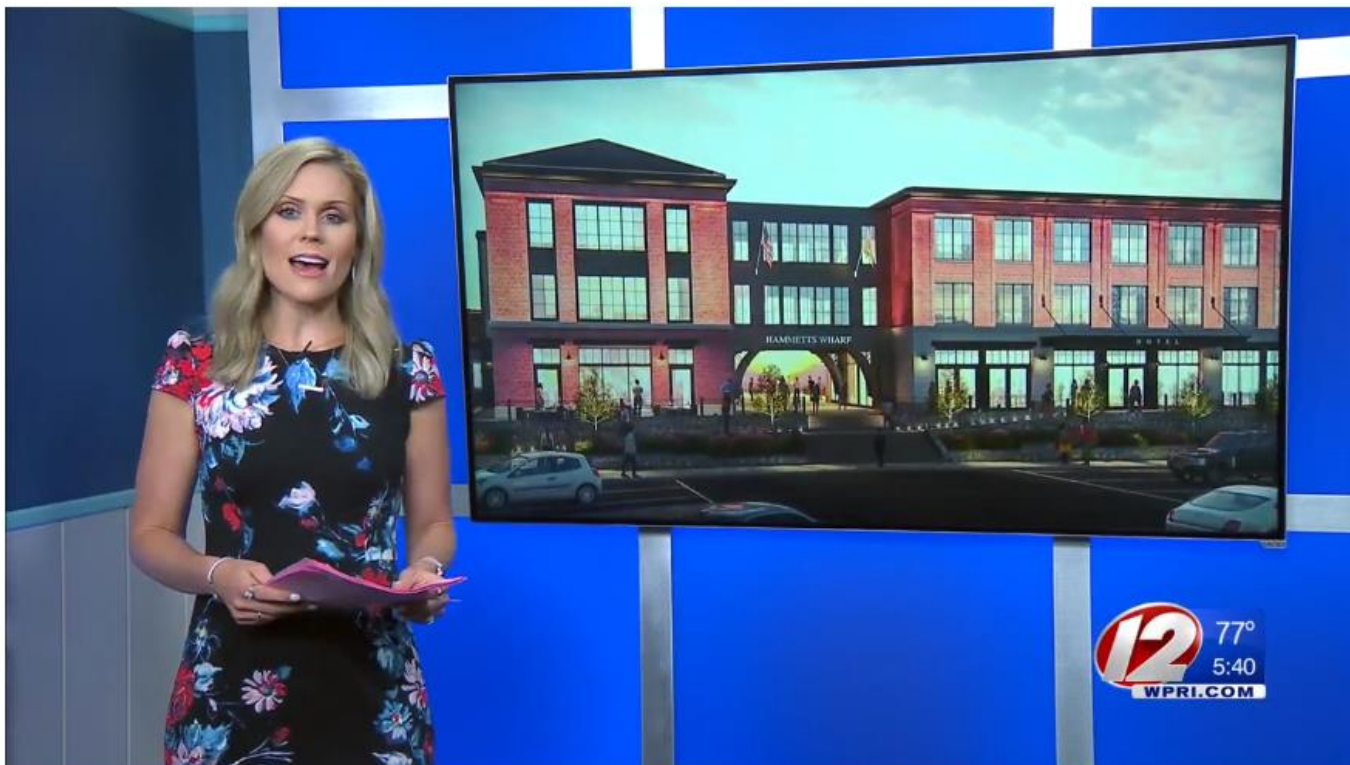


New hotel opens in Newport as tourism industry picks back up



by: Bay Gammans, Brandon Truitt

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NEWPORT, R.I. (WPRI) — The newest addition to the Newport waterfront, the Hotel at Hammetts Wharf, chose the perfect time to open as the city rebounds from its losses caused by the coronavirus.

The city's tourism industry is beginning to pick back up after being slowed by the pandemic, according to Discover Newport CEO Evan Smith. Throughout the pandemic, Smith said the tourism industry lost hundreds of millions of dollars and had a concerning start to reopening.

Colin Kane, a partner of Hammetts Wharf, helped develop the \$30-million property. He said the hotel had been in the works for years but the pandemic nearly stopped it in its tracks.

"We weren't sure if we were going to open in 2020," Kane said.

The hotel has 84 rooms, 60 of which are booked for opening night. Kane said it's part of an even bigger plan that will eventually include shops and a restaurant along the Wharf. He expects this to be completed later this summer.

The owners of Hammetts Wharf tell Eyewitness News they've had time to practice this roll out and are following the state guidelines for enhancing their cleaning standards.

Hammetts Wharf isn't the only new hotel opening in the city by the sea. Just down the street, finishing touches are being made to The Brenton, a six-story and 57-room hotel, that is scheduled to open in July.

"Anytime our city grows and we get new investment in our city it's a good thing here," Smith said. "We want our guests to feel safe and comfortable that our businesses have taken necessary precautions."

Smith said since they started reopening on June 1, the city has been slowly getting back to its old self.

"It may take months, it may take years, but it will come back," he said.

Early returns show hotels in Newport have averaged 75% occupancy on the weekends and 25% during the week, according to Smith.

He hopes to see those weekday numbers go up, but said reopening is a process that has to be done right, all while re-earning the trust of tourists.

<https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/east-bay/new-hotel-opens-in-newport-as-tourism-industry-picks-back-up/>