

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Historic Collins Barn renovation project blends past with present *Mule Barn Mercantile and Artisan Market set to open Saturday, May 15th*

WAXHAW, NC – Local resident Mark Hernig (Collins) has spent the last five years breathing life into his vision for the renovation of his great-grandfather’s old mule barn situated in the heart of downtown Waxhaw. With just a few final touches remaining, Hernig is ready for the upcoming reveal of his project that blends modern commerce with his family history and the bygone days of the hometown he loves. “It’s been a long road with this barn transformation, and I’m glad to finally see it all come together,” Hernig said. “My goal has been to preserve the history of the barn’s early days as a livery stable, while bringing the building into modern use for local artisans and small businesses that will also support and enhance our downtown Waxhaw community.”

The newly restored 1932 Collins Barn is now home to a mix of private small businesses on the upper level, with creative spaces comprising the main level. From the front entrance visitors are greeted by The Baker’s new shop filled with artisan breads that are handcrafted using ancient European techniques. Already open for business, crowds arrive daily to treat themselves to culinary art in the form of delicious breads, croissants, coffee and more. Also located on the main level is Darren Bowen Photography and Portrait Studio, whose creativity extends beyond the camera to staging photographic events in his space.

Just past the bakery, visitors can shop the Mule Barn Mercantile which offers locally and regionally sourced goods, curated gifts, and artistic treasures all proudly made in America. The mercantile is a joint venture operated by the Union County Entrepreneurs and Maplehurst Auctions, with purchase proceeds going back into the community to support UCE programs and local business incubations, in addition to working with local nonprofit organizations. “We’re thrilled to partner with Mark and support his vision and plans for this historical property,” said Karen Johnson, director of Union County Entrepreneurs. “Our organization is all about helping innovative business thinkers bring their ideas into prosperous realities, and Mark’s project with this building embodies that mission.”

Adjoining the mercantile is the Artisan Market that showcases the works and craftsmanship of local fine artisans including pottery, wood, glass, jewelry, and even antique tools of the trades. The Artisan Market features individual maker spaces designed and built by Hernig to resemble the barn’s original stalls, shaped board-by-board using reclaimed wood from the original structure itself. Adjacent to the market is Hernig’s own shop, Brooms on Broome, where he handcrafts and sells “corn” brooms inside his late 1800’s era workshop with period accessories and a collection of older machinery. Hernig’s shop will also host guest artisans each month for live demonstrations.

The community is invited to visit the restored Historic Collins Barn during an Open House event on Saturday, May 15, 2021, 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., for the grand opening of the Mule Barn Mercantile and Artisan Market. The Baker will also be open during its regular operating hours. To comply with pandemic protocols, visitors are required to wear masks.

Historic Collins Barn is located at 121 South Broome Street, Waxhaw, NC, 28173. Following opening weekend, the barn will be open Tuesday – Sunday, with exact hours to be announced soon.

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Additional information / links:

Artisan Market –

- David Clark, pottery, [Mudslinger Pottery](#)
- Bart Conner, woodworks, [Logs to Treasures](#)
- Mary de Jorge, jewelry, [Mahachi Meadows Designs](#)
- Elijah Kell, glassworks, [Elijah Kell Art Glass](#)
- Jodi McNeely, pottery, [Jodi Lynn Pottery](#)

Bakery - Michael Pappas, [The Baker](#)

Photography- Darren Bowen,
[Darren Bowen Photography](#)

Mule Barn Mercantile -

- [Union County Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Maplehurst Auctions](#)