

Farmers' market facility to open in May

Project awarded \$118,000 Thursday

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Nelson County's Horticulture Advisory Board was awarded \$118,000 of tobacco settlement funds for use in the construction of a farmers' market facility slated for completion in May.

The recent award will be added to \$75,000 in Downtown Renaissance Program funds previously awarded to Bardstown and \$60,000 from the Bardstown-Nelson County Tourism Commission for the construction of a pavilion to shelter an existing parking lot along Flaget Avenue.

The planned structure will allow continued use of the lot for parking and provide cover for the farmers' market and special events.

The proposed structure will be 54-feet wide at street-side and nearly 120-feet long as it covers the existing parking lot, according to preliminary plans.

Bardstown assistant city administrator Larry Green said future expansion of the pavilion would be possible.

The red brick façade of the structure is planned to include restroom facilities and resemble the Jewell and Hayden building that once stood on the site.

Bardstown Mayor Dixie Hibbs said the façade would fill a void downtown while allowing a spacious area behind it for the farmers' market and various community events.

"The farmers' market has first call," Hibbs said, "but if they're not using it, it will be available to the community."

Nelson County Horticulture Extension Agent Robbie Smith said he envisions agricultural demonstrations, shows and displays for the new marketplace and was happy to see the joint project closer to a reality.

"The market's been around for about 20 years, but it floated from place to place," Smith said. "Our goal was to give it a home."

Hibbs said the funding of the farmers' market was truly a collaborative effort of tourism, extension office and city personnel.

"No one of the three of us could have done this alone," Hibbs said.

A farmers' market board will be established to oversee activities at the new facility, Hibbs said.

Utility relocation has begun at the site and construction bids for the pavilion and façade's construction are scheduled for opening Thursday.

Green said the city has additional funds available if bids exceed grant funding.