Safety and Communication Improvement for Green Bay's Farmers Market on Broadway

On Broadway, Inc. of Green Bay, Wisconsin received $13,588 to improve the Green Bay Farmers Market. Funds were used to perform a feasibility study for a street closure to improve safety and security at the market and to pay for a promotional campaign to improve usage of the market in downtown Green Bay.

Final Report FY09

2009 FMPP Grant Final Progress Report 12-25-G-0985

Farmers' Market On Broadway, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Submitted by Jessica Maass, Marketing and Communications Manager, On Broadway, Inc.

Date: 2/11/11

Activities performed and Milestones Achieved:

Objective: Communication with Market Goers
Activity: Creating print materials, website upkeep, signage

Effective Communication. Today, OBI does much of its application processing and information dissemination by hand, through the mail, or over the phone. This is time-consuming and decreases the effectiveness of the process as well as the number of services the organization could provide its vendors, volunteers, and event-goers. Without a Website, we are running an inefficient market and missing out on opportunities to address some of the other projects in this grant. With a website in place, we were able to share more vendor information and create an "online only" application which saved on paper, stamps and staff hours that can be used to accomplish other tasks for the Farmers' Market On Broadway.

Awareness. The question we answer most often is, "Where can I park?" and with 2010 starting the first year of the Farmers' Market On Broadway on a completely closed street location, the message of where to park needed to be top of mind for every event-goer. Since the Market is a weekly occurrence the event-goer can get into a habit of consistently parking in the same area. With Broadway closed, it created even more congestion and if a parking area was obstructed—we needed to let people know other areas to park. We did this through television and radio PSAs, flyers, posters, word-of mouth and event greeters in parking areas.

Objective: Communication with Vendors
Activity: Bilingual speaker for vendors and Market Manager

Bilingual Communication. The FMOB has a diverse population of vendors, including Native American, Hispanic, and particularly Hmong, an ethnic group from the mountainous regions of Southeast Asia. Hmong were relocated from refugee camps Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Burma to northeast Wisconsin in the 70's and 90's. Their culture is rural and based heavily in farming. So not surprisingly, 18%, or nearly 1/5, of the vendor applicants to the FMOB are Hmong. As a close-knit group, holding strong to their traditions, language is often a barrier when communicating with this group. From the application process, to day-of exchanges, communication can be arduous on both ends. This can be dangerous in emergency situations, such as when severe weather is moving through.

Having an interpreter available for the 2010 Farmers' Market was a blessing in many ways. The translator, Bee Vang, is a translator for students with the Green Bay Public School District and was very familiar with many of the vendors because their children attend class with Mr. Vang as their teacher which brought the familiarity and trust of the interpreter. Bee was also able to clear up much of the confusion with rules and regulations. In the past, children would translate for their parents and many times the message would not be translated correctly or the children didn't know different dialects of the Hmong language.

Objective: Safety of vendors and Market goers
Activity: Street Closure Feasibility Study

Street Closure. The goal is to provide the safest possible location for market vendors and attendees without compromising the other goals of the market. As stated in the Background, street closure is complicated when considering the needs of the different stakeholders. The wisest approach would be to fully study the situation and understand it from all angles and proceed with a well-planned strategy so as to garner the most support on a divisive subject for the 2010 market.

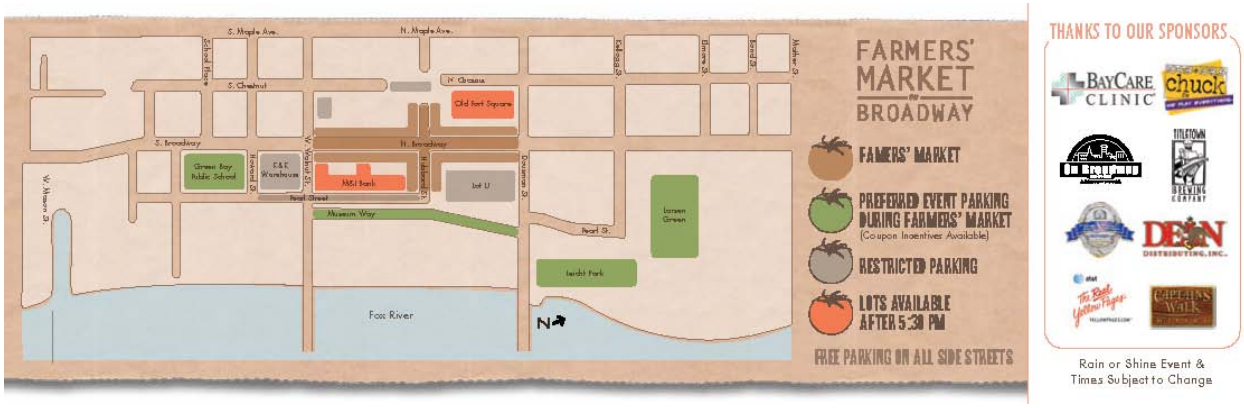
Street Closure Feasibility Study

- Surveyed Vendors if they would see value in Market street closure. The overwhelming response was yes.
- Surveyed Broadway Business owners to see if they equated value to Broadway closed for the Farmers' Market. This closure would affect nearly 30 businesses and their accessibility to customers trying to access storefronts on Broadway. It was a back and forth with a few businesses that didn't and still don't see the value in growing the Farmers' Market. Fortunately, it was a definite safety risk having up to 5,000 event goers within a two block radius on a highway route—we needed to create a pedestrian friendly event.
- Met with the City of Green Bay Traffic Department and created a layout that would be favorable for businesses, vendors and the City of Green Bay.

Print Materials

Front Tri Fold:

Back Tri Fold:



11x17 Poster:

Parking Incentives:

2009 FMPP Grant Final Progress Report 12-25-G-0985 (Addendum)

Farmers' Market On Broadway, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Submitted by Christopher Naumann, Executive Director, On Broadway, Inc.

Date: 5/24/11

As a supplemental report issued to the format standard for the 2009 FMPP Final Report format, per the request of Karl.Hacker@usda.gov, please accept this addendum to our Final Report.

Project Summary:

The issue was simply a growth problem. The success of Farmers' Market on Broadway (FMOB) reached a level of critical mass given its limited resourcing in previous years. Without a direct and aggressive step forward, the FMOB event risked hitting a glass ceiling and falling into a regressive state. Given the popularity of the event, the importance of the event in linking entrepreneurial local food based businesses, and given the commitment to On Broadway Inc. to promote our District as a main street program through successful and sustainable promotional event, the FMOB was at a tipping point. Either the event took steps forward, or it risked faltering under its own weight and starting a downsizing spiral. The Grant allowed FMOB to take significant steps forward in site expansion, street closure, in marketing, and in process consolidation to insure our event could take a large leap forward, and buy the organization the time required to set up sustainable practices through expanded sponsorships and programming, to insure the successful FMOB presence for years to come.

Project Approach:

The problems that plagued our FMOB project were a result of rapid growth in a very short period. Parking, congestion, traffic conflicts and dangerous pedestrian crossings were just one aspect of our market that were problematic. Communicating to patrons, vendors, and businesses throughout the process was a challenge given limited staffing and volunteers.

The approach was simple. Leveraging our grass-roots methodology as a main street program, a committee (through our governance) was established to strategize solutions for parking, and traffic conflicts. At the same time we worked closely with our local municipality to determine that a street closure approach was best to insure patron and vendor safety. The new "closed" events grounds would be far easier to manage for our organization. We also moved aggressively forward to move these proposals into policies and practice. Insuring our vendor processing was streamlined, and communications were standardized through web based communications, and a revamped "event branding" that put marketing materials in the hands of customers promoting the event, and communicating our new policies for parking and traffic management. Lastly, the effective reconfiguration of our grounds allowed significant vendor growth which then allowed us to maximize our efforts to set up a sustainable infrastructure for future events.

However, there were costs involved to make these steps. Sponsors are hesitant to pay for new configurations of events, so funding was challenged. We utilized our Grant to establish micro-projects to become established in our new growth mode. As documented by our reporting, we utilized the Grant to make evolutionary steps forward to create a more self-sufficient event that promotes local food production and sustainable business practices.

Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes:

Our event growth speaks for itself. We increased our capacity for vendors from less than 80 to over 140 in the 2010 season. We are poised to grow to 160 in the 2011 season. This increased density allowed funding that helps the organization. It also offers local vendors more opportunities to participate in our market. The increased density offers our market a unique and festival-like weekly destination that promotes healthy and sustainable food practices. Weekly visitor counts jumped from 2,000 to 4,000 on average, with favorable weather offering surges as high a 6,000 patrons weekly. The one-time boost from our Grant has allowed us to take these steps in 2010, and through backfilling with enhanced sponsorships, renewed confidence from vendors, and contributions from participants and volunteers. We've been able to reach a more sustainable operating model through our growth. Without the Grant we would have not been able to take those steps. Our event success has led to great economic windfalls as well. Besides the success of the event as a fundraiser for our non-profit, we also have been able to attract at least four new businesses who located to our district just because of the success of our FMOB event. This has lead to dozens of new jobs and as a part of our Main Street Program mission, has enabled businesses to invest in the infrastructure of our District.

Beneficiaries:

The entire Greater Green Bay Community has benefited from the success of FMOB. On Broadway Inc. as the event coordinator obviously benefits by the expanded ability to raise funds for our operations. We staff 4 full time employees and some of that support is directly from our events as FMOB. Local Businesses are the next beneficiary. Drawing thousands of people into the District weekly allows many of our small businesses unique marketing and opportunities to draw on new customers for business. The local neighborhoods now have a source for locally grown produce and products, where they are typically underserved the remainder of the year. Local food entrepreneurs now have additional opportunity to launch their businesses, and residents from the entire region have a social event that brings together community, commerce, and sustainable practices.

Lessons Learned:

Clearly, the lesson is that to effectively grow an event, one has to approach things rationally and with stakeholders. One has to work closely with the intent that growth will be able to sustain itself, so the event doesn't falter in future years. For On Broadway Inc. we understand that to grow, we must take calculated risks, we must never lose sight of our priorities and mission, and we occasional need to ask for help to get us to our next evolutionary steps.

Additional Information:

This process has been extremely educational for our humble non-profit. We have put forth great energy and effort to insure the FMOB is sustainable and secure in its future. We have utilized this Grant in the more ideal way. We've leveraged the Grant to teach our community to do for itself in the future. We've allowed our great event to become a cultural hub, to become a center of our summer life. It's become a valued asset that our community supports.