

Teams Needed For Alton Chili Cook-Off On Oct. 14

by Sara McGibany
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ALTON – The 35th Annual Alton Chili Cook-Off will occur as planned on Saturday, October 14th, but ticket sales will be cut off earlier than usual due to low participation. 13 teams are registered, but 20 teams are needed to feed the typical crowd that attends. The event will move forward this year but is in jeopardy in future years unless more teams decide to get involved.

The event was cancelled in 2022 due to Madison County Health Department rules that prohibited cooking in advance in a home kitchen and reheating the chili on-site, but the

Health Department has revamped their policy and put reasonable rules in place to hold the event while keeping everyone safe. “We appreciate how the MCHD has worked with us on this,” said Sara McGibany, Executive Director of Alton Main Street who coordinates the event, adding “We wanted to clear up any misconceptions that the new rules are burdensome – the new rules require one team member to take an online food handlers certification class, which takes about a half hour and costs \$8.00. Contestants can cook in advance in their home kitchen and reheat the chili at the event as long as they keep a cooling log of the temperature of the chili.”

McGibany added, “This is Alton Main Street’s biggest fundraiser, and we know that hundreds of people look forward to eating chili at this fun event every year, but if we can’t find enough teams then the event doesn’t compute. Our planning committee has reached out to hundreds of past participants, and it feels as though we may need to let this event go if the community doesn’t rally behind it.”

The Chili Cook-Off will take place from Noon until 3:00 p.m. on the patio and in the warehouse of The Lodge at the Lovejoy, located at 401 Piasa Street in Downtown Alton. Big George Jr. and the NGK Band will provide live music.

Team registration is still open for October 14th, to register please visit <https://downtownalton.com/events/chili-cook-off/>

To offer your support with outreach so that the event can continue in future years, please contact: sara@altonmainstreet.org.