



# NEWS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority Buys Union Depot Headhouse**

ST. PAUL, MN, June 2, 2009 — The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Tuesday approved final purchase agreements with the owners of the Union Depot headhouse, or lobby building, for \$8.2 million.

“Today marks the official start of the project to return the Union Depot to what it once was: a transportation hub for Ramsey County, the state of Minnesota and the entire upper Midwest,” said Commissioner Jim McDonough, chair of the Rail Authority. “The multimodal transit hub we are creating at the Depot will provide seamless transfers between transportation modes, including trains, local and interstate buses, cars and bicycles. It will give commuters and visitors better access to St. Paul and Ramsey County job centers, entertainment venues and sporting events. This truly is an exciting day for the entire region.”

The headhouse, or the lobby portion of the Depot complex facing St. Paul's 4th Street, houses restaurants, offices and condos. The Rail Authority will purchase of the commercial portions of the headhouse building, the parking structure and the land that the building sits on. Thirty-nine condo units built by the current owner will remain in private hands.

One of the better known tenants of the Headhouse is popular St. Paul restaurant Christos, which will remain in the Depot after the purchase.

“We’ve met with representatives of Ramsey County and the Railroad Authority and have received assurances that they view the presence of Christos in the Union Depot as a very positive one. They expressed their intent to be very supportive of Christos’ banquet operations, and have been receptive to certain improvements we have suggested which would have a beneficial effect on Christos’ operations,” said owner Gus Pappas. “We look forward to working with the new landlord over the remaining seven-year term of our lease agreement, and we are not planning any changes to our day-to-day operations. We are currently booking events for the year 2011.”

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Beyond the headhouse is a 45-foot-wide entrance passage that was built as a bridge over Kellogg Boulevard to connect to the concourse, which provides access to railroad platforms. Ramsey County agreed to purchase the concourse structure and surrounding land from the U.S. Postal Service in October 2007. The Postal Service plans to move its mail-sorting operations in 2010 to an expanded facility now under construction in Eagan. Work continues on preliminary engineering and a federally required environmental assessment of the site.

Many modes of transit will come together at the refurbished Union Depot, including Central Corridor Light Rail, Amtrak passenger rail, Midwest High Speed Rail to Chicago, the Red Rock, Rush Line, Robert Street and I-94 corridors, Greyhound and Jefferson Lines buses, Metro Transit, bicycles and pedestrians.

Thanks to generous federal funding and far-sighted county investment in the project to date, work on the multimodal transit center will be ready to begin when the U.S. Postal Service moves its mail-sorting operations from the depot to Eagan by the end of 2010. The depot is scheduled to reopen as a transit hub in 2012, two years before the Central Corridor Light Rail line is scheduled to open.

Union Depot was built from 1918-1923 on the site of an earlier train station, which was destroyed by fire in 1915. The Depot was built as a hub for passenger and freight rail service in the upper Midwest. At its peak, it served more than 280 passenger trains daily. After passenger rail service was discontinued to the Depot in 1971, sections of the Depot complex were sold to various entities. This includes part of the bridge over Kellogg Boulevard, the concourse, and land near the concourse which were sold to the Postal Service for truck circulation and bulk mail handling.

The Depot is located in downtown St. Paul's historic Lowertown area, a vibrant neighborhood along the Mississippi River just 1 mile south of the State Capitol. Union Depot, under Ramsey County's ownership, will once again be transformed into a multi-modal transit hub for the city, region and state.

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*For more information, photos or video of the project, contact Art Coulson at (651) 266-8017 or [art.coulson@co.ramsey.mn.us](mailto:art.coulson@co.ramsey.mn.us).*