

For Immediate Release

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Local Ventura, California Resident wins Top Prize in National Recipe Contest

Baton Rouge, La. – The Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission, along with *Louisiana Cookin'* magazine, have announced the conclusion of the fourth annual Sweet Rewards Recipe Contest for Canned Sweet Potatoes, naming five first-place winning recipes and one grand-prize winner.

Renee Pokorny, from Ventura, California, was the overall grand-prize winner. Pokorny won the competition and received \$1,000 for her *Zydeco Sweet Potato Crab Chowder* recipe.

This year, there were over 665 entries from 46 states nationwide. Entries were grouped into five categories: breads and breakfasts, soups, sides, desserts, and professional, a new category added to this year's competition for professional chefs. Twenty-six students from the Culinary Arts program at Delgado Community College in New Orleans prepared the final recipes for judging.

Judges for the competition in each category were René Simon, executive assistant to the Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry; Holly Clegg, cookbook author and national spokesperson for the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission; Mark Fields, president of the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission; Mary Ann Fitzmorris, writer and food editor for *Louisiana Cookin'* Magazine; Tony Zeringue, corporate chef for Bruce Foods Corporation; Christine Briede, president of Loubat Equipment Co. Foodservice Equipment; Tommy Simmons, food editor of *The Baton Rouge Advocate*; Matthew Murphy, executive chef of the Ritz-Carlton Hotels of New Orleans; Craig Cuccia, executive director of Café Reconcile in New Orleans; and Ben Thibodeaux, chef de cuisine at the Palace Café in New Orleans. The judging was coordinated by Dr. Mary Bartholomew, director of culinary arts and hospitality management at Delgado.

The judges assigned a first, second and third place winner from each category, as well as an overall grand-prize winner. The winning recipes were decided based on overall flavor, texture, visual appeal and creativity.

Louisiana Cookin' magazine featured the winners' names and recipes in its October issue and posted the winning recipes on their website. Recipes are also posted in the recipe section on the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission's website.

The Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission is the main sponsor for the 2009 Sweet Rewards Recipe contest. Their mission is to promote the consumption of Louisiana sweet potatoes by educating consumers on the yam's many nutritional attributes and its amazing versatility in popular, delicious recipes. Bruce Foods, Allen Canning, the Culinary Arts Department at Delgado Community College and nomenu.com also sponsored this year's contest.

The next Sweet Rewards Recipe Contest for Canned Sweet Potatoes will begin in January 2009. Contest information, free recipes and nutritional information about sweet potatoes are available on the commission's website at www.sweetpotato.org.

OVERALL GRAND-PRIZE RECIPE

Zydeco Sweet Potato Crab Chowder:

Makes 6 servings

2 pieces bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
4 ounces andouille, ground or chopped
(approximately two 4-inch links of andouille)
1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
1/3 chopped shallots
1/4 cup chopped celery
1 tablespoon minced jalapeno, seeded
1 15-ounce can cream-styled sweet corn
2 15-ounce cans low-sodium chicken broth
1/2 teaspoon Creole seasoning
1/2 teaspoon fresh cracked black pepper
2 cups, drained and diced Louisiana sweet potatoes in light syrup
1 cup whole milk
8 ounces cooked lump crabmeat
2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley, in all

Cook the bacon in a large stockpot over medium heat until it begins to crisp. Remove bacon. Add the andouille. Sauté for about 3 minutes or until the andouille is crispy.

Remove two tablespoons of the andouille and set aside for garnish. Add the bacon along with the red bell pepper, shallots, celery and jalapeño. Sauté for about 5 minutes or until fragrant and vegetables are tender.

Add the cream corn, chicken broth, Creole seasoning and black pepper and simmer uncovered for 10 minutes. Next add in the sweet potatoes, stir to incorporate and let simmer 5 minutes, then add in all but 2 tablespoons of the crabmeat and milk and let simmer another 5 minutes or until mixture is heated through.

Stir in 1 tablespoon of parsley. Adjust seasoning if necessary. In a small bowl toss the remaining parsley, crab and andouille together and use as garnish.

Ladle into bread bowl, individual bowls or a soup tureen. Garnish with the reserved andouille/crab mixture. Allow guests to use hot sauce as desired.

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