Thanksgiving week seemed a perfect time to pen the last issue of Food For Thought for 2013. Enough time has passed for many to now merely bask in the fond remembrances of the inaugural Jamboree at The Summit. For others of us who worked so long on dreaming its concepts and planning its achievement, these past couple of months have been substantially a ‘no Jamboree work hiatus’ which is a welcomed respite from the daily efforts throughout the first half of 2013. Most of all Thanksgiving is the quintessential time to send thanks to all of you who were on our staff.

Now let’s look for a minute at some stats because with the leisure of retrospect they are quite amazing. The Food Team had just over 300 people on it – that is all. Collectively we represented 42 out of the 50 United States. We worked in just three principle areas – feeding the participant youth and leaders, feeding the staff and retail food sales. Though there were many sub-components of the Food Team, if you consider your job you should easily be able to say you were working in one of those three types of food service. Many of us crossed over and helped in multiple areas but to feed tens of thousands of people was a grand accomplishment for our little staff.

We often heard that the Jamboree tent city was the second largest city in the state of West Virginia during the event. I mentioned feeding tens of thousands and thought you might like to hear of some ‘final numbers’ that were circulated after the event with breakdown by areas. There were 30,037 participants (scouts and venturers, including all their unit leaders). There were 6,224 staff counting those who attended the full time as well as those who came for either of the half sessions. There were 12,192 visitors to the Jamboree. Last but certainly not least there were countless friendships made and even more lifetime memories lodged.

The Food Team fed everyone and some of the data about food consumption we also figured worthy of a bit of calculation to share, shall I say for the fun of it. We served 44,981,904 corn flakes to the participants. Yes, that’s an individual flake calculation based on a YouTube production of how many individual flakes are in a box and we extrapolated our order amount. There were only 38,520,645 cheerios distributed and we have no clue how many kernels of rice crispy cereal because no one seems to have bothered counting that and we certainly weren’t going to do so. To top off that cereal we served 14,292 gallons of milk.

Turning to lunch, there were 75 unique items that were served during the Jamboree in building the Summit2Go lunches. The Jamboree Food Team distributed to participants and staff a total of 54,918 cases of these products so that everyone could pack what they wished, and leave what they didn’t. The Mountaineer Food Bank was thankful for those leftovers and used them in many ways but one of particular interest was the following: “Many of the donated foods will benefit another program, our Back Pack Program. There are currently 50 sites in West Virginia that provide small packages of food to elementary age children for weekends and holiday breaks. The food types used by the Scouts is exactly the food so badly needed for this program and will help thousands of children make it through the weekend.”
Let’s turn to dinner now. An amazing 6.79 miles would be the length of the 71,700 hot dogs served if laid end to end. To top those franks we ordered a total of 14,296 bottles of ketchup, mustard and relish. To boot it took 23,884 pounds of potato salad and coleslaw to accompany. Beef stew was simpler to deliver – 2,394 cans (#10 cans) which at 6.75 pounds per can which equals 16,160 pounds of stew. Salad is another interesting area. We served 15,940 pounds of lettuce which was topped with $19,831 worth of ranch dressing. Speaking of a financial you also might find interesting, it surely was a party with cake for all on Saturday night. The Jamboree all occasion sheet cakes cost just under $50,000 to feed just over 36,000 of us and doing the math that’s about $1.39 per person for the celebratory festivities.

Clean up took 5,640 scrub pads and 800 bottles of Joy dish soap. Wiper towels, a whopping 39,700 of them, were a lot greener than paper towels and worked better to boot.

Let’s segue to some staff dining service number crunching. We learned that with approximately one seat for every two staff members we never hit capacity of the staff dining complex, rain or shine. We saw that one serving line was needed to serve 500 persons without a wait, as long as we don’t repeat the BBQ night or figure a way to make a better alternative that evening which worked every other meal to divide the lines rather evenly. We know now that 144,360 is the number of eggs we served scrambled for breakfast – for those who want to know how that works we bought 802 bags of liquid eggs that each contained the equivalent of 180 large eggs in the 20 pound bag. We learned that 17,750 apples helped make the Summit2Go lunch even better. Last but by no means least we learned that 954 pecan pies don’t last long in the staff dining line.

No summary would be complete without some Retail Food factoids, so let’s move there for a minute. Total concession sales were over $613k with Action Point leading the way, followed by Boulder Cove and then the Chat ‘n Chew once people found it. Soda led sales volume with 66,873 bottles purchased. Pizza was the fast food winner with 58,826 pies. Burgers were ordered 8,459 times and fries (either with burger or pizza) were the choice an amazing 33,782 times. Even bottled water was a winner, despite the hydration stations, with 9,443 sold. Catering completely delivered on its promise to provide those with a charge card their orders which surpassed one hundred thousand in sales. One might say too that no event would be successful without having ice cream sales that were through the roof at over a third of a million dollars. I think that’s a wrap on retail details.

In closing let me express that I hope each of you looks back at the Jamboree with pride and a good feeling about what our team did and how we did it. There is always room for improvement and I’ll be the first to welcome constructive thoughts in that regard but I know also that on Thanksgiving Day I’ll be openly thankful that this summer past the Food Team came together and delivered its promise to the Jamboree. We could not have done it without the entire team and I thank each of you for your help and role in making it a success. Best wishes to you and yours for a joyous season with family and friends. Perhaps in the New Year we can think about “next year’s” Jamboree but for now let’s end simply with holiday cheers.