

Tacoma's Ultimate Family Festival

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Rain Showers Didn't Dampen This Year's Taste of Tacoma!

Despite heavy rain showers on Friday, people flocked to Point Defiance Park this past weekend to taste offerings from some of the area's favorite restaurants. The Emerald Queen Casino Taste of Tacoma presented by Click! Cable TV drew an estimated 240,000 people this year, with Saturday's attendance being the largest single day in the event's history.

Thanks to the generous contributions made by visitors at the Taste this year, Food Lifeline and the Resource Distribution Council raised just over \$5,000, which will provide 30,000 meals to families in need.

Guests at the event took advantage of the many money-saving opportunities including the Taste It! Discount Meal Ticket program. Lines for ticket purchases reached outside the park and tickets were completely sold out by the early afternoon on Sunday.

The Taste of Tacoma judges were invited back this year to judge the 30 participating restaurants based on food presentation, taste and flavor, originality, staff attire and décor. **For Best Entrée, Pac Island Grill won first place for their Loli Chicken and Pulled Pork.** Bavarian Catering took second place for Hungarian Goulash and also won the Best Dessert award. Steffie's Caribbean won third place Best Entree for their meat pastry. Famous Dave's BBQ won the award for Best BBQ and Tacoma's local participant Mamas Stortini's won Best Booth Design.

Event producers hired over 80 people to work at this year's festival. Their hard work and dedication helped keep the grounds clean and beautiful making Point Defiance Park the perfect location for the Ultimate Family Fun Picnic!

This year the Taste's themed beer gardens were a success; 113 kegs of Coors Beer, products and 20 cases of Bacardi used for Mojitos and Bacardi Cola were consumed.

Visitors of all ages enjoyed music from the Qwest/KMPS Country Music Stage and were wowed by the local talent displayed during the Tacoma Idol competition. One of the most popular areas was the Saturn of Puyallup/102.5 KZOK Classic Rock Stage which pumped out rockin' tunes all weekend long.

Sponsors are what keep the Taste of Tacoma a free event and this year many of them brought attractions and great food. Thousands of guests enjoyed the 55-foot long Oroweat Ultimate Smoker Grill, serving up Bison Burgers and title sponsor Emerald Queen Casino continues to be a popular destination for free t-shirts and throughout the weekend.

Click! Cable TV gave away free movies from their Video ON Demand collection to over a thousand visitors and The American Family Insurance booth had a long line all weekend as visitors spun the AMFAM wheel to win Frisbees, beach balls and other fun family picnic prizes. The Nintendo Wii Tour offered visitors of all ages a chance to try out the newest and most active ways to play video games with the interactive baseball, football and golf games. An estimated 22,000 visitors received free Mentos samples and took advantage of a great photo opportunity next to the Mentos Convertible parked in the midway. The Ben and Jerry's colorful wagon at the entrance to the park cart served up a total of 2,000 scoops of ice cream in various flavors satisfying many Taste goers' sweet tooth.

This year has proven in rain or shine the Taste of Tacoma is still the most affordable family fun festival!

