Bear Town Market Open Again Friday

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Local artists and shop owners will have a chance to peddle their wares Friday at the second Bear Town Market, a bazaar consisting of local vendors selling a variety of products and gift items. Organizers are hoping to make it an regular market event, coinciding with cruise ship visits.

The Bear Town Market was conceived as a way to get cruise ship passengers into the community to visit shops and galleries that aren't within walking distance of the waterfront. Kodiak Island Convention and Visitors Bureau executive director Janet Buckingham said she's been brainstorming with organizer Fran Kelso for the past year on how best to make that happen.

-- (Buckingham 1 17 sec. "Fran Kelso took the ... the cruise ship passengers.")

Buckingham said the first Bear Town Market was held June 5th, and that 16 local vendors participated, filling all available spaces. She said that while the first installment was somewhat slow, she expects it to grow each week, especially since there will be more advertising and signage, and this week, no construction in the area.

-- (Buckingham 2 25 sec. "It is designed to get ... there's music and food.")

Kelso said she is viewing the first year of the event as a learning experience toward making it bigger and better as it develops this cruise ship season and hopefully into the future.

-- (Kelso 1 44 sec. "It was an idea that I had ... signing and selling books.")

Kelso said that each event will feature a slightly different collection of vendors. One of the ways she hopes to see it develop is in the area of food and entertainment.

-- (Kelso 2 35 sec. "Right now what we have is ... won't be the only time.")

Kelso and Buckingham encouraged local residents to visit the Bear Town Market throughout the summer, whenever there is a cruise ship in port. They said their support is helpful in making it an annual event. The second Bear Town Market will take place Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. downstairs at the new Kodiak Convention Center on the corner of Shelikof and Marine Way. There will be 14 more such events held through September 17th.

I'm Erik Wander.

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