Woodstock Farmers’ Market

Setting the Table for Collaboration
History

- Producer-only market.
- 1982-2004 five vendors.
- Located on space donated by local merchant.
- Operated within Chamber of Commerce with limited autonomy.
- First grant received from Illinois Dept. of Agriculture for promotion of Market in 2004.
- Last grant received from USDA for education on eating locally year round.
Stakeholders

- Vendors
- Municipality
- Local Merchants
- Customers
- Community Groups
Vendors

- Need to increase number of vendors and products offered.
- Need to determine what type of promotion is most effective.
City of Woodstock

- Increased services needed for increased traffic.
- Health Department advisory for food sampling.
- Safety of customers if moved to street.
Local Merchants

- Concerned about diminished parking.
- Effect of Market on business.
Customers

- Desired increased options for local and organic produce, particularly berries, mushrooms, eggs, free-range meats and dog treats.
- Information about the various methods of agriculture (organic, natural, etc.)
Customers

• Many indicated interest in joining the Market but felt they needed more information before committing.

• Viewed the Market as an “event” and requested activities such as music and cooking demos.
Community Groups

- Wish to use the Market space for community education.
Current Status

• Recognized as #1 in the state by *Local Harvest*.
• Vendor base increased to 35.
• Market surrounds the Square.
• Parking signs strategically directing customers to additional parking.
Current Status

- Increased vendor participation allows for market manager.
- Cross marketing options with restaurants and other businesses.
- Split from Chamber for increased autonomy.
- Two advisory positions created on board for increased feedback.
- Increased business allows for Market to be eligible for Hotel/Motel Grant.
Current Status

- Increased vendor base allows for additional funds to be offered to community groups.
- Community groups offered free vendor space.
- Music and chef demos offered for both Markets.
Institutional Engagement

- High schools receive free vendor space.
- These have historically been groups that are not often involved with extracurricular activities.
- University of Illinois Master Gardeners provide education for customers.
- Farmers’ Market 101 offered at community college.
- Marketing for local cheese production developed by University of Illinois class.
Engagement

- Oregon State University tools used for rapid market assessments.

- Market has become involved with a cohort of universities involved in value-added product.

- Latest grant provides education on eating locally throughout the year through preservation of product and production of value added product by vendors.
Future

- School gardens
- Food incubators
- Agriculture in the classroom
- Business development
- Food councils
- Agriculture Conservation Easement Commission for farmland
- Institutionalizing organic and local food