



Thursday, October 3, 2002

Parking improvements under way

By **Mary E. Iorio**, OU Writer

In less than a month, the new parking structure will open and ease the parking crunch, while a new online ticket payment system will make it a bit less painful to pay the price of illegal parking.

OU's Facilities Management Department projects a late October opening for the new parking structure on Pioneer Drive across from the new Education and Human Services Building.

"We're getting close," said Rusty Postleware, associate vice president for facilities management. "They're working on the stairwells now. We need to do the electrical for lighting and the elevator."

During the next few weeks, contractors will line the parking spaces and complete the final grading and paving of the driveway.

When complete, the \$6 million, three-floor structure will provide 550 spaces, two-thirds of which will be covered.

"It will be really nice to park there when it's rainy or in the winter when it snows," Postleware said.

The lot will provide much-needed relief to those searching for spaces near Varner and Elliott halls and the new Education and Human Services Building.

"Right now, we've got folks parking way down in the overflow lot on Library Drive and they're walking all the way to Varner. Even there, we're finding people parked on the grass," Postleware said. "Everyone will be parking on pavement when this structure opens."

Postleware suggests individuals making their way to O'Dowd Hall, the Oakland Center or Recreation and Athletics Center consider parking in Lot 11 on the corner of Ravine and Pioneer drives.

"That parking lot always has spaces and it's just a five minute walk to any of those buildings," Postleware said. Contractors recently expanded and repaved Lot 11.

While parking has been a long-term issue, OU Police Lt. Mel Gilroy noticed a shift this year.

"Opening the new education building increased vastly the density of cars and traffic on the south end of campus," he said. As a result, students running late for class or faculty and staff trying to get into their offices have taken to parking illegally along roadsides, in yellow zones and on the grass.

"We don't like writing parking tickets, but we have to make sure there are no hazards," Gilroy said. "We need to be able to get emergency vehicles in, and the biggest vehicle is a fire truck."

The OU Police Department recently set up a new online system, making it simple to pay tickets over the Internet at any time of day or night.

"Parking tickets cost \$20 if paid during the first 30 days," Gilroy said. "After that, the fine goes up an additional \$10. This makes it easy to pay, so you don't miss that first deadline."

To pay your ticket online, visit the **OU Police Department** Web site and click the link to pay online. The five-step program guides users easily through the payment process and accepts all major credit cards. Payments by cash, check or money order must still be done through the mail.

SUMMARY

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