

Last of chain groceries abandon Detroit

by UPI

DETROIT -- Detroit's last two Farmer Jack grocery stores are closing Saturday, leaving the city without any national chain food stores.

Residents complain once the Farmer Jacks are gone, there will no longer be anywhere to go within the city to get quality produce and meats at the lower prices chain stores offer, The Detroit News reported Thursday.

Some already travel outside the city to do their shopping, but Farmer Jack patrons want a nearby quality store, not the neighborhood stores with limited merchandise at higher prices.

"Why should we have to go elsewhere to find a trustworthy store?" asked Joe Lanier, a longtime shopper of Farmer Jack, who owns a nearby business. "It's ridiculous you can't buy all the groceries you need in Detroit."

According to analysts, Detroit is the only major U.S. city that is a "supermarket desert." City efforts to attract chains have been unsuccessful, with stores citing high personnel turnover, security costs, theft losses, and the low income of residents which limits the high profit items that can be sold.

A University of Michigan study of Detroit supermarkets in 2003 said the city could support 41 supermarkets with at least 40,000 square feet of space based on its population and spending.

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