

Vendors prepare for Farmer's Market opening

Organizers say the market is just one link in a revitalized downtown

By MICHAEL MERRILL
STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — About a dozen vendors who will be part of Watsonville's new Farmer's Market, opening June 5, met the newly named market manager Tim Siemsen, in the plaza before attending a reception at the Miramar restaurant Friday evening.

Siemsen brings a wide range of experience to the job — from management, promotions and event coordination to over 20 years experience in the wine and food industry. Locally, he is well known for his work with the Watsonville Police Department's "Citizen's on Phone Patrol (COPP) program. He is also founder and general chairman of Watsonville's first Annual National Night Out, a community event organized to fight drugs, crime and violence.

"Our basic goal right now is to re-establish the market as an exciting Friday night event in downtown," Siemsen said. "We will be highlighting different cultures with music, recipes, chefs and demonstrations. It will always be colorful and exciting with something new each week."

So far, 16 growers have signed up and will be selling their own products along with six non-agricultural vendors who will be selling everything from bread and cheese to fish. Siemsen said there is room for a total of 30 vendors so there are still a few spaces left, but they should go quick.

Duncan Edwards grows nursery plants on Casserly Road and he will be selling both indoor and outdoor plants. According to Edwards, the



Siemsen

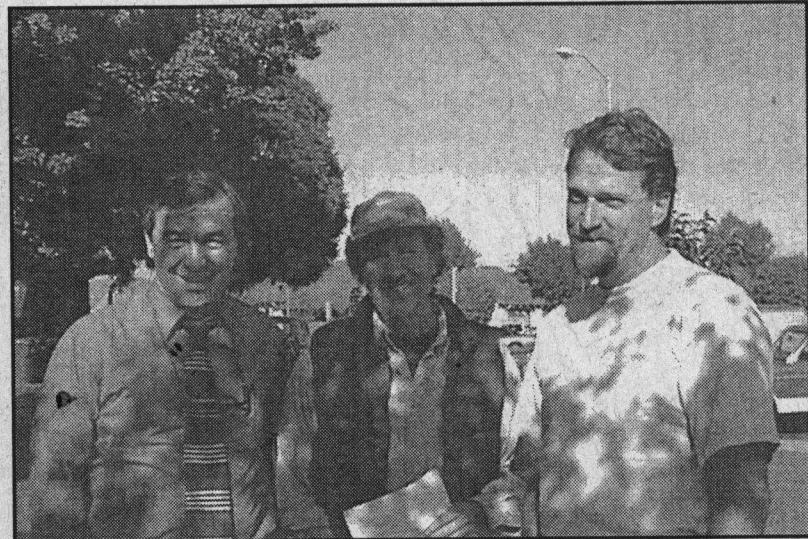
key to success is having enough vendors and so far, it looks like that is happening. Nancy Wright is the special project manager for the Watsonville Re-

development Agency and she explained how the market will fit in the city's long-term goal. "What we are trying to do is create a pedestrian friendly downtown," Wright said. The Farmer's Market is one of the links in our overall vision."

Assistant City Manager Gary Smith told the group that 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, an expanded library and Romo's new five-star restaurant, which is nearing completion. "The downtown is really going to come alive," Smith said. "This is going to be a solid market, one that people will really enjoy coming to."

Grower Nancy Gammons, who with her husband Robin, operates Four Sisters Farm in Aromas. She

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Michael Merrill

Assistant City Manager Gary Smith (left) met with Farmer's Market organizer Sam Earnshaw and vender Ken Kimes during a reception for vendors Friday.

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will be selling kiwi fruit, cut flowers and specialty vegetables such as kale, chard and sorrel. "I love Watsonville and the community," Gammons said. "That's why we want to be a part of this market, it's going to be great."

As part of a special grand opening event, the Watsonville Fire Department will prepare and serve an

opening day barbecue. Siemsen has also lined up a full slate of entertainment.

The market became a reality when members from three organizations — Main Street Watsonville, Community Alliance With Family Farmers (CAFF) and the city of Watsonville — came together to spearhead the effort.