

Fifteen Reasons to Shop Locally

Local shopping is crucial to the growth and expansion of our communities. If we want our community to continue to develop, we have to offer something that other communities don't. Our local business scene is something that's unique to our town for travelers, and provides quality and convenience for residents.

Since local businesses are not tied to any national sales or marketing strategies, we will get a wider variety of products and services from Illinoisans for Illinoisans. This also means you won't run into the exact same mix of restaurant and retail anywhere else.

Not to mention the economic benefits of shopping locally. Local shopping is crucial to our continued growth, because the success of local businesses attracts and encourages other entrepreneurs to start local businesses, which leads to more jobs and revenue recirculating throughout our community.

Doing the Math

The math for buying close to home is compelling—for every \$100 spent at a locally-owned business, \$73 remains in the local economy, and \$27 leaves. Compare that to the same \$100 spent at a non-locally owned business, where \$43 remains in the local economy and \$57 leaves. Recent research from Civic Economics indicates that local eateries return nearly 79 percent of revenues to the community, compared to just over 30 percent for chain restaurants. When profits stay local, it increases the community's wealth, tax revenue and standard of living.

Small businesses and local businesses are still the backbone of our economy. They are local people serving local people and are generally committed to staying there, raising their families. After all, most businesses started out as a small, local business and earned the success of growing and expanding. It's the American Dream.

Here are 15 reasons to keep your cash close to home:

1. **Keep Money Local**—Sales taxes fund our communities and provide vital services such as police and fire protection, street repairs and trash collection. Local businesses are more likely to shop with other local businesses, keeping money moving in our local economy even longer.

2. **Local Investment**—Local businesses are less susceptible to national downturns and more likely to work harder to stay open. Local ownership means that important decisions are made by people who live in our community and feel the

impact of those decisions.

3. **Locally-Made Products**—Local business owners often sell local products, which helps preserve the community's distinction and creates more jobs locally, as well.

4. **Support for Nonprofits**—Local businesses support good work in our community. Studies show that nonprofits receive 250 percent more support from small businesses than large ones

5. **Discover Interesting Things and People**—One-of-a-kind shops and restaurants are part of what makes our towns a great place to live.

6. **Personal Connection**—Getting to know the store owners is a great reason to shop local. It's their business, they are the decision-makers and they build a personal relationship with their customers.

7. **Product Knowledge**—Local business owners are well informed about their products and know what they are selling. Because they know their customers, they can easily adjust their inventories to include the goods and services local people want to buy.

8. **Diverse Products**—Local stores carry inventory you might not find at national chain stores. Local business owners choose products based on what their customers want and often carry unique items from local artists and farmers.

9. **Cost Effective**—Sometimes prices at local businesses are better because they don't have the overhead that larger stores may have, and they may be more willing to negotiate to meet your price needs.

10. **Better Experience**—Local shopping can translate to more convenient retail experiences.

11. **Less "Leakage"**—Lo-



cal businesses tend to buy and sell with other local businesses. With national or multi-national firms, a percentage of that profit 'leaks' out of the community, the state or even the nation.

12. **Increased Expertise**—Shopping at a local store means you can get an expert opinion about the products that you're purchasing. Local shop owners have to be experts in their field to compete. Use them—ask them questions and get advice about products

13. **Create Community**—We are a transitory society, so people don't always have a connection with the communities where they live. We should encourage

people new to an area to ask the locals where they shop.

14. **Better Service**—Local business owners do what they do because they are passionate about their products and typically take more time to get to know their customers. They'll often go the extra mile to help you and to ensure you're a satisfied customer.

15. **Support Future Growth**—Last but not least, shopping locally is the best way to show pride in your town and help protect the businesses that make our communities unique.

We can't simply say 'Shop Locally!' and keep our economy vibrant and healthy. We have to take the time and spend the money to

support local businesses with your wallet, and shopping locally casts your vote dollars. You really do vote and shapes your hometown.

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Baby's first holiday gifts

(Continued from Page 7)

Classic gifts

Rockers have long been popular gifts for young children. While a little one may not be able to ride a rocker just yet, this can be a great addition to a nursery until it proves functional. Although a rocking horse is the standard, unicorns are currently having their moment, so a unicorn rocker can be a playful touch.

Personalized keepsakes

Placing the date and baby's name on gifts instantly transforms them into collector's items that can be cherished through the years. In addition to ornaments, think about engraving photo frames or make a photo book with all of the baby memories thus far.

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