



Small is Possible: Life in a Local Economy

Lyle Estill

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"In *Small is Possible*, Estill chronicles the failures and victories of an ongoing movement for sustainability and local resiliency in Chatham County, located in the piedmont region of North Carolina. Estill is a legitimate source on the subject: he co-founded Piedmont Biofuels, a biodiesel co-op that went from backyard operation into an industrial plant in a few short years. The characters in Estill's world are both entertaining and endearing. Many of them show a flinty defiance, positioning themselves as courageous Daniels against the Goliaths of corporate greed and globalization. Readers interested in academic arguments for local economies can find other books on the subject, but if they want a compelling story about noble attempts to walk the talk, *Small is Possible* delivers. - Brian Baughan, Sustainablog

"In an age of increasing globalization, it is hopeful to be reminded that there are still communities where transactions are handled in handshakes rather than receipts. Estill takes us on a loving stroll through his North Carolina neighborhood and shows us how small-scale sustainability - feeding, fueling, and financing locally - is both possible and preferable." - Book Notes, Orion Magazine

One of my favorite ideas in this book is the idea of open source. Once you let go of this idea that everything must be copyrighted, everything must be owned and protected in order to make money, you become free. Open source ideas quickly foster a more open community, a more open and honest society. A group of people or organizations all start working toward a common goal rather than all working against one another. Beautiful, isn't it?

Another beautiful idea is that a community needs a variety of people and businesses to thrive. And that as you begin living locally- and begin working toward a healthy community - people and businesses find their niches. And when you find your own niche within the local economy, your own happiness rises. Your sense of well-being increases when you realize your positive and necessary contribution to society.

As we go further into debt and economic security throughout the world, nurturing our small, local, sustainable businesses and infrastructure will become increasingly important. I recommend this book. Reviewed by Melinda on *The Blogging Bookworm*

In an era when incomprehensibly complex issues like Peak Oil and climate change dominate headlines, practical solutions at a local level can seem somehow inadequate.

In response, Lyle Estill's *Small is Possible* introduces us to "hometown security," with this chronicle of a community-powered response to resource depletion in a fickle global economy. True stories, springing from the soils of Chatham County, North Carolina, offer a positive counterbalance to the bleakness of our age.

This is the story of how one small southern US town found actual solutions to actual problems. Unwilling to rely on the government and wary of large corporations, these residents discovered it is possible for a community to feed itself, fuel itself, heal itself, and govern itself.

This book is filled with newspaper columns, blog entries, letters, and essays that have appeared on the margins of small-town economies. Tough subjects are handled with humor and finesse. Compelling stories of successful small businesses, from the grocery co-op to the biodiesel co-op, describe a town and its people on a genuine quest for sustainability.

Everyone interested in sustainability, local economy, small business, and whole foods will be inspired by the success stories in this book.

Lyle Estill is “Vice President of Stuff ” at Piedmont Biofuels, and has won numerous awards for his work in the biodiesel business. He is the author of *Biodiesel Power* and lives in Moncure, North Carolina.

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