



# Independence Farmers Market 2019 Year in Review

## Opening Day

We had a successful (and cold!) opening day for the 2019 Independence Farmers Market. 23 vendors made an appearance along with a half dozen Ambassadors for the ribbon cutting on May 11, 2019.



## Vendors

We had 59 registered vendors this year with 17 vendors new to the market. 34 vendors sold fresh fruits/vegetables, baked goods, jam/jellies, eggs, honey, and pork. 25 vendors sold handmade craft items. June 22<sup>nd</sup> was a record number for vendor attendance for the year with 31 vendors.



## Event Days

• **Kid's Day:** The Buchanan County Master Gardener's hosted a craft which reached just over 50 kids. Mr. Nick also joined us to create balloon animals and figures for the kids.

Top: The Chamber Ambassadors performing a ribbon cutting for opening day. Bottom: Maegan Sonksen with Sonksen Haus Artisanal Goods.



• **Dog Day:** This day consisted of Pet Photos by Wilson Photography and proceeds went to the Indee Bark Park and free treats from Holly's Hobby.

• **Community Organization Day:** Four community service organizations set up tables to help spread the word about their efforts and recruit members.

• **Plant a Flower Pot:** The Buchanan County Master Gardeners hosted a booth in the spring to help you plant up your flower pots for the summer.

• **Conservation Station:** The Conservation Station from Iowa Learning Farms in Ames made a stop at the market! Market goers learned about how water and the landscape work together and had fun participating in a few games!

• **Wellness Fair:** August 11 was the annual Wellness Fair, where eight organizations and businesses provided very helpful information to keep our community happy and healthy!

Top: Winner of the Scarecrow Judging Contest. Middle: Kids made scarecrow heads during Kid's Day. Bottom: Printed dog photos from Dog Day.

• **Scarecrow Contest:** Because Art Under the Oaks was not held this year, we were able to host the Buchanan County Master Gardener Scarecrow Judging Contest. Seven people/organizations submitted scarecrows which were voted on by market goers. The winner of the contest was Darrel E Davis Adult Day Center.

• **Soup Feed:** The first fundraiser day for the Historical Society raised \$225! Vendors made soups and desserts for the occasion.

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- Chili Cook-off: The second fundraiser of the year did not have that great of turnout because of the weather, but there was a decent turn out – almost 30 people casted their vote for their favorite chili. Vendors donated soup, cornbread, and desserts. The winner was a chicken chili made by 10-year-old, Avah Julip!



Top: The Independence Public Library  
Teens created kohlrabi salads.  
Bottom: Samples of herb-infused oils.

### Guest Chefs and Taste Tests

The market had several Guest Chefs this year! Joe Olsen cooked up some yummy asparagus recipes with breakfast sausage by local Krogmann Heritage Meats. Throughout the summer, community members volunteered their time to make fresh salsa, kohlrabi salads, pasta salads, and more! The Buchanan County Master Gardeners also provided a taste test of heirloom tomatoes from their gardens. Vendors were also encouraged to provide samples of their products on the “Sample Saturdays”. All was a great success and we appreciate the community’s support!

### Junior Farmers Market

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Junior Farmers Market was held August 13 from 5-7 pm at the Buchanan County Tourism Depot during the Tuesday Night Market. The purpose of the event is to encourage creativity, entrepreneurship, and interpersonal skills for the youth throughout the county. There were six vendors, whose ages ranged from nine to 14 years old, and sold items ranging from baked goods, vegetables, earrings, and hand painted signs. All had great sales and a lot of fun! About 50 people attended. Keep an eye out for next year’s event!



Vendors at the 2019 Junior Farmers Market.

### Market Metrics



Sample of what can be created with data entered into Market Metrics.

This past year, the Iowa Farmers Market Association provided markets with an amazing opportunity to track metrics. The Association has become a part of the National Farmers Market Coalition’s Market Metrics program; a program that has helped thousands of markets across the nation track all sorts of data to help their reach to the public.

The Independence Farmers Market was fortunate enough to be a part of the Iowa group this past year, using it to track events, vendor counts, and weather data. Next year, though, the market will be diving head first into the many more useful features of this program to get a better picture of the market landscape in the coming years. A notable count we preformed in August was a sample

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visitor count. The first 20 minutes of each hour the visitors were counted and it was estimated that 969 people walked through the market! Another metric we loosely tracked was estimated sales. Of the vendors that provided the information throughout the season, it has been estimated that the community contributed over \$38,000 to the market vendors – thank you!

## Tuesday Night Market At the Depot

A new market this year was a Tuesday night market held at the Buchanan County Tourism Depot. It was held the third Tuesday of the months of June through September. The first market had the best turnout of vendors and customers. It was fun to reach a new audience and meet new people. Next year, we will consider the viability of another market and try to make it the best possible time and place for everyone involved.



Tuesday Night Market under the Depot awning.

## Second Saturday Series



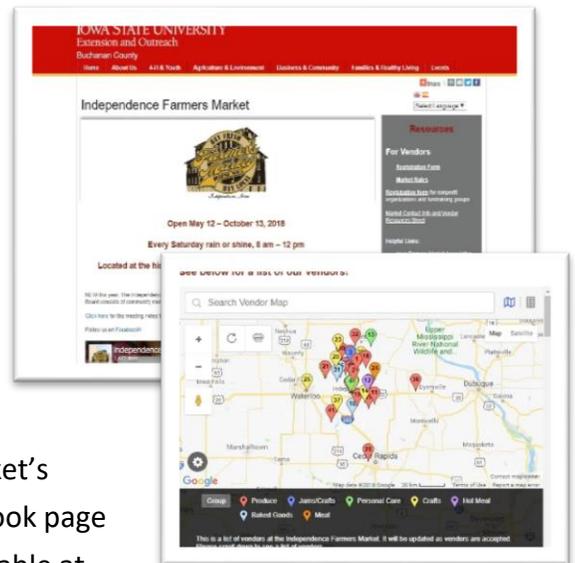
Blue Rapids playing on the Mill deck.

The community group, LACES (Local Arts Comprehensive Education Strategies), who is dedicated to local art promotion and education, wanted to contribute to a community event this year. They chose the market as the place to do just that. The group sponsored four musicians to play the second Saturday of the months of June through September. Musicians came from all around eastern Iowa and were very talented! This event really helped with the visibility of the market and the success of the vendors. We would like to commend LACES for the smooth coordination of the musicians and how it has added to the market! We can't wait for this event next year!

## Marketing

Several marketing strategies were utilized this year to help promote the market to new customers and vendors.

- **Website:** A new webpage on the Buchanan County ISU Extension and Outreach's website was set up at the beginning of this season. This is a great place for vendors and eaters to look for resources and information. Also new this year is an interactive map of where the vendors of the market are located throughout Buchanan and surrounding counties.
- **Facebook:** Use of social media played a vital role in the market's success and popularity again this year. We utilized our Facebook page to promote events, keep people up-to-date on what was available at the market, and promote community businesses and organizations. At the beginning of January 2019 there



Top: Independence Farmers Market webpage on Extension's website. Bottom: New interactive map of vendors.

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Independence Farmers Market Facebook cover photo.

were 1,479 likes on the page and to date there are 1,643 likes. We held 22 events and reached over 18,000 people. Please keep sharing and liking the posts and pictures!

• Independence Bulletin Journal: Again, this year, John Klotzbach of the Bulletin Journal dedicated his Saturday mornings to taking pictures at the market and visiting with the customers and vendors. Almost every week there was a

great article and photo display in the newspaper. We really appreciate John’s support! Also, thanks to the Bulletin Journal for their promotion of buying local year round!

• Farmers Market Bucks: These coupons were created as a way for business and organization to give out as a gift certificate of sorts. When a customer uses the coupons, the vendor brings them to the Market Manager for reimbursement from the Farmers Market account. A couple local organizations utilized them this year.



Farmers Market Bucks coupon.

• Presentations: Sarah Kielly, Market Manager, gave a presentation to the Independence chapter of the Rotary Club.

### Board Update

The Independence Farmers Market Association Board met in April for the spring vendor meeting. Guest speaker was Adam Hahn from Black Hawk Public Health. Good discussion was had about food safety regulations for vendors of farmers markets. In November, the Association elected new Board members and discuss the future of the market management. Re-elected/new board members include **John Klotzbach, Jan Jefferson, Derick Perkins, Mariana Lawrence, and Meagan Sonksen**. If interested in serving on the Board, please contact Market Manager, Sarah Blunt.

### Holiday Farmers Market

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Farmers Market was held in December 2019 during Jingle On Main. The market was located at Living Water Church in downtown Independence. There was a decent turnout of vendors, 10 in all, who sold anything from honey, to baked goods, to stained glass. The vendors donated their fee for the night to the church so they can help a family in need for the holidays. Thank you to everyone who comes out to support the vendors year round!



Top: Hand carved stamped prints made by Scott Jans.

Bottom: Goodies made by Mariana Lawrence.

## In Memory

This past spring, we lost a great person. Gordon Murray-John, a long-time vendor of the market, passed away unexpectedly. Gordon was an avid supporter of local foods and always had many unusual varieties of produce. We will miss him dearly in the years to come.

## Last, But Not Least...THANK YOU!

The market would not have such success without our consistent and supportive customers! You make the market what it is and help support the small businesses and farmers within our community and county!



## Contact Information

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Independence Farmers Market  
100 1<sup>st</sup> Street West  
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Times of Operation: Mid-May thru mid-Oct.  
Saturdays, 8 am – 12 pm