

The best of booth worlds

Buy local and shop safely as farmers markets return

Story & PHOTOS BY GRETCHEN AMMERMAN

For the TODAY

Farmers markets grew quickly in number and popularity in the past decade, but this year some new rules are springing up to help keep shoppers safe as they peruse locally grown produce and handmade crafts.

Social distancing and masks have been required for all vendors and, in most markets, for shoppers as well. These rules helped residents and visitors get ready for the governor's order that masks be worn in various Oregon counties, including Lincoln County, as of Wednesday, June 24.

"Our first day went really well," said Lincoln City Farmers Market manager Lori Lemons. "The customers for the most part complied with the regulations with no problem, and some even came back to thank us because, even with all the new rules, it was a little bit back to the old normal. But our whole thing is safety for our visitors and our staff; we have older ones and even little ones that come to the market and we want to protect them."

Having to limit the number of people in the market at any one time to allow for social distancing meant an extra job for market managers but, according to Lemons, the efforts received a positive response.

"We had a little back-up a few times but I don't think anyone left unhappy," she said. "We apologized but people just said 'We're just so glad you're here.' One customer said the farmers market gives them hope, and another said 'I got my berries and it made my day.' We're the original farmers market in this area and we wanted to open as soon as we could, so if we have to work a little



on the cover

harder, it's worth it."

While visitors to the market will see plenty of familiar faces (at least from the eyes up) a few new vendors are keeping things fresh.

"We have some exciting new booths like Brandywine Fisheries who are bringing fresh, locally caught fish; and Bear Valley Nursery, who will have lots of vegetable starts for your garden," Lemons said. "La Bonita Bakery came a few years ago and did street tacos but we really needed a bakery and they stepped up and are doing a great job."

The Lincoln City Farmers and Crafters Market is held Sundays from 9 am to 3 pm and is located on the lawn of the Lincoln City Cultural Center, 540 NE Hwy. 101. For more information, go to www.lincolncityfarmersmarket.org.

The Newport Farmers Market began its outside operation in mid-June and will continue through October on Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm. The market is located on the corner of Angle and Hwy. 101, and includes a hot food court.

