

Rib Burnoff popularity growing; 20,000 attend this 'saucy' event

By: Amanda E. Garrett

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STRONGSVILLE — There was plenty of finger-licking barbecue on hand last weekend at the 24th annual Strongsville City Club Rib Burn-Off.

Thousands of local residents packed the Strongsville Commons on Thursday, Friday and Saturday for tasty food, live music and a chance to enjoy the summer sunshine.

City Club President David Knowles estimated that 20,000 people attended the event.

"This year's burn-off was a huge success," he said. "We had great ribs, great weather and terrific community support."

Olmsted Falls resident Joe Bonomini made his annual

trip to the burn-off on Friday afternoon.

"I didn't want to make my dinner and the food here is always good," he said. "I had a taste for ribs, so I thought I would come out and enjoy the day."

Bonomini feasted on ribs from Desperado's of Hinckley, roasted sweet corn and a strawberry dessert.

"Everything was delicious," he said.

Strongsville residents Jon Sedlak and Jack Hentosh came out to enjoy the sunshine and the good food. Sedlak sampled ribs from Porky'n'Beans of Port St. Lucie, Fla., while Hentosh enjoyed a funnel cake. Both enjoyed sweet lemonade from Mayor Thomas Perciak's stand.

"Everything was really good," Hentosh said. "We'll

probably stay for a few hours and sample some of the items from the different stands."

The burn-off is an annual tradition for Middleburg Heights resident Donna Henderson. On Friday, she brought her great-niece, Fairview Park resident Gianna Boscarello, 2, and Gianna's grandmother, Olmsted Falls resident Kelly Donahue.

"I love the ribs," Henderson said. "We've already tried Lagerhead's (from Medina) and Two Fat Guys (from Massillon). They were both delicious."

Henderson and Donahue also sampled a bloomin' onion, while Gianna enjoyed a snow cone.

The burn-off was serious business for the 10 rib vendors who competed for top honors. Jon Kiene, co-owner of Lagerhead's BBQ Smokehouse in Abbeyville (Medina Township), was preparing hickory-smoked ribs in the traditional Southern style on Friday.

Kiene cooked the ribs "low and slow" on a hickory-smoked grill. The ribs were then dressed with Lagerhead's homemade barbecue sauce, which comes in regular or hot flavors.

"We enjoy coming out to the rib burn-off every year," he said. "We like to support local events and this event is always a lot of fun."

"It's always a good competition. There are a lot of good ribbers here."

Kiene's hard work paid off. Lagerhead's received the culinary judges' award in the best sauce category.

Other winners were:
People's Choice Best Sauce: Two Fat Guys, Massillon.

People's Choice Best Ribs: Old Carolina BBQ, Massillon.

Culinary Judges Best Ribs: Cowboys, Waterford, Texas.

The burn-off is the annual fundraiser for the Strongsville City Club. Club members use the proceeds to support several local charities.



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Magnolia, Texas, resident Ryan Schlipf prepares ribs for Texas Pit BBQ last Thursday at the Rib Burn-Off. Texas Pit was competing against several other restaurants for the top prizes at the Burn-Off.



Medina resident Jordan Paden, 9, has a good time on the slide at the Kid's Corner.



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Ribs weren't the only things keeping people occupied during the Strongsville City Club rib Burn-Off. Strongsville residents Jason Walter, 5, and Amya Walters, 4, climb an inflatable wall last Thursday at the Kid's Corner. For more photos from this year's festivities visit cleveland.com/sunstarcourier.