



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

News Release

Contact: Melissa Scallan

Phone: 228-523-4124

14-44-MMS
May 21, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Seafood Cook-Off to raise money for food charity

BILOXI, Miss. – This year's Mississippi Seafood Cook-Off won't just name the state's top seafood chef, but also will help feed the hungry along the Gulf Coast and aid tornado victims in North Mississippi.

Hattiesburg chef Robert St. John will emcee the event, and Mississippi artist Wyatt Waters will paint a watercolor during the cook-off that will be auctioned off at the end of the evening. Proceeds will go to St. John's charity, Extra Table, which provides food to missions and food pantries from Jackson to the Coast.

"The Mississippi Seafood Cook-Off already is a great event because we get to showcase some of the state's top chefs," said Jamie Miller, executive director of the state Department of Marine Resources. "This year we also will raise money to help those in need across the state."

St. John founded Extra Table several years ago when he realized how many people in Mississippi go hungry. He partners with Sysco to provide healthy food to 10 agencies from Jackson to the Coast. The food is delivered on the last Wednesday of every month and includes lean meats and grains.

"Having represented Mississippi and the Department of Marine Resources twice in the Great American Seafood Cook-Off, I am a huge fan of this event," St. John said of the cook-off. "I am also proud that they chose Extra Table because money raised will help feed people along the Mississippi Gulf Coast who suffer from food insecurities."

Five agencies on the Coast are partners with Extra Table: Feed My Sheep, Gulfport; Loaves and Fishes, Biloxi; Our Daily Bread, Pascagoula; St. Gerard Community Outreach Catholic and Community Services, Bay St. Louis and The Lord is My Help, Ocean Springs.

Anyone who donates to Extra Table through Monday will receive tickets to this year's Mississippi Seafood Cook-Off while supplies last. To donate, go to MSSeafood.com.

Also during the cook-off, participants will be able to donate to the American Red Cross to help tornado victims in North Mississippi.

The event, which is put on by MDMR's Seafood Marketing Department, will be held May 30, from 4-7:30 p.m. at the Slavonian Lodge, 159 Maple St., Biloxi. This year's chefs include Ty Thames, Restaurant Tyler, Starkville; Gary Hawkins, 1908 Provisions, Jackson; Dru Jones, Boure', Oxford; Jeremy Noffke, Purple Parrot Cafe, Hattiesburg; Eric Spencer, Island View Casino, Gulfport and Danie Rodriguez, Capones Italian Ristorante', D'Iberville.

Judges for this year's cook-off are Regina Charboneau, chef, author and owner of Twin Oaks Bed & Breakfast in Natchez; Susan Benton, food and travel writer, blogger and owner of 30A Eats; Guy Lott, chef and product specialist with Alabama Seafood; Joanne McNeely Zaritsy, marketing director, Gulf

and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation and Sherry Lucas, feature writer for the Clarion Ledger newspaper.

The winner of the cook-off will represent Mississippi in the Great American Seafood Cook-off in August in New Orleans.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

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