

NEWS

MI New Favorite Snack competition coming to Port Huron

Winner to receive \$30K, distribution contract with All Star Services Inc.



A statewide snack competition, MI New Favorite Snack, launched March 23 and is requesting applicants. (Courtesy of MI New Favorite Snack/Facebook)

By **EMILY PAULING** | epauling@medianewsgroup.com | The Voice
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New and emerging small snack food businesses in Michigan will be able to compete for \$50,000 in cash prizes this September in Port Huron.

A statewide snack competition, MI New Favorite Snack, launched March 23 and is requesting applicants. The competition is being billed as the biggest snack food contest in America, a recent press release from the Community Foundation of St. Clair County states.

The deadline for entries is Aug. 1 and the cost to enter is \$100. The winner will receive a top prize of \$30,000 and a distribution contract with All Star Services Inc., which is a food and beverage service provider throughout Michigan that is based in Port Huron. The second and third prizes are \$15,000 and \$5,000 respectively.

The concept of the competition was developed by the Community Foundation of St. Clair County, the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce and All Star Services Inc., said Keely Baribeau of Steady Keel Communications.

“The growth of new small craft and niche snack food companies in Michigan is exciting,” All Star Services Inc. President and COO Duncan Smith said in the release. “All Star Services is a growing small business and we want to help bring more focus to the growing segment of snack food companies in Michigan.”

“I don’t think there’s anything like this in America today,” Smith added.

To be eligible for participation, companies must carry appropriate licensing and insurance, be headquartered in Michigan, have no more than 10 employees at the time of entry and have appropriately packaged product available for consumer purchase.

The judges at All Star Services will narrow the statewide field of submission to select a number of finalists that will present their snacks along the shores of the St. Clair River at Vantage Point in Port Huron on Sept. 17, and the top snack selected that day will be MI New Favorite Snack.

Baribeau said that organizers hope to have at least 15 to 20 finalists present at the event. She noted that the public will have an impact on the voting, as well as industry experts and guest voters.



“The scenery is stunning along the St. Clair River and the public will have a chance to sample the snacks,” she said. “It’s going to be a great family friendly event. This is the biggest event of its kind in the country and we plan to make next year’s event even bigger in terms of prize money. This is the type of opportunity that could really change the trajectory of a small business. It’s not too grand to say that someone’s life may be changed on Sept. 17.”

The cash prizes are being provided by the Community Foundation of St. Clair County and the James C. Acheson donor advised fund.

“Small businesses are the backbone of small towns throughout Michigan,” Community Foundation Board Chairman Hale Walker said in the release. “Our Community Foundation values these emerging entrepreneurs in the food industry from Michigan’s Thumb region all the way up to Houghton and Hancock.”

Brad Cocklin, founder of Chunk Nibbles in Troy, was the first to register for the event.

“This type of cash prize would be a game changer for our small business,” he said in the release. “Not only would the prize allow us to weather the supply chain crisis storm, but it would allow us increased marketing efforts to further our brand awareness and bring our products to the attention of a larger group of buyers.”

The competition registration page for the competition is hosted by the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce, which is managing the logistics of the event.

“Michigan has such a rich history in agriculture, food and produce, and this contest will bring special attention to those small, new and emerging entrepreneurs,” Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce President Thelma Castillo said in the release.

For more information, visit bluewaterchamber.com or facebook.com/minewfavoritesnack.



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