

Expanded Market Opens on April 16 with New Vendors and Musicians

The Augusta Market begins its 2011 season on Saturday, April 16 at the 8th Street Plaza at Reynolds Street and the Riverwalk. Last year's market saw innovative direction through the public/private partnership between the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and a local group of entrepreneurs, strengthening and expanding the market. "The DDA successfully incubated the idea of a privately run market, in keeping with its mission, released a self-sustaining enterprise to the private sector," said Brooke Buxton.

Buxton took over direction of the market, while maintaining her status as a local plant grower and market vendor. Buxton's interest in helping to build the local community (she is a member of the Canal Authority board, in the 2011 class of Leadership Augusta and partnering with the Harrisburg Honey Co-op) lends credibility to her handling of the Augusta Market. She wants the market to be a part of "promoting life at the Riverwalk" and uses the slogan "Diggin' the River" (which may hint at a future marketing campaign – that there is more than one way to "dig" the river).

Buxton and the 2010 market set a new standard by attracting vendors offering unique, locally grown and hand-crafted items. Vendor fees were lowered by 30% and half-booth spaces were made available. Last year's favorite offerings included fresh gulf coast seafood, fresh-squeezed lemonade, River Runs sponsored by Fleet Feet, gallery-quality jewelry makers, local growers of tropical plants, culinary and medicinal herbs and vegetable starter plants, food vendors offering breakfast and lunch specialties like shrimp and grits, hand made authentic Mexican tamales, fresh-baked artisan breads and chocolate croissants and, of course, fresh fruit and vegetables from local growers.

Buxton added Danielle Richards to the team as a Community Relations liaison to bring in local musicians. The new River Stage at the Bulkhead is due in part to Richards inviting "shade tree" musicians to play at the market.



In addition to the new stage, park benches have been installed around the 8th Street fountain, as well as bike racks. This new season promises more new things by bringing in vendors such as Savannah River Farms who will provide locally raised chicken, beef, pork, and eggs, unique gift ideas like bird and bat houses, hand-made ceramics and organic snow cones.

Sponsorship of the market was a key to its success in the past and continues into the new season. Major sponsors like EZ Go, SRP, WJBF and WAGT along with

New Life Natural Food, Tall Pines Greenhouses, verge, Commissioner Matt Aitken and Mayor Deke Copenhaver helped make – and are helping make – the Augusta Market the place to meet interesting and talented members of our community.

To follow or inquire about the Augusta Market at the River, go to **THEAUGUSTAMARKET.COM** or find the Augusta Market on Facebook.

article and photo by **JENN MASLYN**