



# Winterfest's Economic Impact

Annual Boat Parade Brings in Millions of Dollars to the Area

WRITER RENÉE K. QUINN

The 12-mile long Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade is more than a sparkling flotilla of bedazzled boats adorned with holiday lights and decorations for one night. This Fort Lauderdale tradition, which attracts more than one million spectators, touches many industries, from tourism, local businesses and government.

The total economic impact on Greater Fort Lauderdale


is \$48,397,366, according to a market analysis by the Broward Alliance and statistics from the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau. Their estimate includes money spent on hotel rooms, tourism taxes,

dining out, hosting parties, and shopping. Winterfest Inc. itself spends more than \$1,000,000 in Greater Fort Lauderdale.

Multitudes of local businesses benefit from increased spending thanks to the boat parade: food and beverage, caterers, entertainment, rentals, transportation, boating needs, lights and decorations and florists. The day of the parade is the busiest day of the year at local Publix delis. That's right ... not Christmas, not New Year's ... the Winterfest Boat Parade! Every party, every restaurant and bar along the 12-mile route serves platters of food and desserts, and all kinds of tasty libations. Local DJs and party bands are booked a year in advance. Retail partners get in on the act with Winterfest merchandising with the sale of shirts, hats, pins, colorful posters and trinkets. Even Carroll's Jewelers has a set of commemorative jewelry that will make you the envy of all Winterfest-fans.

Pre-parade, Winterfest hosts a Shoreline Decorating Extravaganza where homes and businesses along the 12-mile parade route are encouraged to decorate and create a beautiful backdrop for the parade. Many of these locations spend more than \$10,000 in decorations alone (think of the Griswald home lights), lighting the way for a spectacular evening.

Winterfest also helps local non-profits. Restaurants and private parties entertain and/or host a multitude of charitable events, raising important dollars for our local community.

The Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation was able to raise approximately \$25,000 at The Wasie Foundation's villa, located at the start of the parade, from 2009 to 2012. "Over the years the Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade has offered the Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation a fantastic opportunity to raise funds for South Florida families in crisis enduring pediatric cancer," said Sandra Muvdi, MBA, President / Founder of Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation. "We appreciate their effort to invest in our community." 

*Renée K. Quinn is QuinnProQuo's business strategist, media socialista and community advocate specializing in Downtown Fort Lauderdale. She serves on the executive board of Winterfest Inc. and the advisory council for the Circle of Wise Women at JA South Florida past board chair and park-executive member of Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale.*

## Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade

How can you get involved? By water, boaters can enter a privately-owned boat on the parade for just \$35.

Viewing of the parade (grandstand seats) start at \$20. [www.winterfestparade.com](http://www.winterfestparade.com)



Products such as Absolut Vodka use the Winterfest Boat Parade to help with promotions.