

# Farmers Market back in season

By Shaun Zinck [szinck@beloitdailynews.com](mailto:szinck@beloitdailynews.com) | Posted: Thursday, May 2, 2013 4:00 pm

The Downtown Beloit Association is getting ready to kick off its largest Farmers Market Pre-Sale this Saturday.

For the first time State Street will be blocked off between Broad Street and Grand Avenue in order to have enough room for the vendors.

Crystal Buhmeyer, program coordinator for the DBA, said between 35 and 40 vendors have signed up for the pre-sale, which starts Saturday and runs each Saturday through May 25.

In the past, the pre-sale was held in the parking lot next to the Gantry, but Buhmeyer said too many vendors have signed up.

“The parking lot was only big enough for 18 stalls, and last year we overflowed into the Mill Street parking lot,” she said. “The 300 block of State Street will give us 48 stalls.”

The pre-sale has grown every year for the past several years. It started in the Third Street parking lot with about 15 vendors, Buhmeyer said.

Most of the produce isn't available for the pre-sale, Buhmeyer said, but other items such as jewelry, soaps and other handmade crafts will be on display.

“In terms of produce normally there is asparagus, cheese and maybe tomatoes,” she said. “Usually what I tell people is you'll see flowers and planting bed and crafts. Really anything that is shelf stable.”

This year the Beloit Department of Public Works will have a display each week corresponding with a division within the department.

The water utility and storm water division will start this Saturday and will have a few displays that inform residents on what crews do.

Mike Tinder, water utility supervisor, said dye tablets will be handed out for residents to detect if toilets are leaking.

“We'll also show how we detect a water main break,” he said.

Bill Frisbee, storm water engineer, said he'll have a storm water run off model that shows different ways water can be polluted by fertilizer and other chemicals.

“We'll be showing them things to be conscious of that can cause storm water pollution that they don't

know,” he said.

Wildflower seeds will also be handed out for residents to plant in their own garden. Frisbee said the flowers will help with groundwater infiltration around the city.

On May 11 the transit and parks and leisure services division will have a display. On May 18, the operation division will be passing out information on the Emerald Ash Borer and recycling.

Operations Director Chris Walsh said an ash tree with the EAB will be on hand to give residents an idea of what to look for in their trees.

The main Farmers Market starts June 1, the weekend after the final pre-sale. Buhmeyer said about 90 vendors set up displays during the main market sale, which runs through October.

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