



Padres opener brings new hope to East Village businesses



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SAN DIEGO (KGTV) — The start of the Padres season is bringing new hopes to East Village businesses that survived last year with no fans, even with attendance currently capped at about 10,000.

Basic Pizza in the east village is usually packed for opening day. But in 2020, that went away, with fans not allowed in the stands.

“There was a loss of the interest to come downtown, no more baseball games, no more concerts, no more fairs,” said restaurant co-owner Erik Tesmer.

Tesmer said PPP loans are the reason Basic is still standing. Revenue is down about 75 percent, due to the loss of in-person dining and bar service.

The part of the East Village near the ballpark has been hit particularly hard. Businesses pay high rents because of Petco Park foot traffic - gone during the pandemic. Parking is expensive, and the unsheltered homeless issue persists.

“We have seen a lot of struggles with the business owners, we have also seen a lot of resilience and a lot of creativity,” said Diane Peabody Straw, executive director of the East Village Association.

She says, however, that there is renewed hope with the Padres season starting, and the team expected to be a contender. That's even with attendance capped at 25 percent capacity. Peabody Straw noted that vaccine distribution is increasing at the same time.

“Just the mentality of people feeling more comfortable, like, it is okay to go and show up at these places also will encourage people to think, ‘oh, well maybe I’ll just go down to Bub’s or Knotty Barrel and watch the game,’” Peabody Straw said.

Businesses are already showing their enthusiasm. At Corner Chicken at Ninth and G, workers uniforms mirror the writing of those famous padres browns.

“We're located near the Padres, so we thought we'd just show our spirit towards them,” said Marco Catalan, a shift lead.

After an abridged 2020 season, the Padres are slated for a full 81 games at Petco Park this year.

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