

Keep your money here and think ‘Local First’

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A thriving commercial district is a lifeline to not only the shops you visit, but all those businesses behind the scenes: printers, office suppliers, contractors, caterers, and school districts, to name a few.”

Dan Peterson
SNBT President & CEO

Helping our small businesses thrive can have a major impact on our community's economic sustainability. Small businesses generate two out of every three new jobs in the U.S. and help keep families and neighborhoods healthy.

Let's start asking the question: How can we keep money in our community? It begins with a "Local First" mentality. Adopting the Local First perspective is pretty self-explanatory. Before clicking the "Buy Online" button, pause and consider whether that purchase would bring any benefit to your community. It may seem easier to shop online and have items delivered right to your door. However, in the long run, the escalation of online shopping is leading to the decline of main street businesses, causing a loss of character for the towns we call home.

Here are ten steps for keeping the money right here, where it belongs:

1. Shop small businesses – Whenever possible, think Local First. More of your dollars will be recirculated back into our community when you shop small. Plus, these family-owned businesses are more likely to contribute to donation requests, whether it be monetarily, through in-kind gifts, or by volunteering.

2. Patronize locally-owned restaurants – The supply chain from these eateries is

likely closer to our community. Which means when you eat locally, you may be supporting local farmers too.

3. Recommend local services – From auto repair to medical care, Marinette and Menominee Counties have so much to offer. Local First is about more than retail shopping; it's about supporting business owners of all types.

4. Keep your money local – By depositing your money in a local financial, you are guaranteeing the vitality of your community. Local banks use the money you deposit to help fund loans to your neighbors for homes and businesses. Big box banks, on the other hand, take deposits and lend them elsewhere in the country or invest them in ways that have no direct impact on our community.

5. Use #myMarinetteMenominee – We OWN this hashtag. Everyone should use it regularly to highlight the uniqueness of our area. It belongs to us, and to the movement, so keep it going.

6. Keep a positive outlook – Too often, people can get wrapped up in negative currents and gossip. Our twin counties are unified as ONE, and we aren't going back to being two separate communities. So continue sharing the message of how proud you are to be united.

7. Participate in local events – Too often, you hear people complain that there's nothing fun to do. The truth is, aside from the gorgeous landscapes and plethora of outdoor activities, there are always events organized by our many businesses and service clubs. Participating in them allows

you to give back, while having a good time. Many are even free!

8. Encourage youth to make this area home – Our area is a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Encourage our youth to get out and explore the world, while remembering their roots. Once they return, they can apply their broader perspectives and fresh ideas to rejuvenate our communities.

9. Beautify our neighborhoods – We have a tremendous opportunity to aesthetically polish our neighborhoods, side streets, and downtowns. Even the smallest steps will have big rewards. Dig in, get dirty, and make our communities beautiful, just as they deserve.

10. Be a tourist right here – Discover the hidden gems our area has to offer. There are countless beautiful attractions, museums, and recreational activities you may have taken for granted by living here. Sometimes when you're too close to something, you overlook it. Step back and look through the eyes of a tourist and you'll discover even more positive attributes.

Spread this message where you can: We're in this together to make our communities better. As more people adopt the Local First perspective, it will be easier for us make progress, TOGETHER.

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Ice at the Lighthouse photo by Alicia Kakuk, SNBT Universal Banker

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