

Get a glimpse of ‘What Local Looks Like’ in holiday promotion that starts this week

Program pays off for participating shoppers

BY DON NELSON

TwispWorks has partnered with the Twisp and Winthrop chambers of commerce to launch a local shopping campaign that begins this week.

Called “What Local Looks Like,” the program offers cash rewards for those who shop locally and enter weekly drawings through New Year’s Day. Winners will receive a \$100 gift card to be spent at a Methow Valley restaurant.

“The ‘What Local Looks Like’ program is launching during the holiday season, but will be an ongoing program with seasonal themes, a focus

on buying local services, and weekly cash mobs,” TwispWorks Executive Director Don Linnertz said in a press release.

Here’s how it works:

- Spend \$50 or more at a Methow Valley store.
- Text or email a picture of yourself with your purchase to whatlocallookslike@gmail.com, and you will be eligible for the weekly drawing for the restaurant voucher.
- Winners will be announced every Wednesday starting Dec. 2 and continuing through Jan. 6, 2021.
- Tag @TwispWorks, @WinthropWA or @TwispWA on Facebook or Instagram with #WhatLocalLooksLike after submitting your qualifying purchase and receive one bonus raffle entry.

Submissions must include

full name and phone number. Online purchases are valid for entry. Shoppers may enter the raffle every time they spend \$50 or more at a unique location. Entries do not expire until the end of the campaign or until a shopper wins a raffle.

For information, visit www.twispworks.org or call 997-3300.

Linnertz said studies show that money spent with local business continues to circulate in the community. “Keeping more of our spending local increases job opportunities, keeps wealth in our community and supports the character and diversity we all want to build,” he said.

The partnering organizations came up with “What Local Looks Like” after the planned Mistletoe Madness

outdoor “winter market” was canceled because of the state’s latest coronavirus protocols. The event had been planned for Dec. 4-5 on a closed portion of Glover Street in Twisp.

In a statement last week, the organizing committee for Mistletoe Madness said that public safety concerns were behind the decision to cancel the event, particularly the challenges of observing coronavirus protocols in an outdoor environment. The statement also cited a concern that the event might draw visitors from outside the valley and increase the chances of COVID contacts. The statement also noted that staging such an event after the state’s latest protocols were issued might generate negative feedback “no matter how safely we can execute it.”



Photo by Marcy Stamper
A single skier (visible in the middle of the photo) enjoyed a perfect day in the upper Twisp River area.

COVID

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ticularly difficult to explain the restrictions to residents with memory issues, he said.

Unknown carriers?

Extended Care doesn’t know how the virus got into the facility, but the most likely vector was through a caregiver. “As the virus prevalence increases in the community, it increases the likelihood that our employees will become infected while off work. With so many asymptomatic COVID positive cases it is very possible for any of us to unknowingly be a carrier,” facility representatives said on Facebook. Residents also go into the community for medical and dental appointments.

Because of restrictions on when people can return to work after a positive COVID test, staffing at North Valley remains a

serious concern, the facility said.

Omak School District Superintendent Michael Porter announced on Nov. 14 that an undisclosed number of staff members at North Omak Elementary and Preschool had tested positive for COVID. All staff members who may have been exposed were following a 14-day quarantine.

While the Public Health case investigation found that students had limited exposure to the infected staff, the district shut down in-person learning for preschool through second grade to be extra-cautious. In-person instruction will resume Monday after Thanksgiving, Porter said.

While there have been infections in school-age children throughout the county, no other schools have reported infections among their students.

The Methow Valley School District is asking any students who gather with people outside

their household or travel over the Thanksgiving weekend to attend school remotely for the first week after the break.

Data backlog

DOH is encouraging anyone who has COVID symptoms or who’s had close contact with someone with COVID-19 (or suspected COVID) to get tested right away. But because demand for testing — and pressures on labs to process the tests — has been so intense, DOH is asking the general public not to seek screening tests with the idea that the test will allow them to attend Thanksgiving celebrations.

In fact, the state is so overwhelmed with analyzing test results that DOH asked labs that conduct COVID tests to temporarily stop sending daily individual negative test results, and instead to aggregate the negative tests. Until the flood of data slows, the state will continue to report positive cases, but not the

total number of daily tests or the percent of positive tests.

DOH’s disease reporting system can process approximately 33,000 total results per day, but the agency is getting between 30,000 and 50,000 records per day.

As of Saturday (Nov. 21), there was a backlog of 53,000 test results, both positive and negative, which had accumulated in just two to three days. The tests also include results for diseases such as tuberculosis.

Testing volumes are expected to increase further in the coming weeks because the demand for testing is increasing as COVID cases go up. There are also more testing sites and more types of tests available, DOH said.

The backlog of results means that the number of new COVID-19 cases DOH is reporting is an undercount and most likely doesn’t reflect current disease trends, the department said on Saturday.

The surge in cases is having

far-reaching impacts. Hospitals in Idaho have had to send patients to Spokane, Seattle and Oregon, Okanogan County Community Health Director Lauri Jones said.

Over the past week, there’s

been an average of more than 171,000 COVID cases per day in the United States. At that rate, the country racked up another million cases in a week, with total infections now at 12.3 million.

Free COVID tests in valley next week