



## News Release

U.S. General Services Administration

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February 17, 2010

GSA# R2-09-113

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### **Major Interior Renovation Planned for Historic Custom House**

NEW YORK CITY - It's not really a facelift for the 200 year old structure, but Ogdensburg's Robert C. McEwen U.S. Custom House is about to receive a major interior overhaul just in time for its bicentennial year, according to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). GSA's recent award of a \$4.6 million contract to Con Tech Building Systems, Inc. of Gouverneur, NY, will significantly upgrade the four-story masonry structure so that it better meets the needs of its primary occupant, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

"This renovation will ensure that the McEwen U.S. Custom House is well-poised to move into its third century of use by the federal government. Not only is GSA firmly committed to the preservation of our historic assets, but fully supports the continued use of historic buildings as inherently sustainable," said John Scordia, Acting Regional Administrator of GSA's Northeast and Caribbean Region.

The project, which is scheduled to begin next month, will include new office, waiting and reception areas for CBP, along with new conference, training and locker rooms, a separate prisoner and processing unit, and additional security enhancements. This project will also introduce an elevator into the building, a new secondary interior fire stair, and accessibility accommodations. Other plans include the upgrading of the building's mechanical, lighting and plumbing systems and an upgrade to a central air-conditioning system that will allow for the removal of window units. Asbestos abatement in the building is also planned. The project is anticipated to be completed in November, 2010.

The Robert C. McEwen U.S. Custom House is the oldest, continuously occupied and operating federal office building in GSA's national inventory. It was originally built as a privately-owned store and warehouse in 1810 to serve as part of the distribution network for goods brought to the remote area of

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upper New York State along the St. Lawrence River. It is believed to have housed U.S. Customs Service functions in it from as early as 1811 until 1870 when a new building was constructed locally to house government offices. The building was purchased by the government in 1936 and became a U.S. Custom House at that time. Last year it received a new copper roof. This historically accurate feature ensures that the structure's exterior appearance today remains much the same as when it was constructed two hundred years ago.

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Founded in 1949, GSA manages more than 11 percent of the government's total procurement dollars and \$24 billion in federal assets, including 8,600 government-owned or leased buildings and 213,000 vehicles.

GSA helps preserve our past and define our future, as a steward of more than 480 historic properties, and as manager of USA.gov, the official portal to federal government information and services.

GSA's mission to provide superior workplaces, expert technology solutions, acquisition services, purchasing and E-Gov travel solutions and management policies, at best value, allows federal agencies to focus on their core missions.