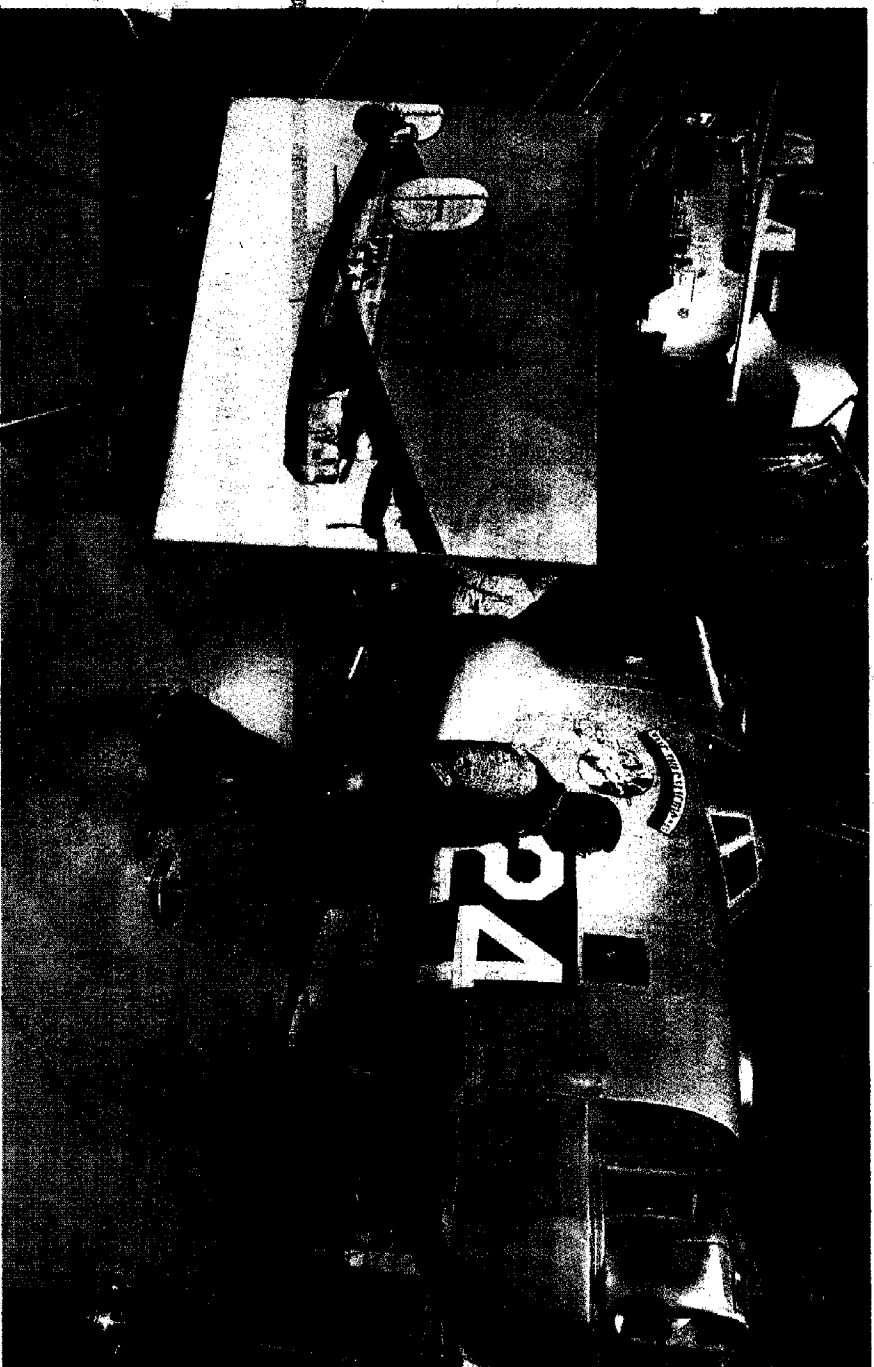


# MetroRegion

TULSA WORLD

— A13 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019 —

*An array of tenants set for  
new Vast Bank building. A17*



People look at the Tulsa Air & Space Museum's new exhibit commemorating the Tulsamerican, the last B-24 Liberator bomber built at the Douglas Aircraft Co. plant in Tulsa. STEPHEN PINNEY/Tulsa World

## Telling a Tulsa story

Local museum dedicates Tulsamerican B-24 exhibit

By Stetson Payne  
Tulsa World

## Schools fight for four-day schedule

**EDUCATION • Supporters  
say proposed rules would  
force nearly all districts to  
resume five-day schedules**

By Nuria Martinez-Keel  
The Oklahoman

OKLAHOMA CITY — With more restrictions coming for four-day school weeks, some education advocates are fighting to keep their shortened schedules intact.

Supporters of four-day school weeks say newly proposed rules from the Oklahoma State Department of Education would force nearly all districts operating on shortened weeks to resume five-day schedules.

Responding to legislation passed this year, the state Education Department created a list of rules for districts to follow if they want to keep their four-day school weeks. Districts that

People look at the Tulsa Air & Space Museum's new exhibit commemorating the Tulsamerican, the last B-24 Liberator bomber built at the Douglas Aircraft Co. plant in Tulsa. STEPHEN PINNEY/Tulsa World

# Telling a Tulsa story

## Local museum dedicates Tulsamerican B-24 exhibit

By **Stetson Payne**  
Tulsa World

**S**eventy-five years to the day after the Tulsamerican was lost on its final mission, the Tulsa Air and Space Museum dedicated an exhibit to the fabled B-24 Liberator bomber.

The last B-24 built at the Douglas plant in Tulsa in July 1944, the Tulsamerican went down after taking damage from enemy fighters and anti-aircraft fire on Dec. 17, 1944.

The plane crashed while attempting an emergency landing at the Croatian island of Vis in the Adriatic Sea. Three crew members — pilot Eugene Ford, flight engineer Charles E. Priest and navigator Russell C. Landry — died in the crash.

At Tuesday's ceremony, surviving family members of the crew and others gathered around a reproduction of Tulsamerican's nose. The aluminum mockup, complete with original nose art and the gunner's turret, is a result of Houston-based METECS, which also built a virtual reality presentation that is part of the exhibit.

Patrick Hoey, chairman of the board



The reproduction of the Tulsamerican's nose is complete with a recreation of the nose art that set the World War II bomber apart from other B-24 Liberators. STEPHEN PINNEY/Tulsa World

of the Tulsa Air and Space Museum, said the new exhibit is an excellent addition to the representation of aerospace history in the city. Hoey, whose father was a B-24 ball turret gunner on a different plane, said it's "a great deal

of honoring our past and our history of aviation in Tulsa."

"The effort it took to produce that many bombers is awesome — and to

» *See Exhibit, page A15*

**OKLAHOMA CITY** — With more restrictions coming for four-day school weeks, some education advocates are fighting to keep their shortened schedules intact.

Supporters of four-day school weeks say newly proposed rules from the Oklahoma State Department of Education would force nearly all districts operating on shortened weeks to resume five-day schedules.

Responding to legislation passed this year, the state Education Department created a list of rules for districts to follow if they want to keep their four-day school weeks. Districts that meet the requirements could be granted an exemption to Senate Bill 441, which recently set the minimum length of a school year at 165 days.

Legislators passed the bill to make it harder for schools to operate on shorter schedules. Some Republicans have said four-day school weeks tarnish the state's reputation and diminish students' education.

During a news conference and public hearing Monday, educators and families with four-day weeks said the exemption would be unattainable for most districts in the state.

Even Oklahoma's highest-performing districts would struggle to meet the proposed requirements, said Erika Wright of the Noble Public Schools Board of Education. She said 93% of all 113 four-day districts would fail to keep their schedules.

» *See Schools, page A15*

## TFD administrative

Springdale Elementary School students present their Tulsa Change-makers projects about telling customized news.



Patrick Hoey and Tonya Blansett speak at the Tulsa Air & Space Museum on Tuesday during the dedication of an exhibit commemorating the Tulsamerican, the last B-24 Liberator bomber built at the Douglas Aircraft Co. plant in Tulsa. STEPHEN PINGRY/Tulsa World

## Exhibit: 'Stories worth telling'

» From page A13

have all the history that we've got about that particular aircraft."

After a candlelight vigil at 3:12 p.m., the time Tulsamerica's engines cut out and it plunged into the water, the exhibit opened with a ribbon cutting. Now with the help of virtual reality and a trove of photographs, museum visitors can relive the plane's construction, its short war career and its final mission.

Above the countless photos in the recreated nose, there's a mockup of the B-24's cockpit glass. One of the pieces is a worn and weathered piece of plexiglass divers recovered from the wreck site.

Tulsa County Assistant District Attorney Kevin Gray, who has spent years researching the Tulsamerican and is a member of the museum's board, said it lets patrons see as the crew did.

"When you look through that little window, you're looking through a piece of the Tulsamerican," Gray said. "We

wanted to make sure anybody who came here, anybody who visited, could look through the same windows and look with the same eyes through the same view that Tulsamerica's crew looked through 75 years ago."

Other than showcasing the plane, Gray said the exhibit honors the human stories of the Tulsamerican.

From those lost on the final mission, to those who ferried the plane from Topeka, Kansas, to its base in Italy, to line workers who signed their names and addresses on the airframe as it was built, they're all part of the story, Gray said.

"The reason we are doing this today, the reason we've done the exhibit we've done, the reason we've done the virtual reality is because these are stories worth telling," Gray said. "These are stories worth remembering, and they shouldn't be forgotten."

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## Schools

» From page A13

"We were prom set of rules that w fair and attainable tricts," Wright said legislators were pr a set of rules that w fair and attainable constituents, as wel

"The bottom line were lied to. The st islature was lied these rules are the site of fair and att

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Districts sho higher than sho decline, Hofmeis

"Treading wat ing still, not de hardly what we satisfied with," ter told The O

"(The) state boac cation is going t see growth and achievement as the demonstr

## TFD: Pattern of deception cited

» From page A13

remain alert.

Tulsa Fire Department spokesman Andy Little said city policy prohibits

Morgans is next scheduled to appear in court for sentencing in his Ar