

# New Ownership Announced for New Providence Quakerdale Campus

*Successful developer and former student takes over ownership of historical boarding school*

NEW PROVIDENCE , IOWA, UNITED STATES, March 5, 2024

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Quakerdale Hospitality and [Quakerdale Foundation](#) jointly announced this month the completed sale of the former Quakerdale boarding school campus to successful developer and former Quakerdale student, Lance Thornton. According to the new owner, "The New Providence Quakerdale school campus will be transitioned into a for-profit agritourism venue which will continue to honor the foundation's mission of supporting families and children."



The former Quakerdale School (New Providence Campus), now named Quakerdale Hospitality, will initially operate under the dba name of Quakerdale Farms and will feature three different business units, JW Lavender Fields, JW Event Center and JW Equine Resort, where the JW represents a direct tribute to the founder of Quakerdale, Josiah White in 1851. One of Josiah White's primary goals was to teach kids practical skills of agriculture which will remain a key focus under the new ownership. The campus transition, construction and farm projects are expected to begin this spring and will roll out in multiple phases, with the project fully developed by

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*Lance Thornton*

summer 2029. The first phase of the project, kicking off in April, will include a small lavender test plot, a lavender educational series, the renovation of student housing, and upgrades to the school building.

The lavender farm program will be headed by local New Providence resident, Scott Johnson. Scott has worked as a plant breeder and geneticist for 25+ years. In addition to commercially planting 40 acres, Scott will be leading a research and development program to explore the cold hardiness for USDA Zones 5 and 4, genetic variations and field testing for 50+ lavender varieties and species of lavender. "It is a unique research program we are starting at Quakerdale Farms. The Quakers are credited with bringing lavender to the United States. I am excited about the opportunity to take what they started to the next level," said Scott Johnson, J.W Lavender Farm Botanist, Lavender Curator.

The local home school program has been leveraging the campus facilities including the Broer Center, off and on, for group activities for years. Under the new ownership and after the initial renovations are complete, the home school group program will be provided with the opportunity to use the campus to host additional athletic events and academic camps, if they so desire. "The week I took over ownership, the first comment to me after the sale was from a homeschool parent sharing how expensive it is to travel to basketball games and academic camps, and how important the Broer Center is to their programs. The second week, we began the renovation of the gym and the former student housing homes," said Lance. "As a result of this conversation, our local homeschool group will soon have a gym with a refurbished floor, additional equipment, updated school rooms for academic camps and most importantly, affordable group housing options to host traveling teams. Supporting this program is important to the JW Legacy and it is why these renovations will be a priority."

Upon completion in 2029, the Quakerdale Farms campus will feature multiple wedding and reception sites, over 100 acres of rolling lavender fields, a genetic plant laboratory, education center, greenhouse program, event and sports center, equine resort and aquatic therapy center, and additional capacity to provide overnight accommodations for guests.

According to the new owner, the project is expected to create at least 25 jobs in the first year. Hiring is currently underway for bookkeepers, farm staff, sales, and hospitality staff. Interested applicants are asked to email their resume to [jobs@quakerdalefarms.com](mailto:jobs@quakerdalefarms.com) or to apply in person Monday through Friday, 10 am – 3 pm at the campus office located at 26866 Co Rd S 55, New Providence, IA.

Thornton also added, "in the interim, many of the former campus services will be open to the public for a \$1 monthly membership fee." In addition to the .5-mile walking trail around the campus, the \$1 fee will cover access to the full-size gym during open gym times, reservation of meeting rooms, and full access to the gym lobby (a great area for small group meetings and socializing that now features a free/donations coffee bar). The school building also boasts a fitness center. The fitness center is currently undergoing renovation and upon completion will require an additional fee to use. Open Gym community events have already begun, including basketball, volleyball, and dodgeball. A schedule of all activities can be found on the company's Facebook page (JW Lavender Fields) and will be available on the company's website when it launches in mid-March.

Additionally, to inform the local community about the new venture, a series of "First Look" meetings have been announced. Attendees of the first meeting will be presented with the 3-phase development plan, construction timeline along with time to meet the new owner and leadership team. RSVP is suggested but not required to attend.

The first "First Look" Public Meeting is scheduled for:

Thursday, March 7th, 7 pm

Quakerdale - Broer Center (26866 Co Rd S55 • New Providence, IA 50206)

Attendees encouraged to rsvp [april@quakerdalefarms.com](mailto:april@quakerdalefarms.com)

"Words cannot express the honor I feel towards the opportunity to develop this social enterprise business," said new owner Lance Thornton. "As a former student of Quakerdale, I understand the importance of the greater mission of this campus. I know I have the leadership experience and resources to bring a truly unique agritourism business to our region that will have great impact in keeping with Josiah White's legacy; encouraging, empowering, and supporting children and families. I keep saying over and over how blessed I am to find myself in this full circle moment."

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