

## Chef of the Year!

### Chef Vernon Hickman, Advanced Culinary Arts Instructor

On Monday, Sept 22nd, ACF Idaho Chefs de Cuisine's president, David Knickrehm (CEC, AAC) announced that West Ada's, Chef Vern Hickman (CCC, CEC) has received the honor of being recognized as Chef of the Year voted on by his esteemed ACF Idaho Chapter colleagues. This award began with Walter Roth back in 1963 to honor his tireless work in promoting and elevating the profession. Today, among chefs, it is the highest honor annually bestowed by ACF and it recognizes only those Chefs who are the best of the best.

Instructor, Chef Hickman teaches seniors, from throughout the district's high schools, who elect to take *Advanced Culinary Arts* and complete the Professional-Technical Culinary Arts Program. Last year, due to administrative and industry support and Chef Hickman's leadership efforts in creating a high quality program, the program was evaluated by ACF and received a prestigious, and rare, 5-year ACF Secondary Schools Accreditation status. Most new programs who receive such a status, are typically granted only 3 years of accreditation coverage.



Chef Hickman wearing  
his ACF Chef of the  
Year Medallion

On top of this professional award and nationally industry recognized program, Chef Hickman, also recently received confirmation from the National ACF office, that the Culinary Arts Center at the ADA Professional-Technical Center has been selected as an official testing site. Professional Chefs throughout the West, have and will continue to travel to the center, to be professionally judged in order to try and earn their next step culinary certification. It also means that students in the program, will be able to meet the judges, be exposed to the process including see the culinary results. They will also receive special guest lectures from these visiting chefs which will certainly enhance their culinary knowledge and skills as well as open doors to postsecondary culinary opportunities and potential employers.

The American Culinary Federation, Inc. (ACF), is the culinary leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and programmatic accreditation designed to enhance professional growth for current and future chefs and pastry chefs. It operates the most comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States and is home to ACF Culinary Team USA. ACF was founded in 1929, in New York City. Today, ACF is the largest professional chefs' organization in North America with over 20,000 members strong. The 200+ local chapters are divided amongst four regions across the United States. The Western region covers a total of 11 states that range from Washington down to California, Montana down through New Mexico, and all the states in-between.

Chef Knickrehm, President of the local chapter, believes Chef Hickman is deserving of such an honor because *"he has always been a strong proponent of culinary education; both student and professional. Every year he goes the extra mile to ensure that chef certification candidates and culinary competitors have a positive experience while in his facility. Chef Hickman's integrity, hospitality and joviality are respected by leaders and judges across the country."*

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