



Holly Pederson / For The Chronicle

Tedy Stjohn, Chehalis, looks for a new book to read Saturday afternoon at Book 'n' Brush in downtown Chehalis. "I would rather not go to Olympia if I don't have to," Stjohn said about his choice to shop at the local business.

Twin Cities Businesses Ask Holiday Shoppers to Keep It Local and 'Keep the Cheer Here'

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS PASSPORT: Program Brings People to Shop Downtown

By Kimberly Mason
For The Chronicle

Inspired by the nationwide Small Business Saturday — a campaign celebrating small business owners and working to convince shoppers to keep their happy holiday dollars closer to home — 23 member businesses of the Chehalis Business Association have begun their own unique promotion, the "Home for the Holidays Passport."

This week-long promotion was created by the Chehalis Business Association in response to their current most pressing need — to keep their doors open and stay in business.

In years past, Black Friday brought local businesses to their knees as the stampeding herd of bargain hunting shoppers flocked the big box stores. Then, as Cyber Monday took hold, it threatened to drown local shops in the wake of a tsunami-sized wave of online Web surfing.

So, wedged between midnight madness and cyber-insanity, a brick and mortar store was left out in the late November cold.

But that was yesterday.

Today, small business owners have banded together to create a new way and a new day for shopping — Small Business Saturday.

That program brought people to businesses throughout small town America, from Bath Depot in Centralia to

Brunswick's in Chehalis.

The Chehalis Business Association has taken that one Saturday one step further, stretching it into a week-long celebration they're calling "Home for the Holidays."

With this new promotion, the 23 participating member stores hope to lure local Lewis County residents to stop in, take a look around and shop local.

"Our goal is to get people walking the downtown," said Patty Kaija, of Kaija's Garden and Pet Center. "We do hope that they stop and shop, but we really just want them to come through the door, to try someplace they've never shopped before."

"We also want to remind them that we're part of the community and the money you spend with us goes back into the community," Kaija added.

The shop local campaign started Saturday and will continue through to next Saturday, Dec. 3. The 23 Chehalis businesses are offering local shoppers a chance to win a gift basket filled with items from each of the stores, worth over \$500.

"All they have to do is pick up a passport at any of the stores listed, visit each of the 23 stores and have the passport validated by all of the stores," said Kaija. "Then return the completed passport to Kaija's Garden and Pet before 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 4, and they'll be entered to win."

"We all donated something toward the gift basket," Kaija added.

David Hartz of Book 'n' Brush in downtown Chehalis says he is already seeing more traffic in his store.

"Black Friday is typically a slow, slow day for us," Hartz said, "but we had a very busy day. Customers have told me they are

making a concerted effort to shop local this year."

Judy DeVaul, owner of ReDesign, who opened her shop just 9 weeks ago, said this weekend's traffic far exceeded her expectations.

"I've had a lot of people stop in, more than I expected," DeVaul said. "And a lot of people are also looking for 'Made in America' tags."

Kaija said she works hard to not only shop local, but to buy local stock, too.

"We're really looking forward to this spring, when we will start buying our vegetable starts from a locally owned nursery, the Dirty Thumb in Adna," she said.

Rebecca Staebler, of HUBBUB in Centralia, had a lot of customers on Friday and even more on Saturday.

"It's all over Facebook," Staebler said. "The word is out and people are talking about it. Many people made a point to tell me they had made a decision to shop locally this year."

Staebler is happy to hear it. She has been handing out "HUBBUBBUCKS" to show her customers how much she appreciates their business — for every \$25 spent, she dealt them a business card in return, good for \$1 off their next \$10 purchase.

Staebler said she stayed busy over the holiday weekend, "and a lot of people made a point to tell me that they were making a real effort to shop locally owned stores."

Kimberly Mason is a freelance writer based in Cinebar. She can be contacted at kz@tds.net.

'HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS' PASSPORT

Visit these 23 Chehalis business to win:

Anthony's Barber Shop, 556 N. Market Blvd.

Baby Gear!, 448 N. Market Blvd.

Billie's Designer Fabrics, 510 N. Market Blvd.

Bliss Salon, 545 N. Market Blvd.

Book 'n' Brush, 518 N. Market Blvd.

Brunswick's Shoe Store, 525 N. Market Blvd.

Ciao Bella Boutique, 576 W. Main St.

Diversified Games, 551 N. Market Blvd.

dot.help, 505 N. Market Blvd.

Jerry's Clock Shop, 460 N. Market Blvd.

Kaija's Garden & Pet, 623 N.W. State Ave.

Lynn's Barber Shop, 44 N.E. Boistfort St.

Mackinaw's Restaurant, 545 N. Market Blvd.

Market Street Bakery, 492 N. Market Blvd.

M & K Town Store, 515 N. Market Blvd.

Palmer Lumber, 370 N.W. State Ave.

ReDesign, 444 N. Market Blvd.

Remember This, 534 N. Market Blvd.

Royal Buffet, 575 N. Market Blvd.

Smiths Mercantile, 465 N. Market Blvd.

Sweet Inspirations, 514 N. Market Blvd.

The Farm Store, Inc., 561 W. Main St. Blvd

Twin Cities Trading Post, 548 N. Market Blvd.