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For Immediate Release

Rust Belt Market is Coming to Town!

Industrious Entrepreneurs Take on Big Space in Downtown Ferndale

Ferndale, MI – A dream come true for a couple of entrepreneurs means occupancy for a prime anchor property at Woodward & Nine Mile Road in Downtown Ferndale.

The Rust Belt Market is moving forward fast with plans to open this spring in the long-shuttered Old Navy space. Closed in September of 2007 by its parent company GAP, the 15,000 square foot former outlet store is enormous, light-filled space, but its size was off-putting to most businesses who inquired about it.

Not so for Chris & Tiffany Best, an ambitious pair whose business plan is to bring the wares of a new wave of local artisans to the sales floor in the soon to open Rust Belt Market.

“This is an exciting venture for the Bests and it’s exciting for Downtown Ferndale,” said Cristina Sheppard-Decius, Executive Director for the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority. “This is prime real estate, but it needed a visionary entrepreneur to create a viable, retail business. The Best’s concept is an ideal mesh with the creative culture that flourishes in Downtown Ferndale.”

The Bests intend to divide the interior to accommodate dozens of vendors every weekend, and will also offer “studio” space and meeting venues, in addition to the sales floor opportunities. They hope to have the market up and running in May.

The occupancy of the biggest vacant property in Downtown Ferndale comes in the midst of many occupancy changes that include the addition of new businesses and the expansions of several retailers who outgrew their first locations.

“This is the kind of movement you want to have in a downtown,” said Sheppard-Decius. “A downtown that is able to accommodate local business expansion is key to sustaining a flourishing business environment. Our business mix gets more interesting, almost on a daily basis, with many more looking to locate their businesses downtown. Not a day goes by that we don’t get an inquiry about available space in Downtown Ferndale.”

Here’s how the action is playing out in Downtown Ferndale.

What’s New (or about to be) on Nine.

- The Cacao Tree Café will bring sweets to the west end of downtown at 918 Nine Mile. No opening has been scheduled.
- West Woodward Animal Clinic, the first veterinarian in the DDA, will soon open at 915 W. Nine Mile.
- The Cupcake Station, one among an expanding Cupcake Station chain, will be serving its sweet stuff at 301 W. Nine and the corner of Allen.

- No Pins Required, 22446 Woodward, will change its name and its location sometimes this spring. The region's only purveyor of cloth diapers will soon become Modern Natural Baby at its new and larger location at 224 W. Nine.
- Mother Fletchers plans to downsize its inventory but upscale its funk when it moves into new space at 210 W. Nine. The move is expected to take place sometime in May.
- The Oakland brings a new yet old style of elegance to the bar scene with crystal chandeliers and plush velvet seating at 201 W. Nine, reminiscent of an old-time speak easy with a modern flair.
- The Orchid will keep the nightclub vibe alive on West Nine when it opens soon at 141 W. Nine.

On Woodward, the action continues.

- Street Legal Customs is already revved up and running on Woodward Avenue, bringing a new set of bright lights at that end of the big M1.
- Essential Massage will move into bigger digs at 22941 Woodward, right next door to its current location at 22939 Woodward.
- Rainy Day Hobbies will move into the old Essential space at 22963 Woodward.
- Sugar Dessert Lounge will open sometime this summer with a revamped design and menu offering in the space currently known as The Bosco at 22930 Woodward.
- Grasshopper Underground has completed its renovation and plans to add outdoor dining to its now open establishment at 22757 Woodward.
- Nyla Motley is preparing to open retail space featuring designer women's fashions at 22751 Woodward.
- Sweet Repeat, vintage clothing, is already up and running at 23315 Woodward.

One thing for sure, life is never boring in Downtown Ferndale, which appeals to consumers and improves the local economy. The district is filled with entrepreneurs and is a breeding ground for urban pioneers. If you are one of us who things outside the proverbial box, the DDA can assist you in taking the right step in opening a business or bringing your concept from home to bricks and mortar.

The Ferndale Downtown Development Authority is the economic redevelopment engine for Downtown Ferndale and as such manages and markets approximately 3.9 linear miles of property and businesses that comprise the district. For more information about the Downtown Ferndale, please call the DDA at 248-546-1632 or visit its website at www.downtownferndale.com.

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