

See more Arts Festival photos on page B1 and at [goanacortes.com](http://goanacortes.com)

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## 'BURSTING WITH HAPPINESS'



PHOTOS BY BRIANA ALZOLA

Crowds of people made their way through the Anacortes Arts Festival Friday to Sunday downtown. Organizers estimated crowds near normal sizes, which means about 80,000 people came through the festival and shopped. Activities included shopping, food, music and hands-on activities like chalk art (below).

## Festival vendors hit \$1.2 million, fine arts show has record sales

BY BRIANA ALZOLA  
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Decent weather, brisk sales and happy faces marked the return of the Anacortes Arts Festival this past weekend.

Those sales were particularly good for art vendors. The vendors brought in \$1.2 million, which is just shy of the record-setting pre-pandemic year of 2019, which had \$1.4 million, Executive Director Meredith McIlmoyle said.

And that is even though the three-day event was actually a little smaller than past years — adjustments that were purposely made in an effort to downsize a bit since the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet faded away. About 60 fewer vendor spots were allowed in an effort to create more room.

The crowds still came, even with a slight drizzle at times on Saturday.

"People were happy to be out seeing friends and experiencing art, music and good food," McIlmoyle said. "We always try to put on a celebration, but this year it felt even more so. We are



just bursting with happiness for our artists and our community."

Organizers of the 60th annual Anacortes Arts Festival created several plans over the past year as local and statewide regulations shifted, changed and adjusted to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Then they finalized what the festival would look like, how booths would be spaced, extra sanitation stations and more.

However, they couldn't be sure how many people would attend, McIlmoyle said.

The crowds seemed about the same, but spread out a little differently than normal, she said.

In a normal year, festival staff count the number of people in each block at several points throughout the day to try to guess on attendance. It didn't do that this year, but vendor sales numbers suggest that the crowds were about average, or roughly 80,000 people over the three days.

The festival also hit a high with its fine art show sales at \$61,000, a new festival record. That number represents a lot of good for both the artists and art collectors, who came to the festival looking to take home a new piece for their collections, McIlmoyle said.

"That's more than we've ever sold," she said.

Those dollar totals don't include any money that came in from the beer and wine garden and other fundraisers.

Several art vendors said they

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## 60th annual event has grown since 1962

BY BRIANA ALZOLA  
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The Anacortes Arts and Crafts Festival got its start in 1962, featuring a curated fine art show, a crafters area and a sculpture garden.

It might have been an unlikely event for what was mostly a lumber and fishing town at the time, but a steady crowd came through to admire the art, see crafters making items and add to their home collections, longtime volunteer Anita Luvera Mayer said.

"We wanted to introduce the community to the world of art," she said.

In its first years, the festival showcased more than 100 artists and quickly grew to roughly 15,000 visitors, according to the Anacortes Museum.



CONTRIBUTED / ANACORTES MUSEUM

A crowd gathers at Seventh and Commercial during the first Anacortes Arts and Crafts Festival in 1962.

Over the years, it continued to grow. By the 25th festival in

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## Walters, Miller to face off for mayor

BY RICHARD WALKER  
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Matt Miller and Ryan Walters have advanced Aug. 3 to the Nov. 2 general election in their bids to become the next mayor of Anacortes.

The latest ballot count Friday showed Walters with 3,533 votes, or 49.3%; Miller with 3,340 votes, or 46.6%; and Tammy Guffey with 279 votes, or 3.9%. Certification will be Aug. 17 once the final ballots — about 80 countywide — are counted, according to the Skagit County Elections Department schedule.

The Anacortes mayor is elected to a four-year term, is full-time and is paid \$94,000 to \$113,000 a year based on step increases.

The final count of an estimated 80 ballots remaining countywide will take place Aug. 17, and results will then be certified.

Walters and Miller issued statements after the latest vote count.

"I'm grateful for the support voters have shown for me and my



vision of a community united around strengthening neighborhoods, invigorating our downtown, and improving the efficiency, performance and customer service of city government," Walters said. "I'm excited to be going into the general [election] with more votes than any other candidate, and I'm looking forward to connecting with even more of our community before Nov. 2."

Miller said he's happy with the results and expected a competitive race.

"We look forward to bringing our message of experienced, reasoned, non-partisan leadership to more members of our community, as we reset to the November General Election race," Miller

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## County urging vaccinations to ward off delta variant

BY RICHARD WALKER  
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Skagit County Public Health officials are urging residents to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and wear masks indoors in a push to keep at bay the delta variant, a resilient strain of the acute respiratory virus.

COVID-19 had been slowed since January by readily available vaccines, but the delta variant has proven to be virulent — particularly among those who have not been vaccinated.

As of Monday in Skagit County, there have been 130 new cases of COVID-19 and 14 hospitalizations since the beginning of the month, according to Skagit County Public Health data available online. That's more new cases than in all of July.

More than 94% of all cases, deaths and hospitalizations in Washington can be attributed to people who have not been fully vaccinated, Skagit County Public Health

officials reported.

Between Feb. 1 and July 30, 95.3% of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in Skagit County were in unvaccinated individuals, the department reported on its website. During this same period, 100% of deaths due to COVID-19 were in unvaccinated individuals.

According to health officials, the vaccine is the best hope of avoiding serious illness.

"We are pleading with Skagitonians to get vaccinated now," Skagit County Public Health Director Jennifer Johnson said on the department's website. "Getting vaccinated will give our community a chance to breathe again. It will keep our hospitals operating the way they need to be during cold and flu season. It will ensure the safety of our

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