

For immediate release
April 25, 2005

Contact: Malei Weir
(805) 239-0020
mw@mooncatcher.com



AL ROKER GETS A TASTE OF SANTA MARIA STYLE BARBECUE

“Roker on The Road” to Showcase Local BBQ Master Billy Ruiz on May 17

SANTA MARIA, CA—The legendary flavors of Santa Maria Style Barbecue will be showcased on The Food Network on Tuesday, May 17 as “Roker on The Road” airs a segment with local barbecue master Billy Ruiz, proprietor of Cowboy Caterin’ in Los Alamos. The show, hosted by The Today Show’s Al Roker, invites viewers to “join Al Roker on the road as he takes his love of food and his fascination with people across America.”

The episode with Ruiz may air at different times on May 17, depending on your television service provider. Please check your provider’s local listings or visit http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/show_ar for more information. The episode will also later be featured within the show’s repeat cycle on The Food Network.

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau initially pitched Santa Maria Style Barbecue and Billy Ruiz to Al Roker Productions and helped coordinate the connection. Ruiz is featured in the bureau’s promotional DVD, in which he conducts a lesson in Santa Maria Style Barbecue.

“Billy Ruiz is an excellent ambassador for Santa Maria Style Barbecue,” said Gina Keough, manager of the Santa Maria Valley Visitor & Convention Bureau. “He is very colorful and articulate, and he is an expert in the methods and traditions of our local barbecue.”

The episode was shot last fall in Santa Barbara at the Santa Barbara Carriage Museum, during one of Ruiz’s catering events—a fundraiser with more than 400 guests. “They did a lot of filming around the barbecue pit,” Ruiz said. “They’d never seen this style of barbecue.”

Al Roker was not on site during the filming, but will introduce the episode during the show.

“I’m excited because I think this episode will help introduce a lot of people to another style of barbecue that was born and bred here in the Santa Maria Valley and the Central Coast,” Ruiz said. “It shows that there’s more to barbecue than Texas, Kansas City and Memphis.”

For more information on Santa Maria Style Barbecue, including an instructional video and interactive DVD, log onto the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau web site at www.santamaria.com or call (800) 331-3779.

Serving the greater Santa Maria Valley in the heart of California’s Central Coast, the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau is a nonprofit association that facilitates local tourism and provides information on the region’s many attractions and visitor services. Famed for its fine wines, natural wonders, agricultural heritage and flavorful barbecue, the Santa Maria Valley offers a broad range of cultural, sporting and historical experiences. For information on lodging, dining, tours, attractions and events, please contact the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau at (800) 331-3779, or visit www.santamaria.com.

###