



## Harbor Freight Tools to open store in Northport

By Stephen Dethrage / Staff Writer

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Harbor Freight Tools will open a 15,000-square-foot store in Northport later this year that will bring 40 new jobs to the area.

The new store is tentatively set to open in late spring and will fill the last empty space in the Northport Corners Shopping Center, between the Walmart Neighborhood Market and the strip mall that houses Cato Fashions, Rent-A-Center, Hungry Howie's Pizza and more.

The shopping center is in Northport's District 3, represented by City Councilman Rodney Sullivan. He said Harbor Freight will help that area realize its full potential for the first time since Kmart closed there in 2014.

"I'm happy to be able to announce this opening and continue to grow this city. The shopping center will be full again, and we're certainly thrilled about that," Sullivan said. "Back when the old Kmart closed, we knew there'd be a good bit of change coming to that shopping center. When the new Walmart Neighborhood Market opened, it left a good opportunity for a business just like this to come in, and we're glad to see Harbor Freight take that opportunity."

Eric Smidt, the president of Harbor Freight Tools, said the company is excited to move into the West Alabama market.

"We're thrilled to be opening our 19th Harbor Freight Tools store in Alabama and very pleased by the warm welcome we've received in Northport," Smidt said. "At Harbor Freight, we're all about delivering high-quality tools at ridiculously low prices. We do it by manufacturing our tools at the same factories as the expensive brands, but we cut out the middle man and pass the savings on to our customers. We've also invested millions of dollars to build and operate our own state-of-the-art quality test labs to ensure that we're constantly driving quality at the lowest possible price. We invite everyone in the Northport area to visit our new store at 1680 McFarland Blvd. and see why if you buy tools anywhere else, you're throwing your money away."

Right now, the nearest Harbor Freight stores to Northport and Tuscaloosa are in Pelham and Columbus, Mississippi, each more than 50 miles away. Sullivan said the new location will serve to bridge that gap in the market.

“This will be beneficial not only for the city of Northport but for the West Alabama community as a whole,” Sullivan said. “Harbor Freight’s closest store today is in the Birmingham area, so this is going to be really beneficial and give our citizens another option when it comes to shopping for tools. We’re couldn’t be more excited to have this new business coming to my district.”

Sullivan said he, Mayor Donna Aaron and the rest of the City Council campaigned on bringing new restaurants and retailers into Northport and that Harbor Freight’s decision to open a store in the city is only one step in a long journey of keeping those promises.

A spokeswoman for the discount tool retailer said the Northport Harbor Freight is set for a soft opening on May 22 and a grand opening on June 6, although both dates are tentative and subject to change.

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