

EA137WX

(300) KENNEDY CENTER

WASHINGTON, JULY 27 (AP)-JOHN MCSHAIN INC. OF ARLINGTON, VA., WAS SELECTED TODAY AS GENERAL CONTRACTOR FOR THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, TO BE BUILT ON THE BANK OF THE POTOMAC RIVER HERE AT A COST ESTIMATED WELL ABOVE \$40 MILLION.

ROGER L. STEVENS OF NEW YORK, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE LONG-PLANNED MEMORIAL TO THE ASSASSINATED PRESIDENT, AUTHORIZED THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL OF THE MCSHAIN FIRM TO CARRY OUT THE PROJECT AT A FEE OF \$249,000.

INVITATIONS FOR PROPOSALS TO BUILD THE CENTER ON A COST-PLUS-FIXED-FEE BASIS WERE SUBMITTED TO 10 LEADING CONTRACTORS JUNE 27 AND BIDS WERE OPENED JULY 20. THE BID OF THE MCSHAIN FIRM, WHICH HAS HANDLED NUMEROUS BIG GOVERNMENT PROJECTS, WAS LOWEST.

PLANNING FOR THE CENTER ACTUALLY ANTEDATES THE ADMINISTRATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY AS PRESIDENT, BUT HE WAS ACTIVE IN PRESSING IT DURING HIS TENURE.

SOON AFTER KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION, PRESIDENT JOHNSON PROPOSED, AND CONGRESS AGREED, THAT THE PROJECT BE NAMED FOR HIM.

THE CENTER IS INTENDED TO GIVE WASHINGTON, FOR THE FIRST TIME, A FOCAL POINT FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF OTHER WORLD CAPITALS.

THERE WILL BE A 1,200-SEAT THEATER, A SMALLER STUDIO THEATER, A CONCERT HALL FOR 2,750, AND ANOTHER HALL FOR OPERA, BALLET AND MUSICAL COMEDY.

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CONGRESS APPROPRIATED \$15.5 MILLION TOWARD THE COST, AND THAT WAS MATCHED BY OVER 10,000 PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS RANGING UP TO THE \$5 MILLION GIVEN BY THE FORD FOUNDATION. ANOTHER \$15.5 MILLION IS TO COME FROM A U.S. TREASURY LOAN.

THE SITE IS A SPOT ON THE POTOMAC NEAR THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL AND NOT FAR FROM THE BRIDGE LEADING TO ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY WHERE PRESIDENT KENNEDY IS BURIED.

THE OFFICIAL GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY WAS HELD MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, AND PRESIDENT JOHNSON SAID ON THAT OCCASION THAT THE PROJECT NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT WITHOUT KENNEDY'S AID

IN PROVIDING FUNDS FOR IT.

JOHNSON QUOTED KENNEDY AS HAVING SAID:

"I LOOK FORWARD TO AN AMERICA WHICH WILL STEADILY ENLARGE
CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS."

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