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Advanced Technology Research Center Almost a Reality

As the newest member of the Oklahoma State University system, OSU-Tulsa has been working hard to develop academic programs that Tulsa businesses need and residents want. The OSU campus in Tulsa was officially established in 1999 and immediately become a tremendous educational resource for the community of Tulsa.

To reach its potential as a comprehensive university, the OSU-Tulsa campus needed a facility supporting basic research by faculty and graduate students. OSU-Tulsa is a step closer to filling that void as construction gets underway this spring for Phase I of the university's Advanced Technology Research Center.

Equipped with orange shovels, OSU-Tulsa President Gary Trennepohl and OSU System CEO and President David Schmidly were joined by community leaders, area legislators and other dignitaries for the ATRC groundbreaking ceremony at OSU-Tulsa on Dec. 14. More than 200 community members and OSU-Tulsa faculty, staff and students helped celebrate this important phase in the construction process.

Trennepohl said the ATRC is an extraordinary project that will benefit OSU researchers and students as well as the Tulsa community.

"This research facility will be the first of its kind in north-eastern Oklahoma," Trennepohl said. "Research activities at OSU-Tulsa will help support area businesses and industries through the transfer of newly developed technology. We are excited about the positive impact this landmark research facility will have on our students and the community."

The ATRC will focus on the development of next generation composites and advanced materials used by many Oklahoma industries. The ATRC will enable engineering faculty and graduate students to conduct research in the use of advanced materials for sensors, energy technologies, information technology and controls, and bio-based technologies. When completed, the ATRC will house 25 faculty, 40 graduate students and five to 10 visiting professors.

During the groundbreaking ceremony, Schmidly said, "The ATRC will kick-start growth of graduate education and research at OSU-Tulsa with a focus on science and engineering. We're confident it will have a big impact on economic development and growth in Tulsa and the surrounding area."

Funded through the Vision 2025 bond issue passed by Tulsa voters last year, the \$30 million research facility will include specialized laboratories, a clean room, imaging suite, advanced information technology equipment, seminar rooms and faculty offices. Trennepohl said construction will begin in April and should be completed by November 2006. The ATRC will be built near the main entrance of OSU-Tulsa, just north of Interstate 244 and Detroit Avenue.

University and community leaders say the ATRC will provide new educational programs and the potential for technology commercialization that will help bring new jobs and industries to the Tulsa region. The center will produce an annual payroll of \$8 to \$10 million, including federal and private research funds. However, Trennepohl said the greatest impact should come from commercialization of technology developed from the research. He said economic impact of these start-up companies could exceed \$400 million annually within 10 to 15 years.

"Research is the springboard for new educational programs and indeed the springboard for Tulsa's future economic growth," said Tulsa Mayor Bill LaFortune.

Schmidly said the ATRC is an example of OSU's leadership role in education and economic development in Oklahoma.

"When I arrived at OSU two years ago, this (the ATRC) was still a dream and now it becomes a reality," Schmidly said. "The ATRC signals OSU's commitment to Tulsa and I can promise you — we've been here, we're going to be here and you haven't seen nothing yet."

Trish McBeath