

Strongsville City Club burnoff going strong at quarter century mark

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By [Brian Byrne, Sun News](#)



Ryan Schlipf of Meadville, PA, spreads sauce on the Texas Pit BBQ grill at the Strongsville City Club's 2011 Rib Burnoff.

Inclement weather did not squelch the party on the City Commons last weekend.

In its 25th year, the Strongsville City Club's Rib Burnoff proved once again that people enjoy good ribs and good music.

By club estimates, 20,000 barbecue lovers made the pilgrimage to the northeast corner of Pearl and Royalton Roads. Although potential rain on June 23 and 24 cut into the event's attendance, sunny skies June 25 helped put the burnoff "over the top" according to City Club President David Knowles.

"The residents of our city really support our event," he said.

"We got our numbers up there."

Although it is still too early to put a figure on funds raised through the event, Knowles indicated that proceeds will enable the City Club to continue to support Strongsville organizations such as the Special Olympics.

This year's winner for best ribs was Armadillo's Rib and BBQ Co. from Boardman, Ohio. This was not Armadillo's first success at the burnoff, as the company has earned Judge's Choice and People's Choice recognition on several occasions.

The 2011 People's Choice award went to Medina's Old Carolina Barbeque Company.

Other ribbers receiving recognition included Desperado's BBQ and Rib Company, Mansfield's Smokin' Joe's Hog Wild Barbeque.

Knowles cites strong participation in guest judging among the crowds comprised of people of all ages from across the region.

"That made it fun," he said. "It seems like there was a great deal of interest this year."

Weather didn't prevent the burnoff's three musical acts from performing each evening. This included Under the Radar, which served as a reunion of sorts for Strongsville resident Gary Willard and former bandmates.

"It really added to the whole atmosphere," Knowles said of the live tunes.

Knowles stresses that the burnoff would not be possible without the help of roughly 100 City Club volunteers, their families and friends. And, he says enthusiasts can look forward to another "Not the biggest . . . Just the best" burnoff in 2012.

"Every year, we continue to work hard to make the event even better, Knowles said.

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