

Bikers Behind the Badge: Motorcycle clubs gather to support first responders

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Nearly 10 motorcycle clubs and hundreds of bikers gathered at the Alton Moose Lodge at 526 East Delmar Saturday afternoon for "Bikers Behind the Badge."

The event's second incarnation was organized by Holly Brown with assistance from Christopher "Doc" Hartshorn. The first event raised \$8,014 for the St. Louis area Back Stoppers organization, which helps support families of fallen first responders as well as first responders who have been harmed in the line of duty. This year, Brown said \$6,640 was raised already, with at least another \$1,000 coming.

"That's not too bad," Brown said Monday. "It went great. The biker community, and they worked it and they spent some money."

At the Moose Lodge Saturday, visitors were treated to fun, food and family-friendly activities. For the second year, the Survival Flight Five helicopter team arrived from Jerseyville, keeping its helicopter at the event all day. Hartshorn said people were able to go into the craft and take photos.

Money was raised through at-the-gate suggested donations as well as from food sales, live and silent auctions, raffles and a 50/50 drawing. The event was free to all first responders who came, he said. Brown said several first responders were at the event.

"Every bit of money raised by this event goes toward Backstoppers," Hartshorn said. "Holly asked me to help. I do several benefits and things like this throughout the year."

One of those benefits is "Fight Like Dottie," an August poker run event for motorcycle enthusiasts to raise money for single-parent families coping with cancer.

Hartshorn said he is also a retired paramedic, so Brown's cause was all the more important to him.

Brown said she began the event after 2016's shootings in Dallas, which killed five police officers. Her brother is an officer in Hudson, New York, and she wanted to do something to honor first responders because of his profession.

A chili cook-off also occurred at the event, with eight motorcycle clubs entering a roaster full of their best dish. Brown said the Bush Pilots won the cook-off this year.



[Steven Spencer also contributed to this story.](#)