

Shopping locally the focus of day

By JENNIFER TRANMER Staff writer | Posted: Friday, November 27, 2015 4:00 pm

ROCKTON — It's that same holiday scene: People who have been up since 4 a.m., running around like madmen trying to get all the best deals they can.

Well, this year Rockton is promoting a different tradition: Small Business Saturday.

"I think (Small Business Saturday) kind of gives people the chance to look for something that is a little more specialized and that caters to the individual, rather than something that is mass produced," said Jessica Chavers, manager of Gem Shop & Diamond Source LCC.

Small Business Saturday launches this Saturday in downtown Rockton with participating businesses and retailers, including The Gem Shop, Rubies n Rust, various restaurants and more. The event is part of a nationwide event that began in 2010.

Rockton Planning and Zoning Administrator Tricia Diduch said promoting small independent businesses is something she is passionate about, and she wants to market them collectively.

"I'm not all shop local or shop small. I do shopping at national retailers, but this is helping to market and strengthen our existing businesses and retailers that are the core of downtown," Diduch said.

In tandem with the new event, the village is also hosting a giveaway. For every purchase made at a participating downtown business, shoppers will receive a drawing entry for a chance to win any one of the prizes donated by the almost 20 participating businesses. Entry forms may be left with merchants or slipped into the utilities payment slot at Rockton Village Hall, 110 E. Main St. Forms are due by noon Friday, Dec. 4 and the drawing will be done that afternoon. Village Hall will be open from 4 - 7 p.m. during the Rockton Christmas Walk on Saturday, Dec. 5 for those who wish to claim their prize.

Diduch said this was just a small added incentive to encourage shoppers, but added she already has plans to grow the event next year with more fun ideas for shoppers.

Village President Dale Adams said this is a way to encourage people to come and see what the downtown has to offer.

"This is just another effort to improve the success of downtown businesses," Adams said.

According to a press release from the Village of Rockton, American Express launched the "#shoplocal" event to "celebrate and strengthen America's small, independent businesses in response to the shopping madness of Black Friday."

Chavers said she thought this event will be a good way to promote the customer service that shoppers get at a small family business.

“It seems to me like customer service is a dying art these days,” she said. “It seems really strange that many big businesses don’t focus on customer service when that is what keeps people coming back and helps us do well ... making everybody happy is definitely the way to go.”

For more information on participating businesses in Rockton, visit the Village of Rockton Facebook page under the “Small Business Saturday” event listing.