

The Truth - Local News

Countryside market open for business

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ELKHART -- With a bell that sounded like the opening of the stock market, the American Countryside Farmers Market opened for business Wednesday.

Hundreds attended the invitation-only grand opening at the new market at 27751 C.R. 26, south of the U.S. 20 Bypass.

Politicians made speeches. LeRoy Troyer, one of the founders, was one of dozens of people taking pictures. Musicians from NorthWood High School performed, but the crowd joined in when Jenny Grunseth led "God Bless America" and Orley Miller broke into "Amazing Grace."

The market opens to the public this morning at 7 a.m. It will be open 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Not all of the food vendors have licenses yet, but those that did were busy serving lunch ranging from buffalo burgers, beef sirloin tips and jerk chicken. People filled the dining court as they ate.

Four booths were selling meat to be taken from the market and one had fresh produce, though most of it bore stickers indicating it wasn't grown here. A number of booths didn't yet have vendors Wednesday. But vendors who were ready sold to hungry customers.

The market is opening, but not done. Construction on the world's largest peg-and-beam building is done, but road construction and landscaping isn't. State Rep. Jackie Walorski, R-Lakeville, said she's working on getting a traffic light for S.R. 19 and C.R. 26 and getting S.R. 19 widened.

Walorski said the market represents "who we are in northern Indiana" and that agritourism is where Indiana is heading. She hopes shoppers at the market show the biblical fruits of the spirit of love and joy, but not self-control. The fruits are engraved into beams surrounding the center court of the building that covers more than an acre.

"God bless this place and the people who built it and God bless American Countryside," Walorski said.

Mayor Dave Miller read from his Bible during the opening ceremony and said, "God helped build this house, but he used people to do it. He needs you to come here and fill it and shop here and bring your friends and family."

E. Jean Phillips of Elkhart said she plans to do just that.

"I can't wait to have some company to show off what we have in Elkhart," she said as she carried out bags of items she purchased.

She and others raved about how beautiful the building is. Phillips called it "the most beautiful building I've seen in a long time."

Jean Sikes of South Bend is a regular shopper at the South Bend Farmers Market and said she didn't expect the large scale of the new market. She liked what she saw and said she wouldn't come weekly, but would come.

Pauline Gleva, who was visiting with her, said, "We like all farmers markets. This is so neat. We'll be back."

While Ed Klose picked out a sugar-free peach pie from one of the booths, his wife, Muff, said they'll return.

"I think it's wonderful. I hope it goes," she said of the market.

Troyer said the opening is just the beginning. Art Moser, who founded the market with Troyer, said the market is the result of nearly 20 years of talking, dreaming and praying.

"We believe this is a facility you can all be using and bring your friends," Troyer said, indicating the market can help connect people to the farm.

"We trust this facility will be from the field to the table," he said.

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Additional Information:

Open for business

The American Countryside Farmers Market will be open 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, year-round.

The market is at 27751 C.R. 26. The intersection at C.R. 26 and S.R. 19 west of the market is already congested and if you can approach the market from the east, you may encounter less traffic.

Vendors will be selling food, nutritional supplements, furniture, clothing and other items.

For more information, see www.americancountryside.us.

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