

**CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND  
2020 LODGING/TOURISM FUND  
PROPOSAL**

**Project Name:**

“Fish Where the Fish Are:

A Multi-Channel Approach to Raise Slow-Season Awareness for Bloedel Reserve in the Cascadia Market”

**Name of Applicant Organization:**

Bloedel Reserve

**Applicant Organization IRS Chapter 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) status and Tax ID Number:**

501(c)(3), 91-6182786

**Date of Incorporation as a Washington State Corporation and UBI Number:**

1974 501(c)(3) 601130563

**Primary Contact:**

Gretchen Douma

**Mailing Address:**

7571 NE Dolphin Drive, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

**Email(s):**

gdouma@bloedelreserve.org

**Day phone:**

206-842-7631, x26

Please indicate the type of project described in your proposal:

	Project Type
✓	Tourism marketing
	Marketing and operations of special events and festivals designed to attract tourists
✓	Supporting the operations of a tourism-related facility owned or operated by a nonprofit organization*
	Supporting the operations and/or capital expenditures of a tourism- related facility owned or operated by a municipality or a public facilities district*

\*If the proposal requests funds for a tourism-related facility, please indicate the legal owner of that facility:

**LODGING/TOURISM FUND APPLICATION  
Applicant Information**

**Please respond to each of these questions in the order listed. If the proposal includes multiple partners, please include the requested information for each organization.**

- 1. Describe the applicant organization's mission, history and areas of expertise. Describe the applicant's experience in tourism promotion on Bainbridge Island and its demonstrated ability to complete the proposed project.**

Bloedel Reserve's mission is to enrich people's lives through a premier public garden of natural and designed Pacific Northwest landscapes. The Reserve's primary focus is the sustainable operation of our 150-acre, waterfront public garden in accordance with four organizational priorities: excellence in horticulture and design, commitment to stewardship and conservation, promotion of nature and well-being, and stimulation of inspiration and creativity. Approximately 60,000 people enjoy our spectacular grounds year-round through: walks on more than two miles of groomed trails, and by taking guided tours, and attending lectures and facilitated discussions, community concerts, readings, and special events. We also offer two programs that are available at no cost to participants: Strolls for Well-Being (a program that uses the grounds as therapist in improving physical and mental health) and the Creative Residency (an artist-in-residence program). Programming partners include Island Volunteer Caregivers, Bainbridge Performing Arts, BARN, Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, and most recently, Virginia Mason, among others.

Founded by Prentice and Virginia Bloedel in 1974 and opened to the public in 1988, we are grateful to the Bloedels for intentionally setting aside this vast acreage on Bainbridge Island for the enjoyment of future generations. As a reluctant heir to his father's timber business, Mr. Bloedel witnessed firsthand the need for the protection of forests and land. Far ahead of his time as a visionary conservationist, Mr. Bloedel made use of several of today's conservation concepts; perhaps his most enduring "green" idea was to plant seedlings to reforest clear-cut land. Further, he knew from his own personal experience about the restorative power of nature, having been long-affected by polio.

Today, Bloedel Reserve remains a safe haven for a vast array of plants and wildlife and is a premier cultural destination for tourists from across Puget Sound, the nation, and the world. The property is a unique blend of natural woodlands, ponds, and beautifully landscaped gardens including the Fujitaro Kubota designed Japanese Garden, now ranked in the top five in the United States according to *Japanese Garden Journal*. Bloedel Reserve has been cited as Bainbridge's top tourist attraction for eight years in a row by the *Bainbridge Island Review*. In 2019, the *Review's* readers also picked the Reserve as "best place to bring out of town guests" and best holiday attraction. This year, *Seattle Times* cited Bloedel Reserve as one of the best places in the region to for a "digital detox" day, recognizing the vital part Bloedel Reserve plays in the health and well-being of our community. And recognition of Bloedel Reserve extends even further. In August of this year, editors of Expedia's online international travel guides sent a photographer to capture images of the Reserve for their online directories. In October, we will host a film crew from BBC TV in London who will be featuring Bloedel Reserve in a 3-part series on American gardens, hosted by garden expert Monty Don. The series will air first on the BBC in the UK and will be later available for international viewing via Netflix. Our website, Facebook page, and Instagram posts give us a strong online presence year-round and we are constantly looking for ways to improve our connectivity and online visitor experience.

We have been fortunate to receive LTAC funding six of the last seven years and have repeatedly demonstrated our ability to deliver on our projects. Our proposal this year forms a cornerstone of what will become the Reserve's first-ever Strategic Communications Plan (2020-2030). With LTAC support, we will significantly stretch the reach of our marketing in order to become a favored destination of the communities around us.

**2. If appropriate, please identify the project partner(s) and briefly describe the involvement of each. Please note that the maximum award of \$100,000 will apply to any single project, even if proposed by a team of partners.**

The current proposal represents a new direction for tourism marketing at Bloedel Reserve and is being led by our new Communications Manager. On the job for just three months at the time of this writing, she has not yet had the opportunity to formalize any partnerships beyond a new relationship that we recently formed with Adventure Artisans, A Virtuoso Travel Advisor Member. Future partnership-building plans include networking with travel and public gardens colleagues by attending the following:

- The Concierge Guild Trade Show (October 25, 2019)
- North American Garden Tourism Conference in Victoria, BC, CANADA (November 8-9, 2019)

- American Public Gardens Association Conference in Portland, OR (June 20-26, 2020)
- National Arts Marketing Project Conference in Los Angeles, CA (June 11-13, 2021)

**3. If appropriate, please list each project and amount of funding awarded and utilized from Lodging Tax Fund within the last five years (2015-2019):**

Year Awarded	Project	Awarded	Utilized
2015:	Destination tourism marketing	\$12,526.00	\$12,526.00
2016:	Destination tourism marketing	\$14,632.00	\$14,632.00
2017:	Destination tourism marketing	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
2018:	Destination tourism marketing	\$23,000.00	\$19,124.81
2019	Did not apply	Did not apply	Did not apply

**4. If any projects previously funded through the Lodging Tax (Civic Improvement) Fund were not completed and/or if reports were not submitted to the City as requested, please explain – N/A**

**LODGING/TOURISM FUND APPLICATION  
Project Information**

**1. Describe the proposed project.**

**A. Scope – Identify the project’s main objectives and how each will be achieved. Be as specific as possible about the proposed services, measurable impacts, distribution method, and costs.**

Bloedel Reserve is a year-round cultural institution and tourist destination that attracts visitors from around the Puget Sound region as well as from around the state, the country and the world. Though our attendance has grown significantly over the last 10 years, we are aware that our visibility both in and outside of the immediate Puget Sound area can be improved. We can’t attract visitors if they don’t know who we are.

Our project – “Fish Where the Fish Are: A Multi-Channel Approach to Raise Slow-Season Awareness of Bloedel Reserve in the Cascadia Market” – is a two-part initiative that focuses on finding and bringing overnight visitors to Bloedel Reserve. We are specifically targeting those likely prospects who live between 50 miles and 300 miles from Bainbridge Island in what we are referring to as the “Cascadian corridor.” This region includes Vancouver and Victoria, B.C. to the north, Boise, ID to the east, Portland, OR to the south, and all of the Olympic peninsula to the west.

**Part One – The Cascadia Media Plan**

The LTAC funds would allow us to purchase targeted advertising on TV, radio and through electronic media channels in markets that we have thus far been unable to afford, over and above our usual and customary media buys.

The Cascadia Media Plan puts Bloedel Reserve in front of select audiences who meet the following criteria:

- They live within driving distance of Bloedel Reserve and Bainbridge Island
- They have an interest in arts, culture, and travel.
- They have the resources to make weekend trips or extend business travel in and around Western Washington.

Based on the demographics of the audiences we will be reaching, we believe we can raise awareness among the prospects who are most likely to spend time not only at Bloedel Reserve but also visiting

other Bainbridge Island cultural organizations, shopping in Bainbridge Island stores, and staying overnight in Bainbridge Island lodging of all types, especially during slow seasons. These are travelers who have the capacity to plan multi-day getaways as well as make impromptu long weekend trips.

**Part Two -- The Overnight Visitor Discount Admission Program**

During our slow-season months (January-March, 2020 and October-December 2020), we will offer discounted admission to anyone who brings us an Overnight Visitor Discount Coupon from their lodging. Our plan is to partner with lodging establishments all across Bainbridge Island. We will provide them with rack cards and discount coupons to give to their guests during their stay. We will promote the program through our media placements wherever possible and through our own website, social media, and emails. There is no cost to the lodging establishments to participate, simply their willingness to give their guests one of our coupons.

**B. Budget – Include a detailed budget for the proposed project with itemized expenses and income. Include the amount requested from the Lodging Tax Fund and identify other sources of funding anticipated or obtained, including matching funds, as well as any in-kind contributions necessary to complete the project.**

We are requesting the maximum allowed grant of \$23,000 to be split as follows:

**Cascadia Media Plan**

Media Placements -- \$19,000 – Media buys to be negotiated among multiple media outlets

Media Type	Media Channel
Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KUOW FM</li> <li>• N3 News Network</li> <li>• Oregon Public Radio</li> <li>• Idaho Public Broadcasting</li> </ul>
TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KCTS TV</li> <li>• Oregon Public TV</li> <li>• Idaho Public Broadcasting</li> </ul>
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crosscut E-News</li> <li>• Journey Magazine AAA (Online options)</li> <li>• Sunset Magazine (Online options)</li> </ul>

Our intent is to negotiate with our media partners for their best non-profit sponsorship rates and to build an overlapping schedule of buys that keeps us in front of our target audiences during both slow-season periods.

**Overnight Visitor Discount Admission Program**

Printing, 2 flights of rack cards/coupons -- \$4,000

We will create a customized rack card and discount coupon to distribute to any Bainbridge Island lodging establishment that would like to partner with us during the slow-season months of January, February, and March and October, November, and December of 2020. We will print the cards in two flights so that we can customize them for each season. We currently have an ongoing relationship with Marshall Suites. We will also connect with the Bainbridge Lodging Association in order to promote the program to its members and to find out how to best reach other lodging establishments on the Island. Lodging partners may opt in (or out) at any time during the two slow-season segments of calendar year 2020

**C. Schedule – Provide a project timeline that identifies major milestones**

Month	Activity
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<b>NOV 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate and lock down media buys for January, February and March, 2020.</li> <li>• Meet with prospective lodging partners to discuss Overnight Visitor Discount Admission Program.</li> </ul>
<b>DEC 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and print first flight of Overnight Visitor rack cards and discount coupons.</li> </ul>
<b>JAN–MAR 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute Overnight Visitor rack cards and coupons.</li> <li>• Collect data on Overnight Visitor Discount Program.</li> <li>• Collect data on media impressions and click-through rates for electronic ads.</li> </ul>
<b>APR 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess January-March 2020 data.</li> <li>• Get feedback from lodging partners.</li> <li>• Revise media buys and discount program terms as necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>JULY 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate and lock down media buys for October, November, and December, 2020.</li> <li>• Meet with lodging partners to discuss Overnight Visitor Discount Admission Program.</li> </ul>
<b>SEPT 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and print second flight of Overnight Visitor rack cards and discount coupons.</li> </ul>
<b>OCT-DEC 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute Overnight Visitor rack cards and coupons.</li> <li>• Collect data on Overnight Visitor Discount Program.</li> <li>• Collect data on media impressions and click-through rates for electronic ads.</li> </ul>
<b>JAN 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess Oct-Dec 2020 data</li> <li>• Get feedback from lodging partners.</li> <li>• Evaluate success of entire project – The Cascadia Media Plan and The Overnight Visitor Discount Admission Program</li> </ul>

**2. Provide a brief narrative statement to address each of the selection criteria:**

**A. Expected impact on increased tourism in 2020. Please provide specific estimates of how the project will impact the number of people traveling 50 miles or more to Bainbridge Island for the activity, or who will travel from another country or state outside of Washington state for this activity. If appropriate compare/contrast this impact to the actual or estimated number of tourists at your event/facility in 2018 and estimates for 2019**

With more exposure to the larger population centers up and down the greater Cascadia corridor such as Vancouver and Victoria, B.C., Boise, Idaho, and Portland Oregon, as well as more exposure in our own Washington markets of Bellingham, Tacoma, and Olympia, to name just a few, we expect to see an increase in visitors coming to Bloedel Reserve from 50 or more miles away.

We also hope that offering Bainbridge Island lodging establishments a valued-added promotion for their overnight guests will be an additional incentive to encourage visitors to stay longer and, of course, include a visit to Bloedel Reserve while they are on the Island.

**B. Expected impact on, or increase in, overnight stays on the Island. Please include actual or estimated numbers of tourists who will stay overnight in paid accommodations in Bainbridge Island establishments in 2020 as a result of the proposed activities. Please include the basis for any estimates.**

It is our assumption that out-of-area visitors who come to Bloedel Reserve have chosen to visit the Reserve as part of a varied itinerary of activities on the Island including visiting family, shopping, dining, and spending time at other cultural and arts organizations. They may also be business travelers who have time to extend their trip.

By using broadcast and electronic media to raise awareness of Bloedel Reserve in broader markets, our intention to increase the likelihood that visitors will choose to include a stop on Bainbridge Island when they are making travel plans that include our area.

We also believe that providing lodging establishments with a value-added coupon to one of the Island's most lauded attractions will enhance the overall visitor BI experience.

**C. Projected economic impact on Bainbridge Island businesses, facilities, events, and amenities, including sales of overnight lodging, meals, tours, gifts, and souvenirs. (Helpful data may be found on the Washington State Department of Commerce website.)**

Our assumption is that visitors coming to Bloedel Reserve from 50 or more miles away are more likely to require overnight lodging than visitors who travel less than 50 miles to get here. We also believe that overnight visitors are more likely to make purchases of meals, gifts, and souvenirs while on Bainbridge Island. Though we know how many visitors to Bloedel Reserve are coming from various communities around the region, we currently have no data that can reliably tell us how many of our visitors are actually staying overnight on Bainbridge Island and then making a visit to Bloedel Reserve part of their Island experience.

By introducing the Overnight Visitors Discount Admission Program, we can track visitors who are staying over one (or more) nights on Bainbridge Island. We can collect discount coupons at our Gatehouse to calculate redemption rates. Once we have the Overnight Visitors Discount Admission Program in place, we can establish baseline data for those visitors who are staying overnight on the Island and then create benchmarks to help us attract more such visitors both to Bloedel Reserve and to Bainbridge Island in years to come.

**D. The project's potential to draw visitors to the Island and increase overnight stays during the off-season (i.e. October 1 until Memorial Day).**

In our media messaging, we will highlight not only the self-guided experience of visiting Bloedel Reserve but also the variety of activities and events that take place during the months of January through March and October through December 2020. Those activities will include:

- Lectures by renowned speakers in the field of horticulture and conservation
- Guided walks through the grounds with Bloedel's own expert staff
- Art exhibitions in the Bloedel Residence in conjunction with our Creative Residency Program
- The annual October squash scavenger hunt for families
- Family-friendly holiday-themed activities
- Nighttime solstice walks at year-end

Our increased media reach will give us more opportunities to present Bloedel Reserve to a much wider audience and to make Bloedel Reserve another reason to come to Bainbridge Island.

We will also print the Overnight Visitors Discount Admission Program rack cards and coupons in two flights -- one for the January-March period and one for the October-December period. That way we can inform visitors about the various activities taking place during their stay.

**E. The applicant's demonstrated history of organizational and project success.**

Bloedel Reserve has received LTAC funding since 2012. We have successfully managed the funds that we have been awarded and have completed the projects for which they were intended including the construction of the Japanese Guest House and Garden, which is one of the Reserve's major draws for visitors.

**F. Describe any partnerships with other organizations and businesses in the proposed project – including efforts to minimize the duplication of services where appropriate and encourage cooperative marketing.**

It is our plan to negotiate buys with our media partners to leverage as much air time and as many online impressions as we can within our limited budget. Our media plan is designed to ensure that our target audiences are hearing about Bloedel Reserve and Bainbridge Island repeatedly and across multiple media channels.

Our Overnight Visitors Discount Admission Program will only work if we can create ongoing relationships with the lodging establishments on Bainbridge Island. We plan to reach out to Bainbridge Island lodging proprietors to introduce the program and to explain how we will promote it via our own website and promotional emails.

**G. Describe how this project is new to our community or reflects an innovative use of LTAC funds.**

The Cascadia Media Plan is unusual for Bloedel Reserve because we have not used broadcast media or travel-centric publications to specifically reach target markets in the Cascadia corridor. We believe that these select media buys will raise awareness of Bloedel Reserve among audiences that are highly likely to travel to the Puget Sound region but have traditionally limited their site-seeing activities to Seattle or who have bypassed Bainbridge Island in favor of excursions to the Olympic Peninsula.

We have not previously attempted to systematically track and quantify overnight visitors who make a trip to Bloedel Reserve a part of their visit to Bainbridge Island. The Overnight Visitors Discount Coupon Program gives us a means to encourage visits from out-of-town guests and to capture reliable data about those visits.

**H. Expected draw to the proposed event, in particular how it will both generate an expected increase in tourism and appeal to the community. N/A**

**I. If for a capital project, detail the project's impact on increased tourism. N/A**

**J. Describe the degree to which the project goals and/or results can be objectively assessed.**

We can capture and assess the following information for each aspect of our plan:

- Broadcast media plan -- We can capture reach and frequency numbers, which we expect will give us much greater exposure to a larger population than our local print media buys can achieve.
- Electronic media placements – We can capture impressions for each electronic placement. We can also use live links and click-through data to assess interest in our messaging.
- Gatehouse visitor activity – We can collect and count Overnight Visitors Discount Admission coupons to and, combined with our zip code capture system, use that data to discover what percentage of Bloedel Reserve visitors are staying one or more nights on the Island and where they are coming from, all of which will help us craft future marketing.

**K. Describe the degree to which the project will leverage award funds with additional matching funds or donated in-kind goods or services.**

Our proposed Cascadia Awareness Media Plan and Overnight Visitors Discount Admission Program aimed at overnight visitors *will be value-added initiatives that will run concurrently* with our regular local and regional media placements. Some of the media and promotional outlets we will continue to use to promote Bloedel Reserve throughout the entire year include: *Bainbridge Island News / Kitsap Herald, ParentMap, Seattle's Child, NW PrimeTime, Art Access, Visit Seattle maps and guides, and ferry ads and rack cards on both Seattle/Bainbridge and Kingston/Edmonds routes.*

The media buys and collateral materials noted above will be funded through the regular Bloedel Reserve marketing budget, *not LTAC funds*.

The Cascadia Awareness Media Plan will increase our exposure in the immediate Puget Sound market as well as in target markets farther out, thanks to the saturation and reach of public TV and radio broadcasting. With carefully crafted messaging, we can communicate that Bainbridge Island and Bloedel Reserve are must-see stops for visitors coming to our area. The Overnight Visitors Discount Admission Program will give us a means of quantifying the number of visitors who come to Bloedel Reserve as part of a longer stay on Bainbridge Island.

### Supporting Documentation

#### 1. Provide your organization's 2018 income / expense summary.

**Bloedel Reserve Statement of Activities**  
12.31.18

	Actual 12.31.18
<b>Support and Revenue:</b>	
<b>Unrestricted Support</b>	
Contributions (Annual Mission Support)	282,152
Comprehensive Campaign (Unrestricted)	305,200
Garden Party	586,025
Weddings	98,000
<b>Total Unrestricted Support</b>	1,271,378
<b>Temporarily Restricted Support</b>	
Contributions - Earmarked	31,702
Corporate Sponsors	20,000
Grants	54,312
<b>Total Temporarily Restricted Support</b>	106,014
<b>Earned Revenue</b>	
Program Revenue	30,281
Memberships	296,265
Admissions	509,924
Shop Sales	123,227
Facilities Rental Revenue	10,500
<b>Total Earned Revenue</b>	970,196
<b>Total Support and Earned Revenue:</b>	<b>2,347,587</b>
<b>Total Expenditures:</b>	
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>	
Payroll & Benefit Expense	2,205,993
Grounds Expense	87,129
Repairs & Maintenance	74,485
Program & Event Expense	59,679
Fundraising Expense	12,764
Membership Expense	2,551
Retail Expense (incl. COGS)	76,134
Advertising	59,758
Bank Services & Processing Fees	39,096
Line of Credit Interest Fees	5,156
Copying & Printing Expense	58,517
Equipment < \$2,500	34,383
Lease & Service Agreements	27,984
Insurance, Tax & License Expense	76,228

Outside Computer Service	25,512
Postage & Shipping	8,992
Professional Development	38,119
Professional Services	349,847
Supplies	71,141
Travel	22,878
Utilities Expense	55,379
Other Expense	20,579
<b>Total Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>3,412,303</b>

<b>NET Operating INCOME:</b>	<b>(1,064,715)</b>
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**2. Provide your organization's 2019 budget and an estimate of actual 2019 revenue and expenses**

We project the budget and the actuals for 2019 to be the same.

**BUDGET - 2019 OPERATIONS (Board Approved January 16, 2019)**

Account Description	FY 2019 BUDGET (Approved)
Contributions	442,146
Garden Party	575,000
Weddings	61,700
Grants/Sponsorships/Earmarked Contributions	76,860
Comprehensive Campaign Allocation	318,120
<b>Total Contributed Revenue</b>	<b>1,473,826</b>
Program Revenue	57,000
Admissions	511,723
Shop Sales	149,622
Membership	316,250
Facilities Rental	10,565
<b>Total Earned Revenue</b>	<b>1,045,160</b>
<b>Total Contributed and Earned Revenue</b>	<b>2,518,986</b>
Payroll & Benefit Expense	2,416,990
Grounds Expense	69,300
Repairs & Maintenance Expense	66,300
Program & Event Expense	71,909
Fundraising Expense	20,820
Membership Expense	3,000
Retail Expense	90,500
Advertising Expense	72,800
Bank Service & Processing Fees	40,488
Interest Expense for Bridge Loan	12,500
Copying & Printing Expense	47,910
Equipment < \$1,500	25,850
Lease & Service Agreement Expense	29,880
Insurance, Tax & License Expense	76,972
Outside Computer Service Expense	32,052
Postage & Shipping Expense	20,670
Professional Development Expense	49,078
Professional Service Fees	217,410
Supplies Expense	83,880
Travel Expense	30,490
Utilities Expense	57,000
Other Expense	31,912
<b>Total Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>3,568,061</b>
<b>NET INCOME/(LOSS) FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>(1,049,075)</b>
Draw from RAB Endowment	140,500
Draw from Main Investment	908,575
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,049,075</b>

**3. Letters of Partnership – Include letters from any partnering organizations committing to joint sponsorship of the application and specifying their intended activities. – N/A**



# BLOEDEL RESERVE

7571 NE DOLPHIN ROAD, BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA 98110  
206-842-7631 | [WWW.BLOEDELRESERVE.ORG](http://WWW.BLOEDELRESERVE.ORG)

September 16, 2019

Lodging Tax Committee  
City of Bainbridge Island  
280 Madison Avenue  
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to apply for 2020 LTAC funding. Your increased support of tourism is very much appreciated and we are grateful to be among the many organizations you assist.

Attached is our proposal, "Fish Where the Fish Are: A Multi-Channel Approach to Raise Slow-Season Awareness for Bloedel Reserve in the Cascadia Market." In addition to the proposal, supplemental financial information is attached, as requested.

Your main contact for the proposal is Gretchen Douma, Bloedel Reserve's communication manager. She can be contacted at [gdouma@bloedelreserve.org](mailto:gdouma@bloedelreserve.org) or 206-842-7631, x26. Feel free to reach out to her or me with any questions you may have.

Edward Moydell  
Executive Director