

How local business will beat the global economy

By GLEN LANKER
Hayden Canyon

In a time of gloom-and-doom national headlines, the timing is better than ever to empower our local business communities.



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So says Michael H. Shuman, an attorney and author turned economic activist. Some of his intriguing conclusions:

■ The key to long-term community prosperity is a vigorous network of locally owned businesses serving primarily local markets—instead of a reliance on outside forces.

■ Despite all the popular discussion of globalization, worldwide trends (like rising oil prices) are making small, local businesses increasingly competitive.

■ Localization can and should appeal to right and left alike, by combining conservatives' passion for free markets, small business, and small government with progressives' passion for community empowerment, sustainability and real democracy.

In his book *The Small-Mart Revolution: How Local Businesses are Beating the Global Economy*, Shuman offers nearly 100 specific suggestions to foster local economic development. We've invited him to look at some ways that our planned community at Hayden Canyon can serve as a catalyst for this type of growth.

"I have two suggestions," Shuman told us. "First, fill the planned retail spaces as much as possible, not with 7-11s, but with locally owned businesses. Local businesses tend to generate, for every dollar spent, more income,

wealth, jobs, taxes and charity. Second, be sure to allow a wide variety of home-based businesses. Kootenai County needs to recognize the next generation of local entrepreneurs will be probably be young people, retirees, and others who cleverly use their homes as business laboratories. Put another way, Hayden Canyon should be seen, not just as a series of comfortable homes, but as an incubator for tomorrow's prosperity."

Here are some of Shuman's other suggestions to our area's small business owners:

1. Local Niche. Make local ownership a key part of marketing your business to consumers and to investors.

2. Go Green. Make your business an outstanding local environmental citizen by using local renewable resources and reusing nonrenewable resources (through recycling and reuse), and be sure to brag to your customers about your practices.

3. BALLE Chapter. Create a local chapter of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies so that you're not alone. Use the alliance to promote local purchasing, fight chains, solve problems, secure credit, and learn new skills.

4. Producers Cooperatives. Join existing producer's cooperatives or other kinds of industry-specific affinity groups that collectively purchase, advertise, and lobby for local members. Or start one.

5. Bazaars. Help set up and participate in local business mini-malls, whether they are weekend farmers' markets or dedicated shopping destinations.

6. Direct Delivery. Create or join a direct delivery service affiliated exclusively or primarily with local businesses.

7. Flexible Manufacturing. Form a network of local businesses that is ready and willing to seize manufacturing opportunities as they arise.

8. Buyers' Cards. Team up with other local businesses to create instruments that promote local purchasing, such as local credit cards, debit cards, loyalty cards and gift cards.

9. B2G Midwife. Create a business that aggregates small businesses into compelling bids for government contracts and handles the mountain of paperwork in exchange for a fee.

10. Non-local Collaboration. Break bread with non-local businesses to learn and work together (at least wherever it does not weaken the local business community).

"Like much of the West, Idaho has gotten used to the idea that land is plentiful and driving is cheap, and development has proceeded apace with few second thoughts about lost farmland, environmental disruption, the proliferation of roads, and lost family time from all that driving," Shuman said. "Hayden Canyon can show that another way is possible – that planning a community from the outset that makes it easy for residents to walk to the grocery store and kids to bicycle to school is a win-win for everyone."

Glen Lanker is a Coeur d'Alene architect who is coordinating the design and development of Hayden Canyon, a Traditional Neighborhood Development. Excerpts are by permission from The Small-Mart Revolution: How Local Businesses Are Beating the Global Competition.