



ALBEMARLE COUNTY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRESENTS:

## THINK LOCAL, BUY LOCAL- WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



If you're finding a surplus of cardboard shipping boxes in the recycling bin these days, you're not alone. After almost two and a half years of navigating a global pandemic, along with balancing busy schedules, many consumers have heavily relied on the convenience of a click of a button to make everyday purchases.

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce<sup>1</sup> announced in July that the estimate of U.S. retail e-commerce sales for the first quarter of 2022 was around \$250 billion.

The goal of the Albemarle County & Charlottesville Buy Local campaign is to help change those e-purchasing habits, educate the community on the importance of spending money locally, contribute to a thriving local economy and keep a portion of that \$250 billion in our community. The campaign is designed to highlight small businesses within Albemarle County & Charlottesville through a multi-channel, multimedia promotional and educational campaign designed to promote awareness on the importance of supporting local area businesses.

Choosing to Buy Local helps strengthen the local economy because each dollar spent at a local small business returns 3 times more money to our community than a dollar spent elsewhere. Shopping locally also creates more jobs as small businesses employ roughly 77 million Americans- that account for 65% of all net new jobs in the past 20 years. Helping local business owners also supports their employees and makes the community stronger.

Local businesses help create and maintain a unique local culture that makes our community special. Livability.com just ranked the area as the #22 best

1. [https://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/data/pdf/ec\\_current.pdf](https://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/data/pdf/ec_current.pdf)



place to live in America due in part to our many thriving local boutique businesses. Whether it's a visit to your favorite winery or brewery, a relaxing dinner at one of the many award-winning, farm-to-table restaurants in the community or treating yourself to a new outfit at a neighborhood shop, spending money locally makes a big impact.

"Supporting local means everything to a small business," said Tracey Love of Blenheim Vineyards. "We wouldn't exist without the support of our wine club members (both near and far) and the support of our local community who visit regularly, buy wine directly from us, and from local wine retailers. We live in a tight knit community and appreciate all the local support we can get and give back!"

Making the decision to shop locally is better for the environment too. Less packaging and transit results in fresher products and a smaller carbon footprint- not to mention the reduction in all those online returns that just didn't meet expectations.

Shopping local allows the spending of money to support causes important to you. For example, one can purchase items from a neighbor, friend, minority business or another local specialty shop.

"Buying from Minority businesses can result in an enhanced multiplier effect. This type of ongoing investment not only inspires innovation, new businesses, and additional value creation, but also sets the stage for greater prosperity and cohesiveness for the community," said Quinton Harrell, Chair of the Chamber Minority Business Alliance (MBA).

### What changes can you make to help local businesses?

Changing your purchasing behaviors doesn't necessarily take a lot of effort. Play a round of golf at a local course; take a day trip with the family to pick-your-own pumpkin or apples at a local farm; or grab lunch from your neighborhood deli or market occasionally- it all makes a difference to everyone's quality of life in the community.

Locally owned, independent businesses with a brick-and-mortar facility in Albemarle County and Charlottesville interested in being featured in the campaign should visit the official Buy Local website [www.ShowLocalLove.org](http://www.ShowLocalLove.org) or follow the campaign on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.