Downtown eyes renewal after COVID pandemic challenges

By Tess Kazenoff

Over the past two years, Downtown Long Beach has seen many shifts, with both long-time and newer Long Beach businesses either closing their doors or relocating.

In 2020, Rock Bottom Brewery closed after 23 years in business, signaling the first major Long Beach restaurant closure after the pandemic hit, and in May of this year, Pier 76 Fish Grill closed after nine years.

Other businesses, such as Gold’s Gym, Waters Edge Winery and Romeo Chocolates all decided to relocate away from Pine Avenue this year, with plans to reopen in other Long Beach locations.

The changes come largely because hospitality sector businesses in Downtown are dependent on business from residents, city visitors, conventioneers and office workers—many of whom were absent from the area amid the pandemic, said Downtown Long Beach Alliance Chief Operating Officer Broc Coward.

“We’ve seen over the last two years, a number of our longtime restaurants and businesses have to either close for a long time, shift their business model or close entirely,” Coward said. “A lot of these independent operators—some of them are putting their life savings into this. They’re cashing their 401(k) out and putting it into an idea, a coffee house, a restaurant, a small retail store. It’s been tough seeing those individuals leaving our Downtown or struggling as much as they have.”

While the DLBA and the city have made efforts to provide grant opportunities to struggling businesses over the past two years, Coward is hopeful that business owners will get an added boost soon as conventioneers and tourists return to Downtown.

“These legs of the stool are hopefully rebounding,” he said.

As for office workers, who primarily make up lunch and happy hour revenue for local restaurants, “that one remains to be seen,” Coward said. “That business model may have changed forever in terms of office workers and remote work. Where we see that loss, we’re going to have to figure out a different way to reach those individuals.”

A challenging time

The loss of daytime office workers, combined with rising costs and staffing troubles contributed to the closure of Pier 76 Fish Grill, owner Chris Krajacic told the Long Beach Post in May.
Developer proposes 21-story residential tower at former Long Beach Cafe property

The development would be located between The Current, a 17-story residential building with 233 units, and the eight-story Abraham Apartments building.

Unlike the developer pays additional fees, 10% of the units would be required to be designated as affordable units for low-income residents due to the city’s inclusionary housing policy.

Further details about the proposed project, including estimated cost, amount of parking and whether it will include ground-floor commercial space or specific resident amenities, were not available.

Burban has completed a conceptual site plan review, which is an advocacy-only process with the city, according to Magallon. The city is awaiting Burnban’s submission of its full entitlement package, “which would grant the land use approvals that are needed before the developer can apply for building permits,” she said.

Once the entitlement package is submitted, the review process will take four to six months, Magallon said. Then, when the review is complete, the proposal will go to the Planning Commission for approval.

While additional housing is needed throughout Long Beach and the state as a whole, this particular development only became possible because of the loss of a city staple: Long Beach Cafe.

Like so many other businesses in Long Beach and around the world, the diner closed its doors for good in the summer of 2020 after serving residents and visitors for more than three decades.

“To all our valued customers. We were forced to permanently close due to COVID-19. Thank you for 32 years of your support.”

Brothers Nick and George Stanitsas were veterans in the food industry, having been in the food business for nearly 30 years. The pair opened Long Beach Cafe in 1988.

Burban Development, which offers developers a host of services, including development strategy and assistance navigating the entitlement and permitting processes, had a hand in nearly two dozen Long Beach projects since being founded by Derek Burnban and Blaine Dodson in 2015. According to its website, the firm has consulted on new multifamily developments, adaptive reuse projects, restaurant and office remodels, and single-family and townhouse developments.

Brandon Richmond / Photographer

A developer has proposed a 21-story residential tower for the former Long Beach Cafe property in Downtown.

Downtown

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Free electric shuttle service coming to Downtown, Belmont

North Long Beach industrial park receives analysis

City leaders to consider plans for wellness center

DLBA ushers in a new era with CEO Austin Metoyer

Digital applications for latest Woman-Owned Business Accelerator Grant

Business Accelerator Grant

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Newsom signs bill that will eliminate statewide recovery slowdown

Crime drop in Long Beach

Newswatch

Long Beach is there’s always a spirit of collaboration. We’re not, ‘Here’s the city’s homeless population. Focus on providing services to the city’s homeless population.’ It’s critical. It would be burdensome if we didn’t have soap to offer,” said Rescue Mission's Chief Operating Officer Broc Coward.

“We go through a ton of shampoo, soap, toothpaste at the end of August. As we head into the fall, and we have more people seeking shelter as the weather gets colder, having those additional resources allows us to continue our services,” said Levin.

“Maybe we can create a program that gives people an opportunity to participate in a positive way.”

When building the framework for the program, local organizations working directly with Long Beach’s homeless residents cited hygiene items and bath towels as needing more, creating the basis for Fresh Start, said Coward.

Recipients of the donated items included U.S. VETS, Mental Health America of Los Angeles’s Long Beach chapter and the Rescue Mission. All organizations that focus on providing services to the city’s homeless population.

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They’re back for— at this point in time, it’s residents, right? It’s been residents who’ve been keeping a lot of the small businesses afloat over the last two years. It’s them who came out at the height of the pandemic saying, “shop local, shop small.” It’s them looking at local events out and to picking up-to-go lunches or whatnot.

So Downtown may be places where people can generally connect. It’s about creating opportunities and events that allow for residents and office workers and those who are visiting from outside the city to connect. So that’s where the organization’s focus is going to be. We’re not going to say, “office is doomed,” but we’ll start looking at community engagement in a different method; that’s been focusing on that daytime population.

And I think that means our small businesses need to also shift their mindset. If office workers don’t come back en masse, in say, the next six months, do you still think about lunch opportunities for those office workers? Or do you shift from you’re following toward the residents that are here?

I’ll also say, for our commercial offices, it’s working with them on how we market those buildings maybe in a different way and getting them to think about what amenities they have— and perhaps thinking about Downtown as a larger amenity to help attract new tenants to fill those spaces. You have the Long Beach Economic Partnership that’s out there doing citywide marketing— how are we partnering with them, as well as the city’s Economic Development Department, to bring some businesses in logistics, aerospace and the like into some of those other buildings.

HM: When it comes to the bigger picture and your own leadership style and priorities, do you see any changes or new direction for the DLBA? AM: That’s a good question. I think the past two years have been a unique challenge for me. We need to get back out into the communities. The way we are, who we are and who the staff is. And the staff need to know who it is we are serving. Clean and Safe Teams—they’re out here everyday, so they know the communities they work with. Downtown has—rightfully so, in some respects— at converting into housing. Whether or not office comes back in the way that we’re used to, the staff have to get back out into the communities— the businesses, the property owners and the city, and not just say, “Put it in Downtown.” I think that we have a role to play, and I’m happy to engage in those conversations and push for that, but you know, if you want to solve a problem that is citywide, you cannot expect one district or one area to be the solution to that problem. The entire city.

HM: Speaking of the office market, that’s something I wanted to touch on. It’s still kind of unclear where the use of office space is going to head. How are you thinking about that?

AM: I don’t think we give up on office and say “office is doomed,” but we’ll start looking at community engagement in a different method; that’s been focusing on that daytime population.

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HM: What is the housing market in the city like, both downtown and the surrounding areas? AM: Downtown Long Beach has seen—rightfully so, in some respects—a big shift in the last two years. It’s a really interesting time—a challenging time. Downtown has seen a lot of business closures, a lot of nonprofits and small businesses closing. But Downtown has also seen a lot of new developments, new restaurants, new office spaces.

For my team is: We need to get back out into the community. The current push is to help the folks we are and who the staff is. And the staff need to know who it is we are serving. Clean and Safe Teams—they’re out here everyday, so they know the communities they work with. Downtown has—rightfully so, in some respects—at converting into housing. Whether or not office comes back in the way that we’re used to, the staff have to get back out into the communities—the businesses, the property owners and the city, and not just say, “Put it in Downtown.” I think that we have a role to play, and I’m happy to engage in those conversations and push for that, but you know, if you want to solve a problem that is citywide, you cannot expect one district or one area to be the solution to that problem. The entire city.

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## DBLA accepting applications for latest Woman-Owned Business Accelerator Grant

"We certainly recognize the importance of small businesses and women in all communities, but certainly in Long Beach, which is our home city."

- Cheryl Byrn, Community Reinvestment Act Officer at Farmers & Merchants Bank

For other Downtown business owners, such as Thai District owner Waudro Phan, the rise in homeless and criminal activity is a着眼点 to fighting crime and improving the safety and livability of the area. Coward explained that instead of focusing on the immediate problem of crime, the Downtown Business Improvement District (DLBA) is focusing on creating a safe and welcoming environment for all residents and visitors. This includes working with local businesses and organizations to promote public safety, cultivate community pride, and foster economic development.

The DLBA is partnering with several organizations to address the issues of crime and homelessness in Downtown Long Beach. The organization is collaborating with the Long Beach Police Department, the Downtown Long Beach Alliance, and the DLBA's safety ambassadors to address the issues of crime and homelessness.

Coward noted that the DLBA has been working closely with these organizations to develop new strategies to improve safety in the area. The organization has implemented new programs, such as the 311 neighborhood watch program, which encourages residents and businesses to report any suspicious activity.

"We’re proud to support the activities of the DLBA and the Women-Owned Business Accelerator Grant," said Byrn. "By supporting these projects, we are able to provide much-needed resources to small businesses and women in our community."}

### Pandemic Challenges

Continued from page 3

Angela Mensa, owner of District Wine on Linden Avenue, was awarded a Woman-Owned Business Accelerator Grant in 2019, and the first grants were announced in 2020.

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Free electric shuttle service coming to Downtown, Belmont Shore this month

The service is part of a plan to help stimulate the local economy.

By Jason Baut

Long Beach is launching a free micro-shuttle program that it hopes will help people get around Downtown and its southeastern waterfront with fewer car trips and less time searching for parking, something the city hopes will stimulate the local economy.

The City Council voted last month to approve a two-year contract with Circuit Transit, a Palo Alto, Calif., company that formerly operated as The Free Ride and serviced Downtown during a pilot project approved this year and will go into effect on Jan. 1, allowing the organization to expand its services to meet the concerns and needs cited by residents, Coward said.

The expansion includes introducing a management-level position for homeless outreach, which will help coordinate services from other organizations and agencies and collect more data about people who are unsheltered, including assessing needs that could be communicated to the city and local nonprofits, Coward said. The plan also includes an increased budget for safety and will add more safety ambassadors to the team, particularly in the waterfront restaurant area along Shoreline Drive and around the square.

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Coward said.

The boundaries of the district will extend farther up Pacific Avenue and will now include the Promenade from Ocean Boulevard to Shoreline Drive, as well as the east side of Pine Avenue in front of the Convention Center.

Leanna Noble, a resident of Downtown and member of the North Pine Neighborhood Alliance, is hopeful about the city’s efforts to increase the care teams and homeless outreach efforts.

“These are situations that need to be de-escalated with very local kinds of support services that are easy for people to connect to,” Noble said. “I think the more community we create, the better able we are going to be to accept the reality that these homeless folks are our neighbors, we’ve got people that have been here as long as we have.”

“It’s really figuring out public safety from a different perspective,” she said.

With the renewal of the district, the DLBA is in a good position to address residents’ concerns and will continue to advocate to community partners, Coward said.

“We’re hopeful that the partners we’ve shared this info with, that they take it as seriously as we do, and they also build on the success that we’ve found in the communities where people are aware of services, people can access services,” Coward said.

“Hopefully the survey provides another point of information for all of us to reflect on what our resources are, what our services are and how those services can be modified or expanded to address some of those issues,” Coward said.

Councilmember Sue Price, who represents the Belmont Shore area, in 2019 asked the city to look at options as struggling retailers along Second Street complained that the lack of parking pared down the walk-to-open JPN & FCH shopping center could make business.

The plan to fund a shuttle service was ultimately put on hold in Jun 2020 since the pandemic.

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Stimulating the local economy was a focus of city leaders coming out of the pandemic, and officials identified a shuttle program in the host of recovery act projects the city intended to fund with federal and state pandemic relief aid.

The contract with Circuit is being paid for with $6 million in COVID-19 relief funds and about $450,000 in county transportation revenue.

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Long Beach airport traffic sees slight August slump

By Brandon Richardson

During August, 293,444 people traveled through the small municipal airport, 9.7% less than the same month in 2019.

The sale agreement with the city contains a break-in-lease provision, allowing the city to take back the property if MWN does not make progress on its plans to convert the property to a wellness campus within a certain time frame. The city has issued a deadline of June 2023 for MWN to start construction on the project.

The new store employs 33 people and is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Founded in 1946, Grocery Outlet has more than 450 locations in California, Idaho, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington, each operated as franchises by independent owners.

This is Castillo’s first Grocery Outlet location.

Each operator makes their own decisions regarding merchandise and pricing, according to spokesperson Xavier Villa.

Castillo presented $1,000 donations to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Long Beach and the Memorial Medical Center Foundation, which supports the nearby Long Beach Memorial and Miller Children’s & Women’s hospitals, during the grand opening ceremony.

In celebration of the opening, The Grocery Outlet recently opened at 300 E. Willow St.

Long Beach business owners can preserve their legacy and strengthen their business with employee ownership

City’s 4th Grocery Outlet location opens in Central Long Beach

By Brandon Richardson

Extreme-value grocery chain Grocery Outlet Bargain Market opened its fourth Long Beach location last week with giveaways and promotions.

Located on the southeast corner of Willow Street and Long Beach Boulevard, the grocery store opened at 8 a.m. Sept. 29. The first 50 adult customers received a mystery gift card worth anywhere between $5 and $50.

“We are so thrilled to be a part of the Long Beach community and provide big savings on quality groceries,” owner Chris Castille said in a statement. “This ownership with Grocery Outlet gives me the ability to grow my business, create new jobs and more importantly, give back to the local community.”

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In celebration of the opening, the Grocery Outlet recently opened at 300 E. Willow St.
This year’s Long Beach Gives fundraising event garnered over $1.96 million for over 230 local nonprofits, with the top 10 nonprofits receiving $760,000. The overall goal was $1 million for over 230 local nonprofits.

For many participating nonprofits, funds raised during the event can support operational costs, increase staffing or scale up the scope of services offered. For example, Guardians and crafters like the company said they’re using their new funds to improve their products or services.

The money was raised through a variety of fundraising efforts, including online campaigns, social media efforts, and in-person events. The event also featured a live auction and raffle prizes, which helped to raise additional funds.

In addition to the funds raised during the event, the organization also received over $250,000 in matching funds from local businesses, which helped to increase the total amount raised.

Nonprofits that received the most funds included the Salvation Army, which received over $175,000, and the Long Beach Animal Care & Control, which received over $100,000.

The success of the Long Beach Gives event is a testament to the generosity of the Long Beach community and the importance of supporting local nonprofits. The funds raised will go towards a variety of programs and services, including education, health care, and social services, and will help to improve the lives of those in need in Long Beach.

Conclusion:

The Long Beach Gives event was a huge success, raising over $1.96 million for local nonprofits. The funds raised will go towards a variety of programs and services, and will help to improve the lives of those in need in Long Beach. This success highlights the importance of supporting local nonprofits and the impact that they have on our communities.
By Brandon Richardson

Long Beach’s unemployment rate went unchanged in August, remaining at 3.2%, while the state’s rate increased slightly, according to data released by the California Employment Development Department last month.

The city’s unemployment rate increased from 3.3% to 4.3%, state data shows. Similarly, the national unemployment rate increased up from 3.9% to 5%, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Just as the state was on the verge of recouping all the jobs lost at the outset of the pandemic, August represented a small bump in the red, with particular weakness seen in Los Angeles and San Francisco, two places that struggled to recover their pre-pandemic footing.

Tanner Oman, research manager at Beacon Economics and the Center for Economic Forecasting, said in statement.

The Los Angeles County unemployment rate, for its part, dipped to 4.9% in August, down from 5% the month before and 5.2% in June.

While macro headwinds are swirling, there still is enough momentum in the state’s labor market to see a full recovery of the jobs lost within the next month or two,” Oman said.

In Long Beach, the labor force decreased by 1,211 people in August to 243,950, while the number of employed people decreased by 1,010. The number of unemployed residents, however, actually decreased by 200.

The city’s unemployment rate is partially leased and MWN is receiving much of MWN’s business, said Molina.

After a city appeal, the city’s health care workers might have a housing problem for their future, Molina said. The former hospital, Molina said.

Continued from page 10

Despite the challenges throughout the year and employment saw a loss of 54,000,” the California Business Roundtable said in a statement. “National and international issues are slowing the economic recovery, which is concerning because California has the 16th highest unemployment rate in the state and is only now transitioning from job recovery driven by the pandemic recession.”

Countrywide, education and health services added the most jobs of any sector, according to the EDD. Trade, transportation and utilities, government, construction, leisure and hospitality, and manufacturing also all grew in August.

Information and financial activities, on the other hand, declined in August, down 500 and 300, respectively, according to state data.

We could have walked away from this,” Molina said. “But we are in a position now that we are able to carry through on the commitment to have an asset based in the center of Long Beach that’s going to benefit the health and well-being of the citizens.”

Molina said the company remains committed to its promise to the city and its residents.

North Beach industrial property to be redeveloped into large warehouse

A North Beach property most recently occupied by an oil and natural gas company is slated to be redeveloped into a massive warehouse. In March, commercial real estate advisory and services firm Newmark Group announced the $50.7 million sale of the property at 5900 Cherry Ave. just north of South Street. Link Logistics Real Estate, a subsidiary of Blackstone that specializes in last-mile properties, purchased the property.

The company faced numerous delays in reopening the hospital, which initially said the 8.7-acre property would close.

The Planning Commission is slated to consider the redevelopment project during its Oct. 6 meeting.

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Newsom signs bill that lets state contribute more to Long Beach’s oil abandonment fund

Assembly Bill 353 allows the state to resume paying into the Oil Trust Fund, the primary source to cover the costs associated with cleaning up oil wells within Long Beach’s Tidelands.

By Anthony Pignataro

The state of California will again contribute to a fund intended to pay for the eventual abandonment of Long Beach’s oil wells. Late last month, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed 31 bills, including Assembly Bill 353, which allows the state to resume paying into the Oil Trust Fund, the primary source to cover the costs associated with cleaning up oil wells within Long Beach’s Tidelands.

Long Beach officials were pleased with Newsom’s signing of the bill.

“The city is very supportive of this bill, and we are grateful it’s been signed,” said Mayor Robert Garcia. “This bill will increase well abandonment funding and support remediation efforts as we transition away from fossil fuels.”

Abandoning and cleaning up Long Beach’s oil wells is estimated to cost $1 billion, according to city officials. AB 353, introduced by 70th District Assemblymember Patrick O’Donnell, eliminates a cap on the fund, which has been maxed at $300 million for the last eight years.

The state’s share of that tab is about $760 million, according to Bob Dowell, director of the city’s Energy Resources Department. The city, meanwhile, will pay $353 million and private oil owners will pay $16 million, according to Dowell.

Long Beach officials are planning to abandon the Tidelands oil wells by 2039, O’Donnell, who will retire when his current term ends early next year, said the bill is his last as a member of the state Assembly. “Our Long Beach community and environment must be protected when it comes time to safely close down the Tideland oil wells,” O’Donnell said in a statement. “A.B. 353 will ensure that Long Beach and its residents are not left holding the bag to pay for the cleanup costs.”

Dowell said last month that the bill “assures our partner in this, the state, is moving in the same direction we are.”

O’Donnell has introduced versions of the bill before, but they all died in committee. Last year, he said the state’s healthy budget, as well as the Oct. 1, 2021, increase could lead to limited job growth in those cities.

The state would also be charged with enforcing the new wage increase, something that city officials said could cost $1.2 million per year.

Opponents of health care worker wage increase submit signatures for referendum

Opponents of the recently adopted $3.5 minimum wage for employees of Long Beach health care facilities have turned in over 40,000 signatures in an effort to let voters decide if the increase should take place, something that could push the decision to March 2024.

The City Council voted in August to adopt an ordinance to increase the minimum wage for health care workers in the city. After the union representing those employees, the Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West, had qualified the issue for the November ballot.

The council had the option of placing the wage increase on the ballot for voters to decide, drafting a competing ballot measure or adopting it as law without changes.

The unanimous vote by the council came after months of testimony from local health care workers who said they risked their lives during the pandemic to care for patients while their low wages forced them into second jobs.

There are about 35,000 health care jobs in the city, which represents about 1% of the city’s workforce. The increase would have been seen nursing assistants, janitors, pharmacists, groundkeepers and others not making $15 take home more money.

Long Beach’s minimum wage is currently $15 citywide.

In a statement, the No on the Long Beach Unfair Pay Measure group, which includes area hospitals like St. Mary Medical Center and Long Beach Memorial, said that it had submitted 40,691 signatures to the City Clerk on Sept. 20 to be verified. The group only needs 26,829 to qualify the referendum on the wage increase for a vote of the people.

“This is a biased measure that will have a negative impact on Long Beach and particularly our vulnerable populations,” the group said in a statement. “With the signatures turned in today, voters will want to vote and decide on the deeply flawed measure.”

The group contends the measure excludes many other health care workers working similar jobs around the city.

The SEIU-UHW said in a statement that it is “confident voters will stand with frontline caregivers over greedy CEOs.”

Assistant City Clerk Allison Bunma confirmed the office received the signatures and said Los Angeles County election officials will verify them.

Bunma said the county would have 30 days to verify the signatures upon receiving them. If enough of the signatures belong to registered voters in the city, the vote could be put on the March 2024 ballot, Bunma said.

The City Council could speed up the vote if the referendum qualifies for the ballot by calling for a special election sometime before March 2024.

The SEIU-UHW had qualified raise increases for health care workers in multiple cities across the region, but opponents have already successfully paused those efforts in Los Angeles and Downey by qualifying referendums for the ballot in those city’s.

An economic analysis completed by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation earlier this year said that the wage increase would most likely result in the loss of about 380 jobs while benefiting those who kept their jobs with millions in wage growth.

However, the report said that the long-term effects of the wage increase could lead to limited job growth in the affected job classifications or lead facilities to close their Long Beach locations and relocate outside of the city.

The city would also be charged with enforcing the new wage increase, something that city officials said could cost $1.2 million per year.

Rockets Lab delivers 150th satellite to space

Rocket Lab last month celebrated the successful delivery of its 150th satellite into space following the launch of a dedicated mission for Japanese Earth-observation company Synspective.

“Japan’s satellite, nicknamed ‘The Owl Spreads Its Wings,’ blasted off from Rocket Lab’s New Zealand complex at 3:39 p.m. Long Beach time. It carried Synspective’s StriX satellite to a 590-kilometer circular orbit with 98 degrees of inclination, joining other 31X satellites launched by Rocket Lab in the family of this year and in December 2021. Synspective’s synthetic aperture radar satellite constellation will be able to deliver images that can detect millimeter-level changes to Earth’s surface regardless of weather conditions or time of day.

“The Owl Spreads Its Wings” was Rocket Lab’s 30th launch of its Electron rocket. The launch was the seventh of this year, with the company boosting 100 satellites into orbit in 2022. The mission also marked the 300th Rutherford engine reaching space. The liquid-propellant engine was designed by Rocket Lab and is almost completely 3D printed at its Long Beach facility.

The Electron rocket is equipped with a total of 10 Rutherford engines, including one on the first stage and one slightly modified on the second. The engine uses liquid oxygen and refined kerosene as its propellants.

Also last month, Rocket Lab successfully test fired a reused Rutherford first stage engine for the first time, according to the company, which said this is “a significant technical achievement” as it develops Electron into the world’s first reusable orbital small rocket.

The company has several more launches slated for this year, including another attempt at recovering an Electron rocket with a helicopter as it falls back to Earth and the company’s first launch from its new complex in Wallops Island, Virginia.

Newswatch Newswatch

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With its new farm, Heritage aims to pair fine food and an environmental mission

By Charity Jenaro
Photos By Thomas R. Cordova

A 2018 report by ReFED, a nonprofit focused on food waste, found that 40% of food wasted in the United States is thrown at restaurants.

“Heritage Farm isn’t large enough to be a commercial farm,” said Philip Pretty, Heritage Chef. “So we’re focusing on micro-farming and we’re trying to be mindful of the planet. We want to leave the land better than we found it and if there’s not, it goes into the compost.”

Philip’s prime example is how they use their California-raised Mary’s ducks. The legs are confit and the duck breast is aged for seven days and served as an entrée for dinner. With the leftover bones, they create a sauce that’s used throughout the menus. Every vegetable, herb and ingredient is used to its max.

“People have come out and do trash audits on us to make sure everything is blooming from recycled material. The to-go silverware is compostable. Their napkins to printer paper, were made by spring everything is blooming from recycled material. The to-go silverware is compostable. Their napkins to printer paper, were made

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“Our goal is to grow things we can use as a whole,” she said, such as herbs, fruits and vegetables that reflect the needs of Heritage’s seasonally changing menu.

As the farm, Philip points to a patch of earth that will hold a new yuzu tree. Further down, a kumquat tree they’re transferring from the restaurant will be planted. Another plant has a micro-sprout basil beds and radishes. All their herbs will be grown in-house.

“We haven’t had to buy basil since we took over the place,” Lauren said. “I cut personally from the yuzu tree. Further down, a kumquat tree they’re transferring from the restaurant will be planted. Another plant has a micro-sprout basil beds and radishes. All their herbs will be grown in-house.

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**State to simplify permit process for street vending**

By Fernando Haro Garcia

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill into law late last month that would remove minimum parking requirements for new housing developments and businesses near transit hubs like the Metro A Line (formerly the Blue Line), increasing the possibility for developers to create housing and decreasing the need for cars in traffic-dense cities like Long Beach.

Assembly Bill 2097, authored by Assemblywoman Laura Friedman, D-Long Beach, first introduced Senate Bill 722 back in February with the goal of removing barriers in state law that kept mobile food vendors from getting permits for their businesses.

While many places had already legalized street vending, including Los Angeles County in 2018, the hurdles to secure health permits still made it nearly impossible for many vendors to operate legally.

One such hurdle was the California Retail Food Code, which set strict uniform and sanitation standards for retail food facilities such as “cottage food operations,” “micromarkets,” “home kitchen operations” and “mobile food facilities,” none of which met the needs of street vendors who usually operate outdoors and sell out of wagons, stands or pushcarts.

SB 722 update the California Retail Food Code and gives vendors more attainable access to permits instead of forcing them to go through a dizzying process of multiple offices and complicated paperwork.

“This is a monumental win for thousands of micro-entrepreneurs and families in California,” Gonzalez said. “With the enactment of SB 722 into law, street food vendors can finally make a living in peace, and pursue their American dream, and we can all continue to enjoy the tie-cut street foods we love.”

Through the new bill, street vendors are now placed in a new category of “compact mobile food facilities,” which offers more leeway from certain provisions, according to the bill.

As defined, a compact mobile food facility is a nonpermanent food facility that operates from an individual or from a pushcart, stand, display, pedal-driven cart, food facility that operates from a pushcart or stand or an individual or a pushcart.

The law aims to tackle both the need for cars in traffic-dense cities and climate change.

“AB 2097 does not prohibit developers from building on-site parking, but it will allow them to create their own parking arrangements, giving them more room to build affordable housing units by cutting the extra costs that typically come with parking mandates.”

Supporters of AB 2097 also say that removing parking mandates will cut back on the use of concrete used to build parking structures.

“The Long Beach Developmental Services Department did not immediately respond to questions about how the law would directly affect the city or how much affordable housing has been created since the incentive program began last year.”

Despite the confusion, Ian says he doesn’t hold it against Long Beach. He said the strict regulations have helped make it “a wonderful city” that values the environment.

“With AB 2097, Ian and Qiana say they won’t cut corners on how they make their food and will keep working to bring Axiom Kitchen Smoked Meats and BBQ to a permanent location because they say, "Long Beach deserves authentic Texas smoke-style barbecue.""
BUSINESS JOURNAL October 4, 2022

**Popcorn World sets up shop in Bixby Knolls**

by Tara Kossen

Long Beach is the new home to a gourmet popcorn experience with the opening of Popcorn World on Oct. 1 in Bixby Knolls.

The store, initially slated to open in June, began in Calhoun, Georgia, in 2013, at the time, including from Long Beach to the popcorn itself, Burton said. The Long Beach location is a result of the Indiana location, said Burton, who began getting license requests at the time, including from Long Beach licensees Vernon and Jasmine Chatman, who first contacted Burton about opening a new location in 2019.

The licensees, who were initially located in Chicago, selected Long Beach as the shop’s location, citing the diversity of culture as well as the tourist feel, Burton said.

There is also a gap in the market for popcorn on the West Coast, while a positive for attracting customers, this has caused some challenges with finding suppliers, Burton said. On top of supply shortages, there aren’t many popcorn suppliers in California, making it difficult to source products from the specifics chosen used to the popcorn itself, Burton said.

The business, while initially slated to open in Bixby Knolls in June, experienced delays due to matters of gaining necessary licenses and approvals, said Burton.

“This is an exciting moment for me as the owner of the brand because this think I will officially own our national trajectory,” Burton said. “I’m looking to have a location in all the major markets, so California is something that I was really, really excited about and I would get in on that location under our belt, seeing that we have a lot of popularity in California in the online presence that we’ve had.”

Popcorn World is located at 706 Atlantic Ave. Online orders can also be placed at directthesedelicious.com.

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**Street Vending**

Continued from page 10

wagon, showcase, rack, or other non-motorized transportation.

These compact mobile food facilities have 25 square feet or less of display area and sell only prepackaged, non-potentially hazardous foods or whole uncooked produce will be exempt from other provisions of the code like having access to sinks, restrooms and water tanks if their planned area of operation has access to public faucets or water bottles.

California codes would still require other mobile food facilities, such as food or ice cream trucks, to meet specified health and safety standards, including access to sinks, restrooms and hand-washing facilities along with required quantities of potable water.

Violation of any of the codes under the new bill has also changed from a misdemeanor to an administrative fine, according to the bill.

Long Beach has backed the bill since its introduction, and city officials in March started talking about how they would make the bill permitting process more understandable and possibly less expensive.

However, officials have expressed continued concerns over what they called “bad operators,” or vendors who have repeatedly made people sick with their products.

“We still have a requirement as a health jurisdiction to enforce state health law,” City Manager Tom Modica said during a council meeting in March. “We do still need to go out and make sure people are safe.”

Currently, Long Beach’s Health Department begins its enforcement procedure on street vendors after receiving a complaint. After the complaint, a health inspector is dispatched to investigate.

Long Beach Health Department spokeswoman Jennifer Rice Epstein said back in May.

“The first time we see a food vendor with no health permit, we provide education on how to obtain a health permit,” according to Epstein, who said the Health Department offers consultations and assistance in multiple languages.

“We want our food vendors to succeed and help them with the process. We also issue a notice to discontinue operations without a health permit and instruct them to leave.”

The second time a street vendor is found without a health permit, the investigator will issue a final notice warning them that the next time will result in the impounding of equipment and food. No citations or monetary penalties are given, Epstein added.

AB 206 will be implemented through local health departments and is expected to be fully online by 2024.

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By Austin Matoyer, DLBA President and CEO

We are committed to re-engaging the community and developing Downtown as a place of inclusivity, creativity, and connectivity for all.
Join us for this family-friendly event!
Find out how the Port of Long Beach is working to become the world’s first zero-emissions port.

Food, Entertainment, Equipment Demonstrations, Information Booths, Kids’ Activities and More

Saturday, Nov. 5 | noon-5 p.m.
Port Maintenance Facility, 725 Harbor Plaza, Long Beach
(Follow the signs to parking and shuttles)

All participants at in-person events must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

More information at polb.com/greenportfair