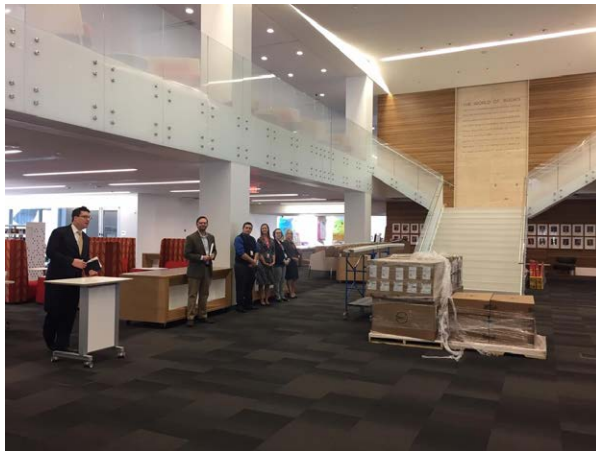


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Central Library Reopens (in the 21st Century) on Oct. 1

By MATT TROTTER • 16 HOURS AGO

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Tulsa City-County Library CEO Gary Shaffer (left) and library staff led a tour of the renovated Central Library Wednesday.

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In



1965, a NASA engineer turned on the lights at Tulsa's Central Library for the first time through a satellite link. Next

Saturday, the downtown branch reopens after a three-year, \$50 million renovation.

Central Library got a complete overhaul inside and out. Tulsa City-County Library CEO Gary Shaffer expects the number of visitors to jump from 1,100 a day pre-renovation to 2,200 a day now.

"It is like the Great Library of Alexandria," Shaffer said. "It is where problems the city faces will be solved. It is where inventions will be discovered, cures will be found and it

is where a child can connect with the world. It's everyone's library."

Shaffer said Tulsa's system already compares to the likes of Boston, Miami and Washington, D.C. — and that was before the project.

"It puts us beyond 'on the map.' It really takes Tulsa to the next level," Shaffer said.

"Tulsa is ranked as a top-25 most literate city, and one of the factors in that research is the library. The library system ranks No. 7 in the country."

The focus was bringing Central Library into the 21st Century. It has a computer lab, digital literacy lab and a maker space, where patrons can use tools like a 3D printer, recording studio and programmable cutting machine.

Staff led a tour of the renovated library Thursday morning. Shaffer said in some ways you can compare the new downtown branch to its pre-renovation form, but in others, you can't.

"We stayed true to the mid-century modern design, but really brought it up into the 21st Century. I'm confident that if all the technology we have available was available in 1965, it would have been included with the building then," Shaffer said.

Central Library reopens Oct. 1 at 11 a.m. There's a ribbon cutting at 10 a.m.