

FROM LIBN.COM

Landlords say most of their retail tenants failed to pay April rent

By DAVID WINZELBERG

More than half the tenants at many Long Island retail properties failed to pay their April rent, according to a survey of area landlords.

The survey of property owners, who collectively control more than 61.3 million square feet of commercial space here, was conducted by the Association for a Better Long Island and Long Island Builders Institute and found some retail landlords reported nonpayment rates as high as 85 percent last month.

More than half of the survey's 41 respondents anticipate revenue losses greater than 20 percent this year, while 12 percent are forecasting revenue losses greater than fifty percent.

The majority of respondents expect that the economy will need at least 12 to 24 months to fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, while 30 percent projected a two- to five-year recovery timeline. Nearly 75 percent of tenants have informed the landlords in the survey that they will need at least six to 12 months or longer for their businesses to recover.

"This survey makes it abundantly clear that the pandemic is dealing a devastating blow to Long Island's economy," ABLI Executive Director Kyle Strober said in a joint statement. "We anticipate May's results, after a full six weeks of economic shutdown, to be worse."

Strober added that the goal of the survey, which will be conducted monthly, is to create an accurate barometer of current market conditions as they are severely impacted by the pandemic.

"The results will be a powerful tool when stating the need for federal, state, and local assistance in order to restart our economy," Strober said. "It can also provide guidance as to what government assistance could be most helpful to tenants, including rental assistance vouchers and commercial mortgage forbearance."



AP Photo/Mark Lennihan

As expected, the survey revealed that the retail real estate sector has been impacted the most and the next hardest hit sector was commercial office space. Thirty percent of respondents experienced nonpayment of rent from 21 percent to 50 percent of their office tenants, while 15 percent of respondents saw more than 50 percent of their office tenants miss April's rent.

"These results underscore the importance of economic

recovery programs now underway by federal, state, and local governments along with the need to not only implement them but sustain them to ensure the economy stabilizes and then is restored to health," LIBI CEO Mitch Pally said in the statement. "With Long Island playing a crucial role in New York's economy, particular emphasis needs to be placed on a region of 2.85 million people whose economic landscape is now unrecognizable."

Syosset firm raises \$1.5M to boost restaurant revenue, feed hungry

A Syosset-based firm has raised \$1.5 million in its mission to drive customers to restaurants and also feed the hungry.

Foodie Card is a dining subscription firm whose members pay \$29.99 to join so that they in turn receive a 10 percent discount at more than 700 participating restaurants.

For every Foodie Card purchased, the company donates a day of meals to a local food bank. Since Foodie Card launched in 2018, Foodie Card, the company says it has donated more than 20,000 meals to Island Harvest.

And since the COVID-19 outbreak, the company has implemented a takeout program, in which more than 700 have signed on. The company has also doubled donations to Island Harvest during this quarter.

Ruttenberg Gordon Investments led this latest round of funding, with participation from Gary Vaynerchuk of VaynerMedia, Ryan Harwood of Gallery Media Group, Jamie Schweid of Schweid & Sons, Eric Sobotka of Durational and Bojangles and Nat Brogadir of Delivery.com.

The new funding would be used to hire staff, enhance technology and for marketing.

New staff would be brought on to sup-

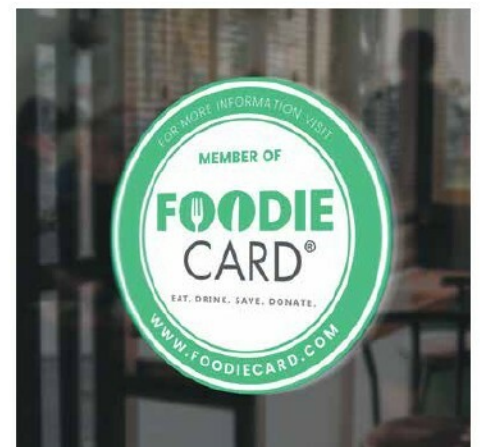


JARED KATZ: 'Our goal in 2020 is to expand through the tri-state area.'

port growth. The firm aims to improve and optimize technology as well as develop a Foodie Card app for iOS and Android platforms. And the firm will market the card to drive new membership and add

restaurants.

"Our goal in 2020 is to expand through the tri-state area," said Jared Katz, the firm's CEO. "Our plan beyond 2020 is to expand across all major metros around the country.



The Foodie Card features more than 700 participating restaurants.

"Obviously, COVID may push back our expansion plans a big depending on when states open up restaurants," he added. "But the ultimate goal is for Foodie Card to be a national presence."

Foodie Card was launched in 2018. Its founders include Ryan Alovic, Neil and Emma Foster, who created the Tri-State Restaurant Club, a Facebook group that now has 69,000 members.

— ADINA GENN