

Strongsville Rib Burnoff preparing for 27th year June 20



By [Cory Shaffer, Sun News](#)

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Charles Nichols, of Florida, slathers racks of ribs in a homemade honey glaze barbecue sauce at the Texas Pit BBQ stand, all the way from Willis, Texas, at last year's Strongsville Rib Burnoff. This year's event kicks off at 4 p.m. June 20. (CORY SHAFFER, SUN NEWS)

For 26 years now, the sweet and smoky smell of pork ribs slathered in barbecue sauce has filled Strongsville Commons for one weekend in June.

And the 27th year will be no different.

The Strongsville City Club's 27th annual Rib Burnoff kicks off at 4 p.m. today, June 20, in the heart of Strongsville at the corner of Routes 42 and 82.

After more than a quarter-century of success, it doesn't make sense to fix something that isn't broken. So City club President Terry Toth said this year's burnoff will be the same event that the 20,000 attendees have come to know and love.

"We're not the biggest, just the best," he said, invoking the event's slogan.



William Stewart, III, of Mentor, who was at last year's Strongsville City Club Rib Burnoff with his grandparents, needed some baby wipes. (CORY SHAFFER, SUN NEWS)

This year's lineup of "prime ribbers" mirrors last year's: Desperado's BBQ & Rib Co. (Hinckley); Smokin' Joe's Hog Wild Barbecue (Mansfield); Armadillo's Rib & BBQ Co. (Atlanta); Sgt. Oink's (Tiffin); Old Carolina Barbecue Company (Massillon); Texas Pit BBQ (Willis, Texas); Pigfoot BBQ Co. (Mentor); and Smokin' Buckeye BBQ Co. (Cary).

Armadillo's Rib & BBQ Co. is returning after a clean sweep at last year's Rib Burnoff, taking home first place in the culinary division for best ribs and best sauce.

Meanwhile, the People's Choice Award winner from last year, Old Carolina Barbecue Company, is still riding high from opening a sit-down restaurant in Strongsville.

Winners will be announced at 7:30 p.m. June 22, as judged by Chef Chris Olszewski and his team from Polaris Career Center, and the people's choice. Local celebrity judges will whittle down the field on June 20 and 21.

With those eight serving up slabs of ribs, Toth said the event's size is somewhat of an asset, allowing it to offer something a lot of other multi-day festivals can't: cleanliness.

The festival has two eating tents that are continuously cleaned by dozens of volunteers, which Toth said adds to the quality of the event.

"It's big enough that you can hit everything but you're not sitting at picnic tables in three days worth of trash," Toth said.



And, though the Rib Burnoff might not sound too welcoming to vegetarians or those or who aren't fans of ribs, there's plenty of food available, ranging from grilled veggies, roasted corn and bloomin' onions to sweet potato ribbon fries, chocolate covered strawberries and fresh squeezed lemonade.

Of course, the Rib Burnoff isn't all about ribs. Vance Ice, 2, and mom Moriah, both of Strongsville, get their boogie on to live music from Midnight Groove at the gazebo at Strongsville Commons at last year's Rib Burnoff. (CORY SHAFFER, SUN NEWS)

The Rib Burnoff isn't just about food. It boasts an entertainment schedule featuring four hours each of Midnite Groove and Funkology June 20 and 21, respectively.

On June 22, the final day, three acts will entertain the masses, starting with solo acoustic guitar performer Victor Samalot, followed by the Olmsted Performing Arts Dance Company and WKYC Channel 3's own Monica Robbins's band, Mr. Mo, closing out the night.

And for kids, there's always the inflatables.

Toth said the food and the entertainment combine to create a unique event nearly everyone can enjoy – and it's all for a good cause, helping the Strongsville City Club erect the city's iconic clock tower that now overlooks the Rib Burnoff, as well as Pat Catan Stadium and the annual Fourth of July fireworks.

This year, a portion of the proceeds will go the Strongsville Special Olympics.

“It’s the judging and the sponsors that really make the whole thing go,” Toth said.

The 27th annual Rib Burnoff opens at 4 p.m. June 20, 3 p.m. June 21 and noon June 22, closing at 11 p.m. each night. Admission is \$2 for adults, and free for kids 10 and under. For more information on the Strongsville City Club’s 27th annual Rib Burnoff, visit strongsvillecityclub.org.