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DOWNTOWN AND BRICKELL

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Downtown initiatives include interactive 3-dimensional view

BY KYLEA HENSELER

Within the next few weeks Miami's Downtown Development Authority plans to launch three new initiatives aimed at helping both local businesses and those looking to relocate to South Florida.

As Covid continues to prove that employees can telework from anywhere, more and more companies have decided to move south and ditch high-income tax cities for the lower living costs and warm winters of the Sunshine State.

"We're fielding a tremendous number of inbound calls from new and old companies," Nitin Motwani, co-chair of the development authority's Enterprise Committee, previously told Miami Today.

In order to give companies looking to move downtown an easy way to assess available office space, the development authority will soon be launching an interactive 3 dimensional tool on its website that allows users to quickly view information on different buildings.

"It's a 3D platform where you basically (see) the skyline of downtown," said Executive

Director Christina Crespi, "and you can scroll through, click on a building and see what's available in that building, who the leasing agent is and how to contact them. You can kind of peruse what's available in the building as far as office space."

The platform, she continued, will be available in the next "week or so" and will eventually expand to include residential and retail spaces downtown.

Additionally, Ms. Crespi said, the development authority is working on two upcoming efforts to bolster local restaurateurs.

"We're looking to partner with UberEats," she said, "on a (60-day) pilot." The new program will allow some downtown restaurants to participate at no cost to them in UberEats, a platform through which patrons can order food from nearby restaurants for pickup or delivery.

"It's a really great marketing platform for restaurants to utilize now for free," she said, "because before you had to pay to be able to be part of the program."

According to UberEats' website, the service typically charges a \$350 activation fee,

which includes a tablet loaded with necessary software and a food photo shoot. Additionally, UberEats takes a 30% commission from orders delivered by an UberEats driver and a 15% commission for orders picked up by customers or delivered by the restaurant's own staff.

Finally, as part of a partnership with the City of Miami and Florida International University's Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, she said, the development authority will be launching a series of free webinars intended to educate local restaurant owners on Covid-19 safety protocols.

The first live webinar, she said, will be at 3 p.m. Sept. 15. Other live sessions taught by a professor will be Sept. 22 and 29. Participants will be able to take a quiz after the events and receive certification from the county and a sticker that can be displayed to customers indicating the restaurant's understanding of protocols.

After the live sessions are complete, Ms. Crespi said, video material and tests will still be available for restaurants hoping to earn their certificate. Participants from all over, she continued, are welcome to attend.



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