

**Capital City Public Market  
Rapid Market Assessment  
23 July 2005**

Market Name: Capital City Public Market  
Date of Assessment: July 23, 2005  
Market Hours: Saturday, 9:30 am to 1:30 pm  
Location: 8<sup>th</sup> Street between Bannock & Main streets, Boise, Idaho  
Market Manager: Karen Ellis  
Market Staff: 1 Paid Market Manager, 3 Paid Market Assistants  
Fees: Grower members: \$20 or 5% of gross sales per week  
Art & specialty foods: \$25 or 5% of gross sales per week  
Vendors: Approximately 100 vendors:  
60% produce  
40% art & specialty food  
Estimated Market Sales: \$84,789.30  
RMA Team Members: Colette DePhelps, Executive Director, Rural Roots, Moscow  
Tona Backman-Stilwill, Fair Mountain Farm, Fairfield  
Jan Book, Noble Food Farm, Boise  
Peg Daily, Friend of the Market, Nampa  
Nick Ling, Friend of the Market, Boise  
Jane Lloyd, Friend of the Market, Boise  
Mike McLeod, Friend of the Market, Boise  
Theresa McLeod, Mayor's Office, Boise  
John, Medlin, Friend of the Market, Boise  
Mark Mickelson, Friend of the Market, Boise  
Jennifer Miller, Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, Boise  
Beth Rasgorshek, Canyon Bounty Farm, Nampa  
Lori Steele, Meadowlark Farm, Nampa  
Clarence Stilwill, Fair Mountain Farm, Fairfield  
Erica Swindle, Friend of the Market, Boise  
Cheryl Williamson, Friend of the Market, Boise  
Ai Yoshida, Intern, Peaceful Belly Farm, Boise  
Heidi Baugerter, Friend of the Market, Boise  
RMA Report Author: Colette DePhelps

## **Part 1: Consumer Information**

**Estimated Total Attendance:** 8220

Shoppers in market at 9:30	198
9:30 am to 10:30 am	2412
10:30 am to 11:30 am	2574
11:30 am to 12:30 pm	1824
12:30 pm to 1:30 pm	1212

### **Question #1: What is your primary reason for coming to the market today?**

Agricultural Products	36%
Music	3%
Arts	12%
Atmosphere	42%
Prepared Foods	6%
Children's Program	1%

**Comment:** In the first half of the market, 41% of the respondents said they came for agricultural products, 41% said they came for the atmosphere and 9% came for the arts. In contrast, during the second half of the market, 27% of those surveyed came for agricultural products, 45 % came for the atmosphere and 16% for the arts.

The percentage of respondents coming to the market for music, prepared foods and children's program did not vary significantly between the first and latter halves of the market (9:30 am to 11:30 am and 11:30 am to 1:30 pm). This was a difficult question for many of the respondents because they wanted to select more than one answer. Forcing them to choose only one allowed for their varying reasons for attending the market to show through.

### **Question #2: How did you learn about the market?**

(Respondents who had shopped at the market for more than 2 years were asked to use the "old time column.)

Newspaper	5%
Radio	1%
Poster	0%
Website	0%
Word-of-Mouth	38%
Saw it & Shopped	10%
Other / Don't Know	3%
Old Timer	43%

**Comment:** The percentage of old timers who came to the market was significantly higher in the first half of the market, 48%, than in the second half, 36%. Interestingly, the percentage of people who learned about the market through “word of mouth” and who “saw it and shopped” increased from 35% and 8% (respectively) to 43% and 11%. The number of respondents who learned about the market through newspaper, radio, poster or website did not vary significantly between the first and second half of the market.

While large numbers of shoppers did not indicate they had learned about the market through newspaper, radio, poster or website, the survey results should not be interpreted to mean that these types of advertising are not important in terms of market visibility or attendance. It simply means they are not the primary ways people initially learned about the market.

**Question #3: How often have you shopped at the market this year?**

Nearly every week	15%
2x / Month	17%
Once a Month	10%
A Few Times	25%
First Time	33%

**Comment:** The percentage of shoppers who indicated they came to the market nearly every week or two times per month was higher during the first half of the market, 36%, than in the second half 27% (percentages are the total of both responses). More first time shoppers came to the second half of the market, 39%, than the first half, 28%. The number of respondents who shopped either once a month or a few times did not vary between the first and second half of the market.

**Question #4: How much have/will you spend at the market today?**

<u>Dollar Amount Spent</u>	<u>Shopper Percentage</u>
\$0	12%
\$5	1%
\$10	27%
\$15	1%
\$20	29%
\$30	15%
\$40	8%
\$50	4%
\$60+	4%

Average amount of money spent per shopping group = \$20.63

Average amount of money spent per shopping group from 9:30 am to 11:30 am = \$20.82  
Average amount of money spent per shopping group from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm = \$20.33

Total market sales can be estimated as follows:

$$(8220 \text{ people} / 2 \text{ people per shopping group}) * \$20.63 = \$84,789.30$$

This estimate is more likely to be low than high because the average size of shopping groups (based on market research elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest) tend to be less than 2.

**Comment:** Spending is by shopping group (adults who spend from one “wallet”) and not per individual. About 12 % of respondents said they spent nothing in the market. Early arrivers spent slightly more then shoppers who arrived later (\$22.82 versus \$22.33). This result is common for weekend markets.

## **Part 2: RMA Team Member Comments/Suggestions/Observations**

The purpose of this section of the report is NOT to provide an overall “grade” to this market or rank it against any other market; rather the team of outsiders used their “fresh eyes” to provide feedback about the individual market elements that they observed. They noted what they liked, what they thought could be changed or improved and questions that they had. The RMA process is about sharing – both the market being observed and the observers should gain new insights and ideas.

### **Physical Site**

#### **Most important messages about the physical site RMA team members wanted to convey to the Market:**

- 8<sup>th</sup> street is a great location – need landscaping along west side of 8<sup>th</sup> – finish the building!
- Cross walk ambassadors – pedestrians walk in continuous stream across Idaho with no regard for street light
- Need porta-potties
- Dogs are an issue
- Directions to public restrooms.
- Fabulous location, parking is ok (I’m not totally sure about all of it)
- Great location, many access points, easily identifiable
- Liability issues - could a kid get hurt in the fountains-slip
- Terrific organization
- Vendors need to watch their space to avoid accidents
- Good flow, crossing the streets could be a problem
- Excellent location for the market
- Anything that might help with dogs and stroller traffic
- Market info booth needs to be more visible
- Flow of traffic (straight)
- Somehow create a better flow through the center of booths
- Need places to sit down on chair and eat. Make sure to have chairs in middle of market somewhere.
- Well organized
- Keep up the great look of the market

#### **Most significant observations about the physical site team members said they would take back with them:**

- Continuous flow of people
- Speeding traffic is a disaster waiting to happen
- Good smells/atmosphere

- How to make our market a better one learning from you guys!
- Lots of people makes it more fun
- Important to get here early before produce is gone. The selection declines.
- It's a fun place to be
- Amazed at the amount of dogs
- Keep it central. I like how arts and agriculture have their own sections, not too intermingled, makes it simple and organized
- Free parking by the sidewalk
- Good location
- Not enough parking
- Easy access is key (and thoroughly present)

*What team members appreciated most about the physical site:*

- 8<sup>th</sup> street – trees / shade / food traffic
- All along one corridor
- Flow is four way: sidewalks (east>west). Middle aisle east/west, which is a good thing
- Flow was reasonably good considering the enormous crowds
- Flow moves incredibly well, despite dogs, doublewide strollers!
- People gather around dogs of interest to them
- Good art grouped in one primary area
- Kids and family having a great time and water fountain
- Liked how most food grouped together
- Good movement of people.
- Easy access and parking
- There is always a good flow of people
- Good layout, nice traffic flow
- It's downtown, an important meeting ground for the community
- Gets people downtown to see what is unique—i.e. statues and fountains that are Boise specific
- Gives neighbors a chance to bump into each other. Provides a place for spontaneous encounters.
- Free parking by sidewalk, public parking lot etc. which encourage people to come. There's plenty of space to park.
- There are a lot of entering/exiting points to the market (e.g., main street) so the flow of people was very smooth
- Flowers planted on 8<sup>th</sup> street
- Garbage tins at various points in market. This is very good since people buy food and eat while they look around market.
- Water fountain in which kids can play.
- Each vendor uses confines of space
- Good placement of particular vendors—flowers on the corners make an inviting entrance. Produce is well placed (berry line in the shade, etc.)
- Open air, people, liability- no dogs just a matter of time before something happens

- It is nice to have multiple entrances because it feels like it gives nice break-up of foot traffic.

*Suggested changes or improvements regarding the physical site:*

- Storm drains sometime emit bad odor
- Move forward on getting the building @ 8<sup>th</sup> and Main built
- The intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> & Idaho is an issue. I observed crowds of people walking against the light – holding up traffic. Perhaps we need to have volunteer traffic ambassadors.
- Cross walk volunteers
- Market ambassadors with badges that just walk among the market – provide direction, answer questions
- Street traffic on Idaho and Main should be limited: by traffic guards? Whose liability? Or, at least the speed should be limited by traffic cones a block before and after.
- Flow along the “art wall” is impeded by stored stuff from vendors. People seem not to use the walkway; move vendors back to wall.
- Storage of vendor supplies/product is untidy in places.
- Limit size of vendor tents between Main and the Grove. It’s pretty tight (maybe larger tents on one side- shorter on the other)
- Have a safe place to store bikes (with an official or guard or someone else watching) while the person goes through the market.
- Consider crossing guards on N & S sides of Idaho and 8<sup>th</sup> (audible signal to help people cross)
- Saw a child trip over a vendor’s items that weren’t tucked away; umbrella and stand that weren’t assembled.
- One totally unsolicited comment, “get rid of the dogs. I know so many people who won’t come down here because of the dogs.”
- Maybe need more bicycle lock areas
- Concern some dogs could be a problem
- Liability: crossing main intersections—people go before walk sign. Need cross guards.
- Dogs can be a problem: had two attack each other in front of me
- Some people could have help carrying their products.
- The crossings (street) seem a little dangerous with larger crowds- is it possible to recruit youth groups (boy scouts, etc.) to work as crossing guards
- Market/info booth could be more visible- flags/signs?
- Maybe signage for message center and lost and found
- Volunteer sign-ups
- Recycle bins at crossings?
- No signs pointing to bathroom
- It would be better if the market could integrate an eating place / sitting area closer to market (maybe around the plaza so that people can eat while they watch performances at the plaza, looking at the face of the market).
- Place to sit and eat not at the very end of the market (e.g., open place in front of garage) because some people are sitting on the ground to eat.
- A plaza around the water fountain would be a great place to set up tents for eating because 1) space, 2) entertainment, 3) water.

- Some congestion
- People moving from one end to the other could be encouraged to use sidewalks on the outside, leaving the street for slower traffic.
- Public restroom, encourage all vendors to create a visually appealing booth
- Possible loading and unloading spot for seniors or pickup
- Caution crossing Idaho and Main. People cross on “don’t walk” or red lights- holding up cars
- Some signs are not very visible when the market is crowded
- Could use a better flow for people who are trying to get a specific booth (e.g. encourage focused shoppers (instead of browsers) to use walkway in front of shops/behind booths).

## **Vendors & Products**

### **Most important messages about the vendors and products RMA team members wanted to convey to the Market:**

- Vendor signage from the back of canopy / booth to the front of the canopy / above
- Encourage more produce, flowers, foods
- Improve vendor signage (up high on booth?)
- The dark, curly haired guy with glasses in the info booth answered most people’s questions in a border tone -surly way. He sat working on his computer facing away from folks—unapproachable man; frowned constantly, seemed to hate his job, although he knew the answers to people’s questions.
- Price diversity is a must, plus the amazing popularity of samples
- All vendors should have a sign with their name and town (needs to be local)
- Local-organic-sustainable
- Shortage of farmers
- The more authentic the product, the better—i.e. the donuts don’t offer ‘local’ flair
- More varieties of food vendors would attract people and more spending at the market
- Good product mix, but some products are marked a little high
- Have vendors that look like they want to be at the market

### **Most significant observations about the vendors and products team members said they would take back with them:**

- Mix seems good, i.e. food vs. crafts. Wondering why crafts are segregated from, food?
- Friendliness of vendors
- Lots of folks eating
- Buyers/strollers are more calm or leisurely in the arts block
- Signage is key to me—gives me lots of information
- It is easier to shop when prices are clearly marked
- Shortage of farmers
- Vendors should all have some type of signage with their name

- Lively communication between vendors and visitors
- Quality of goods

*What team members appreciated most about the vendors and products:*

- Nice mix of produce
- Great mix of products. The limited art has been a great addition but could get out of hand if allowed to grow without standards.
- Tents make for nice consistency
- Lots of folks caring fresh produce/flowers
- Farmers look great wearing farm hats!
- Hanging basket booth, no signs or prices
- Lots of courteous interest in the chef-demo- great draw for people. Nice questions being asked. The chef was courteous and appeared to love and know his profession well.
- Walking puppet delighted all ages- great idea since he's not stationary and was fun!
- Great array of arts, produce, products and foods to eat here. Terrific access to the restaurants and other stores.
- Vendors kept their stalls neat, tidy, and organized—very important: well marked prices are essential as well.
- Some artists woking on their crafts is a good idea—engages possible buyers and teaches the difficulty or ease of what they do.
- Really liked to be greeted by vendors
- Zoombys had a great sign!
- Liked large, specific signs hung high. Info most appreciated was exact location of business: Emmet, Boise, Meridian, etc.
- Diversity of products at the booth, i.e., price range of the \$2.00 item and the \$25.00 item. For example, an artist selling the original print and the card version of the same art.
- Signs that provide city and state of vendor
- Overheard that banners are the best, so when crowd is over the sign, they can still be viewed.
- Vendors with prices on all produce
- People like to buy things to eat as they go (pastries, nuts, Korean)
- Durbin's Bach Acres—great prices and signs
- People like samples
- Good product mix
- Good product quality
- The largest percentage of vendors were friendly and engaging
- Great arts for kids program
- Well-organized set up on all blocks
- Beautiful, fresh, local and organic produce, herbs and flowers
- The Oregon Berry people are very popular—I wish there was a local berry vendor.
- Variety of fresh local products from food to vegetables to plants to fish
- A lot of vendors had samples
- A wine vendor had map of where they get grapes and where wineries are located in Idaho

- Lively conversation between vendors and customers. Even when hectic, vendors answer customer's questions or just talk friendly, which created warm communication between vendors and customers
- Good mix of vendors—all have attractive displays
- Friendly presence with customers

*Suggested changes or improvements regarding the products and vendors:*

- Figure a way for the vendors to rig their signs above their canopies so people can see who they are when the booths are packed
- Signage
- More food vendors
- Lots of vendors sitting which I feel makes them a bit unapproachable (people hate to cause you to stand up for them, especially if they don't end up buying something). Those vendors don't appear to be fully engaged in the market day when they sit (tall stool is ok since you appear to be standing, but you're actually resting somewhat).
- Some art vendors are rather unfriendly. When I said hello, they didn't (or barely with a simple nod) acknowledge me. I was shocked since my assessment tag was totally visible to them.
- Name tags on the vendors with their name and business name helps to make the buyer feel a connection to who they are buying from. It's important to know who grows your food or makes the art you love. It makes the market more personable. I feel we are all connected in life.
- Bag check/cart rental: provide a service to set aside people's purchases so they can keep browsing w/o holding onto eight lbs. of corn, etc. Solicit a high school service group to coordinate this?
- All vendors need home city on signs (lots of booths lack name and location)
- Flowers on both sides of Idaho and 8<sup>th</sup> need some signs
- A number of booths have no signage or inadequate signage.
- Possibly set up a recruitment program for more farmers (winter project?)
- A directory (at main entrance points) giving category, locations, food, produce, arts
- I would love to see more "useful" craftsmanship, i.e. handmade furniture, rugs, baskets, tools, etc. The jewelry is nice, but it would be great to have a local shoemaker, clothes maker, etc.
- Some comments about products costing more at the market
- Have all vendors display professional courtesy to customers "good morning, hello?"

## **Atmosphere**

### **Most important messages about the atmosphere RMA team members wanted to convey to the Market:**

- The atmosphere is great. Perhaps marketing re: parking opportunities, art for kids, etc.
- Vibrant, colorful, friendly vendors
- Keep them all coming by offering the range that's there now.

- The bikes really caused a flow problem (whether pushing or riding them)—strollers too, but I realize they're essential to those moms (who are probably the primary buyers)
- After today, my impression is that it is the atmosphere of the market that makes it so appealing to so many.
- Good mix (of people's) ages
- Good attention to kids and families
- I'd love to see more colorful displays—let vendors be unique. The white canopies are too stark.
- It would be great assets if the market could attract more street performers or musicians
- Great atmosphere of friendly people and color schemes
- I think the market needs more space, can be very crowded

**Most significant observations about the atmosphere team members  
said they would take back with them:**

- 8<sup>th</sup> street market seems to be becoming a Saturday morning tradition
- I saw the arts for kids section for the 1<sup>st</sup> time today – I have not ventured beyond Main street before!
- The shade cast by the tall buildings is a life saver, the soft music was lovely and soothing and happy. The many dogs on leashes also added to the cheerful atmosphere—people had well-behaved, calm dogs (how delightful!)
- Customers take a lot of pride in visiting, supporting and showing off the market.
- Not a very diverse group
- Quality displays are important
- Not only adults, but kids can enjoy and play at the market
- Lots of activities
- Patrons of the market create incredible business for downtown merchants

*What team members appreciated most about the atmosphere:*

- Lots of families – kids.
- The gathering of many generations on a beautiful day!
- Very friendly.
- The kids' events near the fountain are a good idea.
- Friendly, happy, generally calm buyers. They obviously use this as an important social gathering along with buying.
- Loved the cooling fountain—so restful sounding too. Kids playing in it was fun to watch.
- Arts for kids is an amazing idea. Loved the belly dancers (added even more life to market). Usual attraction with large audience (nice to expose us to the different cultures)
- Kids' program at the south end- very fun to watch! Really enjoyed watching vendors engage with the kids.
- Artists were showing off their craft, i.e. glass bead blower, were a huge draw. Very upbeat energy.
- Overheard, "I really like the quality of the artists who sell here."

- Observation: Market seems to attract white, young professionals, young families.
- Families with children
- Senior citizen couples, middle aged people, 11:30am and later seemed to have teenagers
- Lots of socializing- people were hugging each other, seeing/meeting friends
- Friendly place
- The market has a good feel- vendors are very friendly and the public seems to be having a good time. Lots of socializing.
- Congenial, friendly, appreciative, nice mix of serious shoppers and people out for an event
- You're attracting whole families
- Very social, people come here to see and be seen
- Early crowd are the real "shoppers" 9:30-11am. After that, people appear to just be checking things out.
- There's an open atmosphere to all ages and a lot of families with babies and little kids
- Education to customers
- Dogs are allowed too, which is very friendly to animal lovers. It promotes circle of people and conversation
- Free hands-on workshops for kids- always fun!
- Belly dancers
- People are interested and enjoying themselves
- Ages are mostly older and families
- People are socializing well with each other
- The social atmosphere. Good mix of people, dogs, browsers, children, etc.
- General overall nice place to go on Saturday morning
- Heard ladies say what a fun this experience is

*Suggested changes or improvements regarding the atmosphere:*

- Conversations heard: "How's school?" "It's a little crazier here today." Lots of laughter. A little barking.
- A woman said "you need crossing guards at the intersection", since people don't stop and just walk through, according to her.
- Attract different ethnic backgrounds
- Get vendors with more ethnic backgrounds
- Perhaps more physical activities around the fountain circle- mimes, puppeteers
- Any show and tell programs- there is lots of space and the crowds seem to appreciate a break from strolling
- A good location for informational signage
- More quality music performances!
- It would be more fun if there are more diverse street performers, especially because they entertain all ages.
- Keep benches open and free- no vendors on benches
- Discourage dogs from coming to the market

## **General Comments:**

### **Most important general comments RMA team members wanted to convey to the Market:**

- Keep up the great work
- People loved the ease of the dot answers, liked the survey, loved the market.
- People really enjoy visiting with friends
- Very positive buying and selling atmosphere
- Lots of “first timers”—even people who have lived in Boise for years—How do you keep them coming back!?
- We need a better “jamming” area (I think this is referring to the crowded, jammed area)
- People generally have a good feel for the market

### **Most significant general observations team members said they would take back with them:**

- There is something for everyone – even to simply walk & not buy
- From about 9:30-10:30am people were leisurely and calm. They were happy to put dots on. Around 10:45, they were more unfriendly and had no desire to help the market by taking the assessment. There was urgency in the air, also impatience with everything (such as flow, so many baby strollers blocking the way). The heat wasn’t bad, plus the thorough fare was still in blissful shade so that wasn’t the excuse.
- Did not overhear any negative comments
- Early crowd are the true supporters of the market

### *General comments from RMA team members, market attendees and vendors:*

- Vendors seemed pleased that I was doing an assessment.
- Thorough survey
- Great survey, people are here to see friends and to be social with folks seeking the same.
- People were so happy to shop here and to help the market to be better.
- Market Assessment:
  - Idea: a huge sign above the voting area saying perhaps “would you like to help us make a better market”? To catch people, the volunteers might miss (people do look inquisitively at the tent)
  - One lady said, “That’s a great way to do a survey!” It’s fast; you don’t have to hear a person ask a slew of questions; I love it!
- Customers showing off their favorite vendors: his pasta is delicious, makes great dog biscuits.
- Lots of people were in town and just noticed the market
- First time people were hesitant to do the dots
- Returning customers have a special pride in “their” market
- Dot survey was easy to engage shoppers in—it was non-threatening

- Market is well put together and well organized

*General comments and suggestions for changes or improvements from RMA team members, market attendees and vendors:*

- Vendors enjoyed talking about the market – are they surveyed regularly?
- Wish there weren't so many dogs; I get tired of getting licked, and I like dogs.
- Less dogs!
- One man said a 9am opening would be better (that way he could get to the golf course sooner!)
- One woman asked, “are you going to extend another block?” (she would like that if possible)
- One woman asked, “where's the artwork?”. When I told her where she said “maybe it should be interspersed with the other vendors or at least signs pointing the way to it.”
- The staff chowing down in the info booth (not turning away or taking, unobserved bite) in front of the folks seemed very unprofessional. Folks are reluctant to disturb a person eating, so they just walk away and ask nothing.
- Overheard people say they didn't know location of vendors
- I heard a couple of comments by the public about dogs at the market- both comments were negative.
- Perhaps set up dot boards in a center aisle so they are more visible and traffic can flow on both sides
- Seek out a diversity of products for sale in order to keep people's attention while they are at the market especially in crafts department. There are too many jewelry makers for the size of market.
- I had a comment from a man, he said that the area right in front of the information booth seems really jammed. One factor could be food vendors.
- Some people are asking for Saturday and Sunday market
- Vendors should not use their benches to sit