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## Green Bay Apartments Owe \$1M+ to Local Contractors, Delay Pay.

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GREEN BAY – Just days after the grand opening of The Fort at The Railyard, a new mixed-income apartment complex in downtown Green Bay, problems have already surfaced regarding unpaid bills to local contractors.

The Fort at The Railyard, promoted as an essential development for the community, is now under scrutiny after it was revealed that more than \$1 million in payments remain outstanding to the local businesses that worked on the project. Among those affected is

Professional Heating and Air Conditioning Green Bay, owned by Michelle Legois, whose company completed the site's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) work.

"We're just a small family-owned business, and there are a lot of other small family-owned businesses that worked on this project," Legois explained. "This could take some of them down."

Legois said her company is still owed more than \$276,000. She emphasized that the typical billing process on construction projects involves monthly invoices with 10% of each billed amount held as a retainer by the developer until the work is fully completed and approved. The issue is with these retainer amounts, which have not yet been released.

In construction projects, it is standard practice for contractors to bill monthly, and developers often retain a portion of the payment to protect against incomplete or faulty work. However, when these retainers are delayed or withheld, it can place significant financial strain on the contractors, especially smaller, family-run businesses like Legois's.

The situation at The Fort at The Railyard raises concerns about the project's financial health and management. Small businesses contributing to the building's development face uncertainty while waiting for payments. Some fear the delays could threaten their operations, making it harder for them to cover expenses and pay employees.

The Fort at The Railyard was anticipated to be a positive addition to Green Bay's downtown area, offering mixed-income housing and supporting local economic growth. Yet, the payment delays highlight challenges that can arise even in well-publicized developments. It serves as a reminder of the complexities involved in large construction projects and the importance of timely payment to keep all parties financially secure.

Developers and project managers have not yet publicly addressed the unpaid invoices or the reasons behind the delayed payments. Meanwhile, affected contractors remain hopeful for a resolution and full payment to sustain their businesses and the local economy.

The story underscores the vital role small, local contractors play in major development projects and the risks they take when payments are delayed. For many, their work represents not just a job but the livelihood of families and communities. Ensuring timely compensation is essential to maintaining a healthy local business environment.