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FEATURED

Hundreds of new jobs to be created in Milledgeville

Billy Hobbs 58 min ago

Members of the Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority pose here for a group picture with Angelo Bizzarro, founder, owner and chairman of Food Service Partners Holdings, Inc. following Wednesday's monthly board meeting. Bizzarro is seen standing second on the right. Others include (left to right): Baldwin County Commission Vice Chairman Henry Craig, Dr. Nolan Stephens, Dr. George Martinez, Milledgeville City Alderwoman Jeanette Walden, Russ Walden, Johnny Grant, Bruce Vaughn, CSHLRA Chairwoman Quay Fuller, CSHLRA Vice Chairman Dudley Rowe, Angelo Bizzarro, and CSHLRA Executive Director Michael Couch. Not pictured are Dr. Joy Nelson, Owen Pittman.

Angelo Bizzarro described it as a dream come true.

"That's the way this feels because this is something we've been working to have come true for the past 4 1/2," said Bizzarro, founder, owner and chairman of Food Service Partners Holdings. "As a small company, the support we've gotten in this community has been overwhelming, and we now want to return some of it with the creation of hundreds of new jobs."

When Food Service Partners Holdings, Inc., a Maryland-based company plans to completely renovate the Bobby Parham Kitchen on the campus of Renaissance Park at Central State Hospital in Milledgeville. And when such construction is completed, they plan to create between 350 and 500 jobs over a five to seven year period. Employees will be made up of Milledgeville and Baldwin County residents and other area residents.

The project is being financed via a $10 million loan through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. Such loans assist in rural development projects across the country.

Bizzarro believes operations of what will eventually be known as Georgia International Food Center at the Bobby Parham Kitchen will be underway in less than a year from now.

"I'm going to say seven months," Bizzarro told The Union-Recorder after he met with members of the CSHLRA monthly board meeting Wednesday afternoon. 'What we're doing now is on boarding customers at our Roanoke, Virginia facility to transfer here."

Bizzarro said there would be managers and supervisors, as well as highly-trained workers for plant operations.

"Some of the ones that are hired will be sent to other facilities for training," Bizzarro said, noting plans call for the majority of workers at the plant to be hired on a local level. "Now that we've got a date to open, now we'll soon start hiring and training."

During the meeting, Bizzarro made several public comments regarding his dream coming true to open a new facility in Milledgeville.

"I just want to say that I appreciate the thank yous, but I really think we owe you a thank you - one, for supporting us through this and getting us to this point; and two, for the amount of support that we've gotten from the community, the city and county, and from everybody in Georgia," Bizzarro said. "Without that, the project could not have been possible, and my patience would have probably been really (tested). So, I really want to say, thank you."

Food Service Partners Holdings, Inc. was founded in 1997 and focuses on quality food, nutritionally prepared and served to institutional groups such as the Hospital Authority of New York City, as well as the Kaiser Permanente Hospital Group.

The company has facilities in New York, Virginia, Texas, and California.

The work at the Bobby Parham Kitchen will involve renovation of a 110,000 square foot building on the campus of Renaissance Park at Central State Hospital.

Earlier, Quay Fuller, chairwoman of the CSHLRA, said she would like to thank everybody for attending the meeting.

"This is sort of the dawn of a new day even though it's five o'clock in the afternoon," Fuller said with a big smile. "I do want to take this moment to welcome and recognize all of our special guests. First, we have Mr. Angelo Bizzarro of Food Service Partners. Thank you for your commitment and perseverance after 4 1/2 years. We closed Aug. 30. We can see the form taking shape of all the things we've been doing with the Parham Kitchen. I just want to take time out and let's everybody just give us all a big hand clap."

Fuller echoed Bizzarro's sentiments that a shared dream of Food Service Partners Holdings expanding its company to Milledgeville was now taking shape from a reality aspect.

"This is something we have been working on for a very, very long time," Fuller said. "Mr. Bizzarrro, we know that you and your company are the driver of the project. We are very excited of what we have going on in the future."

Fuller also pointed out that Cold Storage Manufacturing, Inc., which is headquartered in Union City, California, would be starting some demolition work on the Parham Kitchen at the end of this month.

"We're just so excited about all of what is going to be going on and all of the updates, and looking forward to the results of our project," Fuller said. "We're going to be working very closely with them and we're going to see how we can how we can see this take shape. I do want to add that I thank so much, everybody that's here."

Fuller said everyone in the community, including elected officials in city and county governments, had been so patient concerning the goals of the CSHLRA board over the last seven years.

"A lot of people sort of doubted that we could ever get to this point, and so we've been working at this for seven years, but we're just at the starting line," Fuller said.

Fuller later praised CSHLRA Executive Director Michael Couch for all of his hard work and dedication to helping make the Food Service Partners Holdings project come true.

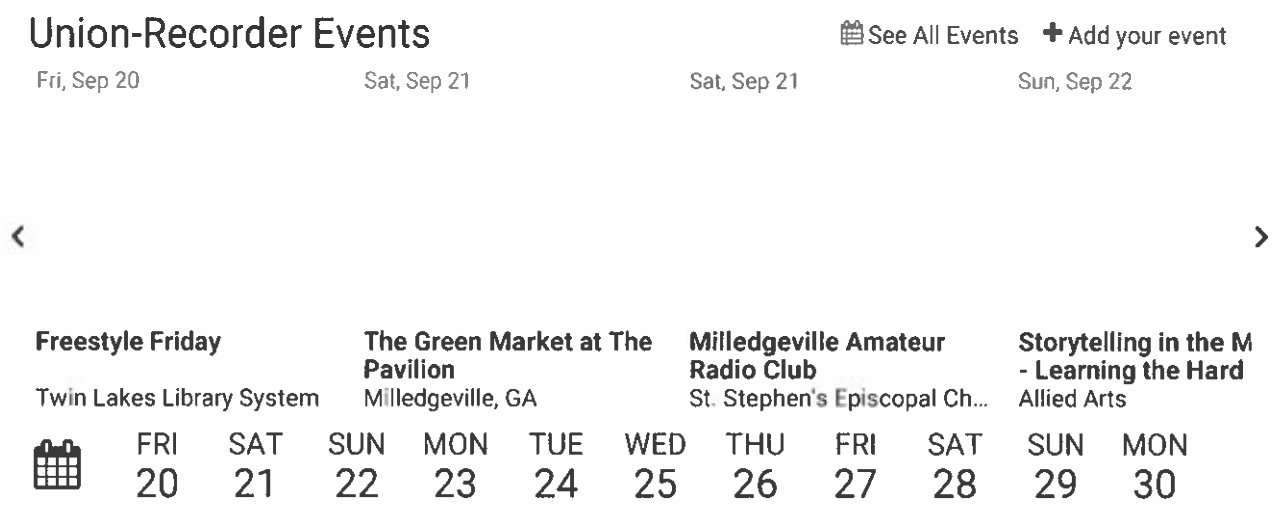
"He has worked tirelessly to make all of this a reality," Fuller said. "We couldn't have done this without his expertise and his determination to see it through."

Couch said since the closing on Aug. 30 that officials with Byline Bank have now accepted those documents and that those documents were now at the U.S. Department of Agriculture office in Athens and the first draw request had officially been made, based on what the anticipated needs will be between now and mid November.

"I want to make sure that everybody understands, we closed but we don't have $10 million sitting in the bank any longer," Couch said. "What we have is an opportunity to execute that $10 million USDA loan."

The targeted timeline for construction to start is Monday week, Sept. 30, Couch said, pointing out that the good news out of all of it was the fact that Angelo Bizzarro was still on board.

"I really believe this is going to be a significant event for this campus and what we're doing," Couch said.



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