

## Outside and Away From Ribbons, Tags and Black Friday

While many people got in their cars in middle of the night on Black Friday to go out to shop doorbusters, wait in lines for deals and power through crowds, some people avoided it all together.

According to a survey by the National Retail Federation, Black Friday attendance was down over 3%, from 58.7% last year to 55.1% this year. Black Friday spending was down 30% from \$59 billion in 2012 to \$50 billion this year.

REI was one company that lead the trend this year by choosing to avoid the chaos and close their doors during Black Friday. They wanted to give their employees the chance to spend the day outside instead, and invited others to do the same. People were encouraged to post pictures on Instagram of themselves outside with the hashtag #OptOutside.

Jerry Stritzke, president and CEO of REI said in a statement, “As a member-owned co-op, our definition of success goes beyond money. We believe that a life lived outdoors is a life well lived and we aspire to be stewards of our great outdoors. We think that Black Friday has gotten out of hand and so we are choosing to invest in helping people get outside with loved ones this holiday season, over spending it in the aisles.”

REI’s message got some support and attention from outdoor lovers across the country. More than 1.4 million people chose to used the hashtag #OptOut and shared

photos of themselves walking through forrests, standing on beaches, snowboarding in the mountains, swimming in waterfalls, rock climbing cliffs and backpacking along streams.

A few Ogdenites decided to Opt Out this Black Friday. Billyjack Cundiff went skiing on Friday to “blow off some steam from Thanksgiving.”

Sage Campell said, “I skied with my 2-year-old for the first time, and then did my Black Friday shopping online during nap time!”

Shad Burnham said, “I climbed my brains out in the desert with no reception and no care.”

Daniel Gajeski, no matter the day, would rather spend his time outside. “I just don’t have the patience to shop really. It stresses me out, and there always seems to be this heavy air of pressure to buy when I’m in a store,” said Gajeski. “No matter what what I am doing outside, all my senses are calmed and at that moment in time I don’t want to be anywhere else.”

Reid Woolsey, who lives in his van, went rock climbing in the desert over the Thanksgiving holiday. “I decided end my lease, buy a van and live in it,” said Woolsey. It makes me feel closer to outdoors and gives me more access to be able to travel wherever I want.”

Many who worked retail, however, didn’t have a choice this Black Friday. Jim Nobles had to work that day at Recreation Outlet in Ogden. “If I didn’t have to work I definitely would have been outside climbing a mountain, but it was sort of a Black Friday all hands-on-deck type of day,” said Nobles. “As far as Black Friday in general, I think

it's dumb. It's the day after Thanksgiving and you should all be hanging out with your families, or doing something rad. Shopping isn't rad." He also said that even though his store didn't have many deals, they were still really busy.

Not all outdoor lovers took REI's advice. Dylan Totaro spent some of his day looking for clothing that might help him with his outdoor activities. "I did end up shopping on Black Friday a little bit at Amer Sports around 8:30 in the morning," he said. "I wanted to get some gifts for my family, and that was pretty much the extent of my shopping for the day. I got to spend time with my dad though, so that was worth it."

Whether people chose to shop on Black Friday this year or not, REI has decided to continue the Opt Outside campaign during and after the holidays to create an ongoing discussion about spending more time outside and the importance of it.