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The NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series will make its debut at Lime Rock Park this summer.
Provided

LIME ROCK PARK

Lime Rock neighbors mull offer to park cars on property for NASCAR trucks event

By [Debra A. Aleksinas](#)

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SALISBURY — Robert Jacopino, vice president of operations at Lime Rock Park, was visiting the Big E in West Springfield, Massachusetts, last fall when a “lightbulb moment” struck.

“I saw cars parked on people’s lawns throughout the neighborhoods and thought, we can have that at Lime Rock Park,” he recalled during a meeting with about a dozen neighboring property owners at the Lakeville venue’s infield chalet on Thursday, Feb. 27.

The hour long forum’s purpose was to gauge neighbors’ interests in hosting, and profiting from, patron parking on private property when the NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series rolls into town the weekend of June 27, drawing what park officials have described as “the biggest event in Lime Rock Park’s history,” with expected attendance between 12,000 and 15,000 guests.

The event, said Jacopino, will be nationally televised on the FOX network.

“We are looking to share the prosperity with our neighbors,” said Jacopino, who in late January sent out a notice to Lime Rock Park neighbors inviting them to profit by parking cars on their property and inviting them to the Feb. 27 informational meeting.

Not only is the plan mutually beneficial to the park and to residents, he said, but “this will be a great economic opportunity for the immediate area, the Northwest Corner and beyond,” including restaurants, hotels and shopkeepers.

Some signed up, others undecided

Jacopino was joined by Tom Burke, director of track operations, as they answered questions, addressed concerns and handed out a generic parking plan with suggestions on how to delineate spaces, travel lanes, entrances and exits.

As of last week’s meeting, about a half dozen neighbors indicated interest in hosting off-site parking, and a handful of others said they had not yet decided but were weighing the option and had additional questions.

Jacopino estimated that 120 cars can fit on an average acre of land, and that the parking fee will range from \$20 per car within a half mile of the track to \$10 per car outside of a half mile.

“It’s going to be totally your revenue. We don’t want any part of it,” said Jacopino.

Lime Rock Park plans to supply each off-site location with a 2-foot by 2-foot official NASCAR parking sign and provide shuttle service for sites not within walking distance to the event, said Jacopino. “And we checked with the town, nobody needs a special permit to park cars in their yards,” he noted in response to a question from the group.

The park’s use of off-site parking is nothing new, as the nearby Trinity Church and other large-acreage fields have offered supplemental parking during large events, said park officials.

In addition to several private property owners, representatives from local businesses including the park’s neighbor, Heather Bloom Farm on White Hollow Road, and Housatonic Valley Regional High School, offered to park cars at their sites.

In addition, said Jacopino, local Boy Scouts have offered to assist with parking as a public service.



Robert Jacopino, vice president of operations at Lime Rock Park, met with about a dozen neighbors last week at the venue's infield chalet to explain how they could benefit financially by parking cars on their property during the upcoming 2025 NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series/ARCA event on June 27 and 28.

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HVRHS to offer paved parking option

Among attendees at the meeting were Melissa and Randy Dean, who said they were representing the owner of nearby While Hollow Farm and Vineyard and seeking details on the parking plan.

Jeffrey Tripp, class advisor at HVRHS, and Jeff Lloyd, facility manager, noted that the school's parking lot would be an ideal alternative for patrons who arrive in "really nice cars" and prefer to park on a paved surface instead of fields.

They further noted that students have volunteered to assist with the parking flow.

Lloyd asked if they should plan on opening the parking area for both Friday and Saturday of the weekend event, or just Saturday.

Burke explained that Friday is traditionally the slower day for weekend events and that Saturday will lure the biggest crowds.

"Saturday is definitely the full monty," Jacopino said.

In response to questions about parking and safety issues, Burke said State Police will provide full security, and that Lifestar "will be on the ground" both at the park and at the high school's athletic fields in the event of a mass casualty incident.

Park officials noted that "No Parking" signs will be posted along Route 112, and along roads where off-site paid parking is being offered, and that all of the private parking areas are set back from the main roads.

"Tom has made leaps and bounds over the past two years getting the State Police involved so that there will be fewer parking jams," said Jacopino.

Concerns about dogs, rain and litter

Dugway Road residents Linda and Thomas Walko were are “on the fence” as to whether they plan to offer their 11 acre property with an expansive, open meadow as an off-site parking location.

Linda Walko asked how to handle a situation where a patron arrives with a dog in their car, to which Lime Rock Park officials suggested they be turned away, as dogs are not allowed in the park or to remain in parked cars.

Thomas Walko, who races at Lime Rock, expressed concern that inclement weather could become an issue. “I can park a couple hundred of cars there, but if it rains, it will rip my place up.”

He also raised concerns about his fields being littered with beer cans and other trash, to which Jacopino suggested placing several visibly marked, large trash cans throughout the parking area.

The Lime Rock vice president said he has received a few calls from residents concerned about noise and traffic, but most of the feedback to the parking plan have been positive. He explained that all of the sites on private property will be “away from other people’s homes,” and on large parcels of land tucked back from main roads.

One meeting attendee asked: “Do the patrons coming aware that this is a small, New England town where there is not a lot of infrastructure?”

The Cooper family on Lime Rock Road is counting the days to the big NASCAR event, when parking will become a family affair.

Erica and Ryan Cooper said they plan to park about 200 cars on their two-and-a-half acre property. “Our three boys are pretty excited” about helping out, said Ryan.

‘Biggest event in Lime Rock Park’s history’

Lime Rock has a long history of hosting NASCAR events, having held 20 races over a 19-year span from 1993 to 2011.

After a 14-year hiatus, NASCAR will once again race at Lime Rock Park as the NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series makes its debut at the Lakeville venue the last weekend in June.

In preparation for the event, the historic park is undergoing several updates during the off-season, including an extension to pit lane and additional safety features.

“To say that we are excited about this announcement is a major understatement, as this will surely be the biggest event in Lime Rock Park’s history,” said Dicky Riegel, the racetrack’s CEO.

“The combination of the NASCAR fan base in New England with the spectacular beauty of Lime Rock will create motorsports magic in Connecticut.”

