

Have you heard?

Farmer's market opens Friday

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WATSONVILLE — The grand opening of the long-awaited Watsonville certified farmer's market is Friday and 24 vendors will line the plaza with booths filled with fresh produce, pastries, eggs, fish, cheese and flowers.

Normally, the market will open every Friday evening at 6 p.m. throughout the market season which ends in early November, but new Market Director Tim Siemsen wanted the grand opening to be special. This Friday only, the festivities will begin at 10 a.m. with a tractor-drawn hay wagon caravan through Watsonville's downtown business community, accompanied by the bluegrass group "Harmony Grits," and last throughout the day.

At 2 p.m., Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Director Jess Brown will join Mayor Dennis Osmer in a dedication ceremony. At 2:30 p.m., the market will officially open and the Watsonville Fire Department will set up its barbecue equipment on Peck Street, where firefighter Matt Ryan said his crew will be serving generously proportioned hot tri-tip steak sandwiches, soft drinks and other delicacies.

According to Assistant City Manager Gary Smith, the market is the first step of many that are going to change Watsonville. He said the market will be the keystone in a new Watsonville complete with an arts and cultural center across the street, a new three-story Cabrillo College building and the recently opened soccer arena. Combined with plenty of convenient free parking and other downtown improvements, organizers are optimistic that the new market will become a part of a revitalized downtown corridor.