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Coca-Cola to donate land for civil rights museum

By Aisha I. Jefferson, Staff Reporter

THE COCA-COLA CO. Chairman and CEO E. Neville Isdell announced Monday the company would donate 2.5 acres for the construction of a civil rights museum in Atlanta.

Isdell made the announcement before business, elected officials and civil rights leaders during the Rotary Club of Atlanta's weekly meeting.

"Atlanta's reputation as the cradle of the civil rights movement makes it an ideal location for a civil rights museum and positioning it in one of the city's entertainment and cultural destinations is a highly appropriate use of this land," Isdell said.

The 2.5 acres currently are a vacant lot that sits across from the future World of Coca-Cola museum site near Centennial Olympic Park Drive and Baker Street in Pemberton Place, and is essentially on the same block as the Georgia Aquarium, said Coca-Cola spokesman Dana Bolden.

Coca-Cola has owned the land, valued between \$10 and \$13 million, since 2003, Bolden said.

"This is the first step in the process where we donate the land and the city will lead the efforts to construct the museum," Bolden said.

The details of the agreement are not yet finalized, although Bolden said the land fee for the City of Atlanta will not exceed more than a \$1 per year.

In regards to construction plans for the museum, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin said, "There are many more details to work out and I will be consulting with the City Council and others as those details are decided."

In 2002, the soft drink company donated 9 acres to the city of Atlanta for the construction of the Georgia Aquarium, Bolden said.

Staff Reporter Aisha I. Jefferson can be reached at ajefferon@alm.com.