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## Montgomery hits target

By TED STREULI  
THE JOURNAL RECORD

The first tenants in Oklahoma City's first luxury mid-rise apartments are enthusiastic about moving on up. The recently opened, much-watched Montgomery is attracting precisely the sort of high-profile tenants developer Richard Tanenbaum was hoping for.

Real estate broker Judy Hatfield said she won't give up her 3,500-square-foot home in

Norman, even though she was first on the list of Montgomery tenants. Hatfield rented the first model apartment, a one-bedroom unit that faces north from the sixth floor, offering a view of the nearby museum and some of the city's oldest neighborhoods stretching beyond.

"I have the best view of any in the entire place," Hatfield said.

Although Hatfield won't live in the building full-time, she said she would use her

new apartment to entertain and as a place to stay when her schedule is filled with downtown events.

"I like the look of the building and it was important to be right in the middle of where everything was going on," she said. "I'm passionate about downtown Oklahoma City redevelopment and wanted the opportunity to have a residence there. I want to be right in the middle of it."

Built as a Montgomery Ward department store in 1919, the remodeled, six-story structure now holds 56 high-end apart-

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Judy Hatfield



RICHARD TANENBAUM shows off Judy Hatfield's apartment kitchen.

PHOTO BY MAX HANCOCK

## Building operators scramble to cover rising heating costs

By HEIDI R. CENTRELLA  
THE JOURNAL RECORD

Despite technological advances and meteorological theory, not even the best super-duper Doppler radars on the market can predict temperatures the state will face in coming winter months. Businesses and institutions can only speculate during the budgeting process.

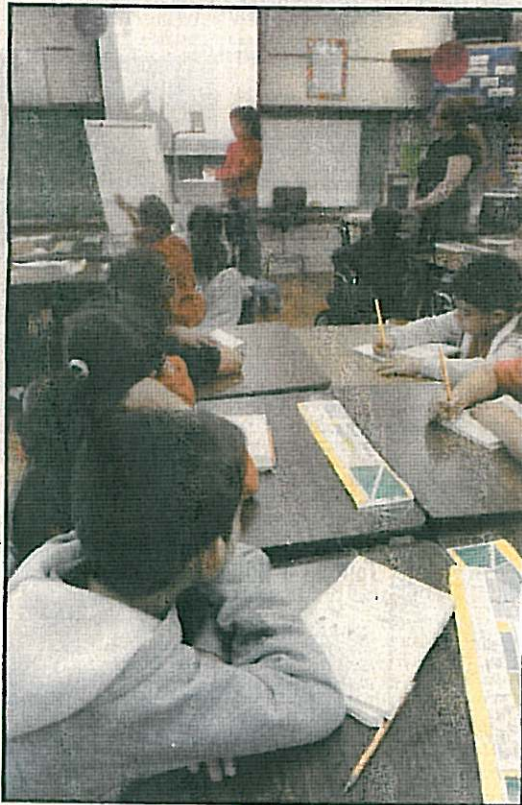
Working with shaved dollars, Oklahoma City Public Schools has cautiously budgeted for what could be a cold winter, as have various businesses, institutions and nonprofits. And with oil prices hovering around \$50 a barrel, associated costs are soaring and no pocketbook is immune.

"We've had reductions in federal funding, we've had reductions in state funding," said Bud Brooks, energy manager for Oklahoma City Public Schools. "We're looking forward to the money that we might get from horse racing in three or four years once the lottery commission is established and a lottery administrative company is hired."

Until then, the schools have set aside a preliminary amount of money for natural gas and electricity for this fiscal year, though they have yet to arrive on a total cost for those commodities.

The school system spent \$1.4 million on natural gas and \$3.1 million in electricity in fiscal year 2003-04. This, Brooks said, will serve as a benchmark for fiscal year 2004-05. While Brooks said

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HIGHER FUEL COSTS might burden some schools.

PHOTO BY MAX HANCOCK

## Business groups offer capitol insights to new legislators

By JANICE FRANCIS-SMITH  
THE JOURNAL RECORD

The State Chamber and Opportunity Oklahoma want to help new state legislators prepare for their new jobs at the Capitol.

"We simply wanted to provide them with an avenue where they can see how government works, and how to build upon one another, use one another in the Legislature," said Matt Robison, vice president of small business and work force development for The State Chamber.

A legislative orientation session on Wednesday in Oklahoma City sponsored by the two groups was closed to media.

"We want the freshman legislators to be completely comfortable in their ability to ask questions about the process, about constituents, about each other," said Robison. "If the press was in there, there might not be as open of a dialogue."

The experience can be overwhelming for a new public official, said Tom Daxon, executive director of Opportunity Oklahoma.

The new lawmakers will not only have to learn the mechanics of how to advance legislation, but also the subtler points of who and where to turn to for information and help when needed.

"I don't know how many of these new legislators really know the exact structure of how a bill

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Tom Daxon

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# Montgomery hits target

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ments on the third through sixth floors, offices on the second floor and retail at street level. The 16,000-square-foot basement will soon sport a fitness center.

The \$5 million project has drawn attention as the first of several planned residential properties downtown. A study commissioned by city leaders showed high demand for downtown housing and plans already on the books would provide about 2,000 units. Fifty-six of those are at the Montgomery.

"It will be a place not only to live but I plan to entertain there and I've already joined the gym that's going to be in the building," Hatfield said. "I look forward to the restaurant."

The fitness center was also a selling point for attorney Patrick Ryan. Ryan and his wife, Barbara Ryan, sold their Crown Heights home and rented a two-bedroom corner apartment on the Montgomery's top floor. The couple also owns a home in Santa Fe, N.M., where they live part-time.

"It became too much to worry about two homes," Barbara Ryan said.

When the Ryans started looking, they investigated all downtown housing options but found the Montgomery the best fit for their lifestyle — which includes a German short-haired pointer.

"Walking the dog, you see things all over the place you never see driving a car," Barbara Ryan said. "You even look at the homeless in a different way. Some of the faces are familiar. They know my dog's name and they want to pet him."

But it is the view from the sixth floor that really opened the Ryans'



THE MODEL APARTMENT that Judy Hatfield is moving into.

PHOTO BY MAX ELIASSON



Patrick Ryan

eyes.

"It is absolutely gorgeous at night and it's very romantic," Barbara Ryan said. "You're looking at the building where you work and all of a sudden it's not where you work, it's a beautiful building."

If the Montgomery is an early swell preceding a wave of enthusiasm for downtown living, the untapped market may well be con-

dominiums. All currently planned units are rentals, and both Hatfield and Ryan said there would be demand for salable property. Ryan said many of her friends can't imagine being renters after a lifetime of home ownership, but with children grown and gone they don't want to maintain a large home.

Hatfield said she would have purchased a unit in the Montgomery rather than renting if apartments had been for sale.

"I agree," Tanenbaum said. "Someone

should be developing condos. There's definitely a demand."

Tanenbaum said 30 of those who initially inquired about apartments at the Montgomery were specifically interested in buying.

*Ted Streuli reports on real estate, construction and public companies. You may reach him by phone at 278-2846 or by e-mail, ted.streuli@journalrecord.com.*

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