

# American Indian Cultural Center construction underway

Posted: May 31, 2008 12:35 AM EDT Updated: May 31, 2008 12:37 AM EDT

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The first building to be complete will be the Visitors Center. Eventually this will be a hub that will point visitors to other attractions here in Oklahoma.



The project was part of an overall \$475 million bond package.



The Oklahoma Legislature authorized \$25 million for the center.

*By Mary Joseph, NEWS 9*

Last-minute action at the State Capitol last week kept construction on a groundbreaking state project at the Interstate 40 / Interstate 35 junction from coming to an abrupt end.

Progress at the American Indian Cultural Center and Museum was in jeopardy because of money.

It is lawmakers who decide where state money goes, and this session they decided to approve \$25 million for a project that takes a look at Oklahoma's history.

Oklahoma's American Indians gathered to bless this land sitting in the shadow of downtown Oklahoma City two and a half years ago. Now, the land is a busy construction site.

The promontory will eventually be covered with native grass and spiral up to 65 feet above the ground. But it came close to getting cut off.

"Without that \$25 million, construction would have completely stopped on this project," Shoshana Wasserman with the American Indian Cultural Center and Museum said.

The \$25 million the Oklahoma Legislature authorized for the center will opens up the way for all the building structures including the galleries that will house the exhibitions.

But this is a multiyear and multimillion dollar deal. The project still needs \$75 million to open its doors. That money will come from private donations, including from the tribes.

"We expect about \$8 million to be coming from the tribes," Wasserman said.

With the \$25 million in hand, the museum now expects to be open to visitors by spring of 2012.