



Jan Rosenthal Townsend

## Vail Valley Voices: Shop Small Saturday

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With the advent of Thanksgiving, the biggest retail season of the year is upon us, including "Black Friday" and "Shop Small Saturday" this weekend.

As a small-business owner-retailer (Shadey Deals-Alpine Ambiance) for over 25 years in the Vail Valley, and as someone that has an Eagle address, shops at my neighbors' stores, dines out locally and is heavily involved with various community events and programs, it's really nice to see national support for small, locally owned businesses.

The "Today" show, other national news media and Facebook have been posting numerous ads and commercials about supporting local businesses. Over 200 advocacy groups are involved in the promotion and Facebook has 2,354,048 "likes" on the "Shop Small" fan page -- a 100 percent increase over last year!

American Express took the lead in this "Shop Small" campaign and as featured in News Week Daily on Nov. 8, their article capsulizes the importance of shopping local: "Small Business Saturday' is about supporting small business overall," said Kenneth Chenault, American Express chairman and CEO, in an Oct. 27 news conference announcing this year's Small Business Saturday. "The message that we really want to build here is support your small businesses. Not only will there be an increase in sales for small businesses, but you will see a growth in our overall economy and a growth in jobs. Last year was our first year, but we feel the momentum has built. People want to support small businesses and their neighborhoods."

American Express is even offering nice rebates to consumers who use their American Express cards at businesses that accept the card.

As Al Roker, of the "Today Show," says, "It's all about bringing the character back to your community -- it's back to Main Street."

Funny thing is, we already have character in Eagle, the town in which I live and own a store. We are just trying to maintain our community character by saying "no" (again) to the 732,000-square-foot big box center Eagle River Station. Perhaps, the town of Eagle, and its leaders, should entertain the thought of following American Express's lead.

As past president and board member of the Eagle Valley Chamber of Commerce and on behalf of many small, locally owned businesses, thank you for your continued support. Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Jan Rosenthal Townsend is an Eagle resident.

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