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## Wayne Cannon downsizes to keep barbeque history alive

BY DANNY PETERSON  
 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

In an effort to keep a piece of Portland barbecue history alive, Cannon's Rib Express, which has cemented itself as a community hub with its award-winning hickory smoked dishes and friendly atmosphere for a generation, is moving from a fixed-location, sit-down restaurant—where the cost was getting too high to operate—to a food cart, proprietor and chef Wayne Cannon told the Portland Observer.

“We’re in the process of trying to maintain a reasonable price of our product and keep the costs down to survive,” Cannon said.

Cannon’s previous location near Northeast Killingsworth Street and 33rd Avenue, a counter-serve venue with patio seating, has shuttered its doors and Cannon will now be amongst a shared plot of food carts that includes Jacksons Catfish Corner, Star Kitchen Thai Food, and Kee’s #Loaded Kitchen—at the corner of Northeast Beech and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. It’s a move that coincides with an explosion of food carts in the Rose City over the past two decades.

Cannon received help making the transition from other food cart operators and his friend, Darnell Lowery, whom he met at a men’s church group at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in north Portland.

“I was crying the blues about the cost of labor and things of that nature and Darnell, being the humanitarian that he is, volunteered to help me out in my problem. He’s been a total asset to the business,” Cannon, 78, said.

Since joining Cannon’s team about a year ago as a part time chef, Darnell, 70, has not only contributed his business acumen from having run a small business himself for many years—“Special Touch Ceramic Tile”—but also one of his family’s secret recipes, “Helen’s Sweet Potato Cake,” to the menu. Much to Cannon’s delight, they’re selling—well—like hot cakes.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Wayne Cannon (right), longtime owner of Cannon’s Rib Express and his friend and part-time chef Darnell Lowery, are encouraging customers old and new to their new food cart on the corner of Northeast Beech and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The cheaper-to-operate location replaces the restaurant space Cannon rented out for several years at the New Seasons Market on Northeast 33rd Avenue.

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