IT IS OUR PLEASURE TO PRESENT THE 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS FROM THE BUFFALO NIAGARA PARTNERSHIP.

Guided by our Vision and Mission, the Partnership plans each year by determining what organizational objectives are most important to our members and the Buffalo Niagara region. We make these determinations based on member feedback, current events and economic conditions, and legislation under consideration at all levels of government.

How we meet these objectives during the year then becomes a key measure of our success. We are happy to report on many successes in the pages that follow, showing how the power of the Partnership works for our members and benefits the community.

You will read about efforts to improve the region’s workforce development system with a new employer-led approach. You will find information on how we are helping business competitiveness in Buffalo Niagara and what we are doing to strengthen trade on our bi-national border with Canada. You will also see how the Partnership is advocating to reduce taxes and burdensome regulations for area business.

There is a great deal of collaboration in all the work we do at the Partnership. We would like to thank everyone whose cooperative spirit helps us succeed, from our leadership team and board of directors...to our strategic partners and Councils...to our staff and the growing list of members they serve.

Your involvement with the Buffalo Niagara Partnership is important and your input is always welcome. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.
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We recognize the many contributions of long-time Board Member
Mark Czarnecki, of M&T Bank, who passed away this year.
Who We Are & What We Stand For

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership is the area’s regional chamber of commerce and privately-funded economic development organization.

Our members employ more than a quarter of a million people in the Buffalo Niagara region. By mobilizing members and strategic partners around common goals, the Partnership grows private investment and jobs in Buffalo Niagara through advocacy, business development and convening.

Since 1844, the Partnership has been working to make Buffalo Niagara a better place in which to do business.

MISSION

To connect and mobilize employers, and advocate for businesses to create economic growth and opportunity in Buffalo Niagara.

VISION

Buffalo Niagara is one of the nation’s most vibrant, relevant and attractive economic regions.

VALUES

PASSION

We are passionate in all we do. We strive for excellence and we operate with a sense of determination, perseverance and positivity.

INTEGRITY

We exhibit integrity in all our interactions. We pursue honorable initiatives and conduct business in a way that is honest, transparent, and ethical.

COLLABORATION

We achieve success through collaboration, via teamwork and respect within the Buffalo Niagara Partnership and by connecting with our members and acting on their behalf.

COURAGE

We have the courage to do the right thing, to communicate in an open and honest fashion, and to approach each challenge with a progressive, innovative creativity to embrace change and drive growth.
The Buffalo Niagara Partnership and a coalition of employers, community leaders, educators and service providers launched **Employ Buffalo Niagara**, a new initiative to strengthen the local job market through employer-led workforce development. Employ Buffalo Niagara was created to streamline workforce development efforts and give employers better access to a greater number of qualified, diverse job candidates in Western New York. At the same time, the initiative aims to connect job seekers with a growing number of career opportunities in the region.

**NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

In an effort to advance employer-led workforce development efforts across the country, the Buffalo Niagara region was **one of seven communities** awarded a technical assistance grant by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

**EMPLOYER-LED APPROACH**

The grant is enabling Employ Buffalo Niagara to utilize a strategy called Talent Pipeline Management (TPM). TPM calls on employers to play a new and expanded leadership role as “end-customers” of the workforce system. **Championed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, TPM gives employers shared responsibility for developing the necessary talent to fill current skills gaps.**

Ultimately a wider cross-section of our community will share in the resulting economic prosperity.
The Partnership has been vigilant about educating elected officials and local decision makers about how sound economic development policy promotes private sector investment and how bad policy stops it in its tracks. Operating in a challenging environment, the Partnership continues to work to align the policy objectives and incentive regulations of economic development organizations to encourage private investment and sustainable development. Given New York State’s high tax and regulatory burden, the role of local IDAs is vital in leveling the playing field and making projects pencil out.

“We have a historic opportunity (with the Buffalo Billion),” said Dottie Gallagher-Cohen, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership’s president. “We have to do everything we can to accelerate the momentum, not stop it.”

- The Buffalo News 1/27/2017

To stay focused on the goal, the Partnership helped facilitate presentations from three national economic development experts asking them to identify key areas of focus of our region. They were:

1. **Implementing our Regional Vision Through:**
   - One Region Forward land use planning
   - Regional Economic Development Council Strategies for Prosperity

2. **Using Land and Infrastructure Efficiently**

3. **Investing in Equitable Progress**

4. **Making New Growth More Accessible to All Populations**

Based on those four key strategies, the Partnership produced a whitepaper:

We shared the whitepaper with more than 130 elected officials, policy makers and members of the media.
The Partnership’s advocacy efforts are broad and far-reaching on behalf of our members. Our experienced government affairs team focuses on economic development policy and business advocacy at all levels of government.

### 2016-2017 Advocacy Efforts

#### Employer Mandates & Taxes

**Workers’ Compensation Reform**

We worked closely with several employer organizations to advocate aggressively for much needed Workers’ Compensation reform. New York currently has the third highest Workers’ Compensation premiums in the country. We won reforms as part of the final budget agreement which will deliver meaningful savings for all employers - private and public. These are the first significant reforms to the system in 10 years.

**18-A Utility Tax Sunset**

After years of advocacy, the 18-a utility tax is finally gone. The 2017-18 State Budget included the formal sunset of the tax at the end of March 2017. Adopted in 2009 to help fill a state budget gap, the tax unfairly targeted manufacturers and other high demand electricity users only adding to the cost of doing business in New York.

#### Cross-Border Economy

**Promoting Travel, Commerce & National Security Act**

Congress and former President Obama came together at the end of 2016 to pass the Promoting Travel, Commerce & National Security Act. Our federal delegation knew passage of this legislation was a priority for our organization. The legislation is a critical first step in implementing pre-clearance at border crossings in Buffalo Niagara and the rest of the northern border.

**Blocking ‘Buy American’**

Working with Unshackle Upstate and other regional chambers of commerce, we were able to remove the proposed ‘Buy American’ provision from the 2017-18 State Budget. The proposal jeopardized existing bi-national supply chains and undermined our cross-border economy by establishing a preference for U.S. manufactured products in all state and public authority contracts/procurements over $100,000.

#### Infrastructure Investment

**Ridesharing for Upstate**

Ridesharing is finally coming to all of New York after a long advocacy campaign to extend access beyond New York City. Working with a diverse coalition, we secured a regulatory agreement in the 2017-18 State Budget to bring Upstate the same reliable and convenient transportation options – and the new jobs that come with them - currently available in most every part of the country.

**Clean Water Investment**

Business, labor and environmental groups came together to push for an historic investment in clean water infrastructure in the 2017-18 State Budget. The $2.5 billion allocation will fund water and sewer infrastructure projects all across the state, leveraging the economic development impact of clean water.
The Partnership has dedicated councils for different target industries, made up of experts in their respective fields, to better support our members’ unique needs. We work closely with council members throughout the year to identify regional priorities and concerns. Then collaboratively, across all councils, we come together to sharpen our focus on these issues.

## Council Connection

### CANAM COUNCIL

**Advocacy:** Blocking the proposed New York State Buy American Act (pg. 7)

**Presentations:** The Council held the 2nd annual signature CanAm Now event featuring a keynote address from Maryscott Greenwood, CEO of the Canadian American Business Council and one of the most influential people in Washington on foreign policy with Canada.

**Current Initiatives:** Executed programming to support the growth of export development among area companies (pg. 9).

### DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Advocacy:** The Council worked with the ECIDA to revamp its Policy Agenda to reflect the goals and aspirations set forth by One Region Forward (pg. 6).

**Presentations:** Multiple presentations were made to the ECIDA Board, BN360 and the public on the positive impacts of smart growth development (pg. 6).

**Current Initiatives:** We collaborated with partners at the City of Buffalo, Erie County, and in the private sector to develop a greater understanding of challenges in affordable housing.

### LOGISTICS & TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

**Advocacy:** We worked for the successful inclusion of ridesharing (pg. 7) and funding to study the extension of Buffalo’s Metro Rail in the state budget.

**Presentations:** The Council hosted a presentation regarding the replacement of Buffalo’s passenger rail station and provided testimony in support of building the new terminal in downtown.

**Current Initiatives:** We supported several regional initiatives impacting logistics and transportation including Go Buffalo Niagara Transit Management Association and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority’s Transit Oriented Development Study.

### MANUFACTURERS COUNCIL

**Advocacy:** Workers’ Compensation reform (pg. 7).

**Presentations:** The Council hosted Martin Scaglione of the Hope Street Group for a presentation on Workforce Development best practices, stressing the need for comprehensive systems change.

**Current Initiatives:** We participated with Employ Buffalo Niagara on the development of initial prototype models of a recalibrated workforce development system (pg. 5).

### EXPLORING NEW COUNCILS

In keeping with our strategy of target industries and issues, the Partnership is exploring the addition of new councils to better inform our work, including a possible Diversity and Inclusion Council.
Efforts to maximize the economic potential of our bi-national border with Canada were strengthened this past year through several initiatives.

**BUILDING AN INTERNATIONAL MARKET MINDSET**

The Partnership continues to help our members connect to international business partners and grow their individual markets. This year we executed three major programs to help member companies with U.S.-Canadian business including:

**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH CANADIAN CHAMBERS**

We signed historic agreements with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce in Ontario, Canada to offer reciprocal memberships between the Partnership and each of these chambers.

This agreement unites our three business regions as one, nearly tripling the size of our reach to over 3,500 area companies and organizations. In the process, we have created effective short cuts for members to easily connect with other business leaders on both sides of the border and empowered members to seek out business to business relationships to address their unique challenges and opportunities.

**CROSS-BORDER BUSINESS NETWORK**

A unique platform including an online directory to bring Western New York and Southern Ontario businesses together.

**BUFFALO NIAGARA EXPORT RESOURCES FORUM**

A conference and trade show on local export resources to help companies begin exporting.

These Partnership programs were made possible by a grant obtained from Global NY – a state program to help foreign businesses looking to invest in New York and local businesses that want to export globally.
The Buffalo Niagara Partnership hosts over 60 events each year which draw approximately 4,500 attendees and vary in size and scope, offering members opportunities to learn, convene, network and more. Highlights from 2016-2017 are featured here:

**Increase in attendance:**
- BN360 Kickoff: 73%
- HobNob: 49%
- Legislative Lunch: 47%
- Other Signature Events: 30%
- ATHENA Awards Luncheon: 18%
- Regional Agenda Rollout/Public Officials Reception: 6%

The Partnership’s Executive Exchange Program is a unique, peer-to-peer, and professionally facilitated program for senior level business leaders to meet, share experiences and resolve business challenges in a comfortable setting. It is a members-only program, offering complete confidentiality with experienced facilitators to customize the program.

The Partnership designed a new program for developing leaders with a minimum of 7 years of business, industry or professional experience who want to hone their skills and learn to navigate the business environment in Buffalo Niagara. These leadership development programs continue to grow in popularity.

**SIGNATURE EVENTS**

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**A STRONG SOCIAL FOLLOWING:**
- LinkedIn: 2,135
- Facebook: 2,742
- Twitter: 11,600


THE PARTNERSHIP'S EXECUTIVE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

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Special Thank You

The Partnership expresses special thanks to the following members for their investments in our programs and events throughout the year.

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MOOG

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Try-It Distributing Co., Inc.
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At Univera Healthcare, we take pride in the place we call home. So giving back is as natural as giving that little bit extra to wow our members every day. Meet a few of our helpful do-gooders at TheUniveraDifference.com

Real people who really care.

COMMITTED TO YOU,
COMMITTED TO BUFFALO.

BY MOBILIZING MEMBERS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERS AROUND COMMON GOALS, THE PARTNERSHIP GROWS PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND JOBS IN BUFFALO NIAGARA THROUGH THREE AREAS OF FOCUS:

CONVENING,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AND ADVOCACY.

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We’re proud to build on the history of tourism in the region by bringing the next generation of travelers to Buffalo-Niagara's unparalleled natural wonders and diverse, local small businesses.

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