

Hot Enough to Fry an Egg on the Sidewalk

By Stacy Brandt

OATMAN – People often quip that it's hot enough to fry eggs on the sidewalk, but how many have actually tried?

About 25 teams did just that Sunday at the 14th annual sidewalk egg-frying contest in Oatman. About 200 people crowded the small sidewalk to watch the event.

"The turnout was eggs-traordinarily good," said Fred Eck, co-chairman of the Oatman Chamber of Commerce.

First, second and third place prizes were given out for the most edible-looking eggs as well as for showmanship, youngest contestant and farthest travel.

Pam Springsteen and Stephanie Olsen grabbed the first place award. Olsen also received farthest travel, as she recently moved to the area from Denmark.

"I like being first," Olsen joked.

Springsteen said she has participated in the event for eight years. This was her second year with the same cooking apparatus, which earned her second prize last year. She said she enjoys the contest because it promotes community involvement.

"It brings family and friends together," she explained.

Mary Gonzales and Paula James won second place for the Colorado River Medical

Complex. Gonzales said she has been watching the contest for nearly 15 years, but this is the first year she has competed. She said she expects to compete again.

Third place was awarded to Chris and Autumn Bryan. Chris watched the slowly cooking eggs through a welding helmet.

The youngest participant was 5-year-old Elliot Murphy, who helped his mom, Donna cook eggs with magnifying glasses and mirrors.

"Now we can perfect it," she said of their solar cooking apparatus.

The contest was first held in Oatman in 1990, but the story of it's creation goes back even further, according to Eck

Eck said he was contacted in 1983 about an egg frying competition between Bullhead City and Blythe, Calif. Blythe won the contest by about 15 minutes, he said.

In 1987, USA Today contacted Eck about reenacting the contest and put a photograph on the front page. The picture generated so much publicity, Eck said, that he suggested revamping the competition in Oatman. The event has grown over the years to attract international interest. Eck said it has been successful for the community, because it draws large crowds without a big investment.

"With the budget we have, we're able to really have people enjoy themselves immensely without spending an overwhelming amount of money," he said.