

Market controversy attracts crowds

SEEING DOUBLE: Duncan's dueling farmers' markets open with great success Saturday, despite minor bickering

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LEADER *staff reporter* 5/15/02

There's no such thing as bad advertising. That adage rang true as visitors flocked to two farmers' markets in downtown Duncan Saturday morning despite a rift between organizers of both events.

"All the publicity has people wanting to see what's going on," said Pat Swan, chair of the Cowichan Valley Smallholders' Society.

"There's heightened awareness about both markets."

Evidence of ongoing conflicts between Mound-based CVSS vendors and rival Downtown Duncan Farmers' Market sellers — who debuted May 11 in the Duncan train station parking lot — was seen in manure dumped Saturday in the station lot and vandalism to a Mound storage shed.

Swan had no idea who dumped about a total of a half-a-yard of manure in piles at both ends and in the middle of the lot before Farmers' Market members arrived.

"It could have been a mad customer or a vendor. Publicly, no one will ever admit to it," she said.

Duncan fire chief Glenn Mackie said a

market organizer shoveled the manure into the box of small pickup truck while he hosed off the residue.

"To me it was something deliberate.

"They (visitors) could have driven over it but it was sure smelly and would have kept people away.

"It was a really childish act."

Rob Rensing, chair of the Farmers' Market, said mudslinging solves nothing.

He's unaware who jammed wire and nails into the locks of Mound washrooms and storage space mid-week or who squirted epoxy glue into the locks before Saturday's CVSS market.

"It's the first I've heard of it," he said Monday.

Swan said police attended the Mound Saturday to inspect lock damage.

CVSS members had already removed gear needed for Saturday's Mound market.

Meanwhile, about 30 Mound vendors were busy Saturday, Swan said.

"The markets are close enough, people could walk to both."

Rensing said the Farmers' Market offered about 50 vendors who were hopping until early afternoon.



Andrew Leong

Duncan councillors Sharon Jackson and Mike Caljouw join DBIA president Lance Steward and DDFMS president Rob Rensing at the opening of Duncan's second farmers' market at the train station.

Local leathersmith Longevity John Falkner, who sold wares at the Mound, said two markets "are a boon for everybody."

"Competition guarantees quality and professionalism at both. I'm glad I'm down

there."

Former Mound vendors formed the new Farmers' Market society last month after CVSS brass missed a contract deadline for use of the city's train station lot.