

For Immediate Release

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Fredericksburg City Farmers Market CELEBRATES NATIONAL FARMERS MARKET WEEK

Fredericksburg City Farmers Market joins markets across the country in celebrating National Farmers Market Week on August 5, 2017. **Customers can enjoy a free slice of watermelon, vote for their favorite market vendors in a “Best of the Market” contest, show their support of the market with stickers and tattoos, and snap a photo in the photo booth. Vendors will be offering specials and samples in honor of the occasion.**

As demand for local food continues to grow, so too have the opportunities for America’s farmers to market fresh food directly to the consumer. According to statistics recently released by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), farmers markets and farm stands account for roughly \$2 billion of the \$3 billion that Americans spend annually on farm-direct products. This revenue, in turn, supports the livelihoods of more than 165,000 mostly small and mid-sized farms and ranches. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) reports that **agriculture is Virginia’s largest industry by far. The industry has an economic impact of \$52 billion annually and provides nearly 311,000 jobs in the Commonwealth. Nearly 90 percent of Virginia farms are owned and operated by individuals or families.**

The **Fredericksburg City Market** began in **1728** and currently hosts **30** farmers selling a wide variety of products, including **fruits and vegetables, meats and seafood, eggs, honey, jams and jellies, prepared food items, baked goods, gluten free and vegan items, and more at its Hurkamp Park location.** The market also hosts the bi-monthly Art in the Park event showcasing the work of local artisans and other special events like Kids’ Market and Community Day. Farmers markets are a valuable economic boost for the region. For every \$100 spent at a farmers market, \$62 stays in the local economy, and \$99 stays in state. Each market generates thousands of dollars in Sales Tax revenue for the Commonwealth.

Gayle Price, City Market Manager says, **“We’re very proud of our market and what it adds to the downtown area. Markets are vital community meeting places and contribute to the economic success of the City and the health and well-being of its citizens. We’re fortunate to have wonderful vendors who work hard to bring the best of what they grow to the residents of the City and surrounding areas. It’s exciting to be able to celebrate those relationships.”**

The Fredericksburg City Farmers Market, along with Spotsylvania and King George Markets, accept and double SNAP benefits. They also have programs to assist Medicaid and WIC shoppers. Every shopper benefits from the fresh, locally grown food and relationships with friendly vendors who help strengthen the community and local economy.

“Farmers markets play a vital role not just in generating real income for farmers, but in forming a healthy, prosperous food systems,” says Jen Cheek, Executive Director of the [Farmers Market Coalition](#). “By providing the opportunity for farmers to connect directly with consumers, markets serve as education centers. Vendors are teaching customers about agriculture and sharing recipes and new foods with their neighbors. Markets are making people and communities stronger and healthier.”

The Fredericksburg City Farmers Market is a part of the Farmers Market.co, www.thefarmersmarket.co, and is operated by Fredericksburg Parks and Recreation under the supervision of Wendy Stone, Division Manager for Finance & Leisure Services. Parks and Recreation operates farmers markets at Hurkamp Park, Dixon Pool, and Mary Washington Healthcare.