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In this section . . .

Farm News
Business
Real Estate
Club Reports

Loretto Farmers Market provides local food for local people

By Emily Weathers Kennedy

Our little town is hopping on Friday evenings. That is, ever since Memorial Day weekend, folks have been gathering at Weathers Park in downtown Loretto for the Loretto Farmers Market.

This event, which seems more like a festival, is the brainchild of several local growers from around the county and other interested parties who put their heads together to create something that is part entertainment—with various activities each week—part uniquely prepared wholesome products, and part food!

After creating a website and Facebook account (the latter being my part in this whole shebang), we have been hearing from folks from around the country, particularly from a wide swath of Tennessee and into Alabama. It seems that people just LOVE a good old farmers market, and Loretto is bringing one into fruition, one week and multiple ripening fruits and vegetables at a time!

There's something else we are hearing. People who grew up here are participating in the online forums, cheering us on, and remarking about how they wish they could join us. It seems that nostalgia for living in Lawrence County abounds, and those who do live here have much to be thankful for. Vendors bring fresh vegetables, fruit, fresh cut flowers, bedding plants, soaps, honey, herbs, baked goods, eggs, jams, jellies, grass-fed beef & lamb, poultry, pastured pork, homemade candies, and more from Middle Tennessee producers, while local musicians gather in the gazebo to create an ambience of a music festival. Every week has been different, with new produce coming in, new vendors joining in, and activities alternating (including story time and a book walk for children). And, Southern Tennessee Regional Health System has graciously participated every week with blood pressure checks!

Perhaps newcomer Natalie Addison has summed it all up the best. A recent transplant from Florida, Natalie lives blocks from downtown. She experienced our lovely Memorial Day service on the heels of the first Farmers Market. She said, "Oh my goodness! I love living in this town! It just feels so welcoming, so like I've come home!" I would tell Natalie that she has come home, and it's a wonderful place to live.

Loretto Farmers Market information:

- * Open every Friday through mid-October from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Weathers Park in downtown Loretto at the corner of Commerce and Main.
- * ARRIVE EARLY because vendors sell out!
- * To show folks how to prepare fresh, seasonal produce, Hoyt Tidwell demonstrates his recipes at 4:00 p.m.
- * Free market bags are available until they run out!
- * Information is posted each week on Facebook on the Loretto Farmers Market page and our website lorettofarmersmarket.com. You can also go to picktnproducts.org and follow the links through Middle Tennessee to Lawrence County. Please check there for changes in times/vendors/events.
- * Interested musicians, vendors, and charitable organizations wishing to set up food booths for fundraising may contact Royce Neidert @ 931-242- 8893 or Lawrence County Agricultural Extension Office @ 931-762-5506 for instructions.



Harley & Martha Simbeck's vegetables sell out early every Friday.



Local musicians gather with Dub Fowler at the gazebo for some lively entertainment.



Jobie Purser, Gracie & Gabriel Malone, and Jalyn Purser enjoy treats from Connie Konig's Speak Robin Farms.



Jack Addison enjoys Story Walk.



Hoyt Tidwell of Hoyt's Kitchen (hoytskitchen.com) demonstrates how to cook fresh garden vegetables.

For me, summer hasn't really started until tomatoes reappear in local farmer's markets -
Jose Andres

FARMERS' MARKET

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