



## **SHOP AIKEN NOW**

The holidays are just around the corner, and that means shopping. Everyone is looking for those special gifts for everyone on their nice list, and the Aiken Chamber knows just where you can find those gifts....in Aiken.

“Shop Aiken” is a campaign to urge shoppers to shop thoughtfully and boost the Aiken economy by spending locally this holiday season. From November 1 – December 31, “Shop Aiken” will celebrate locally owned businesses and work to increase spending locally. It is also a celebration and a tribute to the strength of Aiken’s small businesses and entrepreneurs.

“This has been an especially challenging year for small business,” said Chamber President/CEO J. David Jameson. “Big box stores have larger budgets, are promoting holiday sales earlier and are pushing harder and harder to attract shoppers this year. As a community we must draw a line in the sand and support our local small businesses. Let’s all try our hardest to do our Christmas shopping in Aiken this year.”

The “Shop Aiken” campaign will feature a series of social media videos, as well as television and radio ads. The campaign is sponsored by local entrepreneur Norman Dunagan, owner of Dumpster Depot, Whiskey Alley Spirits & Tapas, and the Alley Downtown Tap Room.

“Small business owners are facing new challenges that make a tough job even tougher,” said Dunagan. “The Aiken community has always been so generous in their support of Dumpster Depot, Whiskey Alley, and the Alley Taproom. We are so blessed, and I simply want to show my support for the Aiken Chamber and all of Aiken’s small business owners. This is a small way that we can help get the message out that shopping local can truly make a big impact.”

The "Shop Aiken" campaign is meant to celebrate our amazing Aiken businesses and how they have adapted this year.

One example of a business model change can be seen at Newberry Hall, a local catering and event facility owned by Patrick and Natalie Carlisle.

"When our Governor required all restaurant/food establishments to cease operations, our entire business came to an abrupt halt," said the Carlises. "We quickly decided that we would begin offering meals to-go for anyone in the community that wanted to avoid grocery store crowds or simply take a night off from cooking. We will forever be grateful to the individuals who have helped support us in this endeavor. Many people have ordered the meals every week since March! Thank you, Aiken."

When you "Shop Aiken", you help Aiken businesses provide jobs for your neighbors and friends. When you "Shop Aiken", you help fund city services such as road maintenance and funding for schools through sales tax dollars. When you "Shop Aiken", you support those who support your children's sports and area non-profits. When you "Shop Aiken", you are investing in the character and prosperity of your hometown now and for the future.

"We must ensure that our local small businesses survive 2020, then grow and thrive in 2021 and beyond. They are the heart and soul of Aiken," said Chamber Chair Julie Whitesell. "Join me to "Shop Aiken" everyday, but especially during the holidays."