

Great day for roasting

• Lions Club's Labor Day event draws thousands of people, dollars to Sunbury.

By LYNDSEY TETER
Suburban News Reporter

Excellent weather and high quality meat prompted a run on roast beef sandwiches early in the afternoon, said organizers of the Sunbury Lions Club Labor Day Ox Roast.

"We ran out at about 1:30 (p.m.) when we usually like to keep the lines going until 4 or 5," said Rick Eyman Lions Club treasurer and longtime organizer of the event. The club decided this year to support the local community by buying more than 90 rump roasts locally from Aaron Bloch of the Butcher's Bloch on Cherry Street.

"Next year we might have to look into buying more meat," he said.

In its 40th year, the annual event drew between 6,000 and 7,000 attendees to the village square.

Final tallies show the event brought in more than \$22,500, Eyman said.

That translates into between \$ 12,000 and \$14,000 in proceeds that will be distributed back into the community.



SNP photo by Ben French

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Ken Groh of Westerville feeds his son Michael, 3, some baked beans during the Lions Club's Labor Day Ox Roast Monday in Sunbury. Additional photographs, Page 11.

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The event is the largest fundraiser of the year for the Lions Club, and as per the club's own rules, all money raised at a public event must be spent on the local public good.

The group collects and tests used eye glasses to distribute to schools, among about 20 different programs.

As in previous years, the Big Walnut High School marching band performed on the square and this year the Buckeye State Harmonica Club provided musical entertainment.

While shopping from about 200 vendors who had set up shop on the square, browsers plowed through 950 pounds of meat, 80 pounds of coleslaw, 230 pounds of potato salad and 30 gallons of baked beans, Eyman said.

Although sponsored by the Lions Club, the yearly event is manned by a volunteer staff of approximately 125 people representing various community organizations.

"I'd guess we put in about 400 man hours on Monday alone," he said, not counting hours of prep work on the Saturday and Sunday before.

The high school Lions Club, the local FFA and Big Walnut High School cheerleaders assisted the Lions Club with food preparation and service at the event.

"With such good weather, we stayed about as busy as we could be," he said.

Next up for the Lions Club, Eyman said, are preparations for the annual Christmas tree sale. Beginning in Thanksgiving, the sale raises money that ultimately will stock food pantries year-round for community families in need.