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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

Vanderbilt Hall Closing For Rejuvenation

After 15 years as one of New York City's premier special events venues, Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall is closing Tuesday for a major cleaning, MTA Metro-North Railroad announced today.

For the next seven months conservators will clean, repair and replace as needed the faux Caen stone walls, the Tennessee Pink Marble floors, the white Botticino marble wainscoting and every surface in the 12,500 square foot room.

"Metro-North is committed to the good stewardship of one of New York City's most revered buildings. It is a responsibility Metro-North does not take lightly and we will not allow Grand Central to slip into the disrepair of the past," said Metro-North President Peter A. Cannito.

The \$3.6 million job also includes cleaning and touch-up painting of the monumental south windows in the terminal's signature and landmarked verdigris green. Bronze vent covers will be polished and the five, massive, zinc and gold-plated chandeliers will be shined up and get new, up-to-date dimmers.

To allow customers safe access to the Main Concourse from 42nd Street, a painted, fireproofed plywood tunnel will be built across the room from the doors on 42nd Street to the top of the ramp that leads into the Concourse.

The contractor, Gem Construction and Restoration Corp. of Union City, N.J. will then erect floor to 52'9" ceiling scaffolds so that workers can clean each of the 6,600 Caen stone tiles in the room. About 2,400 cracked Caen stone tiles will be repaired and another 300 replaced. The scaffolds also will allow conservators to clean the ornate, molded plaster ceiling, which is in good shape after its major restoration work in 1990-1991.

The room, formerly known as the Main Waiting Room, once contained oak benches with seating for more than 600 long-distance travelers. As long-distance train travel declined, the room became obsolete and by 1989 had become a haven for homeless people. The room was closed in 1990 and for the next two years it served as a laboratory for the restoration of the entire terminal. It contained every system and material found throughout the terminal.

Design of the work was by Stantec of New York City and its subcontractor, Building Conservation Associates, which also will perform architectural services during construction.