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## Village of Orland Park's Annual Chili Challenge Returns January 30



The Village of Orland Park's annual Chilly Willie Chili Challenge has been a winter favorite for nearly 20 years.

Sanctioned by the International Chili Society and the Chili Appreciation Society International, this year's contest will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, January 30 at the Orland Park Civic Center, 14750 South Ravinia Avenue. ICS and CASI members, along with local cooks are invited to join the competition.

"Orland Park's Chili Challenge has become a regional attraction because we have over 20 competitors all in one room with at least a third of them being from different parts of the country," said Orland Park Mayor

Dan McLaughlin. "We welcome everyone to come vote for their favorite chili and volunteer to help judge the competition if they want to be a part of it."

An entry fee of \$5.00 includes all-you-can-eat samples of red chili, green chili, and salsa beginning at 2:00 p.m. until the chili is gone.

"People who want to buy tasting cups to sample the chili should arrive as close to 2 p.m. as possible because this is a very popular event," said Trustee Pat Gira, chair of the village's Recreation and Parks Committee. "It's amazing to see how many different types of chili we have each year."

Cooks may compete in ICS traditional red, salsa, verde or home-style and/or in CASI traditional red chili. Cooks must be active ICS members to compete in the ICS Competition. Contestants must be 18 years or older to compete. All chili must be cooked from scratch on-site on the day of Orland Park's Chili Challenge. Contestants are required to cook a minimum of two quarts of competition chili plus an additional gallon for the People's Choice/Public Tasting. Beans, macaroni, hominy or other similar ingredients are only permitted in the home-style category.

Best home-style chili wins \$100 plus an award to commemorate the achievement.

"Each year, we hear about the great chili cooks in Orland Park," McLaughlin said. "It's nice that the ICS opened its competition a few years ago, enabling local residents to compete with their home-style recipes," the mayor said.

Judging is based on aroma, consistency, color, taste and after taste. Awards are presented to the top winners in each category.

An international champion will participate in Orland Park's competition this year. James Burns, of Point, Texas, won the Terlingua International Chili Competition.

The winner of the ICS Competition at Orland Park will qualify to compete in the World Championship Chili Cook Off. The top winners in the CASI competition receive points to add to their totals qualifying cooks for the national competition held in Terlingua, Texas.

Approximately 100 volunteer judges are needed. Judges may only select one category to judge and should arrive 20 to 30 minutes before their judging time. Any individual, age 18 and older, interested in volunteering to judge, should email his or her name, phone number and preferred time and category to Andrea Smaga, [asmaga@orlandpark.org](mailto:asmaga@orlandpark.org).

Details are available by emailing Ray Piattoni at [rpiattoni@orlandpark.org](mailto:rpiattoni@orlandpark.org) and calling or visiting the Village of Orland Park Recreation Department, 14600 South Ravinia Avenue, 708/403-7275.