

## **National Consultants Say The Leonardo Can Succeed**

--Management Also Working with Salt Lake City Administration, City Council

SALT LAKE CITY, Dec. 6, 2007—In a formal presentation to the Salt Lake City Council on Dec. 4, Economic Research Associates (ERA) gave a thumbs-up to the project.

ERA was retained by the city council to evaluate The Leonardo's business and operational plans as part of the council's decision to allocate additional public funds toward the renovation of the former main library, a city-owned building and future home of The Leonardo.

According to the report: "...The Leonardo has undertaken a comprehensive business planning effort considering many of the important factors which contribute to cultural facility viability."

During the presentation, ERA representatives and city council members lauded The Leonardo for their extensive planning and collaborative spirit. The Leonardo has worked closely with council members, staff, members of the Mayor's office, as well as its own national business plan advisory team, to refine its plans. The national team, which was announced in September, consists of business and museum experts from around the country.

Other report highlights include

- **Market Demand:** "There are markets throughout the United States that are much smaller than The Leonardo that have thriving, successful science centers, and generally speaking, it is our opinion that Salt Lake City should be able to support a science center given its market size and demographics." "...There is a growing science and technology industry in the Salt Lake City region, and state leadership is highly proactive in education and science issues, which has positive implications for contributed support for The Leonardo."
- **Location:** "The proposed site for The Leonardo is an exceptionally strong location and should have a favorable influence on attendance."
- **Size:** "...We have conducted a detailed penetration rate analysis based on the scale and characteristics of the resident and visitor markets, and feel that the size of the facility as currently planned is of an appropriate scale to serve the needs of the local market. This is important, as many cultural facilities often encounter budgetary challenges as a result of operating costs that are too high due to overbuilding, or face capacity constraints due to being under built."

The report also included several recommendations from ERA related to programming, pricing, membership, retail store operations, corporate sponsorships and contributed income.

"The process of creating and refining The Leonardo's business plan has been a very comprehensive and collaborative effort, and we are deeply satisfied with ERA's findings," said Mary Tull, executive director of The Leonardo. "The administration, city council, and staff have, and will continue to be, important partners in bringing this exciting project to fruition. We will continue working with our team to fine-tune our business and programming plans to ensure future visitors have the best experience possible."

**About The Leonardo**

Inspired by Leonardo da Vinci, The Leonardo will be a first-of-a-kind art, culture and science center with a multidisciplinary approach. Located in the heart of Utah's capital city, The Leonardo will be part of Library Square, a developing civic and education center anchored by a magnificent new City Library, which is the state's second most-visited tourist destination. The mission of The Leonardo is to create opportunities for visitors to become participants by exploring "new ways of seeing" their world, themselves and each other.

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