



CAPITALIZE ALBANY
CORPORATION

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Media Contact: Michael Bohne, APR – (518) 434-2532

Viva Empanadas Opens In Downtown Albany, Expands Into Downtown Albany Restaurant Landscape

Newest Restaurant With focus On Authentic Latin Cuisine Takes Part In Downtown Revitalization

ALBANY – The no-longer vacant storefront at the corner of North Pearl Street and Sheridan Avenue located at 90 North Pearl Street is now home to a full-service bar and restaurant focused on serving Latin cuisine and providing flavorful experiences — Viva Empanadas. An event was held Tuesday to celebrate its grand opening.

“Viva Empanadas is a welcome new addition to the city and a major boost to downtown Albany’s core and its growing strength,” said City of Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan. “Veronica was able to transform this vacant space into a unique new flavorful restaurant and bar that is the latest attraction to open in downtown. I want to thank Veronica and her team for choosing to invest in downtown and wish Viva Empanadas success.”

"Viva Empanadas is my dream. It was years in the making, I wanted to bring all Latin flavors together under one beautiful roof with an offering that everybody can experience no matter the type of diet restrictions, the circumstance, the budget," said Viva Empanadas owner Veronica Agama. “We want everyone to be able to find something warm and good that feels like eating your favorite dish, with a service and an ambience to brighten your day a little bit more.”

Viva Empanadas was a concept which originally came to the Capital Region in the form of a food truck after Agama moved to the Region from New York City in 2022 before expanding into its first restaurant located at The Galleria 7 in Latham. The Viva Empanadas menu features empanadas, arepas, tamales, choripán, rice bowls, and more. With the expansion into downtown Albany, the new Albany location features tapas, as well as a full bar with Latin drink specialties.

Offering a unique concept to the repertoire of downtown restaurants, Viva Empanadas plans to employ at least a dozen staff.

“Latin food is diverse and really friendly to all tastes as it’s predominantly gluten free, with lots of veggies, and flavor! Across Latin America we all use the same ingredients and most of the time we make very similar dishes we just name them very differently. I’ve carefully curated a menu that represents us all,” explained Agama. “At viva empanadas everything is handcrafted and made to order with lots of love, as we really love the idea of coming all together to celebrate life, to make every moment count, one empanadita at a time!”

21 LODGE STREET
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207
(T) 518-434-2532 ★ (F) 518-434-9846
www.CapitalizeAlbany.com



Made possible with support from the Downtown Albany Retail Grant Program — extensive interior renovations and signage, were completed to support Viva Empanadas business plan, its space’s distinct design and vibrant theme. The grant program is made possible with support from the City of Albany Capital Resource Corporation and is managed and administered by Capitalize Albany Corporation.

Using 2,400 sq. ft. of ground floor space, Viva Empanadas offers an array of authentic Latin dishes serving as a downtown destination and its concept aims to attract and serve residents located within the blocks surrounding the establishment, as well as local workers, daily visitors and tourists alike. Its menu complements the overall visual appeal and spirit.

“The stunning reactivation of this property and the offerings that Viva Empanadas is bringing to the neighborhood will play a vital role in this business corridor’s continued success,” said interim Capitalize Albany Corporation president and City of Albany Capital Resource Corporation CEO Ashley Mohl. “The Downtown Albany Retail Grant Program has proven to be an advantageous tool in supporting new downtown retail — it’s diversifying the restaurant landscape, has supported multiple business expansions, has attracted regional chainlets, a thrift shop, vintage clothing store, and a soft-goods retailer to downtown.”

“Viva Empanadas' food is incredible, the space is beautifully designed, and customer service is top-notch. Owner Veronica Agama started her business by selling empanadas at markets and food courts. Her time-tested product is worthy of a brick-and-mortar restaurant, and we are thrilled she chose Downtown as her destination, expanding our dynamic, cultural food scene. We thank Capitalize Albany for providing the support to help get Veronica's restaurant off the ground and look forward to watching this business grow and flourish in our District," said Downtown Albany BID Executive Director Georgette Steffens.

In recent years, new investment has strengthened downtown. Today the downtown core is a walkable retail destination. The fabric of the neighborhood continues to evolve as new attractions and downtown living opportunities come online. Over the last decade 1,000 new downtown apartment units have been completed.

In early 2016, the City of Albany Capital Resource Corporation used resources set aside for strategic initiatives to support the creation of new grant programs. Capitalize Albany launched the Downtown Albany Retail Grant Program, a program aimed at downtown business attraction and retention that can support new and existing retail businesses, including interior and exterior renovations and expansions. Since its inception the Program has leveraged more than \$2 million in new investment bringing new businesses online in downtown Albany; such as Stacks Espresso Bar; The Vandy Thrift Shoppe and The Fort Orange General Store; Loch & Quay, a full service bar and restaurant; and most recently this year The Bevy Vintage Collective and Viva Empanadas.



About Capitalize Albany Corporation: A catalyst for economic growth, Capitalize Albany Corporation facilitates transformational development projects, serving as the City of Albany's economic development arm. A registered 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization implementing programs and resources to create, retain, and attract business in the City of Albany. www.CapitalizeAlbany.com.

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