

# Frequently Asked Questions: 2011 BWL Chili Cook-Off

## When did the Chili Cook-Off start?

The first Chili Cook-Off was held in 1996. It was started by the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Lansing State Journal and a host of community volunteers, as part of the "Be a Tourist in Your Own Town" event. In 1997, the Lansing Board of Water & Light became the major sponsor. Since then, the Cook-Off has grown every year to become a major downtown event every summer.

## Where and when is the Cook-Off held?

The Chili Cook Off takes place on the banks of the Grand River in downtown Lansing, in Adado Riverfront Park. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, June 4, 2011 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

## How does the Cook-Off Work?

The Chili Cook-Off attracts over 12,000 people annually, where "Chiliheads" sample the area's best chili. Last year, more than 45 restaurants and organizations served up chili from their festive booths. A \$5 (Presale) or \$10 (Day of event) wristband includes admission to a paradise of chili with more than 45 types to sample, plus two great bands for your listening pleasure.

## Where does the money go?

Some of the proceeds from the Cook-Off go directly to benefit charities such as: the Sparrow Foundation, the H.O.P.E. Scholarship Connections Program, and Impression 5 Science Center.

As the event grows, so do the funds generated:

1998: \$5,000	2001: (indoors) \$10,000	2004: (indoors) \$25,000
1999: \$8,800	2002: \$18,000	2005: \$25,500
2000: \$12,000	2003: \$28,000	2006: \$34,000
2007: \$35,000	2008: (rain) \$22,000	2009: \$25,000
2010: \$ (rain)		

## Why should I participate?

It's a chance to invite all your current customers down to the river to join you in a great time. It's also a chance to be a part of something really big: every year local television, radio and the Lansing State Journal cover the event. What great publicity for your organization!! Finally, it's a chance to help bring people together in downtown Lansing.

## What if chili isn't on our menu?

Not a problem! Nearly 50% of participants last year did not regularly make chili.

## So, what does it cost to enter?

This year due to the change in the economic climate and annual growth of the Cook-Off, **returning vendors will now pay a small fee of only \$25.00.** For **new participants** there is a **\$400 deposit that is completely refunded as long as you show up and participate.** Bring your tastiest chili (or other food product(s)), metal trays to store and serve it in, and some workers to run your booth! If you would like to compete for the coveted "Most Creative Booth" trophy please bring your own decorations. **The Lansing Board of Water and Light and other sponsors provide everything else: cups, bowls, spoons, tables, tents, water, power, hot boxes, health department certification, hand wash stations, event promotion, window posters, drinks, bands, mechanical bull, sound equipment, a huge crowd and tons of media coverage,** whew!

### **How many booth workers can I bring?**

The maximum number of workers per booth is six (6) persons. If you require more than six workers, each additional vendor wristband (aside from the 6 complimentary) will be an additional cost of \$5.00 per worker. If your workers plan to switch out during the event, please provide a list of names and arrival times to ensure ease of coming and going through security during the event.

### **How much chili or salsa should I bring?**

If you wish to be a chili vendor, the minimum amount is 40 gallons. Salsa vendors are required to bring a minimum of 10 gallons. Chili vendors will be provided with 10'x10' booths; non-chili vendors pay a fee of \$300 and must obtain necessary certificates and inspections to participate.

### **What about the music?**

Over the years, "Chiliheads" have enjoyed all kinds of music, from Mariachi to Rock to Blues. This year, the Cook-Off will feature separate stages at each end of the festival for two great bands that together cover a wide range of music.

### **What about awards?**

Participants compete for First, Second and Third place awards in eight different categories:

Best Restaurant Chili

Best Corporate Chili

People's Choice Best Chili

Hottest Chili

Best Amateur Chili

Best Meatless Chili

Best Salsa

Most Creative Chili Name

Most Creative Chili Booth

CVB Red Hot Hospitality Award