

# BELOIT PREPS FOR FARMERS' MARKET

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BDN file photo The Beloit Farmers' Market attracts thousands of people every year to purchase a variety of products. The first market of the year is set for May 4.

BELOIT - Downtown Beloit is just three weeks away from fresh produce, hand-crafted goods and more when the 2019 Farmers' Market opens for the season.

As always, the Downtown Beloit Association (DBA) will host the first Farmers' Market of the year on the first Saturday of next month (May 4) and will run each Saturday until Oct. 26, promotions coordinator Crystal Cribbs said. She said the market runs rain or shine from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. on State Street and Grand Avenue in downtown Beloit.

"Hopefully we have great weather," Cribbs said.

Cribbs said the DBA is hoping for around 60 to 70 vendors at the first farmers market. Once produce is more in season during the summer months, 80 to 90 vendors are expected at each market from June-August.

"Events like the Farmers' Market are to get people down here and continue to shop local instead of traveling to Rockford and Janesville," Cribbs said. "It's really trying to build awareness for Beloit."

She said the DBA tries to focus on having vendors that sell food items, while selling quality crafts and other items.

According to the 2018 Downtown Beloit Farmers' Market Impact Study, last year the market included goods and produce from 99 total vendors, with more than half of these vendors attending at least three-quarters of all market dates. The study found that an average of 73 vendors were present on each market day, with a low of 44 vendors during the last two weeks of the season.

Overall it's estimated that 190,000 people attended last year's market, which is lower than the 2017 total of 194,000 attendees, but higher than the 2016 total of 104,000 attendees.

Over the course of the season, studies estimate the market generated an estimated \$907,000 in total sales. This is an increase from the 2017 total of \$580,000.

The study finds that the economic impact on the downtown area and region result in \$2.8 million in additional economic impact and 12 jobs supported in downtown, and \$3.7 million in additional economic impact and 52 jobs supported within the Janesville-Beloit area. This is because sales earned on the day of the market correspond to additional employment and wages for farmers, craftspersons and downtown businesses, and also result in state and local tax collections.

The Farmers' Market has been a staple of Downtown Beloit for more than 50 years, spanning two blocks of on-street space and an adjacent parking lot off the intersection of State Street and Grand Avenue in Downtown Beloit.