

News Release

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Construction Underway on Engineering Building Addition at the University of Michigan–Dearborn

Distinctive Circular Design Evokes Campus Automotive Heritage

DEARBORN, Mich., Aug. 3, 2005 – A building whose distinctive circular design was inspired by the 5-ton radial crane that will be housed in the structure as well as by the automotive heritage of the University of Michigan–Dearborn, is under construction here on the university's campus. The two-story, 46,000-square-foot addition to the UM–Dearborn Engineering Building was designed by Lord, Aeck & Sargent. The \$12.8 million building received 75 percent of its funding from the State of Michigan Capital Outlay Program and the remaining 25 percent from University funds. Construction will be completed in December 2006.

The dominating form of the Engineering Building addition is a 12,000-square-foot, two-story high-bay laboratory that will house the 30-foot-high, pivoting radial crane. The crane will be used in research by faculty and students in the College of Engineering and Computer Science's (CECS) Institute for Advanced Vehicle Systems (IAVS). The IAVS conducts research

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related to automotive body and chassis systems, manufacturing processes, and integration with powertrain systems.

“Our vision for the design of this building was that it should be compatible with other older campus structures yet also have a modern feel that belongs to the 21st century,” said Dr. Subrata Sengupta, CECS dean. “Lord, Aeck & Sargent understood our vision and designed a contextual building that fits in with our campus history and automotive heritage but is also quite modern in its simplicity, with lots of glass, light and flexible space.”

Sengupta referenced the building’s circular form and structure reminiscent of a wheel as an example of how the building will reflect the automotive heritage of UM–Dearborn. The campus was founded in 1959 with a gift of 196 acres from Ford Motor Company.

What’s Inside

In addition to the two-story high-bay laboratory, the building includes a two-story rectangular atrium lobby and a 210-seat high-tech seminar room/auditorium. The first floor also houses dedicated laboratories for transmission and gearing; ergonomics; student design; automotive electronics; and structural crash dynamics; as well as a carwash. The second floor includes two conference rooms and an advanced technology, multi-purpose classroom.

The basement will house all of the mechanical and electrical systems (compressed gas, snorkel vacuum, power and water). Laboratory support services will be delivered through access trenches running perpendicular to a main utility tunnel connected to the basement.

Design Evokes the Practice of Engineering

“We designed the Engineering Building addition to complement the existing 1960s modern architecture on campus and to allude to the automotive engineering teaching and

research that are housed within,” said Terry Sargent, AIA, Lord, Aeck & Sargent’s design principal and director of the Ann Arbor office.

“Inside, our design intent for the two-story atrium lobby was that it should be a center of activity and that students, faculty and others who pass through would be able to observe the activities within the building,” Sargent said. “We achieved our intent by including display, seating, and vending areas and by using large expanses of glass to connect the atrium to the high-bay lab, conference rooms and faculty offices. Adjacent to the high-bay lab are specialized laboratory spaces, which are separated by glazed glass walls to share light and showcase the activities within.”

The Project Team

The University of Michigan – Dearborn Engineering Building addition project team includes:

- Lord, Aeck & Sargent (Ann Arbor, Mich.), architect
- JM Olson Corporation (St. Clair Shores, Mich.), general contractor
- Newcomb & Boyd (Atlanta), MEP/FP engineer and AV consultant
- The Mannik & Smith Group (Dearborn, Mich.), civil engineer
- Robert Darvas Associates (Ann Arbor, Mich.), structural engineer

About Lord, Aeck & Sargent

Founded in 1942, Lord, Aeck & Sargent is an award-winning architectural firm serving clients in scientific, academic, historic preservation, arts and cultural, and housing and mixed-use development markets. The firm’s core values are responsive design, technological expertise and exceptional service. Lord, Aeck & Sargent has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information, visit the firm at www.lordaecksargent.com.

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