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NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

The Standard-Times

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RIDING THE CREST



A man rides his bicycle on the crest of Horseneck Road as seen from Fisherville Lane in Westport.

PETER PEREIRA/THE STANDARD-TIMES

New Bedford State Pier repairs to displace businesses; work could take up to 4 years

Frank Mulligan

The Standard-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

NEW BEDFORD — The state will close State Pier’s south wharf and most of the east wharf within weeks for significant repairs that will cause the displacement of virtually all water-dependent businesses. Repairs could take up to four years.

However, MassDevelopment President and CEO Navjeet Bal said the agency is working on short-term options with Seastreak Ferries and Cuttyhunk Ferry to be able to maintain some level of operations from the pier.

There is a space that’s safe and it’s hoped they can be supported from there, Bal said. Seastreak is currently closed for the season.

Why is the pier closure happening?

Bal said an engineering review of the pier found that the south wharf and most of the east wharf required significant repairs or replacement, necessitating the closure within weeks.

She noted that the north wharf has been closed since 2019 because of needed repairs, and MassDevelopment will be soliciting reconstruction bids for it in the near future.

Who will be affected by the pier closure?

Bal said MassDevelopment was also working with state and local agencies to support other affected users of the pier, who are currently being notified, and who may seek alternate locations in the Port of New Bedford.

Commercial fishermen using State Pier will be displaced, she said.

MassDevelopment interim Executive Vice President Gary Walker said the historic schooner Ernestina Morrissey, operated by Massachusetts Maritime Academy, will be displaced. It also has a berth in Buzzards Bay, where it is currently.

He said an alternative New Bedford location will be discussed.

He said MassDevelopment will work with the New Bedford Port Authority to find an alternate location in the Port for American Cruise Lines.

Walker said there isn’t a current cargo tenant, but operations of that kind won’t be possible until the east wharf is replaced.

An oil refueling barge that was already looking for an alternative site will also be displaced. Walker said businesses within the pier, not on the wharves, can remain active.



The state is going to close State Pier’s south wharf and most of the east wharf within weeks for significant repairs that will cause the displacement of virtually all water-dependent businesses.

PROVIDED BY MASSDEVELOPMENT

Mayor Jon Mitchell said, “The city is working closely with the relevant state agencies to ensure that the businesses affected by the structural repairs on the State Pier can find suitable space elsewhere in the Port of New Bedford. I am grateful that the state did not wait to address the problem, which I note is not likely to impede the ongoing effort to develop the western edge of the pier.”

Emergency permitting will be sought to speed process

Bal said MassDevelopment will pursue emergency permitting with both state and federal agencies to address repairs to the south and east wharves.

“We anticipate the wharves will be closed for two to three years. If we’re unable to get emergency permitting, that timeline is probably more like three to four years,” she said.

Bal added, “MassDevelopment is deeply committed to protecting the long-term vitality of the New Bedford waterfront. We recognize the pier’s importance to the city’s economy, culture and working waterfront, and we’re working urgently with tenants and partners across all levels of government to ensure safety, continuity, and a strong recovery.”

The 8-acre State Pier is owned by the state through the Department of Conservation and Recreation and managed by MassDevelopment.

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New Bedford Music Academy a big addition to city arts scene

Matthew Ferreira

The Standard-Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

NEW BEDFORD — After a quiet opening of the New Bedford Music Academy on Ashley Boulevard in April, owner Todd Salpietro refers to the time since as something of a “light practice run.” But a grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, Oct. 23, marked the end of that, and the start of recognizing the music school as the flagship institution Salpietro has envisioned.

“In that little amount of time we got just under 100 students and hired like 15-18 teachers,” Salpietro, a Westport resident, told The Standard-Times. “So being here has been great.”

Salpietro — who got his start in music education as a drum instructor — has owned TJ’s Music in Fall River, where he operates Fall River Arts Academy, for 29 years. He’s had his sights set on opening a second music school for a while now, and bought the former Santander Bank branch building at 909 Ashley Blvd. several years ago, knowing New Bedford was where he wanted it to be.

“I’ve participated in well over 1,000 musical performances in the city of New Bedford throughout my lifetime ... playing at various bars and clubs, events,” Salpietro said. “So New Bedford is near and dear to my heart.”

What goes on inside New Bedford Music Academy?

The New Bedford Music Academy facility has nine lesson rooms where students meet one-on-one with instructors once a week for 30 minutes to practice their instrument of choice.

“We offer private lessons in guitar, bass, piano, violin, drums and more,” Salpietro said, also noting woodwind and brasswind instruments, as well as the ukelele and voice lessons. “Our main mission is to offer the highest quality music lessons to community just like we do in Fall River. Between both we’re teaching over 600 weekly students.”

“I’m usually on that one over there,” said drum instructor Jessie Hoyt, pointing to a neighboring drum kit as he took a seat at the one usually used by students. “This is my favorite job; I get to play drums all day.”

Hoyt, a Lakeville resident, said he bases his instruction on students’ individual interests and tastes.

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Drum instructor Jessie Hoyt plays the drum in one of the classrooms inside of the New Bedford Music Academy on Ashley Boulevard in New Bedford.

PETER PEREIRA/THE STANDARD-TIMES

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Daylight saving time ended at 2 a.m. today. Remember to set your clocks back one hour.



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