

# IDEAL GREEN MARKET

## *Opens in Ideal Corners*

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY **BARB MANN**

A MEMBER-OWNED FOOD CO-OP OPEN TO ALL IS A DREAM REALIZED FOR RON AND JUDY KIDDER.

“We’re thrilled. This is beyond our greatest imaginings and hopes,” exclaimed Ron and Judy Kidder, about the new Ideal Green Market Cooperative. The Kidders planted the idea in 2012 for a member-owned food cooperative in the community of Ideal Corners in a building they own in the heart of Lake Country.

The driving force was a desire for access to local, healthy, sustainable food, and from that the vision grew to be about building community, and providing on-going education about the food we eat, how we access it and how we re-create the local food economy. The connections and personal stories that continue to emerge are lending strength to this growing co-op.

It has been a long process to realizing the dream with moments where it seemed it just wasn’t going to happen. Yet, every time it seemed like “the end,” one more piece of the puzzle presented itself and the steering committee continued to plan. As John Lennon said, “A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is a reality.”

That community spirit is evident at this small, rural co-op nestled between Pequot Lakes, Breezy Point, Crosslake, and Pine River. It is located next to the Old Milwaukee Club, a local landmark, at the intersection of county roads 16 and 39. Last summer the co-op hosted a farmers’ market which brought local foods to the community during the growing season and established key relationships with local food producers. The co-op opened mid-November 2015 a few days a week and will be operating six days a week this summer, closing Sundays.

The 2016 farmers’ market kicked off the season from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 21, and is open every Saturday through September in the co-op parking lot.

Across Minnesota and the nation, there is a growing trend of food cooperatives developing in rural communities, and across the country a growing demand for locally grown and processed foods. As we each increase our own understandings around food, we can make more informed choices about what we eat.

Some consumers are also interested in increasing the sustainability of the environment and choose to use their financial resources on all levels to contribute to

that effort. For example, in choosing to buy organic, the consumer knows they are also contributing to a healthier environment given the organic growing practices used in producing the food. The consumer may also choose to buy as local as possible to minimize the environmental footprint. When you buy local goods the impact is far-reaching economically and environmentally. By re-investing in the local economy, everyone wins.

“It’s all connected,” said Dan Yavner, IGMC Board member. “From the seed used to grow the food we eat, to the soil our food is grown in, to how we access the food, and ultimately the food waste decomposing back into the soil. If it’s ‘clean’ to begin with, we’re


much better off in the long run. It’s a cycle that’s all connected and we are part of that.”

The co-op, at 154 members as of March 2016, continues to grow. With increasing representation of local vendor products (within 100 miles), the co-op offers even more variety when including all of the Minnesota products available. Ideal Green Market features products that may not be readily available in other food markets, such as Beauty Heart Radishes (a winter radish), kalettes (a blend of brussel sprouts and kale), chaga, and native, wild-harvested berry preserves, bulk spices and herbs, and bulk dry goods. It’s a learning environment at the co-op, and there’s always much to learn about the food we eat, and how best to get the nutrients we need to live healthy and happy lives.

Also available is a great selection of seeds, including seed potatoes, from the Decorah, Iowa, seed company, Seed Savers Exchange, as a way to help promote preserving diversity through our food and flower seeds, many of which are heirloom varieties.

In the midst of it all, there is fun in the process, “because if it’s not fun, why do it,” says co-op coordinator Barb Mann. “Feeling good, on every level, about what we are doing, enhances the goodness of the food we grow, buy and eat, which feeds back into the environment and into the community.” Mann notes, “Are we perfect? No. However, our intention is to do the best we know how, and recognize we are on this journey together, to make this co-op better and better, learning as we go.”

Brenda Myers was hired this spring as general manager of Ideal Green Market Co-op.

For more information on current hours, access the website at [www.idealgreenmarket.com](http://www.idealgreenmarket.com) or call 218-543-6565. All are welcome, greeted with a smile and a sense of gratitude for being part of something bigger than the individual parts, making a difference...together! 



Community members can enjoy a variety of local foods and products at Ideal Green Market.



### ***Become a Member***

When you join, you own it! Ideal Green Market Co-op member share is \$100 and can be paid in four monthly payments of \$25, or paid at once. Benefits of membership include: pride of ownership; a vote at the annual meetings on decisions and election of board of directors; opportunity to run for Board of Directors; discount on classes offered; product discounts and specials; discounts on bulk orders; annual patronage refunds as determined by the Board of Directors.

### ***Ideal Green Market Co-Op***

Mission: to provide access to local, sustainable and healthy food and products. All shoppers are welcome. Ideally located in Ideal Corners in Ideal Township. The 2016 Ideal Green Market Farmers’ Market begins May 21 and runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday through September. Vendors welcome.

**SUMMER HOURS:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, closed on Sundays. Open until 8 p.m. Thursdays.

**LOCATION:** 34988 Co. Rd. 39, Pequot Lakes, MN 56472

**INFO:** Find Ideal Green Market on Facebook or

[www.idealgreenmarket.com](http://www.idealgreenmarket.com) or contact Brenda Myers, general manager, at [brenda@idealgreenmarket.com](mailto:brenda@idealgreenmarket.com) or 218.543.6565.



Ron Kidder and his wife, Judy, helped start Ideal Green Market.

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