



Community Planning and Economic Development Department

# News Release

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*Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home ▫ Jobs & Economic Vitality ▫ Eco-Focused ▫ Livable Communities, Healthy Lives ▫ Many People, One Minneapolis ▫ A City That Works*

## **Pillsbury A-Mill Tunnel System Secured for Study to Understand Preservation, Interpretation, and Hydrothermal Use Options**

**DATE, 2013, (Minneapolis)** - The City of Minneapolis and Dominion announced today that work is getting under way on a study to evaluate the physical and historical condition of the tunnel system built in 1881 along with the Pillsbury A-Mill located at 116 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue SE, Minneapolis.

The Pillsbury A-Mill is one of only 25 National Historic Landmarks in Minnesota and one of the most notable structures on the Minneapolis riverfront at St Anthony Falls. Dominion closed on the property on October 10 and is moving forward with its plan to renovate the historic complex into the A-Mill Artist Lofts, 251 affordable artists' apartments.

The Pillsbury A-Mill once held the title of largest flour mill in the world generating over 1,200 horsepower. Given the historic significance of the tunnel system beneath the A-Mill, there is strong interest by the City of Minneapolis, Dominion, and the Minnesota Historical Society in preserving it and finding ways to explain its significance to the public. However, before any plans for preservation or interpretation use can be formulated, the current condition of the tunnels must be studied.

A team of consultants led by Mead & Hunt and including CNA Consulting Engineers, 10,000 Lakes Archaeology, Rani Engineering and Arch<sup>3</sup>, LLC will evaluate the structural and historical condition of the tunnel system and complete the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation. The study is scheduled to be completed and a report provided by mid-2014.

Concurrently with the tunnel study, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board is completing an interpretive plan for a portion of the east bank of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. This plan is expected to include recommendations as to ways that the important historical story of the Pillsbury A-Mill tunnel system can be shared with the general public.

The tunnel study budget is \$350,000 and is being funded by Minnesota Historical Society through the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board, the City of Minneapolis, and Dominion.

Extensive work is being done by Dominion to secure the project site, including the tunnel system. This work will make the tunnel system safer for the consultant team and keep out urban explorers who have

been endangering themselves and the property by illegally trespassing on the property. Extra lighting, cameras, and enforced trespassing fines will all be part of increased security and safety efforts around the construction site.

Media access to the tunnel system will not be possible during the study phase, as it is an active construction site and much of the system is considered an OSHA “confined space” which requires specific training and equipment. As part of the HAER documentation, there will be a set of professionally-taken photos of the tunnel system that will be made available to the public after the study is completed in mid-2014.

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