

Farm fresh

By Jennifer Tranmer jtranmer@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Thursday, April 30, 2015 4:00 pm

The sun is finally shining, the weather is getting warmer, plants and crops are starting to come back to life, and for Stateline Area residents that means something very exciting: the Downtown Beloit Farmers Market is back!

This year, the market will be celebrating its 50th year.

“It’s a community event and a tradition that everybody looks forward to,” said Crystal Buhmeyer, program coordinator for the Downtown Beloit Association.

“The event is really positive and a really good event for our community.”

From 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday through the end of October, vendors will be selling their goods along State Street and Grand Avenue in downtown Beloit.

Buhmeyer said the DBA is excited to see the market expand once again, with 55 vendors, which brings some new features to the market.

There will not be preview days in the month of May, Buhmeyer said. Instead, the market will kick off in full force beginning May 2. Because some of the produce vendors will not have their goods ready, the DBA is inviting vendors on the waiting list to fill the vacancies.

“A lot of people assume that the pre-sale market days may not be as good as the regular market and we didn’t want to put that idea out there,” Buhmeyer said.

With the increase in vendors also comes an increase in the variety of items offered, including a vendor selling different types of granola, granola bites and specialty nut butters, and an organic-certified produce vendor.

“We’re really excited to add another certified-organic vendor,” Buhmeyer said, adding that the market currently doesn’t have many. “There’s a need for it and there’s a growing demand for organically grown produce.”



Back in Beloit

The pre-sale Farmers Market Saturdays in May last year drew many people to downtown Beloit. Because of the growing popularity of the market, the regular Farmers Market will begin this Saturday with no preview days. There will be a variety of vendors selling homemade goods, meats, cheeses, early harvest produce, seafood, plants and more.

Weekly entertainment will begin in June due to the heightened potential for storms and bad weather throughout May.

Also returning this year will be the Downtown Dash, a 5K run/1-mile walk that will take participants along the Rock River. The race begins at 9 a.m. Saturday in downtown at The Gantry, and the cost is \$25.

There will also be an array of food served right off the street and out of food trucks, including South Padre Streetfood, Tacos Gonzalez and more. With the variety of culinary items, it will certainly be hard to go home hungry.

The SNAP program will also be back again this year. Those with SNAP benefits simply need to head to the information booth to secure their tokens to purchase goods from vendors who accept SNAP.

While you're downtown, make sure to pop into some of the shops to support local businesses and check out the unique items offered. Buhmeyer said she is excited to see the market return, especially because of its growth.

"People far and wide talk about it. It's something to rave about, something to be proud of," she said. "We have grown through the years and each year we try to incorporate new items."

Buhmeyer said she looks forward to being out and about with the Beloit community.

"It symbolizes community," she said. "People are getting together and the sun is shining and everyone is happy. There's a sense of camaraderie."

For more information and a full list of vendors and entertainment, visit the Downtown Beloit Association's website at www.downtownbeloit.com.