

Holiday markets offer local food, artworks

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13

LITTLE FALLS—The Sprout Growers & Makers Marketplace will host its inaugural market from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Nov. 21, in the former Crestliner warehouse, 609 13th Ave., Little Falls.

The public is invited to shop for locally produced food and artworks for the autumn and winter seasons' meals and gifts.

The Marketplace is seeking up to 40 grower and maker vendors of local produce, dairy, and meat products; jams and preserves; and original creations art such as pottery, wood items, and jewelry. To deliver a diverse market, staff is also coordinating with local restaurants and entertainment for food, music, and a children's area with face painting, hula-hooping and more.

A second holiday market is planned 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Dec. 12.

Growers or makers with locally produced food and/or artworks may go online to www.SproutMN.com for vendor application materials. The first 20 vendors to register will be rewarded with a discounted booth fee of \$10.

Sprout's stated mission is to promote the health, economy, and self-reliance of Central Minnesota by facilitating the availability of locally produced food and artworks in the region.

Sprout is a regional food hub and indoor marketplace located in Little Falls. The location is under construction and currently provides local producers and

buyers technical assistance on Good Agricultural Practices, food safety, licensing, and post-harvest handling.

Organizers report the space will serve four primary functions to link consumers to source-identified food and goods that are economically, socially, and environmentally healthy. Those primary functions include: a year-round market for growers and artists to market their locally produced food and artworks to Central Minnesota residents and tourists; a local foods processing facility for local growers to use to can, freeze, etc. value-added products; house a

cooking demonstration kitchen, and facilitate the wholesale aggregation, storage, and distribution of local foods as part of the Sprout Food Hub for institutional sales.

Currently, the Sprout Food Hub coordinates Farm-to-School for six Central Minnesota school districts, large-volume wholesale sales for premiere and resort restaurants, and a Community Supported Agriculture program.

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