



MARKET MATTERS

THE CITY OF ROCHESTER PUBLIC MARKET:
OUR COMMUNITY'S MOST DIVERSE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

THE MARKET TOKEN PROGRAM IS #1 IN THE NATION--AGAIN

The City of Rochester Public Market's Token Program for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) recipients has tallied final results for 2016, and once again our program was the most successful farmers market "food stamp" redemption initiative in the entire country—by a wide margin.

Last year, an astonishing \$727,773 in SNAP benefits were redeemed at the Market for Market Tokens, which can be used like cash with dozens and dozens of Market vendors that sell fresh, healthy, affordable food. Many of these vendors are local farmers and growers.

And because New York State encourages SNAP use at farmers markets by offering a 40% bonus at farmers markets through its "Fresh Connects" program, the Market Token Program broke the \$1 million mark in 2016, finishing at \$1,009,000. To provide some perspective: In 2015 (USDA figures for 2016 have not been released yet), only five entire states' farmers markets *combined* achieved over \$1 million in SNAP redemptions; and our Market accounts for almost 25% of all the SNAP benefits redeemed annually at all 400 farmers markets across New York State.

The success of this program is rooted in its simple but effective design, seamless management by Friends of the Rochester Public Market (our nonprofit partner), and effective promotion through the City of Rochester, the *Buy Fresh For Less* and *Farmers Markets Roc* outreach campaigns, and through many helpful community partners—and word-of-mouth!

It should be noted that the Friends of the Rochester Public Market achieve these extraordinary results with just one full time paid staff person and many dedicated volunteers.

Some have said that one of the reasons for the success of this program is the high levels of poverty



The Market Token Center, custom-fabricated from a repurposed shipping container, is right behind the Market Office building.

in Rochester. It is true that poverty levels here are unacceptably high, but it is also true that cities like Syracuse, Cleveland, Buffalo and Detroit have similarly high poverty levels and also large farmers/public markets—but have not achieved anywhere close to our SNAP redemption results. In other words, the Market Token Program is doing a tremendous job connecting low-income SNAP recipients with the healthy, fresh, affordable food available at our Market.

But we are not resting on these laurels. In 2016, only about 3% of SNAP benefits redeemed annually in Monroe County were redeemed at the Public Market. So there is much room for even more growth and success of the Market Token Program.

Another exciting accomplishment in 2016 was the opening of the new Market Token Center. Beautifully custom-fabricated and designed from a repurposed retired shipping container, this Token Center provides quicker service at multiple walk-up windows.

Note! Income thresholds for SNAP benefits have risen. To learn if you qualify for SNAP, call 585-295-5624 or go to www.lawny.org.



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IMPORTANT REMINDER: WE'RE OPEN ALL REGULAR DAYS AND HOURS THROUGHOUT CONSTRUCTION

The Market has not and will not close at all during the renovation and expansion project! This means the Market will be open all its regular days and hours until the project is complete (likely in early summer). See the green box just to the right for the regular Market schedule. Stay tuned to the progress of the project online at:

www.cityofrochester.gov/marketimprovements

www.facebook.com/cityofrochesterpublicmarket.

SPECIAL EVENTS SCHEDULE NOW ONLINE

Free-admission special events dates have been set for 2017, and can be seen at www.cityofrochester.gov/marketevents. Bookmark this page because new events will likely be added! Soon, print copies of the schedules will be around Market grounds and on the web page!

"TIPS" BROCHURE AVAILABLE FOR MARKET PRODUCE SHOPPERS

The Market offers a immense variety of produce—from farms just down the road, and from all corners of the country and globe. Because there are so many kinds and types of vegetables and fruits available at the Market, we offer a "Tips for Shopping for Fruits and Veggies at the Market" brochure that helps shoppers understand these varieties and options better. Brochures are available in the lobby of the Market Office, and also online at www.cityofrochester.gov/publicmarket (see the link to the brochure near the top of this web page).

As always, we are here to answer your questions and hear your comments and suggestions! Give us a call at 585-428-7282 or shoot us an email to pmarket@cityofrochester.gov.

City of Rochester Public Market

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585.428.6907

pmarket@cityofrochester.gov
cityofrochester.gov/publicmarket

www.facebook.com/cityofrochesterpublicmarket

Tuesday, Thursday, 6 a.m.-1 p.m.;
Saturday, 5 a.m.-3 p.m.

Lovely A. Warren, Mayor

Marisol O. Ramos-Lopez,
Commissioner, Department of
Recreation and Youth Services

Jim Farr, Market Director

Cindy DeCoste
Supervisor of Markets

Rob Sharman
Assistant Market Supervisor

Evan Lowenstein,
Communications/Special Events,
Special Projects Coordinator

Kham Vilaysak
Operations Worker

Chan Xomvimane
Grounds Equipment Operator

Subscribe to receive *Market Matters* via email: Send request to pmarket@cityofrochester.gov

THIS VALENTINE'S DAY, GIVE THE GIFT OF THE MARKET!

Chocolates and flowers are lovely, but gift certificates always make a fabulous generous gift!

So get your honey some Market Gift Tokens this Valentine's Day! Gift Tokens are accepted by dozens of vendors, including produce vendors, meat/fish cheese/baked goods vendors, specialty food and drink and prepared food purveyors, and more!

Market Gift Tokens are \$5.00 "wooden nickels" and are available at the Market Token Center (behind the Market Office) on regular Market days—Tuesdays and Thursdays 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Saturdays 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information about Market Gift Tokens, go to www.cityofrochester.gov/marketgifttokens or call 325-5058.

