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Celebrating July 4 and America 250

New York Army National Guard Band will play free patriotic concerts in Buffalo, Niagara Falls & Lewiston; 42nd Infantry Division 'Rainbow Band' will perform New York National Guard press release

The New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division "Rainbow Band" will mark the 250th anniversary of American independence with eight patriotic concerts being held across New York.

The 90-minute concerts by the 23-soldier band feature patriotic marches like "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and "Over There."

The band's smaller groups, The Bear Mountain Brass and the Governor's Own Brass Quintet, will be playing tunes that reflect American history and culture. These include "Star Wars," the "Revolutionary War Medley" and "Sweet Dreams."

Local performances include:

- June 27, the Buffalo Canalside Boardwalk State in Buffalo at 4 p.m.
- June 28, the Niagara Falls Visitor Center at 11 a.m.
- June 29, the Alphonso I. Dimino Memorial Bandshell in Academy Park in Lewiston at 7 p.m.

The 42nd Infantry Division Band, nicknamed the "Rainbow Band" because the 42nd Infantry Division is the "Rainbow Division," was constituted in 1943 when the 42nd Infantry Division was reactivated for World War II. The band can trace its roots back to New York militia bands created in the 19th Century.



The band is based at Camp Smith Training Site in Cortlandt Manor and serves as a musical ambassador for the 42nd Infantry Division and the New York Army National Guard. It conducts an annual concert tour, performs at military events, and marches in the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City each year.

The band is commanded and led by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ethan Wagner.

'4th of July Kids' Bike Parade' to celebrate America 250

Submitted by the Niagara County Public Information Office

Niagara County Legislator Rich Andres announced details for the ninth annual "Fourth of July Kids Bike Parade" that will be a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The annual event will kick off at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, July 4, from Pine Woods Park (Niagara and Thompson streets) and head west on Thompson Street. The route will end at the Herschell Carousel Museum, 180 Thompson St., North Tonawanda. The entire event runs until noon. All are welcome to participate.

Kids can enjoy rides in Kid-

dieland at the Carousel Museum. Ice cream will be served. Participants are encouraged to decorate their bikes, wagons, strollers and so on, and wear their most patriotic outfits to celebrate America's 250th birthday.

"The Kids' Bike Parade has become part of many families' Fourth of July celebrations, and this year is extra special, given we are celebrating 250 years of American independence," said Andres, who organizes the parade. "If you have never brought your children to this event, it's a lot of fun and wraps up with plenty of time to get ready for those family picnics and barbecues."

In addition to Andres, Niagara County legislators Randy Bradt and Jesse Gooch sponsor the event.

Fort Niagara marks America 250 with grand musket & cannon salute

Press release

At noon Saturday, July 4, 500 reenactors will gather atop the walls of Old Fort Niagara to perform a grand musket and cannon salute in honor of America's 250th anniversary. The salute will be part of Old Fort Niagara's 46th annual French and Indian War Encampment, the historic site's largest living history event of the year.

Did You KNOW?

How America got its name

As residents of the United States of America celebrate the nation's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, some might be curious where the "America" portion of the country's name comes from. According to the Library of Congress, America is named after Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci. The LOC contends that Vespucci was the first to suggest that the lands Christopher Columbus sailed to in 1492 were part of a separate continent. German mapmaker Martin Waldseemüller honored Vespucci's assertion in 1507, when he created a notable map that was the first to depict the lands as a separate continent, naming the area "America," which is a Latinized version of "Amerigo." That map is now part of the cartographic collections at the LOC, and is sometimes referred to as "America's Birth Certificate."

Known as "Siege! 1759," the three-day event recreates the historic siege of Fort Niagara that took place in July 1759. During the 19-day siege, British forces captured the fort from the French, ushering in a new era in American history. At the conclusion of the French and Indian War, Britain gained vast new territories but incurred huge debts and faced imperial challenges that led directly to the American Revolution.

The event begins Friday, July 3, with a display of 18th century military pageantry as British and French forces parade their regimental colors. This will be followed by firing five large cannons in the fort's 1756 Dauphin Battery. Fifes and drums then take the stage as reenactors and visitors alike march into the fort. Once inside, visitors will encounter 22 acres of period artisans and merchants, many demonstrating skills of the era. At 2 p.m. British, French, and Native American forces will face off in a battle reenactment that demonstrates military tactics of the 18th century. Friday's program concludes with an artillery firing demonstration at 4 p.m.

On Saturday, July 4, programs begin at 9:30 a.m. with the firing of the Dauphin Battery followed by a fife and drum concert. At noon, reenactors will mount the fort's extensive walls to perform a grand feu de joie (firing of joy) in celebration of America 250. A feu de joie was an 18th century ceremony involving rolling musket and cannon fire. Firings were often performed to mark a great military victory or alliance. In 2026, Old Fort Niagara's feu de joie will mark this nation's 250th birthday at Western New York's only Revolutionary War-era historic site. The siege continues at 2 p.m. with a battle reenactment followed at 4

OLD FORT NIAGARA

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION
INDIVIDUAL \$75/YEAR
FAMILY \$125/YEAR
(parents & dependent children, or grandparents & grandchildren)
LIFETIME \$1,000
(payable over five years)
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www.oldfortniagara.org

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Hard Rolls \$3.99
A Dozen
Limit 3 Dozen
Oven fresh crusty rolls. Great for sandwiches, burgers or toasted with butter.
Coupons may not be combined with any other offer or discount. Expires July 1 - July 31, 2026.

Donuts \$1.00 off
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• Jalapeno Pepper
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Large Homestyle Cookies \$1.00 off
A Dozen
Seven Varieties • Oatmeal Raisin • Chocolate Chip • Peanut Butter
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Regular Loaf - 50¢ Off
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Hand rolled, hand formed, split & slowly hearth baked.
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Local leaders experience the 'Roar'

At a press event June 18 at the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Welcome Center at Niagara Falls State Park, guests including New York State Assemblyman Angelo Morinello and City of Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino were among the first people to experience the new "Above the Roar" virtual-reality attraction.

Morinello described the ride as "phenomenal."

"It really gives you a perspective that you would never, ever get by just being on land," he said.

Morinello noted one of the more "incredible" moments was "when they went under, and the fish came at you, and you could see the species of fish and the rock formations. It gives you a really true insight into what the river, the gorge and the falls is."

Restaino called "Above the Roar" "spectacular."

"It is amazing," he said. "It adds a whole new dimension to coming down here to visit."

"You know, you can stand by the edge of the falls and be impressed with it all. But now, all of a sudden, you're in it - and it's just spectacular."



City of Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino and New York State Assemblyman Angelo Morinello experience the new "Above the Roar" attraction inside the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Welcome Center at Niagara Falls State Park.

They've done a fabulous job. "I think everybody who takes advantage of this attraction will walk away incredibly impressed and just in awe."

Set in a dark, laser-lit room with about a dozen egg-shaped chairs, "Above the Roar" is a "compelling experience at Niagara Falls State Park," said Delaware North Parks & Resorts Chief Operating Officer

Derek Zwickey. The Buffalo-based global hospitality leader manages the new, 4-minute ride.

Zwickey said it's a "completely new way for people to experience Niagara Falls when they visit the park. It's a fully immersive, multi-sensory virtual reality experience that takes participants on a thrilling journey around the most powerful waterfall in North America and its natural elements."

He noted, "Above the Roar" uses exclusive aerial drone footage, motion-enhanced seating and immersive sound.

"The drone footage is really something special and it really brings this whole thing to life."

"Participants will soar along the U.S. side of the Niagara River, just above the rapids, then over the American, Bridal Veil and Horseshoe Falls before gliding through the gorge and plunging into the depths below," Zwickey said. "Under the water, they will encounter seven species of fish that are native to the river, before returning to the brink of the American Falls and ending back at the welcome center. Every moment is designed to bring guests closer to the scale, the power and beauty of Niagara Falls in a way that feels immediate and unforgettable."

New York State Parks Regional Director Mark Mistretta said, "State Parks is very good at many things - being the best steward we can for this natural wonder we have out here. But we're not so good with food and providing great, interesting retail and exciting attractions. That's why we are lucky to partner with Delaware North here at Niagara Falls for those things that we just don't do as well."

"They have delivered."

He called the attraction an "amazing experience."

Zwickey said, "We are proud of how we work with New York State Parks to welcome millions of guests as they are experiencing the falls, and to tell the Niagara Falls story."

The Town of Niagara Presents

MUSIC MANIA MONDAYS
Summer Concert Series

4th JULY CELEBRATION
Sunday, July 5th
2pm til Dusk

Lawn Chairs or Blankets Recommended

Beer Tent & Food Concessions

Four Great Bands

- 2pm Impact
- 4pm Past Masters - (Beatles Tribute)
- 6pm Thurman Bros Band
- 8pm JJ Swing

Terrific Fireworks Display at Dusk

Best view of the FIREWORKS in the Park

Town of Niagara Veteran's Memorial Park
7000 Lockport Rd., Niagara Falls
No coolers permitted
No animals permitted

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Town of Wheatfield presents

4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS

Celebrate with your family and friends at

Oppenheim Park

Saturday, July 4th, 2026

at dark

Lewiston church salutes America 250

Press release

The First Presbyterian Church of Lewiston, recognized as the oldest and most historic church in the village, will salute America's 250th birthday by hosting a community celebration open to the public.

"Lift Every Voice and Sing" will be held at the church at 11:15 a.m. Sunday, July 5. The service will feature worship and live music. A free community coffee hour will follow.

The Rev. Carly Beard stated, "It is only fitting that historic Lewiston Presbyterian Church, with its rich history of providing worship and community fellowship, is planning this special celebration of our nation's 250th birthday. All are welcome to join this joyful service."

The church is located at 505 Cayuga St., and is handicapped accessible. Childcare will be available for children ages 4 years and under. Parking is available on the street or in a large lot behind the building. The church and events are open to all.

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