

# Green thumbs unite to grow in downtown Raton

By Tim Keller — For the Comet | Posted: Monday, May 11, 2015 12:00 am

RATON – Gardeners unite! That’s the rallying cry as Raton Community Garden regulars prepare for their second group work session this Saturday morning (May 9) from 8 to 10 a.m. They have several raised garden plots still available for those who’d like to join their community of gardeners.

Large beds measuring 4’x12’ are already tilled, weeded and manured, ready for the season at a fee of \$30. A combination lock allows access to gardeners at any time, adding convenience to the central location along Raton’s Historic First Street between Park and Cook streets, directly across from the train depot. Beginning July 1, the summer Farmers Market will come to life right beside the community garden every Saturday afternoon.

Saturday, Clint Henson will build a tool shed for the gardeners as others prepare to plant. Raton High School culinary arts teacher Myra Baird is preparing garden plots with an eye to the future. “I want to bring my culinary class to learn where food comes from,” she says. “I see us growing food here and in the greenhouse at school. Eventually I’d like to see us run a self-sustaining greenhouse that the cafeteria food service could buy food from.”

Jim Stearns is building a small craft brewery in downtown Raton. At a conference two weeks ago, someone gave him a single hop “bine” which he planted at the community garden last Saturday. “It’ll send out three shoots and they’ll grow into vines. If possible, I’d like to buy my hops locally. I’ve talked to one grower in Springer who’s interested in trying it.” Stearns envisions his brewery supplying stores and restaurants only within a short radius—Red River, Angel Fire, Cimarron, Raton, and maybe Trinidad and Clayton. “I don’t intend to have accounts more than two hours away,” he says between swings of a pickaxe breaking winter-hardened ground at Raton Community Garden.

Stearns’ fellow gardeners include teachers, an engineer, children, a game warden and more. Interested in getting your hands into the soil? Bringing home vegetables that you grew yourself—say, green chiles and



These few, these happy few, banded together to start this year’s Raton Community Garden Saturday.

They have plots available for several more gardeners at only \$30 per 4’x12’ plot, already tilled, weeded and fertilized with manure. From left are Doug Looney, Myra Baird, Jim Stearns, Karen Stearns, Wanda Henson, Haiden Looney, and Stephanie Jansen.

tomatoes, or yellow squash and lettuce? Contact Stephanie Jansen for information at (575) 445-2935, or just show up at Raton Community Garden Saturday morning at 8.