

Monday, February 24, 2025



The location of a new event space and food truck park, called Hive of Hope Mills, that is to be built at 3414 Bullard Street in Hope Mills. Andrew Craft, The Fayetteville Observer

NEW FOOD TRUCK PARK, EVENT SPACE SET TO OPEN

Lizmary Evans, Fayetteville Observer USA TODAY NETWORK

HOPE MILLS — Hope Mills is set to welcome a new food truck and event space later this year designed to serve as a community hub.

The Hive of Hope Mills, a \$1.1 million project led by local business owner Kevin Grant, will feature space for seven food trucks, a 3,500-square-foot event center and a commissary kitchen to support mobile food vendors, Grant said. He said the project, set to launch in the fall at 3414 Bullard St., adjacent to Hope Mills Municipal Park, aims to offer more than just dining options. He said the space will host community events, craft fairs and family-friendly activities like movie nights, all while supporting local entrepreneurs and a nonprofit organization called Kwirkz, which is dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities.

Grant, a Fayetteville native, E.E. Smith High School graduate and owner of Auto-Tek, a mechanic and car body shop, said the project has been years in the making.

"I've been blessed with Auto-Tek, so it's really about giving back and creating something for the community," he said last week. "To be honest with you, I think when we get this thing

completed, and we get to a grand opening, it's going to turn into something even bigger than I've expected."

A community-centered vision

Grant said the Hive of Hope Mills will serve as a rotating food truck hub, allowing vendors to set up shop as long as they meet Cumberland County's health regulations and Hope Mills' food truck ordinances, similar to Fayetteville's Haymount Truck Stop. He said each of the seven truck spaces will be equipped with a 50-amp power supply and its own seating area. The space will also feature "speakeasy hours," he said, with plans to obtain an ABC license to serve alcohol in limited time slots at the event center.

At the heart of the development will be an event center that can be rented for private functions like weddings, business meetings and military ceremonies, he said. When not reserved, the space will be free for public use, offering a place for parkgoers to eat, relax or seek shelter from the weather. He said the space will be completely ADA compliant and feature public bathrooms.

"Our patio that we have will be a heated patio, so we're trying to provide as much creature comforts with it, but we're certainly going to be an ADA compliant facility," he said.

Grant said construction on The Hive is set to begin in the coming months, with Kyle Holmes from H2 Contracting leading the build. He said the event center will feature a sleek industrial design with glass-paneled garage doors that open to the park for an indoor-outdoor experience.

He said The Hive of Hope Mills is partnering with Kwirkz, a Georgia based nonprofit organization that provides opportunities and social events for individuals with special needs, to host events. Grant said as a member of the board of directors for Kwirkz, he is eager to bring its mission of connecting the disabled community to social and professional networking opportunities to Hope Mills.

"We'll be hosting at least one event a month dedicated to special needs youth and their families," Grant said.

In addition, the venue plans to offer a borrow-a-bike program, allowing park visitors to check out bicycles for free and return them to the event space, along with other athletic gear and equipment for public use, he said. Grant said other community-driven initiatives include a book-sharing station and an outdoor mercantile market featuring local crafts and farm goods.

As part of its vision to create a space that resonates with the community, Lisbeth Marin, Operations Consultant for the project, said it's important to make The Hive a familiar, accessible destination for local families.

"I am very interested in this being a community destination," Marin said last week. "I want people to come to The Hive because they've heard of it. They've been there before. It's connected to the sports that their kids may be playing, or other events coordinating with Hope Mills Municipal Park ... We want it to be a family-friendly place that everybody can enjoy."

Bringing the vision to life

Marin said the venue's organization will be streamlined through technology to ensure an efficient and structured experience for food truck vendors and event organizers. She said vendors will be categorized based on their compliance with licensing, inspections and insurance requirements. Once approved, she said, they'll have priority access to booking through an automated system, allowing them to select meal slots — lunch, dinner or full-day service — depending on their schedule.

Kevin Grant said a groundbreaking ceremony is also in the works, with Hope Mills town officials and community members expected to attend.

"We're really going to try to jump into this with both feet and make it something for the community," Grant said.

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