

Local holiday shopping season a success in Seneca

BY JUSTIN LEE CAMPBELL
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SENECA — Local business owners said the recent Christmas holiday shopping season was a successful one in the area.

Allison Springs, owner of Green Springs on Ram Cat Alley in Seneca, said her store had a “fantastic” shopping season.

“People want to support the small guy, see the town grow, help neighbors and find something unique,” Springs said. “That’s what you do when you shop local.”

Green Springs sells fair trade and American-made products, including pottery, glass fixtures, toys, baskets, candles, tote bags and soaps.

Springs said shopping local is a way to move past the “coldness” of online shopping, and it was “refreshing” to see people wanting to touch and feel products that have meaning.

“Customers like knowing they’re helping someone out in the town and that their money stays in the town,” she said. “People don’t understand how much money stays here if they spend it here. It’s been wonderful.”

M. Tannery and Sons owner Mary Tannery said her store also did well, exceeding its 2016 sales numbers. M. Tannery and Sons carries antiques, home accessories, unique gifts and furnishings. The store’s sales have been increasing year after year.

Tannery credited the personal feel that her store gives customers.

“When people come into a local store, you have a relationship with



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people who work there, or own it,” Tannery said. “It’s a relationship versus a computer. People come in for an experience.”

Better Furniture Outlet owner Alison Vaught said her store did “a little better” in 2017 than in 2016.

“It was a very good holiday season,” Vaught said.

One reason Vaught credited her store’s success despite the rising popularity of online shopping is that furniture is harder to buy online than in person. She said people can’t sit on a couch or lie down on a bed that they’re buying online.

“You can try furniture out in a store,” Vaught said.

Although Heartwarmers did not exceed last year’s holiday sales, store owner Nan Drais said the store enjoyed steady business throughout the holiday season.

“We’ve been successful, and the last few years

have been very good,” Drais said. “We’ve had very good years the past few years.”

Heartwarmers is a full-service florist and interior design firm. Drais said that products her store offers are products customers would rather see in person than look at on a computer or cell-phone screen.

But with announcements this year that a couple of chain arts- and-crafts retailers are coming to the area, Drais said she is concerned it could affect locally owned businesses. Drais said she isn’t worried her store will see any negative effects, but does worry other stores could. “It’s a little scary we may be losing our small-town appeal,” Drais said. “If people keep shopping online and running to big box stores, the town is going to take on a different look.”