

2011 Harvestfest Thank You!

The Bethel Harvestfest and Chowdah Cookoff was a great success and a wonderful way to kick-off the fall season! The Bethel Area Chamber is so fortunate to have a dedicated core of volunteers, a hardworking staff, and supportive members and sponsors! It takes all these to plan and orchestrate a successful event. For the second consecutive year, Frito Lay was the Presenting Sponsor of the event. As a company, they are very supportive of local farmers and thus, have a great working relationship with our local potato farm, Sunday River Farms – owners Dave and Patti McCrum. Lay's provided the festival with samples of their chips and Sunday River Farms provided us with freshly harvested Maine potatoes for the baked potato booth!

Allen's Coffee Brandy, a popular brand of their parent company, MS Walker, sponsored both the "End of summer, Bethel Harvestfest kick-off party" held at Rooster's Roadhouse on Friday evening - as well as the music on Saturday, organized and emceed by the beautiful Jewel Clark. Oxford Networks had a lovely presence at the festival and sponsored our horse-drawn wagon rides. Mahoosuc Realty also had a presence on the Common and sponsored Steve Stone's chainsaw carving demonstration. Pepsi Beverages Company was the tent sponsor, and Stephens Memorial Hospital was a supporting sponsor. The Chowdah Cookoff is a huge draw for the festival and it was co-sponsored by Sysco Foodservices of Northern New England and Oakhurst Dairy. Oakie the Oakhurst Acorn had a terrific time dancing around the common with the children and they provided samples of their delicious chocolate milk and lemonade. Sponsor Cabot Cheese, another company supportive of local farmers, supplied samples of several kinds of cheese and Dunkin' Donuts supplied coffee, muffins, donuts and donut holes to the festival goers. Apple Pies are also extremely popular and that part of the event is sponsored by Good Food Store. Many thanks to all of these businesses for their part in making the festival a success!

Twelve restaurants were present to provide samples of their award winning chowders. Congratulations to the following who were chosen as winners: Judge's choice: First-Sudbury Inn, Second-Bethel's Best Pizza Grille and Dairy Bar, Third – Rooster's Roadhouse and Honorable Mention – Barking Dawg Market. People's Choice: First – Sudbury Inn, Second – Bull Moose Restaurant, Honorable Mention – Good Food Store. All the chowders were delicious and the chamber would like to thank the twelve participants: 22 Broad Street at the Gideon Hastings House, Barking Dawg Market, Bethel's Best Pizza Grille and Dairy Bar, Bull Moose Restaurant, Funky Red Barn, Good Food Store, Mill Hill Inn, The Phoenix House and Well, Rooster's Roadhouse, Route 2 Diner, The Sudbury Inn, and the Sunday River Brewing Co.

The Apple Pie contest attracted twelve pies. Congratulations to Deb Luxton, the amateur non-traditional pie champion; Fred Coseglia, the amateur traditional pie champion and Beverly Sylvester, from the Sudbury Inn, the professional pie champion. Many thanks to: Darlene Baker, Beth Kramer, Freda Davis, Lee Hughes (Mill Hill Inn,) Eric Hall (Route 2 Diner,) Sadie Sirois, and Brianna Douglas (Funky Red Barn.) Many thanks to judges: Argy Nestor, Pat Irons and Cecille Simmons – and to Wende Gray for arranging for them!

The volunteer “force” at this event was amazing – and they all seemed to be having fun doing their various jobs! Many thanks to the following: Dave Freiday, Bob & Joan Westfall, Hiram Towle, Steve, Ben & Fran Etheridge, Shannan Theilbar, Doug and Matt Zinchuk, Rene McGrew, Jim Mann, Jonathan Goldberg, Karen Saito, Steve Wight, Lynn Saxton, Scott Mills, Sarah Hemeon, Read Dickinson, Susan Isham, Angie Carroll, Bill White, Bruce Powell, Dan Hart, Michele Perejda, Gabrielle Stone, Bob & Barb Dion, John Holliday, Deb Hunt, Amy Marshall, Lynn Wilson, Paula & Dillon Gillies, Pat Thurston, Bill Strauss, Mike Steven, Freda Davis, Lynn Kulik, Rosemary Laban, Mary McVey, Lloyd Sweetser, Ellie Andrews, Mary Stryker, Colleen Files, Joyce Roma, and Al & Jackie Cressy. Thanks also to Gould Academy for the use of their tables & chairs, and to the Bethel Fire Dept. and the West Parish Congregational Church for the use of their chairs. Additional thanks to D & E Sanitation for the use of a dumpster and to Savage Portable Toilets for the portapotties.

Congratulations to Mahoosuc Realty for their winning scarecrow display, showcasing the theme “Celebrating Our Rivers,” and many thanks to Funky Red Barn, The Bethel Inn Resort, Maine Line Products, Brooks Bros. and Norway Savings Bank for also building harvest and scarecrow displays.

Additional thanks to Maggie Lore and Dwayne Bennett for leading the guided bike ride on Sunday and anyone else who helped with that event. The 15th Annual Bethel Harvestfest and Chowdah Cookoff is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 15, 2012 – mark your calendar and plan to attend!

Robin Zinchuk
Bethel Area Chamber of Commerce