

COMMERCE MOVES TO NEW HOME

From Okla. Dept. of Commerce

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) An historic Oklahoma City building has become the new home of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. The move to the building at 900 N. Stiles, which was built during Oklahoma's first years of statehood, was completed Oct. 31.

"We believe this facility is an ideal showcase that makes a bold statement both about Oklahoma's strong heritage and our outlook toward the future," Commerce Executive Director Leo Presley, said. "Having a nearly ninety-year-old building harmoniously and functionally converted and expanded into an ultramodern office makes this building very unique, while also making a positive statement about where we've been and where we're going."

The facility was originally constructed as the 7,000 square foot home of the Maywood Presbyterian Church. During its first 70 years, the building served at least one other church congregation. In the 1980s, the structure was abandoned and derelict, in a blighted urban residential area.

The property and building were purchased by an Oklahoma City architectural firm which expanded the complex into 39,750 square feet, while retaining much of the original 1907 church structure and character. The result is a highly visible and striking center for the state's lead economic development efforts.

Several factors facilitated the new Commerce home. The opportunity to purchase the building and site rather than continuing to lease office space was a major consideration. According to department numbers, the acquisition will effectively lower Commerce's operating costs. The location—close to downtown Oklahoma City, the state capitol complex and the growing Oklahoma Health Center—was also a major factor in the decision.

Cost of the acquisition—structure, site, additional contiguous land plus previous owner furnishings in the building—totaled \$3 million. Commerce Secretary Rosenfeld said, "The new building and related property will be paid for by general obligation bonds issued by the state and sold to investors." Rosenfeld indicated total annual principal and interest payments for the bonds, operating costs and maintenance and repair budgets of the new location are estimated to be \$7,000 less than the annual lease cost of the building the department vacated.

BTR ANNOUNCES MAJOR EXPANSION

From Okla. Dept. of Commerce

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) BTR Sealing Systems North America announced a major expansion recently, to their Oklahoma operations. A \$3 million expansion to buy new equipment and the hiring of approximately 55 new employees was announced by company officials. The expansion at the company's plant in Frederick is an economic boom to the community of 5,500.

BTR began operating in Oklahoma in 1979, and currently employs 425. The plant manufactures products for the automotive industry, primarily rubber seals, which are used in a variety of applications for many vehicles manufactured by some of the major automakers in the U.S.

Plant Manager James Beane said, "We're obviously very pleased that business is going so well it necessitates an expansion of this nature. It's good business for BTR and the town of Frederick as well."

"When you have a firm that employs 10

percent of your population, you realize how important it is to maintain that relationship," said Frederick Mayor Leo Fallon.

The expansion has been a joint effort, said Chamber of Commerce Industrial Committee chairman William Crawford. "The city has been instrumental in the BTR expansion by assisting in upgrading electrical service to the plant, which will cost \$100,000. Since Frederick owns its own electric system, those costs will be recouped through electrical usage," he added. "In addition, the city helped secure a \$300,000 grant for the company through the Department of Urban Housing and Rural Development," Crawford said. "Those monies will be used to purchase additional equipment used in the manufacturing of seals."

The company will also benefit by taking advantage of Oklahoma's Investment/New Jobs tax credit. The program will provide a tax credit applied to their Oklahoma income tax each year for five years.

IMPROVE PAY SCALES FOR AMERICA'S WORKING WOMEN

From U.S. Dept. of Labor

■(WASHINGTON) The U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau has launched the Fair Pay Clearinghouse, a new initiative created in response to concerns voiced by over 250,000 working women in the Bureau's 1994 national Working Women Count! survey.

The Fair Pay Clearinghouse provides information and resources to working women and men, employers and other organizations who are concerned about fair pay. You can find out what organizations are working for fair pay in your state and nationally; get information on pay adjustments by employers who have implemented fair pay in traditionally female jobs; and review current data on the wage gap between women and men.

"Women across the country told the Labor Department they are not getting paid what they deserve—or what they need to support their families," says Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich. "Working women want their true value reflected in their paychecks, but all too often feel it is not. The Clearinghouse offers important resources to working women and others who are concerned about the way women's work is valued."

Access to the Fair Pay Clearinghouse is FREE. Workers, employers and organizations should call 1-800-347-3741. The Women's Bureau also strongly encourages

employers who have made pay adjustments and organizations working on the fair pay issue to call and share information on their efforts in traditionally female jobs.

"Improving pay scales is a top concern of America's working women and a top priority for the Women's Bureau," says Bureau head Ida L. Castro.

- Three out of four American women working full and part time get paid less than \$25,000 a year;

- About half of all women work in traditionally female, relatively-low paid jobs, as clerical workers, nurses, and child care workers; and

- Women retirees receive only one-half the average pension benefit received by men, in part because of a lifetime of unequal pay.

The Clearinghouse has information on traditionally female occupations; how working women of different races, ethnic origins, ages and educational backgrounds are paid; and how women who are represented by a union are paid.

Callers can also request two Fair Pay Clearinghouse publications. "Worth More Than We Earn: Fair Pay for Working Women," is an introduction to the wage gap, what causes it, how it increases over a working woman's lifespan and what employers, unions and working women are doing to

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