

Pasadena's Newest Farmers Market Opens For Business

[Pasadena Star News](#), Posted: 06/01/2010

PASADENA - A high-end farmers market on ritzy South Lake Avenue opens today for a six-month trial.

The new market at Shoppers Lane and South Del Mar Avenue - the city's fourth - will open from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through September.

"It's met with overwhelming enthusiasm from the street-level and upper-floor businesses, and even property owners are very much in favor," said Carlton Maese, a board member and former president of the South Lake Business Association.

Even the Fresh & Easy market people on South Lake at California Boulevard "think it's great," Maese said.

"We're having a six-month trial period to make sure the retailers and vendors are happy and making money," he said. "And if it does work out, we'll make it permanent."

Gretchen Sterling, manager and co-founder of Pasadena Certified Farmers Market - sponsored by the city of Pasadena - said opening the seasonal "satellite" South Lake market and the Thursday market at Robinson Park that opened in April is something of a 30th anniversary celebration.

The first farmers market at Villa Parke Center has been going strong every Thursday since 1980 and was joined in 1984 by the popular Victory Park event on Saturdays.

The Shoppers Lane market will be on a smaller scale, Sterling said, but with the same certified vendors offering fish, baked goods, cheese, oils, fresh flowers, and fruits and vegetables.

"We're getting as much in as

we can," she said. "If the trial works, we could do future summer evening markets ...We know people don't like to buy produce in the dark."

Sterling and the South Lake business owners hope to appeal to residents and employees as well as shoppers.

"It will give folks who work in the tall office buildings time to come down and shop before they leave for home," she said. "We'll see how it works. Next year, if we do it again, it may be May through September."

The new market will not do any cooking on-site, so it won't compete with any restaurants on South Lake, Sterling said.

"We think it might be a good fit," she said.

Gina Tleel, executive director of the South Lake Business Association, said an area poll put a farmers market "top of the list" for residents and merchants.

"South Lake is the place locals like to hang out, and we're marketing it as shopping, dining, banking and living all in 12 blocks," Tleel said.

Old Pasadena's experiment several years ago with a farmers market on Holly Street was short-lived, but Tleel said South Lake businesses have been "hands-on" in the new venture.

Parking, she said, is always a challenge, but businesses agreed the "benefits outweigh the negatives" and pulled together to make it work.

"We're starting out small and sweet," Tleel said.