

Holiday GIFT GUIDE!

TO DONLEY COUNTY MERCHANT SALES



BLACK FRIDAY & SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY • NOV. 24 & 25

SHOP LOCAL - SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Communities benefit from shopping local

Ideas about shopping are never set in stone, and the pandemic illustrated just how quickly consumer trends and opinions can change. Many individuals are now reevaluating how they spend their hard-earned money, particularly since inflation has affected just how far a dollar can be stretched. When consumers think about which stores to patronize, locally owned businesses may be the smartest option for a number of reasons - not the least of which is the way such enterprises benefit the communities they call home.

More money kept locally

Shopping locally means that more money will stay in the community. According to recent research from Civic Economics, local

eateries return nearly 79 percent of revenue to the community, compared to just over 30 percent for chain restaurants. Overall, for every \$100 spent at a local business, around \$73 remains in the community, versus roughly \$43 when shopping at a non-locally owned business.

Get a personal touch

Local business owners typically are inclined to go the extra mile for their customers and are personally invested in the services and products they are selling. As a result, shopping locally tends to be a personalized experience. Furthermore, a local business owner may be more amenable to ordering products for specific clientele. Such personalized service is typically not accessible

when shopping big box stores or other shops where owners are off-site.

Lines are short

Waiting in long lines for checkout or to pick up merchandise ordered online can drain consumers' energy and contribute to stress. Local businesses tend to have short lines and small crowds, which can lead to a more pleasant shopping experience.

Generates tax revenue

Local businesses generate more tax revenue per sales dollar, according to Rubicon, a digital marketplace for waste and recycling businesses. Taxes paid by local small businesses go to support schools, parks, roads, and other programs that benefit the community as well.

Support nonprofits

Local businesses often support good work in the community, such as nonprofit groups. These can include schools and sports teams, among other groups. According to Dr. Sue Lynn Sasser, professor of economics at the University of Central Oklahoma, studies indicate nonprofits "receive 250 percent more support from small businesses than larger ones."

Support other local businesses

Local business support other local businesses by buying and selling among each other. A local, independently owned restaurant may source its ingredients from local farms, which means visitors to such eateries are supporting multiple local businesses each time they dine out.

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SHOP LOCAL - SMALLER IS BETTER

How to cut back on your Big Box habit

Big box retailers are ubiquitous. The appeal of such stores' extensive inventory is undeniable, and consumers like the comfort of knowing they can stop into a big box store anywhere on the map and feel a sense of familiarity with their surroundings.

Despite that feeling of familiarity, consumers who shop exclusively at big box retailers are missing out on what small businesses have to offer. Though it may be impossible to avoid big box retailers entirely, now is a great time to see what small businesses have to offer. Here's a few ways consumers can reduce their reliance on big box retailers.

Start gradually

A gradual separation from

big box retailers will likely prove easier than quitting cold turkey. Try replacing one big box trip each week with a visit to a locally owned small business. Brand loyalty to a local business can be built up from there.

Take steps to become a more active community consumer

Serving on a community's commerce commission or a similar agency helps consumers learn about the small businesses that are coming to town or already established. A greater awareness of shopping options could mean a greater propensity for shopping these stores rather than the chain alternatives.

Increase in-person shopping

It's tempting to simply shop online and order something from

one of the national chains that can afford to ship items straight to your home. However, small retailers tend to have more unique offerings and boast pleasant shopping experiences. Plus, in-person shopping allows consumers to get a real feel for a product, which can save them the time and effort it takes to return things that don't fit or aren't quite right. Many small businesses now offer their own e-commerce options where a shopper can buy an item online and then pick it up in the store or curbside to save time.

Consumers have grown accustomed to shopping at big box retailers. But kicking that habit and patronizing small local businesses can benefit consumers and communities alike.



NOVEMBER 24 & 25

SMALL BUSINESS FRIDAY & SATURDAY



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SHOP LOCAL - GIVE LOCAL

Don't Forget Non-Profits

Some local organizations are focused not on selling products, but on improving the lives of disadvantaged community members. Non-profit groups organizations are all seeking help this holiday season.

And what they're asking for is simply a hand. They need more manpower to achieve their goals and spread the word on their efforts.

LOCAL FOOD DONATIONS

Why not spend your Christmas spreading some holiday cheer – and delicious food? Contact the Clarendon Lions Club to make a donation to its **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKET** program at 874-2259. Call Clarendon Elementary School at 874-3855 about its **SNACK PAK 4 KIDS** program or make a donation or volunteer to help the weekly **CHRIST'S KIDS MINISTRY PROGRAM** as it seeks to nourish the bodies and spirits of local children. And it is a simple act of kindness that can be turned into a tradition, passed on to children or replicated by your friends and family members. Senior citizens groups in Clarendon and Hedley also need your support to continue to provide services to our local elderly.

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

You may find yourself short on time this holiday season, but maybe you have a few dollars to donate to a local organization. Your contribution could go a long way toward furthering the cause of a group near and dear to your heart.

You can conveniently make online donations or in-person cash contributions. Either way, donating funds is a simple way to show your support while making a difference in the lives of those who need it.

LENDING YOUR SKILL SET

Can you spare a few hours every weekend in December? You may be asked to run errands or visit with people. Maybe deliver food or products to clients across town.

Professionals in the creative services field can offer their skills free of charge as a holiday contribution. Locals helping locals will strengthen the community this holiday season.



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SHOP LOCAL - ENJOY FRIENDSHIPS

Spread the Word

Thriving small businesses are vital to strong local economies. According to the Small Business Administration, small businesses contribute roughly 65 percent of all new jobs, while a report from the Congressional Research Service indicated that firms with between 20 and 499 employees had the best job creation record of any size company. That's a significant feather in the cap of small businesses, as the jobs such firms create help to build thriving local economies that benefit from the tax revenue generated through employment and its ripple effects, such as the greater buying power that being employed creates.

With so much to gain from a thriving small business sector, local residents can help to spread the word about small businesses in their communities. A handful of simple and effective strategies can help to promote local businesses, and each can potentially benefit consumers and communities.

- **Take to social media.** Though it certainly has its detractors, social media remains wildly popular. An April 2023 report from Global WebIndex indicated 60 percent of the world's population uses social media, and the daily average usage is two hours and 24 minutes. Data from Meta indicates that 83 percent of Instagram users discover new brands while using the platform. Such reports illustrate how effective positive reviews and references to small local businesses

can be. Consumers won't need much time to share a story about a great local business on their social media accounts, but that small investment of time can pay big dividends for those companies.

- **Share experiences through word-of-mouth.** Word-of-mouth marketing still works, and consumers can play an important role in ensuring that it benefits local businesses. According to the marketing solution experts at Hibü, word-of-mouth marketing remains the most popular way to recommend a business. Consumers trust what others say about a business, so positive experiences with a local firm can be shared with family, friends and neighbors looking for similar services.

- **Review the business online.** Review Trackers reports that more than 81 percent of consumers are likely to visit Google Reviews prior to visiting a business. That's a testament to the value of online review aggregators. After a positive experience with a local business, consumers can visit Google Reviews or another online review aggregator like Yelp and share the details of their encounter. Chances are strong the review will be read and compel others to patronize the business.

A successful small business sector can have a profound impact on local communities. Consumers have an important role to play in the creation of a thriving small business community.



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SHOP LOCAL - SMART GIVING

How to Give Holiday Gift Cards

Nearly every man or woman has hit that all too familiar wall when holiday shopping for friends and family. While many people might be a cinch to shop for, there always seems to be one stickler on holiday shopping lists, and finding the right gift for that person can be an exercise in patience and perseverance.

But even the most patient shopper has his or her limits, and many people find themselves giving gift cards to those friends or family members who

seemingly have everything already. Such cards make great gifts, but only when gift givers employ a few tricks of the gift card trade.

Buy directly from the retailer. It's easy to be duped by a counterfeit gift card, which can be embarrassing for both the gift giver and its eventual recipient. Counterfeit gift cards are big business for criminals who prey on gift givers during the holiday season. Only buy gift cards directly from the retailer, as cards sold by other sources, such as an online auction

site, may be stolen or counterfeit. You don't want to be the person who gave a stolen or counterfeit card, and your friend or family member does not want to be subjected to an inquiry as to why he or she is attempting to use a stolen or counterfeit card.

Examine the card before leaving the store. Once a cashier or customer service employee hands you a gift card, examine it for tampering before leaving the store. Some criminals gain access to gift cards, even those that appear to be

behind lock and key, to learn the PIN number associated with the card. Once they have the PIN, recipients can then recreate their own card, using the stolen PIN to activate and make purchases on their counterfeit cards long before the real card is sold to you. If you detect any damage, ask for a new card before leaving the store.

Include a gift receipt with the card. When giving a gift card, don't forget to include the gift receipt. The gift receipt not only verifies the value of the gift card, but also includes the date the

card was purchased. That's important information, as many companies begin to charge fees, some of which may be exorbitant, on unused cards after a predetermined period of time.

Gift cards make great gifts and can bail out frustrated holiday shoppers who simply can't find that perfect gift for a friend or family member. But when shopping for gift cards, be sure to exercise caution before buying a card so your loved is not put in an embarrassing situation.



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SHOP LOCAL - SMALL BUSINESS, BIG IMPACT

Five Advantages local businesses have over the competition

Small businesses on Main Street and big box chains have been competing for consumers' attention for decades. Historians say that big box stores were born in the early 1960s when Wal-Mart, Target and Kmart entered the retail landscape. It's been more than 60 years since these chains arrived and they certainly have garnered their share of devotees. Big box businesses have size, inventory and often price on their side. However, when consumers look beyond those factors, it's easy to see all of the benefits small businesses offer that behemoths cannot.

1. Passionate owners and operators

Walk into a big box store or other business and you may find a handful of dedicated employees, but not quite at the level of small businesses. Small business owners prioritize the customer experience because they know they need to work hard to retain customers. This translates into knowing the products well, and sharing as much knowledge as possible with customers. Big box businesses vulnerable to heavy staff turnover often do not have a vested interest in the brand.

2. Work the local niche

What makes big box retailers so familiar to shoppers is one can stop in a store in the middle of Nebraska and likely find the same items as a store in Hawaii, with only a few subtle differences between the locations. Big box companies work with the same suppliers and ship the same products all over the world. Customers seeking personalized items and services for their particular regions are better off utilizing local small businesses that can bring in regional vendors more readily.

3. Better shopping experience

Big box stores draw customers during peak times when they're home

from school or off from work. That often translates to long lines both at checkout and at customer service or return counters. By contrast, there may be no apparent rhyme or reason to when shoppers visit small businesses, meaning there likely will not be crowds. It's much more pleasant to browse wares without having to contend with shopping cart traffic and people blocking aisles.

4. Advanced technology

Big box companies have invested millions of dollars into their point-of-service systems and other technologies, which means it can be a very slow transition to new options as times change. Small businesses generally can shift to newer, better technology more readily because they do not have to do so on the same scale as their larger competitors.

5. General agility

Changing technology on a dime is not the only ways small businesses excel. They can experiment in other ways, such as a home contractor offering a special price deal for a certain period of time, or a clothing store experimenting with new in-store decor. Big chains cannot pivot that quickly, and any changes must be approved by corporate and implemented across all centers.

Although small businesses may have a tough time beating big box retailers on overall price, there are many other advantages such enterprises have over the competition.



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SHOP LOCAL - MANAGE YOUR MONEY



Smart ways to pay for gifts

Entertaining, dinners, gifts, travel, and decorating may make for a festive time of year, but the holidays certainly can put a strain on personal finances. No one wants to experience a financial hangover come January. Therefore, making a plan for paying for holiday expenditures now can help the average person save and protect their finances.

Figuring out how to finance holiday purchases can be just as important as scoping out deals and cashing in coupons. Here's a look at some of the ways to pay for holiday gifts.

CREDIT CARDS

Many consumers feel that credit cards are the safest way to make purchases, whether in-store or online. With credit cards, shoppers are using a line of credit. Should fraudulent purchases be made or errors in accounting occur, shoppers aren't responsible - the credit card company is in charge of tracking down or absorbing the error.

Now that spending has increased after the last recession, credit card companies are again offering deals to lure in new customers. Rewards cards are quite popular. Such cards offer points, cash back or travel miles to customers who meet certain criteria. For those who can pay off balances and meet the requirements, these cards can

help save substantial amounts of money. Keep in mind that regular cards carry an interest rate of 15 percent on average, while retail store cards may be as high as 24 percent.

LAYAWAY

Layaway is a safe way to shop for the holidays. Layaway entitles consumers to buy an item by making installment payments. The frequency of payments depends on shoppers' ability to pay. Failure to pay will not affect a credit score or negatively impact credit standing in any way - the consumer may just lose their down payment or be forced to pay a layaway fee. Paying in installments helps lock in a special sale rate and can discourage impulse buying as well.

CASH AND PREPAID CARDS

Paying in cash can help shoppers avoid overspending on gifts. After setting aside a cash limit, once the money is spent, shopping is done. Paying in cash does carry some risk if the money is stolen or misplaced. Plus, as opposed to paying with credit, which can offer some purchase protection or built-in warranties, cash may have no protective benefits.

As an alternative to cash, consumers may want to purchase pre-loaded cash cards in various amounts. Like cash, when the value on the card is depleted, shopping is finished.

SHOP LOCAL - NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

Don't Be A Stranger

There is no place like home, so why would you choose to leave it for Christmas shopping? By spending your time and money shopping locally, you are more likely to run into friends, family, co-workers and past acquaintances, allowing you to enjoy the season around those you love.

Both behind the counter and in the aisles, you will probably know more people within your local businesses in comparison to the stores 60 miles away. Familiar faces and friendly chats help enrich the already exciting experience of Christmas shopping.

TEACH THE KIDS

It's never too early to pass on the values that drive you to shop local and support your neighbors. Your sons, daughters, nieces and nephews will earn money and shop for themselves one day, and they may even be future small business owners.

Bringing them along for the shopping trip to your favorite downtown store will give them a

great understanding of the benefits of spending money locally and may spark an entrepreneurial spirit within them.

LEARN HISTORY

The next time you are perusing through a downtown business, ask yourself if you know the history of the building you are in. Odds are the owner does.

Small business owners are often excellent sources for local history. They can give you detailed information about their buildings or the services that used to be offered through it.

Shopping locally doesn't just enhance the local economy. It can also increase your knowledge of your surroundings.



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SHOP LOCAL - GIVE LOCAL

Giving a little more this holiday season

The holiday season is a time of giving. The generosity on display during the holiday season may not have an official start date, but the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving Day may be the unofficial beginning of the giving season.

The first Tuesday following American Thanksgiving has been referred to as Giving Tuesday since 2012. The event was started by the 92nd Street Y in New York City, the United Nations Foundation and the technology website Mashable as a response to the commercialization of the holiday season and the rampant consumerism that seems to start as soon as the last bite of turkey is digested. Today, Giving Tuesday harnesses the generosity of millions

of people around the world and helps millions of dollars to find its way into the coffers of organizations that need it most. Giving Tuesday inspires people to volunteer or give back to causes that are near and dear to their hearts.

Thanks to technology, giving has the capacity to go viral and inspire others to engage in their own charitable efforts. Since its inception, Giving Tuesday has evolved. The event now underscores how communities can harness the power of people working

together to elicit great change.

Even though Giving Tuesday may be the catalyst for charitable efforts, it doesn't need to end there. People are urged to be generous all year long, including throughout the

holiday season. Here are some seasonally specific ways to give back a little more.

- Pay it forward by treating someone behind you in the checkout line to coffee, fast food, a candy bar, or whatever else suits you at the time. Perhaps he or she will do the same and

keep the generosity going.

- Keep extra dollars in your pocket and be generous to charities seeking donations outside of stores. A cup of coffee or hot chocolate goes a long way toward warming up the people manning the collection pots as well.

- Adopt a family who is less fortunate and purchase some gifts on their wish list. Many community centers and churches have contacts for needy families who could use some support this season.

Giving can be the focus of the holiday season, and in ways that are meaningful to the people on the receiving end of the generosity.



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SHOP LOCAL - ALL YEAR LONG

Shop Local Year Round

Sure, Christmas is a great time to shower your loved ones with locally bought gifts. But what about the other major holidays throughout the year?

Extend your yuletide joy to Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthdays and anniversaries for maximum impact on your local community and business owners.

Your effort in doing so may make more of a difference than you realize. A recent collaborative study by the Small Business Administration, United States Department of Labor and other major organizations found that small businesses employ about 77 million Americans and account for 65 percent of all new jobs over the past 17 years.

So by spending your money locally, you are helping keep your friends and neighbors employed during the holiday season and beyond!

Here are some of the other notable findings from the study:

- Eighty-nine percent of consumers agree that independent businesses contribute positively to local economies.
- Residential neighborhoods served by a successful independent business district gained, on average, 50 percent more in home values than their citywide markets.
- Independent retailers

return more than three times as much money per dollar of sales than chain competitors. Independent restaurants return more than two times as much money per dollar of sales than national restaurant chains.

- If independent businesses regained their 1990 market shares, it would create 200,000 new small businesses, generate nearly \$300 billion in revenues and employ more than 1.6 million American workers.
- If just half of the United States employed population spent \$50 each month at locally owned independent businesses, it would generate more than \$42.6 billion in revenue.
- For every square foot a local firm occupies, the local economy gains \$179, vs. \$105 for a chain store.





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Visit ClarendonTX.com/Christmas for more info and a list of participating businesses.



SHOP LOCAL - GIVE BACK LOCAL

How helping others helps you

Personal growth is at the heart of many New Year's resolutions. Few paths to positive personal growth are more noble than resolving to help others through increased acts of generosity and kindness.

According to Psychology Today, doing good for others, no matter how big or small the deed, feels good but also provides reciprocal benefits. The link between volunteering and lower rates of depression has been well-documented, and there is neural evidence from MRI studies suggesting a link between being generous and signs of happiness in the brain.

The following are several ways to improve oneself by being more mindful of others.

- Be aware of social issues. Read THE CLARENDON ENTERPRISE to stay up-to-date on the pulse of your community. Educate yourself about current issues that are affecting people from all walks of life. Understanding the needs or plights of others may boost your willingness to get involved with nonprofit

organizations. It also may make you more empathetic and compassionate toward other people.

- Volunteer at a charity. Find a charitable group with which you can volunteer your time. This is a great way to support a cause you believe in and makes it possible for you to collaborate with others who are like-minded, potentially helping you make new friends.

- Help someone you know. It's commendable to want to assist a charity or a global cause, but what about people close to you who may need a boost? Whether you're lugging boxes to help a friend move or babysitting a niece or nephew so their parents can enjoy a much-needed night out, when you help someone, those good deeds will return to you in time.

When making resolutions, people should consider goals that involve helping others. While this assistance can benefit the people who are on the receiving end of the care and attention, those who are giving of themselves also reap considerable rewards.



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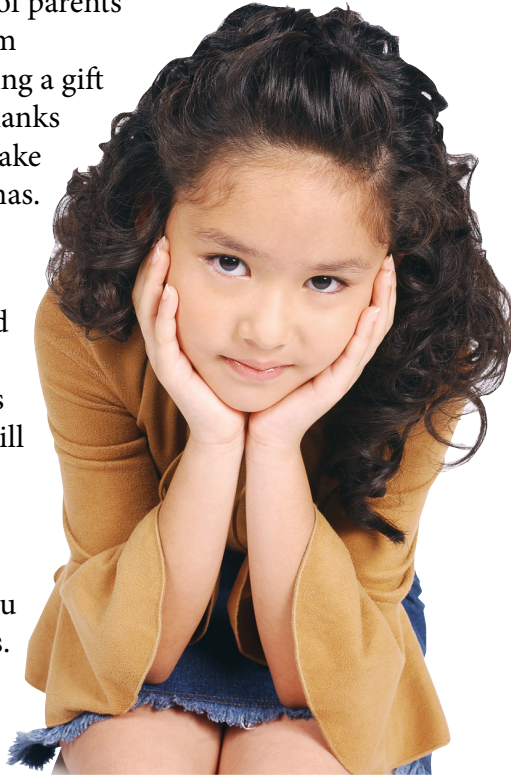
SHOP LOCAL - KIDS IN NEED

Visit The Angel Tree

The economic circumstance of parents shouldn't keep children from experiencing the joy of having a gift to open on Christmas morning. Thanks to a local program, you can help make sure every kid has a Merry Christmas.

Angel Tree applications are currently available at the Burton Memorial Library. Kids ages 12 and under, who might not otherwise have Christmas, are eligible for this program. The application period will close December 1, 2023.

Angels are on the tree now and available for adoption. Go by the Library and select an Angel that you can provide a gift to this Christmas. Gifts are due back at the Library by December 14. For more information, contact the Library at 806-874-3685.



Saints' Roost Museum Christmas Party

Sat., Dec. 2 • Donley Co. Activity Center
6:30 to 11:30 p.m.

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LOOKING FOR TRUE Christmas Spirit?

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This holiday season, try something different. Forget the crowded malls and chain stores and the facelessness of the online world. Shop Clarendon instead.

You'll find unique gifts in beautifully decorated shops and merchants who really want to help you find that perfect gift for that special someone.

By supporting small businesses in our county, you're doing your part to help build a stronger local economy and community. So keep your hard-earned dollars at home this holiday season, and shop locally for the best value!

Your local merchants and the Chamber of Commerce invite you to experience the difference shopping your home town makes this Christmas.

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