

# NIAGARA ERIE REGIONAL COALITION

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Hon. Kathy Konst

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Tod A. Kniazuk

## MEMORANDUM

**To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Kathy Konst**

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

**Re: December, 2008 Meeting**

**Date: December 12, 2008**

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The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Tourism & Culture Subcommittee met December 5, 2008 at the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation (NTCC). Present for the meeting were subcommittee members Lacki, Curtis, Dyster, Iannello, Lawson, O'Connor, Percy, and Rath, as well as Marguerite Greco from Empire State Development.

### Air Travel Survey:

The Subcommittee is beginning work on an air travel survey project intended for implementation in 2009. As a starting point, the group considered a series of topics including users of the data, duration, frequency, project management, and funding.

To maximize the benefits of the project (and diversify the potential funding pool) consideration will be given to including other counties and Southern Ontario in the project – which actually will not significantly alter the methodology or workload of the project while increasing the dissemination of the data. Likewise, potential users beyond the Coalition's member agencies will be invited to participate.

While there are several steps to be taken prior to actually commencing data collection, two immediate steps will be to identify the data already being gathered (and whether that data can be shared), and to identify potential limitations in collecting data at the airports. The NFTA will be invited to the January subcommittee meeting to assist in the later issue.

### Cultural Blueprint:

Following the Empire State Development & New York State Council on the Arts Cultural Blueprint event in September that the Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County and the Regional Coalition managed, consideration was given as to the local follow up to the

effort. Subcommittee member Lawson proposed a continuation of the Arts Council's contractual relationship with the Coalition and its executive director for 2009 that would see the two organizations plan and host a series of six radio shows organized around the topic of arts and economic development, and further broken down into the six "I"s of the roundtable. Please see the attached sheet for additional details.

This effort would meet the Coalition's mission to bring together diverse organizations and fields for information sharing, and would also allow us to continue to communicate our organization and its work to the general public.

**The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Tourism & Culture Subcommittee recommends the group approve a contractual relationship between the Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County and the Regional Coalition to assist in the planning and hosting of six radio shows on the topic of arts and economic development in 2009.**

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included a public hearing conducted by the New York State Senate on December 9, the new Niagara Homecoming event that will be staged in cooperation with the annual Buffalo Homecoming in summer 2009, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Big Easy in Buffalo Mardi Gras Jam that will take place on February 20, 2009 and is being funded and produced by Music is Art (a partner in the original series).



The Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County is proposing a collaboration with the Niagara Erie Regional Coalition that will expand the discussion and regional participation in the Cultural Blueprints initiative that was held here September 18, 2008 at the WNED studios as part of the New York State Council on the Arts statewide initiative to have art and culture included in the Empire State Development Corporation's plan for economic growth throughout the State.

The Arts Council is proposing that together with the Coalition, a series of radio programs be produced that features each of the "I" subjects in the Cultural Blueprint agenda for exploration with a panel of local experts, citizen participation, and representation from the academic (scholar) community.

The programs would be monthly and broadcast over the local NPR system. It is hoped that funding for this initiative will come from the New York State Council on the Humanities that has already expressed interest in such an effort. Other underwriters will be sought out as well.

The Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County and the Niagara Erie Regional Coalition will be the producers and presenters of the radio broadcasts and will serve as co-hosts of each program. Every program would include industry experts and area scholars in each of the "I" categories. The program's format would be developed and determined by the directors of the Arts Council and the Coalition.

The purpose of this project is to a) showcase the Arts Council and the Coalition as leadership organizations – leading by example – in an effort to bring our various sectors together to work collaboratively for a shared vision that includes the contributions of art and culture; b) create a pathway for action that would have consensus from arts, cultural and economic development agencies along with their affinity industries (i.e. education); c) reaffirm the value and importance of Western New York and its stabilization to the overall good health of New York State; d) identify options and priorities for readily accomplished "next steps" and early successes as well as processes to accomplish long-term objectives as determined by public participation, input and feedback from the radio broadcasts and the summaries provided by the New York State Council on the Arts as a result of the Western New York Cultural Blueprint sessions held in Buffalo.

The timeline and budget for the project will be developed by the directors of the Arts Council and the Coalition, and become one of the areas to advance by the Tourism and Culture Committee of the NERC during 2009/2010.