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A Good Time to be Downtown

Tulsa’s Central Library will help redefine what a library can be in one of the busiest parts of the city.

By Sam Alexander on August 30, 2016



The Tulsa City-County Library will celebrate the reopening of Central Library in downtown Tulsa next month. The \$53 million renovation, which began in August 2013, boasts a wide array of technological advances, including music CDs, magazines and DVDs. In addition, government documents and books have been ordered; all materials will be available for public use at the grand reopening.

“The Central Library could not be opening at a better time, given all the development and progress downtown has made even in the last five years,” says Dr. Gary Shaffer, Tulsa City-Country Library’s CEO. “Downtowns across America are becoming exciting hubs of activity after a fairly long, sleepy period. Tulsa is no different.”

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DR. GARY SHAFFER SAYS THE CENTRAL LIBRARY COULD NOT BE OPENING AT A BETTER TIME. PHOTO BY

JANELLE AZEVEDO.

Shaffer says the renovation to the Central Library will provide a dynamic change needed to put Tulsa City-County Library's system on par with some of the most technologically advanced public library systems in the nation. One of the main goals of the remodeling, according to Shaffer, is to "get people reengaged with the space, but also get people who haven't set foot into a library in a very long time back into becoming regular users of public libraries."

When asked about the short-term goals for the central branch after its grand opening, Shaffer discusses the advantages of having such a centralized downtown space.

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space for people to convene, collaborate and create,” he says. “Long term, the Central Library will be a place where important talks and decisions that affect our whole region take place. Whether those revolve around education, health, public safety, transportation or workforce, the Central Library will serve as a hub for our region.”

In a world where technology is constantly changing and upgrading, it is a daily challenge to maintain the ability to serve the general public’s needs. TCCL has kept that in mind with the renovation and has done its best to develop the library to grow with the community as time goes on.

“As more people engage with the library in person and more people populate our ever-growing region, branch libraries, while well-loved and well-used, will also become well-worn,” Shaffer says. “At some point, we will need to grow some branch libraries and update them all. As people who visit the Central Library see what a library can be, I am confident they will be willing to greater invest in our very busy library system.”

Central Library will also offer options that may draw infrequent library visitors, including after school homework help in the Pochahontas Greadington Learning and Creativity Center, as well as a new maker space. Shaffer describes the maker space as “an additionally exciting creative space that will offer tools that are out of reach for the average household.” He says everyone can enjoy this space.

“These tools will allow people of all ages an opportunity to explore their creative ambitions,” he says.

Tulsa City-County Library will mark Central Library’s grand reopening Oct. 1 with a free celebration open to the public.



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