

More than 102,000 attended National Folk Festival

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GREENSBORO — More than 102,000 people are estimated to have attended the 75th National Folk Festival and related events from Sept. 11 to 13, festival organizers announced today.

The festival celebrated its 75th anniversary when it made its North Carolina debut in downtown Greensboro. The free, three-day outdoor multicultural festival will return again in September 2016 and 2017, then continue as the North Carolina Folk Festival.

Because the National Folk Festival is an unticketed event, co-producers Arts Greensboro and the National Council for the Traditional Arts collated figures from the Greensboro Transit Authority, Greensboro Department of Transportation, Greensboro Police Department, Downtown Greensboro Inc., other venues and aerial photographs to arrive at the attendance estimate.

“The 75th National Folk Festival was a smashing success, and we couldn’t be more pleased with the turnout,” NCTA Executive Director Julia Olin said in a news release.

“The festival attracted a very diverse crowd, which was wonderful to see, and was so enthusiastically embraced by those who attended,” Olin said. “Our hopes and expectations for a great launch in North Carolina were met and exceeded.”

About 300 artists — musicians, dancers, puppeteers, storytellers, potters and craftspeople — participated, with 40 groups performing on seven outdoor stages throughout downtown Greensboro.

Related events included late-night concerts and events as well as performances and exhibitions that took place along South Elm Street and at The Railyard, Hamburger Square, the International Civil Rights Center & Museum and the Greensboro Historical Museum.

Arts Greensboro President and CEO Tom Phillion said in the news release that he, too, was pleased with the turnout.

“With all the positive feedback we’ve been getting, I expect that we will grow this number significantly in the years to come,” Phillion said.



National Folk Festival Day 2

Mavis Staples performs on the Belk Stage during the second day of the National Folk Festival. About 300 artists participated in the three-day outdoor event.