



## **Penn Street Market**

READING --- A new market is scheduled to open in the city of Reading on June 4, 2010. Mayor Tom McMahon will be cutting the ribbon for Penn Street Market at 10:30 a.m. to launch this new farmers' market location in the downtown business district. The open-air market is located next to the Reading Hospital dispensary at 8<sup>th</sup> and Penn Streets. It will operate on Fridays until October 1, 2010, with hours from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.

The Penn Street Market is an initiative to bring fresh, local produce back into the urban center. It is a joint project between the city, the county, and a non-profit organization known as Berks Agricultural Resource Network, according to Berks County Agricultural Coordinator Sheila Miller. Miller noted that B.A.R.N. has received a \$2,850 grant from the PA Department of Agriculture through the Direct Farm Sales Grant Program. Other support has come from the City of Reading, the Reading Redevelopment Authority, the Reading Hospital and Medical Center, the Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce, and the Reading Downtown Improvement District.

“The Mayor has invited Berks County farmers to set up a market close to where the old farmers market had been located for decades,” said Miller. “I am excited about the potential customer base that this relocation will bring to the market. We will be a few blocks from the Sovereign Center and the entertainment district of the City, within walking distance of both the city and county government offices, and in close proximity to a number of senior living centers. The Mayor is enthusiastic about bringing the market back downtown to serve local and visiting customers.”

Farmer vendors will be selling seasonal produce, baked goods, fruits, and locally processed dairy products throughout the summer and fall seasons. The market is still accepting vendors who are interested in participating and who have secured the necessary paperwork with the City to conduct business. The Greater Reading Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be cooperating in this endeavor, along with the Berks Agricultural Resource Network and the County of Berks. Nutritional information for consumers will be provided by the Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Reading Hospital.

For more information, contact Berks Agricultural Coordinator Sheila Miller at 610-898-5482.