

Leaders say Niagara Falls, area attractions, poised to have strong rebound

Continued from Page 1

Niagara Falls is uniquely positioned to bring itself back over the course of these next two months. Now clearly, we have a shortened season. And I think everybody in the room that has an attraction, and those of us that pay attention to the tourist season, the hotels, we understand that the season is shorter. All that that means is that we're going to be sharper and better at what we do. And I realize that, as these businesses take upon themselves the ability to sort of move forward with these next two months, I know that I am expecting that we're going to do quite well in July and August. I've had a chance to speak with a number of the hotel owners, as well as the variety of the restaurants and attraction individuals, and I know that they're all ready. Very, very ready to do this, and to do it right."

Restaino said, "Personally, these have been difficult weeks for not only the City of Niagara Falls, but for the country. We've gotten to a point now where I think we're all ready - as I said in my opening - to exhale; to have some fun. I'm just going to simply ask that all of us do our level best to promote the idea, 'Come to Niagara Falls.'"

He added, "Those who will hear me say this, 'Come to Niagara Falls. We're open for business. We're waiting for you. We've been waiting for a while, so please hurry on in. And enjoy all that Niagara Falls has to offer.'"

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Western District Director Mark Mistretta said, "As I see the increase in pedestrians out there, and people walking by my office and (Niagara Falls State Park), it's actually starting to feel like a normal week in July. We're not quite there yet, but we'll get there."

He expressed gratitude Cuomo allowed parks to remain open even as nonessential industries were put on "PAUSE" to slow the possible spread of the coronavirus.

That said, Mistretta explained, "Many of our important venues were closed, as we all know, and that's why we're here today. So, I'm happy to report that, last week, the Maid of the Mist opened, and they've seen increasing numbers every day. And just yesterday, the Cave of the Winds opened for the first time - under very little fanfare. We didn't really announce it. It was kind of, 'Alright, things have lined up, let's go.' We had just under 1,000 visitors yesterday."

"We do anticipate, next week, getting the trolleys open and going. And we're working out the plans for the Visitor Center. We may open to limited capacity. But again, hopefully next week we'll start with some details there."

Old Fort Niagara Executive Director Robert Emerson said, "Since late March, it's been e-

rily quiet at the fort. And we're anxious for that to end.

"We will be opening on Friday, just in time for the July 4 weekend. So, if people don't feel like traveling far, they can at least travel back in time to another era."

He said, "We will be having our living history programs outdoors. So, you'll still be able to come and see the ever-popular musket demonstrations, etc. You can tour the historic buildings. We have a lot of windows and doors that we can keep open to provide good ventilation."

"It's great to be back on track, after these eerily quiet weeks when we've been closed and we've only had a skeleton force at the fort to maintain things. We're looking forward to seeing everybody. Fourth of July weekend is usually our busiest weekend of the year, and we're looking forward to reopening and welcoming some guests."

The Aquarium of Niagara will open to the general public on Saturday. Executive Director Gary Siddall said, "We will be offering general admission. Those tickets will be sold on our website. That is the surest and best way to ensure you'll get in without having an extended wait time."

He added, "We encourage everyone to come and see the aquarium. We are at 25% capacity, as many of the other attractions are. So, if you're typically steering away from the aquarium this time of year because of the large crowds, you can visit the aquarium."

Tom Callahan of Lockport Cave & Underground Boat Ride said, "Our attraction will open on July 4. We're finally glad to be there. Our story, of course, is that of the Industrial Revolution and the history that surrounds Lockport and the industries that made this city. ... We're also very glad that Lockport Locks & Erie Canal Cruises is operating, as will the Discovery Center of Lockport."

Pat Proctor of Rainbow Air said, "It gives me great pleasure to say this: We're finally open tomorrow; thank God! We've basically been ready from the get-go. We wanted to go March 26, but, apparently, we hit a little snag - just like everybody else."

He noted, "Safety has always been our No. 1 issue and concern, and we always attack it to make sure everybody has the most enjoyable time on our aircraft, and be able to see the falls on the U.S. and the Canadian side."

"During the time the world stopped, one thing did not stop - and that was the water going over the falls. And that's one thing we're also good at around here is weathering the storm. It's time to forget about the past; let's move



John Percy shares summer season details.

>> Watch 2 related videos at WWW.WNYPAPERS.COM

forward. Let's hope for a great July."

John Kinney of Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours said, "We started today. We are very, very, very excited to be back and be in operation. And we've gone through a tremendous amount of work with our local health authority to achieve everything that we needed to do to achieve social distancing and all of the sanitation of our equipment and our boats."

He explained, "At Whirlpool Jet Boats, we're very fortunate we have a large fleet of boats. We added our ninth jet boat last year, which gives us the ability to spread out our guests amongst that fleet of vessels and basically maintain our capacities - even though we're spread over so many other boats."

Kinney said, "As a destination, particularly with the leadership that John (Percy) provides, as well as the backing of our political partners ... we can get through this as quickly as possible; and I'm just glad to be doing our little part of it."

Percy said, "It is with great pride that we opened safely this week, to finally welcome visitors and locals again back to our doors - back to our homes here in Niagara Falls - and to get the tourism economy buzzing once again."

"As we entered phase three a few weeks ago, we transitioned from our soft and inspirational marketing messaging to a stronger push in our key drive markets. We started three months ago with 'Destination of Hope.' A few weeks after that, we were into 'Dream Now, Adventure Later.' So, as many mentioned, we were out there. We were present in all of our markets to make sure that Niagara Falls was first and foremost in their minds while (tourists) were home searching and looking for travel for the future."

"Now, on June 18, we've activated 'Wide Open Spaces. ... Now Open For Adventure' across all of our digital channels. Our strategy with this campaign is to highlight

the many adventures across Niagara County that visitors can experience on a daily basis. And what a wonderful week to open up. Of course, we'd love to have been open earlier, but what a great week to open up is July 4th week."

Percy noted, "Our messaging also includes our new 'Unified in Safety' program. This is a program that we created and put out to all of our partners across Niagara County to show that unification - to show that we are together in this, as you are witnessing today; that the prime motivators for consumers in all the research that has started since day one, from traveler sentiment, is that health and safety is the No. 1 concern when traveling or picking a travel destination. So, the 'Unified in Safety' program that is here, that is around our building and even the Visitor Center, is open today for the first time. We're all practicing that, and making it a priority in all of our businesses, because it's imperative that we do."

Destination Niagara reported a massive increase in its web traffic - by as much as 30,000% in one area - and Percy noted, "All these numbers collectively show that the pent-up demand for travel is high; and we truly believe with all of our attractions beginning to reopen this week, we will see our drive market visitors return to enjoy all this destination has to offer."

"I think I can speak for everybody when I say this has been a long time coming," New York State Sen. Rob Ort said. "Thank god we're finally here. And the re-

ality is, we need to let people know that Niagara Falls is open for business. And this is so critical, because, Niagara Falls, Niagara County, Western New York to a larger extent, the tourist dollars - this is the season when people are coming to Niagara Falls. And if we can convince them that, A), it's safe to come back, but also for all of our businesses, our local vendors who are here, but for the city in general ... if we don't try to salvage some of this season that is left, it's going to be much worse for everyone down the line."

He added, "We will continue to be an advocate for this region, for Niagara Falls, for Western New York, and for all of our businesses, not-for-profit businesses across the New York state, so that they can open - and so they can survive. Because I don't think I'm overstating the fact that, right now for a lot of folks, this is about survival."

Assemblyman Angelo Morinello said, "We have various attraction operators who are going to speak, but I'm here representing Mother Nature. ... If you really think about this region, and I'm going to take my district, the 145th, including parts of Grand Island and all of Niagara County. If you think about our open spaces, these are attractions."

He said, "Yesterday, I had the privilege of walking the shoreline trail from Goat Island to the Grand Island Bridge. There is an opportunity for tourism: Safe distancing and exercise. It is magnificent. The State Parks Department have coordinated with the Greenway Commission on the bike trail - because we want to do a bike trail completely around New York state - but they have put in a lake that had been there, almost across from the old Nabisco building, and it is magnificent. You get a view of both the lake that they put in, and the river from that point."

Morinello said, "I'm telling you, we can do this. We have unique opportunities in Western New York; we have Fort Niagara, we have all of the other attractions that scream ecotourism; and with the pandemic, this is what is new. This is the vision we have to have. It's outdoor ecotourism, tying in Mother Nature."

Tax Problems: RESOLVED

There are many ways we can tackle IRS or State tax relief together:

- ✓ Tax Levies & Liens Release
- ✓ Wage Garnishment Release
- ✓ Stop Penalties and Interest
- ✓ Tax Debt Negotiation & Settlement
- ✓ Resolve Back Taxes
- ✓ Payroll Tax Negotiation
- ✓ Tax Preparation & Bookkeeping Services

Call us now for your FREE tax consultation & evaluation:

855-935-3010

Anthem Tax Services

Millions Of Dollars Saved In Back Taxes

Anthem Tax Services provides world class personalized tax debt relief and tax preparation services. We offer the tailored experience that you expect from your tax preparation professionals, and we operate remotely so you never need to leave your home or office.

Tax debt can happen to anyone. Whether you are self-employed, an independent contractor, took an early withdrawal from a 401K, or had another unforeseen life event occur, we can help resolve your debt in a few simple steps:

- 1 Opportunity
- 2 Investigation
- 3 Agreement
- 4 TAX DEBT FREE!

Need Help Getting Social Security Disability Benefits? We Can Help!

FIGHTING FOR YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR OVER 25 YEARS!

You Could Be Eligible To Receive:

Steady monthly income depending on your paid in amount

A lump sum payment of benefits owed from back-pay

Annual cost of living increases

- We simplify the process & strive for quick claim approval
- Starting the process is easy and takes only minutes to complete

BILL GORDON ASSOCIATES

844-568-8625

Helping thousands get the benefits they deserve

Bill Gordon & Associates, a nationwide practice, represents clients before the Social Security Administration. Member of the TX & NM Bar Associations. Mail: 1420 NW 51 Washington D.C. Office: Broward County Florida. Services may be provided by associated attorneys licensed in other states.