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**IDEA CENTER PURPOSE BUILT FOR CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND
ADDITIONAL INSPIRATION FOR REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN CORE**

CLEVELAND, OHIO – *July 5, 2004* – At the same time that the redevelopment of the One Playhouse Square building into Idea Center represents a new departure and significant undertaking for ideastream and Playhouse Square, it also serves as an affirmation that renovated historical structures have a vitally important role to play in downtown, city core neighborhoods.

In fact, the plan for Idea Center follows on the very successful lead already established by the Playhouse Square Foundation in its redevelopment of the State, Ohio, Allen, Palace and Hanna theaters, and the acquisition and management of the Hanna building: Redevelop and reuse an historically significant architectural landmark, in a thoughtful, respectful manner, and positive things are bound to happen.

Prior development in the Playhouse Square district has proven that people are drawn to programs and services within well-designed, reclaimed structures. In addition, the vitality of a redeveloped area tends to be self-perpetuating: As people working in or near redeveloped facilities are invigorated by their environment, they deliver even more creative results, attracting additional people to area programs and services.

Adding the people, content and technology of ideastream to the equation established by Playhouse Square was an obvious extension of an already successful model. Having merged two highly visible and well respected public broadcasting entities into one, multiple media public service organization, ideastream was no stranger to the trials, tribulations and synergies of partnering and combining assets.

The selection of Westlake Reed Leskosky as lead designers and architects for the facility is another natural development, given the firm's close affiliation with Playhouse Square in prior redevelopment in the area.

“The ideastream and Playhouse Square organizations are developing cutting edge programs and using technologies that represent a transformational synergy – one that will create a national model for education outreach partnership between media and performing arts organizations,” comments Paul E. Westlake, FAIA, principal in charge and principal designer of Westlake Reed Leskosky. “As one of the few, major projects under construction in the downtown Cleveland area, the facility will also have a significant impact on the continued revitalization of the city.”

Inserting a contemporary and highly flexible design concept into the historic context of the One Playhouse Square building, Idea Center will take advantage of the activity of nearby Playhouse Square and a visible storefront location on the city's major commercial and retail corridor to add vitality to the neighborhood at large. The integration of ideastream and Playhouse Square also results in efficiency of shared resources and space, reduced costs, and the education of a broader audience through this highly public project.

“Idea Center will serve current and emerging technologies, but also future technologies that we cannot even anticipate. Our design process breaks down the barriers between media to become as open and flexible as possible. The facility is conceived of as a fluid container, highly interactive, and visually open -- an armature for media,” describes architect Ronald A. Reed, FAIA, IIDA, principal designer at Westlake Reed Leskosky.

Highlight features of the renovated structure include:

- A **300 seat Studio Theater** to accommodate television productions and intimate theatrical performances.
- **Studio 2, or the Viewing Stage**, a street-front studio on Euclid Avenue.
- A fully appointed **street-front Dance Studio** suitable for professional or amateur rehearsals and master classes.
- An **Education Center** with multiple classrooms with transformable rooms, saturated with technology for instruction and distance learning activities.
- The Dodge Court Studios, the primary **FM and audio studios** and control rooms and the master technical monitoring center.
- The **idea Trading Center** to facilitate content management and production.
- ideastream **administrative offices** designed to inspire collaboration among production staff and administrative personnel.
- The **PBJ Area** where hundreds of students and teachers visiting idea Center will gather, conduct breakout sessions, and have lunch or a snack.

Entered from the historic lobby noted for its ornamental staircase, the facility will expose all components and allow the multi-level activities and movement of its space to be readily visible at street level.

The design concept by Westlake Reed Leskosky also anticipates a two-story combined television studio/theatre that is notched in the inner areas of the deep building. Activities on the three floors will be connected physically and visually by deep wells and stairways, encouraging interaction.

Visitors will immediately experience what the architects call a “messy vitality,” the excitement of being part of a “backstage” studio environment. This character will be conveyed in the design through exposing the high ceiling structure and technological infrastructure; open plan and permeable floors; and the juxtaposition of old and new elements. The integration of live performance and broadcasting, interactive multimedia, working classrooms and studios is key to the dynamic vitality of the entire facility.

“Over twenty-five years ago, Playhouse Square broke new ground through its vision to reclaim an entire urban arts district – a pioneering concept which has spawned countless theatre projects across the nation,” says Westlake. “Now, that legacy of innovation and urban reinvestment continues with the partnership at the Idea Center at Playhouse Square.”

The structure totals 240,000 square feet with seven stories, of which the first three (approximately 90,000 square feet) will be given over for use by ideastream and Playhouse Square’s education department. The remaining 150,000 square feet will be renovated in white box condition for future tenants. One major tenant already committed to Idea Center is URS, a San Francisco-based global engineering firm, providing design services to improve transportation, buildings and environmental systems.

Originally designed by the noted Cleveland architectural firm Walker & Weeks, the building’s south wing was built on what was formerly a residential site for the retail home furnishings store Kinney & Levan in 1912. A north addition was constructed in 1932. In 1936, Stouffer’s purchased the building for corporate offices. The property was donated to Playhouse Square in 1999, and plans to create an Arts Education Center at the location were announced in 2002.

Other notable tenants in the building’s history have included the Cleveland Public Library in the 1910s, the Intown Club from 1930s to present. In the 1950s the building also housed the studios of WJW and is where disc jockey Alan Freed first uttered the words “Rock and Roll” on the radio.

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