

The Daily Herald

WEEKEND EDITION



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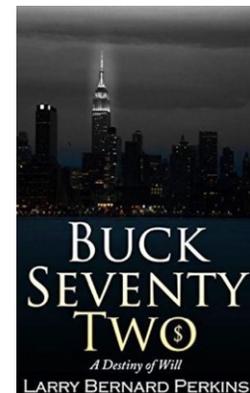


RECONSTITUED VERSION
From original article

PNC Arena/Carolina Hurricanes Vice President/Assistant General Manager Larry B. Perkins stands in front of The Collective Center at 131 Whitfield St. in Enfield on Thursday. Perkins is launching a new series of forums at the facility, which he said will also be used as a multi-use facility that will make and sell high-end soaps.

Perkins to launch community forum series

BY PHILIP SAYBLACK PSAYBLACK@RRDAILYHERALD.COM ROANOKE RAPIDS — One of Enfield's native sons is giving back to his hometown. PNC Arena/Carolina Hurricanes Vice President/ Assistant General Manager Larry B. Perkins is launching a new series of public forums in the town, aimed at profiling people and places from around Eastern North Carolina. Titled the Enfield Exchange, the forums are scheduled to take place at The Collective Center, 131 Whitfield St., in Enfield. Perkins talked about the series' inaugural event, the building where the series will happen and his new book on Thursday during an interview at The Daily Herald's office. Perkins said the first forum, scheduled for 7 p.m. on May 2, is titled the Enfield Book and Writers Exchange, and will feature a panel of people, such as publisher Drew Becker, author Amy Nathan and Perkins himself talking about writing and getting published. Enfield-based author Brenda Greene will moderate the forum. Perkins added the event's general admission tickets are \$12, Gold packages are \$25



and VIP packages, which feature a meet and greet with the panel members, a hat and copy of Perkins' new book, "Buck Seventy-Two," are \$35. Tickets and packages are available online at the official Enfield Exchange Website at bit.ly/2TMGE5A.

[<http://www.TheCollectiveCenter.com>] Perkins stressed plans are already in the works for the upcoming forums. "Right now, I am planning on making it a quarterly event," Perkins said. "We will also have a young professionals forum and an artist's forum. The young professionals forum will focus on how young people can become entrepreneurs."

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Along with hosting public forums, Perkins said he plans to use the building for what he called a multi-use facility. He added one part of the building will be used to make and sell high-end soaps, and to teach soapmaking courses. The other part, he said, will be a place where Enfield residents can spend time together. He said the store and manufacturing portion of the store will initially employ three to four people, with two being full-time and one part-time. He added, he eventually wants to have as many as 15 people employed at the building. Perkins credited his grandfather, who was born in 1883, with inspiring him to become an entrepreneur. "He is my hero," Perkins said. "Buying this building, making the renovations and holding the forums is important because it helps to see his legacy carried on." Perkins' own resume spans more than 40 years. He served as the vice president of the Meadowlands Sports Authority, home to the New York Giants and Jets, iZod Center and Meadowlands Racetrack. It is also the former home of the New Jersey Nets and New Jersey Devils. From 2006 to 2007, Perkins served as president of the International Association of Venue Managers. He has also served on the state Emergency Response Commission, and is chairman of the State Emergency Response Commission, School Safety Subcommittee. He is the recipient of awards, such as the prestigious Charles A. McElravy Award, the Order of the Longleaf Pine and the 2018 Champions For Children Award from the N.C. Senate. Perkins' community efforts include founding Foster A Voice, a nonprofit that assists children in the nation's foster care system, and founding the North Eastern Americans with Disabilities Act Consortium. In talking about "Buck Seventy-Two," Perkins said the book is a biographical work. "I've written a lot of books," Perkins said. "It took me 11 years to write this book. It was a time of healing. It is really about a child longing for his mother. I really wasn't going to share the story at first, but as I got to meet people when they read it, they identified with the story. It became healing and encouraged me — it helped me to heal further." He added that getting such positive feedback from readers "is important because you don't know how good you have it until you see how bad other people have it." More information on Perkins' new book is available online at Buck72.com. The book can be purchased at Amazon at amzn.to/2JiXjtk. [<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1512316008>] More information about events taking place in Enfield is available at enfieldnc.org. Perkins said the inspiration for buying The Collective Center three years ago, and developing the forums, all of which will take place at the facility, rests in the economic and population growth that is happening in Enfield. "There are a lot of people moving back to Enfield," Perkins said. "So the question became, how to display the local talent. Doing this is about helping Enfield prosper. I want to help make Enfield a place where people want to live and relax. I want to help make Enfield a destination town again." Enfield Town Administrator Montre' Freeman said during a phone interview on Friday, Perkins' efforts with the Collective Center are appreciated. "This is massive for the Town of Enfield," Freeman said. "This is absolutely amazing. This means having a multi-venue facility to rent for all types of events. From my position, we can use it to attract potential business owners to the town, too. The Collective Center is a firstclass place. He (Perkins) could have put a new facility anywhere. Instead he put it here. He has great vision and resources, and this means making the town's economic revitalization that much [better]

PNC Arena/Carolina Hurricanes Vice President/Assistant General Manager Larry B. Perkins recently purchased The Collective Center at 131 Whitfield St. in Enfield. The multi-use facility will be used to manufacture and sell high-end soaps and to also serve as a place where area residents can enjoy time together.

