FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Independent Businesses Poised to Draw Shoppers This Holiday Season

November 10, 2014 — While the analysts are already chattering about which big-box stores will open on Thanksgiving Day this year, they’re missing the holiday shopping story that’s more important to many Americans. Over the past few years, locally owned stores have experienced a resurgence, as savvy customers realize that they offer high quality and individual products, personalized service, and stronger economic returns for their communities.

This season, tap into what’s on Americans’ minds, and include locally owned business in your coverage.

• Events like Small Business Saturday (Nov. 29), Indies First (Nov. 29), Back to Black Friday (Nov. 28), and Neighborhood Toy Store Day (Nov. 8) will draw tens of thousands of people, including beloved authors like Neil Gaiman and Amanda Palmer, into independent retail stores.

• Despite the hype about online shopping, over 90 percent of 4th quarter shopping will take place in a brick-and-mortar businesses, based on trend data from the U.S. Commerce Department. Part of the reason people love shopping brick-and-mortar is that, research shows, when they’re shopping in person, they are far more likely to discover a new author, an innovative toy, or something else they didn’t expect.

• New data show that consumers are seeking out independent retailers in growing numbers. Six in 10 customers say they go out of their way to shop at small businesses, and small business owners are feeling the effects. In a survey this year, 62 percent said that public awareness of the benefits of choosing locally owned businesses is on the rise, and they reported revenue growth of 5.3 percent on average in 2013.

• Independent retailers are making a comeback in some categories. The number of independent bookstores has increased more than 20 percent over the past five years, according to membership numbers from the American Booksellers Association, and the number of small independent grocers and local restaurants has also climbed. Numbers like this are fueling Local First alliances, which boast more than 50,000 independent business members in 150-plus U.S. cities.

• New research confirms that shopping local is better for your local economy. One recent study, from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, found that counties with more locally owned businesses have experienced higher income and employment growth over the last decade. While every $10 million in customer spending at Amazon.com creates 14 jobs, the same amount spent at local, brick-and-mortar stores creates 57 jobs—75 percent more.

For citations for the above statistics and more facts about independent business, take a look at the attached infographic.

“We’ve seen a remarkable shift in the last few years. Many people are rediscovering the advantages of locally owned, independent businesses,” says Stacy Mitchell, coordinator of the Advocates for Independent Business, a coalition of 14 national small business groups.
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The Advocates for Independent Business (AIB) is a coalition of 14 national organizations, collectively representing over 100,000 small businesses that employ 600,000 people and provide over $10 billion in annual payroll. More at http://indiebizadvocates.org