

# The Bristol Press

## Planting the idea for carrotmobs

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BRISTOL — When a group of people gets others to stop purchasing a product or patronizing a business, it's called a boycott. But what if a group of people get together and use their purchasing power to get a business to make a change for the better?

That's called a carrotmob. It uses the "carrot" approach by rewarding good behavior. It's the opposite of a boycott, which punishes bad behavior.

Andrea Adams, an active member of Bristol Rising, wants to start some carrotmobs in Bristol.

"The idea is to spend money locally," she said. "People will provide support and money for changes they want to see and to help sustain local businesses."

Adams is forming a committee of people to help generate ideas and promote the carrotmobs.

"Over the next few weeks we will organize and lay the foundation," she said. Once a carrotmob is planned, it will be publicized.

Carrotmobs are a form of crowdsourcing, which uses the power and ideas of people in the community to promote new projects or ideas. Bristol Rising is the crowdsourcing arm of Renaissance Downtowns Bristol, which plans to revitalize downtown by building a mixed-use development at the former Bristol Centre Mall site. Bristol Rising promotes surveys to see what types of housing units, shops, restaurants and public spaces people want. Renaissance Downtowns plans to use that data when planning the development.

Carrotmobs were started three years ago by Brent Schulkin of San Francisco. The first one raised money to get a local store to purchase energy-efficient lighting and new gaskets for its refrigerators to save energy. The owner agreed to use 25 percent of profits from a certain day toward energy-efficiency measures. Schulkin told people about the event to get them to go to the store that day.

Since then, 175 carrotmobs have been held worldwide. Most have focused on environmentally-friendly initiatives. In Bangkok, Thailand 1,397 people helped Villa Market bring in over \$19,000. The store used the money to purchase cloth bags so it could stop using plastic ones.

In Vancouver, Canada, Salt Spring Coffee raised \$1,796 to install energy efficient lighting. The shop contributed another ten percent toward the lights.

In Springfield, Missouri, a gastropub (a pub that sells food as well as alcoholic beverages) raised \$2,000 towards a hydroponic greenhouse so it could grow some of its own vegetables.

Ryan Porter, the project manager of Renaissance Downtowns Bristol, said the Carrotmobs can make a difference.

“People can make a positive change or get a business established that they want,” he said. “It’s a good will community gesture and will be locally driven.”

To join Adams’ Carrotmob committee, call Mark Walerysiak Jr. at Renaissance Downtowns at (860) 582-0030. For more information about Carrotmobs, visit the website [www.carrotmobs.org](http://www.carrotmobs.org)