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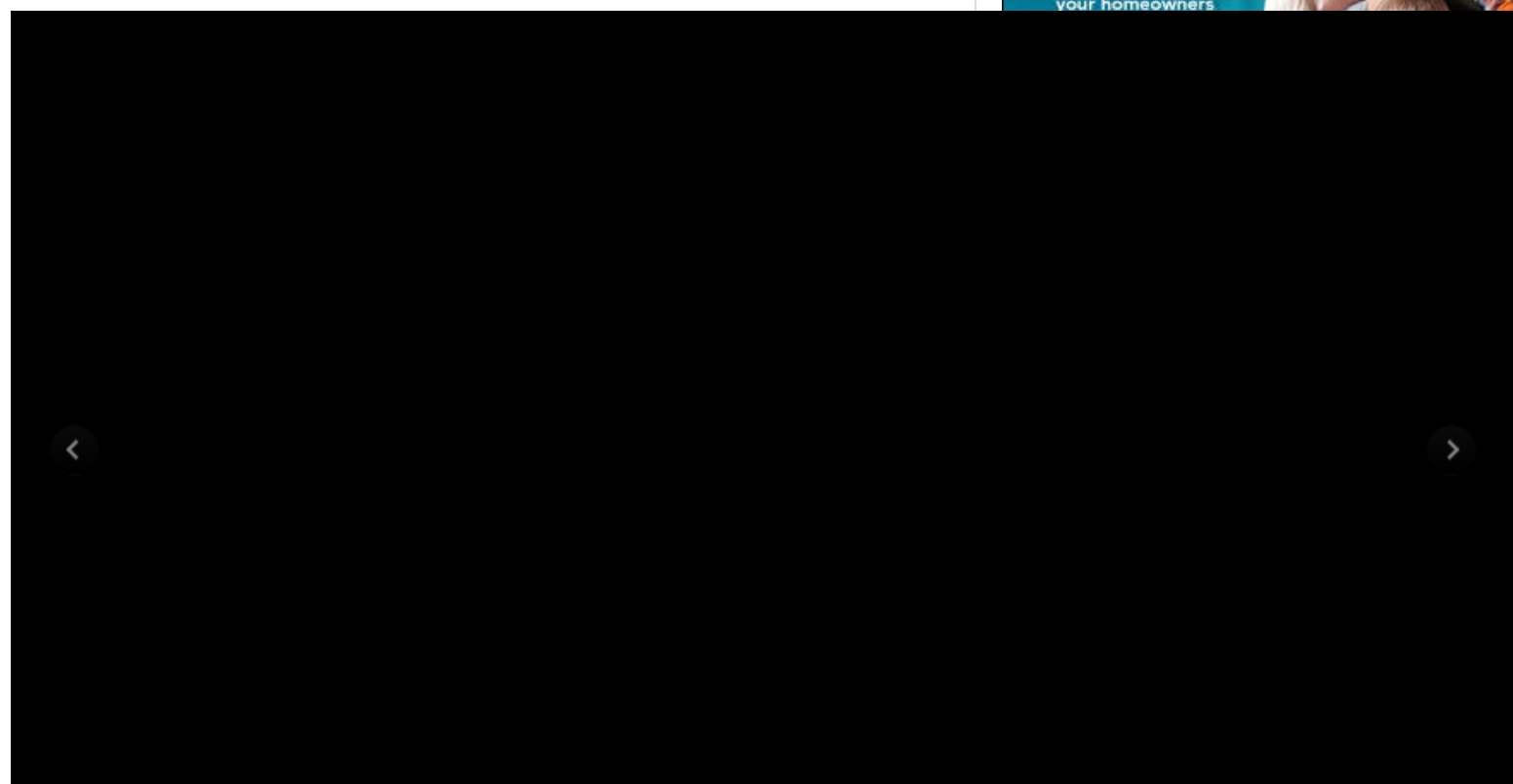


## Tulsa Library's Genealogy Center's upcoming move to Hardesty site gets mixed reviews

By SARA PLUMMER World Staff Writer on Aug 22, 2013, at 2:24 AM Updated on 8/22/13 at 6:34 AM

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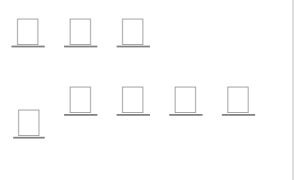





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In just a few weeks, the Tulsa City-County Library will relocate its genealogy collection from its 5,500-square-foot branch at 29th Street and Harvard Avenue to the second floor of the Hardesty Regional Library in south Tulsa, a move that has upset some of the Genealogy Center's users.

Lloyd Hobbs said he doesn't see the need for the move.

"It's a very convenient, nice, clean location," said Hobbs, who has visited genealogy collections across the country. "Ours is very good. Everyone down there, including the volunteers, are very good."

Judith Jaeger is one of those volunteers.

"It was planned and studied and didn't involve any of the users," she said of the move. "The library has made a lot of progress. It doesn't show the same progress as other parts of the library."

Library administrators say the move will actually be an improvement for the collection because it

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will mean more space, more amenities and more hours of operation.

"The building is tiny, and the collection grows and grows. We're constricted by the building," library CEO Gary Shaffer said.

"We did have customers complain about the size of the building, the size of the meeting room. The (current) building is open 42 hours a week. We're

going from 42 hours a week to 69 hours a week."

The Genealogy Center will close on Tuesday, then the center's staff will begin packing and preparing for the collection's move to Hardesty, 8316 E. 93rd St.

The materials will move Sept. 3 and 4 and should be available to the public again beginning Sept. 5.

Mary Barnes, who works on her family's genealogy in her spare time, is excited about the change.

"People who do genealogy love the past, and we don't like change," Barnes said, but she added that she sees the opportunities at the Hardesty location. "I showed (other genealogists) the second floor. I said: 'Look at the space. Look at the computers.'

"Most of the people are retired. I'm not. I can't come in at 3 p.m. every day. Saturday I'm running errands. Now I can go in at 5 p.m. at night. I can go on Sunday."

Hobbs and Jaeger said they worry about the collection's security.

"We (will) go to open stacks at Hardesty," Jaeger said, although typically genealogy collections housed at library branches are kept in separate areas behind closed doors. "I don't think we're asking anything extraordinary."

Hobbs said his biggest concern is possible damage to the collection's books and records.

"I'm afraid people are going to run amok through there," he said.

Shaffer said in the new space, the collection will be able to grow and will be housed on its own and will be secure. All Genealogy Center staff members also will move to the Hardesty location.

"We feel genealogy is incredibly important and an important service. We're placing it somewhere where it can expand," he said.

The current Genealogy Center building, which is owned by the Harmon

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Foundation, will become the new home for the library's adult literacy, outreach and volunteer programs.

"It makes sense to give them a space," Shaffer said. "Part of it is giving them a home, but we wouldn't be doing it if genealogy wasn't outgrowing its home."

Jaeger and Hobbs said that despite their objections, they'll likely continue to use the genealogy collection after it moves to Hardesty.

"I'd use it but I'd still have a bitter taste in my mouth that it never should have happened," Hobbs said.

Jaeger said some genealogists will make the transition to the new site, but others won't.

Barnes is looking forward to the change.

"All the people who use Hardesty for the children's area, they'll wander up," she said. "We have an opportunity to grow; we have an opportunity to have a new audience. I think it's a win for everybody."

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