



NEWS RELEASE

York County Public Affairs
www.yorkcounty.gov



Gail Whittaker, Public Information Officer
757-890-3310 desk - 757-817-2665 cell
whittgl@yorkcounty.gov

York County launches fresh buy-local initiatives

*New video series and e-news reinvigorate County's
"Keep It In York County" outreach to residents, visitors and business owner*

October 30, 2024

In honor of Hampton Roads' Buy Local Month this November, York County is excited to announce its latest initiatives to support local businesses: a three-part video series and a quarterly eblast to residents.

The Department of Economic and Tourism Development introduced its "Keep It in York County" campaign more than two decades ago, in partnership with the York County Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Authority. It aims to:

- Connect with residents, visitors and business owners
- Foster community engagement
- Build York County pride
- Educate residents on the value of local business to their lives
- Encourage all to shop and dine locally
- Remind business owners to patronize fellow local businesses
- Showcase York County's diverse local businesses

The image shows the cover of a "Buy Local BUZZ" e-news publication for September 2024. At the top left is a map of York County with the text "Buy Local BUZZ". At the top right is the York County Virginia logo. Below the logo is the date "SEPTEMBER 2024". The main headline reads "York County has a cornucopia of fall fun". To the left of the headline is a green sidebar with a list of topics: "INSIDE", "Hometown Tourist", "Citizen Rewards", "Virginia Beer Co. Opens 2nd Location", "Fall Nuptials in Yorktown", "Business Awards", "Why Buy Local Video Released", "Upcoming Events", "Celebrity Sighting at County Grill & Smokehouse", "Celebrating Business Anniversaries", "Insider Tip: Thread Perfection Contests", "New In Town", and "The Way It Was". To the right of the sidebar is a photograph of a woman and children painting pumpkins. Below the photo is a short paragraph of text. At the bottom of the page is the text "HOMETOWN TOURIST New sports centers to hit the County".

... all of which are ultimately designed to bolster economic vitality.

The quarterly e-newsletter, called *Buy Local Buzz*, spotlights upcoming events, new business openings, hidden gems (like the free skate days for residents at Chilled Ponds ice complex) and special sections about local businesses—such as Meet the Maker, Behind the Scenes and Hometown Tourist.

The three dynamic videos (which were, of course, produced by a York County company, Two Rivers Media) highlight the importance of patronizing small, locally owned businesses. They spotlight county businesses, their owners, and their contributions to the community—providing a glimpse at what makes local businesses special. Each episode delves into the passion, innovation and dedication that define York County’s small business landscape.

The series also emphasizes the significant impact of buying local, including:

- Reduced tax burden on residents
- More donations and volunteers for local nonprofits
- Added jobs
- Greater sense of community



“When you buy local, you are investing in our community’s future generation,” said Brian Ulsh, owner of local business WOLF Martial Arts Academy, in one video.

“You are building a stronger community and keeping your dollars right here at home,” said another business owner in the series, Stephanie Geddings of GeddinFit.

And as a local shopper described, “I love supporting local families and neighbors.”

In addition to these efforts, the County will promote Small Business Saturday, a nationwide annual event held the day after Black Friday. Focused on shopping at small and independent businesses, Small Business Saturday falls on November 30 this year. York County’s economic development staff will spend the weeks leading up to this event providing businesses with tips and advice to help them capitalize on this opportunity. Business owners not already receiving emails can subscribe at YesYorkCounty.com.

"It's not simply about buying things, as is the focus of Black Friday and Cyber Monday," said Kristi Olsen-Hayes, Director of Economic and Tourism Development for the County. "It's about helping 'Keep It in the County' and supporting the people who make York County awesome. Buying local is a critical commitment to our economic health today and our character in the future."



A study conducted by American Express found that \$0.68 of every dollar spent at a small business in the United States stays in the local community. It also showed that every dollar spent at small businesses creates an additional \$0.48 in local business activity, as a result of employees and local businesses purchasing these goods and services.

"Our local businesses are the heart and soul of York County," said Olsen-Hayes.

In addition to watching the videos and subscribing to the e-news, residents are encouraged to enroll in the county's Citizen Rewards discount program (participating businesses are posted yorkcounty.gov/272/Citizen-Rewards), attend community events and markets, and share their support for York County businesses on social media using the hashtag #KeepItInYorkCounty.

For more information about the campaign, video series and Small Business Saturday, visit KeepItInYorkCounty.com or follow us on Facebook @YesYorkVA.

About York County Economic Development

York County seeks to create a diverse economic base through continually recruiting, growing and retaining business across a variety of industries. The **Department of Economic and Tourism Development** is dedicated to expanding York County's tax base through capital investment in the County; promoting tourism; supporting large, small and home-based businesses; and providing new employment opportunities for County residents. Its efforts result in improved quality of life throughout York County, including charitable giving, volunteerism, and job creation.

The Department of Economic and Tourism Development works in cooperation with many regional and state agencies to pursue its mission. Key among these allies are the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Hampton Roads Alliance, Hampton Roads

Small Business Development Center, and local Chambers of Commerce. Its strongest ally is the **York County Economic Development Authority (EDA)**. Established in 1972, the EDA is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia and has unique powers established in the Code of Virginia. The EDA is a conduit for non-taxable industrial revenue bonds, and can legally own, develop, and sell/lease commercial real estate. It also can provide incentives necessary to close deals within targeted industry sectors. Learn more at YesYorkCounty.com.