The Farmers Market,  
its operation and its mission

by Charlie Tyson

In addition to our educational mission, the Nash County office of the NC Cooperative Extension Service is proud to have been trusted with the responsibility of managing this new, regional farmers market.

Opening in April 2005, it provides area farmers a facility for retail sales of their products. This market permits farmers to sell only those products which they actually grow or produce. While this requirement may initially limit product supply and variety at the market, it encourages local farmers to increase their production. This market philosophy is consistent with the long term economic development and preservation of our local farming community.

As a result of its dependence upon locally grown products, the market operating schedule reflects the seasonal availability of agricultural products. Emphasis is given to the quality and uniqueness of products. As this new market grows toward maturity, a gradually increasing number of participating farmers, product volume and variety are expected.

A market manager coordinates daily market operations, assigning space for sellers and assisting customers. He also promotes the growth and integrity of the market by managing on-site inspections of participating farms and seeking additional farmers to increase market offerings.

The Farmers Market Advisory Board sets and adjusts market operational guidelines to ensure market success. The individuals on this board intentionally represent farmers, market customers and the community in which the market is located. This market advisory board is dedicated to preserving the market’s original mission – serve the Rocky Mount, N.C. area as a real farmers market.

Many think of this farmers market as a nice, new building in an excellent location. While all of this is true, The Farmers Market is actually the dynamic activity of all of the people involved in growing, harvesting, selling, buying and sometimes just coming to visit.