

SOUTH SUBURBS

Cudahy Arby's has closed after decades in business; its iconic neon sign has been spotted in dumpster



Erik S. Hanley

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The Cudahy Arby's tipped its ten-gallon hat sign and rode into the sunset on Halloween.

The restaurant closed without much warning or fanfare. At least one worker at the old west-themed eatery found out via social media the night before the closure that they were out of a job.

Jessy Woyach started working at Arby's, 5695 S. Packard Ave., in December 2021. She's a single mom and lives within walking distance which made the job ideal as she is also living with and caring for her mother who has health issues.

She said the location was perfect because if something happened to her mother, she could get home quickly.

Woyach received a message from a manager around 8:40 p.m., Oct. 30 of a mandatory meeting the next morning. Around 10 p.m. that same night she saw a post in the "Cudahy Town Hall" Facebook group that said "as of 10/31/22 Arby's will be closed."

When Woyach arrived at work for the mandatory morning meeting, people were already tearing things down. She said the company offered employees the option to transfer to another restaurant but "they really, really did some of us dirty."

"It's either this or you're done," Woyach said of how she felt, breaking down at the meeting. "It's like, if you can't help us out anymore you don't matter."

Woyach alleged the owners would not acknowledge her concerns for employees who couldn't drive to another location.

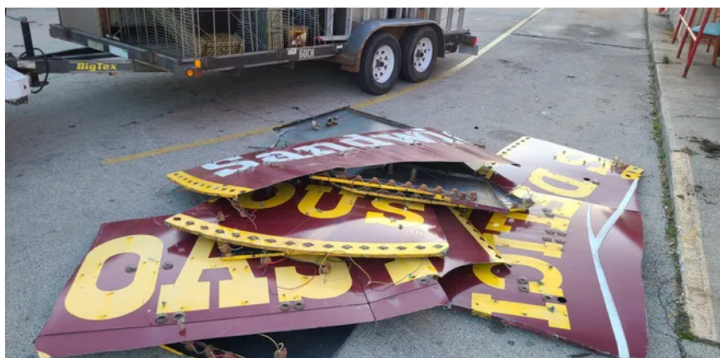
Some of the next nearest Arby's restaurants are at 4841 S. 27th St. and 4280 S. 76th St., both in Greenfield. There's also a location at 1920 W. Ryan Road in Oak Creek and one at 7621 W. Rawson Ave. in Franklin.

Messages left with owner AES Restaurant Group to learn more about the closure, the future of the employees and the beloved and iconic hat sign have not been returned.



The Arby's sign in Cudahy was taken apart Nov. 1, 2022 after the business closed on Halloween the day before. Submitted By Mike Tichkowski

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Pieces of the iconic Arby's sign in Cudahy are piled up as the sign was taken apart on Nov. 1, 2022. Submitted By Noah Skowronski

The future of the classic neon sign appears dim

City Administrator Casey Griffiths believes Arby's opened in Cudahy sometime in 1970.

Property records show a building permit application dated Nov. 4, 1969 and a sign permit application dated Nov. 20, 1969. The sign design specifications included with the application date back to 1966 from the Peskin Neon Sign Co., Inc. out of Ohio.

Arby's was [founded in Ohio in 1964](#) and the large neon hats were a staple of the brand from the beginning, but have slowly been replaced with modern signage. Not many of the ten-gallon treasures remain.

While [some communities have restored the classic cowboy hat signs](#), that doesn't appear to be the case in Cudahy.

Woyach and her son watched the sign slowly come down in pieces.

"It looks like it's being destroyed," she said, and it was later seen inside a dumpster.



The iconic ten-gallon hat sign at the Cudahy Arby's was seen in a dumpster shortly after the business closed. Submitted By Noah Skowronski

Regardless, the Cudahy Arby's sign will be [remembered in part for its malfunctioning](#), which led to some memorable messages including "Roast Beef Sand is delicious."

More: [The iconic Cudahy Arby's hat sign has been saved from the scrapyard](#)

The sign wasn't the only thing aging on the property. Woyach said "a lot of things are breaking down" including a leaking cooler and deep fryers which she said broke down all the time. She said it was likely the owners chose to close instead of renovate the building.

Griffiths said it's the city's understanding the business owner and property owner were unable to come to terms on the future use of the building and/or property.

"We had been informed by business owner that they were working with the owner of the property to either renovate the existing building or demolish the existing building and build a new one," Griffiths said. "The city was not informed of the closure of the business or the removal of the sign until after both had occurred."

The city has not been made aware of any future plans for the location.

Contact Erik S. Hanley at erik.hanley@jrn.com. Like his [Facebook page](#) and follow him on Twitter at [@ES_Hanley](https://twitter.com/ES_Hanley).

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