

Recommended Award: Exhibit "C"

Applicant Name:	Aquarium of Niagara	REDC Region:	WNY
Project Type:	Tourism/Marketing	County:	Niagara
Industry:	Tourism/Education	Locality:	Niagara Falls
Amount Requested:	\$2,325,700	Start Date:	11/01/2013
		Finish Date:	06/01/2014
RECOMMENDED OFFER			
Recommended Total Award:	\$ 1,750,000		
Total Project Cost:	\$ 5,058,773		
% of Project Cost Recommended:	40 %		
REGIONAL IMPACT MEASUREMENTS			
Number of Jobs Retained:	3		
Number of Jobs Created:			
Average Salary of Jobs:			
Indirect Jobs Created			
Other Impact	Increase visitors to the Aquarium and the surrounding area.		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION			
<p>The Aquarium will begin work on Phase I of the organization's six phase Master Plan, which will significantly enhance the Aquarium as a key attraction for visitors to Niagara Falls. The project to be undertaken in Phase I is the construction of a new Penguin Exhibit for the Aquarium's colony of Humboldt Penguins. This project will allow the Aquarium to double the amount of Penguin's housed and increase the exhibit size from 500 sf. to approx. 2,500 sf.</p> <p>The completion of Phase I of this project will give the Aquarium the momentum it needs to leverage the financing of the next 4 phases of the Master Plan which will ultimately provide visitors of the Aquarium with a world class experience. The phases which will be implemented following this exhibit include: renovated classrooms, lavatory facilities, ticket booths, and gift shops; site work including new parking lots, picnic areas, statues, trees etc.; renovating the lobby; and other interior renovations.</p>			
OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS RECEIVED			
ESD:	\$	NYPA:	\$
IDA:	\$	Other:	\$
PREVIOUS STATE ASSISTANCE OFFERED OR PROVIDED			
TYPE	AMOUNT	STATUS	

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

A \$25 million investment is being made in the Niagara Falls State Park to create a world class destination. The Aquarium of Niagara sits at the foot of this park that is about to become a true tourist destination and in turn will bring increased numbers of visitors to the surrounding attractions. Due to the prominent placement of the Aquarium at the foot of the Park, the Aquarium will have the opportunity to capitalize on these new generations of tourists. However, for the Aquarium to be successful in giving these new tourists an experience that will make them extend their stay in the American Niagara Falls, the Aquarium will have to provide state-of-the-art facilities and state-of-the-art programming.

In its current state the applicant is able to maintain its average annual attendance of approx. 250,000 guests which already puts them in the top 5 destinations. Presently, Niagara Falls sees 6.2 million domestic visitors who spend approximately \$711 million dollars. For the applicant to capitalize on the visitors who come to Niagara Falls by getting them to increase their stay in the region the applicant must execute Phase I of their Master Plan. Phase I will create a new penguin exhibit for the Humboldt Penguins, the premier species located at the Aquarium.

The organization has already invested \$750,000 of its own resources into pre-construction capital improvements and repairs to get the much needed facility renovation underway. Phase I will be the first step in a fundraising campaign that will ultimately lead to the completion of the Aquarium Master Plan, which will in-turn create a true tourist destination in Niagara Falls.

Each tourist destination in the Buffalo Niagara Region is an important piece of the puzzle of why this Region has failed to capitalize on the tourists that pass through this Region for so many years. The Aquarium is in a unique position, not only because of its physical location but because the State has made no real investment in enhancing the Aquarium experience for tourists, the way it has for some other prominent tourist destinations.

This project has been identified as a priority project by members of the State, County and City Legislatures. Letters of support of this project have been filed by Mayor Paul Dyster of Niagara Falls, Chairman William L. Ross of the Niagara County Legislature, Chairman Frank Strangio of Niagara USA, New York State Assembly Member John D. Ceretto and New York State Senator George D. Maziarz.

This project is a fundamental step in escalating the Aquarium of Niagara to a world-class destination. This is also a great opportunity for New York State and the WNYPPAB to show their support for tourism in Niagara Falls and the future of the Aquarium.