

Downtown Centrum building begins

The money is in the city's bank account, and construction began Tuesday on the Centrum Plaza in downtown Lincoln. When the project is complete, the Centrum will have some of the design features previously trimmed from the structure.

Mayor Helen Boosalis turned the land over to Watson Centers, Inc. of Minnesota on Monday.

"I will be happy to turn that hole over to you," Boosalis told developer Steve Watson.

Boosalis said that although there have been some delays in the project, the city has done well compared to other cities in such an undertaking.

"This will be a tremendous boon to the community," she added.

Watson gained City Council approval Aug. 7 to trim \$300,000 worth of design features off the plaza. Watson said Monday that \$70,000 in design features will be put back into the plan.

Features once removed from the project, which are included in the final contract with Kingery Construction of Lincoln are: six-foot decorative spandrel beams on the second floor and roof levels, exterior signs, benches inside and in front of the complex, a vestibule and planters on the second floor.

Watson said those items are essential to maintain the quality of the building, and said his firm will bear the cost of the features.

Watson Centers will receive \$370,000 from the city as a developer's fee. Watson paid \$342,900 for the half-block of land on O Street.

Watson said the price for the land was fair. Most developers in similar projects get their land free, he added.

Construction should be complete by September, 1979. Watson said he would meet with Kingery officials to see if the project could be hurried in any way. Kingery was selected as the main contractor after Peter Kiewit and Sons of Omaha quit.

Kingery was one of the original bidders, Watson said. Kiewit underbid all original bidders by \$300,000, but

there will be no additional cost-trimming from the building with Kingery as contractor, Watson has said.

Monday the City Council authorized the City Purchasing Department to take alternative bids for two possible designs for skywalk bridges that would connect the Centrum Plaza to existing businesses in the downtown area.

The skywalks will connect the Centrum to Brandeis to the west, and to Magee's and Miller and Paine to the east. A third skywalk will connect the south side of Magee's to the Atrium.

Tenants of the Centrum Plaza will be the American Indian Store, Bath Fair, Beno's, Brook's Fashions, Brodkey Jewelers, the Carousel Snack Bar, The Collector, Evenson's Cards and Gifts, the General Nutrition Center, The Habitat, The Junction, Kinney Shoes, the La Fonda De Acebo Restaurant, Landon's for Men, the Main Street Soda Shop, Natelson's, Naturalizer Shoes, The Record Shop, Seifert's and the Walden Book Store.

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