

Architect proposes 'iconic' fountain as part of river plans

By **BRIAN BARBER**

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River Parks Authority members were shown design plans Thursday for a fountain that would be in the middle of the Arkansas River and shoot water more than 100 feet in the air.

"I see this being something very iconic for Tulsa," said local architect Brian Freese, who is developing the project.

It has been selected by the Oklahoma Centennial Commission as one of the official projects that will commemorate the state's 100th birthday in 2007.

But Freese said he is working out the location and trying to secure money for the project.

He is trying to raise as much as \$750,000 in private funds to build the fountain and \$1 million more for an endowment that would pay for its ongoing operation and maintenance.

The fountain would have four spouts that would shoot water into the air at angles to form a pyramid.

"It could appear to be different things to different people," Freese said. "It might look like a tepee to some, while to others it might resemble an oil derrick."

Freese said he consulted many experts, including those involved with the famed fountain in front of the Bellagio Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas.

Authority members took no action on the fountain design because the project is still in its preliminary stages. They did say that the project would have to be fully funded for maintenance for them to accept it.

The members also said the debris and silt in the river could pose problems to the mechanics of the fountain.

Freese will take his design to the Indian Nations Council of Governments, which is pursuing a master plan for the Arkansas River Corridor.

In other business, the authority approved the Tulsa Rowing Club's plan to expand its boathouse at the River West Festival Park, 715 W. 21st St.

The club is in the process of raising about \$300,000 for extra bays, an exercise room, an outside porch and driveway space and to make improvements to the facility, built in 1991.

The club's membership has grown because of the popularity of the rowing program at the University of Tulsa and its juniors program for high school students. With the students and the adults in the masters program, about 120 rowers are club members, President Mike Kneafsey said.

"We want to be able to expand because these young people are really the future of rowing in Tulsa, and we're expecting more of them," he said.

The club, which was started in 1983, leases the land for its boathouse from the authority for only \$1 and is responsible for the utilities and maintenance. Its lease runs until 2013.

The lease will be changed to incorporate the additional area that the expansion will consume.

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