

# RBJ



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## Eastman Theatre project hits a delay

Additions now slated to open in fall 2010; initial phase on track

By **NATE DOUGHERTY**

Construction work on additions to the Eastman Theatre has come to a halt while the project's costs are reviewed, officials of the Eastman School of Music said this week.

The pause in construction will push the expected completion date back to the fall of 2010, school officials said. The project had been slated for completion in early 2010.

School officials said the initial phase of the project, upgrades of the existing hall, remains on track, but construction of an addition to the theater has stopped. A spokeswoman said the school does not



File photo

When it is completed, the addition will extend the building's facade to Swan Street.

anticipate a long break before building resumes.

"We're committed to the project going forward, but there is a brief pause in the

addition portion so we can assess its scope in scheduling and cost," said Helene Snihur, an Eastman School spokeswoman.

Construction of the 37,620-square-foot addition to the Eastman Theatre remained on pace through the fall, when the first phase of the two-year project was completed. The \$9 million upgrade of the theater's existing infrastructure, including new air-conditioning and heating units and sound-attenuated ductwork, was completed in October.

Construction is being carried out by the Pike Co. Inc., which led a series of smaller upgrades to the theatre in 1970.

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Calls to Michael Flannery, project director for the Pike Co., for comment on the project were not returned.

A delivery of fabricated steel for the project, scheduled to occur this week, has been delayed, Snihur said. Until that point the project had been on schedule, she noted. Foundation and masonry work was scheduled to go on throughout the early part of 2009.

The cost of the entire project was estimated at more than \$35 million. The initial phase of renovations on the theater is expected to be completed in the fall, reducing the seating capacity by 850 and building new box seats and an expanded lobby area.

The next phase includes an addition to the building to feature faculty studios, a 2,200-square-foot recital hall and a 3,190-square-foot rehearsal hall. It also is expected to extend the theater's façade along East Main Street to the new building, which will be at the corner of East Main and Swan streets.

The project is funded in part with a \$10 million gift from Eastman Kodak Co., whose founder, George Eastman, built the 86-year-old theater. The performance

hall will be named Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre because of the gift.

UR also received \$13 million in state funding for the project, secured through Assemblymen Joseph Morelle, D-Irondquoit, and David Gantt, D-Rochester. In May the Davenport-Hatch Foundation Inc. also made a \$2.5 million commitment to the project, the largest gift in the founda-

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tion's history.

The foundation had previously given \$400,000 for stage renovations to the theater in 2004. The theater's new 230-seat recital hall will be named Hatch Recital Hall for foundation founder Augustus Hatch.

The theater is owned by the University of Rochester and used by the Eastman School and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. Much of the RPO's current three-year strategic plan relies on revenue generated by renovations to the theater, including the addition of box seats.

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