RAD BOARD NEWS

RAD Welcomes New Advisory Board Members

RAD is pleased to welcome two new members to the Citizens Advisory Board which is comprised of Allegheny County leaders who provide ongoing advice to the RAD Board of Directors on a variety of issues. Kathleen McKenzie is the Vice President of Community and Civic Affairs at Allegheny Health Network. She serves on several community boards including the Pennsylvania Economy League, the Carnegie Science Center and the Chatham University PA Center for Women in Politics. Ruthann L. Omer is President of Gateway Engineers. She serves on the boards of Economic Development South and the Local Government Academy, and is active in many community efforts on storm water management.

The Region Celebrates 15th RADical Days Event

“RADical Days is a special opportunity to explore the outstanding art, music, dance, drama and cultural facilities represented by our outstanding regional assets,” said Dusty Elias Kirk, RAD Board Chair. “They’re free, fun and open to all.”

This year, more than 60,000 people visited 45 events that spanned the diverse organizations that receive RAD funding. Now in its 15th year, the RADical Days annual event features free admissions and activities sponsored by the RAD and its funded applicants to attract the public for the sales tax funds that support the region’s libraries, parks, sports and civic facilities, and arts and culture organizations. To celebrate the occasion, 15 organizations offered special discounts to the public to continue the RADical Days spirit.

RADical Days is planned for early Fall in 2017. Sign-up for email alerts on RAD’s web site radworkhere.org or follow announcements at facebook.com/radworkhere.

RAD BOARD APPROVES NEARLY $100 MILLION BUDGET FOR 2017; NEW FUNDS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

In December at a public business meeting, the RAD board of directors approved a nearly $100 million budget for 2017 that will provide funding to sustain and to enhance the operations of 151 regional assets. The $98.4 million final budget is $1.5 million more than the 2016 budget.

“Public investment in our libraries, parks, sports facilities, arts and culture and transit is essential to the wellbeing of our community,” said Dusty Elias Kirk, RAD Board Chair. “With continued support from the public in partnership with corporations, foundations and private donors, our assets will continue to make our region a thriving place to live, work and play.”

The 2017 budget includes $3.7 million in capital grants, with nearly $1.8 million of that in discretionary capital grants that will make substantial improvements to asset infrastructure repairs and improvements. Several require matching funds. Projects at the contractual assets include: elevator repairs at the Pittsburgh Zoo; (planned replacement at Phipps Conservatory); and exhibits improvements at the National Aviary. Funding for capital projects at the annual assets includes trail development, energy efficiency improvements at the Sew, John History Center, security enhancements at the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust and facilities improvements at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall.

The 2017 final budget includes increased operating support to all nine of the contractual assets and 41 annual grant organizations. Nine organizations will receive RAD grants for the first time (see back page). The Allocation Committee noted that discretionary capital grants always depend on revenue and therefore change from year to year, saying, “We will continue to pay careful attention to revenue projections, taking into consideration the possibility for adjustments in 2018 and beyond. We remain confident that the budget...recognizes the public support for our regional assets and will help meet many of the challenges and opportunities.”

The 2017 grants will be funded by $34.5 million in projected new sales tax receipts, with the balance coming from the District’s grant stabilization reserve. Under the approved budget, libraries continue to receive the largest share of funds at 31%; parks and trails would receive 30%; sports facilities and the convention center 15%; arts and culture organizations 12%; regional facilities (Zoo, Phipps and Aviary) 8%; and transit would see 3% of the spending. Funding for District operations would remain at under 1%.

The 2017 budget was adopted after a year-long process that included public meetings and hearings, a formal application process and site visits to applicants. For the first time, RAD’s Citizen Advisory Board participated formally in the process, leading one of the hearings with applicants.

Since 1995, the one percent sales tax paid by residents and visitors to Allegheny County has resulted in a $3.4 billion investment in the region. Half of the funds go directly to Allegheny County and its municipalities for tax relief and municipal services.

(Phipps Conservatory)
Nine arts and culture organizations will receive RAD grants for the first time next year, adding to the diverse mix of RAD-funded regional assets across Allegheny County.

- **ACH Clear Pathways** nurtures creativity in underserved children and youth through visual and performing arts.
- **Corning Dances** is a vehicle for the multi-disciplinary dance/theater productions of Beth Corning.
- **Front Porch Theatricals** creates professional, high-quality musical theater productions featuring Pittsburgh’s broad actor, artistic and technical talent base with particular emphasis on mentoring young talent.
- **JFilm** presents independent films from around the world to deepen both Jewish and general audiences’ understanding of Jewish culture, tolerance and our common humanity.
- **Pittsburgh Savoyards** is a semiprofessional community-based nonprofit theater company that presents Gilbert & Sullivan comic operas.
- **SLB Radio Productions** uses radio and audio technology to share and archive the ideas, stories and feelings of children, youth and families.
- **Steeltown Entertainment Project’s Youth and Media program** exposes students around the area to the possibility of media and entertainment careers through training, and production opportunities.
- **Texture Contemporary Ballet** creates and presents authentic and dynamic movement that is based on classical ballet.
- **Village Theater Company** (scheduled to open in early 2017) is an independent movie theater and venue for film, live performances and special events.