

Beloit Farmers Market to kick off May 7

By Clint Wolf News Editor | Posted: Wednesday, April 20, 2016 4:00 pm

BELOIT — If recent warmer weather has you aching to spend more time outdoors or even make preparations for some home gardening, then you might just be ready for a downtown Beloit tradition.

The 51st season of the downtown Beloit Farmers Market is set to kick off from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Saturday, May 7, with vendors offering the first samplings of plants, early produce, crafts and other goodies.

Downtown Beloit Association Executive Director Shauna El-Amin said the Farmers Market is held each Saturday from May through October. When it is at full strength, the market features over 85 vendors who will be selling their wares from stands set up on State Street and Grand Avenue in downtown Beloit.

The Farmers Market used to start out in May with a “Pre-Sale” which would feature a few vendors in a small setting. However, Al-Amin said the May 7 start of the market will be fairly large.

“There will be a ton of vendors and a full block of State Street and a full block of Grand Avenue will be blocked off,” she said.

She said although much of the freshly harvested produce that normally is sold at the Farmers Market hasn’t even popped out of the ground yet, there still will be plenty that will be offered. Some vendors do canning during the off season and they will be offering canned produce in the early season market.

The Beloit Farmers Market is the second largest farmers market in Wisconsin. Only Madison’s farmers market is larger.

“They have more square footage and a larger population,” El-Amin said.

However, she noted that the Beloit Farmers Market has its own charm and second in the state is still pretty good. And, the Beloit market has a waiting list of vendors who want to be part of the market.

El-Amin said the Beloit Farmers Market averaged 5,500 visitors each Saturday when the market



Milling about the market

BDN file photoThe downtown Beloit Farmers Market is set to kick off Saturday, May 7. The market will be held each Saturday from May through October offering plants, produce, food and more.

season was at its peak, with a total of approximately 143,000 people walking around the downtown area during the full market season. That additional foot traffic in the downtown business district translates into an economic impact of \$2.1 million, El-Amin said.

And the products sold at the Beloit Farmers Market are for the most part home grown. A study conducted last year with the UW Extension showed a third of the vendors at the Beloit Farmers Market are from the City of Beloit or from the Town of Beloit. Another 47 percent are from Rock County in Wisconsin or Winnebago County in Illinois. About 20 percent of vendors come from outside the immediate area.

Visitors to the market are mostly local residents with 42 percent coming from the City of Beloit, 47 percent coming from the immediate area and 11 percent coming from outside the area.