



## Kewaunee County Buy Local Initiative

### 2010 Member Survey

#### Results Summary

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Since the Kewaunee County Buy Local Initiative launched in early 2009, Initiative events and activities have been designed to raise awareness about the importance of buying local, to grow Kewaunee County businesses, communities and families. The Initiative now has nearly 130 business and nonprofit supporters, many of whom have actively participated in spreading the word about Buy Local and committing to shift 10% of their spending to businesses located in Kewaunee County.

UW Cooperative Extension in Kewaunee County was enlisted to survey Buy Local Initiative members to collect their feedback on progress toward intended outcomes, and to gather their advice on moving the Initiative forward. Sixty-one (61) members replied to the survey, which was conducted via SurveyMonkey, an online survey tool. Below is a summary of the main findings.

- In general, businesses who have been involved in the Initiative **for more than one year**, and those who are **more active in the Initiative's events and activities**, report **greater levels of benefits to their businesses**. Overall, 74% of respondents report some type of benefit from participating in the Buy Local Initiative.
- Many businesses **receive an immediate payback** upon joining the Initiative: *"We haven't been in the Buy Local Initiative very long, but, the first networking meeting that we went to, one of the Buy Local members . . . gave us some business by bringing his . . . riding lawnmower to our shop for repair."*
- Most participating businesses (64%) report **greater knowledge of local products and services**. *"During a recent remodeling project, we requested bids and chose local contractors where ever possible." "There is an increase in businesses supporting each other by buying as much as possible locally."*
- 56% of respondents believe that **people are more aware of the importance of buying local**. *"I have changed my personal spending as well. It makes a difference, purchasing locally." "We have seen more traffic in and out of the store because people want to buy local instead of driving all the way to Green Bay. We appreciate that and have done our best to do our business locally as well!"*
- 46% of respondents report **having a larger local business network**. *"The networking events have allowed me to make contacts that I would not have made otherwise, which has resulted in referral business." "Being a new [Business to Business] company in the area was rather difficult, but becoming involved in the Buy Local group put me in front of decision makers every meeting. It has been an invaluable tool for me."*

- 30% report believing that **people are more aware of their business or organization**: “Buy Local held an event at [my business] giving exposure to many locals who had never visited.” “With networking, I have more clients and more business contacts than before the Buy Local.” “. . . Overall, I believe the Buy Local Initiative has impacted our organization, as well as the Kewaunee County community only for the better. I am excited to keep promoting the Advantage Card, and I hope it is as much of a success to the local businesses as it already is to Literacy Partners.”
- Although success with longer-term outcomes of **increased sales dollars and increased customers** was more limited, with only 12% of respondents reporting progress, this is a good start considering how young the Initiative is. “I have a new client because of the Literacy Program Card offer.” “I had some [Buy Local] members purchase at my greenhouse and I am doing a fundraiser for a church in Luxemburg.”

Advice and other ideas for the Buy Local Initiative:

- Continue to heavily promote Buy Local sales promotions, events, and activities. The word is still not getting out to people and they are missing out.
- Encourage more interaction among business members at the networking meetings so that folks are always meeting someone new.
- Consider new events open to the public that showcase local businesses, such as a summer picnic type event.
- Educational events for businesses on specific topics that also expose them to other businesses, such as for the hospitality industry.

For more detailed survey results, go to <http://kewaunee.uwex.edu/> or call Claire Thompson, Community Development Educator, UW Cooperative Extension – Kewaunee County at (920) 388-7136.

Or, contact Jennifer Brown at the Kewaunee County Economic Development Corporation at



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