

(SD)-Attendance Up Slightly For Sturgis Rally

By: John Axtell Posted at: 08/09/2019 08:19 AM

STURGIS, S.D. - Attendance at the 79th annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally is up slightly from last year after the first 6 days, at least according to traffic counts from the South Dakota Department of Transportation of vehicles entering Sturgis.

The department takes counts at 9 locations and those total 343,913 through Wednesday, an increase of 1,897 or 6-10ths of 1% from last year. The totals were higher than a year ago for 3 days and lower for 3 days.

Friday was 5.4% higher than last year, Sunday was up 6.5%, and Monday topped last year by 2.9%. Saturday was less than 1% lower than a year ago, but Tuesday was down 1.5% and Wednesday a whopping 7.3%.

The biggest day of the first 6 was Monday, when the traffic counters recorded 61,126 vehicles entering Sturgis, while the first Friday was the smallest at 52,099.

The Rally continues on pace to be safer than last year but with more law enforcement involvement. As of 6:00 am Thursday, there had been 33 injury traffic accidents, 27 non-injury accidents, and one fatality compared to 36 injury accidents, 38 non-injury, and 4 deaths at the same time last year.

This year's lone traffic death was 29-year old Brandon Anderson of Norman, Ok, who was killed Mon afternoon when he missed a curve. There's also been one non-traffic death - an Omaha man who died of carbon monoxide poisoning Tues in his RV. His name has not been released.

Arrests, citations, and warnings all continue to be up from last year. There've been 115 DUI arrests, 20 more than a year ago, 81 felony drug arrests for an increase of 35, and 128 misdemeanor drug arrests - an increase of 25.

All together, there have been 875 citations, 218 more than last year, with warnings up 141 at 2.594. Authorities have seized 3 cars in drug cases, one fewer than at this time a year ago.