

Partnership and Growth of the Brownwood Area Farmers' Market

Keep Brownwood Beautiful of Brownwood, TX, received \$3,050 to increase participation in the Brownwood Area Farmers Market by implementing an advertising campaign with billboards, posters, brochures, and guides. Funds were used to purchase new billboards, posters, brochures, and guides.

Final Report

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Project Title-

Partnership and Growth of the Brownwood Area Farmers Market

Summary-

Keep Brownwood Beautiful developed a partnership with the Brownwood Area Farmers Market to increase participation in the farmers market. The goal of the partnership is to increase the number of vendors and consumers who use the Brownwood Area Farmers Market was a success. The number of vendors increased by 75%. The stages of work were materials (billboards, posters, brochures, usage tracking system, and final guide), distribution of brochures, posters, billboards, and guides.

The partnership included two projects that help meet FMPP priorities. The first, "Growing Farmers" identified and recruited new vendors and consumers to participate in the Brownwood Area Farmers Market by surveying the community with a written survey sent to a random selection of people identified by voter roster. The second, "Innovative Partnerships and Networking" developed a new partnership between Keep Brownwood Beautiful and the Brownwood Area Farmers Market. With this partnership, Keep Brownwood Beautiful created a guide to help other groups partner with their local farmers market.

Goals of the Project-

The goal of this project was to develop a partnership between Keep Brownwood Beautiful and the Brownwood Area Farmers Market to help make the farmers market a stronger organization. The objectives were to increase both consumer and vendor participation in the Brownwood Farmers Market.

Work plan and Resource Requirements-

The needs of the Brownwood Area Farmers Market were:

1. More vendors- On average in 2007 there were five or less vendors at each event.
This year the market had 17 vendors
2. New Site- Currently the market is on a dirt, sometimes muddy, parking lot with no shade. The market was moved to under an overpass, which offered shade and easy access for both consumers and vendors. The site was shared with Keep Brownwood Beautiful in-town mobile recycling trailer
3. More variety of goods- With limited vendors there was not a wide variety of produce to encourage citizens to come to the market.
New vendors included crafts, artisans, bakers and new vegetable growers.
4. More awareness- There had not been an active program to increase vendors and consumers
Our greatest advertisement success was the two billboards displayed on major roads in Brownwood. They are eye catching and professional looking. Secondly, our printed material was easy to disseminate and display.
5. More Education- There had not been an effort made to educate both farmers and citizens on the benefit of purchasing locally grown food.

Educational outreach was done by submitting columns in the local newspaper, being interviewed by two local radio stations, and working with the local WIC Program.

Project Objectives-

1. To develop partnerships for Brownwood Area Farmers Market.

Keep Brownwood Beautiful will use its current partnerships, which include, the City of Brownwood, Brownwood Chamber of Commerce, Keep Texas Beautiful, the Brownwood Bulletin newspaper, and the County Extension office.

Timeline: all year

Work to be done by project manager and Keep Brownwood Beautiful volunteers and Board of Directors.

Providing each of our current partners with information and brochures on the Brownwood Area Farmers Market, soliciting coverage from our local newspaper and radio stations, submitting market dates for community calendars in the newspaper and Chamber of Commerce monthly newspaper insert, listing market dates on the websites of the Chamber of Commerce and Keep Brownwood Beautiful

Objective Met. Most successful was working with our local newspaper. The market was featured in six articles throughout the season and listed each week in the Community Calendar in the newspaper. Public Service Announcements and interviews were done by two local radio stations. Information is listed on Keep Brownwood Beautiful's website.

2. To locate a new site for the farmers market.

Work with the City of Brownwood to identify a new covered site and allow the Brownwood Area Farmers Market to use the areas.

Timeline: month one

Work done by project manager and City of Brownwood Public Works Director. Public Works Director will give suggestions of sites and permission to use the selected site.

Objective Met. The market moved to under the Austin Avenue Overpass. This is an easy site for vendors and consumers to access. It offers places for signage. It was shared with Keep Brownwood Beautiful in-town mobile recycling trailer, which already had a client base of over 75 regular visitors.

3. Develop awareness material.

Design and purchase two vinyl billboards for Brownwood with information about the Brownwood Area Farmers Market

Timeline: month one

Design and distribute 50 Brownwood Area Farmers Market posters that will be used every year

Timeline: month one

Design and distribute 100 brochures for vendors on the advantages of being a member of Brownwood Area Farmers Market, including information on how to increase sales

Timeline: month two

Design and distribute 300 brochures for consumers on the advantages of purchasing locally produced food

Timeline: month two

Design work done by project manager and contracting with local artist to do a branding logo. Keep Brownwood Beautiful volunteers and Board of Directors and members of the Brownwood Area Farmers Market will work cooperatively to distribute materials.

Objective Met. After seeing the submissions for our new logo, we decided to purchase the rights to use a commercially developed logo. This option was used to make sure the logo selected was relevant and professional looking. A single panel brochure was developed for vendors and one for consumers. Two vinyl billboards were created and displayed for the season with the agreement that they will be displayed in coming years. Posters were printed and distributed. We developed our written materials in such a way that they can be printed as necessary with up dated information rather than having them printed all at once. This way if the times/day/location change for the market, we can easily update our posters and brochures.

4. Track Progress of the Brownwood Area Farmers Market

Develop a tracking system for Brownwood Area Farmers Market to track consumer usage and vendor participation

Timeline: month three

Work done by project manager in collaboration with Brownwood Area Farmers Market's market director.

Objective Partially Met. The manager tracked vendor participation by keeping written track of what vendors set up each session. We were unable to come up with a system to track consumer usage. In discussion with vendors, the overall satisfaction rate for sales was high.

5. To share information

Develop and distribute a guide on how other affiliates of Keep Texas Beautiful can be partners with their local farmers market. This guide will be available for the 340 affiliates of Keep Texas Beautiful. It will also be available to Texas Certified Farmers Markets and the County Extension office

Timeline: month four and five

Work to be done by project manager.

Objective Met: Booklet created and sent to Keep Texas Beautiful to be available for their affiliates. It is also available on the Keep Brownwood Beautiful website.

What we learned. It is more time consuming to print pamphlets and brochures as needed rather than having them copied en masse. However, we are able to make changes as needed and are not having to throw away material if they become outdated. Tracking vendor success was complicated as we had many new vendors and no baseline. The billboards were great! Radio advertising via both public service announcements and purchasing spots reached a great number of people. By being more visible, we received greater coverage in our local newspaper. The market now has a new, shady location! Overall, the grant enabled KBB to work with the Farmers' Market and developed great material that will be used for many years. Our market now has hope to flourish instead of fading away.