



OKC BOATHOUSE FOUNDATION

725 S. Lincoln Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73129  
(405) 552-4040  
[www.riversportokc.org](http://www.riversportokc.org)

*For more information contact*

*M. Elizabeth Laurent (405) 314-6113 or (405) 722-6113 [elaurent@okcbf.org](mailto:elaurent@okcbf.org)*

*Sherry Andrusiak (405) 314-0716 [sandrusiak@okcbf.org](mailto:sandrusiak@okcbf.org)*

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma Makes \$500,000 Gift**  
*New Youth Pavilion, Sky Trail™ and Zip Line Planned for Oklahoma River*

**(December 5, 2011 – Oklahoma City)** The OKC Boathouse Foundation has announced Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma has constructed a new playground and made a \$500,000 contribution toward the construction of a Youth Pavilion in the Boathouse District on the Oklahoma River. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma announced that it would continue its contribution beyond the playground built in the Boathouse District on Saturday, Nov. 12.

“Blue Cross and Blue Shield is focused on improving the health and wellness of Oklahoma families, and we’re very excited about our growing involvement at the Oklahoma River,” said Bert Marshall, president of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma. “Motivating children to engage in healthy habits such as nutrition and exercise at an early age will likely foster healthier adults and steadily increase the health of our state.”

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma made the decision to partner with the Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation as their missions are aligned to promote healthy, active lifestyles in children and extending to the whole family. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma provided funding for the new playground and other facilities for children and families to enjoy while being active. These projects are a part of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma’s “Healthy Kids, Healthy Families,” a three-year initiative to promote healthy habits among young people and to build a new generation of wellness for Oklahoma.

“These generous gifts are going to make it possible to get even more families involved at the Oklahoma River,” said OKCBF Executive Director Mike Knopp. “The playground gives younger kids a fun, safe place to play at the river while older siblings can get on the water and kayak or row. And the Youth Pavilion will greatly enhance our potential to reach thousands of additional youth for programming.”

The Youth Pavilion will offer more than 16,000 square feet of covered space for youth activities and will be modeled on the triangular footprint of the Devon Boathouse. It will include rowing and paddling elements and will be a central hub for youth outreach and educational programs. Rand Elliott is architect for the project.

**Sky Trail™ and Adventure Zip Line**

The Youth Pavilion will anchor a multi-phased project which also includes construction of an OKC RIVERSPORT Sky Trail™ and Adventure Zip Line over the Oklahoma River. The proposed family-oriented features are components of an updated Boathouse District master development plan, which boathouse foundation officials expect to present to the Oklahoma City Riverfront Redevelopment Authority and the Mayor and City Council in coming weeks.

“The Oklahoma River is increasingly becoming an ‘adventure’ destination and we’re getting ready to take it to a whole new level,” Knopp said. “River activities like kayaking, rowing and stand up paddle boarding are already unique experiences for people.”

“Adding the Youth Pavilion, Sky Trail™ and Adventure Zip Line will expand the options and really take us to a whole new level of fun and adventure for families, community groups – really anyone looking for a truly unique experience in the heart of Oklahoma City.”

The Sky Trail™ is the newest approach to the concept of a traditional ropes course.

“Sky Trails are becoming hugely popular at various attractions across the country, and we feel like the Oklahoma River is the perfect place to bring this adventure concept to Oklahoma City,” Knopp said.

Participants will clip into a safety harness at ground level, then climb, jump and swing across various adventure elements as they ascend to a height of four-stories.

At the 75-foot peak they will have the option of zipping across a 700-foot Adventure Zip Line spanning the Oklahoma River. A return zip line will bring them back to the north shore skimming just above the roofline of the Youth Pavilion.

“It’s exciting to see how the Boathouse District is a place where everyone can be involved,” Knopp said. “We have a broad and diverse spectrum of people who are already involved in our rowing and kayaking programs, and we see these newest developments as another way to broaden the appeal even more.”

The budget for the new Boathouse District attractions including the Youth Pavilion, Sky Trail™ and Adventure Zip Line, as well as a mountain bike trail, is estimated to be \$3 to \$5 million.

For more information, visit [riversportokc.org](http://riversportokc.org) or call (405) 552-4040.

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*The OKC Boathouse Foundation promotes the use and development of the Oklahoma River as a world-class urban aquatic venue and provides access to rowing, kayaking and fitness programs for people of all ages and abilities. OKCBF programs pursue the highest goals of sports and embrace the principles of the Olympic spirit which inspire athletes to work toward personal excellence, embrace the power of teamwork, and practice respect for all people and the environment. To learn more or get involved, call (405) 552-4040 or visit [okcbf.org](http://okcbf.org).*

A project of the Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation