POLISH AMERICAN News

December 2020 / January 2021

Customs That Unite Poles Around the World

Throughout the year, there are many customs, traditions and patriotic events that unite Polonia around the world. Christmas is one that has been uniting Polish people for over 1,054 years. In 2020, the Polish people marked the 1,054 Anniversary of Christianity in Poland and the beginning of documented Polish history. Everyone is invited to celebrate the treasured Polish Christmas customs and spread the word to family and friends. For more information, visit:

PolishAmericanCenter.org/Polish_Christmas_Customs.htm

Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia! That is the way to say "Merry Christmas" in Polish. Among Poles, wherever they are, the most beloved and beautiful of all traditional festivities is that of Christmas Eve. It is then that the Wigilia, or Christmas Eve Dinner is served. It is a solemnly celebrated occasion and arouses deep feelings of kinship among family members.

For days in advance, Poles prepare the traditional foods and everyone anxiously awaits the moment when the first star, known as the Gwiazdka, appears in the eastern sky, for that is when the feast to commemorate the birth of the Christ Child begins.

There is always a thin layer of hay under the white tablecloth in memory of the Godchild in the manger. Before sitting down at the table, everyone breaks the traditional wafer, or Oplatek, and exchanges good wishes for health, wealth and happiness in the New Year. This is such a deeply moving moment that often tears of love and joy are evoked from the family members who are breaking this symbolic bread. The Oplatek is a thin, unleavened wafer similar to the altar bread in the Roman Catholic Church. It is stamped with the figures of the Godchild, the blessed Mary, and the holy angels. The wafer is known as the bread of love and is often sent by mail to the absent members of the family.

The dinner itself differs from other evening meals in that the number of courses is fixed at seven, nine or eleven. A lighted candle in the windows symbolizes the hope that the Godchild, in the form of a stranger, may come to share the Wigilia and an extra place is set at the table for the unexpected guest. This belief stems from the ancient Polish adage, "A guest in the home is God in the home."

continued next column -->

The Wigilia is a meatless meal, no doubt the result of a long-time Church mandate that a strict fast and abstinence be observed on this day before Christmas. Although the Church laws have been revised and permit meat to be eaten on this day, the traditional meal remains meatless. Items that would normally be included in a traditional Wigilia menu include mushroom soup, boiled potatoes (kartofle), pickled herring (sledzie), fried fish, pierogi, beans and sauerkraut (groch i kapusta), a dried fruit compote, babka, platek, assorted pastries, nuts and candies.

After the meal the members of the family sing Polish Christmas Carols called the koledy while the children wait impatiently around the Christmas tree or choinka for the gifts to be exchanged. Polish Christmas Carols are numerous and beautiful, especially when sung in Polish churches at the Christmas Eve Mass. This Mass is called the Pasterka, which means the Shepherds Watch, and there is a popular belief in Poland that while the congregation is praying, peace descends on the snow-clad, sleeping earth and that during that holy night, the humble companions of men - the domestic animals - assume voices. But only the innocent of heart may hear them.

Aside from the beautiful Wigilia, the Polish people have a number of other traditions that they practice throughout the Christmas season. Christmas Day itself is spent in rest, prayer, and visits to various members of the family. In Poland, from Christmas Day until the twelfth night, boys trudge from village to village with an illuminated star and a ranting King Herod among them to sing carols. Sometimes, they travel through the towns in expectation of more generous gifts. In some districts, the boys carry on puppet shows called szopki. These are built like a little house with two towers, open in the front where a small crib is set.

During the Christmas season, the theaters give special performances. On the feast of the Epiphany, the priest and the organist visit the homes, bless them and write over their doors the initials of the three wise men - KMB (Kasper, Melchior and Balthazar) - in the belief that this will spare the homes from misfortune.

The Christmas season closes on February 2, known as Candlemas Day. On that day, people carry candles to church and have them blessed for use in their homes during storms, sickness and death.

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December 2020 / January 2021
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Polish American News Update

Since April, 2020, the *Polish American News* was forced to expand its Internet distribution and cut the physical distribution of the Newspaper because the majority of locations that distributed the newspapers were forced to close or downsize as a result of coronavirus concerns.

The Polish American News distributes thousands of copies each edition through churches, stores, organizations and at community events. Everyone involved is grateful for all who help us promote and distribute this publication and look forward to getting back to normal in the near future.

The Polish American News will continue its tradition of posting on the Internet. As we work through these difficult times, everyone is asked to help us spread the **ELECTRONIC edition of the *Polish American News*** by emailing a copy of the link to family and friends.

As always we ask that you support our advertisers and view the information in the electronic newspaper as we all work to promote positive developments in our community.

The Polish American News is posted on the FRONT PAGE of: **PolishAmericanCenter.com** You can also access the newspaper from: ***PolishAmericanNews.com***

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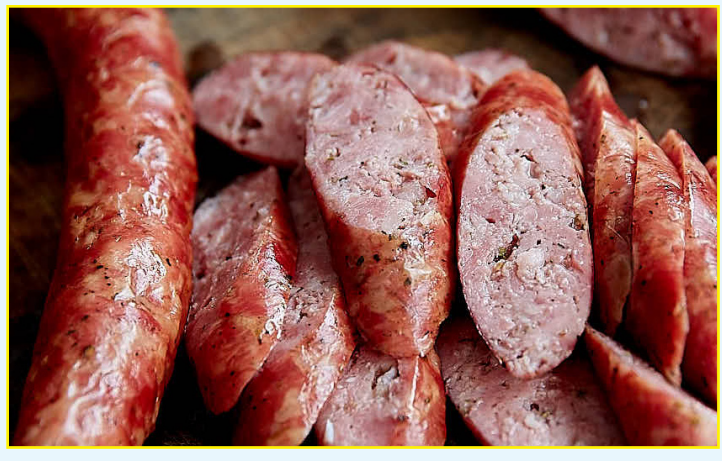

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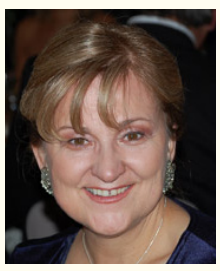

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Polish American Cultural Center Museum

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2021 Membership Appeal

December, 2020

Dear Supporter:

For over 30 years the Polish American Cultural Center Museum has been promoting Polish history, culture and pride to a large and diverse audience of visitors touring Historic Philadelphia. **The Museum's Exhibit Hall remains the only institution in America located within a Historic District, which is listed on street signs, at visitor welcome points and on visitor maps.** One of the goals of the museum is to remain a Public Relations point to the public that promotes Polish and Polish American history.

On March 16, 2020, the coronavirus caused a massive shutdown in Pennsylvania and other states out of caution for the health of the American people. After 6 months being closed, the Museum Exhibit Hall was able to reopen on Thursday, October 1st, as we began our celebration of October as Polish American Heritage Month. **Unfortunately, as of Friday, November 20th, the City of Philadelphia mandated that many public places including museums must close until at least January 1, 2021. The Museum will reopen when City restrictions concerning the coronavirus are lifted.**

Because we were closed, fundraising events that help support the museum like Polish Constitution Day on May 3rd, spring and summer season bus group tours and general tour groups and Christmas season events have been cancelled. Additionally, fundraising from Polish American Heritage Month at the Museum in October, Polish and Polish American Historic Reflections, and cherished Polish traditions events at the museum were all affected.

These efforts generate financial support from our members and from museum tourists and have been important ways for us to maintain museum services. None of us expected long-term restrictions due to the pandemic that would affect our fundraising abilities and our ability to sponsor public events and welcome visitors.

The Museum and other cultural institutions continue to depend on their supporters for financial assistance and to get through these difficult times. In our case, we ask Polonia and our friends to help maintain our mission to promote Polish and Polish American heritage to the public.

As you know, there are many monthly costs necessary to maintain the Museum Exhibit Hall. At this time we need your supportive membership renewal and donation in order to maintain the ongoing efforts of the Polish American Cultural Center Museum.

We will acknowledge your membership renewal by letter and forward a membership card to you. **All efforts of the Museum Exhibit Hall will continue to be promoted on our Internet site: PolishAmericanCenter.com, in the electronic edition of the Polish American News, on social media and during the Polish American Radio Program.**

We wish you and yours the very best and thank you for Helping to Promote Polish Heritage. For more information visit the Center's Internet site at: PolishAmericanCenter.com

Thank you for your support.

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Board and Volunteers
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Polish American Cultural Center Museum

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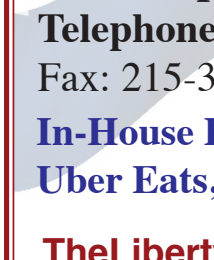

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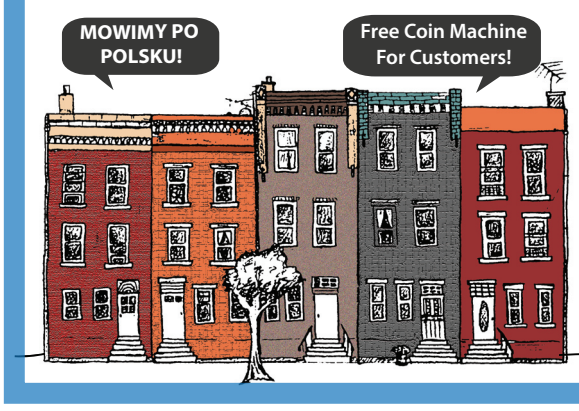

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Clients wishing to visit the main office at 308 Walnut Street, or one of the outreach sites, are asked to call in advance so that a Social Service Representative can tell you what documentation you will need to bring with you to process your request.

You can view an outline of several programs available to senior citizens and individuals of all ages on the PASS Internet site at PolishAmericanSocialServices.com.

For additional information, call PASS, Monday through Friday, between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. at (215) 923-1900.

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As in previous years, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), also known as the Fuel Rebate Program, began on **November 2, 2020.** Those who have applied in previous years should be receiving applications in the mail.

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For more information on filing requirements or to get an application, call PASS at (215) 923-1900.

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For more information or an application contact PASS at 215-923-1900. For more info visit: PolishAmericanSocialServices.com

Real Estate Taxes

The Real Estate Tax/Rent Rebate Program is being administered now. New applications are available. Homeowners and renters can get back as much as $650 on last year's real estate taxes or rent. The income limit is $35,000 annually for homeowners and $15,000 for renters to qualify. It is important to know that only half of your Social Security or SSI counts toward the income guideline. Age requirements are 65 or older, living with a spouse that is 65 or older, widow or widower between the ages of 50 to 64 or permanently disabled between the ages of 18 and 64. For more information call PASS at (215) 923-1900.

Attention Employers!

People seeking employment often contact PASS. The staff will be pleased to alert job seekers of **Job Openings** that have been reported.

If your place of employment is about to or has posted a position, kindly let "PASS" know about that opening. Call Monday through Friday, between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. (215) 923-1900, or send the job opening information to:

Attn: Employment Information
Polish American Social Services
308 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Kindly include qualifications needed, starting salary and where to go for an application and interview.

Job Seeker and Job Training Outreach

Sponsored by:
Polish American Social Services "PASS"
308 Walnut Street • Philadelphia, PA 19106
Telephone: (215) 923-1900 • Fax: (215) 922-1518
Internet: PolishAmericanSocialServices.com

Do You Have A Resume?

PASS encourages job-seeking clients to prepare an outline of their work experience, or a resume, before they apply for any type of employment. A written resume helps job seekers present their job qualifications to a prospective employer. A PASS staff associate can review your current resume, update it, or develop a new one with you to prepare you for your job interview.

This service is available at the office of Polish American Social Services, 308 Walnut Street in Center City Philadelphia. Call to make an appointment for this free service at (215) 923-1900.

What If I Am Satisfied With My Current Resume?

If you are already satisfied with your resume, live in the State of Pennsylvania and want to share your availability with potential employers, mail your resume to PASS and your resume will be shared with prospective employers. Mail your resume to:

Polish American Social Services
Employment Outreach
308 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Fax to: (215) 922-1518
Email to: **Staff@PolishAmericanSocialServices.com**

For more information call PASS, Monday through Friday between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. at: **(215) 923-1900**.

City of Philadelphia Property Tax Freeze

If you are a senior citizen living in the city of Philadelphia and are interested in applying for the **City of Philadelphia Property Tax Freeze Program,** call **"PASS"** Polish American Social Services, also known as United Social Services.

To qualify for the **City of Philadephia Property Tax Freeze Program,** you or your spouse must be 65 years of age or older. For a **single person, your total income must be $27,500 or less and for a married couple, your total income must be $35,500 or less.**

Those who qualify will receive a freeze on their City of Philadephia property taxes.

Program Deadline: 1/31/21

For an application or additional information, call PASS's United Social Services Outreach Program, Monday through Friday, between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. at **215-923-1900.**

Best Wishes to the Polish American Community From

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Polish American Heritage Association "PAHA"
Camden County, New Jersey, Community Contact
Pat Kwoka – 856-310-1783
Email: pkwoka@comcast.net

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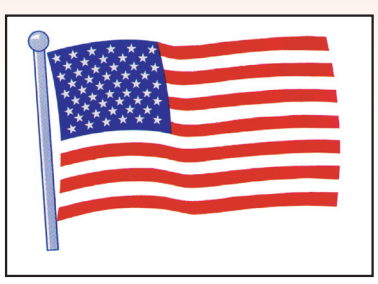

NationalSmallBusinessWeekend.com

This message presented by **American Workers Radio**
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Polish American Heritage Association
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In cooperation with Polish American Cultural Center
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For information about our upcoming meeting, contact:
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Extending Our Most Sincere Wishes to All for a Joyous and Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Warm Wishes from Sandra Tomaszewski & Family

In recognition of donations to the Polish American Cultural Center Museum Exhibit Hall in Memory of

Stephen Groch
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Eleanor Sitko
Ronald Sitko

In Memory of
Dorothy L. Walunas
From Joseph S. Walunas

From the Desk of
Mary Ann Zerkowski, President
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Board of Education
mazredwing@aol.com

POLISH-AMERICAN FOOD, TRADITIONS AND FUN

BERKS POLONIA
$17,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

Despite the effect that COVID-19 has had on all of our lives, I am pleased to announce that t**he Polish-American Board of Education of Berks County will award $16,000 in scholarships in 2021 to help Berks County high school students of Polish descent** pursue college degrees. Scholarship application forms and guidelines will be available in the office of the Guidance Counselor in all Berks County High Schools beginning Monday, January 4, 2021, and they also can be downloaded from the PABEBC website at www.pabeberks.org

Application forms are due NO LATER THAN SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2021, to the Chairperson of our Scholarship Committee Sandra Lubas Hummel, 115 Watercress Drive, Birdsboro, PA 19508-9715. Questions about the scholarship program can be directed to Ms. Hummel at 610-207-7065 or email sahummel@ptd.net.

The Polish-American Heritage Association of Berks County will again partner with PABEBC and award a $1,000 scholarship to a Berks County high school senior of Polish descent. For this scholarship, students are asked to submit a project on Polish history, culture and/or traditions. Application forms and guidelines for this scholarship are also available in all Berks County high school guidance offices and by contacting the **PAHABC Scholarship Chairperson Sandra Lubas Hummel at sahummel@ptd.net, or call her at 610-207-7065.** The **deadline** for receipt of the project and ALL accompanying documents is **MARCH 7, 2021.** Please see the scholarship guidelines for additional information.

Best Wishes for a Joyous Holiday Season and a New Year Blessed with Good Health and Happiness

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Polish American Heritage Association
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St. Hedwig's Society, Chester, PA

Polish National Alliance, Lodge #650
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Aston, PA 19014 • 484-995-0597

Polish American Heritage Association
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Helen Cyzio - (215) 482-3040

Second Street Polish Society
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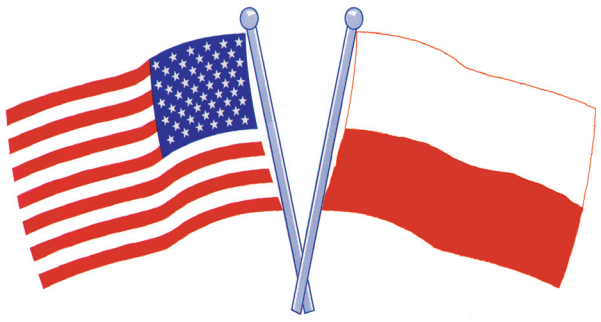
Philadelphia, PA 19148



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From the Desk of
Michael Blichasz
American Workers Advocate

Host of Saturday Variety Program at 11 A.M.
& American Workers Radio, Wednesdays at 11 A.M.

860 AM Radio, WWDB • Philadelphia, PA

I welcome you to review the information from my recent weekly commentaries and ask that you share this information with others.

AmericanWorkersNeedYou.com

Let's All Help America's Small Businesses!

American Workers Radio, Local Businesses Owners and Small Business Associations are proud to promote December as National Small Business Month.

The response to the **December, National Small Business Month effort** has been very good, and we thank the individuals, small businesses, business associations and the media for helping promote the importance of shopping at local businesses.

Americans will be celebrating several special holiday occasions during December, and everyone is asked to be an Ambassador of the **December "National Small Business Month"** campaign and all efforts that benefit American workers.

To help promote the campaign there is a poster on the front page of **AmericanWorkersRadio.com.** The POSTER can be printed out and displayed by Small Businesses to let customers know they Welcome Your Business and are Supporters of National Small Business Month.

There is NO QUESTION that the coronavirus pandemic has placed a lot of stress on America's businesses and American workers. This is another reason why it is important for us to support American workers and the products they make and the services they provide to their customers.

December "National Small Business Month"

American Workers Radio and Small Business Associations are pleased to promote **December as National Small Business Month.** This National effort urges America's consumers to shop at their local small businesses.

The ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic have demonstrated how important it is for Americans to support their local small businesses. There are millions of small businesses serving customers all over the United States. As Americans celebrate various holiday events and purchase gifts for family and friends, consumers are urged to go out of their way to shop at local small businesses.

There are several campaigns that presently promote America's small businesses, however, because of changing times, American Workers Radio is urging everyone to support local businesses throughout the year and especially during the month of **December, "National Small Business Month".**

It is important that we note that America's small businesses employ more than 60 million people and **70% of every dollar spent at local businesses is re-circulated within local economies.**

Our support for small businesses helps in the following ways:

1. **Local businesses remain open and able to keep people employed.**
2. **Local delivery and marketing services continue to be utilized.**
3. **Local, as well as federal and state, taxes are collected through the payroll and business tax system and used to support local, state and federal government services.**
4. **This month long effort will also help American based manufacturers and local service providers maintain jobs for their workers.**

Kindly spread this information to your family and friends. You can email your comments and suggestions to me at: **Michael@AmericanWorkersRadio.com.**

Create and Save American Jobs online at:

MadeInAmericaStore.com

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100% American Made Products

For Store Locations and Hours, Call us at:

1-800-284-0384

American Workers Need You!

Now that the holiday season is upon us, America's businesses want it to be known that they are grateful to all shoppers supporting their businesses. They also want customers to know that as more made in America products become available they will be featured at their place of business.

Support American Based Businesses that Manufacture and Assemble Products in the U.S.A.

Business owners, large and small, who are suffering from the ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic, are seeing that unemployed Americans can't purchase as they did in the past no matter where the products are made. They are also seeing that more of America's consumers are speaking up and showing their support for American made products at the cash register where it really counts. With more businesses being encouraged to expand their production lines in the United States, it's important that we all seek out and purchase more American made so that America's businesses and American workers can BENEFIT equally as we focus on more made in America and less on imports from foreign countries.

Special Thanks to everyone that supported our national effort, **November as American Made Month.** We now ask that all Americans and everyone that voted in the November election to unite behind the **American Workers Need You Campaign.** If we all **UNITE to PROMOTE AMERICA,** we will be able to get the people who have been unemployed during the coronavirus pandemic back to work and get more businesses producing products with a made in the U.S.A. label. Together we can accomplish many good things.

Kindly spread the word to others and email your comments and suggestions to: **Michael@AmericanWorkersRadio.com** uring Made in the U.S.A. labels. Your participation is appreciated. Thanks for spreading the word.

A 50/50 Balance Will Create More Jobs!

As we continue to promote November as **"American Made Month"**, America's consumers are urged to look closely at the labels on clothing, electronics and general household products and consider how important it is for all of us to realize our goal of 50% of all the items sold in America, being made in America again.

CoronaVirus
A Wake Up Call

During the last 35 years most Americans did not realize that seventy thousand well established American based businesses many with well-known brand names moved the manufacturing of their products outside of the United States. Those businesses left the United States to avoid the ever-rising costs of doing business in America. In the last few years America's elected leaders agreed to reduce taxes and regulations on businesses and now thousands of businesses are slowly rebuilding their products lines in the United States. **Many of those businesses were doing well until the coronavirus, that originated in China, caused businesses to close or downsize their products lines and place many employees on unemployment.**

We are now 9 months into the coronivirus which first spread in the United States in mid-March and America's businesses and the American people are still working hard to get back to a level of normalcy. The best thing America's consumers can do to help American workers is support America's businesses by spending our money on as many American made products as possible. **Our purchases will help restore the supply chain of products made in the U.S.A. and in the process help us realize a growing selection of products proudly made in the United States that we know are employing many levels of American Workers.**

Kindly invite you family and friends to spend more of their dollars on American made products and invite them to support our efforts by visiting: **AmericanMadeMonth.com.**

Find
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December "Small Business Month" A National Effort to Promote America's Small Businesses

308 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Internet: DecemberSmallBusinessMonth.com • AmericanWorkersRadio.com • Michael@AmericanWorkersRadio.com

American Workers Radio and Small Business Associations are pleased to promote **December as "National Small Business Month".** This National effort urges America's consumers to shop at their local small businesses.

The ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic have demonstrated how important it is for Americans to support their local small businesses. There are millions of small businesses serving customers all over the United States. As Americans celebrate various holiday events and purchase gifts for family and friends, consumers are being urged to go out of their way to shop at their local small businesses throughout the month of December.

The coronavirus has had a major impact on America's small businesses. There are several campaigns that presently promote America's small businesses, however, because of changing times, American Workers Radio is urging everyone to support local businesses throughout the year and especially during the month of **December, "Small Business Month".**

Important reasons to support America's Small Businesses include:

America's small businesses employ more than 60 million people and 70% of every dollar spent at local businesses is re-circulated within local economies. Your support for small businesses also helps in the following ways:

1. **Local businesses remain open and able to keep people employed.**
2. **Local delivery and marketing services are utilized.**
3. **Local, as well as federal and state, taxes are collected through the payroll and business tax system and used to support local, state and federal government services.**
4. **This month long effort will also help American based manufacturers and local service providers maintain jobs for their workers.**

For more information visit: **AmericanWorkersRadio.com DecemberSmallBusinessMonth.com, or National Small Business Weekend.com**

Thanks for promoting America's Small Businesses.

Michael Blichasz, National Contact
Michael@AmericanWorkers Radio

SEE BELOW POSTER PROMOTING THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT!

We Welcome Your Business and are Proud to Promote DECEMBER as

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