SUMMER SEASON OF OLD CAPITOL FARMERS MARKET STARTS MAY 16 WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING CHANGES

CUDNTWN - DSI is kicking off the 21st summer season of the Old Capitol Farmers Market on Saturday, May 16 at 8 am. The “outdoor grocery store” will still take place on Adams Street, but COVID-19 will change the way shoppers experience the Market this summer.

According to Market Manager Kayla Graven, shoppers should consider it much like a grocery store experience: one shopper per household, do not shop if you are sick, and maintain at least six feet between yourself and other people.

“Having access to locally grown food has never been more important. We have stripped away the more social aspects of the Market so only the core function of providing local food products remains. We are also providing an online pre-order option for curbside pick-up for pre-orders that morning,” Graven said.

The summer season Market is sponsored by HSHS St. John’s Hospital, the presenting sponsor of the Market since 1999. The Market is held on Wednesday and Saturdays from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. through October 31. “We are so pleased the Market can remain open this year while following social distancing guidelines,” said Allison Paul, chief nursing officer for HSHS St. John’s Hospital. “It is an important source of fresh produce for Springfield and surrounding communities and a great way to support local farmers.”

Changes

Vendor booths will be set up in the middle of the street and facing out on Adams from 5th Street to 3rd Street, and extending to 2nd Street on Saturdays. This will provide more space for shoppers to keep the six-foot social distancing rule as they follow a circular path to visit each vendor.

There will be no musician performances, chef demonstrations, community workouts or food prepared at the Market this year. There will also be no ribbon cutting ceremony on the first Saturday. Two hand washing stations will be available and both shoppers and vendors are expected to wear masks. See the attached map.

**MORE**
Shoppers coming to the Market should:

- Follow state and CDC guidelines to wear masks and practice good cough and hand hygiene.
- Follow the signs and arrows pointing in the circular walking path past every vendor booth.
- **Not** touch any products before buying. Vendors will bag the items customers ask for/point to while wearing gloves.
- Pay each vendor with a credit or debit card, if possible. Vendors will accept the exact amount of cash only, so please be prepared to “round up” and donate the difference to the vendor if you do not have exact change or make sure you have enough small bills. There will be no cash tokens available.
- Only SNAP customers can redeem their LINK card for tokens at the Market Booth.
- Stay at least six feet away from other shoppers and vendors.
- **Not** linger at the Market during or after shopping, congregate in any social manner nor consume any food products while there.

**Online Pre-Orders with Curbside Pickup**

Shoppers may also use DSI’s pre-order option. The online pre-orders are accepted each week from Sunday at 9 a.m. through Tuesday at 5 p.m. at [https://www.localline.ca/old-capitol-farmers-market](https://www.localline.ca/old-capitol-farmers-market).

Online shoppers can make their selections and pay each using a credit card. On the following Saturday starting at 10 a.m., they should use the right lane of Washington Street to pick up their orders. Online shoppers will be assigned a 15-minute window to pick up their items curbside.

DSI tried out its new online pre-order/curbside pickup system at the final Winter Market of the season. It was very popular, with more than 130 customers placing their orders online and picking up on April 25. Farmers earned approximately $8,400 from online pre-orders.

*Downtown Springfield Inc. celebrated 20 years of overseeing the Old Capitol Farmers Market summer season in 2019. That same year, DSI added six Winter Markets to its Old Capitol Farmers Market program, once-a-month markets which had originally been developed by Illinois Stewardship Alliance. Illinois Farmers Markets have been deemed an Essential Business by the State of Illinois during the COVID-19 crisis because of their critical role in providing a link between local farms and citizens. Follow Old Capitol Farmers Market on Facebook for updates or bookmark our website at [http://www.downtownspringfield.org/old-capitol-farmers-market/](http://www.downtownspringfield.org/old-capitol-farmers-market/).*

# # # # #