

**U of M names
Construction Team for New
Urban Research and
Outreach/Engagement Center Building**

MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL (1/15/2009) -- The University of Minnesota announced today the selection of Stahl Construction and MN Best Enterprises, Inc. as the construction team for the renovation of the university's new Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC) at the former Plymouth-Penn shopping center, located at 2001 Plymouth Ave. in north Minneapolis.

The team was chosen from eight proposals submitted to the UROC construction committee. In addition to other factors, the construction committee felt that CEOs Wayne Stahl (Stahl) and Hyon Kim (MN Best) had assembled a high quality, experienced work teams and had the strongest ratings in several key areas including inclusion of Targeted Group Businesses (TGB). Work is scheduled to begin the week of Jan. 19.

The university purchased the Plymouth Avenue building in February 2008 to house its many new and existing north Minneapolis research, outreach and engagement activities, facilitate collaborations with community, city and county partners, and make university programs and services more accessible to residents. According to UROC executive director Irma McClaurin, the renovated facility will be unique among other institutions engaged in similar community outreach.

"We have a unique opportunity -- by being based in the community -- to be innovative not only in the development of UROC programs, but also in the design of a space that truly reflects a commitment to collaboration," she said. "We envision a place that will become an important destination for the community of north Minneapolis, and attract others so that they can see the value the north side has to contribute to the city and state."

When completely renovated, the 21,000 square foot building will house a number of community-university partnership programs, including: The Center for Early Education & Development's 500 Under Five-Kindergarten readiness program, in partnership with Northside families; University Northside Partnership Office; University of Minnesota Extension's programs in urban youth development, nutrition education, family development and master gardening; University of Minnesota Medical School's program in health disparities; Center for Innovation and Economic Development and UROC administrative offices. The center is expected to open to the public in late 2009.

Contacts: Mark Cassutt, University News Service, (612) 624-8038,
Hawona Sullivan Janzen, UROC Communications (612) 626-1526

