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# Meat Co. to Leave for N.J.

By SUMATHI REDDY

More meat is going packing from the Meatpacking District.

DeBragga & Spitler, said to be the largest meat purveyor left in the area, is heading to Jersey City, following the path of hundreds of companies and slaughterhouses that have left the neighborhood that still bears their name. The company closed on a vacant warehouse Friday and will begin construction of the \$2.5 million project immediately, with the goal of moving in by October.

The Meatpacking District has transformed into a hub of nightlife and retail over the past decade. With DeBragga's departure, only seven meat companies are left in Gansevoort Market, the cooperative they were a part of.

DeBragga, which supplies meat to many of the city's top-flight restaurants, moved to the district in the late 1940's.

Marc Sarrazin and George Faison, partners in the company, attributed the decision to economics and logistics, including the headache of getting trucks in and out of the city. They said their rent in New Jersey will be significantly reduced.

"Everybody's gone," said Mr. Faison. "They went to the Brooklyn Terminal Market or they went to Hunts Point, and some of them moved to New Jersey."

The company, which employs about 50 people and had sales of about \$24 million last year, will move into a space that is roughly the same size but is laid out more efficiently.

About 25% of their Manhattan space will go to the Whitney Museum of Art, which is relocating to the area, with the remainder reverting to the cooperative.

John Jobbagy, head of the co-op, said it has received an extension on its lease. The cooperative leases the space from the city. A spokeswoman for the city Economic Development said in an email that "the space that DeBragga is vacating will soon be filled with a new or expanded NYC-based meat business."

Mr. Sarrazin thinks the final nail in the coffin isn't far off. "Do I think in 25 years there's going to be a meat market here?" he said. "No."

The DeBragga departure marks the latest food business to leave the city. A.L. Bazzini Co., which makes peanuts, among other products, announced last month that it was moving its

manufacturing plant from the Bronx to Pennsylvania. Other food manufacturing companies that have left the city in the past two years include Stella D'oro, hummus maker Sabra and Old London, manufacturer of Melba Toast,

The Hunts Point wholesale produce market in the South Bronx is also contemplating a move to New Jersey.

But the overall number of food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing companies in the city has remained stable. According to state Labor Department figures from 2010, there are 1,020 such companies in the city, compared to 1,007 in 2000. The number of employees has declined slightly, from 16,585 in the first quarter of 2000 to 14,891 in the same period last year. The figures include companies that pay into the unemployment insurance fund, therefore they do not include self-employed individuals, limited partnerships and most family businesses.

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