

Time for a local tax holiday shopping frenzy

BY TIM EBERHART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RAINSVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The economic crisis is changing the spending habits of American families. But now it's back-to-school-summer-clearance-get-ready-for-football-in-Alabama shopping time. And, it's less than five months until Christmas time. So spend we must.

As shoppers, you and I could choose this season to seek bargains at the megamalls and superstores in other counties or states where other people will use the revenue to fund their own schools, ballpark maintenance, etc. Or, we could shop locally for similar bargains, and support our own retail merchants and jobs while saving time and gas money.

August 7th through 9th is the annual Alabama Sales Tax Holiday. I urge local citizens to view the holiday as an opportunity to give local stores a try. There are at least 14 stores in Rainsville where there will be zero tax on some products. And most are having some

kind of sale to boot. Look for the big ad in today's newspaper that identifies Chamber member stores with tax free goods. Please check out the information on the ad, and help make the tax holiday a big local success.

The three previous tax holidays have proven to be a success for the state. According to the Alabama Retail Association, overall state August sales tax collections jumped a whopping 24 percent when comparing August 2008 to August 2005. We Alabamians obviously bought a great deal of taxable stuff while we were out there buying tax-free stuff. Twenty-four percent growth—I don't know why that makes me visualize a wild shopping frenzy with overflowing shopping carts colliding in the megastore aisles, and people driving around for 20 minutes looking for a parking space (those 30 acre parking lots can only hold so many vehicles).

It would be great for the local economy if we could bring some of that home and start a trend of double-digit retail growth right here in our own town. We could have our very own local shopping frenzies, but without the 30 acre parking lots.

Anyway, I must change the subject. I would like to welcome a new member to the Rainsville Chamber. Christopher K. Croft, Attorney at Law, located at 200 West Main Street, Suite 104 has become our newest member during our Summer Membership Drive.