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Wright gas station work to begin in '09

Business First of Buffalo - by [James Fink](#) Business First

Work is likely to begin next spring on the oft-discussed Frank Lloyd Wright-designed filling station.

Buffalo businessman James Sandoro said he expects to start the bidding process this fall. The \$13 million project will serve as a centerpiece of his Buffalo Transportation/Pierce-Arrow Museum, with construction to follow by early 2009. The project, which will add 60,000 square feet to the Michigan Avenue tourism destination, will take 18 to 24 months to complete.

Sandoro acquired the rights to the filling station that Wright designed in late 1927 but was never built. The game plan has always been to make the station an integral part of Sandoro's transportation museum. The museum addition will peak at six stories tall.

Originally, the station was going to be a stand-alone structure - as Wright envisioned it - but Sandoro decided that weather conditions made building inside more practical.

"There's still going to be this 'wow' factor," he said. "But now people will be able to see and understand what the station represents on a 12-month basis."

It will be the focal point of the 60,000-square-foot expansion. In the revised plans, people will be able to see it from ground level and from an upper-level atrium and gallery above the station. The 14,000-square-foot atrium will include other automotive exhibits from Sandoro's collection.

Wright designed the station for the corner of Michigan Avenue and Cherry Street. It was never built and the site is now part of the Kensington Expressway.

The project is a public-private venture. The state allocated \$3 million; Sandoro has secured private funds; and a capital campaign will start this fall.

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