



**NAPLES
BOTANICAL
GARDEN**

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Executive Director

Harvey E. Kapnick, Jr.
Director in Memoriam

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in part by the State of
Florida through the
Florida Department
of State, Division of
Cultural Affairs, and the
Florida Arts Council,
Collier County and the
Collier County Tourist
Development Council.*

May 6, 2008

"Connecting People and Plants"

Mr. Jack Wert
Executive Director
Tourism Development Council
3050 Horseshoe Drive, Suite 218
Naples, Florida 34104

Dear Jack,

Naples Botanical Garden is extremely grateful for the generous support it has received from the Tourist Development Council. The TDC's financial investment in the Garden, especially in the early years of our "germination," has helped to bring us to where we are today.

The Garden will not be applying for TDC funding this year. As I hope you and the TDC members have heard through various media coverage, we will be closing for *general visitation* on June 1st as we break ground on our transformation. Naples Botanical Garden is embarking on a tremendous metamorphosis, from a modest beginning as a converted strip mall with a one-acre garden in 2003 to being on the cusp of construction that will convert our 160 acre site to an unparalleled botanical paradise.

Our designers, which the *Miami Herald* dubbed the "dream team" of nationally and internationally recognized leaders in landscape architecture, horticulture and green building design have created an elaborate natural mosaic covering seventy acres of gardens featuring the plants and cultures of Brazil, the Caribbean, South Asia and, of course, Southwest Florida intertwined with lakes, lagoons and flowering tree groves. In addition, a hands-on children's garden will include an interactive planting area, the popular butterfly house and recreates seven child-sized Southwest Florida habitats.

Complimenting the cultivated gardens, ninety acres have been placed into conservation easement, protecting in perpetuity the seven unique habitats that grace our property. Winding pathways will lead guests safely through the areas and bring them to our much anticipated birding tower. Situated on a significant migratory pathway, the tower will allow enthusiasts a unique vantage point of the property.

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We will not be completely closed, for safety concerns the Garden needs to offer our experience on a more controlled level than general visitation allows. With heavy machinery, earth moving and other risks on site, we will be offering special tours of the property on specific days of entry. We will be introducing programming in public spaces around the community as often as we can.

Because TDC funds are for 'heads in beds' marketing, we do not feel it is appropriate to apply this year, but hope the Council joins us in looking forward to FY 2009 when we will be applying for marketing funds for the Grand Opening. As the schedule currently stands, our celebratory events will begin in the fall of 2010 and continue throughout the 2010/11 season. Our current projections have us conservatively welcoming an estimated five times increase in our attendance, roughly 145,000 people.

I am pleased to report that, in just two short years, we have secured \$31 million towards our campaign goal of \$55 million. In today's economic climate, we take this significant pledge of financial support as confidence that we are building a premiere attraction for not just Naples, but all of south Florida.

I look forward to being before the Council Members again soon.

Sincerely,



Brian Holley