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#### LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHERS

The Lawrence Farmers' Market (LFM) cultivates a sense of community. The Market is a gathering place where people connect, socialize, and engage with their neighbors. The personal interactions between farmers and consumers foster a deeper understanding of the food production process, creating a bond that is often lacking in impersonal supermarket transactions. It provides an opportunity for customers to learn about the challenges faced by farmers, appreciate their hard work, and develop a stronger connection to the food they consume.

Sustainable agriculture is another vital aspect of the LFM and other local farmer markets in Douglas County. Many of the small-scale farmers who participate in these markets often employ sustainable farming practices that prioritize environmental stewardship. By supporting these farmers, we contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, the reduction of chemical pesticide and fertilizer use, and the conservation of water resources. Additionally, our local markets enable us to access seasonal, locally grown produce, reducing the carbon footprint associated with long-distance transportation of food. This emphasis on sustainability benefits the environment and promotes healthier food choices for all of us.

This access to fresh, high-quality, and nutritious food is at the core of the Farmers' Market. The produce doesn't travel long distances and spend extended periods in storage; it is typically harvested at peak ripeness and brought directly to Market, so you can enjoy fruits, vegetables, and other products bursting with flavor and packed with essential nutrients. By choosing the locally produced Market to shop, you are also supporting agricultural diversity, as the Farmers' Market features unique and heirloom varieties that are not commonly found in mainstream supermarkets.

Unfortunately, we couldn't cover all of the farmers and booths at the Lawrence Farmers' Market. However, hopefully, in this issue, you learn a bit about the wide range of people and products at the Market - and if you know the Market, you learn something new, and if you haven't been recently, you get inspired to explore all that it has to offer.

In this issue, we also feature the **10th Annual Lawrence Business Magazine Foundation Awards**, held in April at The Historic Eldridge Hotel. We want to thank all our sponsors for supporting this event (our largest so far) and supporting local businesses. Along with our Presenting Sponsor, INTRUST Bank, we want to congratulate all the recipients of the Foundation Awards and the winners of the Footprint Impact, Women-Owned Business Impact, and Minority-Owned Business Impact Awards.

As you read through this issue, please remember that all our advertisers have a stake in the local economy; we ask you to first consider them before looking to source your needs outside of the community. Try and shop locally as much as possible and avoid the urge to order online. If you find something online – see if one of our local businesses has it. We know they would appreciate the business - our local businesses are at the center of our community.

When we Shop Local - Shop Baldwin, Eudora, Lecompton, and Lawrence (and use Local Services) -we are supporting those businesses, giving back to our community, and building a future together.

Sincerely,

Ann Frame Hertzog Editor-in-Chief/Publisher Steven Hertzog

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