

SHOP SMALL: Local businesses celebrate Small Business Saturday with discounts, sales and more

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ALTON - Since 2010, in coordination with **American Express**, small businesses around the country gathered to promote their shops, bakeries and more with the invention of **Small Business Saturday**.

In an attempt to raise awareness for the small and local businesses around the country, the Saturday after Thanksgiving marked the starting point for the annual event.

For shops owners like **The Gift Box's Andrea Abbott**, Small Business Saturday is the largest shopping day of the year for her store, which houses creations and designs from over 100 vendors.



“It’s our biggest day of the year and my absolute favorite day,” Abbott said. “It’s my Christmas.”

Abbott and her employees are expected to have lines out the door by the time this afternoon rolls around. However, helping out her vendors in the shop makes the busy day worthwhile.

“Instead of just helping myself operate a business and have an income myself, I’m helping a hundred other people put money in their pockets and help pay for Christmas gifts for their kids.”

Nationwide, the effect of Small Business Saturday is unprecedented. American Express conducted the Consumer Insights Survey that found that customers spent an estimated \$14.3 billion at small businesses around the country.

“Small Business Saturday is really getting people’s attention nowadays,” Abbott said. “It’s a great and viable day for everyone in the community. I’ve been at this location for over 18 years and the longer I’m here, the more I love this community.”

JMC Designs, Just My Desserts, River Bend Yoga, Mississippi Mud Pottery and Hazel2Blue are all local stores who have partnered with American Express to bring awareness to their Small Business Saturday sales and campaigns.



