

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Think big, shop small

It's kind of exciting to talk about chasing companies and corporations when it comes to development.

But it's truly small businesses that continue to serve as the backbone of the U.S. economy, strengthening local communities and creating new opportunities for talented workers.

Small Business Saturday, a week from today, began in 2010 as a credit card's campaign to promote shopping in small businesses. It's become a nationwide event dedicated to supporting small businesses that provide something no big box store can — a personal touch.

Between 1993 and 2011, small businesses helped create 64 percent of net new jobs in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, there are 23 million small businesses in the nation and these enterprises account for 54 percent of all U.S. sales. Amazingly, small businesses provide 55 percent of all jobs and 66 percent of all net new jobs since the 1970s.

Even during the economic downturn, small businesses pushed economic growth. While corporations have been downsizing, the rate of small business starts has grown and the rate for small business failures has declined. The number of small business in the U.S. has increased 49 percent since 1982.

Locally, it may be a critical time to support small businesses in Borderland. With the recent job loss at the local mill, we need

to support these businesses so they may continue to employ family, friends and neighbors, generously support our fundraisers and provide the day-to-day needs of residents and visitors in our local communities.

Without our support, these businesses may fail. In a community like ours, a far reach from other communities, we may see our needs and our wants go unfulfilled easily without these business.

Faye Whitbeck, president of the International Falls Chamber of Commerce urges people to think about small businesses as they prepare their shopping lists.

"When you shop at your local small business, you boost the survival of all the things that make your community great. The money you spend here, stays here," she said. She notes it's estimated \$68 of every \$100 spent in a community goes right back into that community in some way.

Clearly, it's time to put away the catalogs and the online shopping and look for a small business in the community that can offer what you need.

Where else can you get a warm cup of coffee with a smile from someone you know and knows you? Or get a haircut from someone who bought a pizza for your child's fundraiser. Or buy your groceries from the person who contributed to the local senior center your mom visits?

Small business Saturday is a time to pay tribute to the local entrepreneurs in this community who help to make this community the gem that it is.



Lessons learned from our farmers

On the more than 80,000 farms across our state, Minnesota farmers worked around the clock to bring in a successful harvest. Going from the wet spring that delayed planting, the dry summer that stressed crops, and the wet October that has hampered the harvest, this year has not dealt them a perfect hand, but our farmers don't make excuses. They just roll up their sleeves and get the job done.



Amy KLOBUCHAR
GUEST COMMENTARY

Congress could learn a lesson or two from our farmers as we work to finally pass a strong, long-term Farm Bill. As a member of the Farm Bill Conference Committee responsible for crafting the final version of the legislation, I am committed to finding common ground and reaching an agreement that best serves Minnesota and the country.

I firmly believe that out of the chaos of the recent government shutdown comes real opportunity for progress on the Farm Bill. The American people are sick and tired of people standing in opposite corners of the boxing ring, swinging punches. They expect more and are demanding Congress work together for the good of our country.

The bipartisan, Senate passed Farm Bill includes provisions that every American can rally behind. We can reduce our debt by \$24 billion dollars, secure the safety net for farmers by strengthening crop insurance programs, maintain our nutrition programs, and streamline and improve critical conservation programs that protect our environment.

While the call to pass a Farm Bill is nothing new, this time inaction is unacceptable. The one-year Farm Bill extension passed by Congress in 2012 expired on September 30th, creating harmful uncertainty for farmers and ranchers across the country.

Worse yet, if a new Farm Bill is not passed by the end of this year, we would go back to the agriculture policy of 1949. Milk prices could double, farmers would lose important safety-net programs, and funding for critical conservation programs that keep our air and water clean would be eliminated.

In the Senate, we passed a comprehensive, long-term Farm Bill that represents both compromise and reform. As a member of the Agriculture Committee, I was proud to help craft a bill that received strong bipartisan support with 66 senators voting for it.

The Senate bill strengthens the crop-insurance program which is the most important risk-management tool for many farmers in Minnesota and we funded the livestock disaster programs. We put in place a new safety net for dairy producers to address the wild

volatility in the dairy market and continued the successful sugar program.

The Senate bill includes funding for the energy title programs to expand homegrown renewable energy production while streamlining conservation programs from 23 down to 13. There are new initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers including two of my provisions to reduce the cost of crop insurance for beginning farmers by 10 percent and making sure we help beginning ranchers access land for grazing.

We also preserve the essential nutrition programs that millions of families and children rely on every day. While the Senate bill makes \$4 billion in reductions, our focus is on reforms that involve closing loopholes that do not affect Minnesota families and still ensure that hardworking families and seniors can continue to buy the groceries they need.

Most importantly, the Senate Farm Bill cuts \$24 billion from the nation's debt and represents a genuine opportunity for common ground as we continue to work towards a long-term budget deal.

Every single American has a direct stake in the success of our farms and food businesses. Through the food we eat, the water we drink, the fuel we put in our cars, and the air we breathe. It is time for Congress to put aside the partisan gridlock and brinksmanship, work together, and pass a bipartisan Farm Bill that moves our country forward.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Time to pull the plug on war on coal

To the editor,
It's time to pull the rug out from under President Obama's war on coal. That means attacking the primary excuse for the administration's plans: the idea that carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired electricity generation are contributing to dangerous climate change.

Letter writer Bruce Sampson provides an excellent example of what coal proponents must do all the time: explain to the public that climate science does not support the scare. I would add to his analysis that the science is so immature that we don't even know if warming or cooling lie ahead. While some scientists say we are headed

for warming because of CO2 emissions, others, such as Russian solar scientists, assert that dangerous cooling lie in the decades ahead.

The truth is, we simply do not know. Trying to unravel the causes and consequences of climate change is arguably the most complex science ever tackled. Professors Chris Essex (University of Western Ontario) and Ross McKittrick (University of Guelph) write in their award-winning book Taken by Storm, "Climate is one of the most challenging open problems in modern science. Some knowledgeable scientists believe that the climate problem can never be solved."

Yet on this basis, leaders

in the coal industry should be telling the public, the President is planning to destroy country's most important power source and, with it, thousands of jobs. Not highlighting the flimsy science driving the climate scare, as happened last month in the pro-coal rally in Washington DC, will undoubtedly result in the death of coal in America, just as it did here in Ontario where frightened coal supporters let the industry die rather than risk politically incorrectness.

Tom Harris
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