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CITY ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO SHOP LOCAL, SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES DURING HOLIDAY SEASON

The season brings opportunities to support independent retailers, participate in local hosted events, and be an informed consumer

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) encourage Chicago residents and visitors to support the local economy by thoughtfully spending at local small businesses. As Chicago’s economy continues to stabilize, it’s more important than ever to shop and dine locally during the holiday shopping season. Local community and economic development organizations-such as chambers of commerce, community development corporations, and other not-for-profit organizations-have created holiday campaigns to enliven commercial corridors across the city. With the whirlwind of the holiday season, consumers are advised to review consumer protection tips, including for public vehicles.

"Local businesses are an important part of the fabric that makes up our neighborhoods and economy," said Mayor Lightfoot. "That means that when residents shop and dine local, it creates a positive ripple effect across our entire city. This holiday season and every season moving forward, I encourage folks to take the time to patronize the amazing businesses in their communities."

The holiday shopping season unofficially kicks-off during Thanksgiving weekend with dedicated days like Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and Cyber Monday. An estimated 166.3 million people are planning to shop from Thanksgiving Day through Cyber Monday this year, according to an annual survey by the National Retail Federation and Prosper Insights & Analytics. Saturday, November 26th is a notable shopping day with tens of thousands of Chicago small businesses offering a variety of exciting options to holiday shoppers. This is an opportunity to celebrate and support small businesses and all they do for our communities. Whether shopping online or in-person, help jumpstart holiday spending by making the conscious decision to patronize a small business in a Chicago neighborhood.

"The holiday shopping season is the time to prioritize shopping at independent retailers in communities," said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. "Shopping local supports the city’s diverse range of local businesses that create jobs, help boost the economy, and enhance neighborhoods. During Thanksgiving weekend shopping, remember even picking up a cup of coffee from your favorite neighborhood café or ordering flowers from your local florist makes an impact for the small business owner and the community."

To drive spending along Chicago’s commercial corridors, Neighborhood Business Development Centers (NBDCs) will channel resources to spread holiday cheer in neighborhood commercial



corridors through holiday campaigns. The programs will be visible throughout the entire city, including commercial corridors in neighborhoods such as downtown, Belmont-Central, South Loop, and Morgan Park. NBDCs will help bring their community and small businesses together with events and activities starting Thanksgiving weekend to the end of the year.

"One of our holiday campaigns is Holiday Road, a shopping and dining event happening Saturday, December 3, along a stretch of Western Avenue from 99th to 111th streets in Beverly/Morgan Park," said Caroline Connors, Executive Director of Morgan Park Beverly Hills Business Association (MPBHBA). "Festive days like this encourage shopping and family fun with holiday activities."

"The goal of the Pilsen Christmas Window Walk is to inspire holiday cheer among residents and businesses," said Alex Esparza, President of Economic Strategies Development Corporation. "On Saturday, November 26 onlookers will see the collaboration between businesses and local artists during the unveiling of holiday-themed storefront displays."

"From Thanksgiving weekend to the end of the year, the commercial corridors of our city shine bright and merry," said Amanda Harres, Executive Director of Edison Park Chamber of Commerce. "We look forward to celebrating in Edison Park through our shop local events, Santa Express event for young children and families, Ugly Sweater Pub Crawl for the adults and holiday storefront windows that showcase the character of our community."

The holiday season has people bustling around Chicago. As a resource for consumers, BACP's comprehensive [Ride Smart Chicago](#) public awareness campaign was rebranded to provide Chicagoans with simplified tips and resources most relevant to public vehicle passengers. The campaign provides safety and consumer awareness information for passengers of taxicabs, ride-hail, and other public passenger vehicles. Visit Chicago.gov/RideSmart for tips, including how to spot licensed versus unlicensed taxicabs.

BACP also wants to remind businesses and consumers to be diligent about their rights and responsibilities whether shopping in-person or online. All buyers should be aware of tips for a safe and successful shopping season, including checking store return and exchange policies before purchasing, keeping receipts, and checking credit card and bank statements. Learn more by visiting Chicago.gov/ConsumerProtection.

For current and future small business owners looking for support, BACP offers resources to support all small business owners throughout their entrepreneurial journeys. For more information on BACP's programs and services, visit Chicago.gov/BACP.

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