

RIBS FOR THE RIBBON COOK-OFF

GENERAL RULES 2026

Event Date:

Saturday, September 26, 2026

Judged Categories: Ribs and Chicken; People's Choice voted by public

Rib Cook-off Schedule:

6:00-8:00am: Check in/ site set up (no overnight parking/camping available)

8:00am: Cook's Meeting / Rib distribution (10-12 racks)

9:00am: Chicken inspection

1:00pm: Chicken Turn In (minimum 6 portions, 5 minute window)

2:45pm: Rib Turn in (minimum 6 bones, 5 minute window)

3:00-4:30: Public tasting for people's choice Ribs (or until gone)

5:00pm: Awards presentation (approximately)

6:00pm Tear down

Entry Fee:

1. \$150.00 per team, cash or check only. Checks can be written to Big Lake Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
2. Rib Tasting Kits, Individual Kit \$15.00 (Allows tasting of 6 rib samples and people's choice ticket)
3. Additional rib tickets may be purchased for \$3.00 per ticket (teams are to take no cash)
4. Additional prize tickets will be available cost and type to be determined. Must be present to win.

Judging Criteria

1. Entries will be judged by a panel of 6 judges.
2. Any entry turned in after 1:05pm for chicken and 3:05pm for ribs will not be judged.
3. Rib and Chicken scores will be based on three categories: Appearance, Tenderness and Taste.
4. The scoring system is 9 (excellent) to 2 (inedible) in each category. Any half number between 9 and 2 can be used to score. A one (1) score is given to a disqualification and requires approval of event coordinators.
5. Each team will have two "turn in" boxes, one for ribs and one for chicken. A minimum of 6 individual ribs and 6 individual chicken samples are to be turned in for judging. The "turn-in" boxes will be provided by event staff.
6. Garnish is optional and must follow KCBS rules for allowed garnish.
7. No marking, bending tabs, identifying marks of any kind or sculpting of the meat or "turn-in" box will be tolerated. No side sauce containers, pooling, or any other foreign objects such as foil, toothpicks or skewers are allowed in the "turn-in" box. Failure to comply with this rule will result in disqualification.
8. The public will be welcome to visit your space and trade **one ticket for one rib**. (No cash taken by teams).
9. The public will vote on their favorite rib. The team that acquires the most votes from the public (per special ticket) will win the People's Choice Rib Award. 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place will be awarded.
10. The team with the highest overall number will be awarded 1st place, 2nd place, and 3rd place will be awarded by the second and third highest score, respectively in the categories of Ribs, Chicken and People's Choice.

11. Overall Grand Champion will be awarded for the highest combination score calculated based on KCBS and/or MBS criteria. Reserve Grand Champion will be awarded, at the discretion of the contest committee, for the second highest combination score calculated based on KCBS and/or MBS criteria.

Cook-off Rules:

1. A team will consist of one (1) head cook and up to 6 assistants as the head cook deems necessary. The Head cook must be 18 years of age or older.
2. At least Ten (10) racks of ribs will be provided by the event hosts and will be distributed the morning of the event.
3. Each contestant will provide their own choice of cut for the chicken category consistent with KCBS/MBS. Inspection of the chicken by contest officials will happen the morning of the event. The chicken may not have been pre-seasoned, brined, and/or pre-prepped prior to inspection. And that you are exercising common sense about safe food handling and keeping the meats on ice. No other outside meat may be used for the competition.
4. Ribs and chicken must be cooked and seasoned on site within the confines of your team's assigned cooking space. They may be seasoned, sauced or not, and cooked in a manner you feel will deliver a competitive product in the time allowed.
5. Cooking may begin immediately following the meat distribution/inspection.
6. Each team should have team name displayed for People's Choice.
7. At their discretion, teams are encouraged to furnish tasting samples (other than ribs) to the public throughout the day. No money may be taken.
8. Wood, charcoal, pellet, and smoker type barbecues are allowed. Gas grills, electric ovens, gas, or solar ovens are not allowed. Propane will only be permitted to start fires.
9. Contestants may not dig pits and fires are not allowed on the grounds.
10. Ash and Grease barrels will be available for teams to dispose of after cooking.
11. A 16' x 20' space will be assigned to each team. (We will try to accommodate more space if needed.)
12. ABSOLUTELY NO MOTORIZED VEHICLES will be allowed to remain in the contest area. Trailers MUST be removed from tow vehicle and vehicle MUST be removed from the contest area (NO EXCEPTIONS)
13. Each team is responsible for providing ALL of their own supplies, tables, chairs, utensils, ingredients, etc.
14. Generators will be allowed upon event approval. They are not to disturb neighboring teams or the public. No other electricity will be available.

Set up, cleanliness and Safety Rules:

1. The cleanliness of the cooks, assistant cooks and workspace is required.
2. Pants/Shorts, shirts and shoes must be worn by all team members at all times.
3. No use of tobacco products while within any contestants cooking area.
4. Each booth shall have a canopy, cover, pop up awning roof to prevent weather or debris from overhead.
5. Surface area in food prep area shall be cleaned using only disposable sanitary cloths or wipes.
6. All cooking grills, smokers and food prep areas shall be positioned out of reach or access to public.
7. Each cooking booth shall have a waste can plastic bagged lined.
8. No food kept in coolers shall be submerged in water. Must be kept at safe food temperatures based on Food and Drug requirements.
9. No motorized vehicles are allowed in cooking booth areas. Food trucks or delivery personnel will be allowed based on prior approval from the Ribs for the Ribbon Committee.

10. All unloading shall be completed no later than 8:00am the morning of the event.
11. Each team shall supply its own ice and water. Hand wash stations will be available on site for public use.
12. Safe food handling guidelines must be followed. Refer to MDH Temporary Event Food Vendor Requirements for more details.
13. No outside alcohol/beer is allowed on to venue property in accordance with event host liquor license.
14. Ribs for the Ribbon Committee reserves the right to inspect all coolers, trailers, and cooking supplies.