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Miami Intermodal Center progresses

By Jenine Spoliansky/Special to the Gazette River Cities Gazette

The Miami Rental Car Center (RCC), already a local architectural landmark, is the first major structure of the \$1.7 billion Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) Program.

Opened to the public on July 13, 2010, the RCC is a four-level, 3.4-million-square-foot state-of-the-art rental car shopping mall. Each of its four levels is 20 acres in size. The first three floors are dedicated to storage and maintenance operations, and the fourth level is a spacious customer service lobby. Sixteen companies, including all that used to operate inside the airport and several that were located nearby, are now situated in the center.

Among the RCC's many notable features are its distinctive architecture, enhanced safety and security and the first multi-level fueling system in the United States. Presently, the RCC is the second-largest facility of its kind in the United States, with a total capacity for 6,500 vehicles.

The MIC Program is a major transportation hub being sponsored and built by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). It will connect many different forms of transportation and decongest the roads in and around Miami International Airport (MIA).

Other parts of the massive program are on the way. Construction of Miami-Dade County's first all-inclusive ground transportation hub, the Miami Central Station, is anticipated to commence in February 2011 and will be completed by March 2013. The centerpiece of the MIC Program, it is being designed to accommodate all transportation modes, including Amtrak, Tri-Rail, Metrorail, Greyhound, Miami-Dade Transit and other courtesy shuttles, taxis and private vehicles. It will also feature provisions for bicyclists and pedestrians and a potential high-speed rail. The Miami Central Station will provide transportation choices at a safe, centralized location and will be a main transfer point for residents and visitors to the South Florida region.

The MIA Mover, a 1.25-mile elevated people mover that will connect MIA to the RCC and future Central Station, is under construction and will be operational in September 2011. It will eliminate the need for more than a half-million shuttle bus trips to off-site rental car companies each year and reduce curbside traffic at the airport's lower level by 30 percent daily. Once the Metrorail's AirportLink is completed in April 2012, the MIA Mover will provide a direct connection to the airport for tourists and local residents.

The first component of the MIC Program, completed in 2008, the roadway improvements, included the realignment and reconstruction of Le Jeune Road. It alleviated MIA traffic on Le Jeune Road, allowing a free-flowing north-south artery in the heart of Miami-Dade County.

The final element of the MIC Program is its proposed Joint Development, designed to capture the economic development potential in the area. Located to the west of the Central Station, it can

use up to 1.4 million square feet of mixed-use development and attract people to nearby offices, shops, restaurants, hotels and meeting spaces. FDOT may either lease or sell these joint development parcels to a private developer or another public agency.

Overall, the MIC Program will help solve mobility problems that have plagued the growing South Florida area for decades and improve safety and accessibility while functioning as a beautiful new focal point.

For information on the MIC Program, visit www.micdot.com.