

Small Business Saturday's 'Shop Local' Spirit Fueled By Holiday Festival

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JERSEYVILLE, IL – Following Thanksgiving Thursday and the Black Friday shopping events observed by most retailers nationwide, Small Business Saturday is an opportunity for local small businesses to cash in on the holiday shopping season with their one-of-a-kind products and services.

Of course, every day of the year is important for small business owners. But "Small Business Saturday," launched by American Express over a decade ago, is the one day each year where the focus is specifically turned to a practice of “shop small, shop local.”

This year, Small Business Saturday falls on November 27. And once again, the Jerseyville community marks the day with a host of activities, events, and offerings for all ages with its annual Downtown Country Christmas Festival and Bright Lights celebration.

The annual holiday event was initially designed to help shine a spotlight on all the city’s business establishments and show off all the uniqueness Jerseyville has to offer, while also offering family-friendly holiday activities and events as memories in the making.



Merchants and retailers throughout the recently formed Jerseyville Historic City Center District are looking forward to this holiday event as it makes this year’s debut in the heart of the new downtown district. City businesses that are located outside of the district and other area retailers, including local artists and crafters, are also excited about this extra chance to connect with customers.

In fact, Small Business Saturday and this year's holiday season overall is especially important to the city's continued economic recovery and growth as many of Jerseyville's businesses try to move forward past the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

“The definite message that Small Business Saturday brings is the importance of our small businesses being able to succeed and do well in our community. Almost 70 percent of our city income is based on sales tax revenues,” said Jerseyville Mayor Bill Russell. “Continued success for our small businesses is the reason, and the only reason, that the City of Jerseyville can complete projects and introduce continued improvements like those planned for our parks. The businesspeople are our lifeline.”

“It's also a known fact that our Christmas Festival brings increased business during the season to the whole city,” Russell added. “It's such an important event for the community, and the planning committee works so hard to make it happen. With what the country's gone through, and with businesses just trying to survive, we are excited to be able to host the festival again this year.”



“As a small business owner, days such as Small Business Saturday are vital to the overall health of our business,” said Nicole Cummings-McKenney of Deer Lane

Boutique, located within the Jerseyville Historic City Center District at 221 South State Street. “The holidays are a busy time for all, and we live Page 2 of 3 in a time of convenience, so as a small business owner we truly feel the support and love when our customers come out to shop our store over a big box one.”

“The past year has truly shown what our small businesses mean to our community,” CummingsMcKenney said further. “In a time where most would have expected doors to close, the community rallied and new businesses opened, which was magical to see. However, now more than ever, as things start to go back to ‘normal,’ the focus has also started to move back to ‘speed and convenience’ versus supporting your local business owner. My hope for this holiday season would be to see as many people, if not more, supporting ‘local’ than ever before.”

“The holiday season is so important for the success of our business, and I know it is the same for many of our local businesses,” added Mary Karen DeSherlia Wittman of Jerseyville’s Uncorked Spirit, located at 1600 South State Street on the city’s south end. “We prepare for and count on this season all year long. We are beyond grateful for how aware our community is of the importance of supporting local businesses.”

Each year, Jerseyville’s Stadium Theater also hosts a free kids’ movie as a part of the Downtown Country Christmas Festival/Small Business Saturday celebration. Steve Dougherty is the owner of Dougherty Theaters, which includes The Stadium Theater as well as Litchfield’s Westside Cinema.

“This year, The Stadium Theater will be showing a free kids movie at 12 noon on the 27th as part of the celebration,” Dougherty noted. He then shared a unique story that, as he noted, “pushes the idea of ‘spend local’ and shows the true spirit of the season.”

“We had a good customer that wanted to donate to the theater, stating that she was thankful for it to be open again while realizing the difficulty in it doing so,” Dougherty said. “I suggested that she make her donation to cover the costs of a box of popcorn and a small soda for the first 120 children entering the free showing during the festival. The concession stand will be open for additional purchases, but because of this customer’s donation, every kid should enjoy something.”

Jerseyville resident Barbra Moran was the customer behind that donation to the theater. “I grew up in Jersey County, so the theater has always been a part of life here for me,” Moran shared. “It’s such an important fixture for Jerseyville and Jersey County. I worry about its sustainability, and I just wanted to help keep them open in a way that I could.”

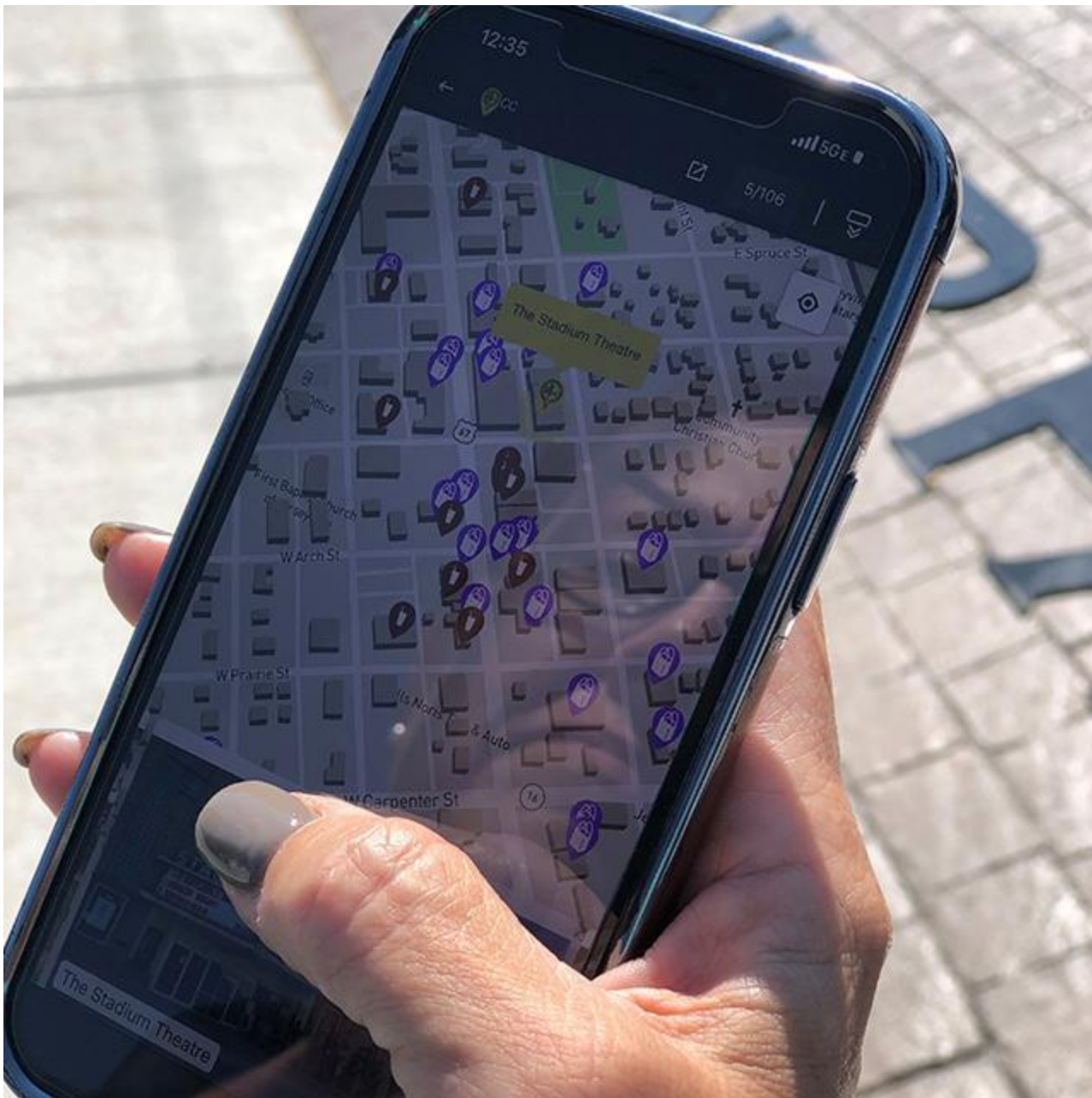
“The times recently when I’ve gone to see a movie, there hasn’t been many others in the theater watching, and it concerned me. I asked how I could donate and help, and Steve

suggested a donation toward the kids' movie. I plan to offer some help again at Christmastime," Moran added.

The city is closing in on 100 businesses, organizations, and agencies located within the boundaries of the recently formed 24-block area known as Jerseyville Historic City Center District, and there are a sizable number of small businesses located outside of the district as well. All are hoping for a better-than-ever Small Business Saturday event on Nov. 27, 2021.

To help visitors and residents navigate through everything that Jerseyville has to offer, not only on Small Business Saturday but every day, the city has launched a new mobile app, available now for smart devices via Google Play and the App Store.

"Known as 'Explore Jerseyville,' this free app comes with numerous features," said Michael Ward with the City of Jerseyville. "It includes a city map, and other categories such as links to the City of Jerseyville website, a photo gallery, highlights and links to local attractions and lodging, an 'About Us' page with Page 3 of 3 pertinent information including various contacts, and Facebook links to the City's page as well as to the Parks and Recreation and Library pages."



“It is a free app for all to use,” Ward added. “This is a one-stop-shop for the user when it comes to finding information about the city of Jerseyville. This tool allows the user to have all modes of information and communication at their fingertips, not to mention the City Map is an all-encompassing view into the business assets and amenities found within our community. The Map reads and directs the user to the information that is posted and updated by the business owners, which also allows the owners the ability to easily update and control their published information.”

Ward further noted that while the Explore Jerseyville app is not compatible with computer use, the Jerseyville City Map is also available via the [explore.jerseyville-il.us](https://www.explore.jerseyville-il.us) website.

To learn more about Jerseyville's Small Business Saturday activities for 2021, or for more information about the Jerseyville Historic City Center District and JEDC Partners in Progress, call 618/639-5332, visit jedc-il.us online, or download and access the "Explore Jerseyville" app with your mobile device