

Shopping locally supports the local community

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With the holiday shopping season quickly approaching it's a great time to consider the many benefits to patronizing the communities many locally owned and operated bricks and mortar businesses.

Ashland Chamber of Commerce executive director Mary McPhetridge asserted that these operations are crucial to our local community infrastructure.

"We always talk about shopping local and we see more and more how important it is to physically shop in bricks and mortar businesses," she said pointing out that every dollar spent in a locally owned business is re-circulated throughout our community seven to 10 times.

"Local Merchants are owners and receive payment, which pays for their expenses; mortgages, personal taxes, and living expenses," McPhetridge said. "They also pay local employees and those employees deposit money locally, pay living expenses, and the money that is generated further down the line is from money spent by the owners and employees on expenses such as mortgages at a local bank, groceries at a local grocery store and the dollar continues to circulate."

Beyond that she said there is the money contributed from the actual businesses themselves as they pay mortgages, taxes, and other expenses.

"The business depos-

its money into the local bank. The taxes that are generated by the business are generated in the community to support local schools, police protection and fire protection," McPhetridge said noting that commercial taxes are assessed at a higher rate than residential taxes.

"Imagine if we didn't have these retail businesses that support the infrastructure and needed services such as police, fire, and schools," she said. "This is why it is economically important to shop local and shop in bricks and mortar or actual physical businesses."

Unfortunately though McPhetridge said online shopping has not only had a very negative impact on small businesses throughout the country, but it is also reached the point where it has begun to affecting big box and franchise retailers like Macy's, Maurices, Gordmans and Younkers as well.

"All have either had to close stores, are closing stores, or downsizing to smaller markets because of online sales," she said. "When these big businesses close their doors, they affect the local community in not only loss of jobs and income, but the tax base that is lost from the business eventually affects the revenue to the municipality and negatively affects the services provided by the municipality."

McPhetridge said it's not an equal playing field.

"These businesses that are opening bricks and mortar stores pay taxes



SARA M. CHASE/STAFF PHOTO

Bricks and mortar businesses like those on Main Street benefit the local community in many ways.

to help support our services that are provided by the city," she said emphasizing that shopping locally in brick and mortar stores is an easy and important way to support the local community.

"Our retailers are so fortunate to have the local community ... and they do depend on the locally community but they also have a bonus of tourists coming in but they don't rely 100 percent on tourism, they rely on the local community to support the infrastructure of our business community," she said. "Ashland's small locally owned retailers tell us how important it is to have the locals shop all year long with them."

"Ashland is very fortunate to have a diverse revenue stream and economic makeup with manufacturing, medical, education, professional services, tourism, and retail, and it's the Christ-

mas and holiday season that helps our local small businesses continue to operate during the slower times of the year."

There are other bonuses to shopping locally too McPhetridge noted.

"It promotes a positive, social, environment," she said mentioning that it's fun to go shopping with friends.

"People enjoy doing that ... it's engaging and fun and generates more serotonin and that is a good thing," McPhetridge said adding that it's fun to make a day of it and to see family, friends and neighbors while out shopping.

Additionally she said there are some great new things happening on Ashland's historic Main Street, such as welcoming the new Quilt shop, Quilt Elements located at 222 West Main Street in the former Edward Jones building as they relocated to the highway.

"Soon, you will see a

satellite store 'Little Red' appearing at the 200 and 201 West Main Street location," she said. "The ladies from the Red Bicycle are so excited to offer larger pieces of furniture and fixtures from their vendors and will be opening on Small Business Saturday for the Christmas Season."

She said the chamber would also be hosting several events from the former Ashland Floral location, 410 Main Street West.

"Look for pictures with Santa and other Christmas themed events in this location on the weekends," McPhetridge said. "You'll also see a beautiful transformation of the empty storefront windows at the Royal Theater building."

According to McPhetridge Chamber staff and volunteers - along with the Mural Walk Committee - will be decorating the storefronts with win-

ter and Christmas scenes and even a merchant's window to promote local merchants products.

"Remember, when you shop local you not only have fun, but you can bet you are personally making a difference in the local economy and the services provided by our local municipalities," she said. "This is the reason the Ashland Chamber and the downtown Events and Promotions committee work so hard to create events and promotions to drive people to shop local."

Local retailers show their appreciation by giving back to the local community by sponsoring events, donating prizes and money to local charities and local fundraisers, volunteering for civic groups and events, and are members in local organizations and serve on various boards McPhetridge concluded.

Business contest

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce announces the 2018 Ashland Retail Storefront Business Contest. The contest is designed to encourage entrepreneurs to submit their retail business concept for consideration and to open a storefront on Ashland's Historic Main Street between the 100 and 800 block of west Main Street.

Grand Prize:

The business with the winning submittal ("Grand Prize Winner") receives:

- Free or reduced rent for the first 8 months with a 3-year Lease Term, excluding common area maintenance ("CAM") expenses, utilities and taxes.

- Free advertising package with The Daily Press & Evergreen Shopper

- Free advertising package with Heartland Communications

- 12 hours of free accounting and consulting services -

- Start-up business \$3,000 loan (3% interest/3 year) from the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce downtown development revolving loan fund.

- Free one year membership with the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce

- Exposure to various media outlets during the announcement of the winning submittals.

Guidelines and Application Procedures to Enter:

This is a two-phase contest. In the first phase, applicants are asked to provide a two-page business concept, which includes an executive summary (in 100 words or less) and also answers the following:

Phase 1—Business Concept

- Describe the nature of your business and the products/merchandise you would carry or deliver

- Define your market (who would be an early user/customer)

- How would your business enhance Ashland's Historic Downtown

- What resources would be needed to develop this concept (personnel, financing, equipment, etc)

- What are your qualifications to develop this business?

If your business concept advances through the initial judging, you will be asked to move on to the second phase of the contest and provide the following: A minimum of 3 finalists are needed to continue the contest. Should there not be a minimum, you will be notified.

Phase 2—Business Plan

Finalists will be offered services from UW-Extension small business development center to compete in phase 2 of the contest. A training class for the Retail Storefront Contest, "Creating a successful business plan" will be offered.

Complete a detailed business plan to include:

- Company, Executive, Products/Services, Market Analysis, Management Summaries, Financial Plan, as well as community impact summary stating, How your business will enhance Ashland's Historic Downtown and Why you business stands out.

For eligibility, please contact the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce at 715-682-2500 or email ashchamb@centurytel.net

Ashland's 55th Annual Garland City of the North Christmas Parade Saturday, December 2, 2017 Parade 4:30 p.m.

IMPORTANT: All units **MUST** report to Beaser Ave. and Main St. to receive their numbers and be told where to line up at. Those not required are the school bands, Color Guard, and National Guard. All school bands are to meet in parking lot west of the Hair Affair (900 Main St. West). **Nothing may be thrown from your float!** If you have giveaways, you may have walkers, walk and hand them out. Liability of injury due to passing out giveaways is assumed by the unit, not the Ashland Chamber of Commerce.

Units report at 4pm ** *New Time*

DECORATIONS: All units **WILL** be decorated. No exceptions! Units not required to decorate will be the school bands, Color Guard, National Guard and elected officials. Units not decorated will not be allowed to participate.

HORSES: All horse entries **MUST** have a person or persons behind the horses, to pick up any horse droppings during the parade. **There will be no exceptions.**

Club/ Organization _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____ Contact person: _____

E-mail Address _____

(Please completely fill out the above information so we can contact you with your number and the time you need to arrive for line-up.)

Please Mark Correct Category

Theme Float: **Christmas**

Religious Float Youth Organization Float Band
Horse (Remember to pick up any horse droppings during the parade)

No Santas will be allowed on any unit: in order to avoid confusion for children, Santa will be at the end of the parade only.

Description of unit for Radio Broadcast (use back of form if necessary):

PLEASE RETURN ENTRY FORM BY **Tuesday, November 28, 2017 TO:**

ASHLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

P O BOX 746, 1716 WEST LAKE SHORE DRIVE, ASHLAND, WI 54806.

Any questions regarding the parade schedule and rules, please call 682-2500.

***** Any units not fully decorated may be eliminated from the line-up.*****

Thank you very much and have a Merry Hometown Christmas!