

50 years brings new headquarters



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There are many milestones in the life of a business, opening day, for instance, or meeting a financial goal. For one Tulsa company building their very own six-story headquarters is certainly a milestone.

Unit Corporation, parent company of Unit Drilling Co., Unit Petroleum Co., and Superior Piping Co., is embarking on the milestone of building their corporate headquarters in the midst of celebrating another milestone- their 50-year anniversary.

“In our 50 years of being in business we’ve always leased space and we’ve struggled with normal issues of space,” said Mark Schell, senior vice president, general counsel and secretary, Unit Corp. “We finally decided we’ve gotten to the point and size that we should look seriously at having our own office building. After analyzing and comparing costs for quite awhile and going through various scenarios, we decided it would be justified, so we found a piece of property to buy.”

Throughout the company’s three sectors, Unit Corporation employs approximately 2,600 people across several states, with roughly 370 working out of the Tulsa-based headquarters. Currently spread out across several floors of the Kensington Complex, Unit Corp. purchased 30 acres of land near 81st Street and U.S. Highway 75. An approximately 180,000 square foot, six-story building and adjacent parking garage are being designed to accommodate existing staff and leave room for growth.

“We’ve done a tremendous amount of growing as a company, and, going along with it, employees over the last five or six years,” said Schell. “We’ve designed this to handle a sufficient enough growth that we can forecast in the near future.”

Being centralized will be the biggest benefit of the new location, according to Schell. At their current location Unit Corp. takes up the entire 10th floor and parts of many others. Part of the complex originally served as Galleria Mall, resulting in Unit Corp. offices being very spread out.

“We’re going to be able to pull everyone together,” he said. “We’ve really used up all the space we can here. By building our own offices we’ll even be able to build some internal stairways connecting floors for the various departments that will be on multiple levels so they can have easy access to each other.”

In addition to providing more room, the new headquarters will be employee-oriented. According to Schell, the new location was chosen based on employees' residences. Schell said many of Unit Corp. employees live in south Tulsa, Jenks or Okmulgee. He added that being centrally located near the highway provides easy access for the employees who don't live nearby.

Furthering the employee experience, the new location will offer covered parking, safety features, upgraded electronic systems, an outdoor area and improved cafeteria facilities. Schell said other features are still under discussion, but the process is very employee-centered.

"Having our own building allows us to [focus on the company culture]," Schell said. "If we were to rent a spot, we wouldn't have that ability."

Unit Corp. has worked with Kinslow, Keith and Todd Architects to make the location visually appealing as well.

"We've spent a lot of time coming up with the design that would look nice and be a good gateway into Tulsa," Schell said. "We tried to come up with a unique style. It's a lot of rock and brick."

The project is going out to bid and Schell hopes construction can begin in mid-June. Tentatively, the construction is planned to complete at end of year 2015, but Schell says it is an early estimate. For more information about Unit Corp. visit www.UnitCorp.com.