



**Erie Canal Harbor  
Development  
Corporation**

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**ERIE CANAL HARBOR DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION APPROVES \$5 MILLION PROJECT TO  
INCREASE ACCESS AND ACTIVATION OF HARBOR AREA**

**B. R. GUEST Ltd., A SUBSIDIARY OF RICH PRODUCTS CORPORATION, SELECTED FOR EVENT  
MANAGEMENT OF PROPERTY**

The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) Board of Directors met today and approved two items, including the Buffalo Outer Harbor Access & Activation Civic Project, which will consist of several capital improvements and investments to facilitate increased use and enjoyment of the Outer Harbor area.

The Outer Harbor lands consist of the Buffalo Harbor State Park and another approximately 160 acres which will ultimately be improved and used in accordance with a community-driven Buffalo Outer Harbor Blueprint (the "Blueprint"), a long-term plan that was developed in accordance with ECHDC's guiding principles and significant public input. The Blueprint describes future land uses and areas for future development/redevelopment and was recently received by the ECHDC Board of Directors and will be incorporated into the City of Buffalo's new Green Code.

Pending the implementation of the Blueprint land uses and its subsequent environmental review process under the City of Buffalo, the project approved by the ECHDC Board includes a number of relatively low-disturbance activities meant to enhance access and facilitate greater public use/enjoyment of the Outer Harbor. The subject lands have already undergone a number of incremental trail access, clean-up/remediation, and recreational improvements over the last decade while in NFTA ownership, including shore stabilization, new trail systems along the water's edge and along public roads in the area, remediation of former disposal sites, clearance of blighting structures, and periodic programming of activities such as concerts.

The Project, funded with \$5 million from the Buffalo Billion initiative, will consist of several capital improvements and investments which allow for increased public access and activation of ECHDC-owned Outer Harbor lands:

**Improvement 1:** Create Visitor Center/Hub at Bell Slip with a modular installation, including pedestrian and bicycle amenities (i.e., bike racks, benches, trash cans, Adirondack chairs, etc.) to take advantage of the existing parking lot and views.

**Improvement 2:** Complete bike path, including pedestrian and bicycle amenities (i.e., bike racks, benches, trash cans, Adirondack chairs, etc.) along Terminals A & B property, thereby completing the southern end of the Greenbelt loop. The northern end of the Greenbelt loop was completed in July 2015.

**Improvement 3:** Redevelop the Michigan Pier into a multi-use flex space and build on the success of Wilkeson Pointe. Clear, cap, and re-grade the approximate 8-acre site to accommodate Adult Playground, Workout Area, Ropes Course, foot/bicycle paths (doubling as x-country ski trails), cantilevered trail section (doubling as fishing pier), install railing and perimeter walkway along entire edge (doubling as setback), deck, beach, beer garden area, and adult games zone (i.e., horse shoes, bocce courts, pétanque, shuffleboard, volleyball, etc.). Include seasonal kiosks or other structures/facilities, recreational fields, pollinator fields, seasonal floating docks, safety ladders and life rings.

**Improvement 4:** Develop two (2) "overlook" locations adjacent the Bell Slip. Design shall be such that birding, painting, photography, and astronomy (publicly desired activities) could occur at these locations.

**Improvement 5:** Install comprehensive signage package from Gallagher Beach to Lighthouse based on the Erie County Shoreline Standards, including ancillary pedestrian and bicycle amenities (i.e., bike racks, benches, etc.) and landscaping features. Highlight key public locations as well as distances.

**Improvement 6:** Install an Osprey nesting platform in Times Beach Nature Preserve.

**Improvement 7:** Develop a mountain bike course(s) within a 6-acre area bounded by the Bell Slip, Lake Erie, and Fuhrman Blvd. Given the site's features and proximity to existing paved pathways, a series of unpaved trails (each less than 5 miles in length) and a pump track would be constructed to take advantage of the mature trees and small gently-rolling hills.

The goals/objectives of the Project are directly connected with ECHDC's guiding principles, including:

- Improving seasonal, recreational and tourist access, use and enjoyment of the Outer Harbor;
- Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access along the Outer Harbor, as well as connecting segments of the existing regional trails network along the Lake Erie waterfront;
- Minimize adverse impacts on communities and the environment by avoiding an inequitable distribution of impacts and maintaining neighborhood and community cohesion.

Upon adoption of the project plan by the ECHDC Board, a public hearing will be held in accordance with the provisions of the UDC Act.

The ECHDC Board also authorized entering into an agreement with B. R. Guest Ltd., a subsidiary of Rich Products Corporation for event management of the property at Buffalo's Outer Harbor. B.R. Guest will offer and oversee special events in designated public spaces of Buffalo's Outer Harbor for the calendar years 2016 - 2018 (with renewable options for 2019 and 2020). In exchange for conferring to the right to offer events and generate profits, ECHDC will receive a base rent and share of revenues, portions of which may be used to fund operations, as well as civic and cultural programming on the site.

B. R. Guest will manage the procurement of events and space rentals and concessions while creating a marketing plan, coordinating financial and legal details, and conducting site inspections in addition to other obligations.

The agreement between ECHDC and the Rich Product Corporation calls for ECHDC to receive a yearly base rent (\$12,000) and percentage (20%) of revenue.

"ECHDC is pleased to select B.R. Guest to further manage future events at the Outer Harbor," said Robert Gioia, Chairman ECHDC. "They have a long history of event management here and across the country. We believe we have the right partner to activate the Outer Harbor with exciting activities that will turn this waterfront property into an appealing year round destination."

"B.R. Guest is excited about the opportunity to work with the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation in managing future events at the Outer Harbor," said *Jonathan Dandes*, President of Rich Baseball Operations. "Our company has been in the event management business for over 30 years, and in agreeing to the term sheet with ECHDC, we look forward to developing a collaborative event schedule that will be both complementary and add to the work already being done at Canalside. We look forward to the completion and execution of our Agreement."

Additional business at today's meeting included the presentation of a check for \$250,000 to the ECHDC Board by National Grid, as part of National Grid's Urban Center/Commercial District Revitalization Program grant. The total grant was for \$500,000. ECHDC received the first \$250,000 payment last year. The generous grant was used toward the construction of the Historically Aligned Canals at Canalside.

#### **About Erie Canal Harbor Development Corp.**

The ECHDC is governed by a nine-member board consisting of seven voting directors and two non-voting, ex-officio directors. The seven voting directors are recommended by the New York State Governor and are appointed by the New York State Urban Development Corporation d/b/a Empire State Development as sole shareholder of ECHDC. The two nonvoting, ex-officio director positions are held by the Erie County Executive and the City of Buffalo Mayor.

As a subsidiary of Empire State Development, the state's chief economic development agency, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation supports and promotes the creation of infrastructure and public activities at Canalside, the Ohio Street corridor and the Outer Harbor that is attracting critical mass, private investment and enhance the enjoyment of the waterfront for residents and tourists in Western New York. 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. For more information on ECHDC, visit [www.eriecanalharbor.com](http://www.eriecanalharbor.com).