

# Farmers Market attracts crowd

By HILLARY GAVAN Senior staff writer | Posted: Monday, May 9, 2016 4:00 pm

BELOIT — Beloit's downtown was filled with food, friendship and fun Saturday as people flocked to the first Farmers Market of the season and the Third Annual Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce Downtown Dash.

"This is a great time for renewal. We have our own little renaissance going on right here," said market fan Anita Whedon.

Anita and Patrick Whendon, who live in Boone County, said they've been to many markets but the Beloit one reigns as favorite. They love it so much, they said they wish it would expand to the west side of the river.

"I enjoy the socialization and the people. Later in the summer there will be more good food too," Patrick Whedon said.

Market regulars Kacie Vernon and David Fleetwood of Roscoe were introducing their 6-month-old daughter Harper to the market.

"My grandparents introduced us to it, and we'll introduce her," Kacie Vernon said. "I like the local farmers and the wide variety."

"It's great products and great people," David Fleetwood said.

Erin Spedding, of Rockton, and her daughters, Avelynn, 8, and Irelynn, 5, were visiting the market for the first time.

"We really like it and want to make it a tradition," mom Erin Spedding said.

Although there weren't any tomatoes yet, there was honey, rhubarb, asparagus and cheese at the market, along with soaps, sauces and more. Downtown Beloit Association Executive Director Shauna El-Amin said there were about 70 vendors and a good crowd despite the wind. Most people, she said, were buying flowers and hanging baskets.

Vendors Kathy and Hank Baumann were back with their new 4-year-old crop of asparagus, smaller



## Farmers Market fun

Kacie Vernon and David Fleetwood, of Roscoe, and 6-month-old Harper Fleetwood visit the Beloit Farmers Market on Saturday. The first market of the year attracted big crowds despite the windy weather.

and thinner than their traditional crop. It was sold out by 11 a.m. with several market goers saying they will use it in place of green beans in green bean casserole. Another customer purchased rhubarb for rhubarb and banana jelly. The Baumanns said it was great to be reunited with their many customers. With the warmer weather on the way and a bit of rain, they are predicting a bounty of crops to soon share.

Despite the weather, the market was as busy as any other season's debut. Many market-goers looked over the plants and flowers before some of them went on to the Chamber's 5K run and 1-mile walk around the scenic riverfront. The event started and ended at Irontek, 635 Third St.

Greater Beloit Chamber's Director of Operations Aimee Thurner said more than 100 people registered for the race with 20 walk-ins on Saturday.

The Chamber had moved the race from starting at the Gantry to outside Irontek to get people more familiar with the Chamber's new offices. There was a huge arch of balloons and plenty of pumping music to get guests in the mood for their run.

Girls on the Run, a group of 15 Fruzen fourth and fifth graders in a program to develop track skills and self-esteem, also were out. They were spraying their hair various colors and donning tutus to show their spirit.