

# BA Conference center/Hotel architect selected

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A project to address the city's lack of meeting space is showing definite signs of life after falling off the public radar several times the last four years.

The Broken Arrow City Council approved a \$530,000 contract last week with Mike Hughes Architects of Tulsa to design and oversee construction of a city conference center, funding for which was originally approved in a 2004 bond election.

"I feel bad it has taken so long, but I feel good about where we are today," City Manager Jim Twombly said. "We are going to have a real quality facility that will draw regionally and statewide and that will be competitive in our market."

The project experienced various delays, including a protracted search for a hotel partner. Iowa-based Stoney Creek Hospitality Corp., which the city named its partner in the project earlier this year, will build an accompanying hotel and operate the center for the city.

Next up, officials say, is land acquisition. Negotiations are set to begin on several acres northeast of Albany Street (61st) and Elm Place (161st East Ave.), Twombly said.

That would put the facility just north of the city's Bass Pro Shops store and the Broken Arrow Expressway and east of a St. John hospital under construction.

Officials hope to begin construction next summer and open the facility in 2010.

Kevin McCarty, Stoney Creek vice president of property development, said the company had been interested in the project since it was announced in 2004.

"We are very excited that it's moving forward and we want to fast-track it as much as possible," McCarty said.

He said Stoney Creek operates 11 hotel-conference centers in other states and has three new ones in development. The Broken Arrow project is the company's first in Oklahoma.

The three-story conference center will offer banquet seating for 750 to 1,000.

The eight-story hotel, which will be built at the same time and adjoin the center, will offer at least 225 rooms, including several theme suites decorated to reflect local culture and history, McCarty said.

An indoor-outdoor pool offering year-around swimming will be one of several amenities, he said.

Mike Hughes Architects will design the hotel for Stoney Creek.

Center design and the city's portion of land costs will be paid for from the bond issue, which included \$6.5 million.

Estimated construction cost for the center is \$5.8 million. Officials say they don't know yet whether additional funding will be required.

Twombly said the city hasn't worked out all the specifics of its deal with Stoney Creek for center operation. It might entail splitting profits and losses, a fixed fee arrangement or other scenarios, he said.