insideGROWER

INSIDER

8/1/2023

Bankruptcy News & a Closing

Jennifer Polanz

April was a rough one for CEA operations. A subsidiary of vertical farm grower Kalera Public Limited Co. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection to “explore strategic alternatives.” The subsidiary, Kalera Inc., will continue to operate as it restructures.

According to the company’s announcement: “In connection with the filing, Kalera PLC has appointed Mark Shapiro, Senior Managing Director at B. Riley Advisory Services, as Chief Restructuring Officer. Mr. Shapiro will oversee the business and its restructuring process, working to execute on the company’s business strategy and conduct a value-maximizing sale process. Mr. Shapiro brings deep experience in managing complex financial and operational restructurings, including providing interim management services to preserve and maximize value.”

“The Chapter 11 process will allow Kalera to continue operations and serve its existing customer base while it evaluates strategic alternatives for its business and assets,” Mark said in the announcement.

Looking back in the *Inside Grower* archives, we reported in 2021 that the Orlando-based Kalera had six operations, including two in Orlando, and one each in Denver, Atlanta, Houston and Seattle. According to the announcement, they’ll continue to operate the Denver and Houston facilities.

In other news, the Brooklyn-based aquaponics company Upward Farms has shuttered its operation, citing the complexity of creating an indoor vertical farm based on aquaponics. The co-founders—Jason Green, Ben Silverman and Matt La Rosa—wrote their followers a letter on the Upward Farms website detailing their reasoning.

“We found that vertical farming is almost infinitely complex—as we tackled challenges, new ones emerged. Our team faced these challenges head on, humbly asking ourselves, ‘If not me, who, and if not now, when?’ Though we are closing a chapter, we are celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of our hardworking team, the delicious products we brought to consumers and the positive impact we had on the food industry at large,” the founders wrote on the company’s website.

According to a story in *The Wilkes-Barre Times Leader*, the company had been constructing a 250,000-sq. ft. facility in Hanover Township, Pennsylvania, that was expected to open at the end of 2023. That will no longer be opening.