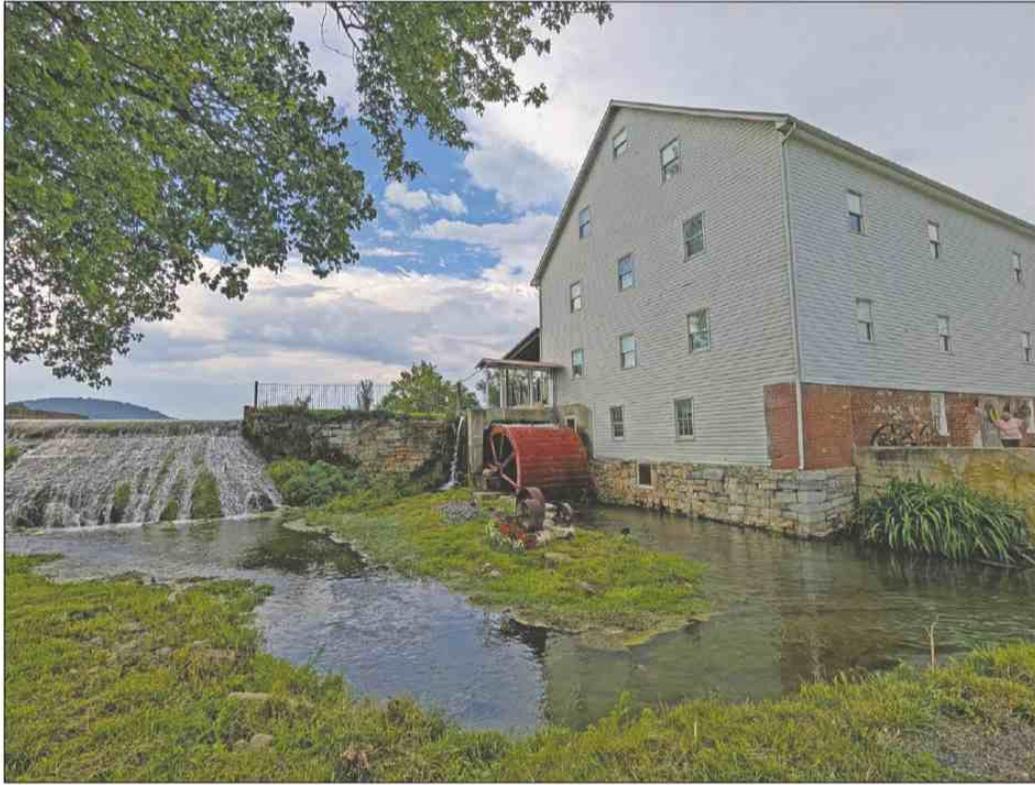


PHOTO BY NANCY SORRELLS

DAYTON



Nancy Sorrells / For the DN-R

The historic Silver Lake Mill in Dayton, which has existed since 1822, and is home to the Virginia Quilt Museum, will be one of three sites to host a monthly farmers market in the summer.

BRANCHING OUT

NEW OUTDOOR MARKET COMING TO THREE LOCATIONS

BY LORI D'ANGELO
Daily News-Record

A new outdoor farmers style market is coming to Dayton this summer.

The market, which will kick off in June and take place in the evenings, will be a collaboration between three Dayton organizations — Rocktown History, Fort Harrison, and the Virginia Quilt Museum.

"The plan is that this will run four months of the year, from June through September, so it fits in between Redbud and Dayton Days," said Alicia Thomas, executive director for the Virginia Quilt Museum. Redbud is Dayton's annual spring festival, and Dayton Days is the town's annual fall festival.

The new venture will be called the Heirloom Market and will take place from 5 to 8 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month from June to September at all three locations.

Since the quilt museum moved from downtown Harrisonburg to Dayton's Silver Lake Mill about a year and a half ago, the organization has increased its

partnerships with Rocktown History and Fort Harrison, Thomas said. The market is an extension of that partnership.

Rocktown History is a historical museum, and Fort Harrison is a house museum located in the home of Daniel Harrison, an early settler in the Shenandoah Valley. Together, the three sites form Dayton's historic triangle.

"We're looking to fill a need for the community but also to activate our spaces and our institutions and bring the local community into those spaces at a time when we're generally closed," Thomas said. "Most of us, our spaces are [usually] only open during the day."

Having an evening event at the three locations should make those spaces more accessible to community members who may have to work or attend school during the day, Thomas said.

Representatives from the organizations made a presentation about the new market to the Dayton Town Council on Monday night.

"Our goal is to really build a part-

nership amongst not only our organizations but amongst other local producers and businesses," Thomas said, "whether that be small businesses or large businesses, and have all sorts of different things on site."

The new market could help showcase the ingenuity of local vendors, said Andrea Early, manager of Rocktown History's bookstore and welcome center.

"As far as what we are envisioning for our vendors, you know, maybe it's a vendor who is selling honey, but then they'll also bring a comb of honey with them, so that people can see what it looks like in the raw, and they might show a little bit about how it's processed," Early said.

The market could also showcase other types of crafts, such as candle making, Early said.

"They could set up a demonstration there, making candles," Early said. "Some things might be hands-on for

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BRANCHING

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kids or adults, and some might just be demonstrations, but we want to definitely have more interaction and show how things are made and not just sell things that are already made."

Demonstrations could also include gardening activities, Early said.

"One example is people who keep heirloom seeds from flowers, and keep them year after year," Early said. "Bring in some seeds and show kids how they grow in the dirt, and you water them. We have lots of ideas."

Thomas said that the partners plan to commit to the event for at least three years.

"We know the first year may not be all that successful," Thomas said. "It's something that probably takes some time to grow. So we are in this



Submitted

Ray Pine of Rockingham County demonstrates traditional woodworking at the Colonial Trades Fair at Fort Harrison in Dayton last year. Fort Harrison will host a monthly farmers market in the summer.

for the long term."

During the evening market, all three museums will be open.

"We're also looking to have things like a food truck, music, maybe historical dancing or other activities,

so that families and other folks can really spend an evening going between the three sites and having dinner and a little bit of family activities," Thomas said.

Organizers are hoping to open

applications for the market later this month, Thomas said. Details will be on the organizations' websites, and flyers will also be posted around town.

Dayton merchants are also invited to participate in the market, either as vendors or by remaining open later on those evenings, Early said.

"We do really want other Dayton businesses to feel like they can be involved," Thomas said.

The town council expressed support and even gave the presenters a round of applause.

"I just want to say this is awesome," said Councilman Trevor Cockburn. "This is what makes Dayton great, when you have all these different organizations coming together to do something like that."

Dayton Mayor Sam Lee also said he was excited.

"What I really like about it is that it feels like a farmers market and a vendor's market kind of at one

time," Lee said. "It's between Redbud and Dayton Days, and it's going to have three locations. It's going to promote people to walk around town. It's going to bring in some visitors from the surrounding areas."

Vice Mayor Bradford Dyjak, who is also a trustee on the Board of Rocktown History, noted that the launch would occur just in time for the nation's 250th birthday.

"We're excited to have this partnership with three of our amazing and incredible historical assets in Dayton," Dyjak said. "They're forging historical connections and roots in a fun and approachable way. These are exactly the kind of partnerships and creative use of our shared spaces that were contemplated in the Dayton Downtown Master Plan and that many residents really sought during those meetings. Now it's coming to life."