

6th annual Rotary Ribfest runs Friday thru Sunday

There's nothing that says summer quite like a community event filled with great food, entertainment, and enough attractions to keep a family occupied for hours, which is why in the five years that Orangeville's Ribfest has run, it has continued to grow in popularity.

The event, which many residents look forward to, peaked at 16,000 in attendance last year ? more than half the population Orangeville.

?It's been incredible to see the support from the community over the years, as it continues to grow,? said Ingrid Sproxtton, Orangeville Rotary Club spokesperson. ?Our sponsorship has nearly doubled this year for the event.?

When Ribfest began in 2010, it was the first major fundraiser for a planned new splash pad at Fendley Park in the west end of town. Earlier this summer, the splash pad was completed and opened to the public, but there are still some final costs involved, which is what the money from this year's Ribfest will go to support.

?I think that's part of why we've seen an increase in sponsorship this year,? said Ms. Sproxtton. ?Not just because the event has done so well, but because the Splash Pad is now open ? they can actually see what the money is going towards.?

This year's event will feature six ribbers ? four returning, and two new ? to delight your taste-buds and fill your stomach full of barbecued wonders. Along with past favourites Blazin BBQ, Boss Hogs, Gator BBQ and Pistol Pete's Smokehouse, attendants will also get to try out Billy Bones and Crazy Canuk's Smokers as they're welcomed to the line-up.

?It's a very similar event to last year's, with live entertainment, vendors, and even more bands,? said Ms. Sproxtton. ?Along with local favourites, Campfire Poets, who will play Saturday night, the lineup will also feature local band Itchy N Scratchy.?

The event will also feature three dog shows, two demonstrations by Tom's Martial Arts, and free cupcakes all day on Sunday to celebrate the opening of the Splash Pad. The midway, with rides and carnival games, will also make a return to this year's event.

Saturday afternoon, Ribfest's guest judges will begin their tasting of each of the six Ribbers ribs and sauces at 1:00 p.m. in the shade tent, where they will cast their votes for their favourite Ribbers, with the announcement of the winners and the people's choice awards being announced at 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Attendees will also witness the return of the Classic Car Show on Saturday, from 3 p.m. until 8 p.m.. Last year, even a bit of rain couldn't scare away to most hardcore of enthusiasts, who showed up despite rolling thunderstorms and showers to show off their cars.

?We've been spreading word about the event at our Wednesday night shows, and everybody is quite interested,? said David Murphy, Business Relations Manager at MacMaster Buick GMC, and new head of the Cruisin' on First Car shows. ?We even have a lot of out-of-towners with unique cars interested, including one with a DeLorean.?

Although the car show at Ribfest has been run by The Road Hazards Car Club in the past, with leaders Bruce and Lorraine Parkinson stepping down, Mr. Murphy has stepped up to run the events. The Parkinsons are still playing a key role in assisting with the show, as well as setting up the car judging contest by the Ribbers.

?Bruce and Lorraine have really done so much for the car community,? said MacMaster President Danny Brackett, a member of the Rotary Club. ?We want to see what they've created continue to grow, and it's great to have them a part of it still.?

The awards have always been a fun and unique part of the event, with each of the Ribbers in attendance choosing their favourite car from the show, and presenting the owner with an award designed to reflect the theme of their specific rib venue. This year, there will also be a community pick award, where those in attendance can cast their vote for their favourite vehicle.

This year, the Rotarians hope they can break last year's attendance record, with a rise to 20,000 visitors through the gates. To celebrate, if this achievement is reached, the 20,000th guest will receive a free rib dinner. Not a bad incentive if you weren't quite convinced yet that Ribfest is the place to be this weekend.

For a full event and entertainment lineup, or more information on Ribfest, visit www.orangevillieribfest.com.