

# NIAGARA ERIE REGIONAL COALITION

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Tod A. Kniazuk

## MEMORANDUM

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

**From: Tourism & Culture Chair David Lacki**

**Re: May and August 2007 Meetings**

**Date: September 7, 2007**

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The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Tourism & Culture Subcommittee met May 17, 2007 at the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau (BNCVB), and August 28 at the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation (NTCC). Present for the May meeting were subcommittee members Lacki, Casale, Lawson, and Percy, as well as NYS Music Fund Steering Group member David Marzo. Present for the August meeting were subcommittee members Lacki, Casale, Iannello, and Percy.

### Arts and Economic Prosperity Project:

The "Arts & Economic Prosperity III" report for Erie and Niagara Counties was released to the public on June 20, 2007.

The report found \$155.29 million annually generated in the two counties by the nonprofit arts and culture industry and their audiences. This spending – \$92.97 million by the organizations themselves and an additional \$62.33 million in event-related spending by their audiences – supports 4,740 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$95.9 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$24.05 million in local and state government revenue.

The report was the result of a more than year-long partnership between the Niagara Erie Regional Coalition, Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County, Americans for the Arts, and AmeriCorps.

The release event attracted approximately 70 representatives from the arts, federal, state, county and local governments, economic developers, businesses, and tourism professionals – including several Regional Coalition members. It was covered by all three tv stations, WBFO, WNED, Buffalo News, and Business First.

Speakers at the event were Regional Coalition Executive Director Tod Kniazuk (welcome), Amherst Industrial Development Agency Executive Director and Regional Coalition member James Allen (context), Arts Council Director and Regional Coalition member

Celeste Lawson (thanks), and Mary Margaret Schoenfeld from Americans for the Arts (results).

Following the release there was a leadership lunch, three breakout sessions, and a meeting with the Buffalo News editorial board (which led to an editorial in support of the arts as business).

The report was mailed to approximately 300, including all elected officials at the federal, state, and county level, every arts organization in our database, and several business leaders. It was sent electronically to the Regional Coalition e-list. Also, the results were presented to the current Leadership Buffalo class, and to the Erie County Legislature as part of their dedicated cultural funding discussions. The report, PowerPoint presentation, and news release all remain available at [www.erie.gov/regionalcoalition](http://www.erie.gov/regionalcoalition)

This brings the project to conclusion, though the Subcommittee will continue to look for opportunities to share its results.

#### New York State Music Fund:

The first three events in The Big Easy in Buffalo series are in the books, with six more to go beginning in September. Schools served to date are the Buffalo Academy of the Visual and Performing Arts (Ellis Marsalis Trio), Enterprise Charter School (Joe Krown), Niagara Falls High School (Pine Leaf Boys), and the Waterfront School (the subdudes). Attendance was approximately 250 for the April show, 65 for May (the first game of the Sabres eastern conference finals), and 315 for June.

The tentative school lineup for the "back six" shows are: September, City Honors; October, suburban Erie County; November, Niagara County; December, see below; January, suburban Erie County; February, Buffalo, suburban Erie County, Niagara County (three bands).

The music education event for the December 6 Preservation Hall Jazz Band show will take place at the UB Center for the Arts, and will be open to all public, private, parochial, and charter schools (grade levels tba). Music Is Art is absorbing the additional costs at the Center, so admission will be free. We're asking classes to take up a penny collection for the New Orleans Musicians Hurricane Relief Fund. This one event will allow up to 1,700 students to be part of the program.

Also for the December show the BNCVB and NTCC are marketing a bus package that includes a "Taste of New Orleans" featuring food, drinks, live music at the reception, the concert itself, and a souvenir for \$65. **This is also open to local groups of five or more, so anyone interested in using this charity event as a Christmas party should contact Tod Kniazuk.**

With Music Is Art, we are also holding a virtual battle of the bands for high schools. Jazz, blues, funk, and marching bands can submit one song. Kniazuk, WBFO dj Jim Santella, Robby Takac from MiA and the Goo Goo Dolls, and New Orleans pianist (and April performer) Joe Krown will pick the winner. The winning band will work with one of our three New Orleans bands on February 1, then get an opening slot at the Mardi Gras Jam that night.

Our next show on September 13 will be a cross promotion with Thursday at the Square earlier that evening, and the October show is now being hosted by the Western New York Blues Society.

The series continues to gain good coverage for the Coalition and its partners. Most recently we received a full page article in the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue of Buffalo Spree, several articles in Blues Beat magazine, a spot on the Artscope tv show, and radio mentions on WBFO, 107.7, and in Rochester.

**The Tourism & Culture Subcommittee reminds all members that this is their program, and encourages them to all attend some of the shows.**

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included the concept of a dedicated source of funding for the culturals, and the September general meeting.