

Montrose Township Farmers' Market celebrates five years

By Lisa Briggs

MONTROSE — Linda Miller, a trustee on the Montrose Township Board, is enthusiastic about entering her fifth year of leading the Montrose Township Farmers' Market.

"It's exciting to see the community come out to support local vendors," said Miller, who spearheaded the concept of a Farmers' Market at the scenic Barber Park, 11410 Seymour Road in 2012. "I'm always impressed how every Thursday, for 20 weeks, our dedicated vendors come out to set up, share their goods and talent, and interact with shoppers."

The vendors pay \$6 for their table and space each week – that's a great deal compared to other surrounding market booth prices. For example, weekly rates in other communities range from \$25-\$75 per day for booth rental. "We haven't raised our prices once," said Miller. "It's been discussed, but the goal to give vendors the best opportunity to make a profit and get their goods into the hands of the public always seems to trump raising our rates."

The vendors are grateful to Miller's loyal and dependable support.

"The pricing is definitely affordable for anyone to be a vendor," said Mary Polzin-Yeager, who sells corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, melons and a few crafts. "Linda Miller thought enough of her community to launch a Farmers' Market five years ago, and she is just amazing to work with. So many people look forward to Thursday nights."

Polzin-Yeager says she appreciates having a place to sell and purchase fresh, home-grown food rather than be limited to processed products."

Jerry Whitney has been a vendor since the beginning.

"I really enjoy the comradery and spirit of the market event," said Whitney, who sells wooden toys and is going to feature yard games such as ladder ball, yard Yahtzee and yard Jenga this year. Whitney, a member of the Lions Club is also taking over the Lions Hotdog Cart. "We'll be selling hotdogs, Coney dogs, chips, water, pop and ice-cream."

Many vendors are from other towns such as Chesaning, Durand, Owosso, Birch Run and Flushing. The drive doesn't bother them because they find the Montrose Township Farmers' Market appealing and worthwhile.

Neil Sutton sells shepherd hooks and other garden art.

He willingly drives from Durand to participate in the Montrose Farmers' Market each week.

"I participate in several different markets, but Montrose is, by far, the one I drive the furthest to," said Sutton, who says Miller is a joy to work with. "Many of the other markets are set up in parking lots or on asphalt, but the Montrose Market is on grass. I really like this aspect, that, and it's in a park and near a beautiful river. It's very appealing."

Leo Stevens, beekeeper and owner of S&L Honey is celebrating his fifth year as a vendor.

"I'm always impressed with the rapport we all have at the Farmer's Market – I've never had a bad customer," he laughs. He is passionate about taking care of the earth's assets. "We've all got to do our part to take care of Mother Nature," he said. "The Farmers' Market is a place to do that."

Miller was the recipient of the 2016 Jennings Foundation Community Service Award for her efforts and Senator Ken Horn acknowledged her work by presenting her with a congratulatory certificate.

To become a vendor, call Miller at 810 533-4880 or Montrose Township at 810 639-2021.