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International Companies to Compete to Develop Ring Railroad

By Ken Martinez

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International transport companies have signaled interest in competing to build rolling stock for the planned Moscow Ring Railroad, the project's general director Mikhail Khromov said at a news conference Wednesday.

"In the near future, I think in the course of a month, a competition for the development of production and supply of rolling stock for the ring railroad will be announced," Khromov said.

Khromov said offers had already been received from companies including Skoda, Siemens, Ariston and Bombardier. He added that Russian companies would also take part in the competition.

Aeroexpress general director Alexei Krivoruchko said last month that the company is considering participating in the project, which means Aeroexpress lines could also be connected to the ring railroad, RBC Daily reported. Aeroexpress, which currently operates

trains connecting the metro system's Circle Line with all of Moscow's airports, is 50 percent owned by Russian Railways, the state-run railway operator that is working with City Hall on the ring railroad.

The planned railroad will encircle the city in a wide ring and provide transfers to other transport systems. Of the more than 30 stops planned, 12 will be transfer points to the city's metro system and six will be junctions with already-existing radial commuter rail lines. The line will also be used at night to carry freight.

Construction of the 54-kilometer track is projected to be completed in 2014, with the rail line to begin operating at full capacity in 2015. An estimated 250 million passengers per year will use the system when it begins to operate at full capacity. Earlier projections had said the project would only finish 13 stations by 2016.

In December, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said the government would invest 17 billion rubles ($582 million) in the project.

The ring railroad will also be incorporated into an ongoing project to create a unified ticketing system for all forms of city transportation, meaning one card would work for buses, trams, local trains and the metro system. The new system is expected to start working later this year.

Russian Railways submitted a revised investment plan to the government, seeking to boost spending by 54.7 billion rubles ($1.88 billion) through 2013, Vedomosti reported Wednesday.

The railway wants to increase investment by 18.7 billion rubles to 447.1 billion rubles this year and by 36 billion rubles to 377 billion rubles in 2013, the newspaper said. Investment for 2014 would be unchanged at 367 billion rubles and spending in 2015 would be 383.6 billion rubles. The increases would be financed from Russian Railways' own funds, including debt. The railways operator is also seeking higher tariffs.

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