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Keeping Business in Our Backyard

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As a young girl growing up in the Lakewood community, it always struck me as odd that grown-ups would drive more than five minutes to accomplish the most basic of tasks — going out for ice cream, grabbing a glass of wine after work, picking up a birthday gift, or even getting an oil change.

These were services and establishments that existed right here in our own backyard. My concerns back then and throughout my teen years would have been centered on spending too much time in the car or paying too much for gas. Not now.

Shopping in the neighborhood is a safe bet. Would folks like this rip you off? Faceless chain stores, though, well ...

Ironically, I was thinking about this topic earlier this year. As a business development banking officer at Professional Bank in Lakewood, I worked with several of my businesswomen friends to create the bank's newest community outreach program, Lakewood-area Women in Business. LWIB was organized by the bank to provide the multitude of female business owners and executives of our community an opportunity for personal and professional growth with monthly networking socials.

The concept spread, and after attending a few socials, these women began transacting business with each other.

I am no longer that young girl who doesn't want to drive outside my community because I hate sitting in the car too long — well, actually I don't like sitting in the car too long, but that's another story. But as a Lakewood resident and a Lakewood businesswoman who works at neighborhood independent bank, I do want my hard-earned dollars to be reinvested in this community that I love and want to see grow and flourish for generations to come.

I talked with just a couple of the many business owners in our community to ask them the question of the day: Why is it important that reciprocal support exist between our community's residents and the local businesses?

Kert Platner, Rob Wilson, and Chris Lawler co-own Times Ten Cellars in Lakewood. Their official business is making and selling wine, but these entrepreneurs believe in our community and all it has to offer, so they make giving back to the community part of

their business. They generously support our neighborhood organizations and events and lend their facility for local efforts.

Platner, who owns several businesses in Lakewood, summed it up nicely.

"We don't think of ourselves as competing for business. We provide a great opportunity for the people of Lakewood and the surrounding area to keep their dollars in our neighborhood," he said. "The money I make gets spent, in turn, at our community grocery store, coffee shop, etc. As residents and as business owners, if we don't support the Lakewood area's small, independent businesses, they won't be around for long."

Carol Hensley is a long-time Lakewood realtor and president of the Lakewood Business Association. She pointed out that, "As area home-based businesses and virtual offices increase in number and as time becomes an even more valuable commodity, the importance of having these businesses nearby becomes vital for our convenience and for our local economy."

Hensley also addressed how reinvesting in our community not only "preserves a decades-old lifestyle that few other communities in Dallas share, but also creates a definite added value to our homes in the Lakewood and Swiss Avenue communities."

So why should we try to continue doing business with the very businesses and people that are in our own backyard? As Lakewood-area residents and small businesses in this community, we have the opportunity to keep our own thriving community going.

"We are really a dynamic city within the city," Hensley said.

Of course, not spending too much time in the car and saving a dollar or two on gas is always a nice perk, too.

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