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# Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society

Founded 1862

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January 11, 1999

Hon. Charles Swanick  
Chairman, Erie County Legislator  
3200 Elmwood Avenue, Rm. 115  
Kenmore, NY 14217

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Dear Chuck:

Best wishes at the beginning of a new year. I am writing to follow up on information that we provided at our legislative breakfast on November 30. Since that time, we have made some important progress. The City of Buffalo has agreed to use money from an Environmental Quality Bond Act grant to contract for engineering and design studies for the stabilization of the Historical Society's foundations, repair of terrace walls and portico steps, and installation of climate control systems, and for the development of firmer project budgets. This work should be completed by the end of March. Another major advance is that the City has contracted to replace the antiquated boilers in the building, and that work is about to begin.

Many problems still need to be addressed, however. Recently several marble veneer stones have fallen from terrace walls, and the walls continue to subside. Water intrusion under the portico stairs continues to deteriorate structural steel. The situation is becoming critical.

We have recently conducted focus groups about the building and the Society's activities, and have found that there is a deep love for the building amongst Western New Yorkers, and that efforts to restore it would produce increased traffic. I enclose some estimates of the advantages that we could expect from undertaking the projects that I propose.

The centennial of the Pan American Exposition, for which our building served as the New York State Building, is in 2001. Community-wide observances are being planned, and efforts are being made to promote Buffalo as a major tourist destination for that year. We will serve as a visitor orientation facility during the time of the centennial. To do so, we simply must have the building restored to its original condition. To that end I have requested major capital funding from New York State, and from the City capital budget. Once the studies I mentioned above are complete, and our overall funding needs are determined, I hope that I will also be able to count on the County's help.

Sincerely,

William H. Siener  
Executive Director

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**Fact Sheet**  
**Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society Climate Control Project**

**Benefits**

**Opportunity to Attract More Exciting Exhibits and Loans:** Currently other museums are unwilling to lend objects that might sustain damage from lack of climate control. When we are able to borrow exhibits, interactive components require high levels of maintenance, resulting in inefficient use of staff time.

**Opportunity to Use Building more effectively in the Summer for Fund Raising:** Recently, the success of two such opportunities, targeting young professionals, have foundered because of extreme temperatures in the building.

**Opportunities to increase earned income:** A 40% increase in attendance would result in net museum store sales increases of \$9,000 at current rates of spending. Enhanced marketing efforts would raise visitor spending levels closer to national averages, resulting in net revenue increases of \$36,960 annually.

**Spin-off benefits for other nearby museums and local businesses:** Spending for food alone in the Elmwood Museum District and Elmwood Shopping area would increase by a minimum of \$72,000 per year, and generate at least \$5,760 in sales tax revenue for local government and \$10,800 in tips.

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