

Farmers Market spot near Big Four 'perfect fit'

Jenna Esarey, Special to The Courier-Journal, May 30, 2015



(Photo: Jessica Ebelhar/Special to The C-J)

From tents erected under the ramp to the bridge or tables set up in the nearby pavilion, vendors opened for business Saturday morning as the Jeffersonville Farmers Market moved this season to the shadow of the Big Four Bridge.

Arriving at the market on foot, on four wheels, or on two, shoppers could peruse the offerings while listening to live music, sipping a cup of coffee or glass of lemonade enjoying a fresh-baked muffin or quick bread.

Cut flowers, handmade soap, baked goods, bulk grains, jewelry and other crafts, and local beef, pork, goat and lamb meat will fill the vendor stalls this season - but fresh produce will rule.

"The craft and art people are a tremendous attraction," said Jay Ellis, director of the farmers market and of Jeffersonville Main Street. "But we definitely want to keep it focused more on the farmers."

"This location is off-the-charts better," said Monica Schotter, co-owner of The Barking Chicken Farm. She, along with her husband, Chris, will be selling recycled items such as tote bags made from t-shirts, and organic and heirloom varieties of produce when the crops start to come in within the next few weeks.

"It's a natural fit having the market here," Chris said. "This is the focal point of Jeffersonville, the perfect spot."

Molly Braun of Louisville, in town for another event, stopped by the market with her family. "We're checking it out," she said. "It looks nice. It's a good use of the space. I'm excited to see how busy they are."

The market has struggled in the past, moving from location to location over the years before settling in an open lot behind Wall Street Methodist Church on Chestnut Street for the last several years.

At its peak last year, 12 vendors participated in the market. "We've got 17 here for opening day and we expect to have 24 by the end of June," said Ellis. "The Big Four Bridge has been in the spotlight and we want to capitalize on that. We've needed a visible location and a permanent home."

Ellis said there were concerns before the move from some of the vendors. "Some of them worried we wouldn't have enough parking, but we have plenty," he said. "The city has given us permission to park cars on Colston Park's field (across the street from the market) if we need it. There's a lot of parking down here."

Future plans for the market include occasional chef demonstrations. "The Red Yeti is already on board," Ellis said. "We want to bring in chefs to show how to use this fresh produce."

First-time vendor Paula Cook, owner of Winnie's Decadent Desserts, appreciated her location in the pavilion. "I love this facility," she said. "There's a lot of traffic. I think it's going to work out just fine."

Shopper Ellen Kelley, a regular at the old market, visited on Saturday, walking across the Big Four Bridge from her downtown Louisville home. "I love the walking bridge and I love this market," she said. "The farmers market has really stepped up. There's lots more stuff. This is more of a festival atmosphere. It's great."