



**BUFFALO NIAGARA PARTNERSHIP  
POSITION STATEMENT  
October 5, 2007**

**(1) Support for 80% of “bed tax” revenues to be dedicated to the CVB for tourism marketing in the 2008 Erie County Budget.**

**(2) Support for an amendment to the Erie County Charter – approved through Local Law by the Erie County Legislature –to dedicate 100% of “bed tax” revenues to the CVB by 2010**

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership, representing 2,500 businesses with over 200,000 employees, supports the full dedication of Erie County’s hotel occupancy tax, or “bed tax” to the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), to be used for convention and tourism marketing.

**Two steps are necessary to ensure that this is accomplished:**

- 1. The dedication must be placed into the 2008 Erie County Budget.**
- 2. The Erie County Legislature must then formalize the funding by passing a Local Law amending the County Charter to include the full dedication of the bed tax to the CVB.**

Currently, the CVB receives an amount equal to 53% of bed tax revenues, which must then cover expenses beyond marketing our region, including the debt service on Convention Center improvements. That funding was further cut during the “budget crisis” of 2005, resulting in a fewer number of convention and event bookings at that time. The tourism industry is now feeling the effects of that lack of funding.

In Erie County, tourism marketing continues to be under funded, in spite of the fact that the industry generates a 20-1 return-on-investment, resulting in:

- \$150M in hotel revenues annually
- \$650M in direct visitor spending
- More than \$50M in sales tax revenues (money that Erie County sales and property tax payers don't have to pay to support roads, bridges, cultural organizations, social services, libraries, etc.)
- 15,000 jobs

To ensure that our region can compete with other venues in the Northeast that would attract visitors (Pittsburgh invests four times what Buffalo currently spends in tourism marketing), it is vital that we make this investment now. Proper funding of the CVB has demonstrated proven results in returning conventions, amateur sports and larger events such as NCAA tournaments to our community. These events provide both national publicity as well as millions of dollars in visitor spending – relieving our local tax burden.