

BACK IN BUSINESS

The *Phoenix Business Journal* is celebrating its 35th anniversary by taking a trip down memory lane. This weekly feature takes a look at people and stories we have covered over the years.

THEN AND NOW

Historic school building has had many uses

The Phoenix Union High School auditorium in downtown Phoenix has taken turns as a video production facility, a concert hall hosting national acts, and now a University of Arizona classroom and events building.

Built in 1911 at 600 E. Van Buren St., it was used as an auditorium until the high school closed in 1982, when the city took over the land and buildings.

In 2000, the auditorium was transformed into the Web Theatre, with promoters claiming it was the first Internet video production facility in the world, according to a May 2000 article in the *Phoenix Business Journal*.

The Web Theatre hosted many corporate events as well as national acts including the Strokes, Natalie Merchant, Tenacious D, Alice Cooper and Moby.

The University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix later leased the buildings from the city and began renovations in March 2005.

The school spent \$25 million on the renovations, which were completed in October 2006. The former balcony was turned into a telemedicine suite.

The building is now used for special events, lectures and classes.

— Hayley Ringle



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Left: In 2000, the building became the Web Theatre, touted as the first Internet video production facility in the world. Right: Today, it houses lecture and classrooms for the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix.

► HEALTH CARE



RENDERING PROVIDED BY IN2IT ARCHITECTURE

Las Vegas-based In2it Architecture designed this 63-bed expansion for Aurora Behavioral Health System East in Tempe.

TEMPE HOSPITAL EXPANDING AFTER 9 YEARS

Corona, California-based Aurora Behavioral Health System East has broken ground on a 63-bed expansion of its Tempe hospital.

The \$8.1 million project, which will be funded via a bank loan, will increase its outpatient services capacity to support the growing mental health and substance abuse needs in metro Phoenix. Upon completion, the Tempe hospital will have 138 beds.

Scottsdale-based UEB Builders is the general contractor and Las Vegas-based In2it Architecture is the architecture firm on the project.

Construction is expected to take about a year, and the expansion will add 60 jobs to the facility.

Aurora is privately owned by Signature Healthcare Services Inc. It has had operations in Arizona since 2006.

Aurora also operates a 100-bed facility in Glendale.

Both hospitals are licensed by the state of Arizona, accredited by the Joint Commission and certified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for inpatient and outpatient services. They offer mental health, dual diagnosis, detox and substance abuse treatment services for adolescents, adults and seniors.

Aurora CEO Bruce Waldo said the expansion will help alleviate inappropriate emergency room visits at local hospitals.

Mental health and addiction disorders are treatable diseases, but the stigma associated with mental illness keeps many from seeking care, he said.

“It is our continual goal to help stamp out the associated stigma and to provide exceptional care in order to aid people’s recovery so that they can lead healthy, productive lives,” he said.

— Angela Gonzales

► TRANSPORTATION

SONG REMAINS THE SAME, 1981 TO PRESENT DAY

This issue of the *Phoenix Business Journal* features an in-depth look at transportation issues — issues that have not changed much in the past 35 years.

Back then, improving transportation also was recognized as a critical element of Arizona’s economy.

“Roads and streets are the arteries that sustain the economy,” Frank Ryley, an attorney with the firm then known as Ryley, Carlock and Ralston, said in the Sept. 21, 1981, issue of the *Business Journal*. “You have to get to the shopping centers, people have to get to work. Basic industry is supported by the roads and streets.”

This quote could just as easily have come from the recent Transportation Roundtable.

In 1981, Arizona’s Transportation Policy Task Force expressed concern with the 1 million-person population increase in the 1970s and projected an additional 750,000 to arrive during the 1980s. That turned out to be an understatement, as Arizona added 1.5 million people by 1990 and 1.3 million more by 2000.

The skyrocketing population means more miles driven on the state’s road system. The 1981 article reported that the task force had identified 8,500 road projects totaling \$16.5 billion that needed shovels in the dirt by 1990.

After two attempts, lawmakers made the gas tax 13 cents in 1982, then



FILE PHOTO

Transportation has been a major economic factor for decades.

bumped it up to 18 cents in 1991. The tax has not been increased since then, despite the price of gasoline rising from about 91 cents per gallon to about \$2.90 today.

The increase proposed in 1981 was to generate about \$5.8 million for state and local road construction and maintenance, or about 16 percent of what was needed for new roads at the time.

For fiscal 2016, ADOT has a budget of less than \$5 billion to cover more than \$85 billion in needed improvements.

— Eric Jay Toll