

# Grocery Stores Crucial to Rural Communities


By Steph Larsen, Center for Rural Affairs

A small grocery store anchors one end of Main Street in the town the Center for Rural Affairs calls home. If you live in a rural community, you understand that our grocery store is arguably one of the most important businesses in town. Our store means more than just ready access to healthy food. Rural grocery stores provide jobs and generate tax revenue. Without a local grocery, the revenue that our food purchases generate go elsewhere.

Having a grocery store also helps attract new residents to a town. Similar to a school, a post office, restaurants and churches, a grocery store makes a community a more attractive place to live. Grocery stores can also be social places where you run into neighbors in the produce aisle, introduce yourself to someone new in town, or catch up on local happenings with the cashier.

Not all small towns are as lucky as we are. The lack of a grocery store means residents have less access to healthy fresh fruits and vegetables, and the elderly and others without reliable transportation will tend to buy their food at convenience stores with more limited selections or go for longer periods of time between visits to the store.

There are times when I worry about not having access to quality produce, or that the grocery distributor will someday choose not to deliver to my town's store. But for now, I choose to support my community by shopping locally.



The Center for Rural Affairs was established in 1973 as an unaffiliated nonprofit corporation under IRS code 501(c)3. The Center for Rural Affairs was formed by rural Nebraskans concerned about family farms and rural communities, and we work to strengthen small businesses, family farms and ranches, and rural communities.