



In the Riverbend and Across Illinois, Shoppers are Encouraged to Stay at Home – and Shop Local

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GODFREY – The **RiverBend Growth Association** is joining chambers and small businesses across the state of Illinois to launch the ‘**IL’ove Local** campaign to encourage people to support local businesses during the week of **April 11 – 18, 2020**. While the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (IACCE) is leading efforts to unite chambers across the state in the initiative, the **RiverBend Growth Association** is taking a leadership role in our community.

"Our local businesses are the heart and soul of our Riverbend communities. They use your dollars and put them back into our local Riverbend economy, supporting other local businesses, sponsoring local events, and generating local tax revenue that supports our police, firefighters, and schools," explains John Keller, President of the RiverBend Growth Association. "We will continue to prepare for what is next and work together with our community leaders, businesses, non-profits, and others. By working together, we can get through this stronger than ever. Please continue supporting our local businesses by putting your money where your heart is."

Small businesses account for [99.6 percent](#) of business in Illinois. Collectively small, local businesses are the states' largest [employer](#), and small businesses employ more than half of the working class in the [United States](#).

"People across the state are staying home to save lives, we want to ensure that small businesses can save their livelihoods," said Lisa Weitzel, President of Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. "We are asking neighbors to put their money where their heart is and support the ‘IL’ove Local initiative."

Each dollar spent at a local, independent business returns [50 times more money](#) to the local economy than shopping at a mega e-retailer. Across Illinois, small businesses

provide communities with good jobs, quality service, and the character that makes cities, towns and neighborhoods feel like home.

From Chicago to Carbondale and the Mississippi to Lake Michigan, Illinois chambers are coming together sharing resources, building community and uniting to create the week-long initiative designed to drive business to our small businesses. Collectively small, local businesses are the [states' largest employer](#). Small businesses employ [more than half of working class](#) in the United States.

WHAT SHOPPERS CAN DO

- Follow social distancing guidelines and stay home as much as possible.
- Buy Local. Find out if your favorite local store has an online shop or reach out to them to find out how you can purchase now for pick up later.
- Buy gift cards to use later.
- Take online virtual classes from your favorite local business.
- Get takeout/delivery - Tip big!
 - Consider buying lunch/dinner for the first responders, you will help your local restaurants and the people who serve us all.
 - Buy gift cards from local businesses for your favorite waiter/waitress /bartender.
- Like and share your favorite local businesses social media post.
 - Once you've purchased a gift card or meal, take a picture of it, share it on your social media and hashtag #IloveIllinois
 - OR use #shopsmall #shopillinois #Illinoisstrong #AllInIllinois
- Maintain your memberships
- Check out chamber links and directories for a one-stop shop in shopping small, of all the ways to support independent Illinois businesses in your backyard. (www.growthassociation.com)

This is a partnership led by the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, with participation from Chambers of Commerce across Illinois in support of small businesses across the state. The Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives was established in 1915 and serves over 130 chambers of commerce and their professional staff throughout the state. IACCE supports the development of chamber professionals by creating opportunities for growth and recognition.

More information on the 'IL'ove Local campaign can be found at www.IllinoisLoveLocal.com.

About the RiverBend Growth Association

The RiverBend Growth Association is the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Organization for the communities of the Riverbend. As a Chamber of Commerce, we actively promote activities among our member businesses. As an Economic Development Organization, we work closely with state, regional, county and local officials to develop new employment opportunities.

The Growth Association serves the following communities in southwestern Illinois: Alton, Bethalto, East Alton, Elsah, Foster Township, Godfrey, Grafton, Hartford, Roxana, South Roxana, Wood River, and Wood River Township.

The mission of the Growth Association is to provide the leadership required to attract, promote and support new and existing enterprise growth throughout the Riverbend community

RiverBend Growth Association

www.growthassociation.com