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**ECHDC BOARD AUTHORIZES AGREEMENT WITH BUFFALO PLACE,  
EASEMENT AT AUD SITE**

*State agency approvals advance Canal Side project, set up exciting summer at the harbor*

**(Buffalo, NY)** – The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) Board of Directors met today and approved several measures, including an amended agreement with Buffalo Place, Inc. and an easement to National Grid at the Buffalo Memorial Auditorium site.

The board extended the operating agreement with Buffalo Place Inc. by one year and ECHDC will provide funds not to exceed \$340,000 for operation, maintenance and special event services at the Erie Canal Harbor site, located within the Canal Side project area. ECHDC will make periodic disbursements to Buffalo Place on a reimbursement basis, in addition to lump-sum payments for the official City of Buffalo July 4 celebration and the Buffalo Place Rocks the Harbor concert series.

“ECHDC’s relationship with Buffalo Place, Inc. is critical, as the organization is our partner in stimulating economic growth downtown and positively impacting the experience of visitors and residents by providing exciting programming at the Canal Side site,” said ECHDC Chairman Jordan Levy. “In the past couple of weeks, Buffalo Place announced several performers for the 2010 Buffalo Place Rocks the Harbor Series, like O.A.R. and moe., and we look forward to announcing more programming, such as educational programs, children’s activities, tours and more in the coming months.”

ECHDC also authorized an easement to National Grid at the site of the former Buffalo Memorial Auditorium (the “Aud”) in order to install electrical transmission lines to service the Canal Side project. Currently, this infrastructure is located on the ECHDC-owned Aud site but the transmission

lines need to be relocated so that future development on the Aud site will not be affected. National Grid has studied various locations where its network could be relocated and found it impractical to relocate within the City of Buffalo right-of-way along Marine Drive. Instead, ECHDC staff worked with National Grid to identify an area on the Aud site that will accommodate National Grid but not prohibit development of the parcel by ECHDC.

“Without the easement, National Grid would be unable to relocate the existing lines currently situated on the Aud parcel until another location is identified, significantly delaying construction on the Canal Side project,” said ECHDC President Thomas Dee. “Needless to say, this is a vital component in our efforts to advance the inner harbor’s revitalization.”

In other board action, the directors approved a resolution expressing the corporation’s support for the continued viability of the Marine Drive apartment complex as moderate income housing and approved a final scoping project with the qualification that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will include an analysis of the impact of any bridge on recreational boating.

Also, earlier this week, ECHDC posted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Cultural Experience Master Plan on the Contract Reporter. ECHDC is seeking proposals from consultants with specific experience in community arts, culture and museum/experiential planning and design to facilitate the development of a Visitor Experience Master Plan for the Canal Side project. The Visitor Experience Master Plan will reflect the community’s desire to utilize arts and culture to enhance the Canal Side project into an indoor/outdoor visitor space offering an array of appealing activities integrating museum and cultural experiences, recreational activities, a public market, waterside and special events, as well as the creation of a “portal” to all resources in the Western New York region. Proposals are due at noon on May 7, 2010.

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation is a subsidiary agency of Empire State Development Corporation (ESD). 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 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, please visit [www.eriecanalharbor.com](http://www.eriecanalharbor.com) or [www.nylovesbiz.com](http://www.nylovesbiz.com).

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