



Eateries keep it local

Denny Culbert/Staff Photographer

Ohio University freshman Lauren Reeves and senior Tiffany Teofilo enjoy coffee and conversation along with other patrons of Donkey Coffee and Espresso Monday evening. Located on W. Washington St. in Athens, Donkey Coffee and Espresso is one of several businesses that value its customers more than profit.

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Athens is home to a bevy of businesses that put social consciousness, globally and locally, before big-time profits.

"Sustainability" is the buzzword when it comes to these restaurants. Matt Marenberg, marketing coordinator for Casa Nueva, 4 W. State St., defined sustainability as using food that is produced locally, usually organically — that is, without pesticides and other chemicals.

Casa's mission statement states the restaurant is "dedicated to strengthening the environmental, economic and social well being of our community by promoting wholesome products, democratic participation and responsible prac-

Businesses strive:

- Big Chimney Baking Company, 8776 Mine Road
- Casa Nueva, 4 W. State St.
- Donkey Coffee and Espresso, 17 1/2 W. Washington St.
- Purple Chop Stix, 371 1/2 Richland Ave.
- Starving Wolf Yellow Moon, 11310 Jackson Drive in The Plains.
- Village Bakery and Café, 270 E. State St.

source: Post research

tices." Casa uses mostly local food products in its meals. Food coordinator Mike McKniff said there are

many reasons for this.

"One, it's fresher," he said. Also, "It supports our local economy."

McKniff said keeping money within Athens is key to long-term prosperity for businesses and individuals.

"Basically the better our economy is, the better we're going to do," he said. "So it's selfish and altruistic at the same time."

Sustainability practices decrease Athens' reliance on external economic factors, said Christine Hughes, owner of Village Bakery and Café, 270 E. State St. She thinks so many Athens businesses have implemented such policies "because people really feel a sense of home here."

"I've lived in other small towns and large towns, and somehow the people who end up here, they really love it and would like to stay

here," Hughes said.

Ohio University economics professor Khosrow Doroodian said from an efficiency standpoint, it is better for businesses to buy the least expensive goods, even if that means bypassing local farmers. However, he said transportation costs could sometimes result in competitive pricing of local goods that would have been more expensive otherwise. Still, he said in the long run, relying on inefficient industries hurts the economy.

"I think the more money that we keep within the community, the stronger it will be," Hughes said. She and Casa's coordinators agreed that using local food facilitates checks on the quality of the product.

"We're more interdependent on each other, which I think in the long run is healthier," she said.