



# THE JOURNAL RECORD SECTION B

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## ELEVATIONS

### CENTRAL LIBRARY

# Building for a new era

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TULSA – Gary Shaffer expressed sadness at seeing the stripped brick walls and concrete floors in what used to be downtown Tulsa's Central Library.

All the tables and shelves, reference desks and office fixtures were moved out after the four-floor complex closed Aug. 30. Workers with Tulsa-based Flintco have completed demolition on two levels, with work nearing completion on the other two.

"But I also have the luxury of knowing the books are safely ensconced in a warehouse, and they're accessible to people," said Shaffer, chief executive of the Tulsa City-County Library System. "It's exciting because we know what's coming. It is sad if it were going away and not coming back. But it's so dynamic. It's going to be so exciting when it opens."

The optimistic Shaffer was reading between the lines of those bare support pillars and ribbed concrete ceilings, knowing what would end up filling the empty chasm between the north and south elevator shafts.

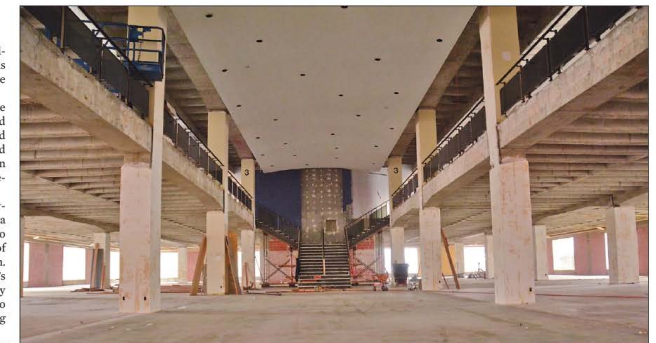
All sorts of new technologies will come into play, from electronic readers and computer stations to automated checkout and check-in stations and a chilled beam air cooling system. Hands-on Maker spaces, such as in the temporary Librarium, will appear throughout the 400 Civic Center library, along with meeting areas, study rooms, some scenic glass cubes allowing exterior views and a coffee shop.

"We think it's going to be highly popular, very well used," Shaffer said.

The exterior's dramatic mid-century design by original architects Charles W. Ward and Joseph Koberling will be updated, with contractors adding a children's garden, parking garage and Fifth Street access.

"George Jetson would be very happy," Shaffer said.

Although the 135,000-square-foot complex is expected to reopen in



The main floor of Central Library. Below is the Aaronson Auditorium. COURTESY PHOTOS BY JOHN FANCHER

spring 2016, the library system has not yet set a start date for final construction on the 49-year-old structure. Shaffer said they are waiting to line up all the financing for the \$47.8 million project, which hopes to gain Silver certification with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, program.

"We are out looking for a 50/50 match," said Shaffer, noting that the system has \$15 million saved up and another \$10 million coming from November's Fix Our Streets election. "The donor community has been very responsive. We soon will be announcing that as well."

Flintco could finish its work within a week, said Senior Project Manager Kevin Saley. He said the structure remains in great shape, leaving their crews excited about going forward.

"Bids are going out soon for the project," Shaffer said. "We are hopeful construction can start in July."



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— Gary Shaffer,  
chief executive of the Tulsa City-County Library System