



Dear Market Manager,

Attached is a packet of information to help you learn more about the WSU Farmers Market Wireless Technology Project. This project is being funded by the WA State Dept. of Agriculture through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

Farmers markets provide an increasingly important, high-value sales venue for specialty and sustainable crops grown in WA State. Developing the technological capacity of WA farmers markets by allowing shoppers to pay with credit/debit cards or use SNAP (food stamp) benefits could maximize sales volumes and expand access to fresh market specialty crops for far greater numbers of consumers. Using the data collected by market managers at each market, this project will allow WSU to evaluate the overall economic impact to specialty crop growers selling at markets with credit/debit/SNAP (food stamp) machines.

Specialty crops are defined as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).” Eligible plants must be intensively cultivated and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification to be considered specialty crops. Meat, dairy, poultry, fish and fiber, as well as commodities (grains, etc.) are NOT Specialty Crops.

We hope that after looking it over, you will want your market to participate in this program. If your market participates, you will receive

- a wireless device set up to accept credit/debit/SNAP food stamp cards,
- wooden tokens,
- signage and materials, and
- consulting services to help set up the program.

If you are **NOT** already accepting SNAP/food stamps at your market, you will need to get a USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) permit. The first step in this process is getting approved by Food and Nutrition Services to be a retailer who takes SNAP/food stamp benefits. There is information on this at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ebt/fm.htm>

To apply to be approved retailer for food stamps (SNAP), please go online to:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/register.htm>

You have to register first, and then for the SNAP store application you will need to gather the required documentation (e.g. Social Security Numbers of Responsible Person/s (Farmers Market Board Officers, Market Manager, etc), business license and photo identification). You can apply online, or call 1-877-823-4369 to receive a paper application. Please note that FNS may take up to 45 days to process an application once it's complete.

The attached packet includes the following information:

- Project description
- Market Application Form
- Sample Board resolution and Sample Vendor agreement forms
- Example of a monthly statement of fees from ePaymentAmerica
- Break even example that shows Sample processing fees for a 20 week market

Grant Timeline:

Application Final Deadline: **February 18, 2011** (postmarked on or before).

Grant recipients notified in writing no later than: **February 28, 2011**.

Please note:

- The Board Resolution and Vendor Agreements are samples ONLY. They may be changed to fit your market's needs.
- Markets that participate in this pilot will be required to take credit/debit/SNAP (food stamps).
- A sample fee chart will be posted on the WSFMA website by January 18, 2011, so that markets can see the expenses that will be incurred when the wireless system is adopted.
- Markets previously involved with taking credit/debit/SNAP have found that they must have a system in place to be able to afford the processing fees associated with taking credit/debit/SNAP. Some markets that charge stall fees based on percentage of vendor sales have found that stall fees have increased as sales have increased, thus the market was able to break even on processing fees. Other markets have chosen to charge vendors an extra fee on debit/credit sales. In the break even example provided in this packet, for a 20 week market, a 5% vendor fee on credit/debit sales would cover the cost of processing fees, and an 11% vendor fee would cover the costs of processing fees and the labor costs of staffing the machine at the market booth.

We would like your application and board resolution returned as soon as possible. The final deadline is February 18, 2011. You will be notified by February 28, 2011 if you have been accepted to participate. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Rita Ordóñez, Coordinator, WSU Farmers Market Wireless Technology Project, at 360-336-0932 or email ritaromaine@gmail.com. We look forward to working with you and other managers on this exciting new project. Thank you for your interest.