

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation

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ERIE CANAL HARBOR BEGINS "SOFT OPENING" PERIOD

Month-long public preview of key waterfront redevelopment project commences

The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) today officially announced the "soft opening" of the Erie Canal Harbor site to the general public in time for the Memorial Day holiday weekend. This "soft opening" will provide the public with immediate access to the harbor, while also providing harbor operators with an opportunity to fine-tune the site, and make additional alterations as necessary.

"ECHDC has really been pushing to get people down to the harbor by Memorial Day, and I'm happy to report we've made that happen," said Jordan Levy, chairman, Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation. "While this is a soft opening, with some definite tweaking that needs to be done, we're at a point now where we feel confident in the harbor's ability to welcome its first guests."

Visitors can expect to walk the wooden central wharf deck, which is as wide as the Atlantic City Boardwalk, while also experiencing the historic Commercial Slip. The "soft-opening" period, which is expected to last through the month of June before giving way to an official mid-summer opening celebration, will primarily focus on exhibiting many of the refurbished historic elements contained within the Erie Canal Harbor site.

Plans for various special events, food vendors, transient boating dock access, and other dynamic programming activities are also being developed, and will be announced in the near future. These activities will tentatively commence after the harbor's official grand opening.

"This is certainly a work in progress, and there are some site changes, as well as improvements already in the works to help increase the visitor's experience," remarked Chairman Levy. "ECHDC is now focusing on harbor operations and upkeep, and we expect to hammer-out those details very soon."

Erie Canal Harbor is located at the intersection of Pearl and Hanover streets in downtown Buffalo, and will be accessible through two entrances near the Commercial Slip, and by way of a temporary visitor's gate near the foot of Main Street, across from HSBC Arena. The harbor will be open to the public 24 hours a day/7 days a week, but may utilize shortened hours during the month-long "soft-opening" period, to accommodate site improvements and other maintenance issues.

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation is a subsidiary agency of Empire State Development Corporation. Its vision is to revitalize Western New York's waterfront and restore economic growth to Buffalo based on the region's legacy of pride, urban significance and natural beauty. ESD is the New York's chief economic development agency and also oversees the marketing of "I Love NY," the state's iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit www.nylovesbiz.com.

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