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Independent We Stand Celebrates 10 Years of Supporting Small Businesses *Milestone anniversary during pandemic draws attention to buy local movement*

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — January 2021 marks 10 years of [Independent We Stand](#) (IWS). This year, the national small business movement celebrates a decade of promoting the vital economic role independent businesses have on our communities' success. For a decade, IWS has aimed to educate consumers about the importance and strong economic benefits of buying local and encouraging small business owners to tout their locally owned status.

"We help small business owners let their communities know that small businesses are here to stay and they need community support now more than ever because of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Bill Brunelle, co-founder of Independent We Stand. "It's up to everyone to do their part to help ensure these businesses survive. Our resources help them to make their presence known, keeping them in the fight."

First launched to the public in January 2011, founding sponsor [STIHL Inc.](#) and its more than 10,000 authorized STIHL Dealers, the vast majority of which are independent retailers, inspired the movement. Over the last decade, IWS has provided support to independent retailers — from flower, candy and coffee shops to hardware stores and breweries — through numerous initiatives:

- IWS has traveled more than 10,000 miles from coast to coast to rally small locally owned businesses and their communities during annual road trips, including the [Great American Route 66 Road Trip](#) and [Main Streets Make Us Better Road Trip](#).
- IWS has shared hundreds of presentations, webinars, videos and more to help independent locally owned businesses build their local brands and tap into America's growing desire to buy local. A recent survey by [OnePoll](#) shows 86% of Americans are going out of their way to support small businesses during the pandemic.
- IWS "buy local" marketing materials have been downloaded more than 100,000 times by tens of thousands of small local businesses across the United States and countries spanning from Canada to Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.
- IWS conducted three studies showing the economic impact of consumers buying local versus spending their hard-earned dollars at big box stores and massive online retailers, yielding the following findings:
 - Together, the two largest national home center chains sold more than \$114 billion in goods in 2013 (excluding installation services). If just 10% of that business had gone instead to independent retailers, hometowns



- around the country would enjoy the benefits of an additional \$1.3 billion in economic activity — [Home Sweet Home](#) (2015)
- Purchasing home building supplies and products from locally owned retailers keeps more than twice as much of that money in the local economy as identical purchases made at big box chain stores — [Home Sweet Home Pros'](#) (2017)
 - Sales through local hardware and paint dealers have a local impact nearly seven times greater (676 percent) than sales through Amazon, even when including all of Amazon's distribution employment — [Home Sweet Home: Locals vs. Amazon](#) (2018)
 - IWS [Buy Local app](#) turns mobile devices into small business store finders delivering millions of locally owned listings nationwide via [Android](#) and [Apple](#) devices.
 - IWS has been featured in thousands of media outlets across the country, including *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *MSNBC*, *The New York Times* and more.

Along with founding sponsor STIHL Inc., IWS has been fortunate to work with many like-minded sponsors, including [FCA US](#), [Do it Best Corp.](#), [Nationwide Marketing Group](#), [PPG](#) and [Tire Pros](#).

Follow Independent We Stand on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Twitter](#). Learn more about how to get involved with the small business movement at www.independentwestand.org.

About Independent We Stand

[Independent We Stand](#) is a nationwide movement of independent small business owners whose mission is to inspire other small business owners to better understand and celebrate their locally owned status while educating consumers about the importance and strong economic benefits of supporting them. The Independent We Stand movement is sponsored by [STIHL Inc.](#) [STIHL products](#) are sold through more than 10,000 [authorized local STIHL Dealers](#) from coast to coast – not big box stores. Associate sponsors include [Nationwide Marketing Group](#) and [Do it Best Corp.](#)

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