

Maximize your fun at the festival

Following a few tips from aficionados is the key

By **DAVID CLOUSTON**
Salina Journal

Pssst. Want to know secrets the “insiders” have for maximizing your enjoyment of the Smoky Hill River Festival? How to beat the crowds, get the best shady spot for your lawn chair or blanket or find the most delectable food fare?

Forget the hidden camera and the truth serum. Festival organizers and longtime event aficionados are happy to share their recommendations with you.

“The structure stays the same so people know what components there are. But inside of that, everything changes,” said Arts and Humanities Commission representative Sharon Benson, one of the coordinators for this — the 31st edition of Salina’s premier summer event.

“The installations change, the activities change. But structurally, there’s comfort. People know when and where to be. They know there’s going to be the race (The Festival Fitness Five) Saturday morning and the Big Band Dance Friday night, for example.”

Here are some helpful hints that can see you through to Sunday’s finale featuring the rollicking sounds of the Celtic band, Needfire,



TOM DORSEY / Salina Journal

Heather Stouffer, daughter of Kim and Matt Stouffer, Lamont, Okla., waits for the festival to open last year.

with nary a sunburn or hint of exhaustion.

■ **Getting in:** Festival gates open at 9 a.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday, an hour before the festival’s beginning each day. Admission is by festival button only — \$7 in advance and \$10 at the gate. Advance button sales cease at 1 p.m. Thursday. Buttons are available at many Salina locations. Children age 11 and under are admitted free.

■ **Pick a home base:** Get to the park just after the gate opens for the best spots: Music fans like to spread

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