

Buy Local Meeting Notes - November 19, 2010

Individual & Family Economic Stability Team

Team Goal: Carroll County becomes one of the top three counties in NH by supporting the achievement of individual and family economic security.

Attendance: Sally Flagg, Aislinn Johnson, Henry Spencer, Christiana Amesquita, Ray O'Brien, Karen Sulewski, Christine MacDonald, Diane Cook Johnson, Jennifer Allen, Laurie Bonica, Cimbria Badenhause, Joel Wotton, Kathy Wotton, Jerry Cline, Denise Roy-Palmer, Cyndi Paulin

Next Meeting: Friday, December 17th at 3:00 pm at Tri-County CAP (location to be confirmed). Finish out your work week with us!

The meeting focused on exploring launching a buy local campaign in Carroll County. The group reviewed the reasons for starting a buy local campaign county-wide and agreed upon some first steps including promoting Plaid Friday.

Why Buy Local in Carroll County? The team had previously looked at the concerns about livable wages and benefits for county residents and came to the conclusion that the best way to influence that would be to strengthen existing local businesses; most businesses treat their employees the best they can and would do more for them if they had the revenue to do so. The simplest way to increase revenues would be to shift some of the existing spending back toward local businesses which has a real bottom-line impact in the community by keeping and circulating more money in the local economy. The group also reviewed why the focus would be at a county level rather than town-by-town; that the effort could be more successful and sustainable if undertaken cooperatively at a county level rather than several separate efforts going at the same time.

The group **strongly agreed that the buy local effort should focus not only on retail but also include local farms, restaurants, artists, services and other parts of the local economy.** People agree that it's a good time for a buy local effort because there is already buzz about the idea including the beginning farmers group that is already thinking about this. The group felt combining efforts in working together would yield better results for all.

Some first steps/actions:

- **A first action agreed upon by the group was to promote plaid Friday.** Plaid Friday is a national effort to counterbalance black Friday and encourage people to shop at local businesses as part of their holiday shopping. The group agreed to email various contacts they had to spread the word, specifically emailing three businesses at a minimum. Cyndi will forward the plaid Friday information from Cimbria to the group as well as send it out to the big email list and post on the CCU Facebook page. (Don't forget to report back on your outreach effort and any results that you hear about.)
- Some first steps will include creating a **logo** to be used for decals or placards that would help the public identify local businesses as we work to kick this off.

- Another first step will be creating a **directory** of local businesses as part of building a **website**. Some people also thought a hard-copy directory would also be important and suggested that people could print their own copies and share them in their community.
- The group is working on a **'field trip' to Portland Maine** to get tips from their Buy Local effort (hopefully December, 8th, 9th or 10th).
- Another idea was using bulletin boards both physical and virtual to spread the news about buy local efforts. There was a suggestion to create a directory of bulletin boards around the county so that people would know where to post information.

Note: the Plaid Friday effort was picked up by WMWV and they called us for information to do a story on Plaid Friday!

The meeting concluded with people agreeing to talk up buy local as well as Plaid Friday in to invite people to the next meeting.