

Fund set up for shelter house

Farmers' Market group intensifies efforts to raise money for new structure at NV City Park

Bryce Mayer

Plans are being modified and bids will soon be taken for a new shelter house at the North Vernon City Park.

The structure will replace the old No. 2 shelter house, which was razed last March because it was in danger of collapsing.

Besides being used for picnics, family reunions and other events, shelter house No. 2 is also the home of the Jennings County Farmers' Market. On three mornings a week from May through October, farmers and others from the area sell produce, herbs, flowers, plants, eggs, meat, baked goods, goat milk soap and other items there. The market is also open on Saturday mornings from November through April.



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People shop at the Jennings County Farmers' Market on Saturday morning where growers pitch open tents over their stands from which they sell vegetables, fruits and other items.—Staff Photo by Bryce Mayer

Since last March, the Farmers' Market has continued to set up on the concrete slab where shelter house 2 once stood, many of the stands covered by open tents or awnings.

"We need a roof over our heads," said George Doll, who brings apples and peaches during those fruits' harvest seasons to the Farmers' Market from his family's orchard in Oldenburg. "It's OK here when it's not raining and the temperatures are not too hot or too cold, but not other times."

Shortly before the Farmers' Market opened on Saturday morning, for example, a downpour doused farmers trying to set up their stands.

"The sooner we can get the shelter house up, the better," said Clarence Wullenweber, who, as marketmaster, is the Farmers' Market director. "There is no timetable yet. That's up to the city."

Two plans are now being readied. One is a tiered option, which has overhangs on the east and west sides where farmers can park their vehicles when selling goods. The other plan is similar to the existing shelter house No. 1 at the park. Both designs call for structures that would cover around 40 by 80 feet.

"Both options will be bid in the fall and then the city will make the final decision," said Bernie Hauersperger of FBPH, the North Vernon firm making the shelter house designs. Hauersperger estimates that the cost will be \$80,000 to \$110,000.

The Farmers' Market is doing all it can to help, including assisting in paying for the new shelter house. Last week it set up a passthrough account with the Jennings County Community Foundation called the Friends of the Farmers' Market fund.

"We've raised over \$600 so far from people putting donations in a bucket we keep here when the Farmers' Market is open," Wullenweber said. "We'll be putting that in the Friends of the Farmers' Market Fund. I put in \$100 of my own money and the Jennings County Farm Bureau is adding \$1,500. All people

have to do is go through the Community Foundation to donate."

Contact the Community Foundation at 111 N. State St., telephone 812-346-5553 or visit its website at jenningsfoundation.net.

The Farmers' Market hopes to match city funds to expedite the process of getting the shelter house constructed.

"We're looking at the possibility of grants, too," Wullenweber noted. "One we were really hopeful for that was for \$50,000 expired before we could get in our application, but there may be others out there we can find."