

## Texas Blueberry Festival 2016

### - Economic Impact and Showcasing of Community

The Nacogdoches County Chamber's 27th Annual **Texas Blueberry Festival** – presented by **Tipton Ford-Lincoln** and held Saturday, June 11, 2016 - was a huge success, with an estimated **19,000 attendees** - an 11% increase from 2015. Festival Chair Grace Handler led two hundred-plus of volunteers in the free-admission event.

#### Being blue brings in a lot of green

- The Kiwanis served **4,110 fresh blueberry pancakes** to hungry early birds. That is a 21% increase from 2015
- More than **500 children** enjoyed the Kids' Bounce & Splash Park provided by Space Walk of East Texas.
- The Blueberry Place pick-your-own blueberry farm welcomed vanloads of visitors again. Excited visitors picked **1,110 pounds** of fresh berries (36% increase from 2015). Roger and Sherrie Randall generously welcomed the crowds, who took photos and enjoyed the van rides provided by SFA's Driving Jacks and Rotary Club of Nacogdoches.
- The Vehicle Funcase car show had a large participation increase, up 123%, with **78 vehicles** of a variety of makes and models entered in the show.
- Brookshire Brothers sold **5,200 pounds (2.6 tons)** of fresh-picked berries. The total is down from the 6,600 pounds in 2015, but local stores were also well-stocked and able to help satisfy throughout the weekend.
- The Nacogdoches Quilters Guild earned **\$2,683 from 533** paid admissions. The **donation quilt raised another \$2,352** that was distributed to Love INC and The Nacogdoches Treatment Center. With those donations and the \$2,000 paid to the local venue, \$4,400.00 went right back into the community.
- Surveys showed **46.0 percent** of visitors **traveled more than 100 miles** to the Saturday festival. In fact, more than **20 percent** traveled **more than 200 miles**. This creates an influx of new money into our local economy. At the second Friday night **Blueberry Bluegrass Concert in the Park**, sponsored by Rex Perry Autoplex, held June 10 in Festival Park attracted more than 1,000 attendees - up 100%, and 7.5% reported they were staying in a local hotel or B&B.



**Presenting Sponsor Tipton Ford-Lincoln** added new events that fit perfectly with the family-friendly festival. The **Hug A Hero** photo booth located at 200 E. Main St. next to the Chamber's Information booth honored those who make sacrifices to serve the community. Festival attendees were able to personally thank the heroes and take photos with them! Neal Slaten was able to secure the **Ford Innovation Lab** that set up in the car show area. The lab is Ford's tractor-trailer that morphs into an interactive walkthrough display of working cutaway engines. The made for off-road racing 2017 Ford Raptor was also on display.

**Walmart, the largest retailer in town,** located four miles north of the festival "experienced a sales increase of 6% over a typical Saturday," said store manager Debbie Warden.

#### **Downtown merchants reap rewards.**

"The festival brought the busiest day since I opened in 2015," said Linda Watson, owner of Wild Rose Old Time Photos. "I had to use a waiting list for call backs and had groups ranging in size from two to 10 at a time."



- PRESENTED BY -

**TIPTONFordLincoln**  
Nacogdoches, TX

## **Texas Blueberry Festival 2016: Economic Impact**

### **Estimated:**

Total Attendance:	19,000
Out of town visitors:	195 (71.0 percent*)
Hotel/B&B occupancy:	47.50% attributed to festival (1,496 rooms occupied)
Direct Income generated at hotels/motels :	\$69,672

**Economic impact: If using a 3x multiplier:** **\$2,090,168**

*\*Note: Our 2016 total of 276 completed surveys found 46.0 percent traveled more than 100 miles. Over 20 percent travel more than 200 miles. Over 5 percent travel more than 300 miles.*

### **More background – from this year and past festivals:**

In its 27 years, the Texas Blueberry Festival has been confirmed as a signal, annual, and much anticipated event for Nacogdoches County. Out of town visitors and local residents combine to produce over 19,000 attendees who bolster the local economy while having a great, family event to enjoy. About 250 dedicated and talented volunteers supported by a great staff of four at the Chamber work together to produce the event. Community partners, volunteers and sponsors (there's no entry fee thanks to sponsors like Tipton Ford-Lincoln) make the event affordable and enjoyable for the family. Local businesses, large and small-from restaurants- printing to banners to hardware to ice and t-shirts benefit from the festival in keeping with the Chamber's 'Shop Nac First' theme.

Aside from attracting out-of-town visitors to Nacogdoches, the event provides a "quality of life" event that makes our community even more attractive for current and future residents. Festival stories are carried by many media – always mentioning Nacogdoches in a positive light.

The Texas Blueberry Festival has the immediate effect of retaining dollars that might be spent in another community if our own residents were traveling the state instead of enjoying – and shopping in – their hometown. So the Shop Nac First component is strong.

Chair Grace Handler and the festival's executive board **thank presenting sponsor Tipton Ford-Lincoln, our other loyal sponsors, volunteers, attendees, businesses, all City of Nacogdoches departments, CVB, Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful, Expo Center, Sheriff's office, media and all who make this festival work so well.**



*The 27th Annual Texas Blueberry Festival presented by Tipton Ford-Lincoln is a part of the Nacogdoches Tricentennial Celebration.*