

Small businesses are a big deal

The term "small business" is evocative for Americans. It connotes visions of independence, individualism, big dreams, freedom and neighbors. Enterprise is a big part of our national psyche, and it's a big part of our economy.

There are about 23 million small businesses in our country. They account for roughly 50 percent of private-sector employees and 30 percent of total payroll.

The common definition of a small business is one with 500 employees or less. Most, however, are much smaller. For instance, in Larimer County, 77 percent of businesses have fewer than 10 employees.

Based on the numbers cited above, small business is a big deal for our national, state and local economies.

What interests me more, however, are the dreams and the passion I see in small-business people.

The successful ones love what they do. They love solving problems for their clients or patients or customers. They derive great satisfaction from bringing their experience and talents to bear to genuinely help people.

Small business is the husband-and-wife photography team that finally helps a client get a headshot he's proud to

David May

From this perspective



use.

Small business is the financial adviser who helps a couple figure out how to reach their financial goal of a secure and comfortable retirement.

Small business is the public relations firm with the creativity to help the small not-for-profit organization figure out how to communicate its value in words and images and do so in an affordable way.

Small business is the housewares retailer in downtown who has served customers with great quality and good cheer for decades.

Small business is the florist who brings the extra flourish to your event table arrangements or the bouquet you take home to a loved one.

Small business is the contractor who gets your building done on time and on budget and honors every commitment made.

All of them exist to make a profit. In the process, however, to endure over time, they must serve people skillfully and at a fair price.

In the process, a happy byproduct is that as these small businesses succeed financially, they give back to the community in innumerable ways.

Coming soon is Small Business Week. To celebrate the spirit of enterprise, innovation, creativity and independence, the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Small Business of the Year Award luncheon on Wednesday.

First National Bank is the premier sponsor of the event. The awards finalists include AlphaGraphics, Brinkman Partners, The Cupboard, MazTech & All-Tech Automotive, Shaw & Associates and Palmer Flowers.

If you're interested in helping us celebrate small business in Fort Collins, call the chamber at (970) 482-3746 or go to www.FortCollinsChamber.com.

It has been my pleasure and honor to work for and around small-business owners for, well, longer than I want to say. After all of these years, I never tire of their stories or lose my sense of wonder at the skills and passion they bring to their work and how it benefits the community.

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