

Can You Support Local Before The First School Bell Rings?: Back To School Challenge

Amanda Clasen- Community Vitality Agent
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As summer winds down and the first day of school quickly approaches, many families are checking off supply lists, scheduling appointments, and preparing for a new routine. Back-to-school season is one of the busiest shopping times of the year, making it the perfect opportunity to support the businesses and people who help our communities thrive.

Every backpack, haircut, meal, or school shirt purchased from a locally owned business does more than cross an item off your list; it helps strengthen the local economy. When dollars are spent locally, they often stay in the community, supporting jobs, sponsoring youth activities, funding local services through sales tax, and helping small businesses continue serving our towns year-round.

This year, I invite you to take the Back-to-School Local Challenge. Before the first school bell rings, see how many of these you can check off your list:

- ✓ Purchase at least one school supply from a locally owned business.
- ✓ Enjoy a meal or sweet treat at a local restaurant.
- ✓ Grab your morning coffee or afternoon drink from a neighborhood coffee shop.
- ✓ Schedule your student's haircut with a local barber or salon.
- ✓ Purchase school spirit wear or a teacher gift from a local business.
- ✓ Write a thank-you note or words of encouragement to a teacher or school staff member.
- ✓ Donate school supplies to a classroom or local organization helping students in need.
- ✓ Share your favorite local business on social media and encourage others to shop there.

While these actions may seem small on their own, together they create a ripple effect throughout the community. Local businesses are often the ones sponsoring youth sports teams, donating to school fundraisers, supporting community events, and creating jobs for our friends and neighbors. Choosing to support them during one of the busiest shopping seasons of the year is an investment in the future of our hometown.

Back-to-school isn't just about preparing students for a successful year; it's also an opportunity to strengthen the community they'll grow up in. Every local purchase, every act of kindness, and every show of support helps build a vibrant community where families and businesses can succeed together.

So, how many items can you check off before the first day of school? Challenge your family, challenge your friends, and let's make this school year one that starts with community.

For more information, please contact Community Vitality Agent Amanda Clasen at any Southwind District office or at amclasen@ksu.edu.