

# Frankenmuth Farmers Market

PO Box 63, Frankenmuth, MI 48734 ★ (989) 295-9766

[www.frankenmuthfarmersmarket.org](http://www.frankenmuthfarmersmarket.org) ★ [ljskehn@gmail.com](mailto:ljskehn@gmail.com)

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## **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Dietrich Bronner ~ (989) 245-0806

[dbronner@chartermi.net](mailto:dbronner@chartermi.net)

## **FFM Breaks Ground with Guests Galore and Gorgeous Weather**

FRANKENMUTH, MI – A picture-perfect day welcomed the 10am Friday, October 30 Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Frankenmuth Farmers Market (FFM), a day 11 years in the making. The Market Board of Directors, leadership team, and vendors hosted a dozen dignitaries along with a crowd of over 125 guests to witness the beginning of building the FFM's new permanent building on property purchased fewer than 15 months ago. The half-hour ceremony culminated with pitchforks and shovels breaking into the soil where the new Market will rise. Guests then enjoyed cider, donuts, cheese and crackers donated by Market vendor Miller's Family Orchard of Vassar and the Frankenmuth Cheese Haus (whose employees purchased a \$12,500 vendor stall in the company's name).

The momentous occasion occurred as a result of the Market successfully fundraising \$1.1 million in only 15 months to secure a low-interest loan from the Frankenmuth Credit Union, the FFM's major sponsor since its inception. "Reaching \$1.1 million in barely more than a year could be a pipe dream for many, but commitment, hard work, and volunteering paid off with dauntless determination," remarked Capital Campaign Chair and Market Secretary Bron Harmon, who emceed the ceremony. "We have done our research and homework, we have done our due diligence as this Market has since its beginning, and the certainty is absolute that this project is not only beneficial but critical to this region's continuing development and improvement of well-being." Not reaching this fundraising goal would have delayed the construction process by at least one full year and Market season.

Closing down its eleventh season, the FFM will evolve next year through the construction of a permanent Market campus. The unique, multi-faceted operation will include a regularly scheduled Farmers Market with up to 50 vendors; an incubator kitchen in which entrepreneurs can prepare commercially saleable foods from local produce and utilize two unique wood-burning brick ovens for baking artisanal goods; a gathering barn for hosting community get-togethers; a year-round farm store selling items to complement and extend the Market's offerings, and meeting rooms, office space, restrooms and green space.

Honorary guests and speakers attending the groundbreaking included:

- Michele Bernreuter, Frankenmuth Farmers Market Board of Directors President
- Vickie Schmitzer, Frankenmuth Credit Union CEO
- Jamie Furbush, Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce CEO
- Stephen List, Frankenmuth Community Foundation Executive Director and Frankenmuth Noon Rotary Representative
- JoAnn Crary, Saginaw Future President
- Senator Ken Horn, Michigan 32<sup>nd</sup> State Senate District
- Derrick Mathis, Representative for U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow
- James Turner, USDA Rural Business Development, Michigan Director
- Rev. Scott Harmon, Frankenmuth United Methodist Church
- Lynn Zuellig, FFM Building Project Coordinator
- Sharon Ellis, Michigan Department of Civil Rights ADA Compliance Director

- Jennifer Miller of Miller's Family Orchard, Market Board Member and Vendor Representative and Incubator Kitchen Manager
- Tom Smith, Constituent Relations Representative for 4<sup>th</sup> District Congressman John Moolenaar
- Craig Schneider, Project Architect, TSSF Architects
- Matt Bronner, General Contractor, William Bronner & Sons Construction

Inspired words of congratulations were offered by many. Michele Bernreuter commented on behalf of the Market, "It takes a village, and the Frankenmuth community has certainly come together in a big way to see this project through, and we just can't wait to share this jewel with the community. A huge thank you!"

Vickie Schmitzer offered, "'People Helping People' is the Credit Union's motto. What a testament this project is to 'People Helping People.' I am so proud to be a small part of what many said 'wouldn't work' and many, many, many more supported, stood behind and said, 'We can and we will!'"

Jamie Furbush explained that "The Market, like all businesses, will continue to grow, subsequently giving back by enhancing our local community and our local economy, giving opportunity to small entrepreneurs and farmers. This year-round facility will help small businesses launch new products and give the community a place to gather and embrace fresh, local goods. This permanent location brings the agritourism business to the north end of town and with it an exciting new feel-good project that residents and visitors alike will enjoy for many, many years to come. It's a great legacy and we congratulate the Farmers Market. Thank you for your investment!"

Stephen List stated, "The Frankenmuth Community Foundation has as two of its goals economic growth and community good. The Frankenmuth Farmers Market building project meets both of these. The Rotary's Taste of Frankenmuth fundraiser generated \$20,000 towards this building project, and our club is happy to join the other service organizations in supporting this worthwhile endeavor. We all look forward to its completion. Congratulations!"

JoAnn Crary said, "Saginaw Future has been honored to have the opportunity to work with the leaders of the Frankenmuth Farmer's Market and I've been so impressed with the talented individuals who have volunteered their time to bring this project to fruition. As people travel to Frankenmuth to purchase products at the Frankenmuth Farmer's Market, the funds provide an economic spin off benefit in supporting the growers and their families. With its first-rate amenities, the market will allow people to connect with each other and sell valued commodities, increasing economic stability in the Frankenmuth community. It also adds to the quality of life and creates vibrancy in the community as a gathering place and social events. It's really great to see such excitement and enthusiasm, coupled with hard work and the development of a sound business plan to sustain this facility for years to come."

Senator Ken Horn offered, "Growers, craftspeople, artists are all natural entrepreneurs, and the Frankenmuth Farmers Market is the quilt that keeps the fabric of these entrepreneurs together. It provides them a risk-free opportunity to learn how to become business people. Today is a great opportunity on this great day to celebrate something that is very, very local, very, very cultural, and very real, and so with that I present from the State of Michigan a certificate congratulating the Farmers Market and all of the volunteers to say thank you for all that you've done and all that you will do in the state of Michigan and for Frankenmuth."

On behalf of Senator Stabenow, Derrick Matthis commented, "The Senator said that I had to be present today when she learned of this event. In 2014 as chairwoman of the Senate Agricultural Committee, the Senator passed the 2014 Farm Bill, making sure there was strong language included for Farmers Markets. Congratulations!"

James Turner explained, I think the more important part of this project is the amount of community involvement—and you can see that—and the amount of money you raised locally to make this happen. As a director of rural department I think that’s a testament to rural communities. Small towns are special places, and that’s why it’s so important to invest in rural communities.”

The Market team continues to raise funds towards the project’s expected total of \$2.1 million. Some of the same grants applied for in 2015 can also be re-applied for in 2016 to perpetuate the flow of incoming funds. At the community level, 25 of the 31 vendor booths have been purchased for naming rights at \$12,500 per booth. Only six of these booths remain for purchase, and they can still be claimed after the Market opens. Requiring more immediate action by interested individuals or organizations are the custom-engraved bricks that will form the Market Patio connecting the Vendor Pavilion to the Gathering Barn. Maria Schumacher, Board Member and “Pave the Way!” Brick Campaign Chair urges those interested to order their bricks as soon as possible: “Only a limited number of 900 bricks are available, we are almost half sold-out, and we won’t be able to fulfill additional requests after the beginning of the year when our order for production needs to be submitted. We encourage everyone to show support and purchase bricks to commemorate birthdays, relationships, weddings, anniversaries or milestones, or as holiday gifts or memorials. Some people have surprised us with the creativity behind their bricks, creating family trees made of many bricks or buying them for grandchildren to go on a future scavenger hunt and discover them at the Market!” Brick order forms can be found at the Market’s website or Facebook page or call Maria at (989) 297-0425.

In other fundraising ventures, the Market has a chance to win \$10,000 if enough people vote daily for the Frankenmuth Credit Union in an online voting competition called “Share the Love Campaign—Love My Credit Union Rewards.” Participants are encouraged to vote daily at <http://goo.gl/cbImCR> through December 24, with the chance to win \$100. Primed to Paint, at 487C North Main Street in Frankenmuth, is hosting Market fundraising painting sessions on November 17 and December 15 at 6pm. Guests will paint their own Market-themed painting on a 16”x20” or 12”x12” canvas that costs \$35 or \$25, respectively, with half the price benefiting the Market. Reservations for these guided painted sessions can be made by calling (989) 262-8199.

The Frankenmuth Farmers Market is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing and promoting the values of local food and products in an effort to strengthen and preserve our economy, agriculture, and sustainability. The Frankenmuth Farmers Market will present its annual Christkindlmarkt in Downtown Frankenmuth November 27-29 and December 4-6. Artisans interested in selling their local products should contact Laurajeanne Kehn at [frankenmuthfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:frankenmuthfarmersmarket@gmail.com) or (989) 295-9766. To keep updated about the Market’s progress, interested individuals may receive the Market’s weekly email newsletter by emailing [frankenmuthfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:frankenmuthfarmersmarket@gmail.com). To learn more, please visit [www.frankenmuthfarmersmarket.org](http://www.frankenmuthfarmersmarket.org) or the Market’s Facebook page.

Laurajeanne Safford Kehn, Market Mistress  
[ljskehr@gmail.com](mailto:ljskehr@gmail.com), 989.295.9766

Dietrich Bronner, Marketing Manager  
[dbronner@chartermi.net](mailto:dbronner@chartermi.net), 989.245.0806

