

Boyce Thompson Center in Yonkers opening May 23

[Ernie Garcia](#), The Journal News Published 11:32 a.m. ET May 11, 2017 | Updated 11:49 a.m. ET May 11, 2017

Highlights from May 10, 2017. Video by Mike Dougherty/lohud.comWochit



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(Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)

YONKERS - The restored Boyce Thompson Center is almost finished and new tenants have started moving into the former plant research institute.

The mixed-use retail-medical complex at 1086 N. Broadway is a \$35 million adaptive reuse of the former Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research, whose tenants with the biggest draws will be Fortina restaurant, the WESTMED Medical Group and St. John's Riverside Hospital.

The Simone Development Cos. redeveloped the property with the goal of making it useful to employees at the adjacent Southern Westchester Executive Park and residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

"We're seeing a tremendous number of visitors drive in — people who live in the community — wanting to know when we're opening and what will be here," said Guy Leibler, president of Simone Healthcare Development.

St. John's Riverside Hospital moved into a cube structure on the property's north side next to Executive Boulevard last month and began seeing patients April 24.

The hospital will offer outpatient care at the Boyce Thompson Center.

"This beautiful spot on Executive Boulevard makes it possible for us to accomplish our goal of providing these vital health services away from a congested hospital setting," St. John's president Ron Corti said in an email.



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The Boyce Thompson Center in Yonkers. (Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)

Leibler said he expected the WESTMED Medical Group to move into its space on the south side of the property May 22.

Simone will celebrate the center's grand opening May 23 with an invitation-only party for city officials and guests.

By the end of the month, Leibler said he expects Family Wellness Pharmacy, the Ultimate Spectacle eyeglasses store, a hair salon and Tompkins Mahopac Bank to be open.

Foodies will have to wait a little longer for the opening of Fortina, a popular Italian eatery that cooks in wood-fired ovens. Fortina is expected to open in mid-June.

Tarrytown-based The Taco Project is expected to open in early June. Later in the summer, there's a Japanese restaurant in the works.



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Guy Leibler, president of Simone Healthcare Development, at the Boyce Thompson Center in Yonkers. (Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)

Fortina's outdoor diners will get to sit near an outdoor hearth that Fortina's cooks will use to prepare foods in the summer. Leibler said the goal behind the hearth and Fortina's 40 outdoor seats is to create a scene.

"We expect this to be a very busy area May through October," he said.

Leibler said about 85 percent of the Boyce Thompson Center is leased.

The Boyce Thompson Center is the latest adaptive reuse project in Yonkers. For the past 15 years, the city has witnessed the renovation and reuse of many historic buildings, including the [Phillipsburg Building](#) on Hudson Street, part of the former Alexander Smith Carpet Mills into the [YoHo artist lofts](#) and the [City Jail](#) into art dealer and collector Daniel Wolf's new headquarters.

The Boyce Thompson Center will have a permanent exhibition on the history of the former botanical research center in Yonkers before it moved to Cornell University.

"The historical society is very pleased that the developer not only rehabilitated and adaptively reused the building, but is also going to have an exhibit that honors William Boyce Thompson's philanthropy and the history of the Boyce Thompson Institute," said Yonkers Historical Society president Deirdre Rylander, whose group is helping to collect materials for the exhibition.

Former Yonkers City Council President Chuck Lesnick was a proponent of adaptive reuse and before his election to the City Council, he held a 2004 forum on historic preservation and adaptive reuse in Yonkers.

He said the city has made much progress on the issue since the debate a decade ago over whether the Boyce Thompson building was worth preserving.



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Work is nearing completion at the Boyce Thompson Center in Yonkers. (Photo: Ricky Flores/The Journal News)

"I remember the deliberations on the council and the previous developer threatening to walk if we landmarked it," said Lesnick, noting that the council never landmarked the Boyce Thompson building to give a future developer flexibility. "The sentiment on the council was that we were not going to let that building be torn down."

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