



(Akron, Ohio) –July 7, 2008 – GAR Foundation President Robert W. Briggs announced that the Foundation signed an agreement with The Chesler Group, Inc. (TCG) to restore the historic Andrew Jackson House in downtown Akron for use as offices by the Foundation. TCG purchased the 16,000-square-foot landmark building at 277 East Mill Street in June 2007 and will develop and renovate the building for the Foundation. The building is located at the corner of East Mill and Union streets, adjacent to the campus of the University of Akron. Its historic value is enhanced by its grand meeting hall on the second floor, which will be restored and made available for community use.

In announcing GAR’s future occupancy of the Andrew Jackson House, Mr. Briggs said, “GAR Foundation’s relocation to a restored landmark building in downtown Akron represents a unique opportunity to visibly reflect and tangibly support the Foundation’s commitment to the vitality of Northeast Ohio’s core cities.”

Once restored, the nineteenth century brick mansion will provide headquarters for GAR Foundation’s executive, administrative, and program staff, as well as public space for community events. Akron-based staff members of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation also plan to occupy offices in the building. Another 3,000 square-foot office space is expected to be available for sub-lease.

TCG’s historic research indicates that this handsome Second Empire style home was constructed between 1868 and 1870 by Andrew Jackson, a lumber company executive. In 1900, the residence was acquired by John T. Johnson, general superintendent of Cleveland Terminal and Valley Railroad and of the Akron Division of the B&O Railroad. From 1919 to 1994, the building served as the meeting lodge for local chapters of the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.), a fraternal group of Akron’s leading professionals and officials. After acquiring the building, the Akron I.O.O.F. completed extensive renovations, replacing multiple bedrooms to create the second floor’s 3,500-square-foot meeting space.

The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been vacant for over 20 years. Working with Dimit Architects LLC of Lakewood, Ohio, TCG will adhere to the Department of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures and will transform the former residence into a highly functional office, meeting and community space. The renovation will be completed in approximately 12 months, with the Foundation expected to take occupancy in the fall of 2009. Plans will conform to high standards for environmentally sensitive and responsible construction processes and building operations, and will include a number of green elements such as geothermal heating and cooling systems, all of which should qualify the building for LEED Certification.

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About GAR Foundation

GAR Foundation is a private, independent foundation established in 1967 as a charitable trust by Galen J. Roush, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Roadway Express, and his wife, Ruth Roush. With approximately \$180 million in assets today, GAR Foundation is among the largest private foundations in Northeast Ohio. Since its inception, GAR has distributed over \$155 million to support charitable organizations within the Foundation's areas of interest. Charitable priorities include education, social services, civic enhancement, and the arts and arts education, with a preference for nonprofit organizations serving Summit County, Ohio.

On the Web: www.garfoundation.org

About The Chesler Group

The Chesler Group, Inc. (TCG), based in Cleveland, Ohio, is a redeveloper of commercial buildings with a special emphasis on the adaptive reuse of historic structures. The Real Estate Property Division of TCG specializes in turn-key real estate development, inclusive of design, architecture, engineering, construction management, and leasing.

On the Web: www.cheslergroup.com

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