Head down to the waterfront in Des Moines and you’ll find much more than a beautiful view of the Puget Sound with snowcapped Olympic Mountains in the distance.

Rows upon rows of portable canopies filled with crafts, brightly colored flower bouquets, fresh fruits and vegetables, and friendly faces transform the marina into a community extravaganza each week.

Last Saturday the Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market kicked off its 11th season at the Des Moines Marina.

Market managers said more than 7,000 people were in attendance to shop, pick up fresh produce, listen to live music, eat delicious food, and enjoy the waterfront atmosphere.

“Just can’t beat the weather like this,” said Wayne Corey, president of the market. “We knew it was just going to be jammed today once we heard about the weather.”

The market unfolds 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Saturday from June to Sept. 24.

This season the market will also continue the Wednesday night Sunset Market from 4 to 8 p.m. These new hours coincide with the Des Moines free Summer Music in the Park concerts, sponsored by the Des Moines Arts Commission.

The concerts are every Wednesday from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Des Moines Beach Park.

“People come and eat, then go into the park to enjoy the free music,” Corey said. “Last year was the first year and we were pleased with it.”

The Sunset Markets will have fewer vendors than the Saturday markets, but “We are hoping for a better year, which will happen if the word gets out more,” he said. “We’re doing more marketing and advertising.”

Last year, the Saturday market had to close several days, especially in October, due to stormy weather. That led market officials to trim this year’s season, Corey said.

“When these canopies start blowing around, people get injured. Just not worth it,” he said.

Despite the past bad weather stories, there was not a cloud in the sky on opening day. Marketgoers sat on the grass or ambled along the nearby Marina promenade to soak up the sun.

“The people are nice, the weather is pretty good, and I make some money,” said Delsie Johanson, the owner of Red Wagon Kettle Corn from Tacoma. “It’s really the only market I want to do. Rikki [Marohl, market manager] has something planned for every weekend and it’s well organized.”

Many people said the weather and location are what makes this market the best in the area.

“Location is pristine, one of the biggest parts about the market that draws in the crowd,” said Jack Armstrong of 18th Ave. Pasta Co. in Tukwila.

“I’m here because it’s the first day of the market,” said Mary Ellis from Normandy Park. “It’s an added bonus that it’s such a nice day. The views of the water and the mountains are just breathtaking.”

“I love the environment,” said Toni Maritima, the owner of Around Your Wrist custom accessories. “People almost always are in a good mood here at the market.”

Maritima has been coming to the market for the past three years to sell her colorful bracelets, charms, necklaces, earrings, key chains and more.

“It’s a great place to try new things,” Maritima said. “I test out new products here all the time.”

The selection at the market is always changing; some of the same vendors are there each week, while new vendors are also added to the mix, market managers say.

“We try to stay true to the farmers market theme, as much as we can,” Corey said.

The market focuses on local farmers and most of the fresh produce and fruits are organic, he said.

Due to the high quality and popularity, several vendors ran out of stock completely before the end of opening day.

“I’m looking for berries, but it looks like they’re all sold out,” said Amy Rowe of Des Moines. “I wanted to make jam and pies. I love the food from here.”

Another popular attraction were the food trucks. Everything from wood-fire pizza, gyros, burgers, and pasta to salads, donuts, shave ice, and ice cream were available. Chinese, Mediterranean, and Mexican foods were also favorite eats of the day, people said.

“I love coming down to the market on my lunch break and finding something good to eat,” said Kevin Davey from Des Moines.

The Des Moines Farmers Market also provides a sense community to everyone that visits, people say.

“Its nice to see the same people each week,” said Emily Davis of Emily’s Handmade Soaps from Des Moines. “I’ve already had at least half a dozen people that I know stop in and say hello. I feel connected to the community. These are my neighbors.”

Morgan and Rodrigo, a local couple who stumbled across the market by accident a few years ago and have been coming back each year since, said the Des Moines market gives a comforting feel.

“This one is more Des Moines-centered, it shows off the best aspects of our area,” Morgan said. “The other [markets] aren’t as homey as this one.”

The market has many parking spaces available and also offers a free shuttle service that transports people from the farther parking lots directly to the market.

Focused on giving back to the city, the market donates to and supports more than 10 nonprofit organizations, such as Dollars for Scholars, the Police Department foundation, Rotary and more.

“We just won’t go backwards. We can never slide and never relax,” said Corey about maintaining the reputation of the market.

The Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market is in the Des Moines Marina north parking lot at 22307 Dock Ave.