Earth Fare grocery chain to close local stores

Susana Kelly Gilbert

The Summerville Earth Fare store is among those that will close.

The Summerville Earth Fare grocery chain to close local stores

BY JON MCDERMOTT AND WARREN L. WISE
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Earth Fare, an organic grocer that opened in the Charleston market more than 20 years ago, is shutting down, citing "continued challenges" in the retail business and mounting debt that it can't refinance.

The Asheville, N.C.-based super- market operator said Monday it had started liquidating inventory and fixtures at all of its 50 stores, including six in South Carolina.

"During the company's history, we have continued to pursue a sale of our assets, in whole or in parts," according to a statement a company official opened in 2018. The company expand- ed to North Idaho in 2013 and to the south- west in 2013 as the anchor of the newly- built Earth Fare MarketPlace Shopping Center. A short-lived Mount Pleasant location was shuttered in 2017 after a three-year run.

The chain's other South Carolina stores are located in Columbia, Greenville, Rock Hill and Fort Mill. Employees declined at the South Windermere market as of mon- day morning. Customers said they were dismayed to learn the chain is shutting down.

"This is very disappointing," said Karen Strickland of Mount Pleasant. "It's my go-to store. They have the best organic products, selection of anytime in the city."

Longtime customer Joanne Byrland of James Island couldn't believe the news.

"I've been coming here since 1997," she said. "That's disappointing. But we still have Whole Foods as a fallback."

Andrew Hallam of James Island also could not believe the news.

"It's a bummer," he said. "They had a good heat selection."

Chanell McDaniel was already look- ing for hard-to-find items.

"I heard about it and said, 'Let's go and get all the favorite items I can't get anywhere else,'" she said.

Unlike others, McDaniel was not surprised with the announcement.

"I was on the higher side," the James Island resident said. "It's sad to see it go."

The prices are on the higher side, the James Island resident said. "It's sad to see it go."

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Don't worry, our reporters who cover Summerville and Dorchester county and the state. Don't worry, our reporters who cover Summerville and Dorchester county and the state.

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More content coming

The Summerville Earth Fare grocery chain will be closing, leaving local consumers without an organic option.

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