



CONTACT

Elena Byrne
Renewing the Countryside
elena@local-feast.org
608-712-8340

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Photos available—Download links and sample captions at end of release

Sixth Annual FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace now accepting vendor applications

Rochester, MN – Food and beverage businesses from Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota are invited to apply to attend the Sixth Annual FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace Dec. 6-7, 2019 at Rochester's Mayo Civic Center. Entrepreneurs and established businesses who use local ingredients and have shelf-ready product can register online at local-feast.org/registration.

Over 266 regional businesses have exhibited at FEAST! Retail stores, restaurants, schools, caterers and more come to FEAST! to source new products and build relationships. "We benefited from every part of it: the panels and education, the buyers expo, and the public market," said Joe Silberschmidt of You Betcha Kimchi after FEAST! 2018.

"Our region is rich with entrepreneurs who are committed to growing a local food economy," adds Tim Penny, President and CEO of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. "The FEAST! Marketplace is an outstanding event that directly supports those businesses."

FEAST! hosts more than 100 regional food businesses each year, including national award-winners. Many exhibitors utilize locally-grown ingredients in food like cheese, jam, wine and include features like gluten-free, grass-fed and organic, as well as environmentally- and socially-responsible practices. See the 2018 exhibitors [here](#).

FEAST! has developed strong partnerships within each state. Something Special *from Wisconsin*™ Director Lois Federman says partnering with FEAST! is a win-win for program members: "FEAST! provides opportunities for our members to meet face to face with retail buyers and consumers outside of Wisconsin. The combination of education and commerce is a perfect fit for our companies."

The Saturday festival features sampling and sales, including off-sales of wine, and voting for the People's Choice Award, with the winner announced near the close of the event. The 2018 People's Choice winner was [The Bee Shed](#), a Specific Benefit Corporation (SBC) that sells honey and promotes beekeeping education and stewardship.

Awards presented during the Friday tradeshow will include recognition for local sourcing and social benefit initiatives, among others. Tradeshow awards at FEAST! 2018 went to Grandma's Gourmets, Heartland Burrito, My Sweet Greens MN, CannonBelles Cheese, and CTL Foods.

FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace is co-hosted by non-profit organizations, [Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation](#) and [Renewing the Countryside](#), and sponsored by the [Minnesota Department of Agriculture](#). For more, visit www.local-feast.org. Follow @localfeastnetwork on [Facebook](#), @Local_Feast on [Twitter](#), localfeast on [Instagram](#), and use #localFEAST to join the conversation.

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Photos and suggested captions:

FEAST! 2018 People's Choice winner:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/renewingthecountryside/pages/709/attachments/original/1556906346/People's_Choice-The_Bee_Shed-crp.jpg?1556906346

Sample caption:

Co-owners of The Bee Shed, John Shonyo and Chris Schad, pose with the FEAST! 2018 People's Choice engraved cheeseboard at the event in Rochester, Minn. last December.

Photo: Elena Byrne

Tim Penny at FEAST!:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/renewingthecountryside/pages/706/attachments/original/1556908610/SMIF_staff_-_Tim_at_booth_crp.jpg?1556908610

Sample caption:

Tim Penny, President and CEO of Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, poses with a shopping bag offered to attendees at FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace in 2016.

Photo: Kallie Rollenhagen

FEAST! Logo:

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/renewingthecountryside/pages/383/attachments/original/1476298740/Feast!.png?1476298740>

Sample caption:

The largest celebration of local foods in the upper Midwest, FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace brings together over 100 regional food and beverage businesses for sampling, sales and fun.