

A popular Clayton coffee shop will be joining the planned Johnston County food hall

Drew Jackson

The Old North State Food Hall is being built in the former JR's Cigars warehouse in Selma, just off of Interstate 95. The Old North State Food Hall is being built in the former JR's Cigars warehouse in Selma, just off of Interstate 95. AdVenture Development

The Old North State Food Hall has landed another vendor, once again keeping it in Johnston County.

Main Street Clayton coffee shop Boulevard West will join the Interstate 95 food hall, developers confirmed Wednesday. The new coffee shop will be named, aptly, Boulevard East, becoming Old North State's second vendor.

"We're excited to know we're bringing quality coffee and tea to that area, it seems like there's a need for it," said Boulevard owner Oisin Finn. "There was a demand for a legit coffee shop here in Clayton, and our hard work has paid off."

Boulevard opened on Main Street in Clayton in 2017, bringing craft coffee to the quickly growing town. With Boulevard East, Finn said they hope to replicate their success, offering a caffeine fix to interstate travelers stopping in Selma. Finn said Boulevard was approached by Old North State's owners about joining the project.

"It's the first interstate food hall," Finn said. "I like that there will be a variety of local vendors rather than national chains."

The Old North State Food Hall is a new project by Selma developers AdVenture Development, looking to transform the former JR's Cigars warehouse into a new 10-vendor dining destination. Larry Lane, owner of Smithfield's Double Barley Brewing, will operate the food hall and run a craft beer bar, the North Carolina Craft House, in the old JR's humidor.

Earlier this month, popular McGee's Crossroads barbecue joint Redneck BBQ Lab announced it would open a new location in the food hall, becoming the project's first vendor. With Old North State two for two in signing Johnston County companies, Lane said it was always the plan to ground the food hall in the local community.

"There's no doubt we'll end up with one national name, but it was important for this to be home grown and local," Lane said in a phone interview. "We saw other food halls that didn't bring in the local community and they were not as successful. To have no one local is a bad idea."

Boulevard East will serve coffee roasted by Raleigh Coffee Company, as well as a variety of teas. On the food side, look for bagels and desserts, including cheesecake from New York's Junior's.

"They created a really awesome place there in Clayton," Lane said of Boulevard West. "Like breweries and bars, coffee shops attract a community of people and make you feel comfortable, like going to a friend's house."

Lane said construction at Old North State is underway, with exterior work halfway completed. He expects permits for the food hall's interior work will be approved within weeks.



Drew Jackson writes about restaurants and dining for The News & Observer and The Herald-Sun, covering the food scene in the Triangle and North Carolina.