



# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **New “ShopMIDowntown Holiday Challenge” Asks Residents to Shop Their Downtowns and Michigan Main Street© Districts, Share Stories for Chance to Win Weekend Getaways**

*Coalition hopes Facebook challenge will help spur sales, generate memories*

A coalition of statewide groups is issuing a “ShopMIDowntown Holiday Challenge” to all Michigan residents. The “ShopMIDowntown Holiday Challenge” asks individuals and organizations to do at least 75% of their shopping this holiday season in downtowns and Michigan Main Street© Districts, then go online and share their favorite downtown Michigan holiday shopping experience this year to become eligible for a random drawing that offers five weekend getaway packages at Michigan hotels.

The coalition includes the Michigan Main Street Center @ Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM), the Michigan Downtown Association (MDA), the Michigan Municipal League (MML), the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), The National Trust’s Main Street Center, Main Street Oakland County, Local First and Buy Michigan Now!

“The ‘ShopMIDowntown Holiday Challenge’ is a way to show how easy it is to purchase all of the gifts you’ll need this holiday at downtown stores, and demonstrate how much fun buying local can be,” said Laura Krizov, manager of the Michigan Main Street Center @ MSHDA.

A 2008 study conducted for Think Local First in Grand Rapids, Michigan by Civic Economics reported that \$73 out of every \$100 spent locally stayed within the community, as opposed to \$43 of every \$100 spent in a business that was not locally owned.

“When you buy from the small businesses in Michigan’s downtowns and Michigan Main Street© districts, it creates jobs and keeps our friends and neighbors in business,” said SBAM President and CEO Rob Fowler. “That’s why we are honored to be a part of making this challenge happen.”

The study also found that if consumers spent just 10 percent more in locally owned businesses, the economic impact could reach \$140 million and result in up to 1600 new jobs in the Grand Rapids market alone ([http://www.localfirst.com/why\\_local\\_first/](http://www.localfirst.com/why_local_first/)).

Michigan residents also are being asked to share their stories, photos and videos of their 2010 downtown holiday shopping trips with the public through the campaign's Facebook page, Facebook.com/ShopMIDowntown. People who post pictures or video of their experience will be automatically entered into a random drawing to win an overnight stay at one of the following establishments:

The Ramsdell Inn (<http://www.ramsdellinn.net/>) in downtown Manistee  
The Doherty Hotel (<http://www.dohertyhotel.com/>) in downtown Clare  
The National House Inn (<http://www.nationalhouseinn.com/>) in downtown Marshall  
The Water Street Inn (<http://www.boynewaterstreetinn.com/>) in downtown Boyne City  
The Courtland Carriage House Bed & Breakfast in downtown Hart.

Manistee, Clare, Marshall, Boyne City and Hart are recognized Michigan Main Street© districts.

"We all know that shopping Michigan's downtowns during the holidays is a magical tradition that's been enjoyed by families and friends for generations," Krizov said. "We want Michigan residents to tell the world this holiday season what makes their experience so memorable, whether it's outstanding customer service by a merchant, a great bargain they find at a local store or an unforgettable meal they had at a downtown restaurant."

The "ShopMIDowntown Holiday Challenge" kicks off on November 8, 2010 and lasts throughout the holiday season, ending on December 31, 2010. The contest was inspired by a campaign in Sparta, Michigan. Sparta's "Christmas in Sparta" campaign ([www.christmasinsparta.com](http://www.christmasinsparta.com)) features a video blog highlighting the various purchases being made downtown and has helped spur sales at downtown businesses. The coalition promoting the "ShopMIDowntown Holiday Challenge" hopes to duplicate Sparta's successful marketing effort in downtowns across the state.

Individuals interested in more information about the "ShopMIDowntown Holiday Challenge" can contact Laura Krizov, manager of the Michigan Main Street Center at 517-241-4237 ([krizovl@michigan.gov](mailto:krizovl@michigan.gov)), or Joe Borgstrom, director of the STARS division at MSHDA, at 517-241-2512 ([borgstromj@michigan.gov](mailto:borgstromj@michigan.gov)).

For more information on the Michigan Main Street© program and official contest rules, go to <http://www.michiganmainstreetcenter.com/ShopMIDowntown> and for a listing of members of the Michigan Downtown Association, go to <http://www.michigandowntowns.com>.

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The Michigan State Housing Development Authority is dedicated to building a thriving and vibrant future for Michigan. MSHDA provides tools and resources to improve people's lives through programs across the state. These programs assist with housing, build strong neighborhoods, and help create places where people want to live and work. MSHDA's programs work in four areas: affordable rental housing; supporting homeownership; ending homelessness; and creating vibrant cities and neighborhoods.\*

\*MSHDA's loan and operating expenses are financed through the sale of tax-exempt and taxable bonds as well as notes to private investors, not from state tax revenues. Proceeds are loaned at below-market interest rates to developers of rental housing, and help fund mortgages and home improvement loans. MSHDA also administers several federal housing programs.