



In the News

Contact: Robbie Ann McPherson
ECIDA Marketing & Communications Manager
716.856.6525 ext. 125 office 310.433.7443 cell

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ECIDA Board tables votes for special projects due to lack of quorum *Special project items included BNE labor market study, minority-focused Beverly Gray Business Exchange Center, Canadian lead generation*

Buffalo, NY— The Erie County Industrial Development Agency's Board of Directors tabled votes for several special project items due to a lack of quorum at Wednesday's meeting.

Items before the Board included \$75,000 in funding for Buffalo Niagara Enterprise (BNE) to conduct a Labor Market Assessment study that will shed new light on area talent attraction, underemployment, workforce development, training and employer costs. The new study will build on a University of Buffalo Regional Institute report that was issued in 2010.

"Currently, we don't have the detailed workforce data necessary in order to ensure the most effective, cohesive workforce development strategy," said ECIDA President and CEO Steve Weathers. "Updating these demographics will help us determine how we can better align training, industry and employer incentives to continue our economic development growth in Erie County," he added.

In spite of the Board not being able to take any official action, BNE president Tom Kucharski made an informational presentation for the Labor Market study, and also requested \$100,000 from the ECIDA to continue support for Canadian lead generation and business attraction. Erie County lost the critical business development funding when the Erie County legislature removed it from the budget.

The Beverly Gray Business Exchange Center, a proposed minority and women-owned business support facility championed by City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, requested \$250,000 in support from the ECIDA, and the Board heard a detailed informational presentation by Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning official Rebecca Grandour.

The ECIDA Board also agreed to table approval of the agency's legal RFP, due to possible issues regarding elected officials on the Board of Directors who may have received campaign donations from any firms under consideration. The Board agreed to examine any possible conflict of interest issues that may exist, and revisit the issue at the March 31st meeting.

The Regional Development Corporation, which serves as the ECIDA's lending arm and shares the same Board of Directors, presented a \$1.6 million loan for Robinson Home products,

Inc. The local home goods manufacturer will use the funds in combination with \$5.6 million from First Niagara Bank and \$900,000 in equity to purchase and expand its current facility at 500 Bailey Avenue in Buffalo, NY. The RDC Board unanimously approved the project.

The Erie County Industrial Development Agency is an independent, public benefit corporation sanctioned by the State of New York to offer tax incentives to qualified businesses, and is dedicated to furthering economic development, adaptive reuse of qualified properties, job creation and ensuring a thriving business environment in Erie County. The staff of the ECIDA are not employees of the City of Buffalo, the County of Erie, or the State of New York. The ECIDA does not receive operating funds from taxpayer revenues. The ECIDA receives its operating funds by collecting fees from businesses that enter into contracts with the Agency, from investments, and from loan fees.

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