

New in '09?

BY JAMES KING

As the downtown campus landscape continues to evolve, 2009 saw several major additions. Here are the highlights:

- Students returned to campus in January able to ride the new Metro. The 20-mile, \$1.4 billion project stretches from east Mesa to Tempe and through downtown Phoenix. For the many students who take classes at both ASU's Phoenix and Tempe campuses, the light rail has made the commute fast and convenient while keeping the two campuses connected.

- In March, the city and ASU unveiled the downtown Civic Space, a 3-acre park across Central Avenue from the new Cronkite building. The Civic Space is a public park with open space, art, water features and shade. The park already has hosted concerts, movies and university events. On the south side of the park, the historic 1926 A.E. England Building has been renovated to house park employees and meeting space and retail.

Civic Space Provides Tranquil Spot in Middle of City

The Civic Space serves as a calming feature in the midst of a bustling, vibrant city.

The 3-acre park, which opened in March across the street from the Cronkite building, gives students, faculty and downtown residents and workers a relaxing place to take their lunch breaks, read or just lie in the grass. The sprawling, tree-dotted lawn is often filled with students throwing Frisbees, talking with friends or studying.

On the south end of the park, the historic 1926 A.E. England Building has an outdoor eating area where students can take advantage of the wireless Internet access available throughout the park.

On the park's northern border, the historic Phoenix post office will be converted into the student union for the downtown campus.

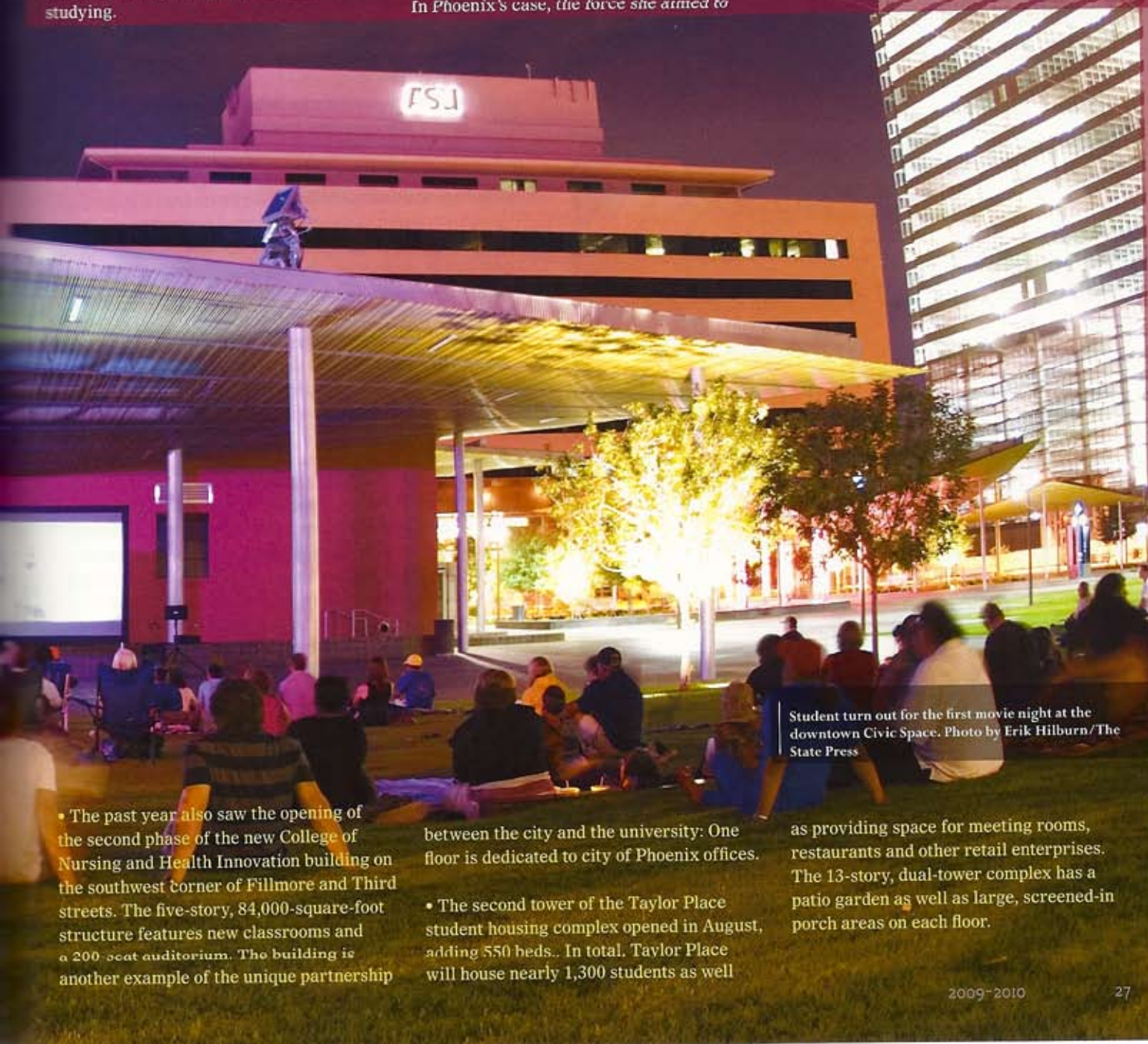
The centerpiece of the new park is a 100-foot-tall sculpture created by artist Janet Echelman. The sculpture, which Echelman titled "Her Secret is Patience," is one of many pieces she has designed all over the world.

Echelman said her art is intended to respond to a city's environmental forces. In Phoenix's case, the force she aimed to

capture is the desert wind. As wind passes through the sculpture and the flexible mesh netting sways and pulsates, the sculpture makes the desert wind visible, Echelman said. The sculpture is illuminated at night, creating a dramatic effect.

Cronkite student Nick Kosmider said it's nice to have a place downtown to relax. Kosmider, who lives several miles from campus, said it's often impractical for him to go home between classes. The Civic Space has given him a new alternative.

"There used to just be nothing here," Kosmider said. "It's nice now. There are usually people hanging out or reading; it gives it the feel of a nice college campus."



Student turn out for the first movie night at the downtown Civic Space. Photo by Erik Hilburn/The State Press

The past year also saw the opening of the second phase of the new College of Nursing and Health Innovation building on the southwest corner of Fillmore and Third streets. The five-story, 84,000-square-foot structure features new classrooms and a 200-seat auditorium. The building is another example of the unique partnership

between the city and the university: One floor is dedicated to city of Phoenix offices.

The second tower of the Taylor Place student housing complex opened in August, adding 550 beds. In total, Taylor Place will house nearly 1,300 students as well

as providing space for meeting rooms, restaurants and other retail enterprises. The 13-story, dual-tower complex has a patio garden as well as large, screened-in porch areas on each floor.