

Crossroads Markets

A unique shopping experience



Seasonal outdoor farmers' market is just one of many highlights at Crossroads Markets.

Crossroads Markets has offered a unique shopping experience in Calgary for almost two decades. Close to a million people visit the markets each year to shop, have a meal, enjoy the arts or attend special functions. For 2005, Crossroads was again voted number one in the annual Calgary Herald Readers' Choice Awards.

Crossroads manager Matthew McDonald says the multicultural aspect of the market is a big reason for its popularity with so many Calgarians. "If you walk through the market, you can hear 10 different languages being spoken," says McDonald. "It really is a multicultural meeting place."

He says there's a wonderful ethnic mix in both the market vendors and the people who shop there. Many vendors are new Canadians starting out their first businesses and bringing in goods from their homelands. The result is an international flair at Crossroads that you won't find in most markets.

McDonald says another big difference between Crossroads and some other markets is that Crossroads Markets is open year-round, and not just during the summer months. That's because Crossroads Markets is not just one market, but five distinctive markets in a huge 100,000-sq.-ft. space. These include a farmer's market, antiques, art market and gallery, flea market and international food fair. McDonald says a new addition to the market this fall will be Loose Moose Theatre, which has chosen Crossroads as its new location. The popular theatre group will open a 200-seat theatre and launch its new performance schedule.

For many people, one of the best things about Crossroads Markets has always been the farmers' market. Crossroads actually has two farmers' mar-

kets, a seasonal outdoor one that runs from about April to late October, and an indoor market that offers produce, cheeses, deli products, baked goods, meats, fish and much more, year-round. The farmers' markets are open Friday to Sunday.

Ready-to-eat and take-home food items from around the world can be found in the international food fair, with most vendors open Friday to Sunday. The flea market and antique area at Crossroads Markets are also huge, and open Saturday and Sunday. Shoppers can find just about anything they might want, from arts and crafts to jewelry, pet supplies and clothes, along with services such as a travel agency, hairdresser, nail care and more. The antique area has furniture, coins, toys, records, books and trading cards, to name just a few.

Crossroads Markets also has one of the city's largest art galleries, upstairs on the second level. Artspace Gallery hosts exhibitions and displays by both Canadian and international artists and artisans. The gallery has a wine and cappuccino bar with free live music offered every Friday night. Adjacent to Artspace is the Avenue of Shops, with smaller galleries and shops offering original artwork and decor items. The gallery level can also be booked for special events such as weddings, corporate parties or charity fundraisers.

As a caring member of the Calgary business community, Crossroads Markets itself has raised millions of dollars over the years and supports many local charities with their fundraising efforts. The annual Servant's Anonymous book drive and sale held in donated space at the marketplace has raised more than \$400,000 in the past three years.