

'Genuine Sandpoint' launched in new 'buy local' campaign

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With a goal of educating and inspiring residents to support and appreciate local businesses, the DSBA's Sandpoint Forward initiative has launched a new "buy local" program.

Dubbed "Genuine Sandpoint," the program will have a number of features as it is developed over the coming months. The particular emphasis for the holiday buying season is simply to raise awareness, said DSBA's downtown manager, Marcy Timblin.



"Buying local is not some kind of plea for charity," she said. "Just in a straight-up comparison, we think our local merchants, restaurants and service providers offer competitive prices and selection with what you can find out of town. Especially when you factor in the cost of driving to Coeur d'Alene or Spokane – that can easily add \$50-\$80 to your expenses, not including the hours of white-knuckle driving."

But Timblin noted the idea of buying local goes much further than that. Especially in tight economic times, when consumers make a conscious decision to buy local they keep their dollars here to help employ neighbors, to contribute to community services through the tax base, and to enable our businesses to recirculate those dollars with their own buying and spending.

"We just hope folks think about the big picture when they go shopping," she said.

Timblin said the Genuine Sandpoint campaign will focus on several areas as it continues.

- **Education.** Information on the range of goods and services available in Sandpoint, reminding residents of the variety and benefits of local shopping.
- **Promotion.** Advertising and social media to promote local buying.
- **Benefits.** Area businesses may wish to offer discounts and specials. A "Buy Local" shopping day is under consideration for early 2012, as well.

Looking ahead, DSBA hopes to add a downtown gift card in the spring and expand benefits. There will also be programs to support locally produced foods and goods.

"We are excited to celebrate local goods and services and build a program that can provide some commerce for our businesses and benefits for our residents," said Timblin. "This is a small start but a good start to revisit the great benefits of shopping downtown and throughout Sandpoint."

Get more information at the DSBA website, www.downtownsandpoint.com. All local businesses are invited to participate in the effort; contact Timblin through the website.

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