

The Power of Two

Universities' projects are expected to continue helping Downtown Phoenix

By ECHO SURINA

Phoenix's skyline is dramatically changing, and new commercial developments downtown are significantly impacting the city, including projects belonging to Arizona State University and the University of Arizona.

Although no formal analysis has been conducted on the effect of both schools' downtown facilities on the surrounding area, there are a number of observations that can already be made.

Mernoy Harrison is vice president and executive vice provost of ASU's Downtown Phoenix campus, which has been in operation for more than one year. He says there are more young people migrating to the downtown core, which has "probably been the biggest impact (to downtown)." But he says the big changes won't occur until next fall, when ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication opens its new facility downtown.

More facilities at the heart of the city mean more students, many of whom will be living close to classes. While there is a sizable number of students living in apartments within a five-mile radius of downtown sites, additional affordable housing is needed and will be built to accommodate this demand. Of the 3,300 ASU students currently taking classes downtown, only 150 live there; the rest live all over Maricopa County. But ASU is on track to reach 15,000 students at its downtown campus, and it plans on providing 4,000 beds nearby.

Judy Bernas is U of A's associate vice president of external relations and works in the Phoenix office. She says U of A will probably not build student housing downtown, but will be working with the city to provide affordable housing.

"The current (U of A) students are recommending to new students to live downtown because of convenience," Bernas says.

However, this young population needs more than housing. Harrison says the downtown area is missing attractions and activities for students between 18 to 21 years. But that will be changing soon.

"Three projects have been announced since we opened that are re-

lated to our opening: CityScape, One Central Park East, Jackson Street Entertainment," Harrison says. "All three of those projects ... are going to make downtown a really thriving area, including the opening of ASU's campus."

Other factors convincing developers of Phoenix's bright future are the light rail system, expansion of the Phoenix Convention Center and a 1,000-room hotel.

ASU and U of A's downtown facilities have already started to make a significant, positive impact on the economy by drawing more retail, creating more employment opportunities and improving health care in the Valley with the addition of the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix, in partnership with Arizona State University.

Bernas hopes Phoenix will one day be considered a true health care destination, providing even greater resources for specialty care. The joint medical campus is expected to bring many more people to Phoenix.

"A campus like this will really grow and become one of the leaders in trading and economic impact for the downtown area," she says.

The annual economic impact of this joint facility at build-out will be \$2.1 billion, according to Tripp Umbach, an independent research survey company, which projects the campus would create 24,000 new jobs throughout Arizona.

The impact of Arizona's two major universities downtown will be felt throughout the capital city and beyond for years to come. **AB**

Future Plans

Universities look ahead

- » **Nursing Phase II:** ASU is in the design stages of the five-story, 84,000-square-foot building.
- » **Historic post office renovation:** Student community center, which opens in early 2009.
- » **ABC I Building:** It will be shared by multiple universities and house classrooms for U of A's colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy, Northern Arizona University's Allied Health Program, ASU's College of Nursing, and ABC II Building that will be used for research labs for U of A, ASU and NAU.
- » **Phoenix Biomedical Campus:** The campus master-plan was recently completed and includes 7 million square feet of space at Copper Square.

Present Construction

Projects in the works

- » **Cronkite/Eight Building:** Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, ASU's Channel 8. Expected completion by July 2008, classes begin in fall 2008.
- » **New student residences:** Building I will open fall 2008. Its 13 stories consists of 744 beds, a dining hall and 10,000 square feet of first-level retail. Building II opens fall 2009 and will offer 550 beds.
- » **School of Bioinformatics.**

» **THE BIG DRAWS // BUILDINGS IN OPERATION NOW //** ASU Downtown University Center: College of Public Programs, University College, a library, Information Commons, most ASU classrooms. // Ramada Inn: Student residences. // Nursing and Health care renovation (formerly called Park Place): Faculty offices for nursing and the Health Center. // Mercado: Offices for a variety of ASU activities and classrooms and has been ASU's home downtown since the early 1990s. // Historic post office: Administration offices. // Securities Building: College of Design on the eighth and ninth floors. // U of A College of Medicine: It moved downtown and opened in September 2006. // Arizona Biomedical Collaborative Building (ABC I): This is the first time U of A and ASU have shared a building. Each school occupies two floors.