

Go Shopping this Small Business Saturday



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(StatePoint) For many holiday shoppers, Black Friday marks the official kickoff to the gift-buying season. But the following day, November 28, is Small Business Saturday, and can be a more satisfying way to shop for gifts for loved ones.

At a time of year where big box retailers offer deep discounts, this annual opportunity to show local businesses your support is also a great way to score unique items while benefitting the local economy.

Here are some retail trends and other things to consider as you shop at your

favorite small businesses.

The Local Economy

By supporting small businesses, you are supporting local job creation. In fact, small firms accounted for over three-fifths of the new jobs created between 1993 and mid-2013, according to

government statistics. With the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) and American Express reporting that \$14.3 billion was spent with independent retailers and restaurants on Small Business Saturday in 2014, spending your holiday shopping budget locally strengthens

Main Street and can help your community's economy thrive.

New Technologies

A common stereotype of mom and pop stores are that they are antiquated and overpriced, but many small businesses are adopting new technologies to streamline their operations; which can be an important consideration for shoppers in a hurry or on a budget.

For example, new Android based point of sale terminals, such as the ergonomically designed V-R7000 and V-R7100 from Casio have widescreen LCD touch

panels, and an intuitive, high-resolution interface for faster sales and fewer transactional snafus. For instance, these terminals come equipped with a battery to protect memory data in the event of a power failure, and offer efficient store operations by eliminating common hardware problems experienced with PC based hardware.

Such information terminals are helping to transform retail management by offering small businesses a chance to better compete against their big box counterparts.

Exclusive Items

Make a splash with one-of-a-kind and unforgettable gifts this season. From the gift shop with handmade crafts made by neighborhood artisans to the bookshop selling the works of local authors, shopping at small businesses means encountering items on sale that you won't find elsewhere.

If you are shopping for someone who seemingly has everything, going local can help you get inspired.

Consider doing your holiday shopping a bit differently this year, by making a point of supporting small, local businesses on Small Business Saturday and beyond.

Add some zest to your dessert table



Jamaica Lime Pie

by Metro Creative Connection

A refreshing dessert makes holiday evenings that much more enjoyable. After a good meal, sharing dessert with friends and family can make for the perfect ending to a relaxing night. Those who want to add a touch of the tangy to their Christmastime dessert table should consider the following recipe for "Jamaica Lime Pie" from Helen Willinsky's "Jerk from Jamaica" (Ten Speed Press).

Jamaica Lime Pie

Serves 6

Filling

- 4 large egg yolks
- 1 large egg white
- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 partially baked 9-inch pie crust, chilled

Meringue

- 3 large egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 6 tablespoons sugar

To make the filling: In a medium bowl, beat the egg yolks and egg white until they are very thick and lemon-colored. Stir in the condensed milk, lime juice and salt until well blended. Pour into the chilled pie shell. Refrigerate for several hours to allow the filling to set.

Shortly before serving, make the meringue. Preheat the oven to 425 F. In a large bowl, beat the 3 egg whites with the cream of tartar until they form soft peaks. Gradually beat in the sugar, and continue beating until it is dissolved. By then the meringue should be stiff and glossy. Spread over the filling, being sure to seal the edges well so that the meringue will not shrink.

Bake for 5 to 7 minutes, or until delicately browned. Let cool away from drafts.

Make-your-own holiday ornaments

Make new holiday memories this year with homemade ornaments.

by Metro Creative Connection

Holiday decorating is a big part of the holiday season. Bins are taken out of the attic or garage, and decorations are once again given their opportunity to shine for several weeks before being packed away again.

Among the many decorations families use to deck the halls are ornaments that were made by hand. This year creating homemade ornaments can be a crafty project that helps families make new holiday memories.

Christmas tree ornaments come in all shapes and sizes and often tell the stories of holiday traditions. There are several different ways to create personalized, do-it-yourself ornaments and leave the cheap, easily broken ornaments from the dollar stores behind.

Photo ornaments

Fun photo ornaments showcase how a family has changed and grown over the years. Experiment with different ways to create these ornaments. You can glue a photo to a ceramic ornament and cover it with decoupage glaze to set it permanently. Try purchasing clear, glass ornaments, then remove the top of the ornament, which is usually spring-loaded, before slipping a photo inside and replacing the top. You also can laminate a photo, punch a hole in the top and affix a ribbon.

Ceramic ornaments

The popularity of paint-it-yourself pottery has led to an increase in ceramic and crafts shops across the country. During the holiday season such shops offer many holiday items that can be painted. Often the store will then fire the pieces after they are painted so that they are shiny and hardened for display.

Those who want to do their painting at home can visit their local craft or hobby shop, where typically there are unfinished ceramic ornaments that can be painted with acrylic paints found right in the next aisle. A finishing coat of clear glaze will help protect the ornaments from year to year.

Wood crafts

Many of today's craft centers have expanded to



include sections devoted to unfinished wood items. Everything from letters to animal cutouts to boxes and rocking horses can be purchased and finished. Turn keepsake boxes into painted and ribbon-adorned gift boxes. Stain a treasure chest that can be used to store reindeer snacks for Santa's crew. Turn small decorative pieces into ornaments for the tree. Paint and affix wood initials onto stocking holders to identify to whom each stocking belongs. Crafty individuals also can turn plain wood plaques into signs with clever sayings, such as "Park your sleigh here."

Scavenge around the house

Young children can use any medium for making ornaments. Garlands made of macaroni or popcorn are traditional. Fabric scraps can be sewn and stuffed with potpourri for homemade scent sachets. Hand-drawn pictures can be made and

laminated and hung on the tree.

The only obstacle with regard to DIY ornaments is a

limited imagination.

Homemade items can add whimsy and a personal touch to the holiday season.

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