

||||||| SOUTHERN MARKET REOPENING |||||

# TIME TO GET COOKING



BLAINE SHAHAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER PHOTOS

People fill Southern Market on opening day Thursday. Below, clockwise, Jessie Tuno, owner of Butter and Bean, makes oatmeal cream pies; Valerie Bradley, left, and Monica Whalen, both of Lancaster, eat while seated inside Southern Market; Sandra Forbes serves fried chicken at X Marks the Spot; Chef Mahmoud Laila, of Layali El Sham, works in the kitchen at Southern Market.

## *Iconic site reborn as city food hall, incubator for startups*

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With an opening night that showcased globally inspired food offerings, cocktails from its central bar, and some refurbished architecture familiar to an older generation of Lancaster residents, Southern Market on Thursday resumed a central place in the life of Lancaster city.

### WATCH THE VIDEO

The space is abuzz on opening day at the renovated Southern Market on [LancasterOnline.com](https://www.lancasteronline.com)

### INSIDE

The history of the Southern Market building. **Page A5**

videos as they made their way inside.

The revitalized Southern Market features a large mural of moss and live plants opposite the main entrance and showcases the original open web trusses which create a 7,600 square foot space without columns. As a food hall, it has seating for around 250, which was about three-quarters full within half an hour Thursday.

"I think it's fantastic. We live in town, and we're really happy about this," said



Susie Sload, 64, a retiree who previously worked in sales and currently volunteers for Lancaster Central Market. "This seems like a community hub."

Southern Market, the first major structure designed by renowned local architect C. Emlen Urban, opened in 1888 as a Wednesday and Saturday farmers market. The farmers market closed in 1986

and then it was used as office space, including for Lancaster city, which owned the building and once had its council chambers there.

The city sold the property to nonprofit Lancaster Equity which partnered with Willow Valley Communities, a Willow Street retirement community that

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# Southern Market: Successful opening night for restaurant incubator

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spearheaded the renovations of the 20,000-square-foot space, oversees the food hall and has the liquor license for the bar. Willow Valley Communities got interested in Southern Market because of Willow Valley's plans to build a 20-story apartment tower across the street, and then took the lead on the project.

## 'We've come a long way'

On opening night, Candace Reynolds, a 40-year-old social worker from East Hempfield Township, said she loved all the different food options in what she expects will become a regular stop when she is in the city.

"I can see myself meeting people here for lunch meetings and things for work," said Reynolds, who was joined by her friend Jheny Viti.

"I'm thrilled about the fact that they have a bar because usually that's not something you'd find at a market," said Viti, a 41-year-old stay-at-home mom from Manor Township.

The 30-seat bar, dubbed Bar 1888, was especially popular Thursday. All the seats were filled within minutes of the opening.

Sitting with his wife and another couple at one corner of the bar was Pierce Atwater, a 66-year-old trophy and award salesman whose family used to own Oblenders, a furniture store at 37-43 S. Queen St. That store closed in 2000 and then was torn down to make way for the Lancaster



BLAINE SHAHAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Customers order at Pho Life inside Southern Market on reopening day Thursday.

County Convention Center.

"I worked there, and I came here all the time when it was a market," Atwater said. "I was wishing they had a bar back then — we've come a long way, baby!"

At a table nearby, 57-year-old Valerie Bradley recalled coming to Southern Market with her grandmother when it was still a farm-

ers' market. "As little girl, I just loved the market. ... I just love that they've repurposed the building. It's beautiful."

## Helping businesses grow

The food hall is set up as a business incubator, with on-site support and business training for the

nine startups selected so far to participate. Market manager Mary Ellen Davis said Thursday's opening night provided a profound learning opportunity for the vendors.

"This is really a first step into the real world of hospitality and what it's like in a large restaurant," Davis said.

Jonathan Forbes, owner of soul

## IF YOU GO

● **Address:** 100 S. Queen St., Lancaster.

● **Food hall hours:** noon-9 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday, noon-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

● **Coffee shop hours:** 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, with some evening hours on Friday and Saturday.

● **Info.:** [southernmarketlancaster.com](https://southernmarketlancaster.com), [facebook.com/SouthernMarketLancaster](https://facebook.com/SouthernMarketLancaster).

food restaurant "X" Marks the Spot, was feeling some of the pressure about half an hour before the first customers showed up.

"The fact that it is finally here is weird and surreal," he said.

Asked what he was nervous about, Forbes replied, "I have no clue. Every aspect of it, just because it's such a new thing. You don't know what you're walking in to."

Lancaster City Council President Ismail "Izzy" Smith-Wade-El cheered the diversity of the opening day crowd, as well as the people serving them.

"I think people will draw attention to the development and the architecture, but at the end of the day it is about developing opportunities for entrepreneurs who are right here," he said. "I think we've developed a lot of success in Lancaster over the past 15 or 20 years, and any opportunity for more Black and brown people to be a part of that success is a win for me."