

News

Small Businesses Band Together for Small Business Saturday

About 200 Portland businesses will join in a marketing effort called Shop Little Boxes



STEPHANIE ZOLLSHAN/THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE VIA AP FILE

In this Nov. 29, 2014, file photo, shoppers form a long line at checkout during Small Business Saturday at the Arcadian Shop in Lenox, Mass. Many small and independent retailers who are holding Small Business Saturday shopping events Thanksgiving weekend are banding together with others, believing that there's strength in numbers.

By *Joyce m. Rosenberg*
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Many small and independent retailers who are holding Small Business Saturday shopping events Thanksgiving weekend are banding together with others, believing that there's strength in numbers.

Small Business Saturday, started in 2010 to encourage consumers to shop in their small local stores rather than national chains and what are called big box stores, has become an event in neighborhoods, towns, even cities as retailers recognize they can draw more customers as a cohesive group than by of-

fering discounts and promotions on their own. Mama Java Coffee, an online coffee retailer, is joining with seven other online businesses that cater to mothers to offer a joint discount. A shopper spending \$40 at any of the companies on Small Business Saturday will get \$10 off purchases at the other seven. Kim

Roman, owner of Mama Java Coffee, says the group, which will market the event on Instagram and other social media, came up with the idea just a few weeks ago. "We were chatting about ways to be unique and help promote each other," she says. Many communal Small Business Saturday events have grown to the point where they're organized by local chambers of commerce and community business or-

ganizations that have big marketing budgets. About 200 indie retailers throughout Portland are banding together in a marketing effort called Shop Little Boxes that will run from Friday through Sunday. The stores are offering discounts, many of them 10 percent, and shoppers get raffle ticket numbers for each visit and pur-

dren. Parents may not be able to do much shopping during such events, but owners say they do return to shop after the party is over. Landlords also sponsor Small Business Saturday events at their developments. Pier Village, a residential complex in Long Branch, New Jersey, has about 30 retail tenants, and many will be tak-

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chase they make. Shop Little Boxes has a smartphone app that shoppers can use to find participating stores and to register their raffle ticket numbers. Retailers say they do see sales blip up during Small Business Saturday, but their aim is also to remind shoppers that they are there year-round. The event in Henderson, Nevada, like many others, is aimed at fostering goodwill; Shop Small Henderson will be a five-hour block party with activities for chil-

ing part in a communal Small Business Saturday event. Some of the events aim at giving craft makers and artisans a place to sell their creations; about a dozen craft makers will take part in a pop-up event at Broadway Market, a retail complex in Seattle. And some companies with surplus space are inviting small vendors to set up shop on their premises — in Elmhurst, Illinois, Brewpoint Coffee is hosting small retailers in its roastery.

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