

The Berkshire Eagle

West Stockbridge merchants team up in lieu of tax-free weekend

Businesses take it upon themselves to continue holiday

By Tony Dobrowolski

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WEST STOCKBRIDGE Providing an alternative to the state's canceled tax-free holiday this month is gaining traction among more Berkshire businesses.

The latest to pick up the gauntlet are 10 small West Stockbridge businesses that have banded together to offer a weekend of savings on Aug. 20 and 21, when the state's tax-free holiday was originally scheduled to take place.

In Pittsfield, nine members of the Downtown Pittsfield Inc. merchants' organization will be providing a similar savings weekend in lieu of the tax free holiday Saturday and today.

Jennifer Knopf, a local merchant, organized the West Stockbridge Summer Spectacular. Knopf owns Flourish Market Vintage at 2 Albany Road, which sells vintage and painted furniture, lighting, artwork, mirrors and jewelry.



The other participants include: Hoffman Pottery; Sandy Klempner@Home; Diana Felber Gallery; Out of Vietnam Gallery; Hotchkiss Mobiles; Equator Antiques; Stanmeyer Gallery & Shaker Dam Coffeehouse; Public Market; and Charles H. Baldwin & Sons.

All of those businesses are located in the center of town except for Hoffman Pottery, which is located at 103 Great Barrington Road (Route 41).



"A lot of them signed on right away," said Knopf, who contacted the businesses via email with her discount weekend suggestion.

"They were excited to put something together and having a specific point of time in August to offer something," she said. "We're about to go into fall when business is a little slower."

Town businesses used to receive a boost in August from West Stockbridge's Zucchini Festival, which no longer takes place.



Public Market owner Tim Walsh was especially enthusiastic about the idea.

"Count me in!" Walsh said in a statement. "My wife, Andrea Harrington" — a candidate for state Senate — "and I are committed to small business which the tax-free weekend would have helped."

Massachusetts' annual tax-free weekend, which gives consumers a break on the state's 6.25 percent sales tax on certain items, was canceled by Legislators last month after tax collections fell short of fiscal 2016 projections. This is the first time tax-free weekend will not take place in Massachusetts since 2009.

Each business participating in the West Stockbridge Summer Spectacular is offering different discounts, according to Knopf.

For example, Hotchkiss Mobiles is offering 10 percent off of all outdoor mobiles; Charles H. Baldwin & Sons, 15 percent off of everything except extracts; and Flourish Market Vintage, 20 percent off the store's entire inventory. Hoffman Pottery is offering between 25 and 75 percent off selected items.

"It's up to each individual business owner what they have to offer," Knopf said. "It's whatever they felt comfortable offering."

For more information contact the individual business owners directly or go to weststockbridgetown.com and search for business links.