

City of Bristol Tennessee

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City Announces Opening Day of Farmers Market with New Programs

City of Bristol Tennessee officials announced Saturday, May 7, 2011 as the opening of the State Street Farmers Market. This year a new program is being introduced to market patrons who possess SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) EBT cards. For the first time in its decade old history, the market will be accepting SNAP EBT cards on the grounds. The market received approval from the USDA to accept SNAP Benefits. An EBT system will be set up in the concession area where participants can scan their card and receive wooden tokens of either \$1 or \$2 value. Those tokens may be redeemed with any market vendor offering food items. Terry Napier, Director of Parks and Recreation, the department which oversees market functions stated, "We are very excited about offering this new service to those in our community who wish to shop the market for the fresh produce and fruits offered during the season. It is a wonderful opportunity for us to support not only those holding EBT cards but for us to support our local farmers to an even greater degree than we have been able to in the past."

Another exciting segment of the plan is being offered through the YMCA's "Pioneering Healthier Communities Program." This program will provide an additional \$5,000 in funds to match SNAP purchases at the market. For example, if someone purchases \$3.00 in green beans their \$3.00 purchase can be matched with another \$3.00 provided by the PHC Program. Chris Ayers, CEO of the YMCA said, "We hope this matching funds program encourages families to

come out to the market and find the best in locally grown fresh produce. It is important for our children to be nourished each day with fresh vegetables and fruits in their diets.” Ayers continued, “We are very proud to be participating and partnering with the State Street Farmers Market.”

This year the market is also offering a new poster series that will feature six (6) limited edition posters highlighting some of the downtown area’s most significant historical sites and events. The posters will only be offered to the first 250 persons attending the market each month. Each poster is marked as only 1 of 250 printed. The series is expected to become collector’s items. There is no charge for the posters. Terrie Talbert, Director of the city’s Community Relations Department explains, “Each year we have been featuring a new market poster. This year we wanted the poster to be unique to Bristol and to create something that not everyone had. We decided to limit the number of posters offered to make the ownership of the entire series something distinctive.” Talbert continued, “We really don’t expect the individual posters to last for a full month. So everyone needs to get out to the market early on the first Saturday of each month to pick up their copy.”

The State Street Farmers market opens in May of each year and runs through October. For more information about the market please go to the market website at www.statestreetfarmersmarket.com.

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