

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information contact:

Ali Hawthorne, 502-262-8580, ali@m2-maximummedia.com

Jennifer Rubenstein, 502-500-4669, jennifer@keeploouisvilleweird.com

Stacy Mitchell, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 207-774-6792

Jeff Milchen, American Independent Business Alliance, 406-582-1255



LIBA
LOUISVILLE
INDEPENDENT
BUSINESS
ALLIANCE



keep Louisville weird.

New Survey Shows Big Gains for Independent Businesses Served by Groups like LIBA

Louisville, KY (February 17, 2015) - A new survey of independent business owners across the U.S. and Canada yielded powerful evidence showing that pro-local attitudes are growing and driving customer traffic, and it indicates the work of the [Louisville Independent Business Alliance](#) (LIBA) and more than one hundred similarly-organized groups are yielding large benefits for their members and the local economy.

The annual survey by the [Institute for Local Self Reliance](#) (ILSR) and [Advocates for Independent Business](#) tallied responses from more than 3000 independent businesses, and also broke out results for Louisville-area businesses. Just under half were retailers while restaurants, service providers and others comprised smaller portions. Among the notable results:

- Independent businesses in communities with an active "buy independent/buy local" campaign run by groups like LIBA saw **revenues grow 9.3% in 2014**, nearly double the 4.9% increase for businesses in areas without such an alliance.
- Independent businesses reported **revenue growth of 8.1% on average in 2014**. The retailers surveyed experienced a 5.1% increase in same-store sales and 4.8% increase in holiday sales, beating many competing chains.
- **Wages paid by respondents equaled or exceeded their chain competitors**. 41% of independents' employees make between \$10 and \$15 hourly, while 34% make \$15 or more hourly.
- 69% of businesses located in cities with an active Independent Business Alliance organization reported increased customer traffic or other benefits resulting from these initiatives.

Highlights of Louisville-specific results from the survey:

- **77% of businesses agreed** that LIBA's Buy Local First campaign has positively impacted their business
- **62% reported an increase in overall sales in 2014**
- **74% of respondents think** that public awareness of the benefits of supporting locally owned businesses has increased in the last year.
- Average change in annual revenue for Louisville businesses surveyed was 5.8%, and change in holiday sales was 3%

"We've been a member of LIBA since the beginning," said Ryan King, owner of Quest Outdoors. "LIBA is a great way for local and independent businesses to get their message out, to learn from other small business owners, and to compete with the national chains."

The survey also assessed major concerns of independent business owners across the nation, indicating:

- Among retailers, 71% said competition from large internet companies was the biggest challenge facing their business, followed by supplier pricing that favors their big competitors, chain competition, and other issues.
- Top policy priorities among respondents are extending the requirement to collect sales tax to large online retailers and enforcing antitrust laws against large, dominant companies.
- For independent businesses which applied for bank loans within the past two years, 30% were denied and another 14% received less money than requested.

LIBA is a member of the [American Independent Business Alliance](#), a national network of more than 85 community alliances supporting local entrepreneurs, which partnered in the survey.

“In 2015, LIBA is celebrating 10 years since our organization’s founding and we currently have our highest membership in history of over 700 members,” says Jennifer Rubenstein, Director of LIBA. “We hope to launch a new media campaign about the importance of buying local in 2015, which we haven’t done since our founder put up the original Keep Louisville Weird billboard in 2005.”

To celebrate “10 Years of Weird” LIBA will host a Weird Birthday Bash, presented by Quest Outdoors, on Friday, February 27th from 7:00pm-11:00pm at Headliners Music Hall. The event will include music by Hay DJ and Tony and the Tan Lines, a cash bar, prizes, and party games such as “Pin the Mustache on the Mayor.” More information at www.keeplouisvilleweird.com or call (502) 473-4687.

The full report (pdf) may be downloaded here: <http://bit.ly/16Tw4Nc>

