

## 2025 Holiday Festival Post Event Report

### **Overview**

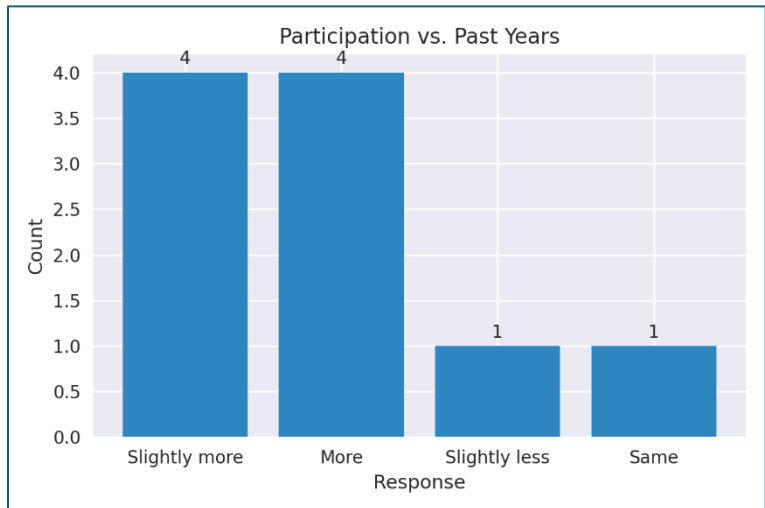
This year the Holiday Festival was held on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. It is noted that two other artisan sales events happening outside of this date range that were included in promotions: Dandelion Spring Farm Holiday Market (11/29) and the Bowdoinham Community School Craft Fair (12/13). A total of eleven venues hosted several events including a new venue at the Downing Arts Blacksmith shop. The festival which was promoted in the Cryer, the Portland Press Holiday Guide, Town and Community School newsletters, social media, Town website, posters throughout town, and three new banners. Artists were also successful in getting on the Maine Public Holiday Guide radio show. New this year it was also promoted in the Lincoln County News Holiday Shopping Guide.

Events included wreath decorating to benefit the Public Library and the Community School craft fair. The Bowdoinham Guild of Artisans hosted sales over the first weekend in December at the Old Town Hall (with record breaking attendance on their opening night) and at Cathance River Gallery. Merrymeeting Arts Center (MAC) and Artistic Endeavors Studio in the FHC building was also open that weekend for sales. In addition, there was a tree lighting and carols at the Fire Station, a cookie decorating party at the Food Pantry earlier that day and an open house at the Nazarene Church.

### **Participation**

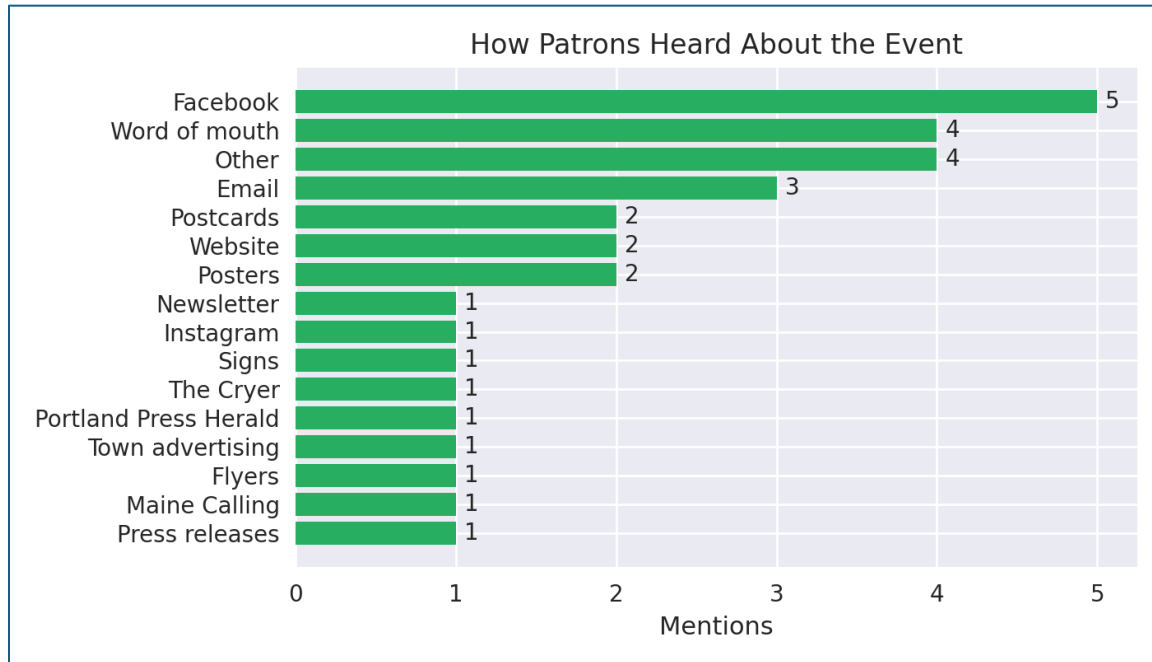
When comparing participation to last year, of the five Guild Show responses the average response was More. MAC and Artistic Endeavors also reported More. Other venues on average reporting Slightly More (Dandelion Spring Farm, Cathance River Gallery, Church of the Nazarene).

Those who took counts reported number of visitors ranging between 50 at the Church of the Nazarene to 540 visitors at the Old Town Hall venue. Downing Arts saw 50 visitors in his first year of participation. Not all locations were open for the same number of hours during the festival and therefore headcount comparisons were not compared across locations.



## Marketing Reach

The most prevalent response was “All of the Above” covering Facebook, posters, signs, the Cryer, Portland Press Herald, word of mouth, and other. Without including “All of the Above” these were the counts of specific marketing channels.



## Sales/Engagement Goals

When asked if the event met their sales/engagement goals responses included:

- Three vendors met or slightly over performed, two noted they attribute this to improving their selection (type and amount) and diversity of vendors at the venue.
- Two vendors reported exceeding over 50% of their expectations, which may have been aided by the PR the town put out, visibility of venues with more lighting .
- Two vendors underperformed (one at over 50% and another between 31-50%). Anecdotally one of the vendors had a very small inventory and the other had was heavily impacted by the weather at the venue.

**When asked “What may have influenced the results of your sales goals?” Direct quotes included:**

*“Maybe price point.”;*

*” Having other items at a lower cost.”;*

*“The type and amount of product I have available is the biggest factor. But it was nice to be back at the Town Hall and I think customers enjoyed seeing the space and all vendors back in one room again.”;*

*“General awareness seemed better”; and*

*“People didn't know about our event except by word of mouth, even though it was listed with other events in the brochure, etc.”* – It is noted that this last comment was not from a sales venue.

## **Additional Feedback:**

### Strengths

- Diversity of participants
- Having outlets in the floor in the Old Town Hall
- New lighting at Old Town Hall
- Map on the back of the brochure
- Placement of signs and PR overall
- Being a part of the Guild
- Renovations at Old Town Hall attracted people to the venue

### Weaknesses

- Parking either lack of safe parking or managing parking – vendor site specific (2 responses)
- Labor required to run these kinds of events (2 responses)
- Missing the stage at the Old Town Hall
- Cleaning supplies at Old Town Hall were lacking
- Weather put a damper on outdoor sales venues
- The dates and times for the Guild and for Cathance Gallery were very confusing. Should arrange differently on the brochure to clear this up.
- Have signage at the intersection by Three Robbers with a directional arrow toward the waterfront. There was one outside of Merrymeeting Art Center but they took it in after Saturday when they were finished. Leave it out next year.

### Opportunities

- Have a food truck near the MAC Gallery
- May host a fire pit and/or hot drinks at a sales venue
- Old Town Hall had space for more vendors