

OU-Tulsa dedicates new building

■ The Schusterman Learning Center is a \$12.2 million project.

BY SHANNON MUCHMORE
World Staff Writer

University of Oklahoma administrators offered thanks to Tulsa residents for promoting growth at the OU-Tulsa campus during a dedication ceremony Wednesday for its newest building, the Schusterman Learning Center.

"When I think about it, there really are no boundaries to this campus," OU President David Boren said. "It is impossible to tell where the university ends and the community begins."

Boren linked the success of educational institutions to the future of the country in



OU-Tulsa student Heather Palmer (right) watches a video in Classroom 1-135 of the new Schusterman Learning Center before a dedication ceremony there Wednesday. The center is designed entirely for classrooms and meeting space. It was financed by a bond issue and private donations. CORY YOUNG/Tulsa World

an increasingly globalized society. He spoke about world affairs and the need for more educated professionals in the

United States.

"We cannot afford to waste an ounce of talent locked into any young person in this

country," he said.

The Schusterman Learning Center, which opened earlier this year, is a \$12.2 million project designed entirely for classrooms and meeting space. It was financed by a bond issue and private donations.

The two-story building includes an auditorium, two lecture halls, eight classrooms and several small study rooms.

It also has a large multipurpose area for university gatherings and community events.

OU-Tulsa President Gerry Clancy said the campus expansion has been amazing.

"It's a real testament to the support we have received from the Tulsa community," he said.

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Private funds to build Jesus statue

■ "We're not looking for a lawsuit," Edmond's mayor says.

BY SEAN MURPHY
Associated Press

EDMOND — The cross, Moses and now Jesus Christ have failed the separation of church and state test in this conservative Oklahoma City suburb with a penchant for trying to incorporate religious art in public spaces.

Mayor Dan O'Neil said Wednesday that he plans to secure private funding to buy out the city's \$3,900 commitment to help pay for a 26-inch-tall statue titled "Come Unto Me" planned for a sidewalk outside a downtown Catholic gift shop. It shows Jesus surrounded by children.

"We're not looking for a lawsuit," O'Neil said. "This will be bought by a private organization."

A decade ago, Edmond was forced to pay more than \$200,000 in legal fees after losing a court battle to keep a cross on its city seal.

Last year, the city backed down from a decision to use public funds on a statue of Moses outside a church.

Plans will move forward to have the Jesus statue in place, perhaps by Christmas, but no city funds will be used.

The Edmond Visual Arts Commission last month approved matching funds to help pay for the statue.

That decision was met with criticism by people who felt that the move violated the separation of church and state doctrine, while others considered it a good use of public funds.

"I'm already getting stuff from all over the country ...

'I'm delighted by this result. Clearly the city has felt some heat and now they have seen the constitutional light.'

Barry Lynn
executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State

Palm Bay, Fla., Texas," O'Neil said. "It's sort of mixed. Some of them said, 'There's no need to fight over this.'"

Barry Lynn, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said: "I'm delighted by this result. Clearly the city has felt some heat and now they have seen the constitutional light."

June Cartwright, chairwoman of the commission and one who supported funding the latest statue, said the sculpture was viewed simply as a piece of art and not a religious endorsement.

However, the Web site of the work's artist, Rosalind Cook, described the image as depicting Jesus with three children, one cradled in his arm.

"Every major line leads to the face of Christ, who is the focal point and apex of the sculpture," the site says.

City Attorney Stephen Murdock, who lost the cross lawsuit 10 years ago, had concerns about Edmond's having an ownership stake in the Jesus statue, O'Neil said.

The mayor said guidelines will be drawn up to govern future local governmental participation in art projects.

He said he was unable to return calls Tuesday for comment on the issue because he was "busy doing the mayor's prayer breakfast."



Bill Obermark, whose hat pays homage to the popular chicken dance, gets directions from Don Wright on Wednesday. Organizers of the annual festival say the chicken dance was hatched in Tulsa. SHANE BEVEL/Tulsa World.

FEST:

A fan favorite, the chicken dance "kind of wears on you," Toschik says.

FROM A9

can be found on the Internet. In fact, he was busy editing

his footage of the 1987 event Wednesday.

Both Toschik and Sanders are quite certain that Tulsa is the authentic home of the chicken dance, thanks to Oktoberfest.

Interviewed separately, they both told the same story of how, in the early 1980s, a German band was preparing to play its version of the "duck dance" — which evidently was

popular in Germany at the time — to Tulsa's Oktoberfest crowd.

They said no one connected to the event could find a regulation-size duck suit.

However, for reasons known only to its employees and lost to history, a local television station did possess a chicken suit.

"That's factual," Toschik said solemnly.

So if anyone from Cincin-

nati — or Berlin, for that matter — tries to tell you that they invented the chicken dance, feel free to shake your tail feathers at them.

Personally, Toschik said, he could do without the chicken dance ("It kind of wears on you"), but he noted that it has become synonymous with the event.

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PORN:

Jackson is accused in Osage County of raping the then-15-year-old girl.

FROM A9

police found a photo in which the girl was nude and had a sign that said "Gary owns me," according to Buchanan.

The girl indicated that she and Jackson engaged in an online relationship and also communicated via text messages and phone calls.

Buchanan, who participates in a law enforcement task force designed to com-

bat the online exploitation of children, arrested Jackson, 59, on Aug. 27 in Broken Arrow in connection with Osage County warrants.

Jackson is in the Tulsa Jail. Tulsa County prosecutors initially charged Jackson in September with possessing a cell phone Aug. 27 that contained pornographic images of the girl. The second count, linked to the personal computer, was added this week.

Jackson is accused in Osage County of the second-degree rape of the girl when she was 15. It would be unlawful for Jackson to have sex with a 15-year-old. He also is alleged to have made an indecent proposal to her in Osage County.

By statute, a person who procures or causes the partic-

ipation of any minor in child pornography can be convicted of a felony.

In 1998, Jackson was charged in Tulsa County with molesting five girls in Bixby. He was released on bond a week after his arrest.

In 2002, Jackson picked up felony convictions but no prison time in a controversial Tulsa County plea deal in a child molestation case.

District Judge Michael Gasset handed him three consecutive five-year suspended sentences on three counts of assault with an intent to commit a felony.

That complied with a plea deal offered by District Attorney Tim Harris' Office, despite strong objections from some of the children's family

members.

Jackson pleaded no contest to those assault counts, which were amended from lewd molestation. The girls ranged in age from 7 to 15 when he entered his pleas in 2002.

In that negotiated outcome with Tulsa prosecutors, 17 felony counts — involving allegations of molestation, forcible sodomy, exhibiting obscene material, making an indecent proposal to a child, rape by instrumentation and assault with an intent to commit a felony — were dismissed.

After being sentenced in that case, Jackson still maintained that he was innocent.

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BIDS:

The center is being expanded to include a vast ballroom and more meeting space.

FROM A9

in three phases, with the first set to be unsealed by the end of the month, Boatright said.

"We're hopeful we can get our bids out there soon while people are serious about lining up work," he said. "That's a good thing for Tulsa and Tulsa contractors."

When the BOK Center was being built between August

2005 and August of this year, the construction industry, particularly in the Tulsa area, was booming, and material costs were high because of demand. As a result, bids for that project came in way over budget.

That triggered Mayor Kathy Taylor to secure an additional \$45.5 million in Vision 2025 sales-tax dollars to support the arena and the Convention Center construction efforts.

Ground was broken on the Convention Center not long ago, with demolition crews tearing up the parking lot and preparing the land behind the Civic Center Parkade to the north for the addition.

The facility is being ex-

panded to include the state's largest ballroom, with more than 30,000 square feet, and extra meeting space.

A modern, glass entrance off Third Street by the ballroom will become the outer focal point of the Convention Center.

New finishes, including fresh paint, carpet and lighting, will be added throughout the building. The work is expected to be done by November 2009.

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