

TULSA WORLD

OU football: Doug Deakin searching for special teams weapons **SPORTS, PAGE B1**



OSU football: Cowboys land first pledge of 2027 recruiting class **SPORTS, PAGE B1**



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Monday, April 6, 2026

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

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MONDAY MORNING REWIND

'TRUE TULSA LANDMARK'



MIKE SIMONS, TULSA WORLD

Tulsa-based Helmerich & Payne Inc. has sold the Utica Square shopping center to Denver-based global real estate investment firm Northwood Investors LLC for an undisclosed price.

Utica Square sold to Denver-based real estate investment firm

WORLD STAFF

A Denver-based global real estate investment firm has purchased Utica Square shopping center, Tulsa's first "suburban" retail center.

Tulsa-based Helmerich & Payne Inc. sold the 370,755-square-foot property at the southeast corner of East 21st Street and South Utica Avenue to Northwood Investors LLC for an undisclosed price, according to a press release announcing last week's sale.

Opened in May 1952, the open-air shopping center has been owned by H&P since 1964.

What is now being called a "lifestyle center" had been on the market since May 2025, when H&P announced it was seeking to explore a partnership or sale of the property.

"Utica Square has been an important part of our company's history and of the Tulsa community for many years," said Hans Helmerich, chairman of the board at H&P. "We are grateful for the generations of tenants, employees and visitors who helped make Utica Square the special place it is today.

"As we considered the future of the property, it was important to us to find a buyer with the experience and long-term perspective to continue its legacy. We believe Northwood is well positioned to serve as an excellent steward of Utica Square and support its continued success in the Tulsa community."

Existing employees supporting Utica Square operations are expected to continue in their roles, according to the



STEPHEN PINGRY, TULSA WORLD

Tulsa Mayor Monroe Nichols takes a drive March 31 over the Musical Road on the Southwest Boulevard Bridge along historic Route 66. Using rumble strips, the road will play "This Land is Your Land" when drivers cross the bridge going 35 mph.

press release.

"We feel very fortunate that the Helmerich family chose Northwood to carry on the legacy for what we feel is one of the most unique and idyllic retail assets in the United States," said Ward Kampf, president of Northwood Retail. "With a portfolio spanning coast to coast, we have a nationwide lens, and in Utica Square, we identified a rare opportunity to own a true Tulsa landmark with history, prestige, and deep community roots."

The Tulsa County Assessor's Office

values the 27.47-acre property, which includes land and improvements, at \$57,277,000.

— Curtis Killman

'This Land is Your Land' now playing daily along Route 66 in Tulsa

Tulsa's centennial celebration of historic Route 66 now has its very own unofficial theme song.

Please see **REWIND**, Page A4

City ponders demise of the penny

U.S. Department of Treasury decided to stop making them in 2025

KEVIN CANFIELD
Tulsa World

At some point in life, one grows up to learn — if not fully accept — that pennies do not come from heaven.

They come from the U.S. Mint. And last year, citing cost concerns and the significant decline in cash transactions, the U.S. Department of Treasury decided to stop making them.

Now, the city of Tulsa is preparing for the possibility that one day they won't have the option of collecting every last penny of a cash transaction.

An ordinance before the City Council sets out what that would mean for utility customers and others who pay cash for city services.

It's a big chunk of money. In fiscal year 2025, approximately 11% — or \$4.2 million — of the money paid to the city for services came in the form of cash. Fortunately for the city, more than half of those dollars, \$2.4 million, was paid to Municipal Court, which would not be affected by the proposed ordinance.

It would, however, affect utility services customers and anyone else who pays for a city service with cash. In FY 2025 payments for utilities — water, sewer, stormwater — accounted for approximately \$1.1 million in cash collected by the city from about 10,000 transactions, according to the city.

"We're in a good position right now," Chad Becker, treasury services manager for the city, told city councilors Wednesday. "I mean, if the bank cut us off, we could probably go another four months or so, but we just wanted to get to a position to be able to react to mandates."

Becker told councilors that the federal government and the state of Oklahoma are expected to mandate a "symmetrical rounding" approach to address the demise of the penny, and that the proposed city ordinance would essentially mirror that effort.

"At this point in time, our depository bank, which is Bank of Oklahoma, is still able to supply some pennies and will continue to until they're not able to, but we realized that there's a finite window with that," Becker said.

Becker stressed Thursday that the city will accept exact payment amounts and give exact change until it is no longer able to do so.

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5 THINGS TO KNOW

Tulsa killer's execution planned for May

ANNA CODUTTI
Tulsa World

1. Raymond Eugene Johnson, 52, was convicted in 2009 of murdering his ex-girlfriend Brooke Whitaker, 24, and her 7-month-old daughter Kya Whitaker on June 23, 2007. Attorney General Gentner Drummond has formally requested that the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board deny clemency in a hearing set for April 8. Johnson's execution is scheduled for May 14.

2. Johnson had been released from prison in 2005 after serving 20 years for fatally shooting Clarence Oliver in Cleveland County. Investigators said Johnson had been stalking Whitaker and making



Johnson

threats against her in the months leading up to the murder. Whitaker filed for a protective order but didn't show up to a court hearing; her aunt said she believed Johnson manipulated Whitaker into dropping the protective order.

3. A neighbor testified that Whitaker said she was "terrified" of Johnson, who Whitaker said was mad because she "put him out of her house." Prosecutors said Johnson struck Whitaker more than 20 times with a hammer before setting her on fire and leaving her and the baby to burn in the

victims' home near Sheridan and Pine. Johnson, 33 at the time, said "he fully intended to kill Brooke Whitaker" but had not intended to kill Kya, investigators testified.

4. Whitaker was still alive but unconscious when firefighters pulled her from the burning home, and she died at the hospital. Kya was pronounced dead at the scene. A medical examiner listed Whitaker's cause of death as blunt trauma to the head and smoke inhalation. Kya's cause of death was "thermal injury." Whitaker had three older children who, for their safety, had been living with other family members at the time of the murder. Johnson was not the father of any of Whitaker's children.

One of those children went to live with his father after the murder, and the other two went to live with Whitaker's mother in Sand Springs.

5. A former prison chaplain and board member of Death Penalty Action interviewed Johnson in 2023 about Johnson's prison ministry and faith journey. The two had exchanged letters for about a year through the advocacy group Jews Against the Death Penalty. "For me to say I'm remorseful, it has to be an action. It can't just be a word, you know? And I try to wake up every day and better myself," Johnson said in the interview.

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