People’s Choice

Voter’s Guide

effinghamdailynews.com/peopleschoice

THANK YOU!!
For the nomination and opportunity! We pledge to provide you with the freshest, cleanest & friendliest shopping experience.
NOW EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE!

Here’s your chance to vote for your favorite businesses, personalities, places and products.

It’s easy as 1 – 2 – 3

1. LOG IN to or create your account online at: effinghamdailynews.com/peopleschoice
2. VOTE for the 2023 People’s Choice awards FEBRUARY 18th through MARCH 4th
3. RESULTS for the 2023 People’s Choice awards will publish in the Effingham Daily News Winners Edition on MARCH 31st.

Limit one voting ballot submission per registered user. People’s Choice ballot will consist of the top nominees in each category. All voting is conducted online at effinghamdailynews.com/peopleschoice.

CATEGORIES INCLUDE:
- Food & Beverage
- Healthcare
- Around the Home
- Personal Services
- Retail Stores
- Financial/Legal/Insurance
- Transportation (Purchase/Repair/Care)
- Home & Business Services
- Everything Else

Thank You for the Votes!

SINCE 1965
301 Main St., Sigel

Sigel Equipment Co. Inc. 217-844-3348

Thank You for nominating us for Best Beer Establishment!

Open 7 days a week including Holidays 7am-1am
- Video Gaming
- Drive-up Window
- Live Music
- Food Available

Visit our facebook page: www.facebook.com/theOrchardInnEffingham/

800 N. 3rd St. Effingham, IL 62401
217.342.9025
People’s Choice Voting to begin today

The Effingham Daily News each year conducts the annual People’s Choice Contest. This popular battle of the businesses begins with the People’s Choice Nomination ballot in January. For two weeks in January, Effingham Daily News readers are asked to go online and actually type in the name of their favorite business in almost 200 different categories. Since we do not provide names of businesses on the ballot to choose from, having readers type in the name of your business on the ballot is quite an honor. Our readers care enough to take the time to let our local businesses know just how much they really enjoy their products and services by recognizing them on the ballot. When the nomination process ends, we receive a list of all businesses recognized. At this point, the top 5 in each category then go on to be listed on the People’s Choice Voting ballot.

The People’s Choice Voting ballot will be available online starting today through Saturday, March 4. See page 2 of this People’s Choice Voting edition to find out how to register and begin the voting process. We encourage our readers to take the time to vote for their favorite business of the top 5 listed in each category. As you read through the voting ballot, you will notice that some categories have more than 5 listed while a few have less than 5 listed. For those categories with more than 5, there was a tie or multiple ties for 5th place. It is only fair then to also include all those who tied for 5th on the voting ballot. Rest assured, in many cases there were even more wrote in than those listed on our Voting ballot. We thank our readers for their votes, even though they did not make the top 5. For those categories with less than 5, we have listed all those who were nominated on the January Nomination ballot.

If you go in to register for this Voting ballot and have trouble getting registered, please give Jody Hardiek a call at (217)347-7155 for assistance.

Once the Voting ballot process has ended, we will tabulate the results and report the winner in each category in our March 31 People’s Choice Winners guide. It really is fun for us when we get to contact a business to let them know they were the winner in their category. There is immense pride and many times they are very humbled by the news. We truly live and work in an area where businesses support one another and cheer each other on. They really love what they do and this award is just one way for us to let them know just how much they are appreciated and loved by their customers and our readers. And the best part is that they get to promote this all through the year on their billboards, in their advertisements in the newspaper, and on their Facebook page, just to name a few. It really is an honor to be recognized as a “favorite” among the majority of our Effingham Daily News readership. Each winner also receives a wooden plaque that includes a certificate to hang on their wall at their place of business in yet another way to promote their achievement.

So, from all of us to all the businesses in our readership area, best of luck during the next two weeks during the Voting ballot process. And please know that even if your business is not chosen as the top winner in your category, we very much appreciate what you provide in products and services to this area and beyond. We know it takes all of us to provide the needed products and services to this area we are proud to call home.

Thanks for Nominating Us Best Nail Salon and Nail Technician Jason!
We Appreciate All Your Support - Please Vote!
• manicures • pedicures • acrylics • gels

T-A Nails
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Open: Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Vote TODAY!

Vote for HSHS St. Anthony’s in these 2023 People’s Choice Categories:
Best Hospital
Best Home Health Service | Best Nurse
Best Rehabilitation Services

and HSHS Medical Group in these categories:
Best Medical Clinic | Best Doctor | Best Surgeon

Thank you for nominating these HSHS Medical Group physicians:

Michelle Braddy, MD
Robb Frost, MD
John Powell, MD

HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital
HSHS Medical Group
Prairie Cardiovascular
FOOD & BEVERAGE

Best Asian Food
Fujiyama Japanese Steakhouse
China Express
China Buffet
Classic Thai
Panda Express

Best Baked Goods & Pies
Niemerg’s Steakhouse
Kirby Foods IGA Plus
The Cookie Jar
Joe Sippers Cafe
Baker’s Cakes
Goldie’s Baking Co.

Best Bakery
Kirby Foods IGA Plus
Holli’s Flour Shop
The Cookie Jar
Joe Sippers Café
Goldie’s Baking Co.

Best Barbecue
Lickin’ My Chicken & Pullin’
My Pork BBQ
Gabby Goat
Kick Addis BBQ
Ginger Ale’s
Patriot BBQ

Best Beer Establishment
Orchard Inn
Top Shelf Beer, Wine & Spirits
Gabby Goat
Village Wine
Brickbat Bar and Grill
BJ’s Saloon

Best Breakfast Place
Niemerg’s Steakhouse
Cracker Barrel
Firefly Grill
Gabby Goat
Denny’s
TK Grille

WE APPRECIATE YOUR PEOPLE'S CHOICE NOMINATIONS!

Thank you for choosing Joe's Pizza & Pasta!
We're grateful for the opportunity to serve the Effingham, Altamont, & surrounding communities.

NOMINATED FOR:
BEST ITALIAN FOOD
BEST PIZZA - CARRY OUT
BEST PIZZA - DINE IN
BEST CATERING
BEST SANDWICHES
BEST SALADS/SALAD BAR

PLEASE VOTE ONLINE NOW - MARCH 4

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Visit us in Downtown Effingham & on Main Street in Altamont
Open Tuesday-Sunday

WE CATER! CALL 217-347-JOES
# People's Choice Voting

**FOOD & BEVERAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Buffet</strong></td>
<td>Niemerg's Steakhouse, Golden Corral, Iron Horse Restaurant at Kirby, Pizza Man, China Buffet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Business Lunch Place</strong></td>
<td>Gabby Goat, Cracker Barrel, Firefly Grill, Gopher's Grill, Joe Sippers Cafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Chicken</strong></td>
<td>Niemerg's Steakhouse, Kirby Foods IGA Plus, Lickin' My Chicken &amp; Pullin', My Pork BBQ, Firefly Grill, Gopher's Grill, Kountry Kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Chinese Food</strong></td>
<td>China Express, Fujiyama Japanese Steakhouse, China Buffet, Panda Express, Classic Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Catering</strong></td>
<td>Country Rhodes Catering, Niemerg's Steakhouse, Joe's Pizza &amp; Pasta, Panera Bread, Kirby Foods IGA Plus, Deb's Catering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Coffee Shop</strong></td>
<td>The Human Bean, Joe Sippers Cafe, Kountry Kitchen, Kirby Foods IGA Plus, McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Customer Service Grocery Store</strong></td>
<td>Kirby Foods IGA Plus, Aldi, Nuxoll Food Center, S &amp; W Supermarket, Save a Lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Deli</strong></td>
<td>Kirby Foods IGA Plus, Subway, McMahon Meats, Nuxoll Food Center, S &amp; W Supermarket, Jersey Mike's</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Thank You!

For nominating us for People’s Choice

- **Best Banking Institution**
  - Crossroads Bank
- **Best Bank Teller - Tabitha Golden**
- **Best Financial Representative - Kory Doty**

---

## Thank You for Your Support!

We are honored to be nominated for three Effingham Daily News People Choice Categories!!

1. **Best Beauty Salon**
2. **Best Day Spa**
3. **Best Nail Salon**

We can’t thank you enough for all of your support since we opened!

---

**Thank You**

for nominating

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as

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---

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---

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<tr>
<th>Best Donuts</th>
<th>Best Japanese Food</th>
<th>Best Mexican Food</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kirby Foods IGA Plus</td>
<td>Fujiyama Japanese Steakhouse</td>
<td>El Rancherito</td>
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<td>The Cookie Jar</td>
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<td>Taqueria Don Pedro</td>
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<td>Daylight Donuts</td>
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<td>Puerto Vallarta</td>
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<td>Dunkin' Donuts</td>
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<td>The Hole Dozen</td>
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<td>The Wurst Wiener</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arby’s</td>
<td>Homewood Grill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panera Bread</td>
<td>Andrew’s Eats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jimmy John’s</td>
<td>Cruiser’s Drive Thru</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jersey Mike’s</td>
<td>Old Mac’s Drive Thru</td>
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<td>Homewood Grill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fujiyama Japanese Steakhouse</td>
<td>Teutopolis Treats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effingham Country Club</td>
<td>Culver’s</td>
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<td>Niemerg’s Steakhouse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucia’s Italian Kitchen</td>
<td>Andrew’s Eats</td>
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<tr>
<th>Best Hamburgers</th>
<th>Best Iced Tea</th>
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<td>Cruiser’s Drive Thru</td>
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<td>Culver’s</td>
<td>Cracker Barrel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joe Sippers Café</td>
<td>Joe’s Eats</td>
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<td>Sweet Tea &amp; Jesus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panera Bread</td>
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<tr>
<th>Best Home Cooking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cracker Barrel</td>
<td>Joe’s Pizza &amp; Pasta</td>
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<td>Kountry Kitchen</td>
<td>Lucia’s Italian Kitchen</td>
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<td>McAlister’s Deli</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Firefly Grill</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pizza Man</td>
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**Thank You for Voting Us #1 People’s Choice**

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---

**Thank You!!**

**MANY THANKS FOR THE NOMINATIONS IN THESE CATEGORIES:**

- BAKED GOODS & PIES
- BAKERY
- BUFFET
- CATERING
- CHICKEN
- COFFEE SHOP
- CUSTOMER SERVICE
- GROCERY STORE
- CONVENIENCE STORE (MIKTOWN FUELS)
- MEAT DEPARTMENT
- BUTCHER SHOP
- PHARMACIST MIKE CONLEY
- PHARMACY TECHNICIAN JAMIE WESTJOHN
- PHARMACY (KIRBY FOODS IGA PHARMACY)
- FLORIST (FLOWERS BY KIRBY)
- PRODUCE / PRODUCE DEPARTMENT
- GAME PLACE (MIKTOWN FUELS)

*Thanks to your continued support, you have allowed us to grow from your corner grocery to the largest full-service grocery in Central Illinois. We are proud to have grown along with Effingham … we look forward to the challenge and excitement presented each and every day … and to serving the best people in the world … our customers!*
### Best Milk Shake
- Steak ‘n Shake
- Andrew’s Eats
- Homewood Grill
- Culver’s
- Cruiser’s Drive Thru
- Dairy Queen

### Best Pizza Carry Out Only
- Pizza Man
- Joe’s Pizza & Pasta
- Casey’s General Store
- Domino’s Pizza
- Little Caesars

### Best Pizza Dine-In
- Pizza Man
- Joe’s Pizza & Pasta
- Lucia’s Italian Kitchen
- Firefly Grill
- The Midway

### Best Salads / Salad Bar
- Pizza Man
- TK Grille
- Panera Bread
- Joe’s Pizza & Pasta
- Cracker Barrel

### Best Sandwiches
- Joe’s Pizza and Pasta
- Firefly Grill
- McAlister’s Deli
- Lickin’ My Chicken & Pullin’ My Pork BBQ
- Jimmy John’s

### Best Seafood
- Fujiyama Japanese Steakhouse
- Heron Cove
- Gabby Goat
- Gopher’s Grill
- Firefly Grill
- Long John Silver’s
- TGI Friday’s

### Best Sports Bar
- Gabby Goat
- Effingham Event Center
- Chili’s Grill & Bar
- Gopher’s Grill
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- TGI Friday’s

### Best Steaks
- Golden Corral
- Firefly Grill
- TGI Friday’s
- Niemerg’s Steakhouse
- Fujiyama Japanese Steakhouse

### Best Seafood
- Fujiyama Japanese Steakhouse
- Heron Cove
- Gabby Goat
- Gopher’s Grill
- Firefly Grill
- Long John Silver’s
- TGI Friday’s

### Best Truck Stop Restaurant
- Popeyes
- IHOP
- Chaser’s Grill & Bar
- Sbarro
- Dunkin’ Donuts

### Best Wine List
- Tuscan Hills Winery
- Effingham Country Club
- Top Shelf Beer, Wine & Spirits
- Village Wine Shop
- Firefly Grill
- TK Grille

### Best Winery
- Tuscan Hills Winery
- Irene’s Vineyard
- Village Wine
- Vahling Vineyards
- Willow Ridge Winery

---

**THANK YOU TO OUR CUSTOMERS FOR THE SUPPORT & NOMINATION!**

- **Best Hamburgers**
- **Best Truckstop Restaurant**

*Locally owned & operated!*

*All our meat comes from Nuxoll’s Food Center!*

Scan to view our menu!
HEALTHCARE

**Best Alzheimer Community**
StoneBridge Memory Care
(formerly Lavender Ridge)
Willowbrook Memory Support
Residences
Lakeland Rehabilitation &
Health Care
Reflections Memory Care
(Villas of Holly Brook
Charleston)

**Best Assisted Living Community**
Villas of Holly Brook-
Effingham
The Glenwood
Brookstone Estates
StoneBridge Memory Care
(formerly Lavender Ridge)

Willowbrook Memory Support
Residences

**Best Chiropractor**
Dr. Jason Frichtl
Dr. Brianna Heuerman
Dr. Paul Rhodes
Dr. Kevin Borntreger
Dr. Laura Ames

**Best Dental Office**
Campos Family Dental
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Effingham Family Dental
Effingham Dental Group

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for nominating
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as
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Dr. Joe Balda
Dr. Christopher Sehy
Dr. Ted Koester
Dr. Alison Conant
Dr. Scott Moore

Best Doctor
Dr. Amanda Bierman - Family Care Associates
Dr. Doug Kabbes - Sarah Bush Lincoln
Dr. Michelle Braddy - HSHS Medical Group
Dr. David Kowalski - Springfield Clinic
Dr. John Powell - HSHS Medical Group
Dr. Jeff Brummer - Family Care Associates

Best Eye Clinic
Weber Optiks
Drs. Sehy & Jones Optometrists
Effingham Ophthalmology Associates
Marion Eye Care
Wolf Eye Care

Best Hearing Aid Clinic
Shackmann Hearing
Family Care Hearing
Sarah Bush Lincoln Audiology - Effingham Clinic
Beltone
Audibel

Best Hearing Aid Specialist
Jacqueline Jansen
Kerri Schackmann
Rachel Frichtl

Best Home Health Care Services
HSHS Illinois Home Care
Sarah Bush Lincoln Home Care
Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospice
VA Home Base

Best Hospital
HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital
St. Louis Children’s Hospital
Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center
Carle Hospital

Best Medical Clinic
HSHS Medical Group
Dr. Robert Frost - Altamont Clinic - HSHS Medical Group
Effingham Prompt Care
Effingham Express Care
Effingham Internal Medicine & Pediatrics at Bonutti Clinic
Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation

Best Nurse
Jessica Andruch (Family Care Associates)
Nicki Holt (Springfield Clinic)
Jaclyn Steppe Wohltman (Sarah Bush Lincoln)
Brenda Shields (Effingham Prompt Care/Dr. Navi Arora)
Norma Shoemaker (HSHS St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital)

THANK YOU for Nominating Gaddis Guns as Best Gun Shop!
We Appreciate Your Votes!
Troy Gaddis, owner

We Appreciate Your Votes and Your Business!

Effingham Auto
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Behind Village Square Mall
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effauto@mediacommb.net

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Evergreen Nursing & Rehabilitation Center
Lutheran Care Center
Heartland Senior Living, LLC
Effingham Rehabilitation & Health Care Center

Best Ophthalmologist
Dr. Joseph Spraul - Visionary Eyewear
Dr. Christy Hohenbary - Visionary Eyewear
Dr. John Kay - Effingham Ophthalmology Associates
Dr. Ryan Pine - Sarah Bush Lincoln / Charleston
Dr. Tony Weber - Weber Optiks
Dr. Mollie Raddatz - Marion Eye Center

Best Optometrist
Dr. Chris Weber - Weber Optiks
Dr. Derek Storm
Dr. Craig Woods - Drs. Sehy & Jones Optometrists
Dr. Brian Sehy - Drs. Sehy & Jones Optometrists
Dr. Matt Jones - Drs. Sehy & Jones Optometrists

Best Orthodontist
Dr. Chuck Schumacher
Dr. Michael Hage

Thank you for your support and trusting us with your care.

We'd Appreciate Your Vote for Best Mexican Restaurant!

$1.00 OFF
Any Lunch
- or -
$1.50 OFF
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When You Buy 2 at Reg. Price
With Coupon Only.
Offer Not Valid on Specials.
Expires: 12/31/23
El Rancherito
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HEALTHCARE

Best Pharmacy Technician
Courtney Probst - Walgreens Pharmacy
Jamie Westjohn - Kirby Foods IGA Health Mart Pharmacy
Kelci Butler - Andes Health Mart Pharmacy
Amanda Fisher - Walmart Pharmacy
Danyelle Kessler - Poehler’s Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy
Emil Kaldas - Walmart Pharmacy

Best Pharmacist
Duane Kremer - Kremer Pharmacy
Nicole Yocum - Walgreens Pharmacy
Andrew Altman - Andes Health Mart Pharmacy
Stephanie Pape - Kremer Pharmacy
Mike Conley - Kirby Foods IGA Health Mart Pharmacy

Best Pharmacy
Kremer Pharmacy
Walmart Pharmacy
Poehler’s Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy
Kirby Foods IGA Health Mart Pharmacy
Brown’s Drug Store
Andes Health Mart Pharmacy

Thank You for Nominating Us!

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303 E FAYETTE AVE 217-342-GOAT
**Best Podiatrist**
Dr. James Graham  
Dr. John Killough

**Best Rehabilitation Services**
HSHS St. Anthony’s Rehabilitation and Wellness  
Effingham Pelvic Health & Wellness  
Sarah Bush Lincoln PT  
Heartland Senior Living  
Lakeland Rehabilitation & Health Care Center  
ProRehab Illinois

**Best Surgeon**
Dr. Ruben Boyajian  
Dr. Louis Mendella - Sarah Bush Lincoln  
Dr. Jennifer Dust - Effingham OB/GYN Associates  
Dr. John Powell - HSHS Medical Group  
Dr. Kelly Haller - Effingham OB/GYN Associates  
Dr. Peter Bonutti - Sarah Bush Lincoln

**Best Cabinet Shop**
Mette’s Cabinet Corner  
Bill Thoele Cabinets  
Lustig Custom Cabinets  
Menards  
Kuche Fine Cabinetry & Design / Elizabeth Yager Designs

**Best Home Builder**
Bloemer Construction  
Strauch Construction  
Hemrich Construction  
DM Design Construction  
Fulfer Creek Construction  
Fieldcrest Homes

---

**We Appreciate Your Votes and Your Trust In Us!**

- **Best Home Improvement Store**
- **Best Hardware Store**

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(217) 347-0561

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**Best Home Improvement Store**
Menards  
Effingham Builder’s Supply  
The Equity Do It Center  
Home Depot  
Holland House Flooring

---

**Thank you for Nominating us as Best Deli, Best Butcher Shop, Best Grocery Store, Best Customer Service Grocery Store & Best Meat Dept**

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Closed Sunday and Monday

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**THANK YOU FOR NOMINATING US IN THESE CATEGORIES:**

- New Car Dealer - Used Car Dealer  
- Auto Dealer Service Dept.  
- Auto Parts Dealer

Also thanks for nominating Mark Mayhood & Robert Tuman as Favorite New Car Salesperson & nominating Troy Thoele as Favorite Mechanic.

---

**Northside**
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Carolyn Hollar / Hollars
Design with Style
Lisa Teichmiller
Kim Stanfield/ Lustig Custom Designs
DM Design Construction
Elizabeth Yager Designs / Kuche Fine Cabinetry & Design
Wright at Home

Best Mobile / Modular Home Dealer
Effingham Homes
B & B Homes
Clayton Homes

Best Pool & Spa Store
WET Pools & Spas
Leisure Times

Best Lighting Store
Menards
Wright's Furniture & Flooring
Mette's Distinctive Lighting
Elizabeth Yager Designs / Kuche Fine Cabinetry & Design

Best Power Washing Company
K&W Pressure Washing
Dill's Soft Wash & Pressure Wash
Matt Ruholl / MR Power Washer
St. Joseph Pressure Wash
Aaron Hille
Beau Adams

AROUND THE HOUSE

EFFINGHAM COUNTY FAIR
July 29 - August 5, 2023
Thank You for Nominating us for Best Event in Effingham County!

Thank you all for your support!

Thank you for nominating us Best Bridal Store and Best Bridal Services. We are having so much fun serving Effingham County and the surrounding areas!

- Wedding Dresses
- Bridesmaid Dresses
- Bridal Items & Accessories
- Veils • Shoes
- Little White Dresses

vayda jane
205 N 4th St. Effingham, IL 217.500.7614 • VaydaJaneBridal.com
**Best Real Estate Agency**
- Smith Realty
- Re/Max Key Advantage
- Century 21
- Benchmark Realty
- Full Circle Realty

**Best Real Estate Agent**
- Mandy Vergara
- Glen Phillips
- Jill Wendling
- Sarah Mietzner
- Katie Koester
- Grant Beals

**Best Roofing Service**
- Whitney Roofing Inc.
- Dale Strauch Construction
- DM Design Construction
- Barr Construction
- Bam Roofing & Construction

**Best Barber Shop**
- Tolliver & Co. Barbers
- Once Upon A Fade
- Hair Xperts
- Renegade Barber & Co.
- New Vintage

**Best Barber**
- Tyson Tolliver
- Alan Harris
- Candace Houser
- Jade Price
- David Newberry
- Emma Kull

**Best Beauty Salon**
- Serenity Salon
- Shear Designs
- Lindsey’s Country Cuts
- Parlour on 3rd
- The Bee Hive
- Elite Hair Studio
- Hair Xperts

**Best Bridal Services**
- Signature Weddings & Events
- Vayda Jane Bridal
- Every Last Detail Event Planning / Cheri Myers
- Wild Rose Bridal
- Blushed Events & Designs

**Best Beauty Salon**
- Serenity Salon
- Shear Designs
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- Parlour on 3rd
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**Best Bridal Services**
- Signature Weddings & Events
- Vayda Jane Bridal
- Every Last Detail Event Planning / Cheri Myers
- Wild Rose Bridal
- Blushed Events & Designs

**Best Day Spa**
- Branches Massage & Spa
- Blu Waters Float Spa
- Elite Hair Studio
- Behold Aesthetics & Wellness Center
- Boho Chic Clinique

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- Blu Waters Float Spa
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**PERSONAL SERVICES**

**Best Barber**
- Tyson Tolliver
- Alan Harris
- Candace Houser
- Jade Price
- David Newberry
- Emma Kull

**Best Barber**
- Tyson Tolliver
- Alan Harris
- Candace Houser
- Jade Price
- David Newberry
- Emma Kull

**Best Day Care**
- Treehouse Two
- Little Ducklings Daycare
- Traci L. Deaton
- LCC Kids Enrichment Center
- Treehouse
- Little Lambs

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**Thank You For Nominating us and for your continued support and business over the last 10 years!**

**Mainly You! Salon & Spa**
- 217-857 1887

**Thank You For Nominating us**

**Best Auto Dealership Service Dept,**
**Best Auto Repair Place,**
**Best Mechanic,**
**Best Oil Change Place,**
**Best Tire Dealer and**
**Best Transmission Repair.**

**Lifeline**
**Christian Books & Gifts, Inc.**
Lincoln Land Bldg., 1901 S. 4th St., Effingham

**Teutopolis Auto Sales**
104 Automotive St., Teutopolis, IL 62467 • (217)857-5807
**Best Fitness Center**
The Zone
Richard E. Workman Sports and Wellness Complex
Evolve Fitness and Climbing
CrossFit Effingham
Mika Yoga Studio
Southside Gym

**Best Front Desk Receptionist**
Maddie Pittman (ProRehab)
Stacy Welter (Taylor Law Offices)
Buffy Miller (Irwin Seating Company)
Brenda Winkler (Sarah Bush Physical Therapy)
Julia Meyers (Branches Massage and Spa)
Connie Shipman (Stanfield Chiropractic)

**Best Funeral Home**
John Johnson Funeral Home
Kull Funeral Home
Pagel Funeral Homes
Bauer Funeral Home
Gieseking Funeral Home
Meyer Funeral Home

**Best Hair Stylist**
Tracy Bierman (Mainly You)
Grace Lybarger (Plot Twist Salon & Spa)
Kristin Deters (Mainly You)
Kayla Westrich (Foxy Styles)
Lois Zwettler (Shear Designs)

**Best Massage Therapist**
Wendy Kellams (Branches Massage & Spa)
Jessica Kessler (Branches Massage & Spa)
Ashley Swingler (Ashley Swingler’s Massage)
Deb Powers (Powers Therapeutic Massage)
Valerie Nuxoll Mayhood (Mika Yoga Studio)
Rob Yardley (Branches Massage & Spa)

**Best Nail Salon**
Serenity Salon
Mainly You
T&A Nails
Plot Twist Salon & Spa
Elite Hair Studio
Parlour on 3rd

**Best Nail Technician**
Beth Knierim (Serenity Salon)
Jason Luong (T&A Nails)
Whitney Steffen (Mainly You Salon & Spa)
Elizabeth Tinker (Serenity Salon)
Maria Ruholl (Mainly You Salon & Spa)
Mallory Koester (Gotcha By the Hair)

**Best Photo Studio / Photographer**
Alicia Schuette Photography
Enchanted Photo Tales by Marissa Mette
Sara Moran Photography
Steffen Harris Photography
Tisha Greuel - Priceless Images
Best Tanning Salon
Tan Express
Planet Fitness
KeraTanz Tanning Salon
Evolve Fitness & Climbing

Best Travel Agency
Travel Quarters
Shannon Stuemke - Ears of Experience
Effingham Travel Agency
Luxury Travel Planning - Maria Niebrugge

Best Weight Loss Center
Jeremy Zumbahlen - The Zone
24 Hour Fitness Center
CrossFit Effingham
Planet Fitness
Best Ever Body - Celina Wink
Optavia - Dot Behrens

Best Accounting Firm
Kemper CPA Group
Goeckner Accounting
West & Company
Angie's Accounting
Tucker Accounting
Doehring, Winders & Co.

Best Attorney
Chris Koester - Taylor Law Office
Ariana Thurnau - Law Group of IL
Thomas Devore - Devore Law Office
Scott R. Ealy, Attorney at Law
Dustin Probst - Dove & Dove Attorneys
Tracy Willenborg - Taylor Law Office

Best Bank Teller
Ruth Dasenbrock - Dieterich Bank
Kristen Rodgers - Midland Bank
Zoryanna Mills - Midland Bank
Tabitha Golden - Crossroads Bank
Carrie Vahling - Dieterich Bank
Erika Walk - First National Bank of Waterloo

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Tabitha Golden - Crossroads Bank
Carrie Vahling - Dieterich Bank
Erika Walk - First National Bank of Waterloo

Best Financial Advisor
Christo Schultz - Midland Bank
Joe Fearday - SC3F
Melissa Willenborg
Luke Doedtman - Brucke Financial
Jill Worman - First Mid Bank
Kent Schmidt - Smith Moore
Adam Butts - Edward Jones

Best Insurance Agent
Jay Mix (Country Financial)
Stephanie Uebinger (State Farm)
Ryan Tieffel (Tieffel Insurance Agency)
Jake Donsbach (Donsbach Meinhart Agency)
Leon Gobczynski (State Farm)

Best Credit Union
Effingham Highway Credit Union
Land of Lincoln Credit Union

As Effingham’s ONLY Supportive Living community, people of all incomes can enjoy our custom care, services and amenities.

Thanks for Your Nomination!
We’d Appreciate Your Vote!

Call 217-240-7595 to schedule a visit.

Brookstone Estates of Effingham
1101 N. Maple Street, Effingham, IL 62401
BrookstoneEstatesEffingham.com

A Big THANK YOU
To All Who Nominated Our Office As
People's Choice
Best Real Estate Agency

SMITH REALTY
GROUP Of Effingham, LLC

Donna Smith
Des. Mng. Broker/Owner

Chuck Wagoner
Broker

Angela Eden
Broker

Emily Nunamaker
Broker

Katie Ruholl
Broker

Stephanie Osborne
Broker

Angie Koester
Office Mgr

Sherree Oliver
Broker

Ted Rhodes
Broker

www.srgeffingham.com
(217) 994-9024
906 W. Jefferson Ave., Effingham, IL 62401
Best Insurance Provider
Dimond Brothers Insurance
Wohltman-Aherin Agency
Stephanie Uebinger - State Farm
Country Financial Companies
Tom Henderson - State Farm
American Family Insurance
Shelter Insurance
Weis Insurance

Best Investment Representative
Kory Doty (Crossroads Bank)
Rob Brown (Edward Jones)
Adam Steppe (Smith Moore)
Kent Schmidt (Smith Moore)
Jill Worman (First Mid Bank)

Best Mortgage Co.
First National Bank of Waterloo
Washington Savings Bank
Dieterich Bank
First Mid Bank
Teutopolis State Bank

Best Title Co.
Allied Capital Title
Michael Imburgia PC
Law Group Ltd
The Title Center

Best Auto Parts Dealer
Dust & Sons
Jansen’s Auto Sales Midwest
Toppers & Accessories
Northside Ford
Blankenship Auto Parts
NAPA Effingham
Goeckner Bros
AutoZone

Best Auto Repair Place
Rock’s Advanced Auto Care
Al’s Tire Mart & Electronics
Webster Tire and Auto
Russ Braunecker’s
Ruholl Auto Body
(formerly Rick Meyer Auto Body)
Goeckner Bros

Best ATV Dealer
CW Motorsports
Owen Motor Sports
Car Corral Polaris
Weber Brothers / W Bros

Best Auto Body Shop
Rock’s Advanced Auto Care
Ruholl Auto Body (former Rick Meyer Auto Body)
Willenborg’s Reconditioning
C Berts Body Shop
Probst Auto Body

Best Auto Dealer Service Dept.
Dan Hecht Chevrolet Toyota
Russ Braunecker’s
Webster Tire & Auto Service / Teutopolis Auto Sales
Northside Ford
Goeckner Bros
Roy Schmidt Honda

Best Auto Glass Repair
Schmidty’s Auto Glass
Double K Auto Glass
Quality Glass
Auto Glass Unlimited

Best Auto Repair Place
Rock’s Advanced Auto Care
Al’s Tire Mart & Electronics
Webster Tire and Auto
Russ Braunecker’s
Ruholl Auto Body
(formerly Rick Meyer Auto Body)
Goeckner Bros

It’s Almost Home...
We Buy & Sell Quality Used Furniture and Home Decor!
Thank you for nominating us!
We Love our customers!!!
1607 S. Banker St. in Effingham • 217-342-6001
Hours: Mon. 10-5 • Tues. 10-5 • Wed. 10-9 • Thurs. 10-5 • Fri. 10-6:30 • Sat. 10-3 • Sun. 10-3
Main Parking In The Back
Open 7 days a Week

Schackmann HEARING
Thank You for Nominating Us!
Nomination Categories:
☑ Best Hearing Aid Clinic
☑ Best Hearing Aid Specialist: Kerri Schackmann
Moving in March to 209 N. 3rd St., Effingham
Better Hearing through Better Care
212 E. Jefferson Ave., Suite 2
Effingham, IL
217-342-0304
Fax: 217-342-0384
Email: info@shackmannhearing.com
Kerri Schackmann
Bonnie Porter
Best Boat Dealer
Lake Sara Marina

Best Car Rental
Dan Hecht Chevrolet Toyota
Goeckner Bros
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Budget Car Rental
The Car Company

Best Car Wash
Southtown Car Wash
Evergreen Car Wash
Willenborg’s Reconditioning
Rainstorm Effingham
Jansen’s Auto Sales Midwest
Toppers & Accessories
Mighty Max

Best Mechanic
Dean Willenborg (Crossroads Truck Equipment)
Jason Flach (Effingham Auto Repair)
Randy Hansen (Goeckner Bros)
Josh Porter (Porterformance Auto Care)
Troy Thoele (Northside Ford)
Webster Tire & Auto

Best Motorcycle Dealer
Legacy Harley-Davidson
CW Motorsports
Owen Motor Sports
Weber Brothers / W Bros

Best Motorcycle / ATV Repair
Legacy Harley-Davidson
CW Motorsports
Owen Motor Sports
Weber Brothers / W Bros

Best New Car Dealer
Roy Schmidt Honda
Russ Braunecker’s
Pilson Auto Center
Goeckner Bros
Northside Ford
Dan Hecht Chevrolet Toyota

Best New Car Salesperson
Clint Antrim (Roy Schmidt Honda)
Cody Frailey (Dan Hecht Chevrolet Toyota)
Robert Tuman (Northside Ford)
Steve Gordon (Pilson Auto Center)
Mark Mayhood (Northside Ford)

Best Oil Change Place
Webster Tire and Auto
Al’s Tire Mart & Electronics
Walmart
Goeckner Bros
Pro-Lube / Valvoline Instant Oil Change

We would like to thank our wonderful community for these three nominations. The love and support you guys have shown is simply amazing.
Thank you
Chef Geno

♦ 400 W. Clark
Effingham
♦ 217.207.0226

LIONS
DISTINCTIVE WINES

Thanks for Nominating
LIONS LIQUORS
as
Best
Liquor Store

We Appreciate Your Vote and Your Business!

204 S. Henrietta, Effingham, IL 62401
Across from Walgreens
217-347-5926 • lionsliquors2@gmail.com

LUCIA’S
ITALIAN KITCHEN

Locally Owned Store
Best Tire Dealer
Webster Tire and Auto
Al's Tire Mart & Electronics
Effingham Tire and Auto
Walmart
Tim's Quality Tire

Best Transmission Repair
Beck's Auto Body & Repair
DHB Transmission
Rock's Advanced Auto Care
Dan Hecht Chevrolet Toyota
Webster Tire & Auto

Best Trucking Co.
Huelsing Trucking, LLC
Rush Truck Center
Nelson Trucking
Probst Trucking
3 Sisters Logistics

Best Used Car Dealer
Sperry Sales
Northside Ford
Russ Braunecker's
Jansen's Auto Sales
Pilson Auto Center
Dan Hecht Chevrolet Toyota

Best Used Car Salesperson
Greg Sperry (Sperry Sales)
Cody Frailey (Dan Hecht
Chevrolet Toyota)
Mike Hoffmeister (A & H
Implement)
Trevor Arsenault (Dan Hecht
Chevrolet Toyota)
Steve Gordon (Pilson Auto
Center)

Best Wrecker Service
Tri Power Towing & Recovery
Heartland Towing & Recovery
1st Class Wrecker Service, LLC
Mattoon, IL
Foreman's Towing & Repair

Thank You for Nominating us as Best Entertainment Venue

Thank you!
For nominating us as one of the top 5 auctioneers in the EDN area.

KRILE AUCTION SERVICE
Conducting Live & Online Auctions
Farm Land – Machinery – Real Estate
Estates – Antiques – Consignments

Justin Krile: 217-246-1332
Email: krileauction@gmail.com
Follow us on Facebook
Website: www.krileauction.com

We appreciate your vote!
Best Appliance Dealer
Weber Bros
Probst Refrigeration & Heating
Menards
Roger's Home Appliances
Card's Appliance Sales & Service

Best Archery Shop
Smith Archery, LLC
Buckstop Archery
Addis Archery

Best Athletic Good Store
Accuracy Firearms
Hibbett Sports

Best Bridal Store
Vayda Jane Bridal
Wild Rose Formals

Best Children's Clothing Store
It's So You Boutique
Sweet Pea & Me
Beanstalk Boutique
Kohl's
Ten Brooke LeAnne

Best Children's Clothing Store
It's So You Boutique
Sweet Pea & Me
Beanstalk Boutique
Kohl's
Ten Brooke LeAnne

Best Butcher Shop
Nuxoll Food Center
J & J Processing
Kirby Foods IGA Plus
Howe's Custom Deer Processing
McMahon Meats

Best Carpet Dealer
Habing Furniture & Flooring
Wright's Furniture and Flooring
Menards
Holland House
Hoedebecke Flooring

Best CBD Dispensary
RISE Effingham
Lucky Luciano’s Smoke Shop

Best Cellular Phone Dealer
Verizon - Al's Tire Mart and Electronics
Walmart
AT&T
Russell Cellular-Verizon

Best Computer Store
Effingham Computer Sales and Service
Jansen Computer Sales & Repair
Magoo & Associates, LLC
Walmart
KTD Computers
SDS Technology

Best Convenience Store
Wessel's
Effingham Fast Stop
Casey's General Store
Walmart
Midtown Fuels (Kirby Foods IGA Plus)

Best Children's Clothing Store
It's So You Boutique
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People's Choice Voting

Best Flooring Store
CR Flooring
Holland House Flooring
Wright’s Furniture & Flooring
Menards
Hoedebecke Flooring

Best Furniture Store
(Holland House Flooring
Wright’s Furniture and Flooring
W.S. Broom & Co Furniture
Slumberland
Niebrugge Furniture

Best Furniture Store
(Used)
It’s Almost Home
Silk Purse
Niebrugge Furniture

Best Game Place
GameStop
Gopher’s Grill
Walmart
D-J’s Party Supply
Midtown Fuels (Kirby Foods
IGA Plus)

THE NOMINATIONS ARE IN

VOTE FOR US!
EDN PEOPLES CHOICE

RETAIL STORES

Shop Locally.
HELP REBUILD
OUR ECONOMY!

THANK YOU
FOR NOMINATING ME AS A
FAVORITE SURGEON

- Military Service: United States Air Force
- Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service
- 2004 Rotary Vocational Excellence Award
- 2006 Illinois Humanities Service Award
- 2013 BESI Award (Business Ethics & Social Involvement)
- 2014 Effingham County Citizen of the Year Award
- Director, Women’s Wellness and Cancer Services,
  St. Anthony’s Memorial Hospital
- 2018 MD Anderson Cancer Center Certified Physician
- Fellow, American College of Surgeons
- Member of: American Society of Breast Surgeons,
  Society of Surgical Oncology
- Over 40 years of Service to the Effingham Community

Ruben Boyajian, MD | Emily Boyajian, NP
St. Anthony’s Health Center • 900 West Temple, Building B, Suite 2500, Effingham IL 62401
217 347 2255

Mark Schackmann
Auctioneer
IL # 0400003.32
IN #AU09200265

THANK YOU for your votes!
BEST AUCTIONEER

801 W. Jefferson Ave., Effingham, IL
Office # (217) 342-4500
Cell Phone # (618) 562-0824
www.schackmannrealty.com
Best Garden Center
Alwerdt’s Gardens
Walmart
Bullard’s Landscaping
& Nursery
Menards
Potted Charm

Best Gift Shop
Burkland’s Florist & Gifts
Hazel Jayne Crystals and Gift Shop
Jack Flash
Cracker Barrel
Brown’s Drug Store
The Beanstalk Boutique

Best Greeting Card Store
Walmart
Brown’s Drug Store
Hazel Jayne Crystals and Gift Shop
Burkland’s Florist & Gifts
Dollar Tree

Best Grocery Store
Kirby Foods IGA Plus
Heartland Health Food
Walmart
Nuxoll Food Center
Aldi

Best Gun Shop
Accuracy Firearms
Gaddis Guns
County Line Shooting Center
Locked and Loaded

THANK YOU!
for nominating us for People’s Choice
Best Banking Institution & Best Mortgage Company

www.washingtonsavings.net
RETAIL STORES

Best Hardware Store
Weber Bros
The Equity
Menards
Effingham Builder’s Supply
Rural King

Best Hunting/Fishing Supplies Shop
Walmart
Rural King
Wessel’s

Best Jewelry Store
Weber’s Jewelry
Reiniger Jewelers
Kay Jewelers
Anderson’s Jewelry
Rauchs Jewelry

Best Lawn / Garden Store
Rural King
Menards
Bahrns Equipment
Heartland Landscaping
Maxedon Landscaping & Outdoor Solutions

Best Liquor Store
A1 Liquors
Top Shelf Beer, Wine & Spirits
D-J’s Party Supply
Lions Liquor
Village Wine & Spirits

Best Meat Department
Nuxoll Food Center
Kirby Foods IGA Plus
J & J Meat Processing
Beecher City Foodliner
McMahon Meats

Best Men’s Clothing Store
Weber’s Clothing
Kohl’s
Hibbett Sports
Walmart

Best Music Store
America’s Groove Record Store
Chesnut Music

Best Paint Dealer
Sherwin Williams
Menards
Dust & Son

Best Party Supply Store
Party Worx
Dollar Tree
Hobby Lobby

Best Produce / Produce Dept
Kirby Foods IGA Plus
Aldi
Walmart
Seans Produce Stand
Martin’s IGA of Newton

Best Resale Shop
Nearly New Fashions
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The importance of small businesses to the economy cannot be overstated. Though national chains often garner publicity, local businesses are equally, if not exceedingly, worthy of attention.

What defines a small business as 'small' varies significantly, but these businesses are generally privately owned and generate far less revenue than big corporations. General consensus also defines small businesses as companies with fewer than 500 paid employees, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Here's a deep look at why small businesses are so vital, and why consumers should direct more of their purchasing power to smaller companies rather than the big box retailers and other national chains.

1. Autonomy and diversity
   The layout and offerings at national chains will be identical whether you live in the mountains or at the beach. Big box stores follow a consistent marketing strategy and look the same regardless of where they are located. That familiarity can come at the cost of variety. On the other hand, an independent business offers the products and services that are reflective of the customers and the community they serve.

2. Local hiring strategy
   Certain big box retailers will hire local residents, but hiring policies may push for promoting from within the organization. This could mean relocating an employee rather than bringing in someone from the community who may be more in tune with local sensibilities. Small businesses may be more inclined to hire residents they know and keep hiring centralized to the local area - something that keeps more resources and money in the community.

3. Adaptability and change
   Local businesses can move more quickly to respond to economic factors that require change. Since they are focused more on the needs of their customers rather than stockholders, changes can be implemented rapidly without having to go through red tape, meetings and updates to corporate policies. Changes also can be customized to the local community at large.

4. Investing in the town
   According to the financial resource Financial Slot, shopping at locally owned businesses rather than big box retailers keeps more money in the community. Local property taxes and other taxes paid by the businesses go right back into the community. This helps raise overall value for homeowners and can even reduce their taxes. The funding helps keep police, fire and school departments functioning properly.

5. Turnover is greater
   While no one wants to see a small business fail, that fate is sometimes unavoidable. However, that turnover helps teach communities what was done poorly and helps others learn from those mistakes. It also means fresh businesses will come in and replace the old, driving new growth, opportunity and competition that keeps prices competitive.

The benefits of a thriving small business sector are numerous. Consumers can do their part by patronizing these firms more frequently.

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How consumers can help small businesses

Small businesses continue to be the backbone of the North American business community. According to the career resource Zippia, there are 33.2 million small businesses in the United States. Those organizations employ around 62 million people. The financial wellness company Fortunly says that small businesses account for nearly half of all private sector jobs in Canada. In fact, small employer businesses made up 98.1 percent of all businesses in Canada in 2021. Despite the prevalence of small businesses and the abundance of people willing to become entrepreneurs, 20 percent of these firms fail within the first year, and only 55 percent survive five years or more, says Zippia. The COVID-19 pandemic was particularly harsh on small businesses. However, many of them survived through digitization that they plan to continue to utilize even when the pandemic is long gone.

Maintaining a small business through economic highs and lows and other issues often comes down to customer involvement. Consumers are the driving forces behind the success of small businesses. Here are some effective ways for consumers to help small businesses grow.
• **Shop local.** The ‘Shop Local’ movement has been around for awhile but remains as relevant as ever. Shopping local means becoming repeat patrons at the independent businesses that comprise Main Street as opposed to the chain stores that dominate strip malls.
• **Share on social.** Social media can be a great way to spread the word about businesses you like and point out particular examples why you shop there. Utilizing social media platforms to highlight the positive attributes of a business can help that business grow.
• **Call direct for take-out orders.** Those ubiquitous third-party food delivery services may be convenient, but businesses have to share the profit from your purchase with the delivery service, cutting into their bottom lines. Pick up your order or rely on the restaurants’ own delivery teams.
• **Engage with the business online.** Complicated algorithms and other factors determine how a business’ website or social media page gets
How to make a review as beneficial as possible for local businesses

Patronizing a business and thanking its staff on your way out can help business owners and their employees feel good about the work they’re doing. Though such gestures will never go out of style, customers can do even more to help the small businesses in their communities.

Since the internet became such a vital part of life, online reviews have become increasingly important seen by the public. You can help things along by liking pages, visiting the website frequently and sharing any posts.

• **Speak about a business in person.** When you’re dining with friends or chatting with a stranger, try to push and recommend businesses you support. If someone compliments your lawn, shoes or haircut, mention the businesses that did the work or sold you the products.

• **Suggest opportunities for exposure.** If you know about a school or organization looking for vendors, make the suggestion to a small business you use frequently. They may get new customers from participating in the event.

Small businesses are driving forces in the economy. Consumers can do their part to keep them thriving and profitable.

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**SMALL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34**

According to BrightLocal’s Local Consumer Review Survey 2022, 78 percent of consumers use the internet more than once a week to learn about local businesses. What’s more, the survey found that a whopping 99 percent of consumers have used the internet to find information about a local business in the last year.

The BrightLocal survey also found that positive reviews can be especially beneficial to local businesses. Consumers indicated that written reviews describing a positive experience and reviews with a high star rating were the most significant review factors to make them feel positively about a local business.

The value of positive reviews for local businesses

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See REVIEW on 37

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The numbers don’t lie. Locally owned businesses may be classified as ‘small,’ but they have a big impact on the national economy. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Business Employment Dynamics report, small businesses created 10.5 million net new jobs between 2000 and 2019, accounting for 65.1 percent of net new jobs created since 2000 in the United States. The Government of Canada reports that the number of small businesses in Canada in 2020 was far greater than the number of medium and large businesses, accounting for 97.9 percent of all the businesses in the country.

Supporting locally owned businesses is a great way to support a neighbor, but that’s not the only attraction. Here are several reasons to shop small.

**The feel-good factor**

Doing for others certainly has an impact on the person on the receiving end, but also benefits the do-gooders. A November 2020 survey by Union Bank found that 72 percent of Americans said supporting small businesses was more important than getting the best deals. That may be due to the feeling of helping out a fellow neighbor.

**Create job opportunities**

Shopping at small businesses keeps those establishments afloat, and it also keeps their employees afloat. Small businesses are the largest employers in the United States. That’s also true in Canada, where 68.8 percent of the total labor force works for a small business. A person may never know when he or she - or a relative - will need a job. Keeping small businesses viable provides a strong job market for locals.

**Keep more money in the community**

The Small Business Administration says $48 out of every $100 spent at a small business stays in the community. Spend the same $100 at a national retailer and only $14 stays.

**Enjoy a more local flavor**

National retailers and other businesses follow a global business model that may not allow for much customization, but small businesses can provide products or services that relate directly to the needs of the communities they serve. These same small businesses also may be more inclined to work with local vendors and start-ups than national companies that have global supply chains.

**REVIEW**

Continued from page 35

is undeniable. Consumers who want to help the small businesses in their communities can consider these tips to ensure their reviews prove as beneficial as possible for local businesses.

- **Go to the right place.** A review is only helpful if it’s seen. The BrightLocal survey found that, in 2021, Google (81 percent), Yelp (53 percent) and Facebook (48 percent) were the three most utilized sites or apps to evaluate local businesses. The popularity of Google and Yelp in particular grew considerably between 2020 and 2021, suggesting that consumers can do the most good by leaving positive reviews on one or both of these sites.

- **Recognize that recency matters.** BrightLocal notes that the number of consumers willing to trust reviews left as long as year ago is on the rise. However, consumers who have already reviewed a company in the distant past should know that only 7 percent of consumers feel that recency of review does not affect their decision. Consumers who really want to help a local business they’ve already reviewed can leave a new review if their previous one was posted more than a year ago.

- **Leave a review even if the business already has plenty.** The value of recent reviews has already been noted, but it’s equally important to point out how valuable the volume of reviews can be. The BrightLocal survey found that 39 percent of consumers indicated a business having more reviews than another business they’re considering is one of a handful of deciding factors when they must choose which firm to patronize. So even if a business already has lots of positive reviews, one more positive review can still prove beneficial. Consumers can tailor their online reviews so they’re as beneficial as possible for the local businesses that help their communities thrive.
Thank you.

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Questions to ask when soliciting customer feedback

The value of customer feedback is significant. According to Dimension Data's 2017 Global Consumer Experience Benchmarking Report, 81 percent of organizations credit improving the customer experience with differentiating them from their competitors. In addition, 84 percent of firms reported a growth in revenue after implementing strategies to improve the customer experience.

In order to improve the customer experience, business owners must first recognize what their customers want. Soliciting feedback from patrons can help business owners identify what their customers want. Thanks to email, social media and online services like Google Reviews, it's now easier than ever for businesses to solicit and identify customer needs. In addition to asking patrons to review their experiences online, business owners can ask the following questions to improve experiences for their customers:

- How did you hear about us?
- Did we meet your expectations?
- Was the staff helpful?
- How could staff be more helpful?
- What was the most enjoyable part of your experience with our business?
- What do you most enjoy about our products or services?
- Did you shop online or in store or both?
- How can we improve your in store or online shopping experience?
- Are you likely to recommend us to friends and family?
- What would you change about your experience?

These questions are straightforward and can be answered in a matter of minutes, but honest feedback from customers can be incredibly valuable to business owners. Feedback also can be valuable for customers, especially when they feel their voices have been heard. In fact, a recent report from Apptentive, who specialize in customer feedback services, indicated that 97 percent of customers are somewhat likely to exhibit brand loyalty to a company that implements their feedback.
Thank you for nominating Chris A. Koester and Tracy A. Willenborg for 2023 People’s Choice for Best Attorney and for nominating Stacy Welter as Best Front Desk Receptionist!