

Economic Development Insight

Support your community

By Brianne Perigo

As a child growing up in rural Greene County, I remember my parents always seemed to turn everyday activities into a valuable life lesson, most of the time not even realizing they're doing so. For example, the task of picking up sticks. I'm sure my parents thought they were giving us a menial job so we could think we were helping and they could keep us occupied. However, because my parents gave me and my siblings' chores, they instilled in us a strong work ethic that has lasted all of these years.

Perhaps a more relevant life lesson was running errands on a Saturday morning. As my Mom and Dad were always working on projects around the house, we made several trips to the hardware stores, paint stores, nurseries and so forth. These errands were completed, not by taking a trip to Terre Haute or Bloomington but, by shopping right here in Greene County. Consequently, because my parents and their peers supported the local vendors, these same stores are still in business today.

The old phrase "Buy Local" has a new meaning now that a major area of media focus is the shape of our economy and the many creative ways we can fix the mess or undo what has long been done. As small businesses are especially vulnerable in these conditions, supporting our local vendors is especially important. One creative idea is promoting a Buy Local Day or a Buy Local Week in the community.

In Phoenix, Mayor Phil Gordon declared December 8-14th, 2008 Buy Local Week with the slogan, "Dollars spent locally stay in the community up to three times more than those spent elsewhere! Keep your money where your home is!" Denver and, even closer, Fort Wayne and Bloomington have developed their own method of encouraging their citizens to buy local.

This is an excellent movement as there are so many advantages to purchasing goods within your own community. Supporting local businesses is good for the environment, because it cuts down on fuel consumption. Another valid point is local businesses donate money to nonprofits and have an appreciation for, and are becoming more accountable to, their local communities.

I want to clarify that "buy local" may have a several meanings to different people and the intent of this article is to encourage folks to shop in Greene County whenever possible. Not everything I own was purchased in Greene County, but I do believe the more conscious we are about where we spend our earned income, the more our community will benefit.

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