



Want to support your community? Shop locally this season

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November 29 through December 5 is Sustainable Connection's Eighth Annual Buy Local Week.

Typically a season of hustle and bustle at shops, malls and retailers around the country, it's a great time to be thinking about where you are spending your money, and no better time to support Whatcom County locally owned, independent businesses.

"Beyond the obvious economic boost and creation of jobs, buying from locally owned and independently operated businesses creates the web that ties our community together," Chuck Robinson, owner of Village Books and Paper Dreams said. "It helps build livable neighborhoods, enlivens cultural life, and strengthens the safety net of the community."

New decals and posters will help shoppers identify locally owned, independent businesses during this busy time of year.

This year, Sustainable Connections is specifically asking the community to make a 10 percent shift in their holiday purchasing, challenging folks to shift at least 10 percent of their spending from regional chains to locally, independently owned businesses in Whatcom County.

Many studies have found that when money is spent with local, independently owned stores that more of that money stays local, re-circulating in our community resulting in greater economic activity and creating new jobs.

"In these times of economic uncertainty we know that buying decisions around the holidays will be tough and hope that consumers will make thoughtful choices about their purchases that will include local, independently owned businesses," said Michelle Grandy, Think Local First program manager.

"We're encouraging folks to support friends and neighbors by keeping their money local, whether that means purchasing more locally grown food for their holiday meals, visiting a local holiday craft festival or unique store right here in Whatcom County, or finding a one-of-a-kind experience to share with loved ones."

"Locally Grown" baby onesies, new Think Local First t-shirts and bumper stickers, and bicycle stickers will be available and make the perfect gift for your favorite local lover – all available at the Allied Arts Festival of the Arts.

The new 2011 "Where the Locals Go! Coupon Book" is now available in stores and make the perfect stocking stuffer, or will help shoppers save in holiday shopping. Savings on everything from dining out to massage and yoga classes, new running shoes and books, and home improvement can be found in the book.

Looking for one-of-a-kind gift ideas? Check out Bid Local First! Sustainable Connections' on-line auction of unique experiences and one-of-a-kind items from Whatcom County's best local, independently owned businesses with proceeds benefiting the programs of Sustainable Connections. The auction will run from November 22 through December 5.

For more information, visit sustainableconnections.org or call 360/647-7093.