

Small Business Saturday

LNP Special Advertising Supplement



VINNY TENNIS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

CATHY MOLITORIS
LNP CUSTOM CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

Lancaster County is a great place to start a business.

That's the consensus from industry experts, taking a look at the overall retail climate of the county.

"Lancaster is thriving," says Daniel Betancourt, CEO and president of Community First Fund. "There is more foot traffic in all our downtown communities and local residents and tourists are patronizing retail shops throughout Lancaster County. There is a growing movement to support small businesses here."

Community First Fund supports low-wealth communities and individuals, especially people of color and women, by providing capital in places where it's not usually available.

Betancourt says statistics from the organization show that business is booming in the county when it comes to retail.

Since 2007, the fund has made loans to more than 50 different retail businesses in the county, with loans totaling \$3.625 million.

Forty percent of the loans went to women business owners, 60 percent to males, and the businesses represent a wide range of diversity when it comes to ethnicity of the owners, Betancourt says.

"Besides seeing more loans going to women-owned businesses, the ethnic diversity of business owners is also changing in Lancaster," he says, noting that 33 percent of these businesses are owned by Hispanics, 15 percent by African Americans and 8 percent by Asians.

And, he says, these businesses have created or retained approximately 150 jobs in the county. None are large employers and almost all are owner-operated.

Tom Baldrige, president and CEO of the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce, says the retail landscape is changing so quickly in Lancaster, it's difficult to make a blanket



Small Business Saturday is the perfect time to shop local, whether it's downtown Lancaster, top, or Ephrata, above.

statement about business success in the county, but he points to the influx of national chains as an indicator that the climate is good for retail.

"These larger national companies do their research before they come to an area, and their research has determined that Lancaster has an opportunity for retail growth," he says.

On the small-business front, certain communities are thriving, he notes, including Lititz, Ephrata, Elizabethtown and Lancaster city.

"These are areas where boutique retail is creating some synergy and driving the foot traffic they need to survive," he says.

Baldrige also says a push to "think local"

has helped boost the retail climate in the county as well.

"We've been doing a pretty active effort to encourage people to think local for the past five years at the Chamber," he says, noting that annual surveys of investor companies show investors are more inclined each year to look locally for products and services.

"There's an increased acknowledgment of the impact we can all have when we think local," he says. "Buying local means far more than getting good customer service and face-to-face interactions with business owners. It means jobs, it means profit for local companies and then companies becoming more civically engaged in our community as a result of their profits."

Betancourt agrees that shopping local is a way to support the community, and says it's one piece of the puzzle when it comes to how small businesses can compete with chain stores.

"Small retail businesses compete against the big box stores by offering more personalized customer service and a unique shopping experience," he says. "Many of the retail businesses in Lancaster are owner operated. There is a growing movement to support these businesses — it's a way of supporting the community we live in. Locals build relationships with these business owners. It's just another way of building connections in our everyday lives. Additionally, tourists and other visitors are drawn to everything Lancaster has to offer in terms of dining, entertainment and shopping."

Baldrige agrees, adding, "With a strong tourism market, there's a built-in opportunity for retail that other communities may not have. There's an opportunity for people to make shopping part of their overall tourist experience."

Despite a climate that supports small businesses, chain stores are becoming more common on the retail landscape of Lancaster County, and small stores may need to

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IT TAKES A VILLAGE



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Sales, events in store throughout county

ROCHELLE A. SHENK
LNP CORRESPONDENT

Small Business Saturday, the nationwide effort to support local businesses, was launched by American Express in 2010. Since then, it's become as much a part of the holiday shopping tradition as Black Friday and the more recent Cyber Monday.

This year, the day to celebrate small businesses is Saturday, Nov. 25.

"Small Business Saturday demonstrates the value small businesses bring to our community. It should be part of a larger effort to 'think local,'" says Tom Baldrige, Lancaster Chamber president, adding that the chamber has promoted the shop local concept for over a decade. "It encourages people to recognize that the small business owners are your neighbors and friends; local businesses play a huge role in supporting community activities."

Although Small Business Saturday focuses on retail, Baldrige notes that small businesses are more than just retailers.

"Every large business started out as a small business. Small businesses are the backbone of our communities. Anything we can do to support their effort to grow is important," he says.

A number of communities throughout the county will be encouraging shoppers to "think local" on Small Business Saturday.

Around the county

■ **Manheim Township** commissioners unanimously approved a Small Business Saturday proclamation. "The reason that we were enthusiastic to do so is that small businesses employ a lot of people in our township and are a significant factor in our economic vitality," board vice president Albert Kling says. "Therefore it is very



PHOTO COURTESY KITCHEN KETTLE VILLAGE

Greg Uptegraph, owner and popcorn maker at Pappy's Kettle Korn in Kitchen Kettle Village, will participate in a Meet the Makers event on Small Business Saturday.

easy to express our support for them, and to wish them success going forward."

■ **Marietta** plans to kick off the holiday season with caroling, a visit from Santa and a tree lighting in a free event from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, 5 W. Walnut St. It's sponsored by Marietta Restoration Associates.

■ **Columbia** will also kick off its holiday season on Small Business Saturday as it launches Roll, Stroll... Shop & Dine.

"We have so much to offer — historic buildings, interesting shops, and restaurants. Our intent is to encourage people as they roll and stroll along the Northwest Lancaster

County River Trail to stop in Columbia and make a day of it," says Rebecca Denlinger of Rising Tide Collaborative, the borough's economic development coordinator.

The event will include a hashtag contest at #Roll-StrollColumbiaPA. Additional information will be posted on the Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce's website, parivertowns.com, and at 360Lancaster.com.

■ **Mount Joy's** effort is coordinated by Main Street Mount Joy. "We welcome shoppers to shop in Mount Joy that day," says MSMJ spokesperson Kim Brewer. "A number of our retailers

will have special activities such as face painting or crafts for kids as well as refreshments. We all work together."

In addition to the community's diverse retailers, there will also be a number of pop-up retailers — small retailers and entrepreneurs who don't have a dedicated retail space, Brewer says. Details of MSMJ's Small Business Saturday offerings will be posted on the organization's Facebook page.

■ **Elizabethtown's** offerings are as varied as its retailers, says Kelly Fuddy of Elizabethtown Area Chamber of Commerce. Several of the vendors at Trellis Marketplace, a

vendor mall at 153 E. High St., will offer sale prices of gift and specialty items. The Fancy Unicorn, a consignment boutique at 52 N. Market St., will celebrate its third anniversary with storewide discounts and a swag bag for the first 10 customers. Kairos Massage & Skincare, 118 S. Cherry Alley, will offer wellness-themed gift baskets as well as other unique gifts. The Connect, an electronics store at 1 S. Market St. specializing in smartphone repairs, will have a grand opening celebration with a drawing featuring a laptop and gift certificates. Further information and details of other specific retailer promotions will be posted under the events tab on the chamber's website, elizabethtowncoc.com, and on its Facebook page.

■ In **Lititz**, Venture Lititz is also coordinating special activities. Lititz Dollars, gift certificates that are honored at any downtown shop or restaurant, will be sold at locations throughout downtown on Small Business Saturday, says executive director Holly DeKarske. Additionally, shoppers are encouraged to pick up a Holiday Shopping Card at any of the 49 participating retailers. For every \$20 spent, shoppers get a stamp. Once the card is filled, it can be entered in a drawing for a gift basket filled with items from downtown Lititz merchants. For more information visit the Venture Lititz Facebook page.

■ **Manheim** is not planning any special activities to mark the day. However, chamber administrator Kelly Lauver says, "We love the idea of Small Business Saturday; we have lots of small businesses to support that day, and, of course, all year-round."

Meet the Makers

Another place that features a variety of small

businesses is Kitchen Kettle Village in Intercourse. Lisa Horn, Kitchen Kettle's director of fun, says the village will host Meet the Makers on Saturday.

"Small Business Saturday is important to us because we are all a group of small businesses that make up the village, so it is just natural that we should take part in the event," she says.

The first-ever event will offer shoppers an opportunity to meet the craftspeople who create some of the items found in the shops.

Some of the "makers" to meet include:

■ Wendy Ellis, owner, knitter and pattern maker at Lancaster Yarn Shop, from 1 to 3 p.m.

■ Mark Severn of Caputo Brothers, mozzarella stretching at the Aged & Cured Shop, from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

■ Eric Nadeau, owner of Victoria Leather Co., at The Deerskin Leather Shop, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Deb Sensenig, fudge-master, at Pepper Lane Fudge & Sweets, all day.

■ Linda Shollenberger, doll creator, at Wash Pin Pals, all day.

■ Greg Uptegraph, owner and popcorn maker at Pappy's Kettle Korn, all day.

■ Patty Kim of Patty Kim's Jackets, at Girls Day Out, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

■ Donna McCubbin of Luca and Danni Jewelry, in The Jewelry Box, from noon to 3 p.m.

■ Alison Hood of Thompson's Candles, at The Country Life, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

■ Local artist Mary Charles will demonstrate her painting techniques at Dutchland Galleries from noon to 4 p.m.

For more information, visit . or Kitchen Kettle Village's Facebook page.

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New businesses getting in on the act

Some planning special events and sales to attract customers

MARGARET GATES
CUSTOM CONTENT EDITOR

When it comes to small businesses, they don't get much smaller than the ones you'll find in Tiny Town, a village of kid-size playhouses in a former factory building on Janet Avenue.

Geared to the 7-and-under crowd, Tiny Town has a market, hospital, mechanic shop, hair salon and more — all run by children and their imaginations.

Hannah and Dale Harris opened Tiny Town only six months ago, but it's somehow appropriate that this interactive playplace of really small businesses has big plans for its first Small Business Saturday on Nov. 25.

Tiny Town will host a shop and play day on Black Friday and Small Business Saturday, featuring a vendor fair where parents can shop while their kids play.

"We as a small business are trying to encourage and support other small businesses," Hannah

Harris says.

She anticipates the 25 or so vendors will be a 60-40 mix of local artisans and direct sales consultants for companies like LuLaRoe and Thirty-One. They've received about 75 applications for the 25 spots in the vendor fair, Harris says.

As an added incentive, Tiny Town will offer a special \$5 admission for parents, a \$3 discount. Admission for children will remain at \$10.

Since Tiny Town's playhouses are located in a large, open space, parents will be able to see their children while they shop, Harris says.

"We are a small family that owns this business. We've never done this before," Harris says. "Lancaster has been amazing. We want to give back to those around us. We want to encourage others."

Tiny Town isn't the only new business doing a little something to promote others on Small Business Saturday.



While children play in Tiny Town's small businesses, their parents can shop at a vendor fair on Small Business Saturday.

At Allergy Orchard, a Willow Street store offering foods that are free from many common food allergens, Small Business Saturday shoppers will receive a free treat from Goodness and Joy Gluten-Free Bakery, a Conestoga-based business owned by Karen Karr.

Tammy Gingras-Moore and Karen Di Pace opened Allergy Orchard earlier this month in Kendig Square with a goal to make it easier for people with food allergies to shop for "safe" food. They are looking forward to their first Small Business Saturday as business owners.

"I've always loved Small Business Saturday," Gingras-Moore says. "I thought it was

just a wonderful thing to do, and now I really think so."

For Klassie Kreations and Revive Us Again, dual businesses selling upcycled and repurposed items in the same space at Brickerville House Specialty Shoppes, Small Business Saturday is an opportunity to do what they always do — something a little extra.

"We always have something special going on for our customers because that's just us," says Betsy Bailey, owner of Revive Us Again, which opened in September.

On Nov 25, that something special will be a book signing featuring young sisters/authors

Bethany and Cora Anne Hurst of Brunnerville.

Bethany will sign copies of "A True Friend," an illustrated book for young readers about bullying and a friendship between two horses.

Cora Anne will sign copies of "Jolly the Snowman and the Shady Lane Gang," based on stories her mom told her growing up on a farm.

Of course, Bailey and Norma Hoshour, owner of Klassie Kreations, hope customers also will stop by to see their eclectic mix of home decor and furniture, from primitives to industrial chic to farmhouse.

Home decor is also the focus at Marshall Family

Furniture, which opened its doors in Willow Street this summer.

In honor of Small Business Saturday, owner Andrew Marshall is holding a 50 percent-off sale — on everything. He's adding an additional 5 percent off for veterans. The store carries custom home furnishings and accessories.

"I'm hoping to get some people to come through the store," Marshall says.

He's owned other small businesses in the past and knows the value of Small Business Saturday.

"It mainly targets people who are conscious of the local area," he says. "It does work."



Allergy Orchard owners Karen Di Pace, left, and Tammy Gingras-Moore.

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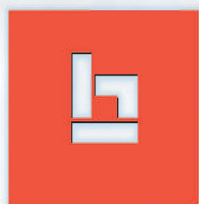
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Don't count the local guy out

Mom-and-pop markets find ways to compete with grocery chains

CATHY MOLITORIS
LNP CUSTOM CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

Chain stores seem to be everywhere in Lancaster County. It's hard to open the paper without learning about a new big box store coming to town. While the chains may offer a boost to the economy and more shopping opportunities, they may be viewed differently by independent retailers who rely on their small-town connections to thrive.

Grocery chains in particular are moving into the county, with Wegmans, Lidl and Whole Foods Market scheduled to open within the next year. As the county experiences more and more national grocery stores, it's affecting the mom-and-pop stores that have long dominated the region.

But, says Jim Kidwell, director of marketing, advertising and buying for Family Owned Markets, don't count the local guy out just yet.

"Our focus is in providing the best customer service that we can, along with the best local products that we can," Kidwell says.

Joining forces

The Family Owned Markets have been working together as a group to serve customers since 2003, when Oregon Dairy, Yoder's Country Market and Darrenkamp's joined forces.

The group slowly grew to 16 stores in 2012, but Darrenkamp's and its four stores left the group in August. Today, the group includes Musser's Markets (with locations in Buck, Columbia, Mountville and Lebanon); Martin's Country Market in Ephrata; Yoder's Country Market in New Holland; John Herr's Village Market in Millersville; and Oregon Dairy in Lititz.

Kidwell says the original motivation for forming the group is the same today as it was in 2003.

"They can much more easily compete with the larger chains with having more stores and greater buying power," he says.

Kidwell notes that the group is thriving because of a unique policy they've adhered to since the beginning.

"While the stores must follow the ads and marketing direction that the group decides on, they are still encouraged to continue to do marketing on their own for their stores," he explains. "It's important for them to gain the benefits of group advertising, but still keep in touch with what made them who they are today."

A different experience

He says shopping at a Family Owned Market offers an experience that differs



From left, three generations of Darrenkamps — Jared, Jane and Joe — hold specialty items made at Darrenkamp's Market in Willow Street, including sausage, home-cooked meals to go and sand tarts made with a recipe from Jane's grandmother.

from shopping at a chain grocery store, and the county has proven to be supportive of smaller stores.

"There's a large percentage of people in central PA who believe in supporting local businesses in their area, whether it's the local ACE hardware store instead of Home Depot, the corner diner vs. Olive Garden, or a Family Owned Markets store vs. a chain store," he says. "We do our best to buy as much as we can from local fresh food vendors: produce, seafood, fresh deli and meats, etc. We believe in supporting our surrounding communities as well."

Joe Darrenkamp, who owns the Darrenkamp's grocery stores with his brothers, Larry and Dave, agrees that offering customers items they can't get other places is part of the strategy the local grocery stores will be employing when it comes to competing with larger chains.

"Where we shine — and we've been around 85 years — is in our quality meats and our perishables, including deli and produce," Darrenkamp says. "That's what we hang our hat on."

The decision to leave the Family Owned Markets consortium was prompted in part by the desire of Darrenkamps' to market the signature items only offered at their stores, he says.

For instance, the stores make more than 72 varieties of sausage in-house, ranging from chicken and turkey sausage to flavors including blueberry and crab.

"Our sand tarts are also a signature recipe," he says. "We used to only offer them at Christmas, but they are so popular that we now make them from September through April. We also have our signature chicken salad, and we make 4,000 pounds a week of that."

Darrenkamp's also buys produce directly from growers in California and Florida, providing the best prices for customers, he notes.

"We're eliminating the middle man, so we can sell our produce cheaper than other stores are selling it for," he says.

And, Darrenkamp says, shopping at a local grocery store offers customers personal touches that might not be available at some of the larger chains.

"We have a full-service meat department where you can still get a butcher," he says. "We can do special cuts, cut anything to order.... We have baggers at every check-out stand. We have people outside who will load up your groceries. We pride ourselves on our customer service."

Kidwell says it's important for owners of the Family Owned Markets to be hands-on in day-to-day operations.

"It's common to see our owners' families in the stores, working and talking to customers," he says. "Many of the chains are operated in other states or countries on the opposite side of the world."

The same is true at Darrenkamp's stores as well.

"You'll see myself and my two brothers out on the floor," Darrenkamp says, noting the business is a fourth-generation grocery store. He and his brothers each have a son involved in the business.

Distinguishing themselves

Like Darrenkamp's, the Family Owned Markets are working hard to compete

MARKETS, page 10

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Following in her footsteps

After mother's death, Ali Witman finds her place in family consignment business

LAURA KNOWLES
LNP CUSTOM CONTENT
CONTRIBUTOR

When Ali Witman was a little girl, she often helped her mother, Susan Witman, at her Penn Township consignment shop.

She never imagined that running her own consignment shop would be in her future.

Now 24, Witman is a small business owner, in the family shop that she operates with her father, Ron Witman. It even has her name on it: Ali Witman Consignment & Clothiers.

Located at 403 W. Lexington Road, northwest of Lititz, Ali Witman Consignment is filled to the brim with like-new consigned clothing for men, women and children.

"A lot of people come for an hour or more, and they come often, too, because the merchandise is always changing," Witman says.

Her father recalls that the idea for the consignment business came about when his late wife was working in social work in Harrisburg in the early 1980s. She noticed the small consignment shops people had in their own homes, reselling items they no longer wanted or needed.

By 1982, Susan and Ron Witman had decided to open their own consignment shop near Lititz. Later they opened two other shops, one on Oregon Pike in Lancaster and the one on Marietta Pike near Rohrerstown. They had three older sons, Andrew, Tyler and Mitchell, who benefited from a huge selection of clothes for rough-and-tumble boys.

It was Ali, though, who spent the most time in the shop. She was born in 1983, a year after the first shop opened. Her mom brought her to work sometimes, and when she was a little older, she entertained the younger kids who came with their mothers to shop.

"I never thought about working in the business though," says Witman, who later pursued her degree at Penn State, and is now a student at Millersville University.

Still, it was in her blood. She knew how to recognize the latest styles and examine items for quality. She also knew what a great bargain second-hand clothing could be for a fashionable teen. Try as she might, it looked like consignment would be in her future.

Witman was a junior in high school when her mother died in 2009. The



Ali Witman sorts clothing in her Lititz consignment shop.

three shops were consolidated into one shop on Lexington Road, and Ali kept feeling the lure of the family business.

She was 19 when her father began suggesting that they become true partners in the family business.

"My dad started talking about it as a maybe," she says. "And I started seeing it as more than just a job. It became fun to work here, because it would be mine someday."

Plus, Witman had always enjoyed clothes and loved shopping, thanks to her mother. In 2012, she began to take a more active role in running the business. She learned about bookkeeping and organizing the

business aspect of the shop. She also learned about pricing.

Coming up with prices that make the customer happy and give a consignor a good return requires careful balance. She needs to know how much the item initially cost, what will be fair to the consignor and what price will bring a smile to the customer's face.

"That can be tricky, but I have learned a lot," she says.

Running a consignment shop is different than a retail business — Witman worked in fashion retail for several years — because the pricing is more fluid. They only accept clothing that is in perfect or near-per-

fect condition. Appointments are a must.

Witman or her father personally inspect each item for imperfections. The clothing that passes their scrutiny is entered into the store's inventory, then organized in the store and tracked. Once it's sold, the consignor receives a check for his or her merchandise.

It's a good deal for the consignor, who gets 50 percent of the sale price. Very few consignment shops offer a 50/50 consignment deal. Even fewer send a check each month.

"People like getting a check mailed to them every month," Witman says. "It lets them know that their stuff is selling."

If items haven't sold in a reasonable period of time, consignors can pick them up, or have them donated to a local charity like the Water Street Rescue Mission.

Witman says she is always surprised to see the quality of items that people bring to her. There are famous names in clothing, shoes, handbags and accessories, including Kate Spade, Lilly Pulitzer, Vera Bradley, Ann Taylor, Dooney & Bourke, Coach, Ralph Lauren, J. Crew, Buckle, Versace, Chicos, Michael

Kors, Gucci, DKNY, Armani and more — all at a fraction of their original prices. Some dresses might have been purchased for as much as \$500 or more.

"Some things still have the original price tag on them and have never been worn," she says. "It's pretty amazing."

People might have pushed an item to the back of the closet and forgotten about it. Others may have gained or lost weight. In the case of children, they simply outgrow things.

Ron Witman is obviously proud of his daughter. He is in the shop most days, with the father-and-daughter team working together to keep the business running smoothly.

He has his own particular interest at the shop: motorcycle gear. As an avid Harley motorcyclist, he has focused on establishing one of the biggest selections of Harley Davidson gear, including boots, gloves, vests, rain gear, chaps, jackets, pants and more.

"This part of the shop is kind of my baby. It's what I enjoy most about the business," Ron Witman says. "That, and having the opportunity to work with my daughter."

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- Noon-3pm - Meet Donna McCubbin with Luca & Danni Jewelry at The Jewelry Box
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Sometimes it takes a village to start a business

How crowdfunding can turn vision into reality

CATHY MOLITORIS
LNP CUSTOM CONTENT
CONTRIBUTOR

When Sierra Wood got the idea for her small business, Meraki Mocha, she knew she'd need help to get it off the ground.

So, the Lancaster woman turned to crowdfunding.

Crowdfunding refers to funding a business by asking for many small donations by a large group of people. Typically, donations are solicited through the Internet and social media sites.

Wood spent more than five years dreaming of putting her business into action, but it wasn't until she started crowdfunding that her vision became a reality.

"Meraki Mocha is a farm-to-table café and catering business focused on empowering people with intellectual and de-

velopmental disabilities by offering meaningful employment," she says.

Wood used the website Indiegogo for crowdfunding.

"It was important for me to have this platform as it allowed me to be able to give people a call to action," she says.

Thanks to her efforts, she was able to raise more than \$20,000 in just one month.

"Crowdfunding has brought in enough money for me to get my business up and running," she says. "(It) gave people the opportunity to join me on the journey of entrepreneurship through financial donations."

But, just as importantly, she says, she's learned that the community supports her business concept.

"It showed me that the community at large be-



VINNY TENNIS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sierra Wood created Meraki Mocha through crowdfunding. She is currently catering, but soon will employ people with developmental disabilities in a farm-to-table café.

lieves in what I am doing," she says, "which gives me confidence that my business will be successful."

How it works

ASSETS in Lancaster supports businesses interested in crowdfunding through a program called the Great Social Enterprise Pitch. Wood's business raised the most money in this year's competition.

"Crowdfunding is a potentially powerful tool in the start-up funding toolbox for entrepreneurs," says Jonathan Coleman, co-executive director of ASSETS.

However, he says, it's not for everyone.

In his experience, the most successful crowdfunding campaigns have one of two key characteristics, he explains.

The new business may offer a product or service that they are pre-selling on the crowdfunding

platform, he says. "For example, they might have a new product with a compelling prototype, but not enough cash to begin full production. So, the crowdfunding campaign offers the opportunity to pre-sell the item, in order to have the necessary cash up-front to actually begin production."

Customers are enticed to donate to the campaign, he says, because they are given a discounted price or are ensured they'll be able to obtain a limited-edition item.

The second type of successful crowdfunding campaign involves a business with a mission that compels donors to support it, Coleman says.

"Social enterprises and other impact-focused businesses have the easiest time with this," he says, adding that all of the campaigns involved in the Great Social Enterprise Pitch use this

appeal.

"They provide some sort of perk for the donors, but it is typically not equivalent to the donation amount. The donation is more altruistic, because of the impact the business can have on its targeted mission."

Crowdfunding can be a viable way of testing the market for a new business or product, he says.

"It allows an entrepreneur to see if there is an actual demand for their product," he explains. "They like it, but are people willing to spend money on it? Crowdfunding is a little- to no-cost way of testing a product, service or business."

Is it right for you?

Coleman says successful crowdfunding campaigns also require business owners to know their audience and craft the language and look of a campaign to appeal

to the most likely contributor. And, he adds, crowdfunding takes time to build.

"Plan on making crowdfunding your full-time job during the campaign," he advises. "Make personal asks — phone calls, emails, coffee dates, etc."

He cautions that anyone who is crowdfunding should not be shy.

"We always tell people in the Great Social Enterprise Pitch program they need to be willing to lose some friends," he says. "Meaning, they have to put themselves out there and not be afraid to ask once, twice and three times."

Above all, he says, successful crowdfunding requires the acceptance that it takes a village to create a new business.

"You can't do it alone," he says. "Build a team of believers to spread your message for you. A compelling message is a necessity, but not enough. Nor are a few Facebook posts. The message has to flow through many social channels and many people."

For Mustafa Nuur, crowdfunding helped launch his business in September.

Nuur won this year's Great Social Enterprise Pitch competition with Bridge, an online platform that allows people to book experiences with people from other cultures.

"These experiences are sold by refugee families from Lancaster," says Nuur, a former refugee from Somalia.

Thanks to crowdfunding, which Nuur did through Indiegogo, he raised more than \$7,300, which was 87 percent of the needed start-up cost for the business.

"Crowdfunding should be considered by any new business owner because of the double benefit it has — one being raising funds to help you start up your business, but most importantly, the exposure it will give you in the market," he says. "You will benefit from getting a new insight to your target market by how they respond to your campaign."

Nuur encourages anyone starting a small business to consider crowdfunding.

"I would encourage them to do it and also take any outcome as an insight in the event people don't donate to your campaign," he says. "It will be an experience worth going through."

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What is Small Business Saturday?

Small Business Saturday is a day for everyone — from the business owners who create jobs to the customers who buy locally — to support small businesses that invigorate the economy and keep our communities thriving. It began in 2010 when American Express founded Small Business Saturday to help businesses with their most pressing need — getting more customers. The single day has grown into a powerful movement, and more people are taking part than ever before.

When is Small Business Saturday?

Small Business Saturday is the Saturday after Thanksgiving and it sits between Black Friday and Cyber Monday. This year, it falls on November 25.

Why should I be a part of Small Business Saturday?

As a Lancaster County consumer, you are a key part in helping our small businesses thrive. By shopping or dining at one of our small businesses this November 25, you’re showing your support for all the small communities around you. This means you could be helping local entrepreneurs offer more jobs, which invigorates the economy. Last year, more than 100 million people came out to shop at independently-owned small businesses on that day. This year, go out and support your favorite small business and search for savings on unique merchandise while experiencing spectacular service — a cornerstone of many small businesses.

How can I participate in Small Business Saturday?

It’s simple! Shop or dine at the local small businesses in this section. Your support will help to create jobs, power the economy and invigorate our communities. And that’s what makes Small Business Saturday a success.

Information taken from ShopSmall.com



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ANNIE BAILEY'S	28 E King St	Lancaster	17602	KIMRIK GARDEN CENTER	1135 Beaver Valley Pike	Lancaster	17602
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HAJOCA	1418 Fruitville Pike	Lancaster	17601	WILLOW VALLEY DOUBLE TREE	2400 Willow Valley Street Pike	Lancaster	17602
HERITAGE FLOORS	60 N Ronks Rd	Ronks	17575	WITMER QUILT SHOP	1076 W Main St	New Holland	17557
HINKLETOWN SEWING	232 Wanner Rd	Ephrata	17522	ZIGG'S BAKERY	800 E Newport Rd	Lititz	17543



FILE PHOTO

Olio in Lititz offers online sales, although about 90 percent of sales are in the store.

To sell or not to sell online

E-commerce complements brick-and-mortar sales for some local businesses

LAURA KNOWLES
LNP CUSTOM CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

For local businesses, it can be a tough call to decide if they are ready to get involved in selling their merchandise online with an e-commerce presence. Some prefer to stick with the tried-and-true bricks-and-mortar store that

they have relied on for years. Others are eager to launch e-commerce websites that will bring more customers their way, even ones across the country or on the other side of the globe.

Most have found a happy medium, where as much as 80 percent of their sales are in a real-life store and 20 percent or less comes from online shoppers. It all depends on the product and how to best reach the market.

Customers far and wide

At Olio Olive Oils & Balsamics in Lititz, it's all about tasting the products. With some 104 varieties of olive oils and balsamic vinegars, not to mention 75 salts and sugars, plus 40 honeys, most customers want to taste before they buy.

How else can you decide if you prefer an olive oil from Portugal or maybe one from Greece or California? How do you know that the chocolate balsamic will be perfect over vanilla ice cream or the blackberry balsamic is the perfect companion for fresh peaches?

The shop has lots of other items for the kitchen, such as dipping bowls, pastas, cookbooks and oil containers. About 90 percent of the sales at Olio are at the shop, with tasting as an important aspect of sales, says Peter Desimone, who has owned the family business with his parents, Joe and Judy Desimone, since 2012.

The remaining 10 percent is online sales.

"We found that we had to have an online site because customers wanted to replenish their supply of products, especially those from outside the area," Desimone says. "We needed a way that they could order online after they go home and need to restock."

Of course, having online sales means that Olio has to ship the products to their customers, who come from all over the country. They are also popular as holiday gifts sent from local customers who want to share Lancaster County's bounty with their friends and family.

Since the oils and vinegars come in glass bottles, extra care must be taken in shipping the fragile glass bottles.

That took some perfecting to reduce the risk of breakage with bubble wrap and crush-proof packaging. At first, Olio offered free shipping for orders over \$100.

They found that \$100 was a little too high. They then reduced it to free shipping on orders of \$50 or more, and customers loved it. They were more than happy to stock up on Lemon in White balsamic, Tuscan herb olive oil, 25 Star balsamic, mix-and-match sampler sets and other popular products online.

"By having an e-commerce presence, we are covering every avenue and making sure our customers get what they need, even if they live in Florida or Maine," Desimone says. "Our online sales continue to go through the roof."

Relishing the opportunity

For Kitchen Kettle Village in Intercourse, having an online store would never have been imagined when the family business got started in 1954. The internet didn't even exist.

Pat and Bob Burnley had purchased a small jelly business and set up operations in their new two-car garage. Local farm women helped to make the jams and relishes.

Known for her signature chow chow relish, Pat Burnley's business grew and grew. Today, the Jam & Relish Kitchen is surrounded by a village of 40 shops, restaurants and an inn. It is run by second generation Mike Burnley, Joanne Ladley and Jim Burnley, and third generation Michelle Rondinelli, Devon Burnley and Allyson Gibson.

Each year some 750,000 visitors come to Kitchen Kettle Village and its Jam & Relish Kitchen. Most come of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware. A few best-sellers include pepper jam, pineapple salsa, strawberry vanilla jam and pickled beets.

Despite its old-fashioned start, Kitchen Kettle Village was on the crest

E-COMMERCE, page 9

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E-commerce: Complementing brick-and-mortar shops

Continued from 8
of internet sales, with a website in July 1998 and e-commerce sales starting soon after. Color catalog sales began in 1995, and Kitchen Kettle had a mail-order brochure since the early '80s.

Several thousand customers purchase from their online store, mostly purchasing top sellers and a selection of corporate and holiday gifts, as well as favors for weddings, and bridal and baby showers.

"E-commerce provides an important service to our guests, allowing us to continue fulfilling their product needs very conveniently and efficiently. We feel that e-commerce is an area of opportunity for us in the future," says Lisa Horn, a spokesman for Kitchen Kettle Village.

Shipping trains and more

The Strasburg Train Shop at the Choo Choo Barn is another Lancaster County family business that relies on sales through e-commerce. The shop was started by Tom and Linda Groff in 1961.

The 2,000-square-foot store is jammed full of thousands of train products to help hobbyists and collectors build the model train layout of their dreams.

"I'd say that 90 percent of shoppers still come into the store, but another 10 percent order online," says the Groffs' daughter, Kristi Groff Largaza.

The website features products from Lionel, MTH, Atlas, Bachmann and others, as well as an option to purchase advance tickets to the display layout next door at the Choo Choo Barn, Largaza says. There are also some custom-decorated die-cast items.

"Our goal is to offer you unique products at reasonable prices," she says. "We have been doing web and mail orders for about 15 years now, dating back



FILE PHOTO

The Strasburg Train Shop at the Choo Choo Barn does about 10 percent online sales.

to 2002, and have satisfied thousands of customers with our excellent customer service and super fast shipping."

The old-fashioned way

There are still a few family businesses that have not made the leap to e-commerce sales. They have distinct reasons for sticking to the bricks-and-mortar approach.

"With a vintage clothing business, it is too hard to have a website. Our merchandise changes by the hour or even by the minute," says Kim Crow of The Curiosity Shoppe in Lititz.

One moment, there is a red-and-white polka dot

'50s-era dress, and the next it's gone. The real mink stole might be sold before Crow could even list it on a website. She wouldn't have the time or resources to keep an online site up to date.

Customers of the vintage clothing shop on Main Street seem to like finding surprises among the racks, whether it's a vintage wedding gown, a string of pearls, a Jackie-style pillbox hat or a hippy-era flower child dress. Crow does encourage customers to check in with her if they are looking for something special.

"The thing with shopping vintage is that you have to move quickly," Crow says. "If you see something you like, better not wait. It will probably be gone if you go home without it."



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Markets: Keeping pace

Continued from 4

with incoming chains, Kidwell says.

"We believe we have to focus on what has made us successful so far, only we need to do it better, more efficiently and cheaper," he says.

Along with keeping prices low, offering a wide variety of locally sourced food, and providing a personal touch, the local stores also distinguish themselves from chain stores because they have a stake in the local community.

"We try to do our best to support local community organizations," Kidwell says. "In our 14 years, we have given back over \$1 million to locally operated organizations in central PA."

While he says the incoming flux of chain grocery stores isn't keeping him up at night, Darrenkamp admits he's a little worried, but he's optimistic about the future of the local stores.

"Competition is a good thing," he says. "It sharpens up everybody. It keeps you on your toes."

He says his stores plan to compete by offering good prices and quality service, while looking for new ways to stay relevant as chains come in.

For instance, the stores have recently begun offering home-cooked meals to go, featuring a meat entrée and veggie sides, perfect for busy families.

"Those have been selling very well for us."

The Mount Joy location of Darrenkamp's will also begin selling alcohol later this year, he says.

And, above all, he emphasizes that the stores will continue to put customers first and to treat both customers and employees like family.

Kidwell agrees, adding that the Family Owned Markets take the first word in their name to heart.

"We believe in our customers, our stores and our families," he says. "We try every day to treat our customers like part of our family."

Shop: Strong retail

Continued from 1

take steps to ensure success in a competitive market.

Betancourt cautions that while many people may dream of opening their own retail shop, more than passion is needed to succeed. He advises that entrepreneurs do their research, develop a detailed business plan and use resources readily available for support, including SCORE and ASSETS.

Additionally, he says all small businesses should ensure they have an engaging website and social media presence, and that they think beyond brick-and-mortar storefronts, particularly if they're selling a product that may be popular outside of the county.

With the environment of the county ripe for supporting small businesses, Betancourt says he sees a bright future for retail in the region.

"Community First Fund knows that locally owned small businesses are the key to the vitality of small cities," he says. "We are proud to support businesses that bring new jobs and excitement to Lancaster County."

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Source: Community First Fund

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