



Finding a Way Forward

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

LOWCOUNTRY
LOCAL FIRST

DEAR FRIENDS,

The year 2020 will forever be one that the world reflects back on with many tales to tell. The story we tell from Lowcountry Local First is one of managing crises by pivoting to implement thoughtful and impactful changes. It was a critical year for local business support, one that truly tested who we are as an organization and reinforced our core purpose. And in reflection, we can proudly say that we passed the test. It was perhaps our most significant year to date since launching in 2007.

For an organization that has thrived on being hands-on and in-person within the community since inception – building relationships and providing networking and learning opportunities each month – it was indeed a challenge to suddenly be thrown into the world of virtual content and engagement in March 2020. The lessons we learned together along the way will only help ensure that the work we do moving forward continues to be relevant and accessible for our local business community.

Our mission ensures that our local economy is resilient and able to withstand the ebb and flow of national and global threats. It's more important than ever to support our neighbors in business and reprioritize how we spend our dollars as individuals and as businesses. We must continue to choose community over convenience. ***We must love the Lowcountry.***

As the organization's past and current Board Chairs, we speak for the community in extending our deep gratitude to Jamee Haley for her 15 years of service to the organization as Founder and Executive Director. The impact of her work and leadership over the years will no doubt have a lasting impact. The legacy she created will be carried on by the very talented team she cultivated, who carry forth her dedication to the well-being of the Lowcountry. We look forward to bringing on a new Executive Director in 2021, and are grateful to Lauren Gellatly for stepping in as Interim Executive Director during our search.

Thank you for enabling us to continue to be the urgent resource that our local businesses need every day. Your continued support of Lowcountry Local First improves the lives of many.

Sincerely,

Nicki Root, Grassroots Wine, 2020 Board Chair
Terri Herubin, Greystar, 2021 Board Chair



OUR APPROACH

Lowcountry Local First is a 501(c)3 nonprofit cultivating an economy anchored in local ownership, because local-independent businesses are the cornerstone of our culture, economy and character.

WHO WE WORK WITH

We work with a diverse range of partners from the private, nonprofit and public sectors.

- Local-independent businesses
- Policymakers and elected officials
- Local, state, and national nonprofit and governmental partners
- Donors and funders who share our values

WHAT WE DO

Our programs implement a new model of local economic development - integrating advocacy, education and training, and relationship-building toward a more equitable, diversified economy.

WHY WE'RE DIFFERENT

We develop innovative models for sustainable and equitable local economies. Our work leverages our understanding of our more than 450 local business members and more than 12,000 employees across all sectors, and is informed by staff with expertise and on-the-ground experience in local economy-building, innovative economic development, entrepreneur support, sustainable agriculture, and food systems. We are connected to local economy and sustainable business organizations throughout the country, granting us access to the best models, case studies and thought leaders.

A large blue sign with white lettering that reads "ABUNDANT SEAFOOD" mounted on the side of a white brick building.

A small white sign with black text that reads "4731" mounted above a dark door.

A circular logo on the glass door that reads "ABUNDANT SEAFOOD" around a central fish icon.



A CRITICAL YEAR FOR LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT

- **51** small businesses were rapidly awarded **\$60,000** in [Small Business Relief Grants](#) thanks to the generosity of Home Telecom and South State Bank
- **52** no-cost one-on-one consultations were provided to local business owners navigating the pandemic through our team and the Local Expertise Exchange of members supporting members
- A robust and actively managed [COVID Resource and Action Center](#) launched on our website and was heavily promoted and used throughout the year, including a local supply hub for PPE equipment, regulatory updates at all levels of government, business loan and grant information, resources to help businesses reopen safely, and a webinar library with free recordings of workshops throughout the year

"I was beyond elated to hear about the grant Pink Cactus was chosen to receive. This has been an extremely hard year. This is my first restaurant I have opened and we just celebrated our one year anniversary right when the pandemic emerged. Things have been very emotional and scary but there have been pockets of light such as these. This grant will go towards helping with our biggest operating expense which is payroll. Thank you again so much!"

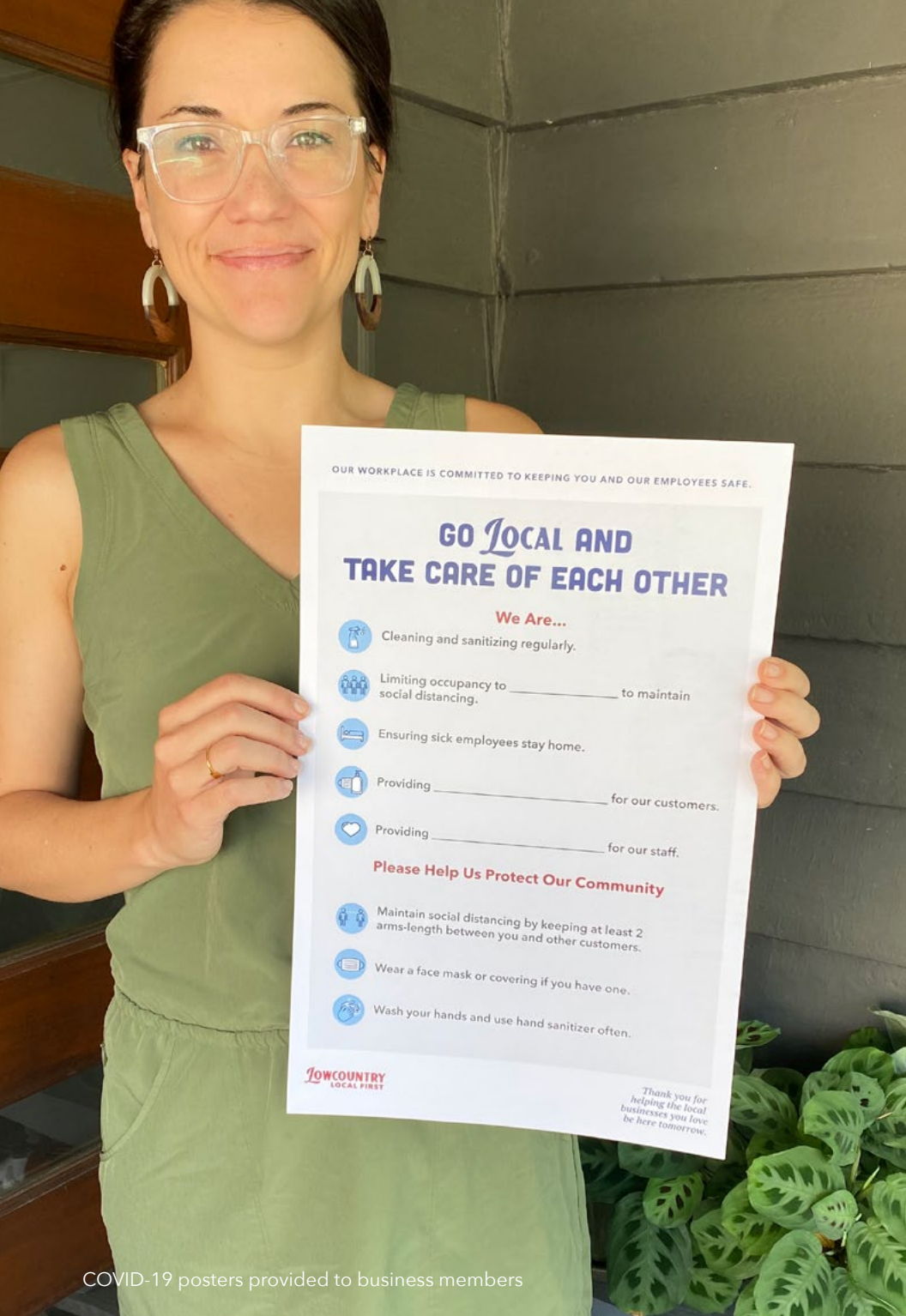
- **Pink Cactus,**
Small Business Relief
Grant recipient

"It was wonderful on many fronts, not just the advice, but meeting someone new in this time of quarantine and having a creative conversation really brightened my day!"

- **Plastic Pollution Solutions,**
Recipient of a Local Expertise
Exchange session

"During times of crisis and change, it sometimes brings out the best and worst in our communities, and organizations either get it or they get lost in all the noise. Having said that, over the past 6 weeks, LLF has clearly demonstrated its value to our community."

- **Charleston City Councilmember Jason Sakran**



OUR WORKPLACE IS COMMITTED TO KEEPING YOU AND OUR EMPLOYEES SAFE.

GO LOCAL AND TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER

We Are...



Cleaning and sanitizing regularly.



Limiting occupancy to _____ to maintain social distancing.



Ensuring sick employees stay home.



Providing _____ for our customers.



Providing _____ for our staff.

Please Help Us Protect Our Community



Maintain social distancing by keeping at least 2 arms-length between you and other customers.



Wear a face mask or covering if you have one.



Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer often.

LOWCOUNTRY
LOCAL FIRST

Thank you for helping the local businesses you love be here tomorrow.

COVID-19 posters provided to business members

ADVOCATING FOR POLICIES THAT SUPPORT LOCAL-INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES

- **2** elected official roundtables were hosted for small business owners (1 in-person and 1 virtual)
- **1 STATEWIDE PRESENTATION** was provided to help government leaders and elected officials better support local businesses throughout the pandemic and beyond
- **10 MEETINGS** or public testimonies were provided in front of elected officials to advocate for the local business community at local, state and federal levels
- Advocated for the **SC BUSINESS LICENSE TAX STANDARDIZATION ACT** (H4431) that passed at the state level in Sept 2020
- Advocated for the **TOWN OF JAMES ISLAND SMALL BUSINESS COVID RELIEF LOAN** Assistance Program that passed in Sept 2020
- Advocated to Charleston City councilmembers to allow artisan and prepared food vendors back at **CHARLESTON FARMERS MARKET** in Oct 2020
- Held public forum online for local businesses to learn and give feedback around the **CITY OF CHARLESTON 10-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN** in Oct 2020
- Letters of support were submitted to advocate for the **LOWCOUNTRY LOWLINE** and **BUS RAPID TRANSIT**



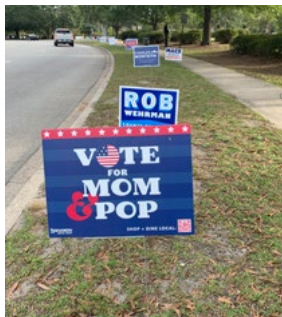


Listening session with Joe Cunningham

2020 IMPACT

SHIFTING DOLLARS TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

- **230+** local businesses were featured on buylocalchs.com, an aggregated marketplace, during the early months of the pandemic, making it easy for citizens to still find and support them as their business models changed
- **5,610+** pageviews took place on buylocalchs.com from Mar 15 - June 15, 2020
- **25,000+** pageviews took place on the [local business directory](https://lowcountrylocalfirst.org) at lowcountrylocalfirst.org throughout 2020, which features 450+ Certified Local businesses across the Lowcountry
- The annual Buy Local Month campaign was extended into a **BUY LOCAL SEASON** (Nov 1 - Dec 31) for the first time, with a “Vote for Mom & Pop” theme.
- **45+** “Shop & Dine Local” street banners were displayed along high-trafficked business districts of Goose Creek, Daniel Island and Mount Pleasant
- **6,100+** postcards were mailed across the Lowcountry directing citizens to the Buy Local campaign site and encouraging them to shop and dine local
- **20+** local outdoor artisan markets were promoted and **90+** local businesses posted to the dedicated campaign website
- **80** “Vote for Mom & Pop” posters and **60** yard signs were displayed in local storefronts and in high foot-trafficked areas
- More than **6,500** views and shares of “[Every Dollar Matters](#)” video throughout the week after launching in mid-November



Local TV station covers Buy Local Season campaign.



Photo provided by City of Goose Creek

2020 IMPACT

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES THROUGH BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

- **70+ ENTREPRENEURS** graduated from our [Good Enterprises](#) Initiative's virtual [Community Business Academy](#) to date, with ages ranging from 18 - 81 years old
- **40+ HOURS OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS COACHING** took place for 18 Community Business Academy alumni through [Business Acceleration Services](#)
- **\$3.80 OF ECONOMIC IMPACT** is generated for every dollar invested into the Good Enterprises Initiative

"The knowledge and information I gained from the program was truly invaluable. You learn how to manage a successful business, including things like record-keeping, sales projections, pricing strategies, marketing, and more. The hands-on training through the Business Simulation game we play throughout helps you understand exactly what it's like to run a business."

- **Tiffany Young**,
Owner of Dazzling Desserts,
Fall 2020 Community
Business Academy graduate

"We believe in Good Enterprises and Lowcountry Local First's mission of helping entrepreneurs, so choosing to be a coach in the program was a no-brainer. What inspires us to help others is our desire to see others realize their true potential."

- **Monique and Chevalo Wilsondebriano**,
Charleston Gourmet Burger Company, Business Acceleration Services Coaches





Tiffany Young, *Dazzling Desserts*

CREATING AN ECOSYSTEM WHERE LOCAL BUSINESSES CAN THRIVE

- Developed a new, expanded community coworking space, [Local Works](#), to provide affordable work space for more businesses in a safe, socially-distanced manner
- Hosted the [7th annual Good Business Summit](#) in Feb 2020 at the Charleston Music Hall, with 200+ local business leaders and decision makers learning from 27 local, regional and national speakers including keynote speaker Vincent Stanley, Director of Philosophy of Patagonia
- Hosted **5 TACTICAL WEBINARS** on subjects like business continuity, remote sales, hiring practices, federal loans and more.
- Hosted a virtual **RETAIL ROUNDTABLE** where local retail owners were able to connect and share tips on how to best safely serve their customers during a pandemic
- Successfully transitioned our [Growing New Farmers Program](#) curriculum to Trident Technical College where it can now serve the community in a more accessible, affordable platform and grow more farmers for our local food system

“The Good Business Summit was an awesome opportunity to connect with other local businesses and learn from their experiences. We will definitely be focusing on the heart and soul of our agency as we continue to grow, learning from other successful entrepreneurs who have built their brands on community and purpose.”

- Rianna Susco, Squeeze Marketing,
2020 Summit attendee





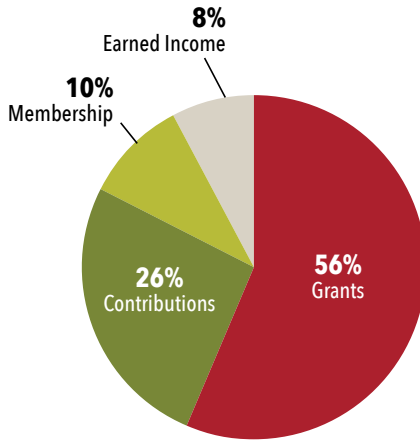
Local Works coworking space

2020

FINANCIALS

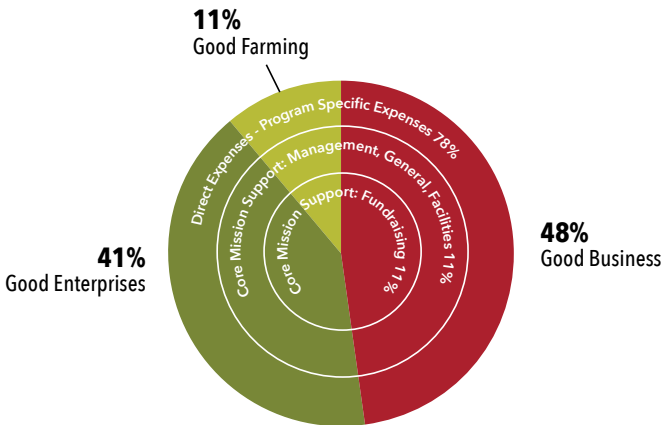
Lowcountry Local First is committed to financial transparency and accountability in appropriately stewarding our supporters' dollars to further our mission. For more information, please contact barbie@lowcountrylocalfirst.org.

2020 REVENUE \$1,179,312



2020 EXPENSES \$929,918

100% of Every Dollar Goes to Impact



Information provided is unaudited. 2020 financial audit will be completed mid-year in 2021.



Local Works coworking space ribbon cutting ceremony

2020

SUPPORTERS

We extend gratitude to the following 2020 donors who catapulted our work from ideas to action through their financial support.

\$10,000+

Bank of America Grants
Charleston County Economic Development
Charleston Together
Coastal Community Foundation of SC
Common Future
Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
U.S. Economic Development Administration
First Reliance Bank
Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
Greystar
Home Telecom
Kathryn Salmanowitz
Pathfinder Foundation
Rising Tide Capital Inc
SC Department of Commerce
Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina
South State Bank
Urban Electric Co.
Wells Fargo Foundation

\$5,000 TO \$9,999

Blackbaud
Dunn Family Fund
Elk Springs Resort
McLeod Endowment
MUSC
SC Federal Credit Union
TD Charitable Foundation
The Ohana East Foundation

\$2,500 TO \$4,999

Artist Collective
Charles McLendon
Central Park Accounting Inc.
Freshfields Village
Giglio Communications and Marketing
The Joanna Foundation
The Matthew 25 34-40 Foundation

\$1,000 TO \$2,499

Baldwin Family Fund
Brasel and Virginia Thomas

Celadon Home
Charleston Mattress
Charm Southern Staging LLC
Christine Lasala and Ellie Lipschitz
CresCom Bank
David Adoff
Frank Haygood
Goldbug Collection
Grassroots Wine
Greg Garvan
Jeff Plotner
Jennifer Murray
Justin Ferira
Meredith Siemens Allen
Pearlstone Family Fund
People Surge
Russell Bennett
Ted's Butcherblock
Terri Herubin
The Denver Foundation
Town of Mount Pleasant

\$500 TO \$999

Alison Dailey
Anna Poole
BoomTown

Carol Jackson
Charleston Imaging Products, Inc.
Christy Allen
City of Charleston
David Marconi
Jessica Slaughter
Joye Law Firm
Morgan East
Myriam Owens
Nicki Root
Nicolas Romo
Pat Sullivan
Phillip Smith
Rheos Gear
The Station at Park Circle

\$101 TO \$499

Abundant Seafood Co
Addlestone International Corp
Alternative Staffing, Inc.
Amy Barrett
Anna Lewin
Brad Mallett
Capers Cauthen
Carmen Blubaugh
Cindy Taylor
Crushed Fine Wine

David Sluter
Durant Consulting
Elliot Meena
Heather Barrie
Heine Family
Helen Mitternacht
Jamee Haley
Jennifer Waggoner
Jessica Peele
Julie Dombrowski
June Bradham
Katherine Lansbury
Kimberly Abney
Lana Kleiman
Laura and Ralph
Cantral
Laura Schaible
Lauren Gellatly
Leslie Wade
Maggie Wojton
Matt Pardieck
Meghan O'Malley
Mini Mariana Hay
Nancy Hadley
Omar Estrella
Ray Weeks
Rebekah Cordell
Sallie Gold
Stephanie Hunt
Steven Ortego
Tara Dorundo

Terese Shelton
Terri Thomas
The Glass Onion
The Glasspro-
Heinauer Family
Fund
The Grubb Family
Fund
Thomas Mosimann
Valerie Howell
Walter Brooks
Whitney Powers
William McKenzie
William Roumillat

\$25 TO \$100

Abbey Frederick
Allison Henry
Amy Romanczuk
Angela Bruns
Anne Lawless
Aryn Linenger
Barbie and Brian
Schreiner
Cat Taylor
Charleston Shop
Curator
Christian Senger
Christina Gannett
Dezba Corporation
Duncan Cheney
Elizabeth Wallace

Gary Flynn
Hanna Attafi
Harvey Friedman
Jamie Farrer
Janelle Wright
Janet Humphries
Jestine's Kitchen
Jonathan Wright
Jordan and Marcus
Amaker
Jordan Ragusa
Joseph McGee
Julia Turner
Kate Goldman
Katherine
Westmoreland
Katy Chung
Katy Perrin
Kaylee Schuh
Kristi Outland
Larry Downey
Laura Bruns
Leah Suarez
Lydia Dodd Legal
Interpreting
Lyn Tally
Marshall Walker
Real Estate
Mary Ann Henry
Mary Paetsch
Matthew Hayden

Maud Bentley
Design
Medea Duffy
Michael Hamrick
Michael Jackson
Mimi Alex Komar
Motherland
Essentials
Nikki Seibert
Nilsy Rapolo
Paul Sykes
Rebekah
Collinsworth
Rosemarie Dreier
Sarah Nielson
Thomas Bruns
Thomas Heath

2020

HIGH LEVEL MEMBERS

CATALYST

Charleston Magazine
El Informador Newspaper
Estelle Colored Glass
First Reliance Bank
Grassroots Wine
Greystar
HLA, Inc.
Limehouse Produce
Motley Rice LLC
Old Whaling Co
REV Federal Credit Union
Ruth's House Event Rentals
and Design
Sonitrol Security Systems
South Carolina Federal
Credit Union

CHAMPION

Avocet Hospitality Group
Inc.
Baker & Brewer
BLU Restaurant & Bar
Carnes Crossroads
Charleston Animal Society
Charleston County Park and
Recreation Commission
Charleston CVB
Croghan's Jewel Box
Cru Café
Cru Catering
CT Lowndes and Company
David Thompson Architect,
LLC
Delaney Oyster House
Dockery's
Goldbug Collection

Home Telecom
Lennon Construction
Company
RCB Development
SlowFood Charleston
South Carolina Stingrays
Steen Enterprises
Taco Boy
The Agricultural Society of
S.C.
The Beach Company
The Glass Onion Restaurant
The Neighborhood Dining
Group
The Ordinary
The Urban Electric Company
Verde
Wills Massalon & Allen LLC
Wonder Works

2020

OUR TEAM

Thank you to our 2020 Board of Directors and staff for their leadership and support.

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nicki Root - <i>Chair</i>	Charles McLendon	Justin Ferira
Adam Steen - <i>Vice Chair</i>	David Bennett	Meredith Siemens
Jennifer Murray - <i>Treasurer</i>	Katherine Perrin	Stephanie Hall
Jessica Slaughter - <i>Secretary</i>	Jeff Plotner	Terri Herubin

STAFF

Barbie Schreiner	Jordan Amaker	Raquel Padgett
CT Burton	Kaylee Schuh	Steve Fletcher
Eileen Peters	Lauren Gellatly	Wyatt Ball
Jamee Haley	Maud Bentley	



Looking ahead to 2021

Hope has kept our chins high during a grueling year and we are holding onto hope that this year will see our community emerge stronger and full of resolve. We know that impacts from COVID-19 will continue to be felt within our local communities for the duration of 2021 but that is why our programs and services will continue to focus on meeting the needs of local business owners and entrepreneurs while also continuing to advocate for policies that alleviate hardships during the recovery process.

Most notably we feel optimistic about the following:

- Gathering in person for our member socials and restoring our relationship economy.
- Celebrating our local food systems through an extended [Eat Local Season](#) campaign in May 1st – June 30th, 2021
- Hosting six cohorts of our Community Business Academy for individuals pursuing their passions.
- Working alongside emerging entrepreneurs through our Business Acceleration Services
- Putting best business practices forward and laying the groundwork for our 9th annual Good Business Summit in 2022
- Working alongside our elected officials to ensure the unique needs of our local economy remain forefront



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LOWCOUNTRYLOCALFIRST.ORG

MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE STATE OF LOCAL:



Join the movement as a member
business and engage in the programming
and advocacy efforts:

LOWCOUNTRYLOCALFIRST.ORG/JOIN



Support and grow the movement with
your dollars:

LOWCOUNTRYLOCALFIRST.ORG/DONATE



Stay informed and keep the conversation
moving forward. Sign up for the e-newslet-
ter by scanning this code with your smart
phone's camera

PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE