

United Way Hamburger Luncheon gets big boost from Denso

By Lance Coleman

Wednesday, August 24, 2011

The Public Service Hamburger Luncheon is a traveling act now.

On Aug. 19, chair Tom Hatcher and about 60 volunteers took the luncheon to Denso where they grilled hamburgers for employees on all three shifts.

“We ended up with about 60 volunteers who helped us with our first ‘on the road’ hamburger luncheon,” said Hatcher. “Last year, we raised a little over \$12,000 at the community Public Service Hamburger Luncheon we have in September. We were looking at ways to make extra money for United Way when we were approached by Denso. We jumped at it. We don’t have the exact figures, but it looks like we’re going to clear about \$5,500 from the Denso lunch.”

Hatcher, who is Blount County Circuit Court Clerk, said the members of Public Service Hamburger Luncheon Committee were approached by a representative of Denso’s United Way committee, asking if they would be willing to do the lunch at Denso. The committee chair said Denso is remodeling their cafeteria and are using vendors to provide food for employees who want to eat in the cafeteria. The committee met and talked about it with Michelle Hankes, president and CEO of the United Way of Blount County, and decided to take the Hamburger Luncheon on the road to try to raise extra money for United Way, Hatcher said.

“We are so appreciative to Denso for giving us the opportunity,” Hatcher said. “We want to thank all the vendors who donated stuff to keep our expenses down and all the volunteers from public safety.”

Public safety sector employees came from the Alcoa Fire Department, Maryville Fire Department, Blount County Fire Department, Blount County Rescue Squad, Maryville Police Department, Blount County Sheriff’s Office and the Circuit Court Clerk’s Office.

Hatcher said Denso promoted the event among its employees. Employees could come eat during their lunch times. Putting on the event wasn’t for the faint of heart, however, Hatcher said.

“It was tough. We fed third shift from 2 to 4 a.m. on Friday, so some started work at 11:30 the night before. Actually, we started at 5 p.m. getting preparations ready,” he said. “About a dozen or so of us were up about 24 hours.”

The community hamburger luncheon at First Baptist Church of Maryville is Wednesday, Sept. 21. "If we have the turnout at the September hamburger luncheon we usually have, we are going to be able to bust that \$12,000 goal wide open."

Hatcher said this new opportunity opened up a way for the Public Service Hamburger Luncheon committee to generate more money for United Way each year.

"I can tell you we've already talked to another company and are going to do this next year," he said. "We're going to try to keep the Hamburger Show on the road year after year."



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