

Farmers' Market approved to return to the Main Street District

By Jamee A. Pierson Newton Daily News

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The farmers' market was approved to move back to downtown by the Jasper County Board of Supervisors, Feb. 3. Andrew Bassman, executive director of Newton Main Street, presented the request to the board and explained the benefits it would bring to downtown.

"I've talked to all of the business owners on the north and west sides of the square. There is one (store) at the end that the owners are not there, so I haven't talked to them yet. But everyone is on board," Bassman said.



photo by Jamee A. Pierson

Andrew Bassman executive director of Newton Main Street was approved to move the farmers' market back to downtown at the Jasper County Board of Supervisors meeting on Feb. 3.

The farmers' market would use the north and west side of the courthouse square lawn from 4 to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays from June 2 to Sept 29. Last year, the market had 11 full-time and six part-time vendors and Bassman hopes to retain the majority, if not all, of those vendors. Also, it was requested to block off the parking spaces on the north half of the west side of the square and the west half of the north side of the square (approximately 20 parking spaces) for the pedestrian-oriented event.

After talking to the local businesses, only one had a potential conflict ensuring delivery driver can get in and out, and Bassman is working to accommodate its needs.

Bassman believes that the farmers' market will benefit from the increased visibility of the courthouse square, with the average daily traffic count along First Avenue West through downtown at nearly 10,000 vehicles per day Bassman said. He also said that he believes the downtown and downtown businesses will benefit from the market on the square, bringing more people downtown, promoting downtown as a gathering place and increasing exposure to downtown businesses.

"I think it is a far better location to have it then where they have had it in the past — more accessible to everyone," Supervisor Denny Carpenter said.