

Students set to move into new Rutgers apartments



New student apartments on College Avenue in New Brunswick, dubbed The Yard, are set to take in its first residents on Sunday.

BY SUSAN LOYER
USA TODAY NETWORK

NEW BRUNSWICK — New student apartments, as well as a new academic building, are opening on Rutgers University's New Brunswick campus.

The new College Avenue Apartments, dubbed "The Yard," will accept the first residents this weekend.

New Rutgers student apartments are set to open to students on Sunday in New Brunswick.

"On Sunday, 465 Rutgers undergraduates will be moving into about 160 apartments," said Christopher Paladino, president of the New Brunswick Development Corporation (Devco).

The Yard, which cost about \$102 million, is at the corner of College Avenue and Hamilton Street. It features three wings — a 14-story, an 8-story and a 5-story, he said.

"It's a mixture of one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments in a U-shaped building," he said. "All the students have their own bedrooms. The apartments also feature granite countertops, stainless steel appliances and extra large windows with great views of New Brunswick, the Raritan River and all of Rutgers."

There are some extraordinary common places, including a two-story sky lounge on the 13th and 14th floors, Paladino said.



"On a very clear day, you can see lower Manhattan and the Verrazano Bridge," he said.

The apartments are built around a 25,000-square-foot public green space.

"We have granite seat walls and a small boardwalk," Paladino said. "There's lots of seating with umbrellas and picnic tables."

The ground floor has a common space, which will be open in good weather.

"It has a glass airport-hangar door, so it creates an indoor-outdoor space," he said.

In addition, the facility also will be home to Starbucks, honeygrow, Krispy Pizza, Bella's Burger Shack, Jersey Mike's Subs, Surf Taco and Scarlet Sweets, Paladino said. RU Hungry is opening its first brick and mortar store at the site, he said.

There will also be a convenience store, At Your Doorstep.

A 320-square-foot, 6-millimeter outdoor LED board, with sound system, will televise university events, ballgames, movies and more.

The facility is "in a pretty active place," he said, adding that it is strategically located near the university's busiest bus stop on College Avenue and across from Scott Hall.

The last housing project that opened on the College Avenue Campus was University Center in 1994, according to Rutgers spokesperson E.J. Miranda.

The new Rutgers Academic Building, which will contain modern lecture halls, large and small classrooms, informal learning spaces, as well as conference rooms and faculty offices, will open on Seminary Place on Sept. 6, Miranda said.

The 175,000-square-foot, \$116 million building also will be the new home of the School of Arts and Sciences, he said.

It is the first new academic facility on the College Avenue Campus since Scott Hall, officials said.

The facility will have academic seating for 2,700 students and will include everything from 300-seat lecture halls to 20-seat seminar rooms, Paladino said.

Rutgers has invested more than \$3 million this year in an ongoing program to upgrade classrooms throughout the university system, Miranda said.

Paladino said the projects "reaffirm that the historic College Avenue campus is a vital part of undergraduate education at Rutgers."

"This phase gives us almost a thousand new beds for Rutgers undergraduates in university housing, so we hope it starts to take some of the pressure off the neighborhoods with the hope that over time we are able to reclaim some of those neighborhoods for nonstudents," Paladino said. "Quality of life is important. These types of buildings help Rutgers market itself as the pre-eminent public research university in the region, and that translates with us being able to attract corporations — both existing companies, start-ups and entrepreneurs — to locate to New Brunswick, which helps to create job growth."

Paladino said the projects are part of the College Avenue Redevelopment Initiative, a joint project of Devco, Rutgers, New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Rutgers Hillel.

The total cost of the project is \$330 million, which includes the new Residential Honors College and the new New Brunswick Theological Seminary, both of which opened last year; the new Rutgers Academic Building; The Yard; and the new Rutgers Hillel, which is due to open this academic year, he said.

The catalyst for the project was a decision by the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, which has been part of the academic community of New Brunswick since the late 1780s, to sell about 5 acres on its 7.5-acre site to implement a long-term capital and facilities plan, according to Devco's website.

Devco purchased the property from the Seminary and was awarded about \$33 million in tax credits from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, Paladino said. Devco also applied to the New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority and the Secretary of Higher Education, and received a \$55 million grant from the state's Higher Education Facilities Trust and from the Capital Improvement Fund for the project, he said.

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