

100th Business Joins iBuyMoCo Campaign

SPARTA – Curves of Sparta is the 100th business to join the iBuyMoCo campaign. “I believe in supporting local businesses myself, so becoming part of iBuyMoCo was a no-brainer for me,” said owner Maretta Budde.

The iBuyMoCo campaign was launched by the Monroe County Economic Development and Tourism Committee in response to a University of Wisconsin-Extension survey that showed Monroe County businesses are losing \$41 million in potential taxable sales to out-of-county businesses.

The goal of the campaign is to bring 10 percent of retail purchases made outside of the county back to Monroe County.

“According to the study, shifting just 10 percent of purchases back to Monroe County will increase personal incomes by \$3.5 million, increase employment by 100 employees and increase municipal tax revenues more than \$700,000,” said Lorry Erickson, iBuyMoCo campaign coordinator.

Budde has owned Curves in Sparta since September 2008. She had previously purchased the Black River Falls Curves in May 2006.

“I think people sometimes forget that if they drive out of town to do their shopping, those establishments in their hometowns won’t be there anymore when they want them. And now that I have two small children, I find it’s really just an inefficient use of my time to shop out of town,” Budde said.

Budde and her husband, Craig, have two sons, Mack, 5, and Tim, 2. Mr. Budde is employed by the Rezin Cranberry Company and the family lives on the Rezin cranberry marsh east of Warrens.

A native of Monroe, Wis., Budde graduated from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse with a degree in recreation management. She had been a member of Curves in Tomah for a year before having the opportunity to purchase the Black River Falls business.

“Becoming involved in Curves was just the right fit for me. It’s what I went to school for and I love helping women reach their goals,” Budde said. “And (Curves) fills a void in small towns where women usually don’t have access to a personal trainer that may cost \$50 an hour and up. Women can come here for just \$34 a month, so it’s more cost effective for the average woman,” she said.



Maretta Budde, owner of Curves in Sparta, was the 100th business owner to join the iBuyMoCo campaign. At last count, 110 businesses have signed up to participate.

As the owner of two small businesses, Budde pointed out that most small business owners are not making a fortune, but are helping to provide jobs for area residents.

“I love rural life and I believe in supporting our rural communities and small towns. I want to support those people who are supporting me,” she said.

All Monroe County businesses that have joined iBuyMoCo are listed on the campaign’s website at www.ibuymoco.com.

Individuals are also encouraged to participate in the program by taking the “I Buy MoCo Pledge” to shift 10 percent of their current out-of-county spending to local businesses.

For more information or to take the iBuyMoCo pledge, visit www.ibuymoco.com or write to P.O. Box 704, Tomah, WI 54660.

GO GREEN!

If you are currently receiving the Quarterly iBuyMoCo Newsletter by mail, please consider switching to our e-newsletter. To “Go Green,” simply e-mail your name and the mailing address that appears on your newsletter envelope to: info@ibuymoco.com. If we can switch most of our subscribers to an e-newsletter, we could publish a monthly newsletter and Hot Buys sheet.

Create It! Seeks to Connect Creative People

"Monroe County has many talented artists, musicians, writers, producers and other creative individuals, but most of us don't know that they're out there," says Nodji Van Wychen, chairperson of the Monroe County Economic Development and Tourism Committee.

In an effort to put the spotlight on these talented individuals, the committee is launching a networking alliance called "Create It" to help those with home-based businesses increase their visibility, as well as their income and sales.

The committee has been awarded a \$7,500 grant from the International Trade, Business and Economic Development Council of Southwest Wisconsin to aid in the development of the program.

"Create It!" will work in conjunction with the committee's iBuyMoCo campaign, which is designed to encourage county residents to support local businesses.

"This new effort is meant to help those entrepreneurs who may not have a downtown storefront, but are making pottery in their garage, baking artisanal breads in a rented kitchen, or whatever they might be making. And it will dovetail nicely with what we're already doing with iBuyMoCo," Van Wychen said.

The committee has planned two countywide events: a May 1 educational program in Sparta and a showcase featuring "Create It!" participants on July 31 at the Monroe County Fair in Tomah.

Prior to those two events, a series of community informational sessions are being held to introduce the program. Meetings have already been held in Kendall and Cataract and additional sessions are planned.

Upcoming meetings include:

- Saturday, April 10, 9 to 11 a.m., Area Community Theatre Commons Room, 907 Kilbourn Avenue, Tomah. Contact person: Lorry Erickson, (608) 378-3014 or info@ibuymoco.com.
- Saturday, April 17, 9 to 11 a.m., Ginny's Cupboard, 127 N. Water Street, Sparta. Contact person: Holly Grady, (608) 269-4123 or spartachamber@centurytel.net.
- Sunday, April 25, 1 to 3 p.m., Little Falls Town Hall, 4124 County Hwy I, Cataract. Contact person: Bernie Arena, (608) 272-3371 or jbarena@centurytel.net.

For future sessions in Kendall, contact Mary Jo Hill at (608) 374-7355 or maryjo@wifirstchoicerealty.com. Hill is also planning to organize a session in the Wilton area.

ArtsBuild Director to Speak at May 1 Program in Sparta

Carole Spelic is the featured speaker for the Create It! educational seminar on Saturday, May 1, in Sparta. Ms. Spelic is director of UW-Platteville's ArtsBuild program and also serves on the Arts Wisconsin board of directors.

Artsbuild is a regional advocacy, technical assistance and networking program for all types of creative entrepreneurs in southwest Wisconsin. Launched in April 2004, Spelic came on board as the director in May 2008.

Originally from the east coast, Spelic earned a masters degree in fine arts and spent 17 years as a working artist in Manhattan. She now lives and works in Mineral Point.

Spelic and her artist partner, Richard Moninski, operate the Green Lantern Studios where they make and show their own work, as well as offering changing exhibits of work by regional and national artists.

The program will be held at Jake's Northwoods Restaurant, 1132 Angelo Road (Highway 21), from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. There is no cost to attend and a free noon luncheon is available to those who register by April 25.

Also speaking will be Deb Moore, owner of Ginny's Cupboard and the soon-to-open Maiden Wisconsin gift shop in Sparta, and Paul Dwyer, co-owner of A Taste of Wisconsin in Tomah. The Wisconsin Agriculture Tourism Association has also been invited to make a presentation.

For more information or to register for the event, contact Lorry Erickson, iBuyMoCo coordinator, at (608) 378-3014 or info@ibuymoco.com, or the Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce at (608) 269-4123 or spartachamber@centurytel.net.

Create It! ***Educational Program***

Saturday, May 1, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Jake's Northwoods
Highway 21, Sparta, WI

PROGRAM

10 to 10:30 a.m. — Overview of Create It! and Introduction of Participants

10:30 to 11:45 a.m. — Carole Spelic, UW-Platteville ArtsBuild program director

11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. — Lunch and Networking among Participants

12:15 to 12:30 p.m. — Deb Moore, of Ginny's Cupboard & Maiden Wisconsin, Sparta

12:30 to 12:45 p.m. — Paul Dwyer of A Taste of Wisconsin, Tomah

12:45 p.m. to 1 p.m. — Wrap-up

Register for free lunch at (608) 269-4123, (608) 378-3014 or info@ibuymoco.com by April 25.