

Transcription of Podcast Episode 370: Desert Food Festival – BBQ

SPEAKERS

Chris Pickering, Bob Firing

Note: This transcription was computer-generated and may contain typographical errors.

Bob Firing 00:00

Good morning, Shadow Hills. Well, I know it's been a while since we've talked, not too much has been going on around here. For those of you who are at your other homes, you should know that the weather here is very pleasant. I think we've only had one or two days where the temperatures even reached 100 degrees. But I'm not here to talk about the weather. I'm here because there is an interesting event going on next weekend at the Date Festival grounds, and I have Chris Pickering here to tell us about it. So, Chris, welcome to the podcast.

Chris Pickering 00:50

Thank you for having me, Bob.

Bob Firing 00:51

Great. So, I people may not know the status of what was formerly the National Date Festival. So, would you tell us what's happened in the last couple of years?

Chris Pickering 01:07

Absolutely. Well, everyone is familiar with, you know, the pandemic really shut things down here. The Riverside County Fair National Date Festival in 2020 was one of the last fairs to occur in the whole country because it's knocking just under the wire in late February, before everything shut down in March. So unfortunately, the National Date Festival had not returned in three years. They did a smaller Thrillville event in 2022, where it was about half the property and mostly a carnival. But this last year, my company Pickering Events came in. We're under a new contract with the county and we're operating the 91-acre Riverside County Fairgrounds here in Indio year-round. But we also brought back the Riverside County Fair National Date Festival, that meant bringing back all competitive exhibits, all the animals, livestock, as well as the carnival, headline entertainment, and of course, the free entertainment throughout the grounds, including the community acts as well. So, it's February 17, through 26th, this year. The community came out and had a fantastic time. We're looking forward to do it again next year in February. In the meantime, we're looking to do more on the grounds throughout the year instead of just the fair and have it available to the public, which this weekend is going to be the first event that our team is putting out separate from the fair itself. And that will be the Desert Food Festival Barbecue Competition.

Bob Firing 02:20

Okay, and so tell us what to expect that you know, people here are looking for things to do on the weekend. So, what time does it start? And what can the residents expect if they go?

Chris Pickering 02:34

Absolutely. So, we'll be kicking off at 11am on Sunday morning. And we'll be carrying on until nine o'clock pm, so you have a chance to come for lunch, you have a chance to come for dinner. And we hope to stay in between to catch all of the judging that's going to be going on. We have three different barbecue booths from the local area that are participating. And are we're really wanting this to be an opportunity for people to come out and have a good time. And you mentioned the weather being nice, it looks like it's going to break 100 on Sunday. This is all going to take place inside the heavily air conditioned full and lighter auditorium, there'll be a great chance to beat the heat and enjoy some good food while you're at it. So, the general mission is just \$5, and that includes one taste at each of our barbecue booths. And of course, a coin so you can vote for the people's choice winner. We're actually handing out six different blue ribbons at this event, one for best chicken, best barbecue, sorry, best beef, best pork, and then also best presentation best overall, and then the people's choice. So, there's a chance to participate for everyone. And to see how that all goes down. We're also going to have an ice cream booth. And then kids 12 and under are free for their admission. And then we're going to have free bounce houses inside as well, including an inflatable obstacle course. We've got live music throughout the day; we have two different local acts plus a DJ. And so, there's really something for everyone to come out and have a good time.

Bob Firing 03:48

Okay, and we have a lot of new people moving in here all the time, and they may not be aware of where you're actually located. So, say from Monroe and Avenue 40 How would they get to the Date Festival grounds?

Chris Pickering 04:07

Absolutely. So, you head south on Monroe, and you come across the I-10 there and we're actually at the corner of Highway 111 and Arabia. And then that's where the Fullenwider is, building is going to be. You come down Arabia Street, it will be on your left-hand side. We'll have a bunch of signs out front making it look fun and inviting where you're actually going to have a couple of low rider cars on display out front as well as a teaser for upcoming November festival Wheels, Bullies, and Music, which is the second year that it's participating here at the fairgrounds and so you'll you can't miss it when you drive past.

Bob Firing 04:37

Okay, well it sounds pretty inviting. So, for \$5 and free parking, you can come and basically have all the barbecue you can eat. You can bring your grandchildren to go because there's music and there's a bounce house, and you don't have to worry about the weather because the event is going to be indoors.

Chris Pickering 04:59

Absolutely, you enjoy that free parking the \$5 gets you a taste at every booth and then you can go back to your favorite and buy some more.

Bob Firing 05:05

Okay, well, thank you, Chris. Thanks for telling the residents about it. And I know you've got more events planned and we will have you on in the future to tell us about them.

Chris Pickering 05:18

Certainly, appreciate that, Bob. Absolutely. This is the first Desert Food Festival iteration. We're looking forward to making this a more regular occurrence here at the fairgrounds. This time, it's barbecue next time, it may be something else. So, we're looking forward to creating these opportunities for the community to really come out and celebrate together and we know in this desert community to be able to beat the heat as well.

Bob Firing 05:38

Great. Great. Well, thank you for telling us about it. We will see you on Sunday.

Chris Pickering 05:44

See you Sunday, Bob. Take care.

Bob Firing 05:45

Okay, and for the audience. Thanks for your attention. If you're looking for something to do on Sunday, I think this would be a lot of fun. So, until next time, bye-bye.