

# Film Studio Part of Mall Plan

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Developer: Sale of mall expected this month

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Another glimpse into the future of Five Points Mall has been revealed – filmmaking.

Charles Everhardt, of Lockwood Development, sent the Chronicle-Tribune a press release announcing the creation of Hope V Studios, along with veterans schooling and housing, inside Five Points Mall.

It's been four months since Everhardt and Randall Miller of the local Randall Miller & Associates engineering firm presented their plan to turn the Five Points Mall into a college for veterans with housing to the Marion City Council.

Everhardt has said Lockwood will purchase the west side of the mall that included Sears, JC Penny and Carson's. The east side of the mall will become a retail center and include the stores that are still operating.

In the press release, Everhardt announced the mall will be closed "within the next few weeks." He said in a follow up email to the C-T that the sale of the mall is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

It is unknown how much the mall will be sold for. Everhardt said in July that figure could not be disclosed. When asked again last week,

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Everhardt replied in an email with "everything under roof." He did not elaborate.

The developer did say in his follow up email that the film aspect of the veterans college will be one of the differentiating factors between the college and other nearby competing institutions.

According to the press release, Hope V Studios will "create and produce documentaries exclusively by and with veterans with content 'That Matters.'"

The first four documentaries slated for production include the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, General John Kelly's Six Seconds to Live, a black market baby ring and a protest in Puerto Rico.

The Kavanaugh documentary will include "veterans getting involved with the many sub-stories," according to the press release.

Six Seconds to Live is based on a speech given by General John Kelly about Marines who were attacked by a suicide bomber in Iraq on April 22, 2018.

The documentary detailing a black market baby ring from the 1950s and '60s will involve veterans investigating and connecting as many "unknown biological family members as might be feasible," according to the press release.

The last documentary will feature the true story of how a union strike in San Juan, Puerto Rico led to the second deadliest fire in North America. Veterans will contribute information to the movie by researching families in Puerto Rico, according to the press release.

Tim Eckerle, executive director for the Grant County Economic Growth Council, declined to comment on what the school could mean for the area in regards to economic impact or if the plan was feasible. The economic director said that without seeing any market studies or data he did not feel comfortable giving an opinion.

However, Eckerle did say

that these plans do tend to change, especially when in the early stages of development.

He also noted that Taylor University has its own, well known, film school. A parallel point was made by Michael Hicks, the director of the Ball State University of Business Economic Research. Hicks said Ball State also has a renowned film school and wondered how the proposed veteran college would attract students.

However, the economist did say that infrastructure of the mall is inexpensive so the main cost for the college itself would be paying faculty. In addition, Hicks said any business that wants to come to town without the use of public money should be welcomed (Everhardt said he does not expect to ask Marion money).

"You welcome any business to the community ..." Hicks said. "As soon as they ask for money your radar goes up."