

NEW EBT SYSTEM at Litchfield Hills Farm-Fresh Market

Litchfield Hills Food Systems of Litchfield, Connecticut received \$14,590 to implement EBT and a new advertising campaign at the Litchfield Hills Farm-Fresh Regional Winter Market.

[Final Report FY09](#)

Fourth/Final Performance Report

Date: September 30, 2011
Recipient Name: Litchfield Hills Food Systems, Inc.
Title of Project: EBT System at Litchfield Hills Farm-Fresh Market
Grant Number: 12-25-G-0921 (Agreement Number)
Location (City/State): Litchfield, CT
Contact Person/Info: Kay Carroll (860) 567-3890 – kaycarroll@aol.com
Progress Report #: Fourth & Final

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Grant Period: Sep 28, 2009 to Sep 28, 2011

The availability of a viable, cost-free, EBT system to increase the purchase of local, healthy food products by EBT consumer was the primary goal with emphasis placed on ease-of-use and lack of any transaction fees.

PROJECT APPROACH:

EBT, credit, and debit card services were contracted through First National Merchant Solutions who provided training, online account access, customer service, technical support, and terminal warranty. Electronic services were initiated at our April 10, 2010 market. Over the course of two months, four individuals were cross-trained by the Program Director and alternated with the Program Director to staff the program each market day. Bookkeeping and accounting procedures were implemented to track and reconcile all tickets and funds.

Consumers purchased \$5 tokens that were exchanged for goods from any of the market vendors. The token system was a color-coded, non-duplicating ticket with serial numbers and matching stub to ensure tracking and security. Tickets were exchanged in full increments only with no cash or change issued per EBT requirements. Vendors redeemed tickets for cash from the Program Director or authorized staff.

GOALS, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED:

Advertising/Promotion/Supplies:

There were significant efforts to generate awareness of EBT acceptance at the farmers' market with publicity releases; public service announcements on radio and local cable TV; signage at libraries, post offices, social service agencies, Social Security office, medical offices, churches, senior centers, soup kitchens, etcetera.

The farmer's market partnered with the NW Connecticut Transit District to offer free bus service to the market from key pick-up points with return transportation to same locations. This was advertised through many of the same means mentioned above as well as producing a postcard handout that was available at key locations for individuals to keep.

Various outreach and publicity efforts continued throughout the period with emphasis on the EBT consumer regarding quality food products, long-term health benefits, discreet and easy use of EBT technology at the market. Signage was posted prominently at each market. Additional efforts continued through program lectures, public service announcements, street signs and printed materials.

Technology and Accounting:

The technological and staffing part of this program ran very smoothly. A portable, wireless terminal was used that was handed to consumer to enter pin privately. Prompts were easy to follow and receipts issued per transaction for both merchant and consumer. Transactions were secure and compliant with all required regulations.

The electronic card terminal automatically differentiated transaction types as EBT, credit, or debit and itemized accordingly on the monthly account statements. All sales, ticket redemptions, petty cash, and electronic transactions were reconciled per market as well as to monthly bank statements.

Producers:

Local producers and vendors were enthusiastic about the easy, cost-free method to increase their sales volumes. They gladly accepted tickets for purchases and redeemed them for cash at the end of each market. This provided a broader product base and subsequently more healthy food choices for consumers.

BENEFICIARIES:

Those EBT consumers that did attend and purchase goods at the farmers' market indicated their appreciation for the availability of fresh, varied, healthy, local produce and the relative ease and discretion of the token system. Though few in number, they were repeat attendees.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Despite the simplistic system and rigorous outreach, there was a slow, inconsistent and disappointingly low volume of EBT consumers attending throughout the program period. Our market does not have a high percentage of EBT customers (estimate less than 10% or 15-30 people on any given day) and we were not successful in drawing more to the market despite outreach and bus service. Of those, only about 10 of them used their EBT card. Some EBT customers were making purchases using other programs (e.g., Farmers' Market Nutrition Program) which were valid ONLY at farmers' markets and we hypothesize they were "saving" EBT dollars for use at other locations where these alternative farmers' market programs couldn't be accepted. As indicated in our previous reports, research indicated and identified the following as recognizable key aspects in implementing successful EBT programs at farmer's markets:

1. Markets offering matching dollars to EBT benefits show substantial increases in EBT usage. This makes sense since their EBT benefit is doubled.
2. Markets located in the heart of housing where EBT populations live, especially in those areas where other food outlets are scarce, have much higher usage of EBT at the market.
3. Markets with support of social service or state agencies that distribute the EBT benefits and have publicized the fact that EBT benefits can be used at the farmers' market have shown increased usage of EBT.

We met with the Community Council of NW Connecticut. The participating organizations felt the best way to get the word out about availability of EBT benefits at our farmers' market was to have information on it at the social service agencies EBT recipients visit. So each of the member organizations (over 20) took and distributed information regarding the availability of EBT at the farmers' market. We met with the Council of Churches and Synagogues in NW CT and they too took information and posted it. We continued work trying to find a way to "go to them" and have a farmers' market presence in their neighborhoods, but did not come up with a viable/economic model. Additionally, with cut backs in funds, any collaboration with the State of CT was very unlikely. We continued to apply for matching funds sources, which is one of the proven ways to increase EBT participation at farmers' markets, but have not been successful in receiving a grant.

FUNDING to DATE:

Of \$14,590.00 total funds granted, we've expended \$14,590 to date to complete the program. All expenditures were within approved budget guidelines and on target.



William Burgess
President and Executive Director

Vendor Redemption Receipt List - Date _____

(Name)

(Signature)

Arethusa Farm Dairy	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Bantam Bread	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Beltane Farm	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Berryledges Apiary	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Boxed Goodes	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Brookside Farm II	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Coffee - Tea - Etc.	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Cato Corner Farm	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Garlic Head'z	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Goatboy Soap	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Gresczyk Farms	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Griffin Farmstead	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Laurel Ridge Farm	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Mapleview Farm	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
March Farm	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Newgate Farm	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Olive Oil Factory	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Starlight Gardens	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Sweet Chow Granola	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Wave Hill Breads	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
West Shore Seafood	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
Winding Drive	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
_____	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
_____	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
_____	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
_____	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
_____	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
_____	_____	Redeemed \$	_____
_____	_____	Redeemed \$	_____

Total Redeemed \$ _____

MERCHANT CARD SERVICES (Name)		FIS: E-funds		1st Nat. Merchant Solutions		Merchant Source		Total Merchant Concepts	
Contract Length		3-yr		1 or 3-yr					Month-to-Month
Rates locked in to contract - Visa/MC		N - Advance Notice Required		N - Apr/Oct		N - Apr/Oct			N - Apr/Oct
Early Termination Fee		None		\$399.00		\$295 to			30-days notice
Opt Out Clause				3-mon enroll by Mar 1st					
Wireless Network Carrier		Verizon		AT&T or Verizon		(AT&T) Apriva			(AT&T) Apriva
24/7/365 Support		Y		Y		Y			Y
PCI Support & Procedures (walk thru)		3rd Party		Merchant Questionnaire		Y			Y
Setup Time Required		4 Weeks		1 Week		1 week			1 week
Paper Statement		Machine Report		N		N			Y
Online Account/Statements		None		Y		Advantage Program \$9.95/mon			Y
EBT (Y/N)		Y		Y		Y			Y
Debit(Y/N)		Y		Y		Y			Y
Credit (Y/N)		3rd Party		Y		Y			Y
Repair Fee (after warranty)		Y		Rental Replaced		See Advantage Program			Cost of Repair
START-UP COSTS									
Machine Name/Type		Verifone VX610		VX610 GPRS		Nurit 8000GPRS			Nurit 820
Wireless		Y		Y		Y			Y
Wired modem/telephone		N		N		Y			Y
Warranty		3-yr		Free replacement w/ rental		Replacement			1-yr
Machine Costs		\$1,200.00		\$21.95/mon rent		(Personal Guarantor) Free			\$950.00
External Pin Pad		N		Fee on Request		N			N
Power Cord		Included		Included		Included			Y
Initial Battery		Included		Included		Included			Y
Carrying Case		Included		N		N			N
Extra Battery		Included		N		optional \$125.40			At Cost
Training		Included		Included		Included			Included
Initial Activation Fee		Included				N			Included
Setup Fee		Included		\$25.00		\$100.00			Included
Wireless Setup		Included		\$75.00		Included			Included
Supplies, Paper, etc. (Can be purchased locally)		As Required		As Required		Advantage Program \$9.95/mon			As Required
Shipping		Free		Included		Free			Free
PCI Compliance		3rd Party		\$59.00		\$4.95 month after 12			\$99.00
3rd Party Agreement (Credit)		Y		N		Partnered w/ Merchant Services			N
Total Start-Up Costs		\$1,200.00		\$159.00		\$100.00			\$1,049.00

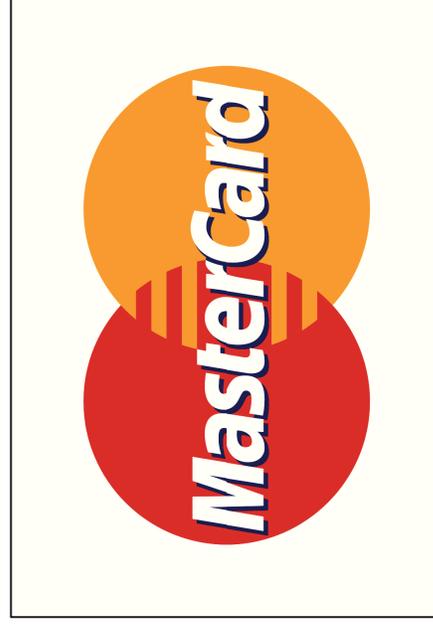
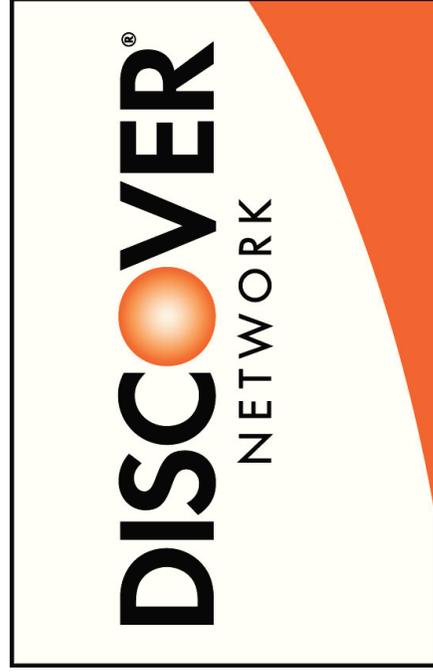
MERCHANT CARDSERVICES (Name)		FIS: E-funds	1st Nat. Merchant Solutions	Merchant Source	Total Merchant Concepts
TRANSACTION COSTS (per Market Day)					
Debit (Pin)					
Interchange Fee (\$0.25-\$1.25) costs vary - estimate only	\$0.00		\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50
Transaction Fee	\$0.40		\$0.15	\$0.35	\$0.25
Wireless Transaction Fee	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.10	\$0.05
Credit					
Low Discount Rate % Sale (Swiped - Qualified)	1.75%		1.69%	1.78%	1.60%
Highest Discount Rate % Sale (Non Qual, Keyed, Other)	3rd Party		3.59%		3.09%
Amex	N		2.89% + \$0.10 + \$0.15	3.5% or \$5.95/mo	\$0.20
Transaction Fee	\$0.22		\$0.20	\$0.35	\$0.22
Wireless Transaction Fee	\$0.00			\$0.10	\$0.05
EBT/Pin Transaction Fee					
EBT Transaction Fees	\$0.15		\$0.15	\$0.10	\$0.20
Wireless Transaction Fee	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.10	\$0.05
Batch Fee (usually daily)	\$0.25		\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.00
Chargeback Fee (Disputed)	?		\$15.00	\$20.00	\$15.00
Sample Transactions Costs					
Debit 10 transactions (w/ \$0.50 Interchange) x \$25 each	\$4.00		\$6.50	\$9.50	\$8.00
Credit (low) 10 transactions x \$25 each	\$6.58		\$6.23	\$8.95	\$6.70
EBT 10 transactions x \$25 each	\$1.50		\$1.50	\$2.00	\$2.50
Batch Fee (once daily or as required)	\$0.25		\$0.25	\$0.25	\$0.25
Total Sample Transaction Costs	\$12.33		\$14.48	\$20.70	\$17.45
MONTHLY FIXED COSTS					
Rental/Replacement Program (in lieu of purchase)	\$0.00		\$21.95	\$0.00	\$0.00
Wireless Access Fee	\$0.00		\$16.95	\$18.95	\$20.00
Customer Service/Support 24/7	\$45.00		Y	\$10.00	\$10.00
Statement Fee	\$0.00		\$9.95	\$0.00	\$0.00
Maintenance Fee	\$0.00		\$7.95	\$0.00	\$0.00
Online Access	\$0.00		Y	\$9.95	\$2.50
EBT/Pin Monthly Fee	\$0.00		\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Monthly Fixed Costs	\$45.00		\$61.80	\$38.90	\$32.50
Minimum Debit Fee (in lieu of transaction fees)	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minimum Credit Fee (in lieu of discount rate)	\$15.00		\$5.00	\$25.00	\$10.00
Total Monthly Minimum Fees	\$15.00		\$5.00	\$25.00	\$10.00

MERCHANT CARDSERVICES (Name)		FIS: E-funds	1st Nat. Merchant Solutions	Merchant Source	Total Merchant Concepts
ESTIMATED TRANSACTION + MONTHLY COSTS					
Monthly Sample Transactions (Total Sample Costs x 4)		\$49.30	\$57.90	\$82.80	\$69.80
Monthly Fixed Costs		\$45.00	\$61.80	\$38.90	\$32.50
Total Estimated Monthly Costs		\$94.30	\$119.70	\$121.70	\$102.30
ANNUAL COSTS					
Annual Contract/Provider Fee		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$29.00
Annual PCI Compliance		\$0.00	\$59.00	\$4.95/mon after 1st yr	\$99.00
Annual Maintenance (in lieu of monthly)		\$0.00	\$89.00	See Advantage Program	\$0.00
Total Annual Costs		\$0.00	\$148.00	\$0.00	\$128.00
QUICK NOTES					
EBT: No refunds or credits allowed - how to return tokens?					
Debit: Under \$25 best to use as credit/check card, not debit/pin					
Manual backup system - Purchase manual imprinter about \$20 (not EBT)					
Apr/Oct review for interchange rates per credit companies					
NO RATES ARE LOCKED INTO TERMS.					
FIS: E-funds					
3rd Party credit provider					
Warning: may require reserve after a few months					
1st National Merchant Solutions					
Rental mon/mon (not lease) vs. Purchase for \$699 1yr warranty					
March 1st opt out clause (3-month) - may extend deadline					
VA, OR, MA, Iowa, KS, etc use them (see references)					
NOT 3rd party - subsidiary of 1st Nat Bank of Omaha					
Merchant Source					
Advantage Program: replacement, online access, supplies					
Personal guarantor required					
3rd Party credit provider - HSBC Bank					
Total Merchant Concepts					
No long-term contract - 30days notice only					
No rental/lease available with wireless					

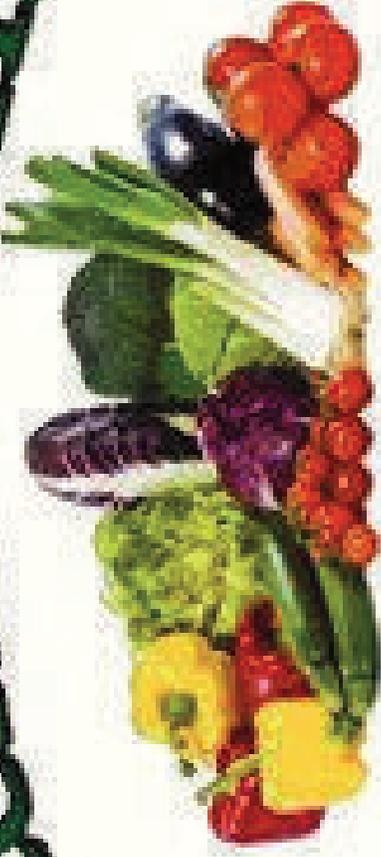
MERCHANT CARD SERVICES (Name)	FIS: E-funds	1st Nat. Merchant Solutions	Merchant Source	Total Merchant Concepts
RECOMMENDATIONS				
MACHINE: Suggest rental/free for lower startup costs and no cost replacement/protection against repair costs, technology upgrades, and future compliance issues.				
TERMS: Suggest a renewable, shorter-term to ensure satisfaction with service, reliability, and setup.				
REFERENCES: Suggest provider used/recommended by multiple farm markets; contact actual client references.				
ONLINE: Suggest online account access for greatest reliability and accountability.				
FIS: E-FUNDS is purchase program with limited info on 3rd party credit agreement. Have received warnings that they may institute reserves (fund deposits) into agreement term. Did not seem as knowledgeable about processes. Overall simplicity, but with vagueness to changes in credit rates and 3rd party agreement. Setup time up to one weeks after enrollment.				
1ST NATIONAL MERCHANT SOLUTIONS: True renewable month-month rental (not long-term lease) with options for 1-year or 3-year agreement. Rental machine ASAP if defective or damaged. Has early termination fee, but offering opt out clause if enrolled before March 1st, offer may be extended. Offers all options that we require and reference contacts. Customer Service friendly and helpful offering personal cell phone contact numbers as well as				
MERCHANT SOURCE: Free machine, long-term agreement, higher transaction costs, and personal guarantor required. Bottom line similar to 1st National Merchant Solutions, but longer-term contract. Option to renew/upgrade free machine at term end their discretion and program availability. Third party credit provider is Total Merchant Services HSBC. Customer service friendly, but with sense of impatience and superiority. One week to ten days setup.				
TOTAL MERCHANT CONCEPTS: Purchase program only for wireless. Month-to-Month agreement with 30-day notice if changing provider. Repair after warranty at cost to owner. Customer service friendly and knowledgeable. One week setup.				
Recommendation: 1st National Merchant Solutions as best option at this point.				



Card Services Available at Basket Tent

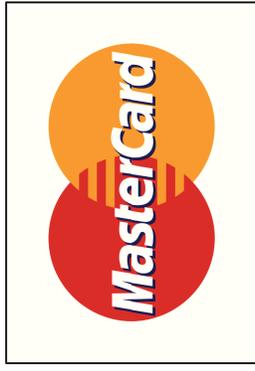


Litchfield Hills



FARM-FRESH MARKET

Card Services Available at Basket Tent



EBT (SNAP) - \$5 Value Per Pink Ticket

Eligible Purchases: Foods for the household to eat, such as:

- breads and cereals
- fruits and vegetables
- meats, fish and poultry
- dairy products
- seeds/plants which produce food to eat

Ineligible Purchases:

- beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco
- any nonfood items
- pet foods; soaps, paper products; household supplies
- vitamins and medicines (supplements)
- food that will be eaten in the store/market
- hot foods

Credit/Debit - \$5 Value Per Yellow Ticket

- May be used to purchase any item

Vendor Redemption

- Print vendor name on back of ticket
- Bring tickets to EBT/Credit/Debit sales desk at close of market
- Exchange for \$5 cash per ticket – there are no service fees for vendor
- Sign vendor redemption receipt sheet

Thank you for participating in our EBT/Credit/Debit card service program. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please speak with the manager/clerk at the EBT/Credit/Debit sales desk or with LHF-FM Market Master.



Saturdays 10 am - 1 pm

The Litchfield Hills Farm-Fresh Market is a year round farmers' market, with 15+ CT-Grown vendors, product sample tastings, music, guest artists, children's activities. It is held outdoors at Litchfield Center School parking lot June through October, and indoors at the Litchfield Community Center November through May. Specific dates below.

This farmers' market participates in four government sponsored nutrition assistance programs.

- SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- WIC – Women, Infant and Children Program
- Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- WIC Farmers' Market Fruit and Vegetable Check Program.

The market accepts credit, debit and EBT cards in exchange for tickets in \$5 increments which can be used only at the farmers' market.

Indoor Market:

Saturday 10 am - 1 pm

2010 dates: 10/30, 11/6, 11/13, 11/20

12/4, 12/11, 12/18

2011 dates: 1/8, 1/22, 2/5, 2/19, 3/5, 3/19, 4/2, 4/16, 4/23, 5/7, 5/21, 5/28

Litchfield Community Center

421 Bantam Road

Litchfield, CT

Outdoor Summer Market:

Saturdays, 10 am - 1 pm

2010 dates: 10/9, 10/16, 10/23

2011 dates: June 11 - October 22

Center School Parking Lot

Route 202/Woodruff Lane

Litchfield, CT



Saturdays 10 am - 1 pm

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This farmers' market is now participating in four government sponsored nutrition assistance programs.

- SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- WIC – Women, Infant and Children Program
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- WIC Farmers' Market Fruit and Vegetable Check Program.

The market has the capability to accept credit, debit and EBT cards in exchange for tickets in \$5 increments which can be used only at the farmers' market.

NW CT Transit District will have a bus scheduled to the market on Saturdays to pick folks up and bring them to the farmers' market and return them to their residence after spending an hour at the market. The initial schedule for this bus is: **Wells Run:** Pick-up 10:15 am, Return 11:45AM. **Bantam Falls:** Pick-up 10:45, Return 12:30. **Bantam Village:** Pick-up 11, Return 12:30.

Indoor Market:

Saturday 10 am - 1 pm

2010 dates: 5/8, 5/22, 5/29

10/23, 10/30, 11/6, 11/13, 11/20

12/4, 12/11, 12/18

Litchfield Community Center

421 Bantam Road

Litchfield, CT

Outdoor Summer Market:

Saturdays, 10 am - 1 pm

2010 dates: 6/12, 6/19, 6/26, 7/3, 7/10, 7/17

7/24, 7/31, 8/7, 8/14, 8/21, 8/28

9/4, 9/11, 9/18, 9/25, 10/2, 10/9, 10/16

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NW CT Transit District has a bus scheduled to the market on Saturdays – picking up at several locations and returning to the same location every half hour. That schedule is being put together now.

If you are interested in having a bus pick-up at Litchfield Ponds to take you to the farmers' market, please call Ponds' resident Bobbie Horne at 860-567-7796 and let her know.

Indoor Market:

Saturday 10 am - 1 pm

2010 dates: 5/8, 5/22, 5/29

10/23, 10/30, 11/6, 11/13, 11/20

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NW CT Transit District has a bus scheduled to the market on Saturdays – picking up at several locations and returning to the same location every half hour. That schedule is being put together now.

If you are interested in having a bus pick-up at Tapping Reeve to take you to the farmers' market, please call Market Master Kay Carroll at 860-567-3890 and let her know.

Indoor Market:

Saturday 10 am - 1 pm

2010 dates: 5/8, 5/22, 5/29

10/23, 10/30, 11/6, 11/13, 11/20

12/4, 12/11, 12/18

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Center School Parking Lot

Route 202/Woodruff Lane

Litchfield, CT



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NW CT Transit District has a bus scheduled to the market on Saturdays – picking up at several locations and returning to the same location every half hour. That schedule is being put together now.

If you are interested in having a bus pick-up at Westleigh to take you to the farmers' market, please call Market Master Kay Carroll at 860-567-3890 and let her know.

Indoor Market:

Saturday 10 am - 1 pm

2010 dates: 5/8, 5/22, 5/29

10/23, 10/30, 11/6, 11/13, 11/20

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