

## LENOIR COUNTY, NC



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### Needs Addressed:

The local food network in Lenoir County suffers from a lack of consistent access to fruit and vegetable growers. Without the existence of the Lenoir County Farmer’s Market, many downtown Kinston residents lack access to fresh fruit and vegetables. Fresh fruits and vegetables are available in limited quantities in a few convenience stores scattered around the downtown area, but many of these stores/shops do not carry fresh produce. Some tailgate sellers are scattered around the city, but most of the roadside stands are located on the major highways or in the remote areas of the county. For many downtown residents these locations are too far away to be convenient.

### Project/Process:

The Lenoir County Community-based Food System Team began by establishing the Lenoir County Farmer’s Market Advisory Committee. The committee surveyed potential market producers, members and customers to determine community needs as they relate to local foods and the Farmer’s Market. The committee sought and secured funding to provide market improvements and updates, as well as revamping the Rules and Regulations. The committee also recruited and secured vendors for market participation. Community organizations were encouraged to utilize market products at community events.



### Lessons Learned:

- It is critical to involve producers, business members, restaurant owners, Extension personnel and other stakeholders in establishing a Community-based Food System and Farmer’s Market
- As vendor participation increases and becomes consistent so will the customer base.
- The use of Internet marketing will significantly impact an increase in the traffic of your market.
- The more you are able to interject local foods into civic and community events the greater the demand will be to do so.

### Results:

- The Lenoir County Farmer’s Market increased market membership from 3 to 32 new members and vendors.
- A customer activity study of the Lenoir County Farmer’s Market revealed an average attendance of 340 to 925 customers visit regularly on a weekly basis. Forty percent will visit on a weekly basis and twenty percent will visit more often.
- Projected annual receipts are \$590,488, with 49% of shoppers reporting they will spend \$883,733 annually at surrounding businesses.
- Over 450 citizens attended Community events featuring Local Foods.
- A Market Manager was secured through County budgeted funds.

### Partnerships:

- North Carolina Cooperative Extension, [Lenoir County Center](#)
- Lenoir County Farmer’s Market Association
- Lenoir County Master Gardeners
- [Pride of Kinston, Inc.](#)
- [Kinston-Lenoir Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Lenoir County Government](#)
- [Community Council for the Arts](#)
- Area restaurants and business



### Next Steps:

The Community-based Food System Team continues to submit grants to support facility upgrades, including bathrooms, lighting and parking areas and to support the Market Manager for a larger amount of time per week.