

**By KENNETH MARTIN**

***Economic and Community Development Direct  
& City Liaison, City of Mt. Juliet***

I wrote this article a while back and thought it might be a great time to run it. Maybe it's the current economy, the cold and dreary weather, my getting older and worrying more or just plain old love for my community.

Not quite sure what it is, but I sure have found myself thinking about it a lot. I personally think it's because I care for and love my county, my country and the people that call it home. But that would sound boastful, egotistical and mushy to say the least. And that's OK; I love lots of stuff and as my mom always said, say it loud and say it proud if you mean it.

As I drive throughout our wonderful community, I keep thinking about the old Ronald Reagan movie "The Gipper." In the movie there was a wonderful quote that stated "Win one for the Gipper." As a point of personal pride, I'd like to win one for Wilson County, Tennessee and all of our residents.

Neighbors, I need your help, and our county needs your help. With all that is going on with our national and state economies, the need to focus on our local economy has never been more important. Small businesses are what drive our local economy and the economic engine of our great country and county.

Small businesses provide sales tax revenue, convenient local services and goods and jobs, jobs, jobs to mention just a few benefits. When consumers shop outside or patronize businesses outside their local county, our local businesses suffer from a lack of or reduction in sales. When sales volumes and patronage drops, so does the need to have employees working. When employees aren't working they can't make money to patronize other business or pay their bills and the vicious cycle continues and/or grows.

If we don't shop locally and shop outside our wonderful county, our tax dollars benefit other cities and counties and not ours. What we lose today will have to be made up somewhere else down the road by other means. If local businesses aren't supported they move to other communities or go out of business. When this happens we lose more revenues from our community and the ability to attract new businesses to offset the ones we lost. The end result is

we never catch up and only fall further and further behind.

Sorry for such a gloomy article, but there is good news here. The good news is that we can control what happens when it comes to keeping taxes low and raising local revenues. Supporting your local businesses by patronizing them first is to our local economy what eating healthy, exercising, sleeping eight hours a day and taking vitamins is to your health.

Please support your local businesses even if it means waiting until you get back to Wilson County. Shopping outside Wilson County supports that community and only costs us in the long run. Take it personal. It's like an investment in your future. Not supporting your local businesses is like depositing your paycheck in your neighbor's bank account. It doesn't really gain you any true benefit.

Call me selfish, but I like doing stuff that might benefit me and those that I care about. I care about you, our county, our local businesses and our children's future. I want our children and the rest of us to have the most prosperous, faithful and friendly community in the world. We can have it and so much more if we support each other and our community with passion, enthusiasm and good old fashioned good will, unity and teamwork.

God Bless the USA and God Bless Wilson County, Tennessee and all those who call it home. Now let's go win one for Wilson County, Tennessee!