

WALL STREET CONSTRUCTION

CPTV moving forward

Innovation and Tech Center connecting to library, theater



Alex von Kleydorff / Hearst Connecticut Media

Workers with McAllen Construction install a conduit for the Connecticut Education Network on Wall Street on Thursday in Norwalk.

By Robert Koch

NORWALK — Connecticut Public Television is moving forward with its plan to create an innovation and tech center along Wall Street in the heart of Norwalk.

“The project continues to receive great support and endorsement from the state and city officials, the Norwalk Board of Education and the Wall Street Theater,” said Meg Sakellarides, chief financial officer of Connecticut Public Broadcasting Inc.

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The project would require bonding from the state, with Connecticut Public Broadcast-

ing borrowing another \$5 million to \$7 million, Hearst Connecticut Media learned in October.

Last fall, the PBS affiliate’s parent submitted to Norwalk building officials plans for a 15,000-square-foot “Connecticut Public Broadcasting Norwalk Innovation and Tech Center” at 67-69 Wall St. The property is owned by Fairfield County Savings Bank.

The plan is advancing amid a threat by the Trump administration to eliminate federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Sakellarides said Connecticut Public

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Broadcasting does not anticipate that Trump's proposed budget will impact the Norwalk project in any way, but referred to a statement by CPBN President & CEO Jerry Franklin's about broader impacts.

"The Trump Administration's budget proposal calling for the elimination of federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting should be a call to action for the millions of Americans who understand and value our public service mission," Franklin wrote on March 16. "If the Administration is successful it would be devastating to CPB, our largest source of federal funding, as well as locally to the Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network (CPTV and WNPR), which would stand to lose \$1.9 million from our \$21 million annual budget."

Franklin said CPBN will join a national grassroots effort to fight the elimination of federal funding while aggressively pursuing growth at a time of steadily decreasing government funding. He said the network will continue building support from its members, donors and corporate sponsors while "developing funding for more local programming."

The Norwalk Innovation and Tech Center, based upon local discussions, would fit that bill. The center would be connected with the arts and education community in Norwalk.

On Tuesday evening, Norwalk Public Schools officials outlined the proposed collaboration between the school district and CPBN. On Thursday



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Above, workers with McAllen Construction install a conduit for the Connecticut Education Network on Wall Street Thursday in Norwalk. The line will run from Main Library to Wall Street Theater, then to future CPTV center at 67 Wall St. Below, the Fairfield County Savings Bank at 67-69 Wall St. will be the future home of CPTV.

afternoon, workers with McAllen Construction Inc. of Prospect, installed below Wall Street a conduit that will carry a fiber-optic cable connecting the Main Library on Belden Avenue, 67-69 Wall St. and the Wall Street Theater.

Wall Street Theater Co. plans to reopen the historic venue at 71 Wall St. in early April. The 102-year-old building is emerging from a \$9 million renovation that has refurbished it into a "first next-generation performance space in Connecticut." The theater will offer live shows, interactive entertainment, digi-

tal productions, art and community space, and state-of-the-art digital streaming, according to Wall Street Theater Co.

"We would be thrilled to have a partner like that to bring programming and jobs opportunities and training in digital arts and media," Wall Street Theater developer Frank Farricker said of the prospective partnership with CPBN. "Connecticut Public Television is nationwide. To have that next door to us, and the opportunities for programming and production, we are really lucky. Norwalk is really lucky."

