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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Lift your glass in celebration of the region's culinary and artistic traditions Oct. 17, 18**

*Inaugural Southern Arizona Food, Art and Wine Festival to feature live music, cooking demonstrations, children's activities, tamale-eating contest, and more*

Oct. 5, 2009—The Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance (SAACA) expects thousands to flock to Rillito Raceway Park, 4502 N. First Ave., to take part in the inaugural Southern Arizona Food, Art and Wine Festival.

The two-day event will feature live music, a variety of culinary-themed contests, family activities, wine and beer tastings and much more. Admission costs \$5 per person. Children 10 and younger get in for free.

The El Charro Tamale Eating Championships are sure to be a highlight of the festival's Oct. 17 schedule. Competitors will try to eat as many tamales as they can in the span of five minutes. The winner will receive a \$500 El Charro gift card.

The festival's Saturday, Oct. 17 schedule also includes a performance by the Blues group The Brian Dean Trio, an ice-carving competition and a live radio broadcast of the University of Arizona/Stanford football game (with a keg toss and obstacle course run during halftime).

On Sunday, Oct. 18, festival-goers can take in a fruit- and vegetable-carving contest or catch the Southern Arizona Pizza Games. Area pizza pros will compete in a variety of categories, including acrobatics, a dough stretch, pizza box folding and pie spinning. Musical performances by the Larry Redhouse Trio and drummer Chip Ritter round out the day's events.

Throughout the two-day event, folks can learn about wine-and-cheese pairings, take part in tastings and attend lectures by local sommeliers.

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## **Food, Art and Wine Festival (continued)**

The festival also will feature a salsa competition, open to the first 10 registrants.

The event will include children and family activities and events, including a pumpkin patch, face painting, balloon animals, inflatable jumping castles and various art activities. Scores of vendors will sell art and jewelry as well.

*For more information about the Southern Arizona Food, Art and Wine Festival, go online to [www.southernazfestivals.org](http://www.southernazfestivals.org). To participate in any of the contests or to sign up for individual lectures or other events, please call SAACA at (520) 797-3959. Salsa contest entrants are eligible for free admission.*

### **About the Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance**

The Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance (SAACA) exists to ensure that, through engagement in arts and culture, our communities produce strong, inspired citizens. SAACA enlists artists, businesses, governments, and individuals to expand artistic and cultural opportunities in their respective communities. To enhance access to the arts and to promote cultural awareness in the communities it serves, SAACA presents large-scale festivals, events and other programs. The alliance also promotes educational opportunities in the arts and culture for both the young and the old.

### **Organization History**

The Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance (SAACA) grew out of the Greater Oro Valley Arts Council (GOVAC), an organization established in 1997 to provide artistic and cultural opportunities for residents of northwest Tucson. GOVAC eventually became one of the largest arts organizations in the region. In 2009, owing to its success, the group expanded its mission to include creation of partnerships with business, governments, and communities throughout Southern Arizona that would encourage innovative, creative cultural expression in the arts for years to come.

*For more information about the Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance, go online to [www.saaca.org](http://www.saaca.org).*

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