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Sberbank Opens High-Tech Archive for Bank Documents

By Roman Shishov

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German robots moving Russian documents around the archive Tuesday. **Vladimir Filonov**

TOMILINO, Moscow Region — A new high-tech automated archive and logistics center has been built for Sberbank outside Moscow.

The center is the first facility of its kind in Russia and cost Sberbank 3.2 billion rubles ($103 million), which it expects to recoup in two years.

It has been designed for centralized storage, use and destruction of documents from the bank's main office and branches in Moscow and neighboring regions. In addition, Sberbank intends to rent out half of the center to other businesses.

The facility is equipped with a German robotic system, specially designed and programmed for Sberbank and delivered to Russia without customs fees.

Sberbank vice president Stanislav Kuznetsov told reporters that the center is unique. Similar

robotic technologies for document storage exist elsewhere, such as in the FBI archives, he said, but Sberbank's center is the world's largest.

Documents are stored and transferred to operators' workstations by a completely automated system. Boxes of documents are delivered by robots.

The building is equipped with an innovative fire prevention system: It is airtight, and the oxygen content in the air of the storage area is reduced to 15 percent.

Kuznetsov said the idea of building the facility came to his mind in 2009, when he calculated expenditures for file storage and transportation. It took and still takes a tremendous amount of time to find the required files and deliver them to a Sberbank branch. Now documents are stored at 144 locations in storage areas exceeding 46,000 square meters in total.

The real estate that the old storage facilities occupied is quite valuable and may be sold in the near future, in which case the return on investment period of the center may be reduced to one year, Sberbank head German Gref told reporters at the facility.

Now the entire archive will be placed in an area of 15,000 square meters. The savings on rental costs for storage space will amount to 200 million rubles a year, Kuznetsov said.

The new center should significantly reduce the time spent by the bank processing archived documents, Gref said. The facility will become fully functional in January.

Sberbank hopes to sell in the first quarter of 2012 oil assets it received as collateral from Urals Energy, bank president German Gref told journalists Tuesday, Interfax reported.

"We are in negotiations. I think in the first quarter the plan is to sell both companies [Dulisma and Taas-Yuryakh Neftegazdobycha]," Gref said, adding that several parties are vying for these assets.

Sberbank Capital's head, Ashot Khachaturyants, said Dulisma would be sold for $250 million, while Taas-Yuryakh would net $440 million.

The president of Alliance Group, Musa Bazhaev, told Kommersant earlier this month that his group's subsidiary, Alliance Oil Company, might step up negotiations with Sberbank to purchase Dulisma Oil Company. Alliance Oil has been looking into acquiring the oil company for the past two years.

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