



CHIEFTAIN PHOTOS/CHRIS MCLEAN

East High School catering and DECA marketing students show off some of the burgers designed for the Burger Shootout at the Gold Dust Saloon on Thursday. Above (from left) are Mariah Sisneros, Kora Griffith, Mark Vivoda, Amelia Flores, Savannah Cassares and Holly Trujillo.

**EDUCATION**

# A meaty roundup

## East burger competition a juicy hit

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THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

**A**s far as a final exam goes, this one was juicy, spicy, cheesy, tasty and innovative.

On Thursday, the Gold Dust Saloon hosted the first-ever East High School Burger Shootout — the final step in an innovative competition that saw catering and DECA marketing students build and promote, respectively, a specialty hamburger dish.

From a field of 20 burgers and accompanying marketing plans submitted as part of a semester final, three finalists

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The Lasso Burger, featuring waffle fries, Thousand Island dressing and an Anaheim pepper, was chosen the winner of the Burger Shootout.



Carol and Andy Meneghini sample the fare at the Burger Shootout at the Gold Dust Saloon.

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were selected:

z The Outlaw, a bacon burger with all the fixings that's so good it should be illegal!

z The Lasso Burger, a quarter-pounder with bacon, Anaheim peppers, waffle fries inside and Thousand Island dressing on the side. The hook? You won't need a side because we've already lassoed in the fries!

z Horseshoe Cheese Burger, unique in that the cheese is cooked into a patty also topped with cheese. Only for those feeling lucky.

In addition to input from a team of judges, the eventual winner was selected based on sales from a steady flow of patrons of all ages. Some of the diners selected their burger based on its name or ingredients. Others were swayed by the slogan or were charmed by a last-minute, table-side pitch by the more savvy of the marketers.

Who realized, of course, that sometimes the hook—Where's the Beef?, Have it your way, etc—is more important than the cook.

Our burger contains waffle fries, said Holly Trujillo, a marketer with Team Lasso. And

the other unique thing is that our burger is the only one with a chile of some sort on it—roasted Anaheim peppers, which no one else has.

And we know how much people in Pueblo appreciate chile. That's why we feel our burger is best.

As the diners dug into their respective choices, one early review commented that Holly wasn't just blowing hot air.

It's pretty amazing, said Dalton Sprouse, D60's director of communication, as he worked through a Lasso Burger. I picked this because it had the waffle fries inside the bun plus the green chile.

I mean, this is really, really good. I hope that they add this to the menu here.

As it turned out, Sprouse's taste buds proved to be an accurate foreteller of things to come, because in the eyes, and mouths, of both judges and ticket buyers, the Lasso Burger simply hogtied the competition.

I feel we took a big risk with the Anaheim peppers and the Thousand Island dressing, said Nelisa Palma, one of the Lasso Burger's

creators. Especially the Anaheim peppers. Everybody would expect Pueblo Chile, so we took a risk and chose something different, something new.

It was all about connecting with the people, added promoter Jacob Shamohammadi. Making sure they knew the name Lasso Burger as soon as they walked in.

And then I went table to table to explain what our burger was all about.

The competition was the brainchild of Mike Patti, an East DECA marketing instructor who realizes that coming up with the next big thing is sometimes only half the battle.

Every year the catering class does a hamburger contest for their annual, Patti explained. And every year I do some sort of a promotional mix for my annual. So this year we combined it.

The catering students created a burger and then met with my students to come up with the name and some unique selling proposition, as well as the marketing.

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