

THE BELL RINGER

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[Broad Street Market Grows Riverside, Boosts Economy](#)

Posted on 23 August 2011 by Staff



At Saturday Market on the River (SMR) in Augusta, jazz and blues fill the air, water shoots 50 feet towards the sky from a fountain and local and non-locals travel from as far away as Alabama to shop.

The market, located at 416 8th Street, Augusta, Ga, first opened in 2005. Margret Woodard, Director of the Downtown Development Authority mission is to work with the city and the economic development. Assist new businesses, renovate buildings and get people living downtown again.

“When you’re trying to promote and redevelop an urban setting like down town one of the things you try to do is events,” Woodard said.

According to Woodward, events are what draw people to downtown.

Brooke Buxton, who is the market director, came on the scene in 2009.

Buxton also is the president of Broad St. Inc., a non-profit organization that supports the market.

Buxton who is a native Augustan, lived in New Orleans and has enjoyed that the people always had something to do on the river. It was this experience that gave her the background to direct the saturday market towards her vision of more involvement from community centers, schools, churches, kid groups and performances from choirs.

She started with the market as a means to bring growth to local business.

“A dollar spent stays in Augusta,” Buxton said.

Buxton and Woodard said they are very passionate about the market. In keeping with their mission statement, they want to work within the community by promoting business and entertainment.

Many businesses have sprung up from being a part of the market. Vendors such as Manuel Venerly Carron of Manuel’s Bread Café in North Augusta, SC., or James Cook, who grows and sells his own fresh vegetables have gotten their start in business through the success of the market.

Cook has been a vendor at the market for five years. He is known for his fresh tomatoes.

“There are more people here at the market on Saturdays than the flea market,” Cook said.

This is why he moved his business from the flea market to the Saturday market. At the market, freshness, flavor and consumer interest are key.

Cook allows his customers to taste the tomatoes before buying, something he feels is a market-specific commitment to customer satisfaction that keeps them coming back to his business.

Other market veterans include Paulette Black of Paulette’s Best Food; Inc. Black has been with the market for five years. Unlike some vendors Black’s product can be purchased at outside stores. Her sauces are sold at Lil’ Dutch Bakery on Washington Road in Augusta.

“If it has my name on it, I want to tell you about my product and let you taste it,” Black said.

The market is growing into a uniquely diverse section of the downtown community, located within walking distance from the river, Cotton Patch restaurant and the building site of the new tech center.

Buxton wants SMR to be open seven days a week, rain or shine. She said she believes in free market where people have the ability to try out their ideas.

The market is open from April 16- Oct. 29. At the end of the season the market finishes with the “Christmas Commons Spectacular.” More than 10,000 people from all around the world travel to see the spectacular light show.



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