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Seafood Cook-Off features local fishermen, July 23

(NEWPORT, OR) Commercial fishing vessels are gearing up for a mouthwatering battle this summer when the Port of Newport hosts the Newport Wild Seafood Cook-Off on July 23.

The event will put a new spin on an old classic when crew members and friends representing fishing boats serve up their best dish in hopes of bagging a part of the \$10,000 prize money. All proceeds from the event will benefit Newport Fishermen's Wives and the Newport Food Pantry.

"The Wild Seafood Cook-Off will provide a great opportunity to showcase the talents of our fishing community," said Port General Manager Paula Miranda. "An event like this is a good way to remind community members and visitors that our Newport fishing community provides a valuable protein to dinner tables all over the country. I look forward to sampling the entries," she added.



Local event planner Jim Myers was at the heart of the concept and is leading efforts to organize it. Coming after two years of cancelled events and minimal gatherings, he described the cook-off as "the perfect opportunity to create a summer event at a time when people are itching to get out again."

The venue for the event will be Port Dock 7, located near the site where the Port's administration building is under construction. Vendors under tents and other seafood-related informational booths will transform the area from parking lot to food fair.

In addition to the Port of Newport, two other presenting sponsors will help make the cook-off a reality. First Interstate Bank and Pacific Seafood have both made sizeable contributions that will ultimately serve as prize money.

The amateur competition is divided into four divisions: crab, albacore, salmon, and trawl. Each team will be provided with the protein highlighted, depending upon their division, thanks to generous donations from the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission, the Oregon Albacore Commission, the Oregon Salmon Commission, and the Oregon Trawl Commission.

The Newport Fishermen's Wives (NFW) are assisting in the event's coordination. Speaking for NFW, Taunette Dixon said they are looking forward to the cook-off for a variety of reasons.

"Part of our mission is to educate the public on our amazing, sustainably-caught products," Dixon said. "I think for some people cooking seafood can be intimidating. Fishermen understand the ease of



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cooking the product that they are catching. I love that people will get to see the variety of ways that seafood can be cooked.”

For the price of admission, those in attendance can expect to sample as many as 20 different seafood creations. Tickets will be sold online and are expected to go on sale by June 1. For an additional fee, attendees can enjoy a beverage in the beer garden operated by Rogue Ales, another of the event’s sponsors.

While the cook-off promises to be fun for all involved, there is also serious prize money is at stake for the amateur cooks. In each of the four categories, a panel of judges will award monies to the top four entries, with the winner receiving \$1,000, followed by prizes of \$700, \$200, and \$100, respectively.

Attendees will also have a job to do, as they must vote for their favorites. “People’s Choice” prize money will be awarded in each category, with first place garnering \$350, followed by \$100, and \$50 for second and third places.

A maximum of 600 tickets will be sold. Seventy percent of the net profits will support the important work of Newport Fishermen’s Wives, which assists families that have lost a loved one at sea. The group also uses its resources on outreach programs to deliver food, clothing, and other immediate needs to fishing families. Scholarships, funding for emergencies, and other services to support the commercial fishing industry are all part of the vital mission of NFW.

The remaining 30 percent of the net profits will be donated to the Newport Food Pantry, which is committed to helping provide for the needs of hungry people throughout the area. The organization is passionate about making sure that no child in Newport goes to bed hungry.

Additional sponsorship support for the cook-off will help increase the contributions to the two charities. Currently, fishing vessel culinary team sponsors include Local Ocean, Northwest Natural, Chinook Winds and Ripley’s World of Adventure. Those interested in sponsoring one of the fishing team entries may contact Myers at beachbum55@charter.net.

For further ticketing information and other updates on the Newport Wild Seafood Cook-Off, visit the Port of Newport and Newport Fishermen’s Wives on Facebook.

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