

Southern Idaho Economic Development Joins Effort to Support Small Businesses during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Idahoans are encouraged to Support Local Gems on Friday, April 24th, 2020

TWIN FALLS, Idaho – Today, Southern Idaho Economic Development joined U.S. Senator for Idaho Jim Risch and the Idaho Department of Commerce to announce the creation of “Support Local Gems,” which will serve as an all-day event to support Idaho small businesses whose operations have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

On Friday, April 24th, 2020, Idahoans are invited to Support Local Gems by giving their business to their favorite local shops and restaurants. Idahoans can get involved by shopping at small businesses online, purchasing gift cards for future use or for loved ones, ordering take-out or delivery from local restaurants, writing a review online, posting on social media about a local business, or simply saying thank you.

Following the April 24th event, Visit Idaho will continue to promote awareness of the Support Local Gems program by sharing resources as well as the stories of Idaho communities, citizens, and small businesses on visitidaho.org and across its social media channels.

Additional supporters of Support Local Gems include Governor Brad Little, Senator Mike Crapo, Congressman Mike Simpson, Congressman Russ Fulcher, Association of Idaho Cities, Idaho Association of Counties, Idaho Chamber Alliance, Idaho Retailers Association, Idaho Lodging and Restaurant Association, Idaho Association of Commerce & Industry (IACI), and the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce.

“We are thrilled to take part in this movement. The Magic Valley’s small businesses bring vibrancy to our downtowns, community and economy,” said Connie Stopher, Executive Director of Southern Idaho Economic Development. “We are here to support local businesses in any way they need it, on Friday, April 24th and beyond.”

“Idaho small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities and the backbone of our state’s economy. The ongoing COVID-19 outbreak has forced widespread closures of small businesses across the Gem State, threatening livelihoods, acute job losses, and imperiling the future of Main Street establishments across the state,” **said Risch**. “There are many ways to support these businesses, on Friday, April 24th, I invite you to find a way to express your support for the small businesses that power our economy and make our communities thrive.”

“Idaho will be better positioned for a strong economic comeback because we are making difficult changes in how we live and work in the short-term, and our small businesses need our support more than ever,” **Little said**. “I urge all citizens who are able to spend money and support small business on Friday, April 24th.”

Background: Today’s small businesses face unprecedented hardships as they work to remain viable through the COVID-19 outbreak. Support Local Gems is an opportunity for Idahoans to find ways to support small businesses through low- and no-contact means, to help promote local jobs in their communities.

Starting April 27th, Idaho Commerce and Visit Idaho will extend the one-day Support Local Gems event into a 10-week initiative, serving to keep this vital awareness effort top of mind for Idahoans. Visit Idaho will share helpful resources and content on visitidaho.org and across its social media channels to encourage partners, citizens, and communities around the state to support this initiative in their respective area. Additionally, Idaho Commerce and Visit Idaho will spotlight similar efforts already underway in several Idaho communities, helping to further rally support for small businesses of all sizes — from Main Street organizations to the Gem State's more remote establishments.

If your organization or small business would like to get involved in the Support Local Gems initiative, email press@risch.senate.gov.