

Look inside: Rutgers-Newark opens arts incubator in old Hahne's building



Express Newark, a university community collabortory of 50,000 square feet inside the Hahne's Building in Newark, NJ. (Ed Murray | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)
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NEWARK -- After years of anticipation, the rebirth of one of Newark's most historic buildings has started.

Express Newark - the 50,000 square foot arts incubator that Rutgers-Newark officials say will connect the school with the greater community - opened quietly Monday, in conjunction with the start of the school's spring semester.

It is the first major tenant to open inside [the renovated Hahne's building](#), which once housed the department store but has been empty since the 1980s. Plans for the major ongoing renovation include Newark's first Whole Foods, 160 apartments, and other retail and commercial spaces, all set to open this year.

With Express Newark, Rutgers officials have said the school hopes to build on the other institutions in the area, like NJPAC and the Newark Museum, to grow the city's arts hub.

Facility co-director Victor Davson said the key is a collaboration between students and residents. Its aim is to show the college is "of Newark, and not simply in Newark," he said in a statement.

The facility includes spaces for artists in residence, a print shop, a 3D printing studio, video production and portrait studios, smart classrooms, and more. The school has been [working on the project](#) since its Board of Governors approved a \$33 million plan to lease three floors of the building in 2014.

In addition to classes beginning there, the first exhibition in the space's new public art gallery, showcasing Rutgers' jazz archive, opened Monday. Organizers said they hope the public arts spaces will draw residents in.

"We want people who walk past the building to feel included, to feel, 'That place is for me,'" said Express Newark co-director Anne Schaper Englot.

L+M Development, the company behind the \$174 million renovation of the 500,000 square foot Hahne's building, plans a ribbon cutting at the building next week.

In addition to the highly anticipated 30,000 square foot Whole Foods, which is [slated to open this winter](#), the building will also include City National Bank's [headquarters](#) and a new restaurant [concept from celebrity chef](#) Marcus Samuelsson, among others.

See a full list of the facilities inside Express Newark [here](#).