

Rotary Program Sales to Benefit Sierra Madre Fire Service

By Bill Coburn

Another side story to this year's Wistaria Festival is a benefit to the entire Community, improved fire service. Each year, Sierra Madre Rotary Club produces a program that it distributes three times a year, with its debut at the annual Wistaria Festival. The other two distribution times are Rotary's Concert in the Park, which the last few years has featured Sierra Madre-raised Harry Shahoian, who returns from Las Vegas where he performs as Elvis, and recently, Dickens Village, the Chamber of Commerce sponsored kickoff to the holiday shopping season.



Hungry festival goers line up at the Rotary Tri-tip booth in Memorial Park at the 2007 Wistaria Festival. Rotary's new directory, which will be available at their booth on Sunday, will help pay for state of the art radio equipment for SMFD. Photo by Bill Coburn

The booklet, which in the past has been filled largely with advertising, is being enhanced this year with a color-coded Downtown District map designed by Gwen Gordon, a business directory, and, in the Wistaria edition, photos of the Wistaria Vine and historic Sierra Madre structures taken by yours truly, with editorial content about the vine and each of the featured structures. Rotary expects that the increased non-advertising copy, particularly the downtown map and the business directory, will make the program the kind of resource item that Sierra Madreans will want to hang on to as a valued reference material for years to come.

The cost of publication is covered by the sale of advertising, and that cost includes some extra for Rotary to do some philanthropic acts to benefit the community. Traditionally the net proceeds have helped

fund such things as mini-grants to the community, landscaping costs associated with the exterior of the library this past year, donation to the revitalization of Goldberg Park, and various projects at Sierra Madre School, including building of a stage and stairway two years ago. Rotary also sponsors the Interact Club, which is a service organization for high school students from nearby schools, and it sends students to RYLA, which is a leadership camp, and much more. On the subject of the Interact Club, along with the tri-tip for which the parent organization has become famous, this year at Wistaria, the Rotary Interact Club for teens will be serving Wistaria lemonade and cupcakes to raise funds for their designated philanthropic projects

This year the program project took a more ambitious path. With the increased quality of content, Rotary hoped to raise additional revenue, and make a larger contribution to the community. Committee members Rudy Hayek and Dan Alle met with then Fire Chief Roger Lowe to see if perhaps they could help fund equipment needs within the department. Chief Lowe stated the item they needed most at this time was "State of the Art" radios, in order to keep up to date with national standards that recently changed to accommodate a post 9/11 environment. The radios are Motorola's XTS 5000 Digital Portable Radio. Motorola's product literature describes it thus: The XTS 5000 Project 25 Digital Radio is the toughest and most interoperable portable radio Motorola makes. It assures seamless, high quality communication in a robust design that stands up to the most demanding environments. Designed specifically for law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical, military and federal agencies, the XTS 5000 digital portable radio is the preferred tool of life-saving professionals.

The increased quality provided by the new radios would allow SMFD to remain at the forefront of national technology. They were not planning on getting this equipment for another 3-5 years. Said Fire Chief Steve Heydorff "The gift of the Motorola XTS 5000 radios will be a great benefit to the fire department.

The fire department is deficient in the number of required radios it received from a federal grant we received two years ago. The addition of these radios will put a radio in each riding position on the fire apparatus. This will ensure the safety of our dedicated firefighters.”

So this year, as you savor the tri-tip sandwich in the park, or stroll down among the artisan booths on the Boulevard, or enjoy the harp or the dulcimer by the vine on the hillside, keep in mind that thanks to Rotary, and the Rotary directory that is making its debut at this year’s Wistaria Festival, the entire community is benefiting from this year’s event. There’s more to this festival than meets the eye.

The Sierra Madre Rotary Club is a service organization, chartered in 1997, which is part of the nation organization which boasts 1.2 million Rotarians belonging to some 31,000 Rotary clubs in 166 countries. Its motto is “Service Above Self.” Sierra Madre Rotary Club meets at Café 322 in Sierra Madre each Tuesday morning at 7:30am.