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# Oklahoma City Boom Town Again

OKLAHOMANS have seen a lot of boom towns. They sprang up along railroads and at crossroads because folks could imagine each of those places becoming an important trade and transportation center.

Shanty towns were thrown up almost overnight in the vicinity of oil field discoveries and there was once a gold boom town in the state. Boom towns grew up around World War II defense installations.

A boom town may be any locality that experiences sudden growth in population, business, or importance.

Oklahoma City was a boom town in the past, and by almost any definition it would have to be classified as a boom town today. It is growing rapidly in population, in business, and in importance.

Start with the downtown section, where a whole new skyline has been constructed. More people are employed there now than during that area's heyday as a retail shopping center.

Then look at more than 100 shopping centers in the metropolitan area and make a guess as to how

much business they are doing.

More are being built. It is not unusual to discover a new office building or shopping center under construction near where you live or work. You might surmise that we already have enough, but a few weeks later you may notice the parking lot is filled with cars, indicating employees and customers are transacting business.

Consider housing developments that have been built in the last 10 years and then observe how many more expensive new homes and apartments are being built on all sides of Oklahoma City, in suburban communities, and in other town within commuting distance.

Most wholesale firms long ago outgrew the limited area east of the downtown section. No longer tied to the railroads for shipments of merchandise, these also have relocated on the perimeter, and there are a lot more of them.

It hasn't been many years since a dozen banks were adequate to handle Oklahoma Cityans' money and loans. Now there are at least four

times that many, and more branch banks may be on the way.

Other areas of increasing importance, including education, health care, technology, transportation, and manufacturing.

Probably everybody thinks that the thoroughfares he or she uses are the most crowded in the area, but a trip to any other side of the city may make the familiar roads seem easier to travel.

That is, if they are not blocked off here and there for repairs, rebuilding, or new construction. Heavier traffic of all kinds has taken heavy toll of blacktop and many thoroughfares need to be widened to accommodate the dense parade of cars and trucks.

When the downtown urban renewal project was launched and hundreds of old buildings were being torn out to make room for new structures a visitor commented: "Oklahoma City is a nice town — or will be if you ever get it finished."

Oklahoma City isn't finished yet but it's under construction and is booming along toward its centennial celebration in 1989.