

## Grandview Yard's Buckeye Hall of Fame set for November opening

BY DAN EATON | BUSINESS FIRST

Nationwide Realty Investors Ltd. has scheduled November for the opening of the Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill at its Grandview Yard mixed-use project.

Nationwide Realty President Brian Ellis said the restaurant and bar will not replicate the old Buckeye Hall of Fame Cafe, which operated for 12 years around the corner on Olentangy River Road until closing last year.

There will be some natural similarities, he acknowledged. The restaurant will be adorned with Ohio State University sports memorabilia, but it won't be the behemoth 50,000-square-foot size of the original and it won't include a bustling game room.

"We may have a pool table," Ellis conceded.

Columbus Hospitality LLC is designing the menu and will run operations in a 7,800-square-foot space, which will include a 40-foot-long bar and an outdoor fire pit amid an array of audiovisual accoutrements. Ellis said the menu will feature casual dining staples, such as burgers and bar fare, but the operators are aiming for higher-quality offerings while hoping to maintain affordable prices.

"We're working to identify our signature items," said Columbus Hospitality President Charles Lagarce. "The emphasis will be on quality and freshness. We want to be very Ohio-driven with our vendors and our ingredients."

"The (profit) margins may be a little tighter," Ellis said. "We have a broader agenda than other restaurant owners. We want to make money, but we want it to be an amenity."

The restaurant will seat 240 inside and



The new Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill at Grandview Yard will have two patios and a fire pit, and in addition to the regular dining area, it will have a private theater-style dining room.

more than 300 when the two patios are open.

One addition will be a room for 25 seated theater-style facing a large projection television. The space can be reserved and closed off for private functions or opened to the restaurant during events.

Nationwide Realty acquired some furniture and fixtures from the predecessor restaurant, but otherwise there are no ties to the previous establishment, Ellis said.

"It's fresh eyes at every level," he said.

Operators are working with Ohio State and outside sources to assemble the memorabilia that will be put on display. Ellis said securing the OSU brand was key because proximity to the university has Grandview Yard developers hoping it will be a destination for university patrons, students, workers and visitors.

Grandview Yard's Hyatt Place hotel will

offer limited food options, Ellis said, so the Buckeye Hall of Fame Grill is positioned to capture hungry travelers.

"The university is a key market for the hotel," Ellis said. "Hyatt will be a demand generator for the Buckeye Hall of Fame."

Lagarce said the hotel will run shuttles to OSU events.

Ellis said developers envision an array of restaurants at Grandview Yard and they are open to national chains and independents, though he expects national names likely will be among the early commitments. Beaumont, Texas-based Jason's Deli plans to open a Grandview Yard shop Sept. 1.

"We know from the Arena District that when you can walk to places to eat and drink nearby, that makes the residential and office components better," Ellis said.