

# Assessing the Impact of the Athens Farmers Market



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*with support from*  
Athens Farmers Market  
City of Athens  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of the Athens Farmers Market (AFM) and a member of the Athens City Council, Ohio University’s Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs conducted an assessment of the Athens Farmers Market and its impact on the community. The assessment was carried out in collaboration with AFM and the City of Athens, and drew on the Rapid Market Assessment model created by researchers at Oregon State University Extension Service. The project included customer counts, vehicle counts, customer engagement and a collection of financial information from vendors. Table 1 provides an overview of the assessment components. The full report provides an explanation of the methods employed in the assessment and a list of recommendations for the City of Athens and AFM as they work to ensure AFM’s long-term security.

**Table 1: Overview of Data Collection**

Type of Data Collection	Dates of Collection	Method of Collection	Notes
<b>Traffic Counts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 24-August 14</li> </ul>	County and City officials placed traffic tubes at parking lot entrances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average vehicular traffic counts appear higher during market times.</li> <li>See page 12 of this report for specific counts.</li> </ul>
<b>Attendance Counts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>July 24, 2013 (Weds.)</li> <li>July 27, 2013 (Sat.)</li> <li>August 10, 2013 (Sat.)</li> <li>August 14, 2013 (Weds.)</li> <li>October 2, 2013 (Weds.)</li> <li>October 5, 2013 (Sat.)</li> </ul>	VS staff conducted a Modified Rapid Market Assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An average of 2,570 adult shoppers entered the market on Saturdays and an average of 880 adult shoppers entered the market on Wednesdays.</li> <li>See page 6 of this report for specific counts.</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August 10, 2013 (Sat.)</li> <li>August 14, 2013 (Weds.)</li> </ul>	VS staff administered a dot poster survey and Questionnaire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>398 Saturday customers and 141 Wednesday customers participated in the dot survey and/or questionnaire.</li> <li>See page 9 of this report and Appendices A and B for details.</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring 2013</li> </ul>	AFM Market Manager collected data from 62 of the 84 vendors operating in 2012.	<p><i>For the 62 vendors providing information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vendors reported over \$1.4 million in estimated aggregate annual sales.</li> <li>AFM supported a total of 122 full-time and 135 part-time vendors and paid employees.</li> </ul>

Based on the assessment, researchers conclude that AFM is a robust market with significant impact on the community, as demonstrated by the following:

- Attendance counts conducted at three Saturday and three Wednesday markets in 2013 (July 24 and 27, August 10 and 14, and October 2 and 5) document that **AFM has an average attendance of 2,570 adult customers on Saturdays and 880 adult customers on Wednesdays.**<sup>1</sup> These numbers compare favorably with farmers markets in areas with even larger populations.<sup>2</sup>
- **AFM currently has over 80 vendors, plus a waiting list** of potential vendors. This places the market in the “large” category (56-90 vendors) as defined by researchers at Oregon State University Extension.<sup>3</sup> The wait list indicates the potential for continued growth of the market.
- **AFM demonstrates other characteristics of successful farmers markets**, including a wide selection of farm products, multiple product categories, entertainment and special events, a compensated professional manager and relatively low manager turnover.<sup>4</sup>
- **Sixty-two of the 84 AFM vendors report that they earned a combined total of \$1.4 million dollars in 2012.**
- **In 2012, AFM employed 122 full-time and 135 part-time personnel** (including vendors and their paid employees).
- **The vast majority of shopper participating in the customer engagement process report that their primary reason for coming to East State Street is to shop at the market**, and over half of these customers report that they “often” or “always” shop at other businesses or restaurants when they come to the market.
- **AFM significantly increases the traffic flow into the area on days that it operates.** At just one of the market entrances alone, an average of over 1,300 vehicles entered the parking lot on Saturdays from 9am to 2pm.
- **The market appears to enjoy strong community support.** Over 70% of customers who participated in the assessment indicated that they shop at the market multiple times a month. Almost half of all participating customers reported residing within Athens City limits and another third were from the remainder of Athens County.
- **AFM also draws customers from outside Athens County.** Fourteen percent of responding customers reported that they came from someplace other than Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Vinton or Morgan County.

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<sup>1</sup> For those days in which counts were conducted.

<sup>2</sup> See page 8 of this report for details.

<sup>3</sup> G. Stephenson, L. Lev, and L. Brewer (December 2007). *Understanding the Link Between Farmer’s Market Size and Management Organization*. Oregon State University Extension Service Special Report 1082-E

<sup>4</sup> Farmers’ Markets America (2008). *Characteristics of Successful Farmers Markets*.

<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/236585> (accessed 12/10/13); G. Stephenson, L. Lev and L. Brewer (December 2006). *When Things Don’t Work: Some Insights into Why Farmers’ Markets Close*. Oregon State University Extension Service Special Report 1073; E. Ragland and D. Tropp (2009). *USDA National Farmers Market Manager Survey: 2006*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5077203&acct=wdmgeninfo#sthash.KwfcMxIy.dpuf> (accessed 12/11/13)

## BACKGROUND

The Athens Farmers Market (AFM) has been operating in the City of Athens since 1972. Currently, over 80 vendors participate and there is a waiting list of vendors who would like to be a part of the market. The market is open on Saturdays year-round, and on Wednesdays from April to December. In the winter, many vendors move indoors to The Market on State. Audubon magazine has designated AFM as among “10 of the country’s finest” farmers markets<sup>5</sup> and local press has called the market “a bustling hub of more than 100 vendors providing fresh produce and local goods, creating a social gathering for community members and serving as the epicenter of the region’s burgeoning local food culture.”<sup>6</sup>

In the summer of 2013, concern over the long-term viability of the AFM’s current location in the parking lot of The Market on State prompted an effort to gather information about the market and its impact on the community in order to guide any future decision-making about the market. AFM Manager, Kip Parker, AFM Board Member, Ann Fugate, and Athens City Council member, Steve Patterson, approached Ohio University’s Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (VS) about the possibility of conducting an assessment of the impact of the AFM. Parker, Fugate and Patterson met with VS staff to discuss the goals of the research and to review the methods and materials to be used. At the suggestion of Leslie Schaller, Director of Programing at the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet), the group agreed to use a modified version of the Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) method to gather and report information on the market.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> M. Thomas (March 2006) “Cream of the Crop,” *Audubon Magazine* <http://archive.audubonmagazine.org/features0603/market.html> (accessed 10/29/13)

<sup>6</sup> J. Halley (June 14, 2012) “Athens Farmers Market Turns 40,” *Athens Messenger* [http://www.athensohiotoday.com/news/athens-farmers-market-turns/article\\_36e0e750-b61c-11e1-98bf-0019bb2963f4.html](http://www.athensohiotoday.com/news/athens-farmers-market-turns/article_36e0e750-b61c-11e1-98bf-0019bb2963f4.html) (accessed 10/29/2013)

<sup>7</sup> For more on the Rapid Market Assessment method, see: L. Lev and G. Stephenson (October 1999) “Dot Posters: Practical Alternative to Written Questions and Oral Interviews,” *Journal of Extension* <http://www.joe.org.iow/1999october/tt1.html> (accessed 09/14/2013); L. Lev, L. Brewer and G. Stephenson (May 2008) “Tools for Rapid Market Assessments” *Oregon Small Farms Technical Report*, No. 6 [http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/8665/SR\\_no.1088\\_ocr.pdf](http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/8665/SR_no.1088_ocr.pdf) (accessed 09/14/2013)

## RAPID MARKET ASSESSMENT METHOD

The RMA method was designed by Oregon State Extension Service to provide efficient, cost-effective ways to document a farmers market's role in the community. A typical RMA includes attendance counts, dot poster surveys and "Constructive Comments and Observations" (CCO). For attendance counts, researchers count the number of adults entering the market for 10- or 20-minute periods each hour, and that number is then multiplied to produce an hourly attendance estimate. For the dot poster surveys, three to four closed-ended questions are posted on large poster boards and customers are asked to indicate their answers to the questions by placing stickers in the column labeled with their answer. The CCO portion of the RMA was not used in this project, but typically involves an exchange between members of two farmers markets in order to collect feedback on the functioning of the markets.

### ***Modifications to the RMA method***

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Five changes were made to the RMA method in order to tailor it to the unique needs of the AFM assessment:

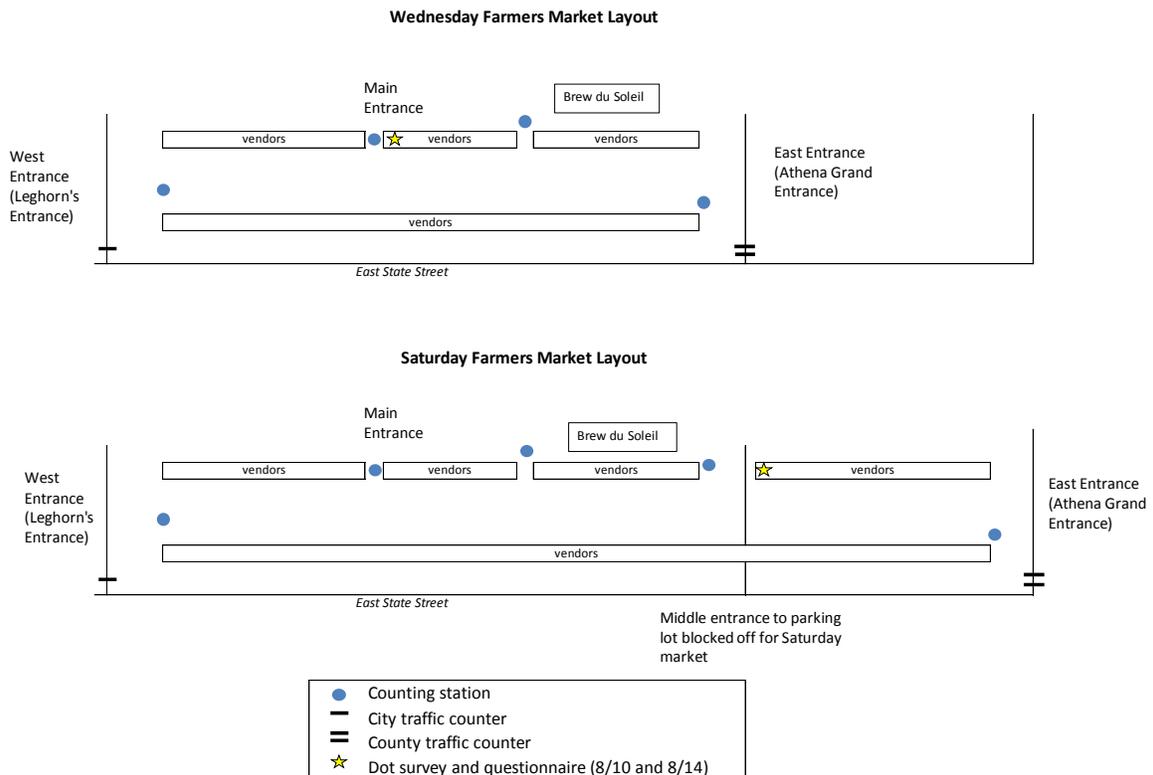
- Because the CCO portion is a labor-intensive process that may require farmers market officials to be absent from their own market on market day, the CCO portion was not incorporated into this assessment.
- The prescribed counting method was modified slightly in order to include those customers already in the market at the time of the starting bell (details can be found in the Attendance section of this report).
- Researchers added an anonymous six-question survey to the customer engagement process. By adding the questions, researchers were able to collect a total of ten pieces of information from customers, instead of the four pieces typically collected by the RMA method.
- To supplement the data, vehicular traffic counts were collected with traffic counting tubes provided by the City of Athens and Athens County.
- To provide more information on the market and its impact, financial data and employment information were collected from vendors by the AFM manager.

## Logistics

The following figure provides a rough sketch of the AFM layout for both Wednesday and Saturday markets. Circles indicate the locations at which VS staff stood to count adult shoppers entering the market. Before the market, VS staff used yellow caution tape to block off informal access points into the market, and hung signs advising shoppers of the customer count in progress and asking them to use the main entrances. Stars indicate the location where the dot survey and questionnaire were administered on August 10 and 14. A single horizontal line indicates the location of the City of Athens traffic counter, and a double horizontal line indicates the location of the Athens County traffic counter.

**Figure 1. AFM Layout**

Note: Figure is not to scale



# ATTENDANCE

## **Method**

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VS staff counted adults entering the market during market hours on July 24, July 27, August 10, August 14, October 2, and October 5 (three Wednesday and three Saturday markets). From 20- to 40-minutes after the hour, staffers used hand-held clickers to count every adult entering the market. If the person counting customers recognized that someone entering the market was a vendor or had already entered the market during that counting period, the person was not counted.

## **Modifications to method**

After the first count was performed on Wednesday, July 24, vendors expressed concern that the total count might be too small. One concern was that the sampling method might not reliably capture the total attendance. The other concern was that counting strictly between 10am and 1pm did not capture the considerable number of customers who enter the market before 10am in order to make purchases as soon as the market opens for business. In response, researchers increased the number of VS staff at the next market (Saturday, July 27), and engaged in continuous counting of all adult customers entering the market *and* 20-minute sampling in order to compare the two tallies and gauge the accuracy of the sampling method. The tally resulting from the continuous count strictly between 10am and 1pm (2,556 customers) was about 6% higher than the estimate produced by the sampling method (2,394 customers). Researchers concluded that the sampling method was reliable and the difference in the tallies could be explained by the number of people already in the market before 10am.

In order to capture these shoppers in the attendance counts, at the following markets researchers once again used the 20-minute samples, but also counted the number of adult shoppers already in the market at the time of the opening bell and added this number to the total count for that day. This modification to the RMA method has also been made by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont in its instructions to member markets.<sup>8</sup> All of the customer counts from August 10 on were completed using this amended method.

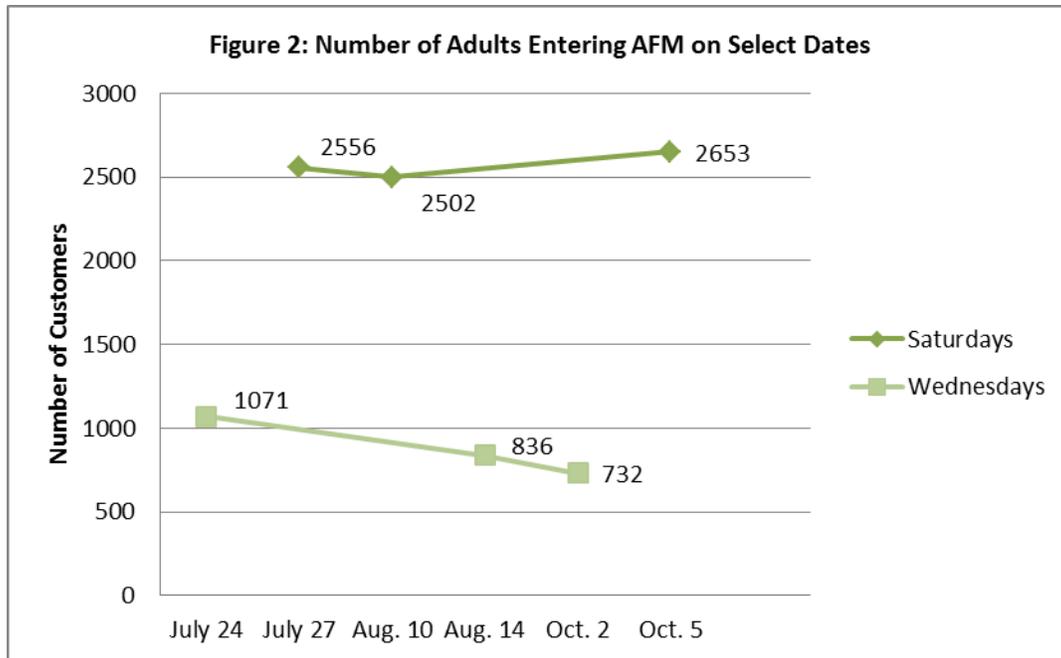
## **Results**

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Figure 2 shows the number of customers attending the selected Wednesday and Saturday markets. Table 2 provides a summary of the number of adult shoppers counted on each day and additional details about the day and counting method. An average of 2,570 adult customers entered the market on the three Saturdays and an average of 880 customers entered the market on the three Wednesdays.

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<sup>8</sup> Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont. "Rapid Market Assessment" <http://nofavt.org/node/765> (accessed 09/10/13)



**Table 2: Customer Counts and Related Details**

Date	Number of Adult Shoppers	Day of the Week	Method	Notes
July 24, 2013	<b>1,071</b>	Wednesday	20 minute samples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature in high 60s</li> <li>• Ohio University (OU) on summer break</li> </ul>
July 27, 2013	<b>2,556</b>	Saturday	Continuous count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature in low 70s, brief period of rain</li> <li>• OU on summer break</li> </ul>
August 10, 2013	<b>2,502</b>	Saturday	20 minute samples + initial count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature in high 70s, overcast</li> <li>• OU on summer break</li> </ul>
August 14, 2013	<b>836</b>	Wednesday	20 minute samples + initial count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature in mid 60s</li> <li>• OU on summer break</li> </ul>
October 2, 2013	<b>732</b>	Wednesday	20 minute samples + initial count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature in mid 70s</li> <li>• OU in session</li> <li>• An Athens City Schools bus carrying 21 passengers arrived at the market outside of the counting intervals</li> </ul>
October 5, 2013	<b>2,653</b>	Saturday	20 minute samples + initial count	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature in mid 70s, overcast</li> <li>• OU in session</li> </ul>

Attendance data for farmers markets are not collected in a standardized way, nor are they widely available. Nonetheless, the attendance data that can be found suggests the AFM has a relatively high attendance rate relative to the population of the City of Athens (population 23,832).<sup>9</sup> For example, the farmers market in Cary, North Carolina (population 135,234) reports a weekly attendance of 843 shoppers at their Saturday markets in 2013.<sup>10</sup> In 2012, a Rapid Market Assessment in Lewiston, Idaho (population 31,894) documented an attendance rate of 120 people at a Tuesday farmers market.<sup>11</sup> The farmers market in Leavenworth, Kansas (population 35,251) reported a Saturday attendance of 832 adult shoppers in 2009.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Population data for this report was drawn from U.S. Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, *American Fact Finder*. [http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community\\_facts.xhtml](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml) (accessed 12/11/13)

<sup>10</sup> Paul A. Spect and Sydney Walford (November 27, 2013). "Local farmers markets see upswing in attendance" *The Cary News*

<sup>11</sup> University of Idaho Extension (2012). *Rapid Market Assessment Provides Needed Information for Farmers' Markets*. [http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/impacts/Pdf\\_12/39-12wwarren-RMA.pdf](http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/impacts/Pdf_12/39-12wwarren-RMA.pdf) (accessed 12/11/13)

<sup>12</sup> M. Tayler-Puckett (2009). *Leavenworth Farmers Market*. [http://www.ksfarmersmarkets.org/sites/default/files/RMA\\_Leavenworth\\_August2009.pdf](http://www.ksfarmersmarkets.org/sites/default/files/RMA_Leavenworth_August2009.pdf) (accessed 12/11/13)

# CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

## *Methods*

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VS staff again drew on the RMA method in order to collect data directly from customers. Because traditional paper surveys and interview techniques tend not to be highly effective in the busy outdoor setting of a farmers market, the RMA method incorporates dot poster surveys, which are more in keeping with the community-oriented nature of the market. As mentioned earlier, researchers also supplemented the dot poster questions with a brief questionnaire in order to increase the amount of information collected from customers. VS staff worked in collaboration with AFM to design the two sets of questions.

Several steps were taken in order to encourage customers to participate. The research effort was publicized ahead of time in both traditional and social media. Signs advertising the survey were placed at the entrances to the market, and vendors also had a signs encouraging participation posted in their stalls. At the site of the dot voting, smaller poster boards were set up for children to vote on their favorite fruits and vegetables so that children would have an activity while their parents were participating in the survey. Finally, AFM provided two \$50 AFM gift certificates that were raffled off to customers who completed a questionnaire. Overall, customers appeared to be very supportive of the data collection effort and appeared eager to participate in a process they thought would support the market.

The dot survey asked the following questions:

- (1) How often do you shop at this market?
- (2) How often do you shop at other businesses or restaurants when you come to this market?
- (3) What did you (or will you) buy today?
- (4) What is your PRIMARY reason for coming to East State Street today?

The brief questionnaire asked respondents the following questions:

- (1) How many people are in your household?
- (2) Are you a student?
- (3) Where do you live?
- (4) How much did you (or will you) spend at the market today?
- (5) How did you travel to the market?
- (6) How old are you?

## ***Results***

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Almost four hundred shoppers (398) participated in the customer engagement process on Saturday, August 10. One hundred forty-one shoppers participated on Wednesday, August 14. Table 3 summarizes the results of the process, and frequency tables for each question are provided in Appendices A and B.

In addition to the results captured in the following table, it should be noted that customers spontaneously offered information verbally to researchers and by making additional comments on questionnaires. Typically, the comments were supportive statements about the value of the market and expressions of concern about a potential relocation of the market.

**Table 3: Customer Engagement Results**

Question Topic	Data Collection Method	Results
<b>Shopping behavior</b>	Dot survey and questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A majority of participating shoppers indicated that they shop at the market at least 2-3 times a month.</li> <li>• 40% of Saturday respondents and 46% of Wednesday respondents reported that they shop at the market at least once a week.</li> <li>• Over half of participating shoppers reported that they planned to spend between \$11 and \$30 at the market that day (52% of Saturday respondents and 51% of Wednesday respondents indicated this).</li> <li>• Respondents most frequently selected “fruits and/or vegetables” when asked what they were buying that day.<sup>13</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Impact on other area businesses</b>	Dot survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over half of responding shoppers reported that they “often” or “always” shop at other businesses or restaurants. Over 90% of responding shoppers report that they at least “occasionally” shop at other businesses or restaurants when they come to the market.</li> <li>• The vast majority of participating shoppers reported that their primary reason for coming to East State Street that day was the farmers market (90% of Saturday respondents and 82% of Wednesday respondents indicated this).</li> </ul>
<b>Customer demographics</b>	Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 46% of participating Saturday shoppers and 43% of participating Wednesday shoppers come from two-person households.</li> <li>• 18% of Saturday respondents and 23% of Wednesday respondents report that they are not students.</li> <li>• Roughly half of responding shoppers report that they live within Athens City limits (48% of Saturday participants and 50% of Wednesday participants indicated this).</li> <li>• There was no clear pattern in the age of responding shoppers. 23% of Saturday respondents and 29% of Wednesday respondents were 29 years old or younger; 32% of Saturday and Wednesday respondents were between the ages of 30 and 49; 46% of Saturday respondents and 40% of Wednesday respondents were 50 years or older.</li> <li>• Ten percent of participating shoppers reported being at the market for first time, indicating this may be a tourist destination</li> </ul>
<b>Mode of transportation to market</b>	Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vast majority of participating shoppers arrive at the market by car or truck (98% of Saturday respondents and 96% of Wednesday respondents reported this).</li> </ul> <p><u>Note:</u> Customer engagement occurred primarily while students were out of town, though public transportation to the market and the Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities van were operating.</p>

<sup>13</sup> These questions were asked in August and customers’ purchases may vary based on seasonal availability of products.

## TRAFFIC COUNTS

### *Method*

City Council member Steve Patterson coordinated with Athens County and the City of Athens to place traffic counting tubes at the entrances to the parking lot at The Market on State. The City of Athens' device is able to note the time data is collected, so researchers were able to isolate the traffic count for precise market hours (10am to 1pm). The City's device also provides separate counts of vehicles turning into and leaving the parking lot. The County's traffic tube is not able to identify the time in which traffic counts are collected, and does not distinguish between vehicles entering or leaving the parking lot. Therefore, gross traffic counts were collected for the entire time the county-provided tube was on the ground (8am to 2pm on market days). Table 4 summarizes the traffic counting methods used.

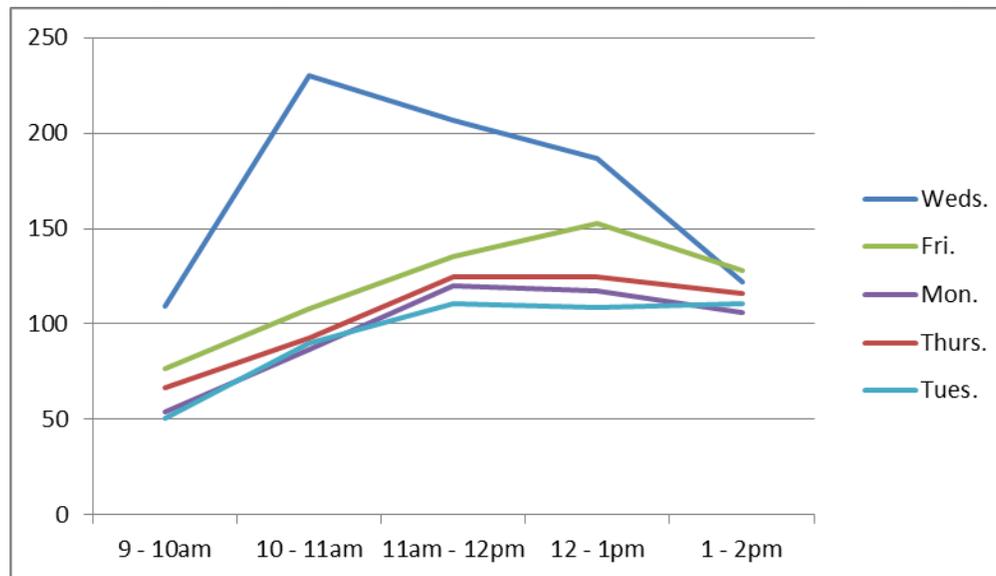
**Table 4: Traffic Counting Details**

Traffic Counter	Details	Dates in Place	Location	Results
<b>Counter provided by City of Athens</b>	Vehicle counts are time-stamped; provides separate count of vehicles leaving lot	July 27 through August 14, 2013	West entrance to Market on State parking lot (entrance nearest Leghorn's)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average traffic count on Wednesdays <i>at this entrance</i> (855 vehicles) was higher than the average traffic counts for other weekdays. Averages on other weekdays ranged from 470-600 vehicles.</li> <li>• <i>At this entrance</i>, the average traffic count for 9am-2pm on Saturdays (1,308 vehicles) was higher than the average traffic count from 2-5pm on Saturdays (479 vehicles).</li> </ul>
<b>Counter provided by Athens County</b>	Records aggregate count; does not distinguish between vehicles entering and leaving lot	July 24 and August 14, 2013 (8am-2pm on both days)	Main entrance to Market on State parking lot	The number of vehicles entering <i>and</i> exiting the market <i>at this entrance</i> were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 24: 1,032 vehicles</li> <li>• August 14: 1,043 vehicles</li> </ul>
		July 27 and August 10 (8am-2pm on both days)	East entrance to Market on State parking lot (entrance nearest the Athena Grand)	The number of vehicles entering <i>and</i> exiting the market <i>at this entrance</i> were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 27: 2,916 vehicles</li> <li>• August 10: 2,974 vehicles</li> </ul>

## Results

Differences in the ways that the tubes collect data make it impossible to provide a total traffic count for market hours (10am to 1pm) on the days the tubes were in place. Figure 3 and Table 5 report data provided by the City of Athens' counter and show the average traffic into the west entrance of the Market on State parking lot (the entrance nearest Leghorn's) on weekdays between 9am and 2pm. For the period of July 27 through August 14, 2013, average traffic counts on Wednesdays (a market day) were higher than the average counts for other weekdays. From Wednesday, July 24, 2013 through Wednesday, August 14, 2013, an average of 855 vehicles entered the west entrance of The Market on State parking lot on Wednesdays between 9am and 2pm. Traffic volume at that entrance on other weekdays ranged from 470 to 600 vehicles for the same time period.

**Figure 3: Average Weekday Traffic into Lot at LEGHORN'S ENTRANCE ONLY: July 27 – August 14**



**Table 5: Average Weekday Traffic Volume into Lot at LEGHORN'S ENTRANCE ONLY: July 27 – August 14**

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 – 10am	54	50	109	66	77
10 – 11am	86	90	230	92	108
11am – 12pm	120	111	207	125	135
12 – 1pm	117	109	187	125	153
1 – 2pm	106	110	122	116	128
<b>Total*</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>600*</b>

\*Totals may not equal sum of hourly values due to rounding.

Table 6 shows the volume of traffic by hour into the same entrance (the west entrance) on three Saturdays (July 27, August 3, and August 10, 2013) and provides the average traffic volume for each hour between 9am and 2pm. There were over 1,000 cars entering through that entrance alone on each of the Saturdays that traffic was counted.

**Table 6: Saturday Traffic Volume into Lot at LEGHORN'S ENTRANCE ONLY**

Time	July 27	August 3	August 10	Average
9 – 10am	213	214	233	220
10 – 11am	362	348	341	350
11am – 12pm	307	343	293	314
12 – 1pm	255	266	262	261
1 – 2pm	147	157	182	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,284</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>1,311</b>	<b>1,307*</b>

\*Totals may not equal sum of hourly values due to rounding.

The average vehicle count for Saturday from 9am to 2pm at that entrance was 1,308 compared to the period between 2pm until 5pm the when the average traffic volume was 479 vehicles. Actual traffic into the parking lot is likely twice as high since this information is for only one entrance. Table 7 contains the data collected by the county-provided traffic counter and gives an idea of the rough number of vehicles that enter and leave the parking lot through the other entrances.

**Table 7: County Traffic Counts FOR ENTRANCES OTHER THAN LEGHORN'S**

Date	Entrance	Count (between 8am and 2pm in and out of entrance)
Wednesday, July 24	Main (middle) entrance	1,032
Saturday, July 27	Athena Grand entrance	2,916
Saturday, August 10	Athena Grand entrance	2,974
Wednesday, August 14	Main (middle) entrance	1,043

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The AFM Manager obtained 2012 estimated sales volume and workforce counts from 62 of the 84 vendors operating at the market that year. For the 62 responding vendors, the aggregate estimated sales volume was \$1.4 million dollars, and there were 122 full-time and 135 part-time personnel including vendors and their paid workers. All but two of the major or large income vendors are included in the sales volume and workforce information.

As with attendance data, there is little widely available data to use to place AFM earnings in context. One indicator that AFM is a relatively successful market is the fact that, in 2008, the seven farmers markets that serve the Seattle, Washington area grossed a combined \$5.1 million in 2008.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Farmers Markets America

## SUGGESTIONS

Based on the information gathered through the assessment and AFM's clearly expressed desire to be located at a permanent site, VS suggest that the following steps for consideration as the City of Athens and AFM work together to ensure the market's long-term security:

1. Identifying the features needed for a permanent site requires a strategic planning process that specifies the long-range goals and needs of the market. The resources section of this report contains citation of literature that discusses features of successful markets (including size, infrastructure, mix of products, etc.).
2. Establish a committee that includes Athens City Council, Athens County Commissioners, and AFM to obtain needed information and guide the process.
3. Identify the partners who will be needed for this process, including the Athens City-County Health Department, potential funders, other stakeholders in the local food system, etc.
4. Explore other farmers market models (such as those that include a pavilion and sites that serve multiple community functions). Farmers market experts indicate that these practices are associated with successful farmers markets.<sup>15</sup>
5. Conduct a feasibility study of a limited number of potential sites both to examine suitability of the site for meeting the market's long-term goals and to identify cost-considerations.
6. Consider a capital campaign based on the findings in the feasibility studies.
7. Given the high level of community support for AFM and community awareness of the market's pending location change, continue to communicate openly with the public as this process evolves.

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<sup>15</sup> Farmers' Markets America; Oregon State University Extension Service, Special Report 1073

## CONCLUSION

The Athens Farmers Market has a significant impact on the City of Athens. It employs over 260 individuals, has a wait list for vendors who would like to participate in the market, draws over 3,000 adult customers a week<sup>16</sup>, has a yearly sales volume exceeding \$1.4 million<sup>17</sup> and brings customers to other area businesses. The following bullet points highlight some of the main findings of the analysis of the Athens Farmers Market:

- On days that it operates, AFM brings in a large number of customers to East State Street (an average of nearly 900 adult shoppers on Wednesdays and over 2,500 adult shoppers on Saturdays) and these figures do not include the many children who accompany the adult shoppers. These numbers compare favorably with farmers markets nationwide.
- The vast majority of queried shoppers reported that their primary reason for coming to East State Street was to shop at the market and over half of these shoppers reported that they *often* or *always* shop at other businesses or restaurants when they come to the market.
- Most surveyed customers reported spending between \$11 and \$30 at the market.
- AFM significantly increases the traffic flow into the area on the days that it operates, creating a substantial need for parking. An average of over 1,300 vehicles used *one* of two available entrances to the Market on State on Saturdays from 9am to 2pm, while the count at *one* of the three possible entrances on Wednesday during the same time period was 855 vehicles.
- The market appears to draw customers from outside Athens County and environs, since 14% of shoppers reported they were from someplace other than Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Vinton or Morgan County. Almost half of all customers reported residing within Athens City limits and another third were from the remainder of Athens County.
- Finally, market customers appeared eager to help with data collection, indicating a considerable degree of community support for the market.

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<sup>16</sup> On the days attendance was counted.

<sup>17</sup> This figure is a conservative estimate; it does not include sales information for 22 of the 84 vendors.

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## APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

**Q1. How many people are in your household?**

# People	Saturday 8/10		Wednesday 8/14	
	#	%	#	%
<b>1</b>	54	16.5%	13	12.6%
<b>2</b>	149	45.4%	44	42.7%
<b>3</b>	54	16.5%	18	17.5%
<b>4</b>	45	13.7%	18	17.5%
<b>5</b>	20	6.1%	9	8.7%
<b>6</b>	5	1.5%	1	1.0%
<b>7</b>	0	0%	0	0%
<b>8</b>	1	0.3%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q2. Are you a student?**

Student	Saturday 8/10		Wednesday 8/14	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Yes</b>	57	18%	23	23%
<b>No</b>	266	82%	79	77%
<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Q3. Where do you live?**

Location	Saturday 8/10		Wednesday 8/14	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Within Athens City limits</b>	164	48%	54	50%
<b>In Athens County, but outside City limits</b>	119	35%	40	37%
<b>Hocking County</b>	3	1%	2	2%
<b>Meigs County</b>	4	1%	0	0%
<b>Vinton County</b>	1	0%	1	1%
<b>Morgan County</b>	3	1%	0	0%
<b>Other county</b>	46	14%	11	10%
<b>Total</b>	340	100%	108	100%

**Q4. How much did you (or will you) spend at the farmers market today?**

Amount	Saturday 8/10		Wednesday 8/14	
	#	%	#	%
<b>\$0-5</b>	18	5%	7	7%
<b>\$6-10</b>	34	10%	25	24%
<b>\$11-20</b>	90	27%	29	27%
<b>\$21-30</b>	83	25%	25	24%
<b>\$31-40</b>	46	14%	9	8%
<b>\$41-50</b>	29	9%	6	6%
<b>Over \$50</b>	36	11%	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	336	100%	106	100%

**Q5. How did you travel to the market?**

Mode of transportation	Saturday 8/10		Wednesday 8/14	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Car or truck</b>	324	97.9%	103	96%
<b>Bicycle</b>	6	1.8%	1	1%
<b>Walk</b>	0	0.0%	2	2%
<b>Public transportation</b>	1	0.3%	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	331	100%	107	100%

**Q6. How old are you?**

Age	Saturday 8/10		Wednesday 8/14	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Less than 20</b>	10	3%	2	2%
<b>20-29</b>	67	20%	29	27%
<b>30-39</b>	57	17%	20	19%
<b>40-49</b>	51	15%	14	13%
<b>50-59</b>	74	22%	10	9%
<b>60-69</b>	63	19%	20	19%
<b>70+</b>	18	5%	13	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100%</b>

## APPENDIX B. DOT SURVEY RESPONSES

**Q1. How often do you shop at this market?**

Shopping Frequency (AFM)	Saturday 8/10		Wednesday 8/14	
	#	%	#	%
<b>First time</b>	40	10%	15	11%
<b>Rarely</b>	25	6%	12	9%
<b>Once a month</b>	46	12%	10	7%
<b>2-3 times a month</b>	126	32%	36	27%
<b>At least once a week</b>	156	40%	62	46%
<b>Total</b>	<i>393</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Q2. How often do you shop at other businesses or restaurants on East State Street when you come to this market?**

Shopping Frequency (other businesses or restaurants)	Saturday 8/10		Wednesday 8/14	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Never</b>	27	7%	8	6%
<b>Occasionally</b>	131	36%	50	38%
<b>Often</b>	145	39%	49	37%
<b>Always</b>	66	18%	25	19%
<b>Total</b>	<i>369</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>100%</i>

**Q3. What did you (or will you) buy today?**

	<b>Saturday 8/10</b>	<b>Wednesday 8/14</b>
	<b>#</b>	<b>#</b>
<b>Fruits and/or Vegetables</b>	327	127
<b>Meat</b>	66	29
<b>Cheese and/or eggs</b>	108	29
<b>Prepared Foods</b>	181	33
<b>Plants</b>	51	20
<b>Other</b>	125	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>266</b>

Note: Customers were allowed to select more than one response.

**Q4. What is your PRIMARY reason for coming to East State Street today?**

Reasons for coming to East State Street	<b>Saturday 8/10</b>		<b>Wednesday 8/14</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Farmers Market</b>	358	90%	116	82%
<b>Shop at other establishment</b>	13	3%	12	9%
<b>Eat at other establishment</b>	6	2%	1	1%
<b>Other</b>	21	5%	12	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100%</b>



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