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USAN Board Meets, Approves Items to Advance Economic Development in Niagara Falls

Uniland Development to Transform Former Rainbow Centre Mall into \$150 Million Wonder Falls Resort, Wingate Hotel Project to Receive Capital Incentive Grant

The USA Niagara Development Corporation (USAN) Board of Directors met today and approved the selection of Uniland Development Company as the preferred developer of the former Rainbow Centre Mall and, in a separate project, funding for Plati Niagara Inc. to build a Wingate by Wyndham Hotel.

“USAN’s efforts to expand the quality lodging, entertainment, restaurant and meeting facilities downtown are coming together to support the tourism industry and make Niagara Falls stronger than it’s ever been,” USA Niagara Development Corporation Chairwoman Francine DelMonte. “I’m pleased to see investors, like Uniland and Plati, recognize the great potential for growth in our iconic city and pledge that USAN will continue to enhance the quality of the visitor experience.”

The board authorized USAN to designate Uniland Development Company as the preferred developer to undertake an adaptive re-use of the former Rainbow Centre Mall. A two-step competitive selection process to select the preferred developer was conducted with the proposal of Uniland Development Company, a leading builder, developer and manager of commercial real estate in Western New York, ultimately being determined as best able to meet the evaluation criteria as stated in the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Uniland will transform the former mall into the “Wonder Falls” Resort, an estimated \$150 million new complex featuring a hotel tower with world-class amenities, restaurants and entertainment facilities including a waterpark, and various other retail and food and beverage venues. With eight million tourists traveling to Niagara Falls each year, the resort is designed to encourage visitors to extend their stay in the City and extend the tourism period of Niagara Falls to a year-round destination. The project will create more than 300 permanent jobs, as well as more than 1,500 jobs during construction. The level of public investment will be determined as part of a subsequent approval of the development agreement for the project. Uniland’s partners on the project are Delaware North, which is headquartered in Buffalo and is a leader in the hospitality sector with a portfolio that includes world-renowned hotels and cultural

attractions, and Cannon Design, an award-winning, full service architecture, engineering and interior design firm with projects in more than 20 countries. Read more about the project [here](#).

“Uniland and its partners thank USA Niagara for having confidence in our team so that we now may work toward a developer agreement with the State of New York,” said Uniland Vice President Michael Montante. “There are several steps in this process to ensure the project is successful and contributes to the economic well-being of the Cataract City.”

In a separate move, the board also approved providing \$980,000 in assistance to Plati Niagara Inc., a local, Niagara Falls hotel development company, to facilitate a \$10.16 million mixed-use development including a Wingate by Wyndham Hotel, on a currently vacant 1.8-acre land parcel along Rainbow Boulevard in downtown Niagara Falls. The project includes the development of a new 65,000-square-foot building comprising of 110 hotel rooms and ground-level food-and-beverage and/or retail operations open to the general public. The development site is a significant parcel in the heart of the city’s downtown tourist district and is located in close proximity to Niagara Falls State Park, the Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls, the Seneca Niagara Casino complex, and a number of other downtown hospitality establishments. The project will create new jobs and increase bed tax revenues, as well as serve the public as a recreational support amenity by expanding the City’s inventory of quality hotel rooms and the breadth of choices for food-and-beverage facilities. Read more about the project [here](#).

“I’m very excited that the USA Niagara Board of Directors has decided to support this project and I’m happy to invest in my hometown of Niagara Falls,” said Frank Strangio, Co-Owner/Vice President of Plati Niagara Inc. “This project would not be possible without the support from the State and the City of Niagara Falls. Work is progressing and I look forward to completing the project and the opening of a new Wingate by Wyndham Hotel for downtown Niagara Falls.”

The USAN Directors took one administrative action, approving the corporation to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the City of Niagara Falls for funding of the Conference Center Niagara Falls and Old Falls Street for calendar years 2014 through 2018. The city will fund projected operating and capital investment budgets in the aggregate amount not to exceed \$1.5 million for each year of the term of the agreement.

USAN, a subsidiary of Empire State Development Corporation, is solely dedicated to the support and promotion of economic development initiatives in Niagara Falls by leveraging private investment and encouraging growth and renewal of the tourism industry in the City of Niagara Falls. For more information, visit www.usaniagara.com.

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