



**For Immediate Release
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The City Market Celebrates 150 Years!

KANSAS CITY, MO – The Historic City Market will be kicking off a landmark year in 2007 as this jewel of downtown reaches a milestone of 150 years! The City Market is most known for its Farmers’ Market, but this downtown jewel is many things to many people; a hub for the River Market neighborhood, a cultural center representing the most diverse area in Kansas City, a farmers’ market linking growers with the community, an eclectic entertainment venue, a shopping and eating destination and most of all, an old friend at the “root” of many memories.

The City Market has been a fixture in Kansas City history since its inception in 1857, as a bustling site for commerce, horse trading, political rallies, medicine shows and circuses. Commonly known as the City Market Square, this public square served as Kansas City’s seat of city and county government for more than 80 years. City Hall, the Jackson County Courthouse, Gillis Opera House and two newspapers surrounded the farmers’ market of the 1920’s. The Market Square remained a produce centered destination through the 1960’s, making way in the 1970’s for restaurants, bars and other establishments in the broader neighborhood, then called, “The River Quay”. In the late 1980’s and 90’s, \$14.5 million in public and private funds were invested in the City Market with additional dollars committed to energize the greater River Market neighborhood. The City Market buildings were modernized in 1986 and rehabbed in 1990, resulting in approximately 100,000 square feet of restaurants, food-related shops, retail and museum exhibit space. Improvements included conversion of several top floor spaces in the west and north buildings into apartments and the addition of the Arabia Steamboat Museum in the City Market’s east building. Other infrastructure included new curbing, antique pedestrian and interior lighting, street-scaping and additional free parking spaces within the City Market property.



The City Market has become a respected Market with a national reputation. In 2002, the City Market received a Great Markets/Great Cities *Award of Distinction* from the Project for Public Spaces, an internationally known advocate for farmers' markets. In 2006, the City Market was ranked as the Oldest Area Based Business and Kansas City's 9th Top Area Attraction in the *Kansas City Business Journal*. Celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2007, the City Market is busier than ever, with over 590,000 people visiting the Market annually.

Throughout the week the City Market is a community of commercial and residential living with tenants representing eight different ethnic backgrounds. Keeping true to tradition, the weekend Farmers' Market expands the property to a destination location with over 140 vendors from farmers to crafters, strolling musicians and activities in the Market's courtyard setting, including outdoor concerts, festivals and other events that create a family atmosphere giving the Market a small town feel in a metropolitan area.

Seeking Memories and Memorabilia

With 150 years of tradition, there are not many people in the City that haven't in some way been touched by an experience at the City Market. We are searching for Kansas-Citians who will submit stories, experiences, photos or memorabilia to the City Market to share as part of this great commemorative occasion. Submissions can be sent to The City Market, Attn: Stephanie Spatz-Ornburn, 20 E. 5th Street, Suite 201, Kansas City, Missouri 64106 or by email to sspatzornburn@cwbk.com.

A Season of Celebration

The anniversary celebration will kick off the season the weekend of May 12 and 13, featuring a weekend full of activities for all ages, including a pancake breakfast with Chris Cakes! Each month throughout the season, we will celebrate the City Market's flavorful history and agricultural farming practices through partnerships with the Kansas City Public Library and the National Agricultural Center and Hall of Fame. Other programming will include historical reenactments and special food festivals featuring mouthwatering summer favorites!

There is great enthusiasm in Kansas City particularly in the downtown area. In 2007, several development and revitalization projects are scheduled for completion, so while the City moves forward we hope not to forget the past. The City Market has only one 150th anniversary season, the perfect opportunity for the community to experience the history and tradition the City Market has to offer. For further updates visit: www.thecitymarket.org or contact the City Market Office at 816-842-1271.

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