

# Thousands greet return of Lincolnshire Art Festival format



Simon Maxwell, 3, of Skokie, looks at lawn sculptures that were on display during the Lincolnshire Art Festival. (Brian O'Mahoney / Pioneer Press)

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**F**or the 20th annual Lincolnshire Art Festival this past weekend, organizers returned to form, hosting numerous painters, photographers, sculptors and other artists at the Village Green shopping center.

Boosted by fair weather, a crowd, which organizers estimated totaled in the thousands for the two-day festival Aug. 12 and Aug. 13, were able to walk the vendor aisles and take home some new pieces of art.

It marked the return of the traditional set-up for the art festival after representatives with Amdur Productions and Lincolnshire officials experimented with a new format in 2016, combining food and entertainment with art.

But many visitors last year said they were confused by the layout that featured restaurant vendors and live music on one side of the Village Green shopping center, and art vendors on the other side.

"I think that the weather contributed to larger crowds than normal," said Amy Amdur, owner of the event productions firm. "This year, in coming back to the true art festival, it kept the focus more on the art itself, and it didn't try to be everything to everybody."

Tonya Zozulya, economic development coordinator for Lincolnshire, said officials decided to eliminate the food portion of the event after one year because too many attendees last year seemed uncertain about what type of event they were attending.

"There was some of that despite our best efforts to rebrand," Zozulya said. "The arts part was somewhat isolated from the eats part, and the music did not quite amplify as much as we wanted it to."

Going forward, village officials are asking people who attended the festival to submit comments about how the arts festival this year compared to the food-and-art festival, called "Arts and Eats," in 2016, she said.

"This year will be a telling year," Zozulya said.

Amdur said her company would consider the combination again for future events.

"I'm still open to the idea of featuring Lincolnshire restaurants because I think the people would enjoy it," she said. "If there was interest on the part of the restaurants, it's something we'd look into again."