

To the Editor April 4, 2020

Back to Basics

I would like to offer local businesses some unsolicited advice. I have no knowledge of the ownership, management, financials, or the history of any of your businesses. As a retired businessman, I offer some ideas as food for thought to think through these troubled days and years ahead.

That said, for those business established near a major highway, over time your business has become geared mainly to travelers from the highways.

In Wisconsin many businesses began in the 18th Century at the lake front, grew overtime in the 19th Century away from the lake to near the railroads, and then to the highways in the 20th Century. This gutted small town businesses and left us dependent on the state and interstate highway transportation systems, and the larger global economy to some extent.

For the next few years or more, all of that will be completely different because of this virus and those that follow. Travel will reduce, your revenues will take a big hit. It is time to turn your business to the towns and villages near you. This means changing all inventory and services to focus locally. We will all need to pull together, and to some extent revert to previous days of a local rather than a global economy.

Many residents of our town and villages are scared and elderly and do not wish to drive to bigger cities for groceries and supplies. They will become your new customers.

We will need to go back to the 1950's, and turn our farms back into local resources. I would advise local farmers to stop planting corn and soybeans, which need to be transported and processed, and start planting real FOOD for local use. Plant potatoes, carrots, onions, and sweet corn. Buy the necessary machinery now. Plant orchards for apples, peaches, and pears. The days of bringing in food from Mexico and South America are going to go away.

We need to get back to these basics, or we could end up in the Stone Age.