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closing up shop: 2-year makeover

Central Library closing for 2-year renovation project

■ Downtown's Central Library branch to close for renovation

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Posted: Friday, August 30, 2013 12:00 am

SARA PLUMMER World Staff Writer | 0 comments

Correction: A Friday Tulsa World story attributed a quote to the wrong person. This story has been corrected.

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At 5 p.m. Friday, the bell to signal closing time at Central Library will ring for the last time.

Cleo Yuan, who has worked at Central for more than 25 years, will get the chance to ring the bell for the first, and last, time as the downtown branch closes to the public for a two-year renovation project.

"I've never gotten to ring the bell," said Yuan, who works in the Ruth G. Hardman Adult Literacy Service. The literacy service,

along with other outreach programs, is moving to the current Genealogy Center in September.

Most of the library's collection, such as research materials, will be warehoused but will still be available by request.

High-demand items such as public computers; children's, teenage and adult materials; and multimedia items will move to the Librarium, formerly the Homeland grocery store near

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11th Street and Denver Avenue, which opens to the public Tuesday. Other programs and services will be relocated to other branches during the renovation.

Ellen Cummings, the research center's manager, and Terri Combs, a research specialist in business, science and engineering, have worked at the downtown branch for a combined 42 years, almost as long as Central has been open.

"It's emotional," Cummings said. "If we can focus on the light at the end of the tunnel" it makes the move easier.

"It will be an interesting two years," she said.

Combs said she was walking through the building recently and realized that she had only days left before it closed.

"I looked around and said: 'It really does need to be updated. It's needing a new face,' " she said.

The nearly \$48 million project includes a renovation of the almost 50-year-old building and replacement of its mechanical system, as well as the addition of a parking garage, education area, garden and other features.

The renovated library will have one entrance off Fifth Street with drop-off and pick-up parking, as well as a garden area for programs and film showings.

The Tulsa Library Trust, a nonprofit organization that supports the Tulsa City-County Library, has \$15 million earmarked for the project. The remaining \$32.5 million is to be raised privately.

City officials included \$10 million for the library in the \$919.9 million Improve Our Tulsa proposal, which goes before voters Nov. 12. If it passes, the amount needed to be raised privately would drop to \$22.5 million.

The need to replace the building's electrical and heating and air-conditioning systems and windows was the impetus for the project.

"I think it's really neat we're reinvesting in this modern architecture building," Yuan said. "I'm happy it's happening."

It doesn't make change any easier, though.

"I'm nervous," she added. "I've grown up in this building. When I started I was 21. I am saying goodbye. When we come back it will be different."

Although change isn't easy, it can be for the better - like integrating new technology into the collections.

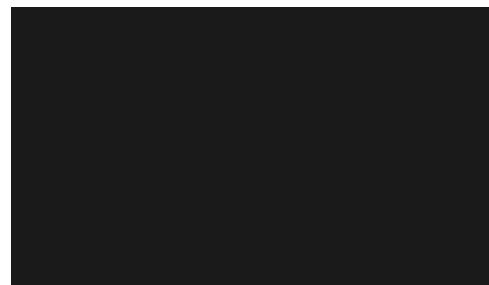
"A lot of our work in research involves working with old stuff and new stuff," Cummings said. "In the last year we've been making our collection very usable. Keeping the best of the best. We're excited about how the collection has come together in the last two years."

Yuan said walking around Central has her thinking about all the people and librarians who have come before.

"It's the end of an era in a lot of ways," she said, "but we're starting a new one."

Downtown library changes

The Central Library at Fourth Street and Denver Avenue will close at 5 p.m. Friday for two



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years while renovations are completed.

The nearby Librarium, 1110 S. Denver Ave., will open at 10 a.m. Tuesday. A grand opening celebration is planned for 10 a.m. to noon Sept. 7 with children's activities and storytime.

Sara Plummer 918-581-8465

sara.plummer@tulsaworld.com SUBHEAD: closing up shop: 2-year makeover Downtown's Central Library branch to close for renovation

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New DOC boss faces tough job

BY CARL KENNEDY
 Oklahoma's new director of corrections faces a tough job as he takes over the state's largest prison system. The new boss, who was appointed by Gov. Mary Fallon, will have to deal with a system that is plagued by overcrowding, budget cuts and a high rate of recidivism. Kennedy, who has worked for the state for 15 years, says he is committed to making the system more efficient and cost-effective.

Immigrant discretion program eases cost

BY CARL KENNEDY
 The state's new program to provide legal status to undocumented immigrants is expected to save the state millions of dollars in costs associated with their incarceration. The program, which was approved by the state legislature, allows eligible immigrants to apply for legal status and avoid the high costs of being held in state prisons.

Up in the air

E-CIGARETTES: RESTRICTIONS CONSIDERED
 Lawmakers are considering restrictions on the sale and use of e-cigarettes in public places. The bill, which is currently in committee, would prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in schools, workplaces and public buildings.

Murder trial to begin in Hicks Park shootings

BY CARL KENNEDY
 A trial to determine the guilt of a man accused of shooting and killing a young couple in Hicks Park is set to begin Monday. The man, who is charged with first-degree murder, is expected to be tried in state court.

Lawmakers want to limit access for some

BY CARL KENNEDY
 Oklahoma lawmakers are considering a bill that would limit access to certain public facilities for individuals with criminal records. The bill, which is currently in committee, would prohibit individuals with certain criminal records from entering public buildings and parks.

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