

Myriad Gardens renovations near completion

by Brianna Bailey

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Larry Nichols walks through the Myriad Gardens Monday. (Maïke Sabolich)

OKLAHOMA CITY – A restaurant and seasonal ice rink that are part of the \$42 million Myriad Gardens renovations are pegged for completion by this winter, Devon Energy Corp. Executive Chairman Larry Nichols said Monday.

City officials are in the process of interviewing operators to run a sit-down restaurant overlooking the ice skating rink, Nichols said.

While an initial search for a high-end restaurant operator for the site received only one response, it has been easier to create interest in the modern, glass-walled site now that construction is wrapping up, Nichols said.

“It was a terrible time to do it before; everything was torn up,” Nichols said. “Now they can envision what it’s going to look like.”

Deep Fork Restaurant Group submitted the only proposal in the city’s previous search for a restaurant operator. While Deep Fork’s vision for the site was for a casual burger restaurant, city officials have been seeking a more high-end concept.

The restaurant and ice rink are the only two components of the gardens that have yet to be completed.

Workers at the nearly completed Myriad Gardens were busy on Monday putting the finishing touches on a children’s splash fountain inspired by an Oklahoma thunderstorm. The fountain is next to the new children’s garden, which includes a hedge maze and climbing area.

Newly hired Myriad Gardens Foundation Executive Director Maureen Heffernan arrived in Oklahoma City two weeks ago to take on her new role.

Heffernan is examining ways to expand the gardens’ role in the city through new educational programs, as well as maintaining a high standard of quality for the landscaping there.

“I’m seeing how great it is now and how we can make it even better,” she said.

The Myriad Gardens renovations were funded by tax increment financing money generated by the construction of the \$750 million Devon Energy Tower across the street from the new gardens. The gardens will celebrate a grand reopening on Saturday with the daylong Festival on the Green event. Sponsored by the Myriad Gardens Foundation and Devon Energy, the event will feature live music and children’s activities.