

Berrien County Health Department of Benton Harbor, MI received \$39,947 to increase low-income consumers' use of a farmers market; increase access to healthy foods; and improve the income of small local farmers by helping the accept EBT payments and buying supplies and advertising for the market.

[Final Report FY10](#)

Final Performance Report

Date: December 20, 2011

Recipient Name: Berrien County Health Department

Title of Project: Berrien County Farmers Market Expansion

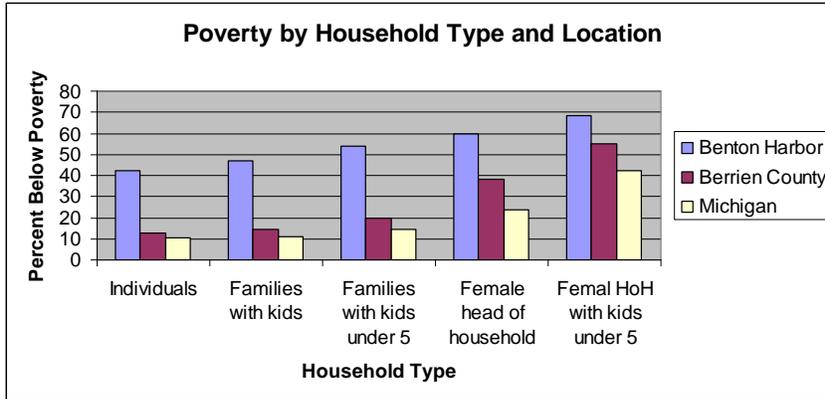
Grant Number: 12-25-G-1163

Location (City, State): Benton Harbor, Michigan

Project Summary:

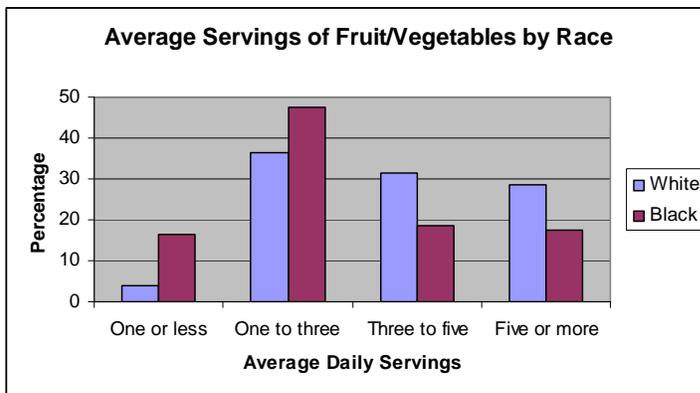
Outline the issues, problems, interest, and/or need for the project

The low-income population in Berrien County (particularly residents in the City of Benton Harbor) is at risk for a myriad of preventable health problems and is disproportionately affected by overweight and obesity. As noted in the 2008 Berrien County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS), residents whose household incomes are below \$20,000 annually have notably higher rates of hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and heart attack, as well as are more likely to be obese than residents with higher incomes. For example, 21% of residents making under \$20,000 suffer



from diabetes as compared to only 10% of those making over \$75,000 annually. In addition, over 76% of residents with incomes under \$20,000 are classified as either overweight or obese, as compared to 68% of those with incomes over \$75,000. One of the reasons for these problems affecting this population is a lack of

access to healthy food options, specifically to fresh fruits and vegetables. BRFS data also shows that 87% of residents with household incomes under \$20,000 consume less than the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables daily. It is well-documented that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables will not only help a person maintain a healthy weight, but will prevent many other diseases due to the numerous nutritional benefits.

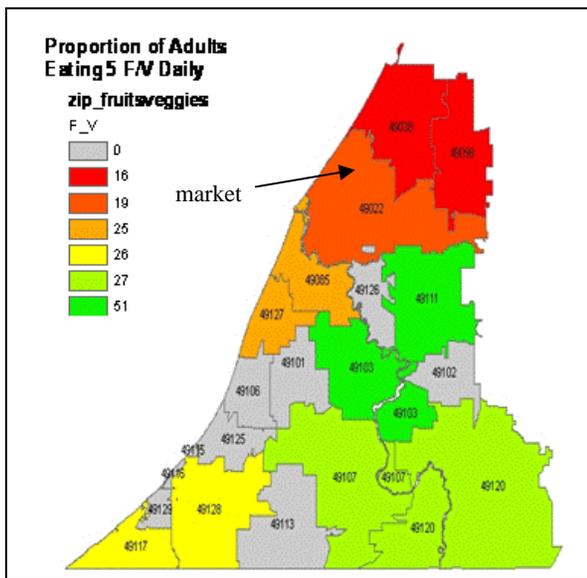


The lack of healthy food consumption by low income residents is unacceptable for many reasons, not the least of which is the ample supply of produce that is grown right here in Berrien County. Berrien County sold over \$123 million worth of crops in 2007 (USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture) and is ranked as the number five top crop producer for vegetables in the State of Michigan (measured in

acres). Additionally, Berrien is the number two producer of vegetables and number three producer of fruits in the State as measured by value of sales. However, while there are considerable revenues from crop sales, only about 6% of farm sales are going directly to consumers.

Consumption of the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables is also affected by race in Berrien County. Benton Harbor, the target community for this project, is not only the area with the lowest income in the County, but also has a population that is over 95% black. The chart above illustrates racial disparities in consumption of fruits and vegetables according to 2008 BRFS data.

There are barriers that affect low income residents' abilities to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, including a lack of retailers who sell fresh produce that are in walking distance or on public transportation routes from highly concentrated residential areas. Also, not all retailers who sell fresh produce accept food assistance on Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, which is a main source of food purchases for those with extremely low income. In Benton Harbor, about half of all retailers accepting EBT benefits are convenience stores, "party stores," and pharmacies that do not have the capacity to stock fresh produce and are filled with packaged snacks. There are no grocery stores in the city limits of Benton Harbor, and residents must travel to adjacent Benton Township to find a grocery store.



Berrien County has many more accessible options offering unhealthy food choices than healthy ones (affecting EBT clients as well as the rest of the population). For example, in Berrien County there are 114 fast food restaurants, 70 convenience stores, 41 grocery stores, and only 6 farmers markets (Berrien County USDA Food Environment Atlas). This disbursement of food outlets makes it very difficult for low-income residents to choose healthy foods. The goal of the proposed project is to add a farmers market selling only healthy, fresh, and locally grown food to an area otherwise filled with unhealthy choices. As noted in the map to the left, the market will be placed in an area concentrated with residents who are eating less than the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables daily according to 2008 BRFS data.

*Note that gray areas of map are areas that do not have enough data to determine statistically significant results, not areas with 0% consumption.

The solution to all of these significant social and health issues is to link local producers with local residents who would benefit from having fresh food readily available and affordable. While some programs have addressed this need, the proposed project will be a major expansion.

Project Approach:

Describe how the issue or problem was addressed

The purpose of the project was two-fold: 1) to improve the health of low-income members of the community by increasing their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and 2) to increase local farmers' direct sales of produce to residents.

These goals were accomplished through a workplan including increased staffing and hours of operation of the market, increased advertising efforts (including radio, print, and online advertising), promotional giveaways at the market, and increased outreach to partner organizations to reach potential customers. Market operations were increased from one day a week to two days, and a staff person was on-site to set up banners and other advertising materials and to accept EBT benefits. This staff person also worked closely with farmers to assure their needs were met and help them with the processes to accept WIC and SNAP benefits.

Advertising was done in a variety of media outlets including the following:

- Newspaper advertising in a small publication read predominately by the population in Benton Harbor (low income African American residents)
- Newspaper advertising in a larger newspaper read more widely by all residents in the county
- Radio advertising at a small hip hop station listened to by Benton Harbor residents
- Radio advertising at a regional pop station listened to more broadly throughout the county
- Facebook page
- Website advertising on BCHD's website
- Flyers distributed at BCHD and by several key partner organizations including Benton Harbor Area Schools, Department of Human Services, and InterCare Community Health Network (local Federally Qualified Health Center)

Promotional giveaways at the market were also done to increase attendance and included giveaways of calendar magnets, recipe cards featuring items sold at the market, and some cooking supplies such as measuring cups/spoons and cutting boards.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

Describe accomplishments, results and conclusions

The objectives of the project as stated in the application and progress towards them are as follows:

Stated Objective: Increase number of patrons using farmers market by a least 50% from 2010

Progress: There were a total of 2,731 paying parties that came to the market in 2011. This is an increase of 97% from 2010.

Stated Objective: Increase value of sales to at least \$12,000

Progress: the total value of sales in 2011 was \$8,848. This is a 53% increase from 2010.

Stated Objective: Assure that 75% of market sales are from EBT benefits

Progress: EBT sales accounted for \$912 out of the \$8,848 total sales, or approximately 10%.

While this amount is lower than was hoped, 2011 was the very first year that EBT had been accepted at the market, and shopping at a farmers market is a new behavior for many community members. We hope to use this year as a baseline and improve in the future.

Stated Objective: At least 95% of “market money” given in exchange for SNAP benefits is redeemed.

Progress: 100% of market money was redeemed.

Stated Objective: Increase number of farmers participating in the market to at least 9 (from 6 in 2009)

Progress: There were a total of 8 farmers participating in 2011.

Beneficiaries:

Describe the people, organizations, marketing entities and/or communities that have benefited from the project’s accomplishments, and a quantitative measure of the current or future benefits to be derived from the project

Beneficiaries of the project primarily included the local farmers who sold goods at the market as well as the consumers who were able to utilize the market to spend cash or food assistance benefits on local, fresh produce. Other beneficiaries of receiving these funds include the local companies utilized for advertising the market, organizations who were able to partner on market activities, and the City of Benton Harbor who saw increased traffic due to holding the market in their downtown park.

Specifically, local farmers saw revenues of \$8,848 total sales of their goods during the market season. As noted above, this amount was over a 50% increase from the previous year.

Low-income consumers also saw a benefit, as they had a local venue to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. In the 2011 season over 2,700 paying parties came to shop at the market, representing a nearly 100% increase from 2010 customers. These customers spent over \$900 in SNAP benefits and over \$1,600 in WIC benefits.

Local companies were also beneficiaries of this project, as they were paid to do advertising and printing, and for giveaways used at the market. Over \$7,000 was spent on advertising and other promotional costs.

Other beneficiaries include partner organizations who did activities at the market, such as First Chance, a summer youth program who used the market as a site for youth to do community service and learn about agriculture and entrepreneurship. Other organizations also used the market as a site to set up their own booths to recruit program participants or share other information. The City benefited by having several thousand people brought to the downtown area over the summer to shop at the market, as these people may also choose to visit other local businesses, use public transportation, etc.

Lessons Learned:

Describe in reasonable detail the lessons that were learned and benefits that were gained from the project. If the project objective was not achieved (or if portions of the objective were not

achieved) describe the reasons and what was learned in the process. Identify and share the lessons learned to help expedite problem solving for others who will read your final report.

While the project was overall very successful, two areas that could have been improved were the number of vendors participating and the amount of sales made using SNAP benefits. Regarding vendor participation, we learned that increased outreach to vendors is necessary to explain the benefits of their participation in the market. While there are a considerable number of farmers in Berrien County, not many chose to participate in the BHFMM, presumably because of their concerns that it would not be as lucrative as other markets and because of the reputation the City of Benton Harbor has (as a low-income African American community, many rural farmers have a perception that it is not a safe area). We now know for the future that increased, targeted outreach is necessary to convince more farmers of the benefits of participating in this market.

Regarding EBT sales, we learned even more the importance of a location that is convenient and comfortable for low-income customers. Even though our location was in an area very close to low-income residences, feedback from customers indicated that it was too far away and potentially out of the comfort zone of people with very low incomes (SNAP benefit users). In future market years, we will consult more representatives from the community to assure that the market is in a place that is truly accessible to our target customer base.

Additional Information:

Include and describe the specific contributions of project partners, and include any relevant information that would help in understanding the accomplishments of your project (eg publications, web sites, and photographs).

Please refer to attached pictures and samples of advertising.

Contact Person:

List the contact person with telephone number and e-mail address
Nicki Britten, (269) 927-5607, nbritten@bchdmi.org

1. Document the impacts on farmers such as:

- a. *Changes in income*
- b. *Changes in the number of agricultural vendors participating in direct marketing*
- c. *Changes in the volume of agricultural products sold*
- d. *Changes in the number of markets or farmers who can conduct electronic benefits transfer transactions*

The biggest impact on participating farmers was the increase in total sales for the 2011 season as compared to 2010. During the 2011 season, the total value of sales in 2011 was \$8,848. This is a 53% increase from 2010. In addition, as 2011 was the first year of accepting EBT at the market, 9 new vendors were able to sell to customers who use EBT benefits to purchase their food.

2. Document impacts on customers such as:

- a. *changes in the number of customers visiting the market over the course of a season*
- b. *changes in purchasing habits- especially the dollar amount and number of EBT and/or vendor transactions (SNAP, WIC) if applicable*
- c. *changes in customer awareness and/or interest in local food products*
- d. *changes in customer base such as the number of new customers and/or changes in customer demographics (income, diversity, distance traveled to market, etc)*

There was a major increase in customer attendance during the 2011 season as compared to the 2010 market season. There were a total of 2,731 paying parties that came to the market in 2011; an increase of 97% from 2010. Additionally, since 2011 was the first year accepting SNAP benefits, the \$912 spent in SNAP (about 10% of total sales) was a major increase in this community. The majority of sales continue to be cash. Please refer to attached graphs for detailed sales figures throughout the season.

3. How has the FMPP grant helped your organization?

This funding was extremely helpful to the organization by providing support for a needed program that also enhanced other programs in the organization that were able to partner with the farmers market. Specifically, the WIC program provides coupons to clients to use at the market which helps that program's clients.

4. What changes have occurred in organizational operations as a result of the FMPP grant?

By having funding specifically for the farmers market, more attention was paid by the organization as a whole to the market. Formerly a small side project, with the support of FMPP it took center stage and was the focus of not only organizational attention but additional press and community support.

5. What challenges or problems- if any- have developed during the implementation of this project?

- a. *How were they resolved?*

One of the biggest challenges encountered was the low number of vendors participating in the market. The most obvious reason for this is that because the market is targeted toward lower-income customers, there is not the opportunity for high sales compared to markets elsewhere in the county. During recruitment efforts by staff to bring in new vendors, common feedback was that vendors did not want to sell in a “bad neighborhood”. This reluctance may have been due to the economic implications and also to their perceived safety concerns. Because Benton Harbor is a lower-income, predominantly African American community, there is a perception (often unjustified) that it is unsafe. This issue is part of a larger cultural and social context in the county.

Regarding the economic implications of selling in Benton Harbor, Berrien County has numerous farmers markets and roadside stands throughout the growing season, so farmers do have options about where to sell and may choose areas that attract a higher-income population leading to higher sales. To make the market more attractive to vendors, it is held on “off days” that other large markets are not open, and there are not vendor fees. It was hoped that with no fees, vendors would not feel they were losing anything by being there and would be more likely to participate. Increased outreach is planned for the future which will include details of potential profits to be made at the market and other incentives for farmers.

6. What partnerships have been key to the success of this project and why?

Partnership with Michigan State University Extension has been extremely important, as they were able to set up their Market FRESH coupon distribution at the market to allow seniors to sign up and receive their coupons on the spot and then immediately redeem them.

7. What additional resources (financial and other support) was the organization able to leverage as a result of this FMPP grant?

The increased focus on the market has led to several new opportunities for potential funding in the future. Sources including the Double Up Food Bucks program, which would allow every dollar spent by a customer using their SNAP benefits to be matched, resulting in double the food purchase for these customers. Also, grant opportunities are available from The Conservation Fund as well as other private foundations. Several of these opportunities have been the result of the increased activity at the market being noted in the community and funders approaching BCHD staff about applying for support for subsequent season activities.

8. Can this project be replicated elsewhere?

a. why or why not?

Yes, this project could certainly be replicated elsewhere, particularly in a smaller community with good word-of-mouth contacts between residents.

9. What was the organization’s overall experience with FMPP?

BCHD is extremely grateful for the funding from the FMPP program which has allowed us to greatly enhance our farmers market. However, one major issue we encountered was the

specificity required in the budget and the time it took to have our budget amendments approved. We requested a minor budget amendment (purchasing different promotional items) in late June and after multiple requests for staff to review it, we finally received approval the second week of August. Unfortunately, in a project with a short time frame this was extremely detrimental to our project as we were not able to purchase many items until the market was well underway. While we understand the necessity of the USDA to review our budgets in detail, we would have appreciated somewhat quicker response to our requests for a minor amendment, particularly in a project that takes place over such a short time frame.

10. How did the project benefit you, personally?

Personally, I benefited from this project in two major ways. This was my first time managing a grant program independently. It was a learning experience that will not only help me in other endeavors but has also increased the capacity of our market to seek, obtain, and manage additional funds in the future. On a different note, the success of the Benton Harbor Farmers Market is important to me because it makes a difference in a community I care about deeply. Seeing a 100% increase in customers and a 50% increase in sales of local fresh fruits and vegetables in just one year's time is incredibly encouraging and gives me a hope for a brighter and more economically viable Benton Harbor in the future.

11. If an opportunity arises, would you be willing to participate in a webinar, be interviewed in a podcast or video, or participate in other events?

Yes.

I give my permission, as a participant in the Farmers Market Promotion grant, for the US Department of Agriculture to use my name and information provided by me in reports or other promotional material created about this FMPP-funded project:

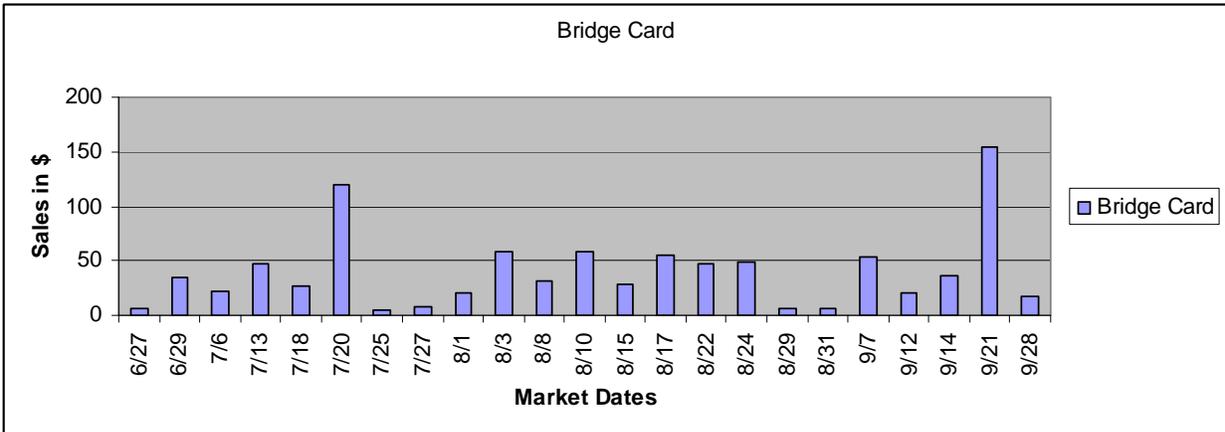
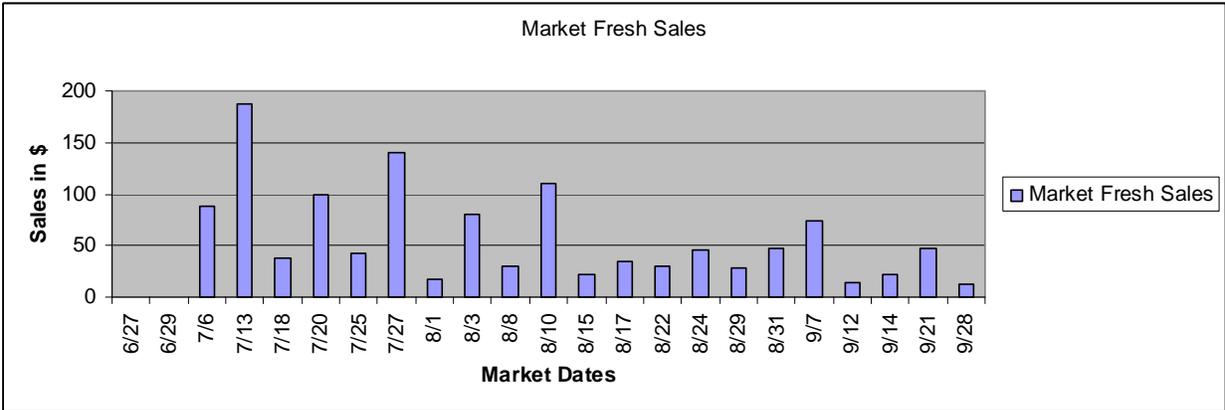
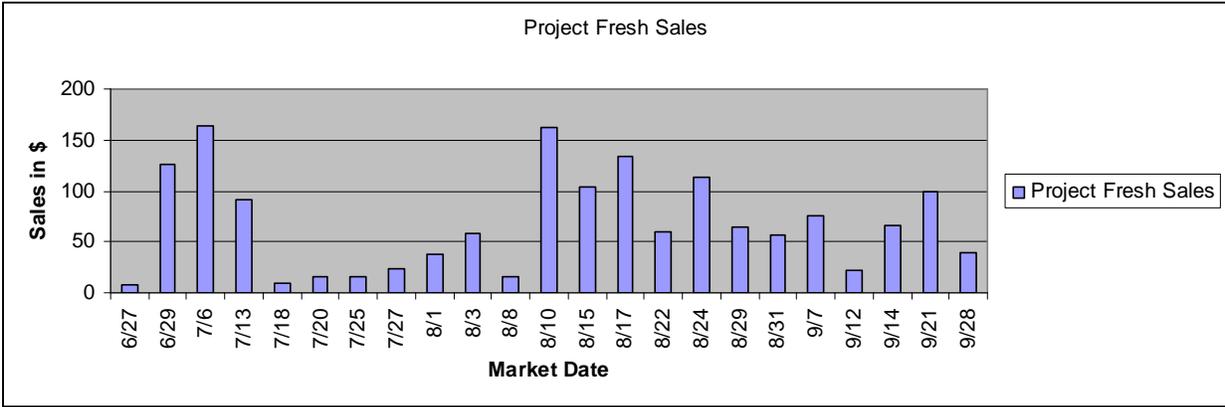
Name: Nicki Britten

Title or role within the FMPP-funded project: Director of Community Health Planning, Project Manager for the Berrien County Farmers Market Expansion

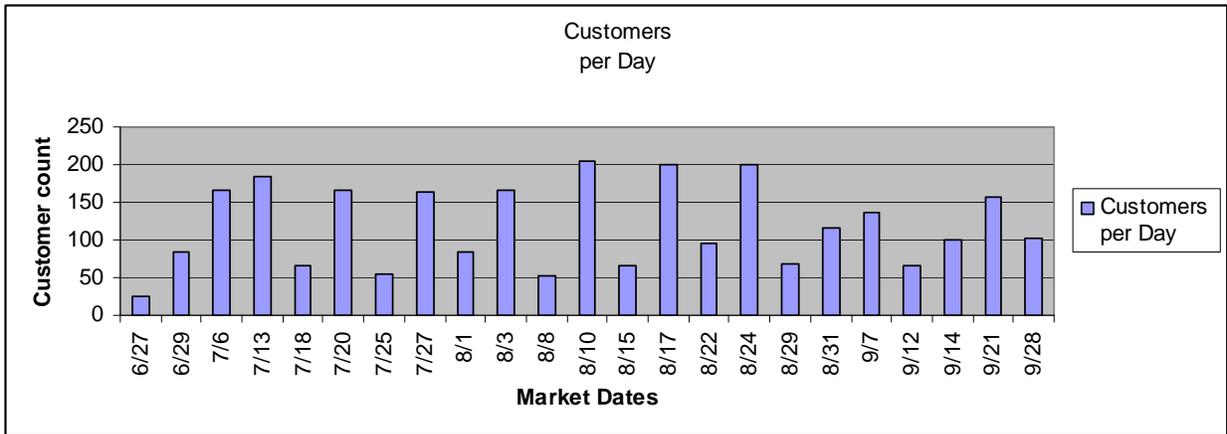
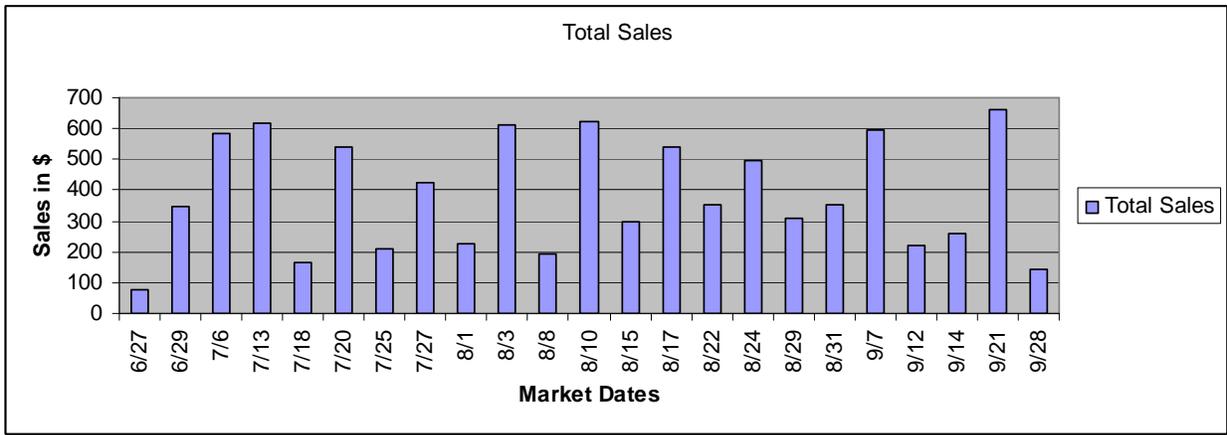
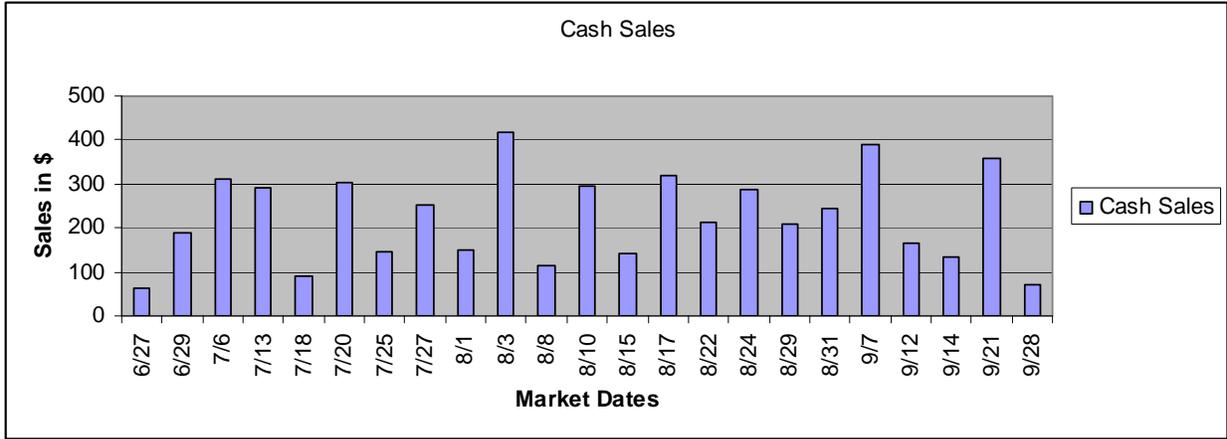
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Date: 4/9/12

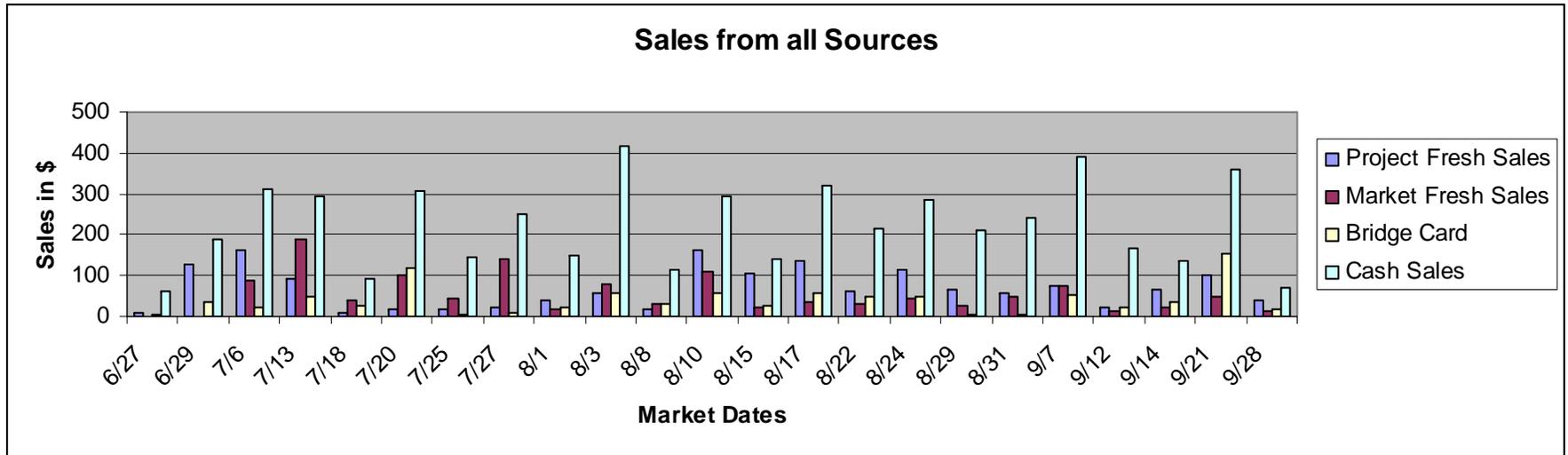
Berrien County Farmers Market Expansion Sales Records



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Berrien County Farmers Market Expansion Sales Records





Benton Harbor Farmers Market 2011 Season



Benton Harbor Farmers Market 2011 Season

(1) Benton Harbor Farmers Market - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.facebook.com/#!/BentonHarborFarmersMarket

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Contribute Edit in Contribute Post to Blog Convert Select

☆ Favorites (1) Benton Harbor Farmers Market

facebook Rudy Benson Find Friends Home

Search

Benton Harbor Farmers Market

Community · Edit Info

Wall Benton Harbor Farmers Market · Everyone (Top Posts)

Share: Status Photo Link Video Question

Write something...

Benton Harbor Farmers Market added 2 new photos to the album Summer 2011 Season.



Summer 2011 Season

Admins (3) [?] See All

- Use Facebook as Benton Harbor Farmers Market
- Notifications
- Promote with an Ad
- View Insights
- Invite Friends

You and Benton Harbor Farmers Market

3 friends like this.

Quick Tips

Get more people to like your Page with Facebook Ads today!

Sample Ad: Benton Harbor...

The text of your ad will go here.

Chat (1)

Internet 100%

Berrien County Health Department - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.bchdmi.org/index.htm

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Contribute Edit in Contribute Post to Blog Convert Select

Favorites Berrien County Health Department

Home RSS Print Page Safety Tools

While reflecting the spirit of the Health Department's mission and its population-based approach to health status enhancement. Find out more about these outstanding friends of public health by reading [Jerry Frank's accomplishments](#) and [Marjorie Rea's accomplishments](#).

[Click here to learn more about the Friend of Public Health Award.](#)

Farmers Market



The Benton Harbor Farmers market will once again be providing locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables to all who like to spend less for more! The Farmers Market will run beginning June 27th on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12 - 6 on the corner of Main Street and Pipestone in Benton Harbor. Please plan to make this part of your regular shopping routine. For more information, please download the [Benton Harbor Farmers Market Flyer](#).

New this year: The Farmers Market will be accepting Bridge Cards, along with Project Fresh and Market Fresh coupons.

HEARING and VISION Screenings



Because they have nothing to compare it to, young children can have hearing and vision problems and never even know it. Children entering school with undiagnosed hearing or vision problems will often have trouble learning, including reading or hearing teachers' instructions. To avoid these problems and make sure that children entering school are ready to read, listen and learn.

Internet 100%



Purple loosestrife, an invasive plant species, is visible in the Louis J. Sima Marsh along the Galien River. Chikaming Open Lands, a nonprofit group, is working to restore the marsh and other nearby wetlands, in part by eliminating or controlling such invasives. Scott Aiken / H-P staff

Monday, August 22, 2011 1:20 PM EDT
» Q&A: Alvaro Sarmiento
Monday, August 22, 2011 1:20 PM EDT
» In brief
Monday, August 22, 2011 1:20 PM EDT

GARAGE SALES
Click here to view the **Mānia Măp**

Nothing improves the look of your home quite like new flooring.
Click on ad to access our website.
COUNTRY CARPET
countrycarpetshoppe.net

2011 CHEVY MALIBU
Sign and Drive Special
\$269 down \$269 month 39 mo. lease
EVERYTHING INCLUDED...EVEN TAX!!
DOMINION
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WWW.DOMINIONCHEVYCOUNTRY.COM

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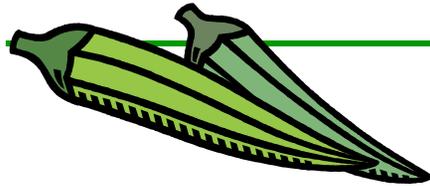
TOP STORIES MOST POPULAR MOST COMMENTED MOST E-MAILED SIGN UP FOR NEWS ALERTS

Shop Smart, Shop Local

Niles Downtown Authority Discover Niles... you'll love what you find! Niles Main Street	Benton Harbor Farmers Market Every Monday and Wednesday 12 pm - 6 pm Dwight A. Mitchell City Center Park Corner of Poplar and Main St.	U-PICK Raspberries OPEN TOWN A WEEK-AM-PM JULY - AUGUST DeGrandchamp Farms	Roger's Faster... fresher... lower... Roger's Old Europe Chosen From Benton Harbor	Spruce Ridge Best Golf Value in Michigan 18 Holes - Lounge - Outings Junior & Senior Rates 18 Holes w/ Cart Weekdays \$24, Weekends \$28 (269) 782-5827 20831 Dutch Settlement Rd. Doniphan, MI
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Click Here For More Offers

Roasted Okra



Roasted Okra

Ingredients

*18 fresh okra pods, sliced
1/3 inch thick
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 teaspoons kosher salt, or
to taste
2 teaspoons black pepper, or
to taste*

1. Preheat an oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).
2. Arrange the okra slices in one layer on a foil lined cookie sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake in the preheated oven for 10 to 15 minutes.

This publication is based on work supported by the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) Grant Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, under Award No. 12-25-G-1163.

Mashed Sweet Potato and Squash



Ingredients

- 3 sweet potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 butternut squash (peeled, seeded and cubed)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 cup maple flavored syrup

1. Place the sweet potatoes and butternut squash into a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes.
2. Drain and allow to steam dry for a minute or two.
3. Mash the sweet potatoes and butternut squash, then add cinnamon, nutmeg, and syrup. Mix until smooth.

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Mashed Sweet Potato and Squash

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Sautéed Butternut Squash

Ingredients

3 tablespoons olive oil
 1 butternut squash, washed, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1 inch chunks
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

1. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat.
2. Add squash and garlic and toss to coat with oil.
3. Saute slowly over low heat (avoid browning garlic), stirring frequently for about 30 minutes until squash is golden and tender (add water if squash begins to stick).
4. Add salt and pepper to taste, then sprinkle sage and parsley over squash. Mix well and serve.

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number of appointments are for uninsured local residents 64; household income may \$50,000 annually. for skin cancer, women in States are diagnosed with er more often than any other er," said Shelley Wilkinson, Health Coordinator, Lakeland. "Early detection dramatizes the chances of survival, important that all women receive enings."

Woman's breast health needs ent, so it's important for talk with their healthcare o best individualize a breast reening plan. The follow- ines were developed by the

- Have a clinical breast exam by healthcare provider about every one to three years.

- Age 40 and over - Have a mammogram and clinical breast exam yearly. Talk with your healthcare provider at the time of your clinical breast exam.

To discuss eligibility and schedule a mammogram through Pink Saturdays, call (800) 873-0649.

For more information about Pink Saturdays, visit www.pinksaturdays.org.

For more information on cancer care and resources for breast cancer patients and survivors available at Lakeland, visit www.lakelandhealth.org.

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**Every Monday and Wednesday
12 pm - 6 pm**

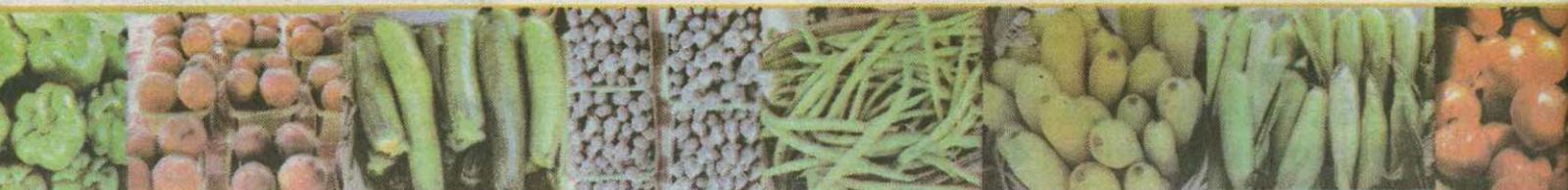
**Dwight P. Mitchell City Center Park
Corner of Pipestone and Main St.**



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... bombing occurred
... the base, the num-
... injuries it caused
... nificant. Combat
... usually house
... troops.

“Through a countrywide
uprising, the Afghans will
send the Americans to the
dustbin of history like they
sent other empires of the
past.”

... cross-border raid into Paki-
... stan, where al-Qaida’s lead-
... ership was driven. It was
... the deadliest single loss for
... American forces in the de-
... cade-old war.

... being kept out of the battle
... by their comrades from
... Bani Walid, who told them
... they do not want outside
... help. The out-of-town
... fighters said Bani Walid
... natives at times prevented
... them from searching homes
... or carrying out arrests of
... relatives who were on the
... Gadhafi side.

... alized and outgunned.
They said they had come
under heavy attack from
rooftop snipers and loyal-
ists firing mortars and
Grad rockets. Some said
Gadhafi loyalists also
spread oil and flammable
materials on uphill roads
to slow rebel convoys.

The fall of Tripoli in late
August – after a six-month
civil war with NATO air-
strikes aiding the rebels –
marked the collapse of
Gadhafi’s 42-year rule and
turned the dictator into a
fugitive. The rapid disinte-
gration of Gadhafi’s forces
in the capital, home to
nearly 2 million people,

NATO said Sunday that
its warplanes hit a series of
targets near Bani Walid a
day earlier – a tank, two
armed vehicles and one
multiple rocket launcher.
Airstrikes also pounded
targets around Gadhafi’s
hometown of Sirte, and
the towns of Waddan and
Sabha in the southern des-
ert.

enforcement official

**eric: Stop
g U.S. troops**

DAD (AP) — An
merican cleric is urg-
... llowers to stop at-
... U.S. troops in Iraq
... their withdrawal
... country isn’t slowed
... call meant to ramp
... ure on Baghdad’s
... leaders who are
... ng asking some
... h forces to stay.

I am obliged to halt military
operations of the honest
Iraqi resistance until the
withdrawal of the occupa-
tion forces is complete,” al-
Sadr said in the statement,
posted late Saturday. Sadrist
lawmaker Mushraq Naji
confirmed the statement on
Sunday.

However, al-Sadr warned
that “if the withdrawal
doesn’t happen ... the mili-
tary operations will be re-
sumed in a new and tougher
way.”

**SpongeBob in hot
water after study**

CHICAGO (AP) — The
cartoon character Sponge-
Bob SquarePants is in hot
water from a study suggest-
ing that watching just nine
minutes of that program

can cause short-term atten-
tion and learning problems
in 4-year-olds.

The problems were seen
in a study of 60 children
randomly assigned to either
watch “SpongeBob,” or the
slower-paced PBS cartoon
“Caillou” or assigned to
draw pictures. Immediately
after these nine-minute as-
signments, the kids took
mental function tests; those
who had watched “Sponge-
Bob” did measurably worse
than the others.

Previous research has
linked TV-watching with
long-term attention prob-
lems in children, but the new
study suggests more imme-
diate problems can occur
after very little exposure –
results that parents of young
kids should be alert to, the
study authors said.

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3

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& Flower
Gardener's
Dream...**

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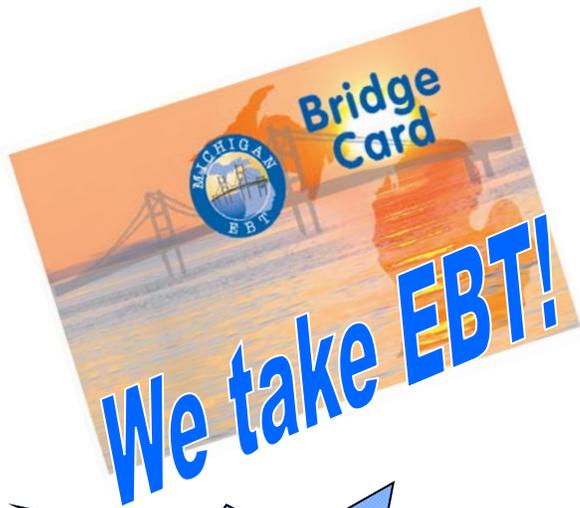
Mondays and Wednesdays

12pm to 6pm

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- Eggplant * Bell Peppers *
- Broccoli * Zucchini * Onions * Sweet
Potatoes * Cantaloupe * Watermelon *



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