

THINK LOCAL

Campaign shows consumer spending power

Think Local turns \$500 into \$6,900

By JONDI GUMZ

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SANTA CRUZ — The results of a \$500 experiment to prove the value of shopping locally were announced Wednesday.

In one month, the investment generated \$6,900 in local commerce.

Supporters gathered at Lighthouse Bank to toast their success with Vino Tabi wine, local of course.

“What goes around comes around,” said Peter Beckmann, who co-chairs Think Local First—County of Santa Cruz. “More money re-circulates within our community when we patronize local businesses, and those basic consumer choices serve as a powerful tool in maintaining a vibrant local economy.”

The local money check campaign was launched April 2. Five local lenders that ordinarily compete cooperated to each give away \$100, which could only be spent at a locally owned business.

Lighthouse Bank’s check circulated 17 times,

followed by Bay Federal Credit Union, 16 times, Monterey Credit Union, 14 times, and Santa Cruz County Credit Union and Santa Cruz County Bank, 11 times each.

“Brilliant idea,” said Mayor Cynthia Mathews.

City officials surveyed by the National League of Cities this year agreed locally owned retailers are vital to economic stability. That’s because they tend to spend more of their revenues on supplies and services provided by other local businesses.

“It was an honor to get the business,” said Greenspace owner Lydia Corser, describing how Parmalee Taft of Santa Cruz Parent bought a lamp at Greenspace made by a local artist, enabling Corser to buy a used computer at User-Friendly Computer.

Think Local’s Web site tracked where checks were spent. Santa Cruz and Capitola merchants benefited the most, sales also reached Scotts Valley and Watsonville.

Ben Lomond resident Bradd Barkan went to KSCO to buy advertising for California Dreaming, his new real estate office in Felton.

Capitola resident Peter

Steyne, manager of California Futon, spent his \$100 at New Leaf Community Market. So did Krista Nilsen of Threshold Enterprises in Scotts Valley.

“When we purchase anything, we first go to our clients and get bids,” said Mary Anne Carson of Santa Cruz County Bank. “We purchase through Palace because they’re green and we’re green.”

That might explain why Palace Art & Office Supplies, observing its 60th anniversary, racked up a half-dozen sales.

The list of businesses patronized during the campaign reads like a Who’s Who of local ownership.

New Leaf Community Market, Sock Shop & Shoe Co. and Chefworks, all anchors downtown, had multiple sales. So did long-time stalwarts Shopper’s Corner, KSCO Radio, Staff of Life, Darco Printing and Paper Supplies and Cruzio.

In 18 months, Think Local First has grown to 243 members.

Tom Dembski, owner of Tom’s Pharmacy, said the campaign made people think.

“It brought a lot of attention to our cause,” he said.



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

Greenspace owner Lydia Corser, at right with daughter Isabel, chats Wednesday with Think Local members Rick Hofstetter of Lighthouse Bank and Nellie and Karl Heiman of Caffè Pergolesi.