



Press Release

Toms River Business Improvement District
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24th Annual NJ Chili & Salsa Cook-off Heats-Up Downtown Toms River

TOMS RIVER, NJ - Despite overcast skies and chilly temps, thousands flocked to Washington St. in Downtown Toms River for the 24th Annual New Jersey Chili & Salsa Cook-off on Saturday, May 18th.

The International Chili Society (ICS)-sanctioned event, sponsored by Circle Hyundai of Shrewsbury, featured over 40 chili and salsa cooks and over 100 street vendors. The first place cooks in the ISC Red Chili, Chili Verde, and Salsa competitions automatically qualify for the ISC World Competition held this Fall in Palm Springs, CA, as do the winners of the People's Choice Red Chili and Salsa competitions. In addition, both competitions' winners receive cash prizes.

The ICS winners were as follows: Red Chili, 1st Place (and \$1,500)- Johnnie's, A Favorite Chili; 2nd Place (and \$300)- Mad Hatter Chili; Third Place (and \$100)- Giants Tailgate Chili Too; and Honorable Mention went to Mad Mike's Chili. Chili Verde: First Place (and \$500)- Dave Lorenz; 2nd Place (and \$200)- Damir Penava; and 3rd Place (and \$100)- Ann Marie Malone. Salsa, 1st Place (and \$400)- Sally Shenk; 2nd Place (and \$200)- Nathan Gramm; and 3rd Place (and \$100)- Thomas Yanisko.

People's Choice victors included: Red Chili, 1st Place (and \$1,000) Shop Rite; 2nd Place (and \$300)- Pop's Hots; and 3rd Place- Trailer Trash Chili. Salsa: 1st Place (and \$400) Frank Benowitz; 2nd Place- Raymond Palazzo; and 3rd Place- Steve Riccelli.

Official ICS judges on hand were: Johanna Loddo (Chief Judge) and Nick Loddo, and the scorekeeper was Mary Ellen Weber. "It was such an honor for me to have been asked to fill-in for Steve Falkowski as head judge for the 24th annual New Jersey State Chili Cook-off in Toms River. This event is always one of my favorite cook-offs of the year," noted Johanna Loddo, who was also impressed by the great quality of, and sheer number of contestants.

While each year, the Chili & Salsa Cook-off has had corporate sponsors for its special event series, this year was the first year that Downtown Toms River secured a title sponsor for this event, Circle Hyundai of Shrewsbury. Donald DeFelice, the dealership's owner in charge of business development, commented on the event and partnership with Downtown Toms River:

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“We are proud to partner up with Downtown Toms River. Our First experience with the NJ State Chili & Salsa Cook-Off was an awesome one, everyone in Toms River was so nice and accommodating to us. The event was well-run, with plenty of contestants-- a lot of fun and great community involvement. We had a prime location with plenty of exposure, and we met some really nice people. What more could we ask? We will continue to support Downtown Toms River in all its future events.”

“This was a great way to kick-off the 2013 Downtown Toms River special event series, and we cannot do it without our sponsors, volunteers, dedicated staff, and our friends in the Township’s Building & Grounds Department, ” said Toms River Business Development Corporation Executive Director Jody Alessandrine. “We’re already excited for next year’s Silver Anniversary. But, before that, we’ve got the first Downtown Farmers’ Market this Wednesday, and Cruisin’ Downtown now starting in June, and another huge event just around the corner—the 11th Annual New Jersey State Ice Cream Festival on July 20th. Needless to say, there are a lot of reasons to come to Toms River,” he added.

For a video album of photos of the 24th Annual NJ Chili & Salsa Cook, please visit:
http://albums.phanfare.com/slideshow.aspx?i=1&db=1&pw=fXnSSey6&a_id=6069692

In addition to the title sponsor, Circle Hyundai, Downtown Toms River Partnering Sponsors for the Chili & Salsa Cook-off include: XFINITY, JCP&L, New Jersey Natural Gas, United Water of Toms River, Morgan Stanley (Toms River Office), Shore Community Bank, WJRZ-FM, WRAT-FM, The Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Stop & Shop, Foods Galore, and Home Turf Yard & Home Maintenance.

For more information about Downtown Toms River, including the Downtown Gift Card Program, visit www.downtowntomriver.com, or call 732-341-8738.

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