Old Capitol Farmers Market Moves to Wednesday Afternoons

New collaboration will grow the Market, which starts Wed. May 11 & Sat. May 14

SPRINGFIELD – Downtown Springfield, Inc. is planning its biggest Old Capitol Farmers Market (OCFM) season yet, thanks to a collaboration with two non-profits whose missions involve local foods. HSHS St. John’s Hospital has also increased its commitment as the Market’s premier sponsor; this is the 20th year in a row St. John’s has been a main sponsor.

“St. John’s is proud to be the premier sponsor as we believe in the importance of locally-grown, fresh produce to help people live healthier lives,” said HSHS St. John’s President and CEO Charles L. Lucore, M.D., M.B.A. “We’ll be at the Old Capitol Farmers Market each week, offering various health screenings such as blood pressure monitoring and measuring body mass index for free.”

Illinois Stewardship Alliance (ISA) has a statewide mission to promote local food systems, and they are managing the OCFM vendor registration and at-market experience this year. Generation Healthy Kids (genHkids), whose mission is to educate families about growing and cooking with healthy foods, is organizing the chef demonstrations, musical acts and other amenities that enhance the community experience. Both organizations have downtown headquarters.

The first Wednesday market of the season will take place on May 11. The Wednesday market is moving from its traditional morning hours to 3-6:30 pm in the afternoons.

“We have some exciting changes in store for this season,” said Lisa Clemmons Stott, DSI Executive Director. “Convenience for consumers and a closer tie-in to our downtown scene is what is driving these changes. People are really liking the idea that they can do their end-of-day shopping to get the freshest, most local produce and goods right here in the heart of the city, as well as linger a little bit in this beautiful area, maybe try out a new store or restaurant.”

The official Grand Opening of the Market will be Saturday, May 14 at 10 am. Mayor Langfelder and Governor Rauner have been invited. Cake will be provided by Incredibly Delicious. The Saturday Market will keep the traditional morning hours of 8 am – 12:30 pm but it will have a more compact footprint; instead of placing vendors west of the railroad tracks at 3rd Street, the Saturday market will expand to the Resource One parking lot in addition to Adams Street between 3rd and 5th. In addition, the City of Springfield has opened up its parking ramp at 4th and Washington for FREE Saturday Farmers Market parking (normally a $5 charge).

“We’re excited to be a part of Springfield’s most popular and longest-running Market and be able to add our expertise in helping farmers get to market and to provide that seal of approval which tells consumers that they can be confident that they food they buy here is locally sourced,” said Lindsay Record, Executive Director of Illinois Stewardship Alliance. Vendors have until May 1 to sign up. Information is at http://www.ilstewards.org/old-capitol-farmers-market/.

“This collaboration ties in beautifully with the work genHkids is doing to help educate families and to address food deserts with our new cold storage truck and our work with community gardens,” said Jen Dillman, Executive Director of genHkids.