

**Sharing Montana's Bounty:
A Celebration of the Farmer's Market EBT Project.**

Come to your Farmer's Market this Saturday, September 8, and celebrate a new way of sharing the bounty. Four Markets in Montana are now accepting food stamp Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards.

To celebrate this significant event, each of the four markets will hold a kick-off celebration this Saturday. The Gallatin Valley Farmers market in **Bozeman**, the **Helena** Farmers Market, and both **Missoula** markets, the Missoula Farmers Market and the Clark Fork Market, have successfully installed a device that enables EBT cardholders to use their benefits to buy fresh, healthy and local food. The Helena and Clark Fork Markets will also be accepting credit and debit cards!

The kick-off celebrations will include raffles of local crafts and foods, door prizes, cooking demonstrations, and numerous kids' activities. "Our customers are anxiously looking forward to it," says Michele Lelandre, from the Bozeman Job Service, WORCS Program. "The new EBT machines will give them ... (access)...to a market that they otherwise would not have had the opportunity to participate in."

While the transition from food stamps to EBT cards has somewhat reduced the stigma associated with using food stamps, it has made it more difficult for farmers markets and other smaller retailers to accept the EBT cards. Farmers markets are often in locations, such as city streets and parks, which have no phone lines and a Point of Service device to swipe the EBT cards.

The Farmers Market electronic swipe project has been funded by The Montana State Department of Health and Human Services. The National Center for Appropriate Technology in partnership with the Alternative Energy Resources Organization is administering this pilot program.

For more information about the kick-off celebrations or the Farmers Market EBT Project contact:

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