

# 3<sup>rd</sup> annual BBQ Bash to benefit new Kids Zone facility

By JAN CRANFILL  
Staff Writer

This coming Saturday will see the all day West Texas BBQ Bash back at the Ward County Arena for the third year with added events for all ages. A car show, bouncy houses for the kids, free food, free beer, free music is on

tap for the day.

This huge community event was actually an accidental creation according to George Bunker, the Bash organizer.

"During the 2020 Covid shutdown, my friend Colin McEllrath, and I was suffering from cabin fever so we went to get

tacos at the taco cafe in Pyote. The owner at the time asked us if we wanted to donate \$20 to help feed some of the elderly shut-ins so they could have something to eat," Bunker said.

"Well, that got Colin and I to

**See BBQ BASH, Pg. 9A**

## BBQ BASH — From Page 1A

thinking—we would set up a two person cook off between us and see if we could raise a few dollars to help with the elderly meals," he added.

Bunker and McEllrath decided to hold their small cook off at the Pyote Park, but this small cook off gained momentum. Other bar-b-quer's wanted to get in on the action. The two competitors, Bunker and McEllrath, grew into five competitors then 32 competitors.

Ward County Precinct 4 Commissioner Eddie Nelms said, "This event can't be held in the Pyote Park, all those people will walking around will destroy my sprinkler heads. But, I will find a place for you."

Nelms did just that — he set them up to use the newly finished Ward County Arena which was the first event held in the new arena.

But, the place to hold the event was just the first problem needing to be addressed. This was in 2020, the Covid lockdown was in full swing. Bunker and McEllrath had to obtain special permission to hold the event. They needed approval from two judges and permission from the governor's office. They were told they had to have written rules and guidelines for the public's safety. They wrote the rules and guidelines, submitted them to the State Health Department office, got approval and were told they better follow their rules.

"Once the rules were approved by the Health Department, the state could not say no to the event," Bunker said.

The first BBQ Bash was held

for high schools," Bunker said.

This year's event to be held this Saturday, October 15 is hoped to bring in \$20,000 which is pegged to be split half and half between the new Kids Zone project and the Monahans Volunteer Fire Department.

"The fire department will be donating their half of the raised money to the Kids Zone project fund," said Fire Chief Randy Crabtree. "It is important to get the Kids Zone completed for the kids of Monahans."

The West Texas BBQ Bash for this year, along with free food samples, free beer, free music, the car show, bouncy houses for the kids, raffle tickets for several firearms hopes to provide a day of fun and socializing for the community.

The 2022 BBQ Bash will officially kick off at the Ward County Arena gates opening at 11 a. m. for the general public.

The Desert Reflections Car Show will start move-in and registration at 9 a.m, continuing until 11 a. m when the gates open to the public. Participants can pay the \$30 registration fee the day of the show which will run from 11 a.m to 3 p.m with awards being announced at 3:30 p.m.

There are 33 food booths, for taste testing, entered in the competition this year. The public is encouraged to taste test and vote for their best choice. For the BBQ competition, the Cook Team entry fee is \$500 and consists of a Head Cook and up to five assistants. There are four competition categories: Beef Brisket, Pork Ribs, Chicken, Best appetizer which is picked as the Peoples Choice.

The first BBQ Bash was held on October 15, 2020 and was attended by approximately 5,200 socially oppressed Covid lockdown citizens.

"We put the event together to help people have some social interaction and to help feed senior shut-in's who had no way to go to the grocery store for food," he said.

The Bash raised \$10,000 for the non-profit event to donate to food for the cause.

The second BBQ Bash was held last year and had grown to include more entries vying for the best cook/food honor, along with free food, drinks and live bands entertaining the crowd. It brought in \$16,000 in donations.

A South Texas BBQ Bash held at Karnes City in April brought in \$30,000 for the Bash's recipients—which are youth organizations, EMS's, and scholarships.

The Bashes have raised over \$1million since the first Bash held in October 2020.

"We want to help young people learn to get involved in the community. We, ideally would like to teach the kids to be community ambassadors by helping get donations from businesses and help promote anti-violence programs

appetizer which is picked as the Peoples Choice.

Live music starts at 12:30 p.m with Clay Creek entertaining the crowd; next up at 2 p.m is Gonby 9; then Johnny Woods at 3:30 p.m; Casey Daniels Band at 5 p.m Caleb Young Band at 8 p.m; and Cody Hibbard at 9:30 p.m.

Raffle tickets can be purchased at the Merch Booth for a chance to win one of five firearms; a Henry Golden Boy 22 lever action rifle a 12 gauge Semi Automatic Girsan MC312; a Bear Creek Arsenal AR-15 Semi Automatic Rifle; a Bul Armory Compact 9mm Semi Automatic Pistol; or a M&P 13246 Shield Compact 9mm Semi Automatic Pistol.

The Bouncy Houses will be set up under the covered arena so the children can have their own fun.

A free beer wagon will be set up for the adults.

The new Kids Zone, which will be located across from the Parkway Elementary. The youth center will be an after school and summer facilities where students can safely spent time doing homework, receiving tutoring help for school subjects, participating in sports, or just hanging out in a supervised setting where healthy food and snacks will be readily available for the students.