

January 9, 2009

Kate Burke

Fort Worden Area Parks Manager

200 Battery Way

Port Townsend, WA 98368

Dear Kate:

We submit this Letter of Interest in response to your agency's effort to identify a non-profit organization excited about and capable of "developing a long-term relationship with the agency and ultimately managing aspects of the life-long learning center envisioned for Fort Worden State Park."

A Partnership of Purpose

How the non-profit demonstrates its ability to adapt to and align with the vision, mission, and values as adopted for Fort Worden State Park.

In September, 2004, the Centrum Board of Directors adopted a *Plan for Growth* guided by the following mission, vision, and values statements:

Mission

Centrum is a gathering place for artists and creative thinkers from around the world, students of all ages and backgrounds, and audiences seeking extraordinary cultural enrichment. Centrum promotes creative experiences that change lives.

Vision

Centrum is a lead partner in a vibrant alliance of public, private nonprofit, and for profit enterprises that serves and is economically sustained by the vision of Fort Worden State Park as a gathering place dedicated to creative, educational, and recreational retreat, renewal, and discovery.

Values

Creativity is our primary resource. We achieve excellence by taking risks and embracing change. We change by actively seeking out, inviting in, listening to, and learning from people of all ages and backgrounds. We thrive in partnership and alliance.

The wording of and the spirit behind these statements reflects our institutional commitment to the profound partnership of purpose that Centrum seeks with Fort Worden. The alignment with the Fort's own mission, vision, and values is intentional.

Centrum has had the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to Fort Worden in very specific ways throughout the planning process.

- The board devoted a significant portion of the Executive Director's time to help staff the planning process.
- Centrum identified and engaged several members of the two special task forces that were assembled to provide expertise in the first two phases of planning.
- Centrum's lobbying was central to securing \$465,000 in legislative funding for the second phase of the planning process. These monies supported critical analysis, public process, and business and site planning.
- Centrum has raised significant funds from private foundations and individuals interested in the evolution of Fort Worden as a Life Long Learning Center.
- Centrum and Fort Worden began and continue to convene campus-wide Partners' meetings, which have evolved from trust-building exercises to opportunities to develop and implement specific joint marketing and technology initiatives. Additional Centrum staffing has been allocated to these endeavors.
- Centrum managed broadband hardware and service installation for various Fort Partners, including the Fort Worden Commons.
- Centrum produced the first Fort Worden Partners' brochure.
- Centrum created and manages *fortworden.net*, the first Partners' website (now in its second iteration).

- Centrum worked with the Port Townsend School of Woodworking to create a Fort-wide online events calendar, static versions of which were featured in Centrum’s magazine, *Experience* (see materials enclosed).
- Centrum actively and prominently promotes Fort Worden in all its printed materials and has kept its constituents informed about the evolution of the planning process through its publications [see enclosed issues of *Experience*], special “Letters from the Director,” and broadcast emails.

The Evolution of Centrum

How the non-profit views their role with respect to State Parks, park partner organizations, park visitors, and extended community in developing and managing a life-long learning center at Fort Worden State Park.

For Centrum to assume more of a leadership role at Fort Worden the organization will demonstrate—through the MOU process—its commitment to ongoing transformation. The MOU process is iterative, acknowledging the complex web of institutional, partner, community, customer, and donor/volunteer relationships that must be navigated. It would be inappropriate at this time for Centrum unilaterally to propose or commit to a specific structure or hierarchy of relationships between itself and Washington State Parks, the Fort Worden administration, partner organizations, and all the groups and individuals that have a stake in the extraordinary resources of Fort Worden.

We do see our overall charge as developing a vital and sustainable partnership economy that:

1. provides the highest quality and most culturally relevant multi-and cross-disciplinary creative, learning, and public presentation opportunities;
2. embraces leading edge research and innovation in programs, management, and site stewardship;
3. honors the historic legacies of the site;
4. attracts regional, national, and international participation and investment; and
5. is a centerpiece for regional economic development.

And we see our role as that of primary advocate for, manager of, and investor in an integrated partner economy at the Park. We are committed to partnering in investment, program development, marketing and promotion, technology access, donor cultivation, volunteer management and appreciation, financial and database management, hospitality support, and information services. We believe this strategic collaboration will leverage the existing \$7 million economy at Fort Worden into a \$10-12 million economy over the next 4-6 years.

Ready on Day One

The non-profit's capacity and expertise in managing programs and services of the type and extent now offered at Fort Worden and their ability to grow and achieve those envisioned for a life-long learning center as described in long-range planning documents prepared for the Park.

Much of the education economy envisioned in the business plan for Fort Worden is based on institutions offering quality residential learning experiences that attract participants to pay not only tuition fees but also purchase accommodations and food services at Fort Worden. This has been Centrum's core business for the last 36 years.

Over the last five years Centrum has built that business—through growth in programs and partnerships—in large measure anticipating this evolution of opportunity at Fort Worden. We dramatically increased program quality by contracting with internationally respected artistic directors to offer new vision, energy, and cultural perspectives. We have increased program breadth by bringing new producing partners such as Goddard College, Seattle Theater Group, Artist Trust, and the Port Townsend Film Festival to the Park.

Our operating budget has grown from \$1.8 million in 2003 to over \$3 million in 2008. We have also dramatically increased contributed revenues. In 2008, we will book more than \$1.5 million in public and private grants and donations. We generate between \$500,000 and \$600,000 in annual food and accommodations revenues for the Park.

In addition to investing in programs, we have enhanced administrative capacity, bringing higher-level financial, information systems online, with appropriate productivity staff, to implement and utilize new databases and software. We believe this capacity could be of enormous value to the envisioned partnership economy of Fort Worden.

The Promise of Partnership

The non-profit's willingness and capacity to achieve the goal of a long-term agreement with State Parks through the process and framework described in this solicitation.

For five years Centrum has been demonstrating its willingness and capacity to achieve the goal of a long-term agreement with State Parks. Our commitment is further underlined by our interest—in this period of severe financial downturn—to provide human and financial resources to pursue this initiative. We will continue to rebuild our organization to serve the mission and vision of Fort Worden State Park. We want to bring the best people to the table to achieve success. We are poised and excited to be part of this extraordinary institutional transformation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cindy Hill Finnie	John Begley	Thatcher Bailey
Centrum	Centrum	Consultant
Board of Directors	Board of Directors	Fort Worden Task Force
Fort Worden Task Force	Fort Worden Task Force	

Encl. Biographies, Centrum Board of Directors
 2007 Audit of Operations
 2007 Tax Returns (Form 990)
 Recent Issues of *Experience*