



## Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation

**For Immediate Release:** May 20, 2016

**Contact:**

Pamm Lent (Governor's Office) | [pamm.lent@esd.ny.gov](mailto:pamm.lent@esd.ny.gov) | (716) 846-8309 | (800) 260-7313  
Laura Magee (ECHDC) | [laura.magee@esd.ny.gov](mailto:laura.magee@esd.ny.gov) | (716) 846-8239 | (800) 260-7313

### **Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation Announces LeChase Construction to Manage Construction of Children's Museum at Canalside**

*LeChase will oversee the construction of Explore & More building*

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) today announced that LeChase Construction Services LLC will oversee the design and construction of Explore & More Children's Museum. The nearly 43,000 square foot building will be located next to the restored canal system at Canalside.

"LeChase clearly understands the complexity of the project, the site constraints and the schedule which will allow the museum to begin operation in 2018," said ECHDC Chairman Robert Gioia. "We are happy to have LeChase on board for this project. Explore & More Children's Museum is an important step as we work to redevelop the South Aud Block and build on amenities and attractions ECHDC already put in place on the site."

"This announcement moves us another step closer to the realization of a new, one-of-a-kind institution for children and families at Canalside," said Explore & More CEO Douglas Love. "We look forward to working with LeChase and ECHDC in this project which will positively impact the lives of so many children for generations to come."

The pre-construction phase services contract amount with LeChase will not exceed \$254,000. As per the ECHDC Board's previous authorization regarding agreements with Explore & More, ECHDC will contribute a maximum of \$9 million to the construction of the building and Explore & More will fund the remaining portion of the construction costs, which are currently estimated at \$13 million. In addition, Explore & More will be required to fund and construct the fit-out and exhibits of the museum. The funding source for ECHDC is the New York Power Authority.

The LeChase team also includes the Rodriguez Construction Group (Minority-Owned Business Enterprise) and Singleton Construction Consultants (Woman-Owned Business Enterprise). The pre-construction services, including value engineering and analysis, scheduling, cost estimating and document review, is expected to be completed in

November 2016. A groundbreaking is expected for March 2017 with construction completed by June 2018. The museum will open in 2018.

The South Aud Block consists of nearly one acre of development space and it is envisioned that multiple buildings will be constructed there over time. This contract is focused on designing the core and shell of the museum building that will be located on one of the South Aud Block's parcels (highlighted in orange [here](#)). The building will house Explore & More Children's Museum on five levels and will include an outdoor terrace. In 2012, following an earlier RFP process, Explore & More was selected by ECHDC to locate its new museum at Canalside.

The entire Canalside project area is located along the foot of Main Street and is within walking distance to downtown residential developments, two Marriott hotels, the First Niagara Center (home to the NHL Buffalo Sabres), the HARBORCENTER, Erie Basin Marina and Coca-Cola Field (home to the AAA Buffalo Bisons). The area has quickly become one the region's great year round destinations for passive and active recreational opportunities.

#### **About Explore & More Children's Museum**

Celebrating its 22<sup>nd</sup> year in operation, Explore & More Children's Museum provides an environment for creative play and learning through hands-on exhibits, activities and programs that inspire creativity, curiosity and imagination. Explore & More Children's Museum is currently located at 300 Gleed Avenue in East Aurora, and will open in the South Aud Block at Canalside on the Buffalo waterfront in 2018. For more information about the Museum, visit [www.exploreandmore.org](http://www.exploreandmore.org) or call (716) 655-5131 ext. 11.

#### **About Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation**

The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (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).

###