

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Media contact:

Carolynn Welch
WEDI Executive Director
(716) 800-4122
cwelch@wedibuffalo.org

WEDI to Close Downtown Bazaar, Relocation of Businesses being planned

Buffalo, NY –December 9, 2024– Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI), in partnership with the Downtown Bazaar’s business owners, today announced a new chapter for the bazaar at 617 Main St. in the city’s Theater District.

“After careful consideration, we decided to close the Downtown Bazaar and assist our businesses in transitioning to new locations that will better support their future success,” said WEDI Executive Director Carolynn Welch. “The bazaar on Main Street, which set up in April 2023 in the former EXPO space, ends its lease Dec. 31, 2024 and will close Dec. 21, 2024.”

WEDI’s decision regarding the Downtown Bazaar’s lease is unrelated to the growth of the West Side Bazaar on Niagara Street, which WEDI also runs and features international cuisine.

Originally created as a temporary solution for business owners displaced by a 2022 fire, the Downtown Bazaar has been instrumental in supporting several local entrepreneurs.

“Looking ahead, we believe that relocating these businesses to their own spaces will provide them with even greater opportunities for growth and sustainability. We thank Nick Sinatra and his team for providing this opportunity to rent this space after the devastating fire on Grant Street we and these businesses experienced in September 2022,” Welch said.

“The Downtown Bazaar created a vibrant location in the Theater District for the past two years. Although we are sad to leave this space, we are excited about the new possibilities for our restaurant owners,” she said. “Stay tuned; more to come on what’s next”

“WEDI’s Downtown Bazaar has been a vital incubator for small businesses, providing aspiring entrepreneurs with key business skills while fostering a vibrant community space that brings together people of all backgrounds to enjoy diverse foods and products. Located in Buffalo’s theater district, the Bazaar has played a crucial role in supporting local businesses and enhancing the area’s cultural richness. As it closes at the end of this year, this decision reflects its commitment to strengthening the workforce and economy. I trust that the team will continue to support individuals as they move forward in their journey.”- **Fillmore District Council Member Mitchell P. Nowakowski**

WEDI continues to work with each business to find their next home. Over the next month, watch for announcements on www.wedibuffalo.org about where they will relocate. WEDI’s relationship with these restaurant owners focuses on management support, operational guidance and financial teaching, all designed to help launch them into independent operations. WEDI has seen multiple restaurants do that, including Manna@Northland.

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"We are excited to see these businesses find new homes and are grateful for the support they have and will continue to receive from their valued customers," Welch added.

The Downtown Bazaar originally featured five restaurants and one boutique, offering a mix of Burmese/Thai, Ethiopian, Filipino, Mexican and Sudanese cuisine. Many of the restaurateurs are immigrants or refugees.

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