



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### June 13, 2017

### Chili Cookoff Breaks Records for Attendance, Fundraising

**Wheeling, W. Va.** – On Tuesday, June 13, City of Wheeling officials reported a record-breaking year for the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Wheeling Feeling Chili Cookoff and presented a check to the United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley for \$10,043.

Mayor Glenn Elliott and Cookoff Chair Rosemary Humway-Warmuth announced the final total during a press conference attended by many of this year's local winners. Several special donors added to the money raised on June 3 and were recognized on Tuesday.

- Williams Lea Tag hosted an internal cookoff in May to select which employee would represent the company at the city's cookoff. WLT donated \$622 from this internal event.
- Miss Chili Pepper winner Mary Fahey presented a check for \$500 on behalf of the Elm Grove Eagles.
- Gianna Landis sold lemonade at the Fire Department chili booth to raise an additional \$140.
- The week after the cookoff, People's Choice (Commercial Division) Winner, Vagabond Chef Matt Welsh, sold his award-winning chili at the Vagabond Kitchen and donated the proceeds to the event total, bringing the final 2017 Chili Cookoff donation past the \$10,000 mark.

The cookoff, always held the first Saturday in June, brought the community together to share in the celebration of good food, local music, and a car cruise, with all proceeds benefitting the United Way of the Upper Ohio Valley. This year's competition offered more than 60 unique chili recipes prepared by 38 individual cooks and 10 commercial entries. Record numbers for cooks and attendees led to the largest fundraising total to date. Overall, the event has raised \$105,757.

Competitors traveled to Wheeling from 10 states as well as Canada. Participating commercial entries included: Vagabond Kitchen; Ye Olde Alpha; Wheeling Island Hotel Casino Racetrack;



Main Street Bank/TJ's Sports Garden partnership; Eat 'N' Park; Oglebay Resort and Conference Center; Perkins Restaurant and Bakery; Generations; River City; Cura Hospitality/Sisters of St. Joseph partnership; and Bubba's Burgers. The United Way volunteers manned a booth serving chili from several restaurants, as well as recipes prepared by United Way agencies.

The top winners in the International Chili Society's competition categories (traditional red, verde, salsa, and homestyle) are eligible to compete in the World's Championship Chili Cookoff in October, and the World Food Championships in November. Based on final scores tabulated by representatives from Wilson Kozicki & Gwynn PLLC, the winners in the 2017 Wheeling Feeling Chili Cookoff are as follows:

**Miss Chili Pepper** – Mary Fahey of Wheeling;

**Mr. Hot Sauce** – Butch Talbert;

**Best Booth (Individual)** – Fire Department by the Landis Family of Wheeling;

**Best Booth (Restaurant/Commercial)** – TJ's Sports Garden & Main Street Bank partnership;

**Best of Wheeling** – Bennett McKinley of Wheeling;

**Rookie of the Year** – Chef Jeff Freshwater;

**Best Commercial/Restaurant** – Generations (1<sup>st</sup>); Eat`N`Park (2<sup>nd</sup>); Cura Hospitality & Sisters of St. Joseph (3<sup>rd</sup>);

**People's Choice (Individual)** – Derrick McKee of Wheeling;

**Peoples Choice (Restaurant/Commercial)** – Vagabond Kitchen

**Homestyle** – Phil Majestro (1<sup>st</sup>); Diane Lentz (2<sup>nd</sup>);

**ICS Salsa** – Cindy Lorenz (1<sup>st</sup>); John Harwell (2<sup>nd</sup>);

**ICS Chile Verde** – Sean Heffernan (1<sup>st</sup>); Matt Bush (2<sup>nd</sup>); Kitt Hoff (3<sup>rd</sup>);

**ICS Red** – Gail Kyle (1<sup>st</sup>); Faye Mulligan (2<sup>nd</sup>); Sean Heffernan (3<sup>rd</sup>).

###