



Final days to register for local food conference

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IBF and USDA to headline opportunity discussion

“If you’re a farmer, nutritionist, food producer, entrepreneur, restaurant owner, caterer, economic developer, government official, food retailer, food distributor, hospital, school district, senior living institution, or anyone interested in growing their business or community through local food, you should get a front row seat!”, exclaimed event planner and board member, Ron Tanner, of AABDA. “Sign up now; it’s just days away.”

The interest in and impact of farmers markets, farm-to-table, CSAs, and local food availability in mainstream markets is trending all over the country and Southwestern Illinois is paying attention. The Alton Area Business Development Association (AABDA) has teamed up with Lewis & Clark Community College (LCCC) to host a comprehensive food conference at the college on March 31, 2015 from 7:30am until 12:30pm. The cost is \$15.00 when purchased online at **MarketFreshNetwork.org** and \$20.00 at the door.

The event, titled *Opportunities in Local and Regional Foods Conference*, will feature speakers from the Illinois Farm Bureau, USDA Rural Development, and other partners including Illinois-Metro East Small Business Development Center, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Madison County Community Development, BiG iDEA Workshops, U of I Extension, Trailnet, *Feast Magazine*, and St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce. Local speakers will discuss their projects involving local food.

Attendees will learn *what is happening; what could happen; how one can influence those outcomes; and where to get more information about the new economy of local foods*. Refreshments are provided by LCCC Catering using fresh cheese and yogurt products from local producers Marcoot Jersey Creamery in Greenville, and Windcrest Dairy in Trenton, Illinois.

“The line-up is packed with well informed industry professionals and practitioners armed with the facts about the impact of a local food economy,” explained Tanner. “This conference is a rare occasion to participate in a comprehensive overview of local foods and the opportunities therein.”

Alton Area Business Development Association, the event organizer and host is a 501(c)3 non-profit economic and community development organization whose mission is to support our local economy through small business incubation, a local food hub, commercial kitchen rental, and the arts. The Great Rivers Market Fresh Network, online at MarketFreshNetwork.org, is the brand created to facilitate this mission. This Network is the emerging home to a growing community of entrepreneurs, chefs, food fans and artisans of all kinds, designers, mentors, educators and much more. It is designed around three interconnected business development components, each sustaining the other, to incubate new and accelerate existing businesses.

You can purchase event tickets, contact, or donate to AABDA via www.MarketFreshNetwork.org, or email at: altonabda2012@gmail.com or by phone at 618-551-5020.