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### **For Immediate Release**

June 15, 2010

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## **Athens Farmers Market helps people in need**

Nearly 50 percent of all of the Food Assistance Program dollars that are spent at farmers' markets in Ohio are spent at the Athens Farmers' Market.

And this summer, the Athens Farmers Market is using grant funding that will allow area residents who receive Food Assistance benefits to receive even more fresh fruits and vegetables at the market.

"The Food Assistance program is wonderful," said Jack Cantrell, president of the Athens Farmers Market. "We are having more and more participants all the time."

In 2009, area residents spent about \$21,000 in Food Assistance benefits on fresh fruits and vegetables at the Athens Farmers Market. This accounted for nearly half of all of the Food Assistance benefits used at farmers' markets across the state.

"We are proud that we have such a group that works together to help people out in southeast Ohio. It's just a good example of how by working together we can make things better for everybody," said Athens County Commissioner Lenny Eliason.

"I think it's a win-win for everyone involved," added Athens County Commissioner Larry Payne, who is a past president of the Athens Farmers Market. "The Farmers Market has a history of providing fresh fruits and vegetables for people in our area. With this partnership, it allows people with lower incomes to have access to these products that they may not have had on their own. It's just a great program."

The Athens Farmers Market makes it easy for area residents to use their Food Assistance benefits to purchase tokens that can then be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. And this summer, the Athens Farmers Market is providing an extra incentive for area residents who use their Food Assistance benefits at the market.

Beginning in July, through grant funding provided by ACENet, the Athens Farmers Market will be offering coupons for \$5 worth of tokens for fruits and vegetables to customers who buy \$10 worth of tokens with the Food Assistance benefits. The program will be offered for a limited time this summer because funding is limited, Cantrell explained.

The Athens Farmers Market is open from 10 am. until 1 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays at The Market on State.