

NIAGARA ERIE REGIONAL COALITION

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MEMORANDUM

To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Tourism & Culture Chair David Lacki

Re: March and April 2007 Meetings

Date: May 11, 2007

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Tourism & Culture Subcommittee met March 19, 2007 at the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau (BNCVB), and April 19 at the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation (NTCC). Present for the March meeting were subcommittee members Lacki, Casale, and Iannello, as well as NYS Music Fund Steering Group member Denise Botticelli-Ambrusko. Present for the April meeting were subcommittee members Lacki, Casale, Lawson, Praetzel, and Percy.

February 2 General Meeting:

The Subcommittee expressed its pleasure with the content and attendance at the February 2 general meeting that focused on tourism and culture. Member attendance was strong, and several guests were also at the meeting. The Niagara University College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Eddie Friel, and Debbie Curtis were thanked for their roles in the meeting as well.

Arts and Economic Prosperity Project:

After several months of data collection, the project is in the hands of Americans for the Arts for analysis and publication. A national announcement of the report will be made on June 5, with a local rollout on June 6.

The subcommittee decided that the rollout should happen at a press event. Invited guests will be the approximately 175 local cultural organizations; federal, state, county, and some local elected officials; area economic development agencies; and of course all Coalition members. All in attendance will receive a copy of the local report, with the full national report available as a web link from the Coalition website. Both the BNCVB and NTCC have offered to produce bound, color reports. The local report and link to the national report will be mailed to any on the aforementioned lists who

do not attend. This is all work the Coalition agreed to as part of its role in the project.

Several additional elements can be added to the rollout, such as a reception at the event, bringing in a speaker from the national Americans for the Arts organization, "taking the show on the road" to local delegations, etc. As the Coalition was a contracted agent of the Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County, it was noted that for any of the "extra" elements to take place the Arts Council would have to secure funding.

New York State Music Fund:

Following the acceptance of the \$90,000 New York State Music Fund grant, "The Big Easy in Buffalo" series was organized. It is a nine event music education and concert series featuring at least 12 New Orleans and Louisiana bands. Proceeds of the concerts will be used to donate instruments to the Buffalo and Niagara Falls public schools, although the music education programs will take place throughout the two counties.

The series was launched in a press conference on March 19 at the BNCVB Visitor Center. Featured speakers were Subcommittee Chair Lacki, Executive Director Tod Kniazuk, and Music Is Art Founder Robby Takac. The launch received coverage on Channels 4 and 7 (at 5, 5:30, 6, and 11), as well as two drive times on WBFO and WNED.

The first concert – modern jazz with the Ellis Marsalis Trio featuring Jason Marsalis, and Joe Krown – took place on April 17 at the UB Center for the Arts. The Marsalis Trio worked with the instrumental and vocal jazz ensembles at the Buffalo Academy for the Visual and Performing Arts, and Joe Krown worked with the music in our lives classes at Enterprise Charter School. Attendance at the concert was approximately 250.

The concert was previewed in a feature in the *Gusto* and on Buffalo Rising and WBFO. The music education program was covered by the Buffalo News and Channel 2, and the concert was positively reviewed in the Buffalo News. In most cases, the Coalition was mentioned, and is also included in our posters and flyers.

The next show, the Cajun band the Pine Leaf Boys, will take place May 10 at the Traf Music Hall. The December offering, a holiday concert with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, has the potential to be the single biggest revenue generator. Both the BNCVB and NTCC will market the show to bus tour providers and out of town guests.

The success of the series will largely be determined by sponsorships and in-kind services. Following is a mostly-complete

list of either free or reduced services we have received to date (not including all the work put in by the Coalition and its partners):

- WBFO
- UB Center for the Arts
- Tralf Music Hall
- WNY Blues Society
- Adam's Mark Hotel
- Channel 2 Community Relations
- Buffalo News Gusto
- New World Record
- Buffalo Place
- Albright Knox Art Gallery
- Shea's Buffalo Performing Arts Center
- Jim Santella (blues radio dj)
- "Muskie's Juke Joint" (Rochester blues show)
- Rochester International Jazz Festival
- Marinaccio's Steak and Seafood
- Ron Wofford Photography
- Buffalo Public Schools Music Department
- Kenmore East High School Music Program
- Erie County DISS (web design)
- Arthur Murray Dance Studio
- Fred Astaire Dance Studio
- US Amateur Ballroom Association
- TMS Dance
- Ted Kniazuk

While all these partnerships are saving us hundreds and perhaps thousands of dollars in paid advertising and services, we still need to raise approximately \$50,000 in cash sponsorships. **The Tourism & Culture Subcommittee is asking all Coalition members to provide a contact name of a potential sponsor to the executive director as soon as possible.**

Advancing Arts & Culture:

The effort once known as the BNCTI has hired a director, Florine Luhr. Kniazuk met with her to discuss our current efforts, and the subcommittee will invite her in to discuss her group's priorities.

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included the concept of a dedicated source of funding for the culturals, and a new effort to bring together and streamline data collection for the culturals and tourism promotion agencies.