



CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Capital Development Board

NEWS RELEASE

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James R. Thompson Center granite panels will soon be removed

CHICAGO – Approximately 1,000 granite panels, each weighing between 200 and 600 pounds, will soon be removed at an estimated cost of \$1 million from the arcade surrounding the James R. Thompson Center, the main State of Illinois office building in Chicago, as state officials address an unsafe situation that saw a stone panel fall from the arcade this summer.

The Capital Development Board (CDB), which manages all construction projects involving state-owned buildings, will solicit proposals later this month to remove all of the stone panels that adorn the building's arcade and determine what needs to be done to solve the problem. An emergency analysis of the panels performed after one fell onto the Clark Street sidewalk August 27 determined that other pieces of granite might be unstable as well, prompting state officials to construct a canopy around the building to protect sidewalk pedestrians. Stainless steel bands have been added in several areas to stabilize the stone. There were no injuries due to the individual slab that fell from the building.

An emergency investigation revealed corrosion behind the panels and deficient granite and limestone backing pieces that caused one panel to fall and have placed other panels at risk. Seven additional panels deemed to be the most unstable have already been removed on orders from CDB.

The arcade is a decorative architectural element surrounding the building. It does not impact the Thompson Center's structural stability.

The project to remove the stone will also involve a review of the structural steel that supports the panels. Some streets around the Thompson Center may be closed temporarily for safety reasons as the project progresses. The stone removal is expected to begin by the end of October and take about eight weeks to complete. Plywood and temporary enclosures will be installed to protect the support structure from the elements after the stone removal. A permanent

solution to the problem will be sought by CDB with a new construction project possibly in the spring of 2010.

Granite panels clad the arcade and freestanding columns surrounding the Thompson Center and plaza along Clark, LaSalle and Randolph Streets. The building, designed by famed architect Helmut Jahn, was completed in 1985.

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