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Silver Dollar City's Bluegrass & BBQ Brings the Bluegrass Best to the Midwest, May 12-30

(Branson, Mo. 5/11) **The all-American favorites of bluegrass music and slow-smoked barbecue take over the Silver Dollar City streets, from the tunes of the bands to the tang of the sauce, at the park's *Bluegrass & BBQ* festival, May 12-30. Presenting more than 50 bands and hundreds of performances, from international award-winning musicians to the hottest new bands in bluegrass, the festival presents a feast from the stages to the grills at the Branson, Missouri theme park.**

Known for its vocal harmonies and acoustic instrument sound, bluegrass music developed in America in the mid-1900s, blending influences from European and African roots, according to D.A. Callaway, Silver Dollar City Event Manager. As it grew in popularity and generations brought their own influences, the popularity of the music exploded, said Callaway, who visits bluegrass festivals all across America to find the best of both traditional and contemporary groups.

“The music is as American as barbecue – and we have that too,” Callaway says. Crossover and cutting-edge bluegrass artists like **Rhonda Vincent, The Grascals** and **IIIrd Tyme Out** have racked up awards from the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA), while **Audie Blaylock** and **Danny Paisley** have won awards with more traditional sounds. New groups, such as **Monroeville** –already spotlighted on *The Today Show* - keep the genre fresh.

The House of BBQ and Hundreds of Sauces

The *House of BBQ* serves up a feast from St. Louis ribs and smoked chicken to Texas brisket and sweet roasted corn on the cob, direct from large outdoor charcoal grills and a custom-made 9-foot smoker for Silver Dollar City's famous flavor. Guests can sample hundreds of sauces from smoky chipotle and sweet hickory to Carolina vinegar and honey habanero, plus the park's own Honey Blackberry. There's also an all-you-can-eat BBQ rib feast each afternoon, featuring meats from fall-off-the-bone ribs in four flavors to 18-hour smoked brisket, along with traditional barbecue sides.

National Bluegrass Competitions

The festival highlights two national competitions featuring entrants from across the country. The **5th Annual National Single Mic Championship, May 21-22**, highlights performance skills as each band gathers around a single microphone and balances their sound by moving toward or away from it, a technique revived by many of today's top bluegrass bands. The **Youth In Bluegrass Band Competition, May 28-29, promotes and encourages** amateur bluegrass musicians 21 years of age or younger as they compete for top honors and cash prizes.

Silver Dollar City, located near Branson, Missouri, is open daily during Bluegrass & BBQ, May 12 – 30. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (9:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and Sunday, May 29). For information and schedules: 800-831-4FUN(386), or www.silverdollarcity.com. ###