

# Housing authority holds inaugural chili challenge

By KENDRA LOLIO

klolio@ricentral.com

WEST WARWICK — Residents and staff with the West Warwick Housing Authority decided to kick up the heat Wednesday afternoon with their first inaugural chili challenge. Executive director Stephen O'Rourke says he hopes to make the event an annual tradition in West Warwick.

Seven contestants came prepared with crockpots full of different types of chili to sample. A table was set up with all the proper accoutrements - cornbread, sour cream, chopped scallions, shredded cheese, crackers and other toppings.

Some chilis were mild while others offered a big, satisfying kick, but each recipe had its own secret ingredients that distinguished it from the rest.

Guest judges included Thomas Zampa, Chairman of the WWHA Board, Providence Journal Editorial Board Member David Brussat and WPRI's Meteorologist T. J. Del Santo, who were asked to rate the dishes based on color, aroma, texture, heat and flavor.

WWHA resident Jean Campbell has been making her chili recipe for years, she said. A standout in the group, her dish included venison in place of the traditional beef or turkey, as well as plenty



Photo by Kendra Lolio

**Jackie Rajotte puts out samples of her turkey chili with no added salt and cannellini and red kidney beans.**

of onions, celery and stewed tomatoes.

Fellow resident Jack Bridgmon calls his chili 'mid-west style.'

"I've been making it since I was a kid," he said. "I just started throwing things together until I got it right. I never found anybody who didn't like it."

When asked what the secret to his recipe is, Bridgmon replied, "If I told you the secret it wouldn't be a secret anymore."

He competed against his wife, Debbie Bridgmon, who is also the

**See CHILI page A3**