

A portion of Esmeralda Avenue is closed for the market each Tuesday, and the street, just one block off 395, takes on a “Main Street” vibe. The market is adjacent to Minden Park—where I watched a couple of families spread out underneath the gazebo and shade trees to picnic—and sits directly in front of Minden’s historic Carson Valley Improvement Club, or CVIC Hall, which today serves as a multipurpose social center.



Rick Frost of Reno Chile at Esmeralda's Farmers' Market.

I arrived at 4:30 in the afternoon, and despite the heat of the day the sidewalks were already crowded with Mindenites eating an early dinner in the shade of the CVIC. At the market, fruit stands were abundant—but I noticed a lack of fresh vegetables, fish, red meat and eggs, although one stand did offer pork by request.

Even though the Esmeralda Farmers' Market does not offer a diverse enough selection of produce to be effective for a grocery run, its lively atmosphere provides a great chance to interact with Minden's friendly community. Because of the long drive, I would look for further occasion to explore Minden, like a tour of the newly completed Bently Heritage Estate Distillery, for instance (see “Kindred Spirits,” Arts&Culture, June 23).

Riverside Farmers' Market

925 Riverside Drive
Thursdays, 4 to 8 p.m., through Sept. 27
and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to noon, between
October and May

Of the five farmers' markets I visited for this piece, the Riverside Farmers' Market was the most recently organized, held for the first time in October 2018. Nonetheless, it offered the most comprehensive selection of produce, was the most family-friendly and mandated the highest standards of sustainability and regenerative farm practice.

It's important to note that the Riverside Farmers' Market runs year-round, too, and provides fresh produce from four or five

vendors through the winter. Additionally, the lawn in front of the McKinley Arts Center, with the Truckee River as a backdrop, is one of Reno's most enjoyable outdoor spaces.

The market's 16 vendors, food trucks, live music and artisans are curated by local agriculturalists at Prema Farms.

Prema is Sanskrit for “supreme love.” Prema Farms manages a 1.5 acre plot of land 12 miles north of Reno. Its goal is to not only provide locally-sourced, organic vegetables to Reno and its surrounding communities, but also to redefine what we value about the food we eat.

“I think that the Riverside Farmers' Market, working with primarily local, small vendors is a great opportunity for consumers to come in and have wonderful realizations,” said Zach Cannady, Prema Farm's lead farmer. “You taste a bite of a cherry tomato that's grown by somebody in your neighborhood, or by somebody within 10 miles of where you live, and they vine ripen it, and they get it just right, and you have this food experience that's like, ‘Oh my Gosh, I may have never eaten a tomato before.’ It may not be the prettiest thing that you've ever eaten, but it actually completely changes your biology and the way that you're perceiving food and the expectations that you have of food when you have good food experiences around food that isn't exactly perfect.”

Cannady also told me that in addition to requiring that everything sold at the market be locally grown and USDA certified organic, he examines each food truck to ensure that they meet Prema's ambitious standards at each step of their production process, from sewing their seeds to preparing your order.

Speaking with Cannady about the Riverside Farmers' Market helped me realize that immense, 1,000-plus acre industrial farms are not entirely necessary to feed a community—and that by shifting consumer expectations, it might just be possible to reduce our reliance on wasteful agricultural giants.



Reflecting back, all but one of the markets I visited did not give me confidence I could eat a diet primarily comprised of local produce, but they helped me realize we all could do more. In every case, I found that with brief effort from the consumer, these spaces made it easy to support Northern Nevada's agriculturalists, contribute to the local economy and lead a healthier lifestyle. □

WEEKLY LINEUP

MONDAY: CLOSED
TUESDAY: KARAOKE
WEDNESDAY: BINGO
THURSDAY: KARAOKE
FRIDAY: DJ'S & DANCING
SATURDAY: DJ, DANCING & DRAG SHOW
SUNDAY: SUNDAY FUNDAY

HOURS 5PM-2AM+

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