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Tenants start slow move into Dayton Arcade; new residents weeks away

By Cornelius Frolik

The Dayton Arcade's anchor tenants are moving in and soon will be joined by new residents, breathing new life into a long-vacant property that officials hope will be an economic engine and a downtown treasure.

Article continues below

[The Dayton Innovation Hub](#), a joint venture between the University of Dayton and The Entrepreneurs Center, is the anchor tenant of the nine-building complex, which will allow hundreds of college students, faculty members and staff to work collaboratively with local small businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs.

The arcade also is likely just weeks away from welcoming dozens of new apartments, most of which will be affordable housing that will be marketed to artists and creative types and thinkers, according to the arcade's residential developer.

The revitalized arcade will be transformational for the community, said Montgomery County Commissioner Carolyn Rice, who toured the property last weekend.

“It will be a boost, and we really need it after COVID,” she said. “It’ll connect the future with the past.”

The [Arcade Innovation Hub](#), the joint venture between UD and the [Entrepreneurs Center](#), has committed to a 10-year [lease](#) at the Dayton Arcade, with plans to use about 95,000 square feet of space.

The innovation hub will give student artists, business majors and engineers hands-on experience while working alongside of creative business professionals and entrepreneurial community members.

UD’s [L. William Crotty Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership](#) is moving into the hub. The hub also will be home to gallery space, art studios, makerspace areas and a new venture from the student-run business [Flyer Enterprises](#).

The arcade’s developers currently are focused on finishing rehabbing seven of the arcade’s nine buildings, which are located south of an alley that cuts through the complex.

The arcade [officially closed in the early 1990s](#). UD declined to comment for this article.

Other planned tenants for the arcade include restaurants and retail, a kitchen incubator, a visual arts organization and [a local payroll services company](#).

Credit: Tom Gilliam

Commissioner Rice said on Saturday she toured the arcade with members of the Montgomery County Land Bank, which [helped sponsor one of the plaster turkeys](#) that ring the arcade's dome.

The hub is gorgeous and looks far along with new furniture, fixtures and finishes, and the tour guide indicated the Entrepreneurs Center and UD were moving into the space this week, Rice said.

There's still a lot of work remaining in some parts of the south arcade, but tour-takers saw apartments, classrooms and office spaces that looked ready to go, she said.

"It's beautiful," she said. "There's a great energy about it, and you can see how people will collaborate."

The arcade will create new community connections, including between downtown and UD, and bringing students to the arcade and downtown will help with the property's and the area's rebirth, she said.

The Art Lofts are 110 apartments that will be spread across four of the arcade's buildings, and the bulk of the units will be affordable housing, said Trace Shaughnessy, vice president of design and construction with McCormack Baron Salazar Inc., the arcade's residential developer.

"It's new, it's funky, it's urban and a cool place to live," he said.

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Shaughnessy said pre-leasing is getting underway, and about 76 units hopefully will be done by the end of this month.

The remaining 34 should be completed by the end of March, he said, and the first residents likely will start to move in by the end of this month.

"There seems to be a lot of interest in the project," he said.

The Arts Lofts will have 83 one-bedroom apartments, 21 two-bedroom units and half a dozen three-bedroom units, he said.

The smallest units will be about 650 to 675 square feet, while the largest units will be about 1,100 to 1,200 square feet, Shaughnessy said.

Credit: Tom Gilliam

The apartments offer new countertops, cabinets and stainless steel appliances, but many units have historical features, such as original wood floors, Shaughnessy said.

The arcade will have 39 residential units in the Fourth Street building; 36 in the Lindsey building; 21 in the Ludlow building; and 14 in the Commercial building.