

Wood River Business Owner Denies Food Truck Festival Cancellation Rumors

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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WOOD RIVER - Matt Herren, co-owner and co-founder of C&B Boiled Bagels and 1929 Pizza & Wine in Wood River, said the rumors circulating on Facebook that his businesses were behind the cancellation of the Wood River Food Truck Festival are not only false, but have resulted in death threats against him and his employees, bottles being thrown at their buildings, and much more.

On Tuesday night, the Wood River Enrichment Network [announced](#) on Facebook that the Food Truck Festival they planned for Oct. 7 had been canceled. Several comments and other Facebook posts indicated Herren was behind the cancellation, but he said he had nothing to do with it.

“I didn’t ask them to cancel anything,” Herren said. “I have no idea why they canceled their festival, all I know is that we have been turned into somebody’s scapegoat.”

While Facebook comments about the situation have gotten heated, Herren said the real-life response has escalated to threats and violence.

“We’ve gotten death threats, our employees have gotten death threats, they’ve thrown bottles at our buildings. This never had anything to do with us,” Herren said. “We had people protesting outside of our stores this morning ... they’ve thrown fruit at our store for no apparent reason.”

The fifth annual Food Truck Festival was only scheduled from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 7, but Ferguson Avenue was set by the City Council to be closed that day from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Herren said C&B Boiled Bagels does four weekdays’ worth of business on any given Saturday, so the business couldn’t afford to close for an entire Saturday to facilitate a three-hour event.

After learning about the street closure, Herren said he reached out to city officials and explained C&B only has one entrance and is only open until noon on Saturdays. He said city officials apologized for the error and directed him to Melissa “Missy” Bell-Yates, owner of Rustic Roots and an organizer of the Food Truck Festival. Herren asked Bell-Yates if she would be willing to relocate or reschedule the event, but he said she refused to do either.

“Missy, who was putting on the Food Truck Festival, we thought that we had an absolutely lovely relationship with,” Herren said. “She called us on Sunday and we said, ‘Hey, listen, we can’t afford to not be open on that Saturday. We understand that your food truck event doesn’t start until 11, could you guys start it later and leave the store open so our patrons can still get to us?’ And she said, ‘No,’ she refused.”

After she also refused to relocate the event to any of Herren’s suggested locations, Herren said he asked city officials to help fix the situation. After city officials asked Bell-Yates if she would reschedule or relocate the event, the event had suddenly been canceled.

“The next thing everybody knows, she canceled the event,” Herren said. “I don’t know why she canceled the event - she could’ve just moved it, she could’ve just sat at the table and had a conversation.

“We are so shell-shocked, so dumbfounded this vitriol chaos. We’re not Facebook people, so this was all a complete and utter shock to us ... every miscommunication, there’s always two sides to a story, and people want to get themselves so insanely riled up over one perceived idea.”

Bell-Yates could not yet be reached for comment at the time of this writing. This story will be updated when and if she provides more information.