FARMERS from A1

nity," she said. "And being on Saturdays, we are able to be around for a lot of other community events going on."

The move to Saturdays is part of a long adaptive history of the market.

Various versions of the market have sprung up over the decades, with venues ranging from parks to parking lots that achieved varying levels of success and organizational cohesiveness. The market's current iteration on Seventh Street started in 2016 and was the beginning of an effort to create a solid network and structure.

The year 2016 also saw the market officially become a 501(c)(6) nonprofit, a tax status similar to 501(c)(3), but is reserved for "business leagues" such as chambers of commerce, which derive much of their funding from member fees and dues.

One immediate advantage to the status change was the market's access to government programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, the Double Up Food Bucks program and the Oregon Farm Direct Nutrition Program.

Last year, the market took tentative steps back onto the street amid the outbreak of COVID-19, but instituted new rules of conduct for customers, such as keeping a six-foot distance, refraining from food consumption, leaving pets at home, keeping hands off products, using washing stations and try-

ing to avoid contact. While the weekly Thursday schedule saw a good turnout, market organizers realized that both vendors and customers could

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benefit from the Saturday switch. It also allowed the market to stay open an extra hour.

SNAP/EBT and Double Up Food Bucks are confirmed to still be features at the market this year as customers can use their cards to get a \$10 match on purchases.

Aldrich celebrated the multiplier effect of the Double Up Food Bucks.

"The customer who comes gets twice as much money as they would have been able to spend otherwise. And then the vendors also gets twice as much money as they would have gotten otherwise," she said. "So, it's not just a double-up; it's like a quadruple-up."

State funding for the program, she said, has massively benefited the community.

While just six vendors turned out for the market's return on Saturday, Aldrich said to expect more in the coming weeks.

"We will have several returning farmers who will be joining us in the next few weeks throughout May as their produce comes into season," she said. "We also have a couple new up and coming farms that are going to be joining us hopefully in the next few weeks."

In addition to produce vendors, a number of craft vendors are slated to join the lineup as well. In all, Aldrich is hoping around 15 vendors will be lining the streets for the season.

Pre-orders are returning this year, too.

Last season, the market launched an online pre-order system which includes produce, pastries, soap and jams in its virtual aisle, allowing customers to browse through the vendors from the comfort of their homes. Pre-orders can then be picked up contact-free at the market.

Updates to the online system are currently planned and customers are encouraged to check back in regarding upcoming changes. The current site can be

leyfarmersmarket.square. The market can also be found by searching for South Valley Famers Mar-

found at www.southval-

tagram. This season will run until Oct. 30.

ket on Facebook and Ins-

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