

Wrap Up Report:

Ice Fest 2026, Saturday, February 7, 2026

10am – 4pm

Chilly Chili Cook-Off Competition – Noon – 3:30pm for sampling, votes in by 3:30pm, awards at 4 pm.

Weather: Sunny, -21 wind chill in morning (weather alert), high of 17 degrees, low of 2 degrees

Ice Sculptures (single block) Sponsors:

Broadway Embroidery, Caruso Chiropractic, DDA – 2 blocks, Hanson’s, Lake Orion Review, and Michigan Credit Union

Ice Sculpture (two block) Sponsors:

Bitter Tom’s Distillery

Ice Sculpture Live Carving Demos Sponsors:

Mocerri Companies (Mystic Cove) – three block carving
Meijer – two block carving

Media Sponsors:

Ad-Rite (billboard on M24), Lake Orion Review, and ONTV

Business Bingo Participants (15):

Amazing Petals & Gifts, Bitter Tom’s Distillery, Boutique Chic, Custom Builders Flooring, Ed’s Broadway Gift & Costume, Green Hippo Gifts, Hanson’s, Heritage Spinning & Weaving, Lake Orion Bike & Adventure Co., Lo’s Beauty Bar, Lucky’s Natural Foods, Messy Designs, Primetime Sports Cards, Roses of Silverbell, and Twice Blessed

Jack Frost Scavenger Hunt for Kids:

Poster located at Lucky’s Natural Foods

Chilly Chili Cook-Off Competition Participants:

Bitter Tom’s Distillery, Irish Tavern, Johnny Black’s Lakehouse, Rise Lounge, Sagebrush Cantina, Sick Town Hall, The Mess Hall @ American Legion, and Waterside Social @ Wine Social.

WINNERS:

1st: Irish Tavern

2nd: Rise Lounge

3rd: Bitter Tom's Distillery

Congratulations to our Winners! Thank you to Wine Social for hosting the awards.

Volunteer Support:

There were 60 volunteer spots for this event. Almost all the spots were filled. Majority were with filled with LOHS students. We had two photographers onsite – one Noon to 2 pm (an LOHS student), and another from 2 pm – 4 pm. Thank you to all of our volunteers for braving the cold and being such a positive energy for the event. We thank those volunteers who also helped distribute flyers prior to the event and those that supported event activity efforts.

Flint St. Alley – Ice Golf Hole #12/DDA Info Booth/Warming Hub:

The cold and ice in the alley made setup challenging but it lent itself to an interesting Hole #12 activity. The DDA Booth was placed in the alley, along with a propane floor heater. A few fire pits and a patio heater were placed around the Flint St. Alley for folks to warm up by.

Media Coverage:

Ad-Rite (M24 billboard), ONTV (pre/during/post event coverage and 2x during interview coverage), Lake Orion Review (ad, article), Oakland County Moms, Macaroni KID, Oakland Press (and Ice Fest photo used for their Facebook events post), Oakland County Times, CandGnews.com, allevents.in, Little Guide Detroit, Live in the D Segment and online (WDIV), and Dine in the D with Sick Town Hall event mention (WDIV). Fox 2 called letting us know they would like to send a reporter out to the event. Someone mentioned hearing the event mentioned on radio.

Initial Comments/Feedback:

“Ice Fest seemed like a success. My daughter said sales were good considering the cold weather. She did say not very many participants in bingo but those that were liked it. She suggested to do every Saturday in February to entice people out of their house and come downtown.” – L.C., Downtown Lake Orion Business Owner

“We had the most visitors of any downtown event ever. Thought you'd like to know that!” – J.S., Downtown Lake Orion Business Owner

“Consider including celebrity chefs for next year’s Chilly Chili Cook-Off. They can even be local like police and fire chief, long-time residents, etc.” – J.P., Downtown Lake Orion Chef

Ice Fest Survey:

An Ice Fest post-event survey link went out via email, e-newsletter to businesses, and via the Downtown Business Owners private Facebook group. We have 7 received responses so far and will continue to collect those results. This information will be provided to the Promotions Committee for event review and will also be provided to the DDA board once complete.

Successes/Challenges:

If we keep same event format, a volunteer coordinator for the Information Booth and a volunteer coordinator for the Chilly Chili Cook-Off would be helpful. It would be recommended to have a volunteer meeting prior to the event to instruct on tasks and answer questions to all volunteers.

Cone off one parking spot for ice carver per live demo area. Worked out this year but need to add to Special Event Application.

Drop off materials mid-week for Bingo and Chilly Chili Cook-Off.

Open chili tickets two months out. Close sponsorships one month out.

Review sponsorship levels for more funding opportunities.

900-pound group of ice blocks fell – luckily a golf group help to upright as it was one of our live carving demos. Thank you!

Assign volunteers for tabulation for chili awards.

Six cement blocks per sculpture – create a-frames or yard-signs for live carving demos.