



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2015

Chili Cookoff Gives Back to the United Way *City Presents Check for \$9,050*

Wheeling, WV – The 14th annual Wheeling Feeling Chili Cookoff on Saturday, June 6, proved to be Wheeling’s most successful cookoff yet, with a record \$9,050.50 raised for the United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley.

During the City Council meeting on June 16, Mayor Andy McKenzie, City Council members, City Manager Robert Herron, and Cookoff Chairperson Rosemary Humway-Warmuth presented a check in that amount on the city’s behalf to George Smoulder, Executive Director of the United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley.

“We are deeply appreciative to the City of Wheeling and all those who took part to make this year’s Chili Cookoff the most successful it has ever been,” Smoulder shared. “We recognize that without the support and participation of many individuals and businesses, this contribution would not be possible. On behalf of our United Way agencies and, more importantly, the families they serve, we are very grateful.”

Nearly 40 individual cooks competed in the 14th annual cookoff, along with 13 commercial entries. The top winners in the ICS competition categories (traditional red, verde, salsa, and homestyle) are eligible to compete in the World’s Championship Chili Cookoff in October in Reno, Nevada, and in November at the World Food Championships in Kissimmee, Florida.

“I’m really thrilled with the way the event has grown over the past 14 years,” Humway-Warmuth said. “This cooking competition was the first of its kind here and the first event to utilize Heritage Port and the Wheeling waterfront. It’s exciting to bring national recognition to the City of Wheeling, the Ohio Valley, and our local United Way.”

A total of \$3,500 in prizes was distributed based on the judges’ rankings. The judging tent housed more than 50 local judges throughout the day, under the leadership of the “Head Chili,” Brian Warmuth. Brian has competed at chili cookoff events throughout the country for more than 25 years and was instrumental in founding the Wheeling Feeling Chili Cookoff.



Based on final scores tabulated by Nancy Gwynn, CPA, of Wilson Kozicki & Gwynn PLLC, the winners in the 2015 Wheeling Feeling Chili Cookoff are as follows:

Miss Chili Pepper – Laura and Debbie Williams, the “Dancing Chili Peppers” from Ohio;

Mr. Hot Sauce – Robert Hibbs of Wheeling with Wheelhouse Creative;

Best Booth – Ron and Laura McClay of Wheeling with Temper Tantrum Chili;

Best of Wheeling – Dorsey Kindler with the Wheeling Team;

Rookie of the Year – Dorsey Kindler of Wheeling/Ohio;

Best Commercial/Restaurant – Generations (1st); Avenue Eats (2nd); Vagabond Kitchen (3rd);

Peoples Choice, Commercial – Vagabond Kitchen;

People’s Choice, Individual – Mary and Wolfie’s Right Bite Chili of Wheeling;

ICS Red – Julie Nester of Indiana (1st); Lauren Ray of Michigan (2nd); Tom Hoover of Ohio (3rd);

ICS Chile Verde – Lynne Berkebile of Ohio (1st); Joe Harter of Virginia (2nd); Debbie Williams of Ohio (3rd);

ICS Salsa – Larry Lentz of Kentucky (1st); Bill Donovan of Ohio (2nd); Derrick McKee of Wheeling (3rd);

Homestyle – Larry Lentz of Kentucky (1st); Diane Lentz of Kentucky (2nd).

Local participating restaurants included: Ye Olde Alpha; TJ’s Sports Garden with Main Street Bank; Vagabond Kitchen; Big Girls BBQ; Two P’s Chili; Perkins Restaurant & Bakery and Panhandle Cleaning & Restoration; Eat’n Park; River City with the Wheeling Nailers; Generations; Oglebay; Avenue Eats; Soup Shack; Wheelhouse Creative; and Ruttenbucks. The United Way manned a booth serving chili from several restaurants, as well as chili prepared by United Way agencies.

To date, the Wheeling Feeling Chili Cookoff – held the first full weekend of June and hosted by the City of Wheeling – has brought in nearly \$90,000 for the United Way. The 2016 Wheeling Feeling Chili Cookoff will be held Saturday, June 4. Plans are already underway to make the 15th anniversary a special celebration.

###