and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures.

Dated: June 27, 2000.

**Evelyn S. Lieberman,**

*Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 00–17254 Filed 7–12–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–11–P

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

**[Public Notice 3359]**

## Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; A Writer's Perspective on Contemporary Social Issues in the United States

**NOTICE:** Request for Proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, announces a competition for a project designed for Vietnam titled A Writer's Perspective on Contemporary Social Issues in the United States. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501 ( c ) may submit proposals.

**Program Information:**

Overview: Within Vietnam there is a lack of understanding of U.S. culture and society. This circumstance derives from decades of isolation and often makes Vietnamese cautious about cooperating with the U.S. One of the best ways to promote increased understanding of the U.S. is to enable Vietnamese writers, artists, journalists and academics to meet and discuss with American writers and academic specialists on contemporary social issues and observe how American social critics express concerns over these issues.

The proposed program would bring a delegation of 13 Vietnamese to the United States for a three-week study tour. During the study tour, members of the delegation should meet with range of writers who write on social and political issues. These meetings will explore how American writers, both fiction and nonfiction, influence the public's perception of contemporary political and social questions. A key element of the project is how writers define their role as social and political critics and how the written word can play a role in framing the issues confronting society. Additional meetings should be scheduled with American journalists from both the print and the electronic media who write about contemporary social issues. Finally, the study tour should permit the participants to experience the ethnic and cultural diversity of the U.S. It is anticipated that the program will be conducted between September 2000 and December 2000. The grant should be awarded by mid-July. Applicants should identify the local organizations and individuals with whom they are proposing to collaborate and describe in detail previous cooperative programming and/or contacts.

Programs must comply with J–1 visa regulations. Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

**Budget Guidelines**

Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to $60,000. The total requested from the Bureau not exceed $190,000. Please note: All funding decisions are subject to final Congressional action. Additional budget guidelines are explained in the Solicitation Package.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

1. International and domestic air fares; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs.

2. Per Diem. For the U.S. program, organizations have the option of using a flat $160/day for program participants or the published U.S. Federal per diem rates for individual American cities. For activities outside the U.S., the published Federal per diem rates must be used. NOTE: U.S. escorting staff must use the published Federal per diem rates, not the flat rate. Per diem rates may be accessed at {www.usia.gov/agency/ebur-ref.html}.

3. Interpreters: If needed, interpreters for the U.S. program are provided by the State Department's Language Services Division. Typically, a pair of simultaneous interpreters is provided for every four visitors who need interpretation. Bureau grants do not pay for foreign interpreters to accompany delegations from their home country. Grant proposal budgets should contain a flat $160/day per diem for each Department of State interpreter, as well as home-program-home air transportation of $400 per interpreter plus any U.S. travel expenses during the program. Salary expenses are covered centrally and should not be part of an applicant's proposed budget.

4. Book and cultural allowance: Participants are entitled to and escorts are reimbursed a one-time cultural allowance of $150 per person, plus a participant book allowance of $50. U.S. staff do not get these benefits.

5. Consultants. May be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentations. Daily honoraria generally do not exceed $250 per day. Subcontracting organizations may also be used, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and subcontractor should be included in the proposal.

6. Room rental, which generally should not exceed $250 per day.

7. Materials development. Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop, and translate materials for participants.

8. One working meal per project. Per capita costs may not exceed $5–8 for a lunch and $14–20 for a dinner, excluding room rental. The number of invited guests may not exceed participants by more than a factor of two-to-one.

9. A return travel allowance of $70 for each participant which is to be used for incidental expenditures incurred during international travel.

10. All Bureau-funded delegates will be covered under the terms of a Bureau-sponsored health insurance policy. The premium is paid by the Bureau directly to the insurance company.

11. Other costs necessary for the effective administration of the program, including salaries for grant organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the application package.

Announcement Title and Number: All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFP should reference the above title and number ECA/PE/C–00–55.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** The Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C, Room 224, U.S. Department of State, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, telephone number 202/619–5326 and fax number 202/260–0440, Internet address, ctoles@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package. The Solicitation Package contains detailed award criteria, required application forms, specific budget instructions, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

Please specify Bureau Program Officer Raymond H. Harvey on all other inquiries and correspondence.

Please read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition

with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

*To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:* The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at http://e.usia.gov/education/rfps. Please read all information before downloading.

*Deadline for Proposals:* All proposal copies must be received at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Thursday, September 28, 2000. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked the due date but received on a later date will not be accepted. Each applicant must ensure that the proposals are received by the above deadline.

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The original and ten copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Department of State, SA–44, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Ref.: ECA/PE/C–00–55, Program Management, ECA/EX/PM, Room 336, 301 4th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547.

Applicants must also submit the ''Executive Summary'' and ''Proposal Narrative'' sections of the proposal on a 3.5″ diskette, formatted for DOS. These documents must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. The Bureau will transmit these files electronically to the Public Affairs section at the U.S. Embassy for its review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get embassy comments for the Bureau's grants review process.

**Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. ''Diversity'' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Public Law 104–319 provides that ''in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy,'' the Bureau ''shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries.'' Proposals should reflect advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Year 2000 Compliance Requirement (Y2K Requirement)

The Year 2000 (Y2K) issue is a broad operational and accounting problem that could potentially prohibit organizations from processing information in accordance with Federal management and program specific requirements including data exchange with the Bureau. The inability to process information in accordance with Federal requirements could result in grantees' being required to return funds that have not been accounted for properly.

The Bureau therefore requires all organizations use Y2K compliant systems including hardware, software, and firmware. Systems must accurately process data and dates (calculating, comparing and sequencing) both before and after the beginning of the year 2000 and correctly adjust for leap years.

Additional information addressing the Y2K issue may be found at the General Services Administration's Office of Information Technology website at http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov.

**Review Process**

The Bureau will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of Bureau officers for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

**Review Criteria**

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. *Quality of Program Idea*: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Agency mission.

2. *Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Program Objectives*: Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program objectives and plan.

3. *Multiplier Effect/Impact*: Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

4. *Support of Diversity*: Proposals should demonstrate the substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue, and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials, and follow-up activities

5. *Institutional Capacity/Reputation/Ability*: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's or project's goal. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

6. *Follow-on Activities*: Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) which ensures that Bureau-supported programs are not isolated events.

7. *Evaluation Plan*: Proposals should provide a plan for a thorough and objective evaluation of the program/project by the grantee institution.

8. *Cost-Effectiveness/Cost Sharing*: The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

**Authority:** Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87–256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is ''to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries * * *; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations * * * and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.'' The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures.

Dated: June 27, 2000.

**Evelyn S. Lieberman,**

*Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State.*

[FR Doc. 00–17255 Filed 7–12–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710–11–P

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Coast Guard

**[USCG–2000–7608]**

## Chemical Transportation Advisory Committee

**AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Subcommittee of the Chemical Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) on Environmental Response will meet to discuss its tasking and current applicable response standards. The Subcommittee is tasked to identify, review, and make recommendations to the Coast Guard on current industry standards and guidelines for hazardous material response organizations that represent best practices for ensuring safe and effective emergency response operations to marine transportation-related chemical spill incidents. This meeting will be open to the public.

**DATES:** The Subcommittee will meet on Thursday, August 3, 2000, from 9:00 am to 4 pm. The meeting may close early if all business is finished. Written material and requests to make oral presentations should reach the Coast Guard on or before July 31, 2000. Requests to have a copy of your material distributed to each member of the subcommittee should reach the Coast Guard on or before July 30, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** The Subcommittee will meet in room 6319, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street SW., Washington, DC. Send written material and requests to make oral presentations to Commander Robert F. Corbin, Commandant (G–MSO–3), U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street SW., Washington, DC 20593–0001.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Lieutenant Susan Klein, Coast Guard Technical Representative to the Subcommittee, telephone 202–267–0417, or Lieutenant Gregory F. Herold, Deputy Assistant to the Executive Director of CTAC, telephone 202–267–1217, fax 202–267–4570.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Notice of this meeting is given under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

### Agenda of Meeting

The agenda of the Subcommittee of the Chemical Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) on Environmental Response includes the following:

(1) Introduction of Subcommittee members.

(2) Brief overview of Subcommittee tasking and desired outcome.

(3) Discussion of current applicable regulatory requirements and industry best practice response standards.

(4) Evaluation of the need to provide certain criteria or best practices to the field.

(5) Development of future Subcommittee activities.

### Procedural

The meeting is open to the public. Please note that the meeting may close early if all business is finished. All attendees at the meeting are encouraged to fully review the Subcommittee's task statement prior to the meeting. Copies of the Subcommittee's task statement can be obtained from Lieutenant Susan Klein, telephone 202–267–0417, or Lieutenant Gregory F. Herold, telephone 202–267–1217, fax 202–267–4570. It is also available from the CTAC Internet Website at: *www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/advisory/ctac.* At the discretion of the Subcommittee Chair, members of the public may make oral presentations during the meeting. If you would like to make an oral presentation at the meeting, please notify the Coast Guard Technical Representative to the Subcommittee and submit written material on or before July 31, 2000. If you would like a copy of your material distributed to each member of the Subcommittee in advance of a meeting, please submit 25 copies to the Coast Guard Technical Representative to the Subcommittee no later than July 30, 2000.

### Information on Services for Individuals With Disabilities

For information on facilities or services for individuals with disabilities, or to request special assistance at the meeting, contact the Deputy Assistant to the Executive Director of CTAC as soon as possible.

Dated: July 3, 2000.

**Peter A. Richardson,**

*Acting Director of Standards, Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.*

[FR Doc. 00–17676 Filed 7–12–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–15–M

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Surface Transportation Board

**[STB Docket No. MC–F–20972]**

## Laidlaw Inc., et al.; Control and Merger; 918897 Ontario Inc., B. R. Babcock Limited, Babcock Coach Lines Limited, Lee Line Corp., and Lee Charter Services, Inc.

**AGENCY:** Surface Transportation Board.

**ACTION:** Notice Tentatively Approving Finance Application.

**SUMMARY:** In an application filed under 49 U.S.C. 14303, Laidlaw Inc. (Laidlaw), a noncarrier, seeks to acquire indirect control, through its subsidiary, Laidlaw Transit Ltd. (Transit Ltd.), of 918897 Ontario Inc. (Babcock), a noncarrier, and B. R. Babcock Limited (BRB), and Babcock Coach Lines Limited (BCL), motor passenger carriers, and subsequently to merge Babcock, BRB, and BCL into Transit Ltd. Laidlaw also seeks to acquire indirect control, through its subsidiary, Laidlaw Transit, Inc. (Transit, Inc.), of the operating assets of Lee Line Corp. (LLC), a motor passenger carrier, the transfer of LLC's