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Drive-in Ribfest returning to Amaranth July 16 and July 17

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

It's been said that when the going gets tough, the tough eat ribs, and that's exactly what Dufferin residents are being invited to do next Friday and Saturday.

For the second year in a row, the Orangeville Rotary's Ribfest is operating with a drive-thru format and will again be set up at the Headwaters Fitness and Racquet Club parking lot (205467 Dufferin Rd 109, Amaranth) on July 16 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and July 17 from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. The event has been shortened from its usual three days to two ? same as last year.

The Ribfest won't feature any entertainment, car show or beer tent, but there will be the same mouther watering ribs from two of the best ribbers around ? Brickyard BBQ and Gator BBQ.

?We don't have massive expectations, because it's not a traditional rib fest? it's really just an opportunity for the community to at least have the dinner that they expect in the summer,? noted Michael Wright, Rotarian and Orangeville Ribfest co-chair.

In addition to the two ribbers, there will be three vendors that have you covered for side dishes, such as French fries and corn on the cob. The Palgrave Rotary Club's also going to be in attendance, selling grilled cheese sandwiches, while Tiny Toms Donuts serves up the dessert.

?People will be able to get any of those side dishes on the way up to get the ribs and all their food needs will be met,? said Wright.

Both ribbers attending this year's drive-thru event are award winning and have been great supporters of the Orangeville Ribfest in the past, noted Wright. And when it comes to quality ribs, he says these guys don't miss.

?With these ribbers ? this is what they do ? this is how they make their living, by providing really good quality food to community events and so they always surpass our expectations,? noted Wright.

Meanwhile, one of the main reasons the ribfest is held each year is to fundraise for various projects and support not-for-profit organizations in the community.

Last year, the Orangeville Rotary Club was able to raise more than $22,000 for the Headwaters Health Care Foundation. This year the club doesn't have a specific cause it's supporting but all of the money will stay in the community and be directed back to charities in need.

Wright told the Citizen he isn't expecting to raise nearly as much money as they did when the event was in-person, with revenue in excess of $75,000 back in 2019, but he's hopeful it might be comparable to last year. With very little advertising or promotion the event saw 1,000 cars lined up.

This year's ribfest will again be COVID-19 safe with those purchasing ribs able to do it from the comfort of their car.

While the Orangeville Rotary Club would have much preferred to bring back the regular, in-person ribfest, it wasn't possible to properly plan around the current COVID-19 restrictions.

Looking ahead to next year, Wright says he's looking forward to bringing back the usual ribfest, which generally sees up to 20,000 visitors over the weekend.

?We just cannot wait to be able to get back to a traditional ribfest. We've had a lot of the bands that have been reaching out to us

with hopes that we were going to be able to do something this year but that just wasn't the case,? he explained.

?Certainly, we're looking forward to it next year. That's what it's all about. It's a massive community event that our entire club looks forward to every year. The community has always supported ribfest, just hugely supported us, and we just cannot wait to get back to seeing everybody again.?

But in the meantime, while COVID-19 is still presenting its challenges, Wright says he encourages everyone to stop by the drive-thru event for a delicious rack of ribs.

?This is the dinner event that people look forward to every year, they always look forward to the music, all that sort of thing and everybody's well aware that can't happen anymore. It just gives us at least an opportunity to have the dinner event, bring it home, enjoy it with your family, and make sure that Rotary is still able to do what we can do in the community,? he explained.

The annual ribfest is made possible through the support of its many sponsors. To view a full list, visit the sponsor page of their website: https://www.orangevilleribfest.com/sponsors/

For more information about the Rotary Drive-Thru Ribfest, visit www.orangevilleribfest.com.