

Tickling the taste buds

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— An estimated 8,000 people attended Carnegie Hall's Taste of our Town, an annual and flavorful fall event, Saturday in Greenbrier County. "The crowd was wonderful this year and we truly appreciate the support from all of our vendors," Carnegie Hall marketing and public relations director Mary Baldwin said. "TOOT is our annual fundraiser where our vendors contribute 50 percent of their sales to our ongoing arts and education programs."

Baldwin said the event also went "green" this year with first-year West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine student Kyle Keene manning trash bins that sorted recyclable items.

The Greenbrier Sporting Club made its first appearance at TOOT this year, offering to the public sloppy Joe's with slaw, chocolate brownies and, as a refreshment, "pineapple basic elixir." General manager Larry Klein said TOOT is on the schedule for next year as well.

"I bet we are the only stand here that's serving an elixir," Klein quipped.

Over at the Aviagen Turkey stand, turkey meatballs with sweet barbecue sauce were sold out by 3 p.m., and the General Lewis Inn had long lines for its famed pecan pie.

Ron Snedegar of Maxwelton said he chowed down on a hamburger made at the Methodist Church booth.

"This is the 24th year for TOOT and I have been to it every single time," Snedegar said.

Catching the sights and sounds of TOOT for the first time this year was the Keenan family who traveled to Greenbrier County from Summersville.

Mathew, his wife Shannon and their son River said TOOT was their kind of festival.

"We are definitely going to go to as many places as possible and sample food," Mathew said.

Several different areas at the festival offered live music with acts like Sweety and Old School Abbey, plus school choirs helped round at the event.

Lewisburg deputy police chief C.J. Teubert described the crowds as "larger than last year" and said there were "no problems" associated with the four-hour event.

Making the trip from Wood County was Paul and Donna Boggs of Parkersburg, who most likely had the best idea about how to handle more than 60 food vendors in such a short period of time. Donna is the superintendent of a West Virginia welcome station at Williamstown and knows what hospitality is all about.

"Our method is to just start at one end of the street and then just stop at each place until we make it all the way to the other end of the street," Donna said with a grin.

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