



Janet Simons

SIMONS: Local food firms win heated competition

October 24, 2007

The results are in from the recent **Fiery Food Challenge**, sponsored by *Chili Pepper* magazine. Two metro-area food makers took home coveted Golden Chile first-place awards from the competition in Fort Worth, Texas.

This is the 17th Golden Chile for Aurora's Two Hot Chili Peppers and the sixth for its **Green Chili Stew Mix**, which took gold in the soup/ stew cook-off category last year, too. Find products from Two Hot Chili Peppers, \$3.50 to \$7.50, at gift and specialty food stores throughout Colorado or direct from twohotchilipeppers.net or 303-367-5952.

Habanero Hot Bloody Mary Mix from Denver-based Freshies Food Corp. took first in the Bloody Mary category in its first Fiery Food Challenge outing since the same product won a Golden Chile in 2001. Freshies, which was started in Telluride in 1994, uses locally grown chiles, dill, onions, celery, garlic, horseradish, mint and parsley in its juice-based mixes. The all-natural, nonalcoholic cocktail mixes sell for \$6 to \$8 per 32-ounce bottle at liquor stores locally and online at freshies.com.

Black Label spicy barbecue sauce, new from Grumpy's Foods of Thornton, grumpysbbq.com, took third place in the Chile Specific barbecue sauce category. And one of our neighbors to the north, Chugwater Chili of Chugwater, Wyo., chugwaterchili.com, took three awards: a Golden Chile in the chili con carne cook-off category for its **Gourmet Chili Blend**, a second place in the dip/salsa cook-off category for its **Dip & Dressing Mix** and a second place in the people's preference category.

For more information, go to zestfest2007.com.

Bean soup mixes from the Women's Bean Project have just arrived at Safeway stores throughout the metro area.

The gourmet mixes, with beans attractively layered in plastic tubes tied with bows, are prepared and packaged by women with histories of chronic poverty and unemployment. Since 1989, the Denver program has offered them job-hunting skills, training and a hand up.

Sales and marketing director Geoff Lucas says the increased distribution should enable the Bean Project to expand its reach.

"Each year the Women's Bean Project has to turn away two-thirds of the women who apply for help," Lucas said. "This new partnership might make it possible to add a significant number of new members."

Women's Bean Project products also are sold at King Soopers and City Market stores, Whole Foods, various gourmet grocers and gift shops and online at www.womensbeanproject.com and amazon.com.

Have a tip on a new food product or grocery trend? Contact Janet Simons at simonsj@RockyMountainNews.com, 303-954-2547.