

[NEWS](#) > [CLASSIFIEDS](#) > [JOBSPRESS](#) > [WHEELSPRESS](#) > [SERVICES](#) > [FEATURES](#)
[LOGIN](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#)

 SEARCH: Today's News Last 7 Days Web
[Contests](#) | [Lotteries](#) | [Horoscopes](#) | [Comics](#) | [Tides](#) | [Bookmark Us](#)

Partly cloudy

20° Celsius

[Click for Forecast](#)

NEWS

- » [Front page](#)
- » [Metro](#)
- » [Nova Scotia](#)
- » [Canada](#)
- » [World](#)
- » [Business](#)
- » [Sports](#)
- » [Entertainment](#)
- » [Provincial Election](#)

Cunard Centre takes shape at Pier 23

Facility can handle banquets, receptions, trade and consumer shows, concerts and special events
By TOM PETERS Business Reporter

The Cunard name is prominent once more on the Halifax waterfront.

The Halifax Port Authority has renovated a cargo shed at Pier 23 to create the 53,000-square-foot Cunard Centre, a multi-purpose year-round facility named for Samuel Cunard of Halifax, founder of the company that became the Cunard Line of steamships.

The centre's first function is a Nova Scotia Liquor Corp. event today.

OPINIONS

- » [Editorials](#)
- » [Columnists](#)
- » [Letters/Feedback](#)

RCR Hospitality Group of Halifax, in partnership with the authority, will operate the centre under a long-term contract.

The facility will host events, conferences, meetings and trade shows, and will be used to help build the port's cruise industry, especially its home porting program. The cruise vessel Hanseatic of Hapag-Lloyd Cruises was scheduled for two passenger changes in May and June through the centre.

A home porting program can be lucrative for the port. Provisioning a 100-passenger cruise ship arriving for a day can cost \$60,000, but if passengers disembark and the vessel takes a on full load of new passengers, the price tag rises. And if passengers arrive a day early, the extra spending on hotels and meals means more for the local economy.

The Cunard Centre can handle banquets for up to 2,500 people and receptions for 4,000, plus trade and consumer shows, concerts, charity and fundraising events, and product launches. The space can also be divided for smaller gatherings.

The centre, behind the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel, is part of the port authority's nearly nine-hectare Seaport redevelopment project, in which the authority is investing about \$105 million over the next five years. The arts district will be expanded, and retail and tourism opportunities will be created.

FEATURES

- » [Living](#)
- » [Travel](#)
- » [At Home](#)
- » [Books](#)
- » [Religion](#)
- » [Science](#)
- » [The NovaScotian](#)

Robert Risley, president, RCR Hospitality Group, which has invested more than \$1 million in the project, said Thursday that the Cunard Centre is an important addition to Halifax's hospitality industry.

"It will open up a new niche market in the large conference business that we are presently unable to handle anywhere in the city," he said. "The biggest banquet centre we have now, I think is the World Trade Centre, which maxes out at a little over 1,000 — and we will be able to seat 2,500 people."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- » [Births](#)
- » [Cards of Thanks](#)
- » [In Memoriam](#)
- » [Milestones](#)
- » [Obituaries](#)

The port authority has guaranteed 400 parking spaces for the centre, and Mr. Risley said his company will employ more than 100 people during a major event.

July and August are traditionally slow months in the conference business, but starting in September the facility has several bookings. Mr. Risley said the redevelopment is a welcome project.

"I think what it will do is create a new anchor for the central business district, which right now almost ends around Bishop's Landing," he said. "I know this will be an eight- to 10-year project, but they have some wonderful things happening there and I think it will be a wonderful addition to the city."

RCR Hospitality Group has been in the food and beverage service since 1974 and has owned and operated more than 15 restaurants. It also focuses on special events and offsite catering.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing."

Oscar Wilde

(tpeters@herald.ca)

[Back](#)

[Back to top](#)

[ABOUT US](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [CHARITIES](#) | [ADVERTISING](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#) | [FAQ](#) | [COMICS](#) | [HIGHWAY CAMS](#)
[WORK @ THE CHRONICLE HERALD](#) | [WEATHER](#) | [TIDES](#) | [LOTTERIES](#) | [HOROSCOPE](#) | [CONTESTS](#) | [BOOKMARK US](#)

© 2005 The Halifax Herald Limited