



VISIT BUFFALO NIAGARA UNVEILS NEW DESTINATION BRAND IDENTITY: “BUFFALO. FOR REAL”

May 10, 2011 – Visit Buffalo Niagara (Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau) unveiled a new brand identity for the region today. The brand positioning, “Buffalo. For Real”, was introduced at a special event at the Burchfield Penney Art Center attended by tourism, hospitality and civic leaders.

“Successful destinations have distinctive personalities and identities,” said Dottie Gallagher-Cohen, president and CEO of Visit Buffalo Niagara. “In developing this new brand platform, we have tried to identify and articulate the unique attributes that will distinguish Buffalo from its competitors and attract cultural tourists who are looking for authentic experiences of American history, architecture and culture.”



According to Gallagher-Cohen, the new brand identity was developed after more than a year of extensive community meetings, research and collaboration with a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Representatives from local government, foundations, business, sports and arts organizations contributed to the process of assessing the Buffalo brand, defining its core attributes and vetting creative concepts. (A list of participants is attached).

“Achieving consensus among any large group of people is always a challenge,” said Gallagher-Cohen, “but the stakeholders we assembled were unanimous in identifying Buffalo’s art, architecture, history and natural amenities as core assets to build our new brand platform around.”

Copywriters, creative directors and graphic artists from Buffalo-based advertising agencies and public relations and promotions staff from area corporations donated their time to a series of brainstorming sessions that resulted in the “For Real” concept and creative direction, as well as a plan for its implementation.

“The collaboration was phenomenal,” said Gallagher-Cohen. “We simply could not have done this without the extraordinary contribution of our community partners. I don’t know of any other destination in the United States that has undertaken a branding initiative of this magnitude fueled almost entirely by the goodwill and civic-mindedness of its creative professionals. It is a real tribute to the passion people feel for Buffalo.”

According to Gallagher-Cohen, the new brand platform establishes a clear, consistent and compelling message about the region that will be reflected in every marketing tool Visit Buffalo Niagara has at its disposal – from social media and video to print advertising and public relations -- and has as its goal a measurable increase in visitation to Buffalo and Erie County. It also provides the community with the opportunity to communicate a unified message about Buffalo.

“The ‘For Real’ platform is a reflection of the fact that Buffalo offers travelers a powerful connection to the kind of deep, rich and real Americana that has simply disappeared in most places,” said Gallagher-Cohen. “The new identity promises travelers a memorable experience of our unique heritage and culture. We intend to work with the community to keep that promise as we roll out our new brand identity over the course of the next several years.”

As part of the branding initiative, Visit Buffalo Niagara redesigned its annual visitors guide, unveiled the first phase of a new website (visitbuffaloniagara.com), produced two new videos and kicked off the promotion of a series of contests that will bring visitors to Buffalo to experience the National Garden Festival and the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site. In addition, Visit Buffalo Niagara will be sponsoring special events in Pittsburgh and Charlotte in partnership with the National Buffalo Wing Festival that will take the new brand identity to key feeder markets. A series of "Buffalo. For Real" webisodes will also be produced this summer that feature Buffalo's key assets and attractions. Print advertisements will all carry the "Buffalo. For Real" logo.

"Visit Buffalo Niagara's new branding initiative will allow us to better market our community's best attributes to the nation, showcasing why Erie County is a world-class tourist destination," said County Executive Chris Collins. "That is why my administration is committed to fully funding Visit Buffalo Niagara and supporting this effort. Tourism is a major economic development engine for our region and we are already seeing great results with increasing numbers of conventions and sporting events coming to Erie County. This brand platform will only make our marketing efforts stronger."

"By focusing on Buffalo's distinctive assets in art, architecture, history and nature we are positioning our community to join the ranks of the premier cultural and heritage tourism destinations in the United States," said Mayor Byron Brown. "My administration is excited to be working with Erie County, Visit Buffalo Niagara and the other partners and stakeholders in this branding initiative to deliver on the promise we are making to visitors that they will have a truly memorable experience when they visit our community."

The Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau also announced that it has officially changed its name to Visit Buffalo Niagara as of today. "We feel this is a more consumer friendly, self-explanatory name," said Gallagher-Cohen. "Many destination marketing organizations around the country have made the change away from the traditional 'CVB' moniker. We felt it was time to do the same."

Visit Buffalo Niagara sells and markets our assets and attractions to visitors outside of the Buffalo Niagara region as a convention, tourism and leisure destination for the economic benefit of the community.

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CONTACTS

Ed Healy

Vice President, Marketing

716-218-2930

716-912-5321

healy@visitbuffaloniagara.com

Peter Burakowski

Communications Manager

716-218-2922

716-480-3054

burakowski@visitbuffaloniagara.com