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# Attendance at quilters show, Grand Rapids' largest convention, topped best estimates, say organizers



(<http://connect.mlive.com/user/gellison/index.html>) By **Garret Ellison** | [gellison@mlive.com](mailto:gellison@mlive.com)  
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GRAND RAPIDS, MI — Tourism officials today said that the city's largest multi-year convention to date brought about 6,500 more visitors to Grand Rapids in August than even the most optimistic estimates had predicted in the weeks prior.

The first American Quilter's Society Show & Contest held at the DeVos Place Convention Center from Aug. 22 to 25



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Chris Clark | [chriscclark@mlive.com](mailto:chriscclark@mlive.com)  
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Quilters form a "flash mob" on the Gillette Bridge Wednesday morning.

brought more than 21,500 attendees to West Michigan, well outpacing the pre-event estimate of 10,000 to 15,000 attendees, according to Experience Grand Rapids.

"We're excited to return next year," said Bonnie Browning, AQS executive show director.

The show is one of four annually sponsored by the AQS. The organization has made a three-year commitment to Grand Rapids and the DeVos Place. The 2013 convention will be held Aug. 14 to 17. Each show was **estimated** ([http://www.mlive.com/business/west-michigan/index.ssf/2011/02/grand\\_rapids\\_lands\\_convention.html](http://www.mlive.com/business/west-michigan/index.ssf/2011/02/grand_rapids_lands_convention.html)) to bring \$15 million into the city.

The AQS show is the largest multi-year convention to date in Grand Rapids and the city **rolled out the red carpet** ([http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2012/08/quilters\\_bring\\_devos\\_place\\_its.html](http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2012/08/quilters_bring_devos_place_its.html)) for the convention-goers.

The Grand Rapids Art Museum and Public Museum, and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum offered admission discounts for quilters to visit their respective quilt-related exhibits or displays.

The Master Arts Theatre held the first of a 16-performance run musical, "**Quilters**" (<http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2012/08>

They are in town for the American Quilter's Society Quilt Show and Contest, Grand Rapids (Mlch.) largest multi-year convention booked to date. Photo taken August 22, 2012. (Chris Clark | MLive.com)

American Quilter's Society flash mob ([http://photos.mlive.com/4469/gallery/american\\_quilters\\_society\\_flash\\_mob/index.html](http://photos.mlive.com/4469/gallery/american_quilters_society_flash_mob/index.html)) gallery (4 photos)



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Quilt: Brilliant Energy

Courtesy Photo



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Matthew Busch | [mbusch1@mlive.com](mailto:mbusch1@mlive.com)  
(<http://connect.mlive.com/user/GRPmbusch/photos.html>)

Anna Worbois, center right, is baptized by Nina Howerton during the rehearsal of "Quilters" at the Master Arts Theatre on Wednesday, August 15, 2012. The play is set to open next Wednesday, August 22. (© Matthew Busch/Mlive.com)

Cast of Quilters rehearses at Master Arts Theatre ([http://photos.mlive.com/4469/gallery/cast\\_of\\_quilters\\_rehearses\\_at\\_master\\_arts\\_theatre/index.html](http://photos.mlive.com/4469/gallery/cast_of_quilters_rehearses_at_master_arts_theatre/index.html)) gallery (16 photos)



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/master\_arts\_theatre\_performs\_m.html),” on the first day of the convention, which kicked off downtown with a **flash mob** ([http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2012/08/quilters\\_flash\\_mob\\_hits\\_downto.html](http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2012/08/quilters_flash_mob_hits_downto.html)).

The city's third annual Restaurant Week was also rescheduled this year, in part, to take

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And no Visitor's Center at the main intersection in downtown Grand Rapids near the Convention Center and hotels.

What are people thinking? Or not thinking?



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