

## So, *why* Buy Local?

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In September of last year the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce launched a campaign to encourage the City of Salinas to Buy Local. Let me be clear on this one, when I say City of Salinas, yes, I am speaking about our City administration and elected officials – but I am also referring to YOU!

The Buy Local Taskforce knew that we had to ensure that our city administration was leading by example, so we proposed the Buy Local ordinance that was adopted by the City of Salinas in September. This ordinance was simply the first step in a long list of “to do’s” we knew had to be addressed.

What is local? Local refers to any business/service that operates within the city of Salinas, from “mom & pop” to big box and everything in between. Why Buy Local? It is pretty straightforward – when we as members of this community (and those who are visiting our beautiful town) Buy Local we are reinvesting in our community. How? Sales Tax Revenue!

Sales tax revenue represents a significant amount of operating funds for the City of Salinas. Through sales tax revenue we can positively affect the services we expect as members of this community. Do you want a more substantial police force? Buy Local. Do you want extended library hours? Buy Local. Do you enjoy our parks and recreation options (or, you want more/better parks and recreation options)? Buy Local. Fire Protection? Yup! Buy Local.

The Chamber is working hard to ensure that we are promoting our Member businesses to one another through our Member to Member Benefit program. If you are a local business who uses goods and services of other businesses (and who doesn’t?) we urge you to look local first! There is a perception that when you Buy Local you pay more. I urge you to take a second look. Need materials printed for your office? Request a bid from a local printer, along with your normal company of preference, and compare. You may be surprised. As a business you can maximize Buy Local by making sure that you are providing exceptional customer service to each and every customer. Disposable incomes are decreasing; make sure that those people who are spending their money with you are receiving the service that will bring them back!

As consumers I urge all of you to be conscious about your own buying habits. If you have a favorite store that is located in Salinas and also in

another town, shop the one in Salinas. Why? Sales tax revenue! Let me put this in perspective for you...Cross sell reports, which provide vehicle registration information, show that from October of 2007 to August 2008 the city of Salinas lost \$2,029,800 in sales tax revenue due to residents of Salinas purchasing vehicles outside of Salinas (source: The Californian, using 2.5% local components of the 7.75% sales tax rate and average car price of \$24,000). And that is just vehicle purchases. Think about your weekly buying habits, and those, too, can add up quickly.

The Chamber has identified the Buy Local campaign as one of our main priorities as it pertains to economic development, and we hope you will join us. On Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> we are holding "*Wake Up! Salinas: It's Time to Buy Local*" at Hartnell College from 7:30am to 9:00am. Come and learn about the Buy Local concept. We will be discussing how Buy Local affects sales tax revenue and economic development, the basics of customer service and expose attendees to all the city of Salinas has to offer to consumers. This community holds the power to make a difference one purchase at a time.