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Ah, the sweet taste of success

By Jennifer Morris

POULSBO - Residents who have wondered where cooking lessons, music, organically-grown foods and the company of good friends collide, need look no further. Now in its fourth year of business, the Poulsbo Farmers Market is boasting over 50 vendors and more events on its calendar than ever before.

"It's doing great this year," said market manager Jackie Aitchison. "It takes three to five years to become established, and we're in our fourth. We've built a real stable core of vendors and a great regular customer base."

Aitchison, who was recently named administrative director of the Washington State Farmers Market Association, said the venue provides a chance for the community to support local businesses while purchasing great produce.

"It's a real win-win for the community," she said. "You can know where your food is coming from and support local farmers. Plus, it's a fun thing to do on Saturday mornings."

New to the market this season are its monthly chef demonstrations, during which professionals create displays using produce fresh from the market. Visitor favorites also include live music, Village Baker artisan bread and the Steel City Café, Aitchison said.

PFM board president John Pyles said the market affords people the opportunity to browse its vendors while catching up with friends.

"It's a social event," he said. "We've had a good start to the year... we're on track to have our best year ever."

The quality of this season's produce is not only excellent, but also competitively priced. The growing size of the market has afforded a more varied array from which people can choose, Pyles said. Included in the market's choices are organic coffee, tomatoes, fresh eggs and crops grown east of the mountains by a Yakima-area vendor.

"It's great to have so many farmers," Aitchison said. "A lot of it is naturally grown, without all those pesticides."

Poulsbo Mayor Kathryn Quade said she enjoys going to the market as often as she can.

“It gets bigger by the week,” she said. “It’s charming, with wonderful produce and people.”

Two upcoming events the market will host are a lavender festival July 21 and Children’s Day on July 28, Aitchison said.

The market is located in the Poulsbo Village Medical/Dental Center at the corner of Iverson and 7th. It is open every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through Oct. 13. For more information and to sign up for the market’s e-newsletter, visit <http://www.poulsbofarmersmarket.org>.