Kaleida hopes to expand food trucks on Medical Campus
By Karen Robinson
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Institutions on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus are looking to eventually create their own version of a massive food truck experience to diversify eating options for campus workers and the public – mirroring the widely successful Food Truck Tuesdays in Larkinville.

That may not happen for a long time – given the ongoing construction on campus – but there’s a strong push behind the scenes to ramp up the daily presence of food trucks throughout the 120-acre campus beyond the handful of trucks there on a typical day.

Kaleida Health – which operates Buffalo General Medical Center, the new John R. Oishei Children's Hospital that will open in November and Gates Vascular Institute – is working with Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Inc. to expand food truck options, said Kaleida Health spokesman Michael P. Hughes.

One of the things being looked at for this summer season is creating multiple-day visits for food trucks in more centrally located sections of campus that would not conflict with ongoing construction, Hughes said Tuesday. "We have talked to a number of food truck vendors for their availability this summer."

"As part of the growth of the Kaleida footprint on the campus, this is a natural amenity we’re trying to expand on the campus," Hughes said. "The food trucks are very popular in the community and we receive a lot of requests from our employees and food truck vendors to leverage the growth tied to the campus. It's capitalizing on the popularity of food trucks."

While it's uncertain when the long-term vision of a food truck rodeo might occur because of all the construction on campus, Hughes said there is a strong interest in offering more eating amenities to workers. The overall popularity of food trucks is a natural fit, said Hughes, noting the success they have had at Larkin, where Kaleida’s back office operations are based.

"We’d like to have that type of experience introduced this summer," Hughes said, noting, however, that part of the biggest challenge is working around construction. "Construction may be an impediment. But we want to increase food truck availability this summer, and then have a larger, long-range plan so we can create a Food Truck Tuesday similar to the Larkin Building. It's a very popular concept in the community."

Food trucks are on the Medical Campus weekdays in the area of Elm and Virginia streets in the Roswell Park section of campus. They generally operate on a set schedule at different spots, but it is not actively coordinated by BNMC.

"We want to support our local restaurants, as well as food trucks, and give those on campus, lots of options," said BNMC spokesperson Susan Kirkpatrick. "We are supportive of food trucks. We would be happy to see additional trucks join in and it would be nice to have variety and different types of trucks."

The food trucks are on campus daily and it’s up to food trucks where they will be and when, she said. "We encourage employees to check social media for their favorite food trucks."
Lomo Lomo food truck co-owner Sam Geyer is excited about ramping up food truck activity on the Medical Campus.

In its second season on campus, Lomo Lomo is looking to extend its Friday lunch hours on campus until 3 or 4 p.m. in June. "We've been talking about staying a little later til 3 or 4 because it's so big and people have later lunch breaks. It's not just doctors, but nurses and patients. Everyone goes there at some point." said Geyer, whose trucks are at Elm and Virginia. "I learned Roswell is a good spot to be."

Beyond summer, Geyer said Lomo Lomo, which serves food influenced by South American and Asian flavors, will consider staying in the fall, as well as two days a week in the winter, offering soups.

"I think the food truck community would be happy with more," Geyer said. "It's really hard for a food truck to pull up in other areas of the city. Roswell and the Medical Campus are one of those areas where there's always people walking around and it's one of the few areas of the city where you feel like a real, traditional food truck where you can open up on a street and serve people directly."

http://buffalonews.com/2017/05/03/push-food-truck-presence-medical-campus/