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New England Center At UNH To Close June 30, 2010

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University Spokesperson

July 22, 2009

DURHAM, N.H. -- The New England Center (NEC) at the University of New Hampshire will close on June 30, 2010. According to UNH officials, the action is necessary for several reasons: the downturn in the economy has aggravated an already challenging financial situation; there is increased competition from other hotel/conference facilities in the Seacoast; and there are no available funds for necessary capital repairs and upgrades.

UNH spends \$2 million annually to subsidize the operation of the NEC, which has had a 50 percent drop in revenue over the last two years. At least \$17 million in new capital investment would be needed to bring the hotel and conference center up to industry standards.

"Coming to the decision to close the New England Center was extremely difficult as the facility has great historical significance to the university, the town of Durham and the state," said UNH President Mark W. Huddleston. "We have been grappling with this decision for several years, reaching out to a wide array of industry experts and consultants and delaying the decision to close the center until it became absolutely unavoidable."

In the months ahead, UNH will conduct additional analysis and determine whether and how the New England Center might be repurposed, according to Huddleston.

The New England Center was designed by William Pereira, who built the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco, and was built in 1969 with a grant from the Kellogg Foundation.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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