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Milwaukee Punk Band Begins Renovations on Shuttered Cudahy Music Venue

Mini-arcade, renovated interior will replace former Metal Grill and Vnuk's on Packard Avenue

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – [Direct Hit, a Milwaukee-based band](#) signed to San Francisco's Fat Wreck Chords record label has announced the former night club at 5036 S Packard Avenue in Cudahy will re-open as a mini-arcade and live music venue before the end of the year. With the help of regional investors and partners, the band's lead singer and manager Nick Woods has already begun renovations on the long-standing tavern previously occupied by The Metal Grill and Vnuk's.

The new venue will offer a selection of video games and a cocktail menu featuring both non-alcoholic and adult beverages, domestic and craft beer, and bar food modeled after well-known frozen party snacks. The new club will be named in the coming months.

"Our goal here is to fill a void that's existed in the Milwaukee area since The Globe East closed nearly 15 years ago," Woods says. "Performers of all ages need a safe, stable and affordable place to hone their skills, meet new people in their communities, and realize their visions for both themselves and their art, just like any pro athlete training in a gym. This isn't a non-profit business by definition, and everyone in our group expects their investments to be protected, but we haven't designed the operation to run as a high-volume service business to make hundreds of thousands of dollars. We want to build a long-lasting, inclusive, viable venue for creative people of every persuasion – that's the real motivating factor."

"Every investor here has deep roots in Milwaukee music. We all grew up going to shows in Midwestern basements, dives, Legion Halls and rec centers, and Direct Hit's been lucky enough to get a taste of mainland Europe's youth houses. Those are the clubs we love, and they'll be reflected in the place we're building here."

Woods grew up in Oconomowoc and attended Marquette University High School before earning degrees in Journalism and Communication Arts, and an M.B.A. all from the University of Wisconsin. In partnership with Chicago musicians/artists Andy Slania and Eric Baskauskas, and Woods's wife Kate, the group secured financing to buy the property through First Bank Financial Centre, along with seven additional investors living in Milwaukee, Chicago, Michigan and Minneapolis, who contributed legal counsel and consultation as the business has been planned.

The group selected the Packard Avenue property on the heels of many young families moving to the area, adding to Cudahy's strength as a bridge between Bayview and South Milwaukee.

The group plans to install a new PA system, bar and restaurant equipment, and make extensive repairs and updates to the existing building before opening.

“Once again, I am pleased to see old buildings in Cudahy brought back to life,” says Cudahy Mayor John Hohenfeldt. “Mr. Woods and his partners have great plans for the facility and we look forward to them being a part of our business community downtown.”

“Playing in a touring rock band has taught me more skills and life lessons than any single job, class or mentor has – I firmly believe in learning by doing,” Woods says. “This is our group’s way of giving back to the community that supported us in making the music we wanted to hear, traveling the world, and learning first-hand how people we looked up to created media that changed our minds for the better. We hope our place will have a hand in providing that same opportunity to new and established artists, entertainers, journalists and leaders.”

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