We have been hearing a lot lately about “Small Business Saturday” this weekend, Nov. 26. We are being asked to “Shop Small” on this day.

Small Business Saturday follows by one day the national shopping mania that has become known as Black Friday—when the ***-marts and the big box stores and other national retailers hope to sell plenty of pricy items so their finances will end up “in the black” in a persistently pessimistic economy.

We won’t even get into that good-for-nothing Congress and its failure with the “super committee,” which was doomed to fail from the outset. After all, what’s more important? The nation’s economic health? Or the next election?

The ***-marts and big box stores and national retailers are pushing you very hard to spend your money with them. Remember when Black Friday started early Friday morning? Now the starting gun for you to rush out and buy your iCrap is Thanksgiving Day and night. It wasn’t so long ago when stores were closed on Thanksgiving so people could spend time with their families. Times—and priorities—have sure changed.

But one thing doesn’t change. The keystone to every local economy is its small and local businesses, and we heartily endorse the idea that all of you should shop small—and local. Think for a moment about all the local businesses we have—and all the empty storefronts. Times have changed a lot here, too.

None of the factors behind our local struggles can be easily solved. But each of us can help in our own little way by supporting our local businesses—the businesses in Iron River and Crystal Falls and elsewhere in Iron County.

Think about it. We depend very much on the services and goods that are available here. The groceries. The drug stores. The restaurants. The auto service center that changes your oil and fixes your brakes. The gas stations. The place where the ladies get their hair done, and the local barber shop. The area hardware store, where you go for furnace filters and paint and bird seed. And yes, your local newspaper.

We all need these services—badly! We all depend on them and assume that they will always be there when we need them. But they need us, too. They need our patronage and support. They need us to spend money with them so they can pay their utilities and their taxes and their employees. Maybe add another person to the staff so everybody doesn’t have to work such long hours.

Isn’t that more important than saving 10 cents a can on dog food at some mega mart 50 miles away that treats its employees like dirt? (That’s another thing: Shopping local saves on gas.)

So this Christmas season, think about our businesses and about our area. We all need to get our cars and trucks serviced. How about buying a coupon for an oil change? We need to buy food, right? Get a gift card from the store. A gift certificate from the restaurant or the jewelers or the hardware store or the beautician or the lawn care business. You can see where we’re going with this.

After all, we are all in this together, and we all have a stake in the health and future of our local businesses. That is why it is important for us to Shop Small.

But not just this Saturday. All the time. This is our home, after all.

--Peter Nocerini