

Buy Baltimore campaign kicks off next week

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Nov 30, 2006 3:00 AM (7 hrs ago)

BALTIMORE -

Forget shopping at the mall, at least for next week.

Instead, visit a local store — and help the environment at the same time.

That's the message of the Chesapeake Sustainable Business Alliance. The group encourages businesses to be environmentally responsible while encouraging consumers to shop at their local stores.

“Every time you go to the mall you burn a lot of fossil fuels,” said Keith Lasoya, executive director of Chesapeake Sustainable Business Alliance. “Consumers should put local businesses on their shopping list first,” Lasoya said.

Beginning Dec. 2, the alliance kicks off its first Buy Local Baltimore campaign. The goal of the weeklong campaign is to encourage consumers to shop at local, independently owned businesses. More than 300 Baltimore businesses are participating.

“We educate the public to reduce material and energy costs, recycle and reuse waste, buy and sell local,” Lasoya said.

He said that the local campaign targets specific neighborhoods with “Buy Fells Point” and Buy Pigtown” efforts.

According to a study by the alliance, for every \$100 spent at a locally owned business, \$45 comes back into the community and the local tax bases. The alliance study says that for every \$100 spent at a nonlocal chain store, \$14 comes back into the local economy.

Some Baltimore companies, hope that the buy-local campaign will attract more business.

Since Claudia Towles and her husband bought aMuse in Fells Point in March, they have dedicated themselves to working with a local schools and community groups.

AMuse sells unique education related toys, said Towles, who added that the store caters to buyers ages “zero to 107.”

“We live in this community; we have a business here. This is all about building relationships,” Towles said.

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