

Initial Opening, Operating, and Promoting the Shawano Farmer's Market

Shawano Business Improvement District Board Shawano, WI received \$3,000 to develop a new farmers market in Shawano, WI. Funds were used to recruit local farmers as vendors; pay for market banners, print ads, and flyers; and research and document the effect of the market on the economic growth of local farmers and community.

Final Report

FMPP REPORT

August 25, 2009



Progress Report:

- Our main goal for the farmers market was to create a venue for local growers to sell their fruits and vegetables while creating a venue for local shoppers to purchase healthy food in a positive social atmosphere. From the beginning to what we have now we have gone from no venue to a regular weekly market which has grown from 8 vendors that first week to our current number of 25 vendors plus weekly music groups, master gardeners and general information booth. This has drawn a customer base which started at about 50 and now is several hundred.
- We have been fortunate not to have suffered any delays. The organizational committee made the effort to do the needed research, invite the appropriate and necessary people to come on board and begin well in advance of the opening of the market. The committee members were very pleasantly surprised at the rapid growth of the market, how well it was received by the community and businesses owners, how many people came forward to help as volunteers.
- During the winter months we are hoping to work on the following issues: expanding the market physical area; solving parking problems; secure more volunteers; work out any vendor issues that might require updating our vendor guidelines. We will schedule a second annual meeting which will give the volunteers, vendors and committee members a chance to go over in detail the past, present and future concerns.
- Over the course of the market's conception and growth to date, we have received grant monies and donations that have allowed us to hire a part time Market Executive Director, purchase necessary supplies and advertise to bring vendors and customers to the market on a regular basis.

Final Report:

- The original issue for our farmers market committee was to be able to establish a farmers market for the Shawano area that would be stable, serve the community of vendors and customers as well as promote the business community.

- The above issues were addressed through regular committee meetings, grant applications and fund raising. This along with the organization of volunteers and the market itself has made this a successful project.
- Our main project partner is the City of Shawano Business Improvement District. They have taken on this project as a part of their mission in the business community. Their support through office supplies and staff, insurance coverage and meeting space has helped to make this project a success. There are other project partners in the community such as the Shawano Medical Center who has given funds to promote the market and individuals who have given of their time and resources to see this project succeed.
- The result of these efforts is a very successful market in less than two years. The conclusions and lessons learned are that a well laid plan and the implementation of that plan are crucial to see a project succeed. That along with a watchful eye to keep the project afloat have been the driving force of the project. The committee members and organizational team that set this in motion are to be commended.
- The future benefit of this project is the continuation of the healthy life style that will be offered to the people of the Shawano area. Along with this is the opportunity for produce, meat, and other vendors to have a place to sell their product and a superior product for the customer to buy. The added bonus is the opportunity for local visitors and residence to enjoy the opportunity to visit the market as a social outlet where good music, good food and good fellowship abound.
- The Shawano Farmers Market is fortunate to have a volunteer web master and a donated web site at shawanofarmersmarket.org.
- There will always be a need for future research. We have committee members who constantly visit other markets, internet searches, bringing back advice and information to help us improve. To stop learning is to stop growing.
- Contact person for this project is Marlene Brath at 715-526-6138 or brath@shawanonet.net
- The Shawano downtown business community is a direct beneficiary of the farmers market traffic on Saturday mornings. Our elderly can call for bus pick up to the market and many of them use WIC or other food certificates for their purchases. We have had other communities contact us about how we got started and for advice for their communities. Recently a neighboring community started a market after visiting with us and attending some of our meetings. It is very gratifying to see them succeed also.