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HOT

Farmers market debuts at Solenberger's on Berryville Avenue

By BRIAN BREHM The Winchester Star
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Violet Busbee, 2, of Strasburg, looks over the fresh blueberries offered by Mackintosh Fruit Farm in Clarke County attending The Market at Solenberger's, a new farmers' market located at Solenberger's Home & Hardware (832 Berryville Ave.) on its opening day Wednesday. The new weekday market features up to 10 local vendors selling fresh produce, meat, dairy, and baked goods. It operates every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Jeff Taylor/The Winchester Star

A new weekly farmers market has launched on Berryville Avenue to provide fresh fruit, produce and meats — as well as handmade crafts, sweets, flowers, home goods and more — to people who live and shop in eastern Winchester.

The Market at Solenberger's debuted on Wednesday afternoon in the parking lot in front of the business that created it, [Solenberger's Home and Hardware](#) at 832 Berryville Ave.

"Our hope is that this will become a community event for this side of Winchester because there's nothing like this here," said Patti Solenberger, marketing director at Solenberger's Home and Hardware.

The Market at Solenberger's will operate from 3 to 7 p.m. on Wednesdays, whereas many similar markets in and around Winchester are set up on weekends only.

Solenberger said it has been a dream of hers "for years and years and years" to host a farmers market on the Berryville Avenue corridor, but she never had the time or resources to make it happen. That changed last month when Emily Windle came onboard as Solenberger's Home and Hardware's new marketing manager, replacing the now-retired Rich Weller.

"She said, 'I'll do it,'" Solenberger said about Windle. "'If you will provide this space, I'll organize it.' And I said, 'Sold!'"

To get the ball rolling, Windle said vendors will not have to pay setup fees for the market's first year.

"We just asked them to commit and be here every week," said Windle, whose official first day at Solenberger's coincided with the market's opening on Wednesday. "We tried really hard to make sure we had produce, meat, bread — that sort of thing."

A total of 12 local vendors participated in the debut market at Solenberger's, many of them remaining under canopies and some of them using portable fans in a rather futile attempt to stay cool as the outdoor temperature reached 95 degrees.

The vendors at the inaugural farmers market included [Wicked Whisk](#) and [Fur and Ber's](#), both of which sold homemade baked goods and other items; [Cooper Farms](#), [Moonbase Farms](#), [Shallowbrooke Acres](#) and [MacKintosh Fruit Farm](#), all of which provided farm-fresh items including meat, produce and fruits; [Peony Place](#), which offered fresh floral arrangements; [Porch Couture Bows](#), which sold handmade bows to adorn walls and doors; [Tinker's Tasty Tidbits](#), which had

freeze-dried snacks; Billy Sous and Ginger Delight Drinks, which provided food and beverages for on-site enjoyment; and Solenberger's itself, which was demonstrating how to bake an apple pie in a Big Green Egg outdoor grill.

Solenberger's employee and grillmaster Jeff Hartman said the Big Green Egg, which is a kamado grill that looks like its name suggests, uses lump charcoal and holds a steady heat for 27 hours, making it possible to use the device to prepare a variety of foods.

"Anything you can do in your oven, you can do it on a Green Egg," Hartman said as he opened the grill to reveal a perfectly baked apple pie that took about an hour to finish. "You can fix your whole dinner on this thing if you have the three-tier rack."

Across from the grill demonstration, Caroline Brown of Porch Couture Bows had some unique descriptions of her intricate, decorative bows.

"These are a southern summer with sweet tea and dopamine," Brown said while pointing out a few of her creations. "This is red, white and ridiculous."

Brown added that each of her bows are one-of-a-kind and come with a certificate of adoption.

Porch Couture Bows was designated as a pop-up vendor on Wednesday, meaning it won't be a regular part of the new farmers market.

"We'll have a [different] pop-up vendor every week," Solenberger said.

Tim Cooper of Cooper Farms, which will return to the market on a weekly basis, said he and his family grew all the produce he was selling on Wednesday with the exception of orchard fruits like apple and peaches.

"We get that from a neighboring orchard in Capon Bridge [West Virginia], Smith's Orchard," Cooper said. "Everything else, we brought. We do about 20 acres of field crops, and then we have four 30-by-96-foot tunnels and two 30-by-300s, and we're getting ready to build four more. We never stop. This is all we've done since 2019."

Julia Tinker of Tinker's Tasty Tidbits said her freeze-dried fruits and vegetables were not just good, they were also nutritious.

"When you freeze dry [food], it has 97% nutritional value," Tinker said. "When you dehydrate, it has 60%. When you can, it has 40% nutritional value."

Customer Chris Rosenberger of Winchester said the Berryville Avenue corridor needed "good, locally grown food" like that being sold at The Market at Solenberger's, so he was eager to check out its opening on Wednesday.

"I had some disposable income," Rosenberger said, "so I used it while I was here."

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