

# Welcome!

The tents are up, and over 800 volunteers are ready to provide your families with an unforgettable eight days of family fun. The large contingent of volunteers makes this festival unique among all other festivals. And thanks to our corporate sponsors more than 80% of our events continue to be free to the public.

As you prepare your schedule of events and activities to see and do, consider our weekend Air Shows, children and senior events, or one of our three downtown Traverse City Parades. There's a full roster of Competitive and Sporting events, and to entice your taste buds there's a full compliment of cherry cuisine events.

Stop by and visit our cherry farm market to sample or purchase cherry products being sold by our local farmers including that little red fruit, the cherry, that put Traverse City on the World map. The Festival food court provides a good respite for the festival attendee. It's a place to relax and enjoy delicacies from our local restaurateurs.

Whether it's meeting friends at the Festival Open Space or participating in an all-time favorite event, our residents, volunteers and visitors all find something special along the shores of Grand Traverse Bay.

Ed Nadeau  
National Cherry Festival President



Dear Friends, Welcome to Michigan!

As Governor of the State of Michigan, it gives me great pleasure to invite visitors to the 79th National Cherry Festival and to Traverse City, the Cherry Capital of the World!

The National Cherry Festival is a fun-filled, family event that celebrates the rich history of the cherry industry in the Grand Traverse region – the nation's largest exporter of tart cherries.

While you are here, we hope that you and your family will take time to explore and enjoy the scenic beauty of Northern Michigan. In Traverse City, you will find all the amenities of a metropolitan area, packaged in a small town America atmosphere.

Enjoy your stay in the heart of cherry Country.

Governor Jennifer Granholm



## Cooperative teamwork makes National Cherry Festival a success

**BY GARRET ELLISON & LINDSAY VANHULLE**  
Record-Eagle staff writers

It takes a lot of cooperation to make the National Cherry Festival run smoothly — from the distribution of cherry pies to the sorting of waste.

The festival has developed several partnerships with area businesses over the years, such as Sara Lee Bakery and Waste Management of Michigan Inc., that provide important services to festivalgoers.

"The festival obviously tries to do business with other businesses in the Grand Traverse area first and foremost, so that the money we spend to produce the event stays here in the community," Cherry Festival executive director Tom Kern said. "It allows us to enhance the programming that we do. The festival we put on for the community is better because the businesses have a vested interest in it."

Waste Management of Michigan Inc., for example, has worked with the festival over the years to provide a garbage and recycling program, said Laurel Durkin, director of community and municipal relations for the company.

A former plan was cut last year to save money, and provided recycling for cardboard only.

"This year's program will include recycling for clear plastic bottles and returnables for festivalgoers. Bins will be in place for trash. Vendors also will have cardboard and tin can recycling," Kern said.

"To make sure waste collection runs according to plan, the company puts either a truck or a compactor at the festival and picks up recycling as it fills," Durkin said. Several Waste Management volunteers operate equipment and collect materials at the festival.

"We totally support the Cherry Festival," she said. "We think it's a great event and we're glad to be a partner in this. The festival is in a beautiful area, and the environment is so important up here."

The area seems even more beautiful this year, as the Bay vista has opened up since the removal of the power plant just west of the Open Space Park. While the status of that project will result in some temporary logistical challenges for the Festival, it also provided an opportunity for the folks at Perfect Fence Company to jump in and volunteer to help with some last minute security fencing to help enhance the production of the event and provide a secure atmosphere for volunteers and guests.

During Festival week, the Fifth Third Bank of Northern Michigan employee parking lot becomes the home of the Arnold Amusements midway park, and the Union Street bank drive-through is closed.

"The bank has been donating its facilities for nearly 20 years," said John Pelizzari, president of Fifth Third Bank of Northern Michigan.

Pelizzari is a native of the area, and grew up on a cherry farm. He said he thinks it's a good

business decision to help out the festival.

"Our bank is highly dependent on the success of the community," he said. "And the Cherry Festival needs that parking lot — historically, it's always been in that spot."

In the past, bank employees have volunteered in the festival, and every year the bank sponsors the Children's Fishing Pond.

"It's our way of trying to be a good community citizen," Pelizzari said.

For the edible part of the festivities, all the cherry pies that are distributed, displayed and consumed during the week come from one place — Sara Lee Bakery.

"The bakery uses millions of tons of locally grown cherries each year in the manufacture of the pies," said Randy Tucker, plant manager at the Traverse City facility.

"For the past five years, we have continued to invest in the Cherry Festival as a corporate citizen," Tucker said. "We do it simply to say thanks to the community for letting our employees live and work here."

During the week, the plant shuts down operation so its employees can take the time off to enjoy the festival with their families, he said.

As the sponsor of the children's events, Big Boy Restaurants and Bakeries aims to enhance the festival for children, said Mark Hamlyn, owner of the Big Boy restaurant in Traverse City.

"We're a family-style restaurant," Hamlyn said. "We've always felt like we're part of this community, and this is a way to give back to the community."

The Traverse City restaurant collects the toys it gives with kids' meals and donates them as prizes for the events, he said.

"We want to make sure that any kid who does any event has something to take home," Hamlyn said.

He said the festival works with the community to find out what events it could hold to draw more people in.

"They really try to look at the families in the area, and the young people in the area, and see how they can serve them," Hamlyn said. "(Children's events are) a nice fit for us, and I think we're all pretty partial to kids."

As the days wind down to the start of the Cherry Festival, Outback Steakhouse of Traverse City puts on a special dinner for all the festival ambassadors. For about five years, the steakhouse has provided all the food and service for the dinner, said Shawn Foress, managing partner of the restaurant.

"It's really fun to do a top-notch, classy event," Foress said. "You can tell that they're all excited."

The dinner is made up of various menus, mostly steak or chicken. Restaurant employees have to make enough food for about 650 people — including side dishes, salads and beverages, he said. The dinner is served fresh at the Open Space.

"The Cherry Festival is such a great local organization," Foress said. "I'm new to Traverse City within the last few years, and it's impressive to see how everyone's involved."