

# Oklahoma City's Film Row will get influx of 175 employees with renovation of Hart Building

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For the past few years as Chip Fudge has redeveloped Film Row on the west edge of downtown, he's known the biggest boost would come with the relocation of his own company.

While most of the buildings along the 700 block of W Sheridan Avenue are occupied by smaller creative firms (along with Joey's Pizzeria and IAO Gallery), the Hart Building, at 720 W Sheridan Ave., presented the largest amount of space to fill — 40,000 square feet in total.

Firms moving in later this year will be Fudge's Claims Management Resources and Advanced Subrogation Resources, with 115 employees; Credit Collections Inc., with 45 employees; and Ferrell Oil, with 15 employees.

Fudge also is in negotiations with the International Photography Hall of Fame to reopen its operation in the corner storefront space facing Sheridan Avenue.

“We've got a pretty unique concept for them — 2,000 square feet of permanent space and 6,000 square feet of shared space where they could have a rotating gallery in the lunch area and entryway,” Fudge said. He added that with the area's history in film, “it seems a perfect fit.”

Fudge said he is awaiting a vote by the organization's board on whether to proceed with the move. The organization for years called Kirkpatrick Center home but closed its operation for what turned out to be an unsuccessful effort to relocate to St. Louis.

“From a successful perspective, it gives me a rotating world class art collection in my building, and I get to help a nonprofit show off their incredible art,” Fudge said.

The redevelopment, currently under way, is also expected to help out California Avenue to the south, which is still somewhat mired in the area's more recent past as “skid row.”

## New use for space

Architect Wade Scaramucci said he embraced the idea of creating a new “urban street” out of a passageway that ran between the two buildings that were once home to Hart Industrial Supply. The lunch and meeting space will be topped by a new atrium, he said, that will create an ideal venue for art and cultural events. The entrance will be from the parking lot through a new, modern facade that will replace a steel shed and utility space.

“We intentionally moved the entrance to the south to re-purpose the historic film alley into a feature,” Scaramucci said. “These alleys have been used for decades as utility and, importantly, transport corridors, and we have had a number of useful and productive discussions with local utility companies to assist with upgrading this historic component of the city.”

The parking area is being designed to double as an outdoor special event venue as Fudge continues his efforts to transform Film Row into downtown's next mixed-use district.

“It is our ambition that this project and its resultant density will attract further

development not only off California Avenue,” Scaramucci said, “but to act as a major catalyst for redevelopment of the entire Film Exchange District.”



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