



Sycamore Land Trust

Media Coverage

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Holiday season kicks off with run of retail, philanthropy days



David Snodgrass – Herald-Times

Article The National Retail Federation expects Americans to spend about \$656 billion in November and December on merchandise for themselves and loved ones.

It's an economic juggernaut that retailers anticipate and plan for all year. According to the retail federation, more than 137 million people either plan to or are considering shopping during the Thanksgiving weekend, which the federation defines as Thursday through Sunday.

As the seasons have come and gone, there has evolved a nomenclature and order to the days after Thanksgiving to gently guide consumers through the gift-giving landscape. Each day has its own audience, history and beneficiaries. Here, then, is a guide to the Big Four of the holiday season.

Black Friday

According to [history.com](https://www.history.com), the term “Black Friday” was used the first time to describe the crash of the U.S. gold market on Sept. 24, 1869.

Some 90 years later, police in Philadelphia reportedly came up with the term to describe the bedlam with which they contended when hordes of shoppers descended on the city the day after Thanksgiving in advance of the annual Army-Navy football game (now played the second Saturday of December). It wasn't until the mid-1980s that the phrase was applied to general retail activity and spread to the rest of the country. Now, Black Friday is almost universally understood as the day retailers turn their business ledgers from red (operating at a loss) to black (earning a profit), although that is not entirely accurate.

It is not the biggest single sales day of the holiday season — traditionally, the Saturday before Christmas takes that honor — but Black Friday is the busiest day of the Thanksgiving weekend. According to a retail federation survey, 74 percent of consumers said they planned to shop on Friday this year. An even higher percentage of millennials are making a Black Friday shopping list; the retail federation survey found that 86 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds and 78 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds were planning to shop the day after Thanksgiving.

Locally, College Mall manager Ellery Likens said preparations for Black Friday have been “a hustle,” especially with multiple mall entrances having ongoing construction. Likens said a lot of conversations happen around the consumer holidays. In addition to handing out “surprise and delight” gift bags to shoppers, Likens said, mall staff will be out in force to interact with customers and take notes for what's anticipated to be an especially big year next year, with the expected completion of mall renovations.

“We're out in the mall talking to customers and checking in with retailers, seeing how their sales are doing,” Likens said, expecting this year's Black Friday to be much like last year's. “It's more than just shopping; it's a day out with family and friends.”

Conversations between retailers and mall management allow Likens to plan for the longest lines to be in front of Target and Dick's Sporting Goods. From Thanksgiving night into early this morning, retailers were given the option to soft-close, and essentially keep working until the mall opened at 6 a.m. today.

Most of the mall's seasonal pop-up stores, such as Go Calendars and The Venue, are either local stores or operated by local franchisees. Interjecting local vendors is a mall initiative in line with Small Business Saturday's intent that provides an incubator of sorts for fledgling businesses such as the Cup & Kettle tea shop.

Small Business Saturday

From working together at a local restaurant to opening their first independent storefront on Small Business Saturday, Cup & Kettle co-owners Kayla Maldonado and Jessica Messmer will bring local, looseleaf, organic tea to College Mall as part of the Thanksgiving weekend retail madness.

“We both enjoy creating, and we love Bloomington,” Maldonado said. “We had both run online businesses individually before, so it was a natural transition for us as friends to get together and work on this. We’re both just creative, maker people.”

Having partnered with Gather: handmade shoppe & Co.: and having been featured at Uel Zing Coffee Lab, Cup & Kettle is looking to eventually open a tea shop in downtown Bloomington. For now, the small business has signed a lease with the mall to offer its line of 10 different teas, with seasonal product line expansions expected in the future.

“Any kind of tea connoisseur will be able to come in and try any kind. We want it to be a kind of coffee shop with a focus on tea, but it has been difficult finding a space, so it’s nice to try out a portion of our vision,” Maldonado said.

American Express is credited with coming up with the concept of Small Business Saturday six years ago, while the country and its 28 million independent businesses were mired in recession. Launched in 2010, the initiative quickly picked up the support of the U.S. Small Business Administration and other business groups. According to the Small Business Administration, consumers spent more than \$16 billion last year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving at independent, neighborhood retailers and restaurants. The retail federation counts it as the second-busiest day of the long holiday weekend, and says that 47 percent of consumers it surveyed report they plan to shop this Saturday specifically to support small businesses in their communities.

To read about Soapy Soap Co., another example of a local small business, check out The Herald-Times’ business section in today’s H-T. The company is a small business, but that doesn’t keep it from housing its own computer servers for the store’s online presence, which is set to launch its DesignMySoap.com on Cyber Monday.

Cyber Monday

Although not officially included in Thanksgiving weekend shopping forecasts put out by the retail federation, it has not been ignored. In this year’s survey of consumers, the retail federation found that 36 percent of respondents said they plan to shop online on Cyber Monday, an increase from 34 percent in 2015.

The concept actually is older than Small Business Saturday. The phrase was coined by shop.org, the digital retail unit of the retail federation, in 2005, when it noted in a news release that online retailers saw substantially more business the Monday after Thanksgiving, driven by online discounts and promotions. At the time, many consumers had access to high-speed internet only at their workplaces, which meant they could not begin serious shopping before returning to work the day following the long holiday weekend.

Last year, more than \$3 billion was spent online by consumers on Cyber Monday, and analysts say this year's totals could set another record.

Giving Tuesday

It's not a shopping holiday, but Giving Tuesday has assumed a related cachet as the unofficial kickoff to the holiday charitable giving season. It even has its own website, www.givingtuesday.org, and some large retailers now partner with nonprofits to donate a portion of their Thanksgiving weekend sales to charitable causes in local communities.

The notion of having a day for giving back originated in 2012 when a team from the Belfer Center for Innovation and Social Impact and the 92nd Street Y in New York City conceived a way to combine the ideas of giving and giving back during the holiday season. According to givingtuesday.org, in 2015, a total of 1.08 million online gifts raised a total of \$116.7 million for charitable organizations on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving.

Locally, that idea is heard loud and clear: Mayor John Hamilton has declared Nov. 29 Giving Tuesday in the city of Bloomington.

Sycamore Land Trust, an organization that protects nature in southern Indiana, is leading the charge during Giving Tuesday, inviting people to donate and become a Sycamore Sustainer as a way to stand with the forests and wildlife that surround all of us.

"There's no doubt that Indiana is a beautiful place," said Abby Perfetti, communications director for Sycamore Land Trust. "We're fortunate to live in a city with so many compassionate people who are drawn together to support the causes they believe in. Giving Tuesday is our way of highlighting and celebrating their unique culture of generosity."

Sycamore Land Trust is inviting people to post pictures on social media of kindness toward nature, such as filling a bird feeder or picking up trash outside, and include the hashtag #GivingTuesday.

Other local agencies will also participate in social media campaigns and give back to their volunteers.

Habitat for Humanity at Indiana University will host an online donation campaign to raise money to sponsor its second house for a qualified family in Monroe County. More information can be found at www.monroecountyhabitat.org.

The Monroe County Humane Association will have a social media campaign to help people get to know MCHA staff and to show people exactly where their donations are going by sharing personal stories.

Bloomington Community Orchard is giving back to those who have helped its organization by hosting a lunch for volunteers.

Herald-Times reporters Kurt Christian and Jonathan Streetman and local news editor Rod Spaw all contributed to this story.