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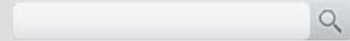
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Central Library's \$48 million renovation shows progress

■ The building's interior is stripped bare as the two-year project continues.

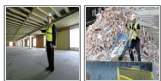
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Tulsa Library CEO Gary Shaffer discusses the ongoing renovations Friday at the Central Library. MATT BARNARD/Tulsa World



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Posted: Saturday, April 19, 2014 12:00 am | Updated: 9:35 am, Sat Apr 19, 2014.

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Crews were jackhammering away at Central Library on Friday.

Demolition work began nearly three months ago and is about 70 percent complete, putting the library on track to begin construction work this summer.

"It's kind of exciting as Tulsa gets its 21st-century library," said Tulsa City-County Library CEO Gary Shaffer.

The library closed in the fall for a two-year, \$48 million renovation project that will replace the building's mechanical system, add a parking garage and open a new entrance on Fifth Street, among other things.

A few delays have pushed the projected completion to the spring of 2016.

The library is now stripped bare in most places, with the foundation visible.

"It's built very much like a bridge," Shaffer said, pointing at the ceiling on the top floor.

The strong design of the building, constructed about 50 years ago, was made to hold the weight of the books.

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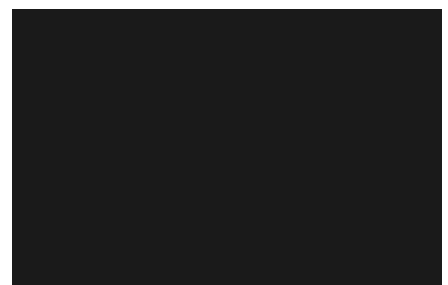
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at the library when it reopens.

"Libraries are no longer book warehouses," Shaffer said.

Raised technology floors will accommodate wiring for computers and other electronics; a STEM center will offer a place where children can learn about science, technology, engineering and math; and an overall "flexible" layout of the building will allow the library to adapt as new resources emerge.

Shaffer said every square inch of the building will get at least a touch-up.

The five-floor library will be divided into "zones" of activities, with the most active floor on the ground level where visitors will enter. Glass-enclosed study rooms will line the balcony. And a garden will be added between the library and the parking structure, which will be on the east side of the building.

The garden will serve a variety of purposes, and Shaffer said it could also be rented out for events.

Shaffer said traffic at Central is expected to double after its reopening.

"We think it's going to be highly popular and very well-used," he said. "It's going to be the most dynamic spot in the county."

Shaffer said the numerous residential projects coming to downtown mean that Central will be serving as the neighborhood library for a lot more people.

The renovation project was largely driven by the need to change the library's aging electrical and heat and air-conditioning systems. The new HVAC system will use high-efficiency boilers and a chilled beam system, which is relatively new to Oklahoma, Shaffer said.

And new LED lighting, as well as a variety of other energy "green" changes, will make the library qualify for silver-level certification of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED program.

"That's very exciting because the library is also a teaching element and it teaches children that this is how you build buildings, to be environmentally friendly," Shaffer said.

The Tulsa Library Trust, a nonprofit organization that supports the Tulsa City-County Library, has \$15 million earmarked for the project, and \$10 million was included in the Improve Our Tulsa capital funding program that voters passed last year.

The remaining \$23 million is being raised privately, and Shaffer said so far donors have been "highly receptive."

The library will make an announcement soon about the progress of the fundraising effort.

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