

I love shopping at the Wal-Mart in Plattsburgh. Why shouldn't we have one here?

The Wal-Mart in Plattsburgh has something we don't have.

Competition.

Wal-Mart can't raise its prices in Plattsburgh, because there are many other stores that would then be a better bargain. But what would happen to us, when we have a Wal-Mart, and nothing else?

We all know getting a Wal-Mart will hurt local businesses. Maybe you think the bargains at Wal-Mart will make up for that, because you think the local stores are too expensive, or don't have the things you want. Perhaps that's why you go to Plattsburgh in the first place.

It is true that when a new Wal-Mart opens, it offers the lowest prices. However, they only **retain these low prices for the first year** of operation.

Two major consumer studies at University of Iowa and Penn State have shown that within five years of opening, average retail prices in the entire area become **4-8 percent higher** than they were before Wal-Mart arrived.

Because **with local competition gone**, Wal-Mart can gouge.

And they do.

Play now, pay later.

It's very tempting to think that with a Wal-Mart in Saranac Lake, we'll have the best of both worlds.

We have the little friendly town we love, only with convenience and low prices.

But all across America, small towns like ours have discovered, too late, that Wal-Mart was the worst neighbor they could have gotten.

Listen to what this small town resident has to say:

"Wal-Mart came to Nowata, Oklahoma years ago and completely destroyed the town. The Ma and Pa shops went out of business and they never returned. Nowata, Oklahoma is a small town but previously I heard that it had life. Wal-Mart set up its shop, took business away, and then pulled out and left. After all those years Nowata has not been reborn."

(www.justicetalking.org, comment from citizen of Nowata, OK)

Find out more at

SaveSaranacLake.org



What's behind the mask?



Can we really afford a Wal-Mart?

Can we afford more unemployment?

Missouri economist Emek Basker did a major study of what really happens when Wal-Mart opens in small communities:

- Wholesale employment **declines** by approximately 20 jobs over five years.
- Many of these jobs are only part-time, with smaller benefits and less opportunity for advancement.
- Wal-Mart overstates the number of full-time employees by counting as full-time anybody who works more than 34 hours a week.

Independent research shows that eight years after Wal-Mart comes to town there is actually a 2-4% net loss of jobs.

- Jobs are lost at competing retailers.
- Wal-Mart **does not use local suppliers and service providers.**
- Area wages **decrease** by 5%.

If Wal-Mart shuts down its store in a few years, then the town is left with nothing.

- The life cycle of one of these stores tends to be **from five to ten years.**
- There are **350 shuttered stores now blighting towns** across America.
- Wal-Mart moves to newer, bigger stores and then avoids competition by **refusing to sell or lease** their property.

(University of Missouri economic study, 2002)

Can we afford to destroy our beautiful area?

In October 2004, the United States sued Wal-Mart for violating the Clean Water Act in 9 states, calling for penalties of over \$3 million and changes to W-M building codes. [U.S. v. Wal-Mart Stores Inc., 2004 WL 2370700]

The United States Environmental Protection agency fined Wal-Mart \$1 million, settling allegations that Wal-Mart violated the Clean Water Act with dirt discharges while building stores in Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. [Wal-MartLitigation.com]

The Pennsylvania Environmental Protection Department fined Wal-Mart \$100,000 for polluting rivers. [Business Week, 5/31/99]

In Georgia, Wal-Mart was fined about \$150,000 for water contamination. [Atlanta Journal- Constitution, 2/10/05].

Can we afford the real cost of Wal-Mart?

Wal-Mart is "not a good neighbor" and its "low-wage jobs have no health care," Cathedral City, California Mayor Pro Tem Greg Pettis says today, now that their Wal-Mart has come and gone. Subsidizing it, he says, is "the biggest mistake" community leaders can make with taxpayer dollars.

(AFL-CIO study May 24, 2006: *Shopping for Subsidies: How Wal-Mart Uses Taxpayer Money to Finance Its Never-Ending Growth*)

Can we afford higher taxes?

Wal-Mart offers poor quality jobs. Over half of Wal-Mart employees do not receive health coverage. For too many, Wal-Mart's plan is unaffordable, and they are **forced into Medicaid.** (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3/2/06)

To try to reduce the costs they do pay for healthcare, Wal-Mart is **changing hiring practices to avoid hiring people who are overweight or have age-related health problems.** (*New York Times*, 10/26/05)

When Wal-Mart comes to town, taxes typically go up. The best independent research shows that taxes increase because **towns pay more in police, fire, road maintenance, and other services than Wal-Mart pays in taxes.** (Ohio Fiscal Analysis, 8/04)

Police costs are the most well-documented cost increases. Towns around the country report a sobering increase in police costs when Wal-Mart comes to town. Traffic incidents, bad checks, and shoplifting, account for some of the calls. But those vast parking lots also become **havens for drug deals and violent crime.** (*Arizona Republic*, 6/14/06)

In Pineville, North Carolina they had to hire two new police officers after Wal-Mart came to town. **Salaries, benefits, and police cars cost Pineville more than it received in taxes from Wal-Mart.** Studies show that many other towns have had to do the same. (www.ourtowndamariscotta.com)