

an email. She now manages a food bank in Hawaii. “In particular, Cannon Beach residents had limited access to fresh produce.”

### A big deal

But several challenges arose, including finding local farmers.

“We discovered that, out of Oregon’s 36 counties, Clatsop County was the 35th in terms of agricultural production,” Frost Albrecht wrote. “Of the farmers who were in the North Coast region, nearly all were age 65 or older with many considering retirement and leaving farming.”

However, Bob Neroni and his wife, Lenore Emery, had a solution for that. As operators of the EVOO Cooking School, they also had difficulty obtaining local produce. They asked then-City Manager Rich Mays — who had never been to a farmers market before — if a market could be started. They talked to other chefs about collaborating on purchases, too.

“Because we were so small, it was really difficult for farms to come and deliver, say, a case of tomatoes,” Neroni recalled. “But with the idea of the market, and at the same time the chef’s collaborative ... one case turned into 20 cases. That was worth their while coming.”

There were other challenges, too: finding a location; working around city ordinances prohibiting outdoor merchandising; dealing with local merchants’ concerns about competition; and secur-



NANCY MCCARTHY PHOTOS

Dave Quinton, left, and Brad Griswold play music during the Cannon Beach Farmers Market. Support for the musicians comes partly from the city of Cannon Beach and from donations by local businesses and individuals.

ing financial support.

After the Cannon Beach City Council agreed to sponsor the market and to allow it on the City Hall parking lot, a farmers market committee got to work.

“There was a lot of effort by the committee to try to structure what kind of farmers market we wanted and what the rules were,” said Rainmar Bartl, who, as city planning director, guided the group through the web of city ordinances affecting the market. “That was a big deal.”

### The city’s ‘living room’

The committee had high expectations.

“We wanted this to be a serious food market with a

“gold standard,” with the vendors as “growers/sellers,” Frost Albrecht said. “In vetting our vendors, we visited every farm as well as artisan producers to make sure they were the ones growing, harvesting and/or foraging their products.”

Vendor Anne Berlinger, of Gales Meadow Farms in Forest Grove, appreciates the policy.

“I like it that Cannon Beach is what you see is what is grown at the vendor’s farm; that’s really important,” said Berlinger, who has been with the market since it started.

The committee decided early on not to allow crafts to avoid competing with local merchants who might carry

similar items.

The “no competition” rule was so strict that cut flowers were banned the first year because some local businesses carried cut flowers. The “cut flower” controversy heated up until Daryl “Hank” Johnson resigned from his membership on the city’s design review board in protest of the ban. He later rejoined the board, however.

The “food only” policy sets Cannon Beach apart, said market manager Philomena Lloyd, who works 19 hours a week organizing



**LEFT:** Jeff Wong, founder of Community Supported Fisheries in Garibaldi, prepares fish and sausages at the Cannon Beach Farmers Market. **RIGHT:** Once banned from the Cannon Beach Farmers Market due to concerns about competition with local businesses, cut flowers are among the most popular items purchased at the market.



**LEFT:** Produce is available from three vendors, including Veggie Girls, at the Cannon Beach Farmers Market. **RIGHT:** New to the Cannon Beach Farmers Market, Blackberry Bog Farms brings produce, eggs and free-range chickens to the market.

the market.

“It’s one of the things that makes our market unique in the whole North Coast area. It’s kind of an identifying thing, and I think our food vendors appreciate it,” Lloyd said.

Ten years later, the market is thriving with 29 vendors from Oregon and southern Washington.

“The market became Cannon Beach’s ‘living room’ — a place where you were going to be sure to see your friends, neighbors, family every week — and buy fresh, local, seasonal food,” Frost Albrecht said. “While the food was the reason, what became apparent was that the market was all about community.” *cw*

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