

Repairs Begin Monday on Damage from January 2001 Fire

(Jan. 2, 2002) One year ago this month, a spectacular fire on the roof of the Gateway building forced the evacuation of MTA Headquarters. The Jan. 12, 2001, blaze blackened and cracked the stone facing of the parapet and destroyed exterior lighting equipment.

Starting Monday, Jan. 7, a contractor will begin removing the damaged Minnesota limestone that forms the parapet and replace it with new facing blocks. The \$150,000 restoration project is expected to take four to five weeks to complete. This phase of the work will not include repairs to the damaged lighting.

Contractor crews will work on the parapet from 7 p.m. until 5 a.m. Security tape will be strung across the interior lobby doors during those hours to ensure that pedestrians cannot exit the building onto the Plaza. The third floor balcony also will be closed.

The Plaza area around the Gateway building from the stairs at the Cesar Chavez/Vignes intersection to the retaining wall on the west patio will be blocked to pedestrian traffic during contractor work hours. Detour signs will be in place to direct foot traffic.

The Plaza and Headquarters entrances and third floor balcony will be reopened for normal employee and public use from 5 a.m. until 7 p.m. each day.

"This work will have very little impact on our employees," says Brian Soto, director, General Services. "We have involved the Systems Safety and Security Department throughout the entire process and they've instructed the contractor on precautions to take to make sure no one is injured."

Since the January 2001 fire, a tarp has covered the parapet to protect it from weather damage. Soto said the MTA retained a forensics expert to assess the cause of the fire. Once the cause is determined and any legal issues resolved, the next phase of repairs can begin.



Bob Skarseth and Bob Ketring of General Services take a look at the area where the Gateway building parapet will be repaired.



Security Director Dan Cowden inspected the damage shortly after the fire was extinguished.



The Jan. 12, 2001, fire on the roof of MTA Headquarters could be seen for miles.

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