



Bills release Howard on cutdown day

Cutting veteran means team must absorb \$2.6 million cap hit | PAGE C1

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Gunshot detection system may get city test

Wingo, ShotSpotter in talks on setting up a pilot program

By Aaron Besecker

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

When there is any report of gunfire in Buffalo, Masten Council Member Ulysees Wingo wants that information to more quickly get to the police officers who can respond to it.

He might get his wish.

Wingo and Buffalo Police Department brass are talking with representatives of ShotSpotter about setting up a 3- to 6-month pilot program to evaluate what the company calls its "acoustic gunshot detection service."

The initial usage would come at no cost to the city, Wingo said.

Setting up the audio detection equipment, which police and the company say would allow officers to get to shooting scenes more quickly than having the information be reported - if at all - via 911, would deter people from pulling the trigger, Wingo said.

"Masten District residents want this," he said.

Establishing the pilot program may require approval from the Council. City lawmakers pulled funding for ShotSpotter from Mayor Byron Brown's proposed budget earlier this year after criticism from residents, advocates and community leaders.

A spokeswoman for ShotSpotter declined to comment on potential plans in the city, cit-

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ANALYSIS

Russia is using nuclear plant as new means of intimidation

By David E. Sanger

NEW YORK TIMES

As international nuclear inspectors head toward Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia power plant, they face a situation that few had ever envisioned: a vast nuclear power plant that could be deliberately turned into a potential dirty bomb, with Russia using it to intimidate its enemy and the world.

Fourteen experts with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations nuclear watchdog, landed in Ukraine this week, where they are confronted by one of the most complicated missions in the agency's history. The IAEA has also worked in Iraq, Iran and North Korea.

To reach the occupied facility, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the team must negotiate the craters and trenches of the front and enter an area where frequent shelling has raised fears of a possible nuclear catastrophe.

At a minimum, President Vladimir Putin of Russia has found a way to employ the civilian facility as a shield for his troops, who are occupying the facility and betting Ukraine will not

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WEST SENECA VOTES TO KEEP POOL OPEN



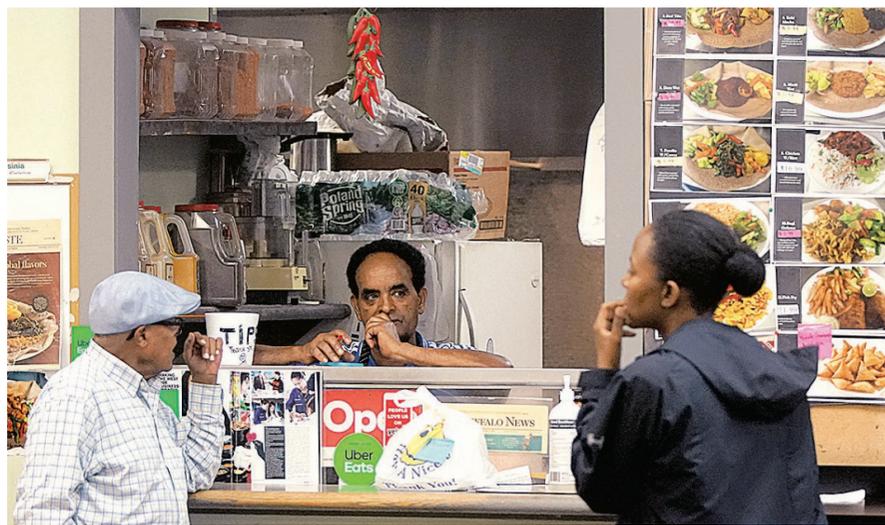
West Seneca has listened to its residents, including a petition drive with 400 signatures, and the Town Board has voted to keep the town's outdoor pool open next year. Town Board

members say they will try to recruit more lifeguards to staff the pool, a problem that many communities have run into with their recreation programs. *Story on Page B1*

West Side Bazaar breaks ground for new home, hopes for refugees



A rendering shows how the West Side Bazaar will be transformed into an expanded two-level business-incubator-meets-community-space at its new Niagara Street location, with a capacity of more than 200 people, 24 vendors, a stage and commercial kitchen.



Mark Mulville/Buffalo News

Gezahdme Earch, center, waits on customers at Abyssinia Ethiopian Cuisine in the West Side Bazaar on Grant Street in Buffalo on Tuesday.

Current bazaar grew too small to contain immigrants' dreams

By Andrew Z. Galarneau

NEWS FOOD EDITOR

The West Side Bazaar was too small the day it opened.

The search for a new home considered every parcel on Grant Street, but none could hold the visions of a project that went beyond food court and crafts bazaar to a true community center, with room for services and businesses beyond dumplings and jewelry.

In the end, it was an immigrant who got the job done. Mustafa Yousef, commercial

real estate agent, son of Bazaar macrame and clothing vendor Nadine Yousef, brought 1432 Niagara St. to the attention of Westminster Economic Development Initiative, said Carolyn Welch, WEDI executive director. "Which was really cool," Welch said. "It was like full circle."

WEDI, the nonprofit that operates the West Side Bazaar as a small-business incubator, managed to get the former factory for less than \$400,000, before the pandemic. Now places across the street start at \$1 mil-

lion or so.

Funded by government and charitable efforts, the \$11.5 million project that broke ground Tuesday will have the space to hold many more American dreams.

Dreams of a bigger bazaar predated Welch's arrival five years ago.

"We have 120 businesses on our waiting list," she said. "Probably 60% of them are restaurants. About 10% are service industries, and the rest are vari-

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Niagara St. site to offer bigger opportunities

By Ben Tsujimoto

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Louise Sano knows the power of the West Side Bazaar. The Rwandan's story in Buffalo began with a suitcase, an 8-foot table and dreams of business success.

Sano's Global Villages, an Africa-inspired clothing and jewelry shop now on Grant Street, represents the goal of the Bazaar's mission. In 2011, Sano attended business workshops with Westminster Economic Development Initiative, which oversees the Bazaar, then took over her own table in the fledgling incubator later that year.

By the next year, she had outgrown her space and, with help from a WEDI loan, opened a stand-alone location. Even after she left the Bazaar, her early role as "voice of the vendors" propelled her to a position on WEDI's board of directors, which she still holds. "It's an adventure," Sano said.

With the Tuesday groundbreaking of the \$11.5 million future site of the West Side Bazaar, at 1432 Niagara St., dozens of other immigrants and refugees will have the opportunity to follow in Sano's footsteps on the journey from wide-eyed newcomer to savvy business owner.

"When you own a building, you control your future," Sano said at the future site on Tuesday. "It's power. You can grow, you can expand."

Empire State Development and WEDI hosted the gathering of officials and media in the musty warehouse between Potomac Avenue and West Delavan Street that Hayes Construction Services will transform into an expanded two-

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CONTINUED FROM THE COVER

New Bazaar site expected to draw 250K visitors yearly

BAZAAR • from A1

level business-incubator-meets-community-space, with a capacity of more than 200 people, 24 vendors, a stage and commercial kitchen to host everything from food safety and cooking classes to pop-ups and ghost kitchens.

The Bazaar is best known for its allure as a food hall, at which customers can try Ethiopian injera, a sponge-like bread that eaters use to scoop up meat or vegetables, or chicken tawook, a grilled Middle Eastern kebab with a whirlwind of flavor. Freshly prepared food from countries like South Sudan, Japan, China, Laos, Thailand and others have enticed Buffalo's adventurous eaters and connected them with unfamiliar cuisines. Since 2011, the Bazaar has been considered a reflection of the "new Buffalo."

The West Side Bazaar on Niagara has a tentative opening date of September 2023 and is nearing the end of its capital campaign, of which about \$1.7 million still needs to be raised for non-construction-related endeavors.

The Niagara Street venture will ultimately dwarf the scene at 25 Grant St., which houses 15 vendors, four of whom share a kitchen space along the south wall. At the Niagara site, eight aspiring restaurateurs will have access to a kitchen. Carolynn Welch said the process will be competitive to determine the four hot-food additions from a waiting list of more than 100 names.

Welch added that the new layout will better connect Bazaar's retail and food vendors, which are essentially cordoned off from one another on Grant Street. Blueprints for the Niagara Street location show retail areas flanking both sides of the column of eight connected kitchens, with a large community space in front of both.

An economic impact study pegged the Bazaar as having a \$35 million value in its first five years, Welch said, with visits expected to rise



Photos by Mark Mulville/Buffalo News

This warehouse on Niagara Street between Potomac Avenue and West Delevan Street will be transformed into the \$11.5 million future home of the West Side Bazaar. Bigger space means greater growth potential at the bazaar, seen as a "community hub" vital to the overhaul of Niagara Street.

from 80,000 per year on Grant Street to about 250,000 on Niagara. And those estimates could be conservative, Welch said. Officials including State Sen. Sean Ryan and Rep. Brian Higgins Tuesday lauded the Bazaar as a "community hub" key to the \$28 million overhaul of Niagara Street, which recently completed an extensive streetscape makeover.

A bigger space means greater

growth potential for tenant businesses, Welch said, elaborating why it's been hard for entrepreneurs on Grant Street to branch out on their own. Global Villages, Rakhapura, Kiosko Latino and Radah Baked Goods are four "graduates" who moved out and remain in business; Gourmet Lao had a brief foray on its own before closing.

"We don't have room for storage.

We don't have room for more customers. So everyone kind of hits their cap and starting a restaurant, it's very expensive," Welch said about existing constraints.

WEDI's aim is still to facilitate businesses entering, learning, growing and branching out on their own, opening the door for other entrepreneurs to follow the same path. "I want everyone to leave me," Welch dead-

panned.

But Tuesday was about the Bazaar's future, which felt boundless at the groundbreaking. Sano was almost in disbelief discussing past growth and the possibilities ahead.

"If a person said this would be the situation 10 years ago, I would have said they were crazy," Sano said. "We are talking today, in 2022. I can't imagine what it will be like in 2032."

Bazaar offers so many dishes that are hard to find in the 716

JOURNEY • from A1

ous types of retail." The owner of sushi counter KO Galaxy, which joined the West Side Bazaar lineup in May, had been trying since 2012.

So far, businesses that started at 25 Grant St. and went on to other locations include Family Thai, Rakhapura Restaurant, Kiosko Latino, opening soon in Cheektowaga, and the late, lamented Lao Gourmet Foods.

Yet West Side Bazaar remains a bastion of immigrant cuisines in Buffalo. The reason the compact dining area is sometimes overflowing is because it offers so many dishes that are hard to find elsewhere in the 716.

It's the site of the city's stalwart Ethiopian outpost, Abyssinian Ethiopian Cuisine, delivering satisfactions evenly on vegan and carnivore sides of the plate. It's the home of Buffalo's only source of housemade dim sum, 007 Chinese Food.

Burmese immigrants who spent years in Thai refugee camps have opened many restaurants in Western New York, bringing a fiery, sour edge to everyday Thai dishes. West Side Bazaar's Nine & Night delivers nam prik pao and green curry at the flame-throwing edge of what Buffalo palates will allow.

It's the only place to enjoy the South Sudanese stylings of restaurateur Akec Aguer, from the poshest ful



Mark Mulville/Buffalo News

Ma Theint, of Moon Lady Arts and Crafts, waits on customer Myla Bo in the West Side Bazar on Grant Street in Buffalo on Tuesday.

medames in town to dill-laced beef kabobs and a collard green, beef and dill stew called sukuma wiki.

By the time the West Side Bazaar had room for Aguer's restaurant, he'd already given up waiting. He'd pulled up stakes to seek his fortune in the Midwest.

The South Sudanese restaurateur had moved to Wisconsin, started

working there, and planned to move his family.

There, the call reached him: His spot was ready. So he came back, and opened his place, Nile River, another outstanding regional menu represented on Grant Street.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Aguer shared his moment of joy.

"To open a restaurant has been my

lifelong dream," he said. When he got the call from manager Mike Moretti, "Oh god, that was what I was waiting for."

The number of places with regular kitchen access, including fryers, woks, and the necessary ventilation systems, will double, to eight. The new building will also have more room for other food vendors that do not require

kitchen access, such as bubble tea and smoothies.

The investments include installation of a commercial kitchen, a space where many more food businesses can flower. For use in one-off menus called pop-ups, for commercial production or food truck commissary, the rentable inspected cooking space can be all the hearth an enterprising cook needs.

Cooking lessons for children and adults will be part of the building's community programming, Welch said. "So you can come in and learn how to make injera from Zelalem (Gemmeda) and hear the story about how she moved to Buffalo," she said. "It's gonna be a bumping kitchen for sure."

The current bazaar is so cramped that accountants cannot have private conversations, Welch noted. Offices in the new place will provide space for use by accountants, cosmetologists, barbers, and other professionals.

"One of the things that WEDI does really well is help small businesses bloom and grow," she said. "If you look at Grant Street, so many of those businesses are WEDI related. I think our place on Niagara Street will be able to encourage that same type of growth from people in the neighborhood looking to start businesses."

It's all part of making the new West Side Bazaar the community center its neighborhoods deserve.

'We need every available tool,' anti-violence group says of gunshot system

GUNFIRE • from A1

ing ongoing negotiations.

What ShotSpotter promises

ShotSpotter promises its customers they will be alerted within a minute of gunfire in the areas covered by its equipment. Officers will be able to get notifications sent to their cellphones.

Acoustic sensors placed atop buildings or utility poles capture sounds that may be gunfire and analyze the sound first by computer, then by the ear of a human analyst. Loud noises similar to gunshots would be filtered out, with no police response triggered, according to the company.

The company says its technology is used in more than 125 cities.

The Buffalo News reported last week that shootings were down about 36% in the first seven months of this year, compared with 2021, according to Buffalo police data. In July, typically one of the busiest for gun violence, the number of people who were shot was down 65%, compared with both 2020 and 2021.

Buffalo police have implemented a strategy

targeting "micro hot spots" of recent gun violence, one that's been in place about a year. It involves increased foot patrols in areas for greater police presence, with a focus not on arrests but engaging the community.

The Brown administration's budget proposal earlier this year pegged the first year's costs at about \$250,000. Subsequent annual costs were estimated at about \$221,000, or about \$70,000 per square mile for 3 square miles of coverage.

How police believe it will help

Not all gunfire gets reported to police — ShotSpotter cites a 2016 analysis by the Brookings Institution of data from Washington, D.C., and Oakland, Calif., that found "only 12% of gunfire incidents result in a 911 call to report gunshots." Buffalo police say they don't know much gunfire here goes unreported.

Employing ShotSpotter would get officers to scenes of gunfire more quickly, which would benefit the community in two ways, said Police Commissioner Joseph Gramaglia.

Police getting to a scene faster would help them more quickly reach injured victims, who could be treated with the trauma kits officers

carry in their vehicles, Gramaglia said. Officers have made use of the equipment, including tourniquets, on a number of occasions.

The more quickly shooting victims can be treated, the better chances of saving lives, he said.

And using ShotSpotter will give police the chance to track down more evidence at scenes they may never have known about, the commissioner said. The additional scenes will give investigators more evidence with which they can work their cases, he said.

"That's on top of getting to shooting victims that much faster — that's the no-brainer," Gramaglia said.

What critics say

People who opposed the city shelling out cash on ShotSpotter offered a variety of criticisms and concerns.

In an opinion piece published in August 2021, University at Buffalo School of Law professor Anthony O'Rourke and Northwestern School of Law MacArthur Justice Center attorney Jonathan Manes argued the city should not spend money on the system, in part citing a

Johns Hopkins University study that concluded ShotSpotter had no significant impact on "firearm-related homicides or arrest outcomes" in 68 counties over 17 years.

The MacArthur Justice Center's analysis of ShotSpotter's use in Chicago, as well as other studies from around the country, show the use of the system leads police to limited evidence of gun crimes or arrests, according to the center.

The American Civil Liberties Union's concerns with ShotSpotter include an increase of "stop and frisk" tactics by police, citing a review of the program in Chicago by the city's Inspector General's Office.

Ralph A. Clark, ShotSpotter's president and CEO, penned an opinion piece in the News last year, addressing critiques of the company's product.

Most Valuable Parents, an anti-violence group in the city, sees value in using ShotSpotter.

The city should invest in this technology because it would help police with the ongoing devastating issue of gun violence, said MVP's Keith Matthews.

"We need this," Matthews said. "We need every available tool at our disposal."