

Support Local, Shop Small this Holiday Season

By: State Senator Brad Pfaff (D – Onalaska)

Small businesses are the economic backbone of our economy. While much attention is focused on Wall Street, the stock market, and big business, our small businesses employ many people and anchor our local economies. Think about it; it is our small businesses that sponsor our kids' little league and soccer teams and promote and donate to the local 5K fun run.

We are fortunate that the Coulee Region is home to so many great small, family-owned businesses. From plumbing companies and multi-generational family farms to restaurant owners and local artists selling their craft, people in western Wisconsin work hard to provide valuable services and goods to the rest of us.

Owning a business is tough. It takes risk, courage, and fortitude. As the son of farmers and the proud dad of a small business owner, I hear often about hiring challenges, fluctuating consumer demand, and red tape, all while trying to make ends meet—and at a time when everything seems to be getting more expensive for all of us.

So, this holiday season, I encourage you to support local businesses and shop small. Shopping local has more benefits for our community than one might think... did you know that nearly \$0.66 of every \$1 spent at a small business stays in the local community? Our hard-earned cash goes further in the Coulee Region, helping employers make payroll, upgrading their machinery, or even surprising their child with their favorite player's (maybe Jordan Love?!) jersey for Christmas.

When we buy small and purchase local services, the dollars stay here, in our community, supporting our schools, our roads, and our families.

Whether your home needs an emergency repair, you're rushing to find last-minute stocking stuffers, or you're treating the in-laws to a nice meal at a restaurant, consider supporting those small business owners who continuously invest in our main streets and contribute so much to our local economy.

I believe we should not only support small businesses and their employees with our dollars, but also with action. As your state senator, I believe it is imperative that we enact policies to support Wisconsin's main streets.

Recently, I introduced legislation to create a "one-stop shop" for business owners, directing the Department of Administration to establish and maintain a portal for the most common small business needs. Previously known as "Open for Business," the portal has since been renamed the "One-Stop Business Portal."

The improved portal will provide owners with information on bidding opportunities, economic development programs, educational and networking opportunities, licensing or permit requirements, and taxes and fees associated with their businesses.

The legislation helps to level the playing field between small businesses and large corporations, specifically when navigating bureaucratic hurdles and red tape. Currently, it can take up to 10 different website visits to coordinate the needs of a small business. Let me be frank, that's just too many, especially since we have the capacity to streamline and centralize this information for business owners!

By requiring state agencies to work together and improve the already existing website, we can make it easier for business owners to navigate state requirements, allowing them to focus on growing their business and our local economy.

Please join me this holiday season, supporting our friends and neighbors who own businesses and provide so much to the Coulee Region.