

Eastman project now at \$46.5M

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As economic factors continue to plague the area's construction projects, the Eastman School of Music has not been immune.

Vendor bids came in higher than projected for the Eastman Theatre renovation and school expansion plan, which forced construction of the new wing to be suspended over the past two weeks as costs were analyzed.

Construction has resumed, but at a new price tag: \$46.5 million, up from \$43 million. The

original estimate in September 2007 was \$35 million.

Selected vendors were notified Tuesday.

Douglas Lowry, dean of Eastman, said that the school has raised about \$30 million for the project, which includes \$10 million from Kodak and \$2.5 from the Davenport-Hatch Foundation; the commitments include naming rights to the theater and the new recital hall, respectively.

The Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the theater's largest tenant, has completed raising its

portion for the project, \$10 million, though it continues to help with fundraising efforts.

Costs for the overhaul of the theater, which are scheduled to take place between June 1 and Oct. 1, are already covered, said Lowry. But fundraising for the remaining \$16.5 million will be an uphill battle.

"The fundraising — philanthropy in general — worldwide has slowed considerably," said Lowry, who points to the market crash as a primary reason. "Much of it, in terms of decision

making, has slowed down until people get a sense of what's happening with the economy."

Construction also came to a halt last summer for Nazareth College's Arts Center renovations as costs skyrocketed because of the rising cost of steel. Originally estimated at \$6 million, the cost of the project was finalized at \$10.1 million, after a major redesign.

The project total includes \$1 million for improvements to the music department. □

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