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### **NEW CAR TAG TO SUPPORT ALABAMA SMALL BUSINESSES IN DANGER OF FALLING THROUGH**

**Birmingham, Ala.** - Near the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Alabama residents were offered the opportunity to show their commitment to shopping locally by [pre-ordering](#) a distinctive car tag. The full *Shop Local Support Small Business* tag will be produced if at least 1,000 people complete an online application and pay a \$50 fee by October 31, 2021. If that quota isn't met, a similar plate could be produced in its place.

The money raised from the *Shop Local Support Small Business* tag will go to Main Street Alabama. The non-profit will use proceeds to support workshops for main street businesses while also making much-needed grants available.

"I would use the grant money to continue events like Best Friend Night , Military Appreciation Day, Realtor Night Out and other small events that would draw people to our downtown. The cost of door prizes, staffing and advertising add up quickly. These types of in-house events do really well in my store and other stores benefit from it as well!" - **Debbie Gaydos, Owner/Operator of Shopaholic Home Decor & Gifts, Enterprise Alabama**

Hoover City Councilman, Casey Middlebrooks says the car tag idea came from a group of Jefferson County Councilors that regularly discuss impending issues. Leaders saw the custom tag as a way to support local businesses after the pandemic hit in March. "We felt Main Street Alabama had the statewide presence and resources to facilitate support to small businesses throughout the state," said Middlebrooks.

**Main Street organizations immediately jumped into action during the pandemic.** Main Street helped small businesses with curbside pickup, online ordering/marketplaces as well as organizing events to encourage people to shop in person. Many events were strategically developed to support social distance and shopping outside of smaller, brick & mortar shops.

**Despite pandemic struggles, small business growth across Alabama is at an all time high.** According to the Secretary of State, from March 2020 to June 2021, just under 60,000 people registered a business in Alabama. For comparison, 15 months before the pandemic, roughly 35,000 people formed a business.

"As a small business owner, a \$500 grant goes a long way. I think it is important to make sure that your store is maintained. It would enable me to make necessary repairs for painting and replacing rotten wood." - **Pat Miller, Owner of Taming of the Ewe, a Yarn and Tea Boutique in Gadsden.**

To learn more about purchasing the *Shop Local Support Small Business* tag, visit Main Street Alabama's website, [www.mainstreetalabama.org](http://www.mainstreetalabama.org).

Main Street Alabama is a non-profit and state coordinating program of Main Street America. The National Main Street Four Point Approach™ is an over 40 year model that focuses work in four areas: organization, design, promotion and economic vitality with strategies unique to the community.

For more information, please contact:

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