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## **Blue Angels Judge Rib Cook-off for Kids**

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**NAF EL CENTRO, Calif.** – Members of the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, judged the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Holtville Athletic Club Rib Cook-off Extravaganza, in Holtville, Calif., Saturday, marking the 21<sup>st</sup> year the Blue Angels have judged the contest.

The Holtville Athletic Club hosts the annual rib cook-off as a fundraiser to support the club's sports and educational youth programs.

Among the friendly Imperial Valley community, the Blue Angels tasted and judged samples of the nearly 12,000 pounds of ribs from each of the more than 20 competitors prepared during the one-day festival.

And when the mesquite-filled smoke had cleared, the Blue Angel judges made their call, and selected the over-all winners of the event – the youth and community of Holtville.

Holtville Rib Cook-off Volunteer/Judge Coordinator, Kurt Hoffman, said having the Blue Angels involved in the rib cook-off is not simply about promoting the event, but allows the community to share their sense of commitment to the team.

“The Imperial Valley community feels a sense of ownership and pride in the Blue Angels because the team calls this area home for a few months each year and the community has adopted them as family in a way,” said Hoffman.

“So the rib cook-off is a special opportunity for this community to mingle with the Blue Angels who they have a strong sense of pride in and have come to love.”

The Blue Angel judges echoed Hoffman's sentiment and reflected on what the event meant to them.

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“Coming to the rib cook-off is a great way to get involved with the local community and give back to them for all their support. Plus, the ribs here are some of the best I’ve ever had,” said Blue Angel Aviation Electronics Technician 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jay Yannuzzi from Chester, Pa.

Throughout the year, the Blue Angels showcase the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps inspiring a culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community involvement.

In much the same way, the rib cook-off is a celebration of service to the community.

Always happy to help out their community, each Blue Angel involved in the event left with more than just a full belly of ribs.

“Helping the Holtville Athletic Club do good things for local kids is the right thing to do,” said Blue Angel Aviation Ordnanceman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Hanna Rains, from Oklahoma City, Okla.

“Plus, we get to mingle with the community, hear their stories and share our experiences. That’s always fun. And we get to sample these awesome ribs. It just doesn’t get any better.”

“This one-day event is a fund raiser for the city of Holtville that raises a significant portion of the budget for the many programs at the athletic club. The companies and organizations who come here to compete or simply sell products donate all the proceeds to the cause, said Hoffmman.

“At the end of the day, it’s all about the kids.”

The Blue Angels are currently conducting winter training at Naval Air Facility (NAF) El Centro, Calif. This training kicks off the 2014 air show season with the first air show at NAF El Centro, March 15th.

For more information about the Blue Angels, including 2014 and 2015 air show schedules, log onto the squadron website at: [www.BlueAngels.navy.mil](http://www.BlueAngels.navy.mil).