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**INDEPENDENT RETAILERS IN CITIES WITH “BUY LOCAL” CAMPAIGNS  
OUTPERFORM THOSE WITHOUT, NATIONAL SURVEY FINDS  
“Keep Louisville Weird” is Keeping Louisville Businesses a Step Ahead of Chains**

*Louisville, KY* – In an extremely challenging economic climate, independent retailers are outperforming many chains, a national survey has found. The survey also found that independent retailers in cities with organizations with permanent “Buy Independent/Local” campaigns, like the Louisville Independent Business Alliance’s (LIBA) “Keep Louisville Weird” campaign, reported much stronger holiday sales than those in cities lacking such efforts. Independent retailers in these cities still saw a decrease in sales compared to last year, but the drop was 3.2% - far less than the 5.6% decline reported in cities without permanent “Buy Local” organizations.

Ninety-five percent of the retailers surveyed said that the fact that their business is locally owned matters to their customers -- up from 82% in last year’s survey.

Jessie Bishop, winner of LIBA’s “Holiday Passport Contest,” said “I have always liked unique, local shops, but this contest really drove home the idea that shopping independent stores is in our best interest – more of the dollars stay local.” The Holiday Passport Contest was launched to create awareness about the importance of buying locally, and to give local consumers an incentive to do so. People who collected 10 receipts from LIBA member businesses entered to win \$1,000 to spend at those businesses. Jesse will spend the bulk of her dollars at Quest Outdoors.

“LIBA’s Holiday Passport Contest gave people a reason to discover new stores they hadn’t been to before,” said Todd Brashear, owner of Wild and Woolly Video. “Almost half of the people that entered shopped someplace they hadn’t been before, and almost half said it made them more aware of the importance of buying locally.”

The survey of 1,142 independent retailers in a wide range of categories (books, toys, clothing, etc.) and across all 50 states found that holiday sales at independent stores declined an average of 5.0% from the same time period in 2007. That compares favorably to most competing chains, including Barnes & Noble (-7.7%), Best Buy (-6.5%), Borders (-14.0%), JC Penney (-8.1%), Macy’s (-7.5%), The Gap (-14.0%), and Williams-Sonoma (-24.2%).

"Since the economic downturn began, we've seen an explosion of interest in communities looking to start Independent Business Alliances and buy local campaigns," said Jennifer Rockne, director of the American Independent Business Alliance. "This survey shows such interest is justified. These campaigns are making a huge difference for local businesses and their

communities."

The survey was conducted by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, a nonprofit research organization, in partnership with several independent business organizations, including the American Independent Business Alliance (the Louisville Independent Business Alliance is an affiliate), American Booksellers Association, American Specialty Toy Retailers Association, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, Independent Music Store Owners coalition, and National Bicycle Dealers Association.

To see full survey results, please visit [www.ilsr.org/columns/2009/011509.html](http://www.ilsr.org/columns/2009/011509.html).

### **About the Louisville Independent Business Alliance**

The mission of LIBA is to preserve the unique community character of the Metro Louisville area by promoting locally-owned businesses and to educate citizens on the value of shopping locally. For more information and a member list, visit [www.keeplouisvilleweird.com](http://www.keeplouisvilleweird.com).

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