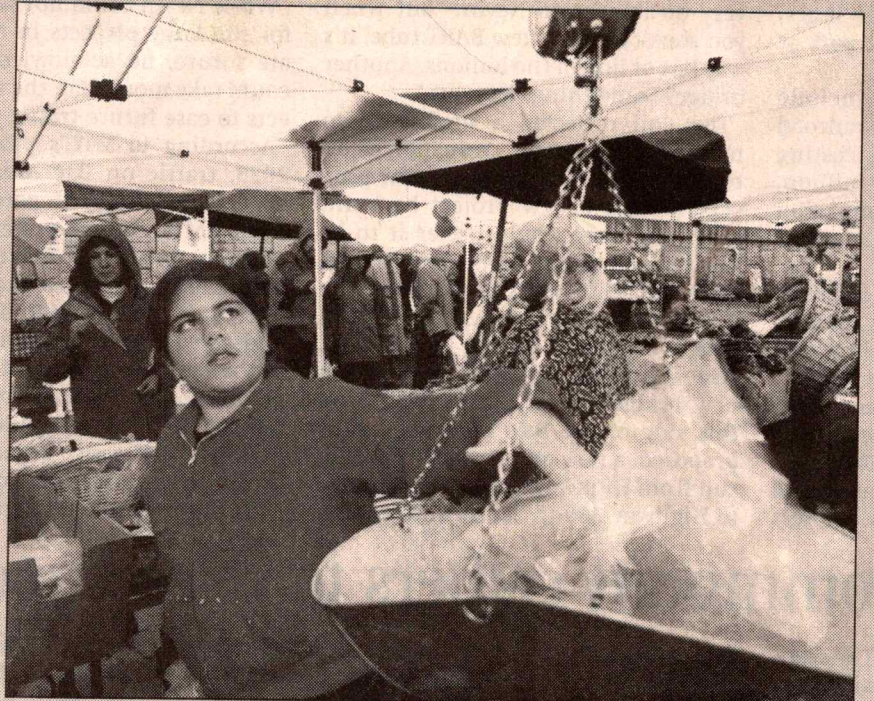


*Farmer's Market
The Independent
June 5, 2002*

Farm fresh



Margarita Trembos weighed a bag of lettuce as she assisted her grandmother Jeanne from Specialty Produce at a booth at the Belmont Farmer's Market May 19. The farmer's market, located at the Belmont Caltrain Station, is open every Sunday morning through August.

ERIN DAY

Sunday farmer's market begins June 4th

Caltrain allows space near Ralston Avenue for six-month location

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

Supporters learned last week that efforts to bring a regular farmers' market to Belmont's downtown were not fruitless.

Acting as the Belmont Redevelopment Agency on April 11, the City Council unanimously approved a six-month lease for space, \$20,000 to pay a group to run the weekly produce markets, and told city staff to work up an agreement with the operator.

Whether it offers pears, peaches

or pomegranates, city officials see a weekly farmers' market, beginning this summer, as a big step toward revitalizing downtown.

"We feel that, for the amount of \$20,000 for half a year, to bring a weekly venue into the community, this would be one of the most economic and viable alternatives for the downtown area ..." said Belmont Economic Development Coordinator Julie Woepke of the market, which will be held Sundays, beginning June 4, and feature produce, entertainment, flow-

ers and other services and vendors. "Even for business that are not even open [on Sundays] it's still bringing people to the downtown — it reminds them that the dry cleaners is there, that certain restaurants are there," Woepke said, adding that the markets would probably be held between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. "It will help encourage, reinforce people shopping and staying in Belmont."

As a result of their recent efforts, city officials got the OK from the Joint Powers Board, a multi-county board that oversees Caltrain, to hold the event at one of their train station parking lots in the 1300 block of El Camino Real, south of Ralston Avenue.

Areas at City Hall and the College of Notre Dame were considered, Woepke said, but the El Camino Real lot proved the most ideal.

"We wanted to have something that's accessible to Belmont residents living in the north, south, east, west. People that travel on Caltrain can use it, it can be used by people who are using SamTrans, public transportation," she said. "It will be where we can have our bike trail system."

The lease approved allows for use of the lot for a trial, six-month period, minus a handful of Sundays, when the San Francisco Giants have home games scheduled and Caltrain officials expect they'll need the parking for ballpark com-

muters. On those days, Woepke said, the produce market would be moved across the street to a public lot near Waltermire and O'Neill avenues.

Woepke said she talked to a number of business owners in the area who felt the market would be a positive addition to the city. Officials will be working with the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association, a group that brings together farmers to sell at the events and handles marketing for cities it works with, operating about 18 farmers' markets around the Bay Area.

The Belmont Chamber of Commerce and the city worked with the group last November to

MARKET: page 5A

MARKET: Traditional gathering place returns

Continued from 1A

host a one-time farmers' market, in an effort to bring attention to downtown businesses in the area suffering through street closures for construction of train overpasses above El Camino Real. Organizers were gauging the community's reaction to the event, which drew about 500 people, with hope that it would garner enough support from residents to bring it back for a more permanent stay.

Judging by the "overwhelming response" that she received recently, Mayor Terri Cook said residents must have gotten a good taste.

"Up until I left the house at a little after six this evening, I think I had received maybe 50 e-mails of

support for this..." Cook said at the recent meeting.

The markets could prove a "nexus" for the community, according to Planning Commissioner Elizabeth Wiecha.

"One of the oldest and most traditional gathering places for a community is the market place and a farmers' market will provide just such a sense of community and an opportunity for different people within Belmont to gather..." said Wiecha. "I think this is a very important opportunity for us to bring people back to downtown after a long hiatus of disruption."

Councilmembers agreed that the benefits of the market would far outweigh the cost of working with

the farmers' market association.

Councilmember Paul Wright, who used to work with Santa Rosa's Chamber of Commerce, said an outdoor produce market had been in place for several years in

that city and had become very popular.

"The one in Santa Rosa now literally attracts thousands of people," he said. "It would be a nice problem to have."

*Farmer's Market
The Chamber
opened 19, 2008*

Belmont Farmers Market
The Independent
Nov 17, 1999

Fruits, vegetables to boost business

Belmont plans first farmers' market to aid the downtown

By Amy Yarbrough
Staff Reporter

City officials and the Belmont Chamber of Commerce are assembling a city farmers' market to help revitalize downtown businesses that will be isolated during the next six months, when portions of a vital city street are closed to complete construction beneath Belmont's new train overpasses.

The market, which is one of several events planned to aid businesses near the intersection of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue, will host about 20 farmers selling fruit and vegetables, vendors with other edible offerings and events such as face painting for children. Belmont merchants will also showcase their wares throughout the event.

Planned to coincide with Thanksgiving and the city's Holiday Crafts Faire at the Twin Pines Senior Center, the market will be open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday at the Twin Pines Park Meadow off of Ralston and Sixth avenues.

"There are so many people that want that market in Belmont," said Julie Woepke, the city's economic development director. Woepke added that the upcoming event is a test case, so organizers will be asking for feedback, both through fliers handed out at the event and through the city's website: <http://www.belmont.gov>.

"It's like a spill-over effect on the surrounding businesses," Woepke added, explaining that by drawing people downtown for the produce market, they may also be encouraged to frequent stores and eateries in the area. Organizers also hope the market

FARMERS: page 11A

FARMERS: Boosting business

Continued from 1A

will bring in visitors from San Carlos and Redwood Shores, which don't have farmers' markets of their own.

If enough positive response is generated from the event, the city will look for a permanent place to set the market up each week and could likely resume the event next spring during the growing season, according to Woepke.

"This is a kick-off. This will be a way of [determining] whether or not the city can support a full-time farmers' market," added Joan Dentler, executive director of the Belmont Chamber of Commerce.

Though businesses have suffered in varying degrees throughout the four years of the "grade separation" project to raise train tracks above El Camino Real, Dentler said it was very necessary to schedule upcoming business events because

city officials anticipate that the upcoming months will be the toughest.

The closure of business laden-por-

'This will be a way of [determining] whether or not the city can support a full-time farmers' market.'

Joan Dentler, executive director of the Belmont Chamber of Commerce

tions of Ralston Avenue — from just west of El Camino Real to Old County Road — began Nov. 9, and is expected to last until May, 2000.

Though she hasn't heard too many recent complaints from business owners, the closure makes it more difficult for drivers to access

shopping centers like Bayview Plaza at Ralston and Sixth avenues. Dentler said she fears some shoppers may avoid the area altogether.

In addition to the farmers' market, the Chamber of Commerce will be offering half off membership for new businesses and will be working with businesses to offer coupons through the city's newsletter, which is mailed to all households in Belmont.

The City of Belmont is also planning a free business workshop. The seminar, entitled "What Happens Once the Customer Is In the Door?" will be presented by Sheila McElroy, a downtown revitalization consultant on Tuesday, Nov. 30, from 8:30 to 10 a.m., at Belmont City Hall, room 101. Reservations must be made by Monday.

Call (650) 595-7408 for more information or for reservations.