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Page 2B, Friday Edition

Rite of spring: Market opens

Sunshine welcomed the opening of a new season for one of Eugene's traditional signs of

The Saturday Market, a local attraction featuring handmade arts and crafts, food and music, began its 17th year Saturday with the usual cross-section of local residents and visitors, who have supported the the market's development through the years.

A block-party atmosphere prevails at the market, which draws everyone from families and students to street musicians and artists to the Park Blocks near East Eighth Avenue and Oak Streets.

Claire Feighan, Saturday Market manager, says the weekend event has become a solid part of the community

"The fact that it's a place where you can go down and buy your food and your arts and crafts from people who actually made them makes it popular," she says.

The market also provides artists and craftspeople an opportunity to start a business with very little overhead, she adds.

More than 125 booths, selling pottery, jewelry, wood carvings, clothing, food, furniture, toys and assorted gifts, were present for the opening. Feighan says she expects this number to remain for most of the season, which runs through

"We've got Yuppies, grandmothers, single moms and dads, nuclear families, extended families, part-time and full-time artists, students, people who sell at the market for fun, people who make the majority of their living here, people from all over the world, and incredibly, native Oregonians," she says.

Thanks to Saturday Market exposure, a number of artisans and epicures have taken their. wares to bigger markets. They include Monster Cookies, Toby's Tofu Products, Fibergraphics, Jody Coyote Jewelry and Anita's Empanadas.

Leilani Horsfall, a Eugene resident, has sold her brightly colored windsocks at the market for about five years. She has a separate shop at the Fifth Street Public Market where she sells her designs year-round.

But Horsfall, along with many other booth operators, still enjoys the relaxed and friendly atmosphere present in the Park Blocks...

Janan Dean, also a resident, has been a part of the market for 10 years, selling her pottery work.

She began by sharing a booth with another woman, but is now on her own and says she feels good about being able to build her own business. I enjoy being my own boss and selling directly to the people.

For others, the market serves as a single stop on a planned sales circuit.

James, who declined to give his last name, says he always comes to the Saturday Market's first show to sell his wooden boxes: He attends craft shows and festivals all over the western United States, but says he has returned to Eugene for the past 10 years.

Beth Warriner also takes her products on the road, but says she sets up a stand at the Saturday



Kids of all ages and sizes look to the opening of the Saturday Market as a true sign that spring has arrived in Eugene.

Market when she is home in Eugene, and it's not raining.

Warriner has sold her natural stone jewelry at the market for about a year and has become one of its many advocates.

'You get to see and meet lots of different people," she says. "It's great. And if you can make money at it, it's even better."

The Saturday Market grew out of the Christmas EPIC sales - the Eugene Peace Information Center - which were organized by Lotte Streisinger in the early 1960s, Feighan says. By 1969, people were lining up outside the door of the sale and it became obvious that a more frequent event would be supported by the community.

The market, which has produced many imitators around the country, was originally located under the downtown Overpark. It was then moved to the Lane County Courthouse parking lot on Oak Street before finding its current, permanent home in the Park Blocks.

Story by Julie Freeman

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