

TODAY'S DATE: November 21, 2014



RELEASE DATE: IMMEDIATE



CONTACT: Teresa Lamar-Sarno, CRA Administrator

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***Shop Local | Shop Smart to Give Away Reusable Shopping Bags at
“Christmas on Main Street” Tree Lighting Festival in Downtown Stuart
Program Highlighting Locally Owned Businesses on Black Friday***

STUART, FL – November 21, 2014 – Downtown Stuart’s Shop Local Program, ***Shop Local | Shop Smart*** will highlight the benefits of shopping local by giving away reusable shopping bags at *Christmas on Main Street*, Stuart’s downtown Christmas tree lighting festival, Friday, November 28 from 4-7 pm. The festival falls on Black Friday, the first day of the traditional Christmas shopping season.

“Black Friday is the biggest shopping day of the holidays and the start of ‘season’ for our downtown merchants,” explained Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency Administrator, Teresa Lamar-Sarno. “So it’s an excellent time to highlight the benefits of shopping locally.” 500 shopping bags will be given away along with inserts explaining the benefits of patronizing local businesses.

“Supporting local stores, restaurants, and services doesn’t just keep more money in the local economy, it’s also good for tourism, the environment, and the community.” explains Patty O’Connell of the Downtown Business Association. “For example, small businesses give more than twice as much to non-profit groups as big businesses, so when you support a local business you are helping them to help others.”

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Shop Local | Shop Smart is a joint effort by the Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency, Downtown Business Association of Stuart, and Stuart Main Street. Launched in 2013, the awareness campaign is intended to educate shoppers about the benefits of shopping and dining at locally owned brick-and-mortar businesses. The educational program uses local media, social media, and in store materials to highlight benefits to the local community and economy.

The City of Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency was created in 1986 to eliminate slum and blighted conditions in its communities and re-established and expanded in 1998 and 2002.

The CRA is directed by the Community Redevelopment Board (CRB) and implements the objectives, programs, and projects defined in the CRA Plan adopted by the City of Stuart in August 2002. The CRB meets the first Tuesday of every month at 4:00 in the City Hall Chambers at 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart. For more information, please visit www.cityofstuart.us.

The Stuart Downtown Business Association (DBA) formed to market the shops, galleries, restaurants, and professional businesses of Stuart's Historic Downtown and the surrounding areas. The group advocates for business owners and promotes a positive image of the downtown business district as a unique alternative to "cookie cutter" mall shopping through marketing, events, and other promotions. The DBA meets the fourth Wednesday of every month at 8:30 a.m. in the City Hall Chambers at 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart. For more information, visit www.historicdowntownstuart.com.

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Stuart Main Street is a preservation-based program dedicated to building a healthy, vital downtown area through community self-reliance and a focus on the downtown's traditional assets: personal service, local ownership, unique architecture, and sense of community.

Formed in 1987, the group follows the Main Street Four-Point Approach® as established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center and practiced in over 1600 communities across the country. Stuart Main Street meets the second Tuesday of every month at 4:30 p.m. in the City Hall Chambers at 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart. For more information, visit stuartmainstreet.org or call 772-286-2848.

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NEWS RELEASE

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*The **Shop Local** | **Shop Smart** Reusable Shopping Bag*

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10 Reasons to Shop Local | Shop Smart This Holiday Season

1. **One-of-a-kind gifts.** Independent shops carry smaller lines and local merchandise you won't find in buyer-controlled chains.
2. **Service you deserve.** Neighborhood business owners are the people you see at work and school. They know you and work harder for you.
3. **Local entrepreneurs.** Local business owners are your neighbors, and your support helps them to live, work, and raise their families here.
4. **The environment.** Neighborhood businesses in town centers like Stuart's downtown increase walkability, and decrease sprawl, loss of habitat, and pollution.
5. **A unique downtown.** A mix of independent businesses helps maintain Stuart's unique character.
6. **Help others.** Smaller businesses give twice as much to non-profits as bigger companies—and volunteer more too.
7. **Encourage Historic Preservation.** Independent businesses tend to be in existing commercial districts and reuse historic buildings.
8. **Retained profits.** For every \$100 spent in a local business, \$73 stays local, but only \$43 stays here when you shop at a major retailer. Choosing locally-owned restaurants keeps \$79 out of every \$100 you spend in the community. Eat at a chain restaurant and it drops to just \$30.
9. **Create local jobs.** Small businesses hire more than large corporations—and create more higher paying, skilled jobs too.
10. **Build relationships.** At a locally-owned business you'll get to know others who share your values.



On Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and all season long, please choose locally-owned businesses.

Brought to you by the Stuart Community Redevelopment Agency, the Downtown Business Association of Stuart, and Stuart Main Street.

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Christmas on Main Street Downtown Stuart Tree Lighting

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