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FOR RELEASE:

NATIONAL HAMBURGER FESTIVAL DRAWS TOP-RANKED MAJOR LEAGUE EATERS TO AKRON

*100-Pound Sonya “The Black Widow” Thomas To
Challenge Reigning Champ, Akron Firefighter Matt Askea*

Sonya “The Black Widow” Thomas—at 100 pounds, the fourth-ranked eater and #1 female eater in the world—will descend upon the National Hamburger-Eating Championship at the Seventh Annual National Hamburger Festival in Akron, OH, to challenge reigning title-holder Matt Askea. For Askea, an Akron firefighter who faces danger on a routine basis, the August 19 showdown presents his toughest challenge yet.

Askea ate 11 burgers in five minutes last year to earn the title of National Hamburger-Eating Champion. However, this year the National Hamburger-Eating Championship is open to amateurs and Major League Eaters, meaning Askea will face increased competition from a host of professional eaters, including Thomas, who has eaten 45 hot dogs and buns in 10 minutes and 183 chicken wings in 12 minutes.

“If Askea loses, his shame will be fertile ground for the seeds of self-doubt and recrimination,” said Major League Eating Chair George Shea, who will host the contest. “This is about more than money or titles. With Sonya Thomas headed to the National Hamburger-Eating Championship, Askea’s honor is at stake.”

Thomas is the reigning Women’s July Fourth Hot Dog Eating Champion and five-time U.S. Buffalo Wing Eating Champion. She also is the jambalaya-, soft taco-, oyster-, crab cake-, cheesecake- hard boiled egg- and toasted ravioli-eating champion of the world.

The 10-minute, all-you-can-eat contest will take place at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 19, with a total prize purse of \$1,500. Registration is currently open at www.ifoce.com/contests. All competitors must be 18 years or older, and amateurs are welcome. On Saturday, August 18, at 6:30 p.m., Thomas will compete against a field of local media in a preview event.

The two-day National Hamburger Festival, now in its seventh year, will occur Saturday, August 18 and Sunday, August 19 in historic Lock 3 Park in downtown Akron. More than 140,000 hamburger fans have enjoyed family fun, great entertainment and one of the largest assortments of hamburgers ever assembled in one place. Over 20 different eateries will be serving 50 different styles of burgers. The festival raises money each year for one of Akron’s favorite charities, the Akron Children’s Hospital. For more information, visit www.hamburgerfestival.com

The National Hamburger Festival is the brainchild of Drew Cerza President/CEO of the Just Wing It Productions located in New York. As founder of the National Chicken Wing Festival, and

the Road to Buffalo Tour, Cerza has a history of successful event management across the country.

Major League Eating (MLE) is the world governing body of all stomach-centric sports and conducts more than 80 events annually, including the Nathan's Famous Fourth of July International Hot Dog Eating Contest in Coney Island, N.Y. For more information visit www.MajorLeagueEating.com, www.facebook.com/eatfast, www.twitter.com/eatingcontest.

Event Info:

What: National Hamburger Festival
When: Saturday, August 18th from noon to 11pm
Sunday, August 19th from noon to 7pm

What: Sonya Thomas vs. Media competitive eating
When: Saturday, August 18th at 6:30pm

What: National Hamburger Eating Championship
When: Sunday, August 19th at 3:30pm

Location: The National Hamburger Festival
Lock 3 Park
200 S Main St.
Akron, OH 44308

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