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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **21<sup>st</sup> Annual Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off Set for Sept. 2- 7 at John Ascuaga's Nugget**

Reno/Sparks, Nev. - The country's favorite free rib festival is back! This year's Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off, the 21st annual, will run Wednesday, September 2 through Monday, September 7, once again transforming the Labor Day holiday on Victorian Square in downtown Sparks into a must-attend culinary, music, craft, and family end-of-summer affair. Daily hours for all the fun - the rib cookers, live entertainment, special kids area and multiple city blocks of craft vendors - are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 7. And remember, there is no admission charge!

Attendance estimates show the cook-off continues to be one of the largest outdoor barbeque events in North America, with more than 500,000 visitors and more than 100 tons of ribs served in 2008. Large activities within the event, including a world-championship rib-eating contest, and top-notch entertainment - not to mention the best BBQ in the country - all come together to draw massive amounts of people to Victorian Square.

"The Nugget Rib Cook-off has grown over the years into one of the most fun and exciting events for guests from literally all over the world. Last year we again encountered capacity crowds," said Beth Cooney, Executive Director of Marketing at John Ascuaga's Nugget.

### **Rib Cookers**

Even larger crowds are expected in 2009. Free top-name entertainment and a continued multitude of activities are planned. But the world's best ribs are what carry the day. Twenty-four of the country's most celebrated and talented rib cookers will once again feed event goers while competing for a total cash purse of \$14,500 and the title of, "Best of the West," - a designation many cookers consider to be the ultimate prize in high-volume competitive BBQ. Bill Wahl and Bone Daddy's of Midland, MI will be back after finishing first in 2008. Also back to defend its 2006 and 2007 titles, Mike Bowar of Famous Dave's BBQ of Plymouth, MN will face stiff competition from a host of returning champions, including 2005 winner, Butch Lupinetti of Mt. Laurel, New Jersey's "Butch's Smack Your Lips BBQ," 2004 winner Tommy Houston of Martinsville, Virginia's "Checkered Pig BBQ," and three-time champion ('00, '02, '03) "Texas Outlaw BBQ," again manned by Jim Clayton of Elizabethtown, Kentucky. New this year is actually a returning favorite, Armadillo Willys of Los Gatos, Ca.

### **Rib Eating Competition**

Returning to this year's Cook-off, the International Federation of Competitive Eating (IFOCE), now known as Major League Eating (MLE), the governing body of all stomach-centric sports, will host the fourth annual Best in the West Nugget World Rib Eating Championships at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, September 2, at the Main Stage area. The country's best competitive eaters will vie for \$5,000 and the title of World Champion. The IFOCE conducts more than 90 events annually, including the Nathan's Famous Fourth of July International Hot Dog Eating Contest in Coney Island, NY. It's estimated the top competitors will consume seven-plus pounds of meat during the 12-minute competition. Three-time winner, prolific gurgitator Joey Chestnut, is expected to attend, along with more than one dozen other top-flight athletes. Last year, Chestnut set a world record by downing 9.8 pounds of rib meat!

### **Entertainment**

This year's main-stage free entertainment lineup includes the Saddle Tramps, Hot Club of Cowtown, Restless Heart, The Fixx, Jonny Lang and The

Iguanas. The main stage begins nightly at 7 p.m. and Monday at 3 p.m. Music at the U.S. Bank stage (West end of the main street) begins daily when the event opens. In all, more than 40 bands will play on multiple stages throughout the six-day Victorian Square event. And, again this year, Southern Living Magazine will roll in with its “BBQ on Tour” daily cooking demonstration caravan, featuring famed competitive BBQ cook Troy Black. In addition, there will be daily demonstrations from Mike Peters and the Kansas City Barbeque Society’s “Great American BBQ Tour.”

### **Kids’ Area**

Children will delight in an array of rides and activities. The kids’ area will be located on Victorian Plaza, east of the fountain in front of Century Theatres, and will include an obstacle course, a bounce house, a slide, and a mechanical swing. Ride tickets will be available for purchase just outside the kids’ area.

### **New Website**

Rib fans are invited to explore our freshly redesigned event website, [nuggettribcookoff.com](http://nuggettribcookoff.com), for extended details. Visitors can search things like event judge bios and send an official Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off e-postcard.

### **Sponsors**

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off is sponsored by U.S. Bank; Morrey Distributing / Budweiser; City of Sparks; Curly's Foods Inc.; Model Dairy; AT&T Nevada; Kansas City Barbecue Society; Northern Nevada Medical Center; KOZZ 105.7 FM; KBUL 98 FM; Clark Pest Control; KTHX 100.1 FM; Swire Coca-Cola; IGT; KZTQ/BOB 97.3 FM; Sunset Magazine and Southern Living.

The Rib Cook-off is scheduled for an extended Labor Day weekend, Wednesday, September 2 through Monday, September 7, 2009. For advance reservations, event history and information call (800) 648-1177 or (775) 356-3300, or visit [www.nuggettribcookoff.com](http://www.nuggettribcookoff.com). Do the Nugget Tonight!