

Strewn over the floor near the door are other goodies: huge wing nuts and bolts off a 1920s bridge, an asphalt sample from a Chandler Park tennis court, and an anchor tie from the Haikey Creek levee. It looks like junk. But Jordan, the county's engineer for the past 35 years, plans on taking it all home at the end of the month. When he does, the office door will close behind him, and his 40-year career in Tulsa County will be over. "I would hope that people would remember me as doing the very best job I could in a professional manner and trying to assist people with problems instead of making problems," Jordan said. That day will surely come, but for now county officials and others who have worked with Jordan are just trying to figure out what they will do without him. "I am going to miss Ray both professionally and personally," said Linda Dorrell, county purchasing director. Dorrell has worked with Jordan for 28 years on projects ranging from the construction of the Tulsa Jail to the Vision 2025 program. "Ray is the consummate professional, and his technical knowledge is unsurpassed," Dorrell said. Jordan didn't grow up dreaming about building roads and bridges. A farm boy from Nowata, his real interest — when not playing baseball and football — was in what was falling from the sky. "I just liked the fact that you could learn to predict the runoff from a rainfall and you could build farm ponds and small watersheds," Jordan said. So he went to school to learn how to do just that, graduating from Oklahoma State University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering and a master's degree in civil engineering. "Agricultural engineering — it prepared you for this kind of work," Jordan said. "The basic principles are all the same. He joined the county as a design engineer in March 1971. Four years later, at the age of 31, he was named county engineer. At the time, at least one county commissioner thought he was too young for the job. Now, all three would do anything to keep him around. "I joke with him that

I am going to hold his ankles” when he tries to leave, said County Commission Chairwoman Karen Keith. That won’t happen, of course. Jordan, who turned 66 on Friday, has things he wants to do. He’ll fish and play golf. He’ll attend even more OSU sporting events with his wife of 47 years, Sue Jordan. And the couple will go to places they haven’t been before — such as Maine and northern California. Jordan says he feels good enough to keep working. But there are at least two important reasons he’s packing up his nuts and bolts and heading home. His father, Woodrow Jordan, 92, and his mother, Dorles Jordan, 85, are still alive. “I feel good enough I could work another 10 years if I wanted to,” Jordan said, “but I am going to miss something” if he does.