



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE SPROUT GROWERS & MAKERS MARKETPLACE GRAND OPENING WITH SPECIAL GUESTS APRIL 1 & 2**

LITTLE FALLS, Minn. – FEBRUARY 18, 2016 – The public is invited to celebrate Central Minnesota rural culture at the Sprout Food Hub and Sprout Growers & Makers Marketplace grand opening on Friday, April 1 & Saturday, April 2, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (609 13th Ave, Little Falls, MN 56345).

On Friday, presentations, ribbon cutting and lunch with honored guests will begin at 9:30 a.m. A printed Eventbrite ticket is required for the meal, available via [www.sproutMN.com/marketplace](http://www.sproutMN.com/marketplace) (or click [here](#)).

Guest speakers will include USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Lisa Mensah, MDA Commissioner Dave Fredrickson, USDA Rural Development MN State Director Colleen Landkamer, and Rural Policy Research Institute President & CEO Chuck Fluharty. Additional guests may include our Federal Representatives who serve on the US Ag Committee.

Plus, on both Friday and Saturday, attendees will tour the newly licensed processing facility and demonstration kitchen, shop local food and original creations art, and enjoy live music and delicious food catered by Prairie Bay. Over 50 marketplace vendors are expected to sell their locally produced food and art both Friday and Saturday.

Visitors can shop for locally produced food and artworks, typically including local produce, dairy, and meat products; jams and preserves; and original creations art such as pottery, wood items, and jewelry.

The two soft-opening holiday markets in 2015 brought over 250 guests each day to the new facility, and vendors reported having very successful sales. One vendor Catherine Rausch has been pleased with the opportunity the new marketplace brings to her community. "I was working on my first original piece of framed art and finished it the evening before the market, so I brought it along. I didn't know what to expect, and I was so surprised when the original print sold before noon. The buyer was a vendor also, and he let me keep the print on my table with a sign that said 'SOLD - Reprints available' and before the day was over I also sold a reprint."

Growers or makers with locally produced food and/or artworks are encouraged to visit the Sprout webpage at [www.SproutMN.com](http://www.SproutMN.com) for vendor application materials. Vendor booths cost \$25 each day or \$40 for both days.

**About Sprout**

Sprout's mission is to promote the health, economy, and self-reliance of Central Minnesota by facilitating the availability of locally produced food and artworks in the region.

Sprout is a regional food hub and indoor marketplace located in Little Falls. The space will serve four primary functions: 1) A year-round market for growers and artists to market their locally produced food and artworks to Central Minnesota residents and tourists; 2) Provide a local foods processing facility for local growers to use to can, freeze, etc. value-added products; 3) House a cooking demonstration kitchen, and, 4) Facilitate the wholesale aggregation, storage, and distribution of local foods as part of the Sprout Food Hub for institutional sales.

For more information, visit [www.SproutMN.com](http://www.SproutMN.com) and follow the [Sprout Food Hub](#) and [Sprout Growers & Makers Marketplace](#) on Facebook.