

It has become fashionable to talk about buying our everyday needs from our local retailers. We hear on the radio and TV, national public service ads about the value of buying local.

When you think about it, it is a core value of any Chamber of Commerce to support its local retailers who form a key segment of its membership.

Buying local has come home to me personally in the last few weeks.

I recently had very positive experiences with three of our local retailers and, by the way, long time Chamber members.

In the virtual world we live in, the Chamber needed to upgrade our virtual meeting capability. With grants from the Paul B. Sharar Foundation and the Gateway Area Foundation we were able to acquire a new large screen monitor, a new computer, camera, microphones and speakers.

We discussed where to buy the monitor between a big box store or a local small retail store. Perhaps the big box store would be a little cheaper. We made the decision to go with Zirkelbach. They agreed to a small discount because the Chamber is a non-profit and they agreed to mount the monitor. When the monitor was removed from the box the screen was cracked.

There was never any discussion. It was replaced with no question or hassle. I would suggest to you that this would have been much more complicated with a big box store.

The second example is a personal one. Because I am senior, Wagner Pharmacy **called me** to ask if I wanted to receive the covid vaccine. I would suggest to you that this is not happening very often except for Wagner customers. I am very grateful to have received this kind of service.

And lastly, I recently bought a new suit from Boegels. Nothing special here except I received the kind of service you would expect from a small hometown shop. The price was competitive, and I learned that they have other items that I needed, and I didn't have to order online (I am a bigger guy) or go to the QCA.

Check and buy local first. I don't think you will be disappointed.