

New name & brand for Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls

Destination Niagara USA announced Wednesday that, effective immediately, it has changed the name of the Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls to the Niagara Falls Convention Center.

Destination Niagara USA assumed operation of the Niagara Falls Convention Center on Jan. 1 as part of a five-year management agreement with USA Niagara Development Corp., which owns the building. Since then, Destination Niagara USA has been working with the Niagara Falls Convention Center team to ensure a smooth transition, and to outline new and improved marketing and sales plans.

John Percy, president and CEO of Destination Niagara USA, said, "For several months in advance of assuming this management role, we have had in-depth conversations with the internal sales team, as well as meeting planners across the industry, to

determine how to best move forward to effectively market this building. The consistent answer was that 'conference' is misleading and limiting for the types of events that we are actually able to host in this 116,000-square-foot facility."

What's in a name – conference center vs. convention center? Destination Niagara USA said:

√ Conference centers typically refer to smaller properties with an intimate feel and single-use meeting space.

√ Convention centers focus on larger-sized groups and trade-shows. These groups maximize economic impact with multiple-day stay patterns and weekday meeting cycles, which are optimum for hotels. In contrast, conference centers focus on meetings and seminars with only one- to two-day meeting patterns.

√ Convention centers focus on size-appropriate, citywide conventions that benefit all des-

ignation partners, including hotels, restaurants and attractions. Conference centers tend to focus solely on meeting space.

√ Convention centers offer a variety of spaces, including exhibition halls, meeting rooms, auditorium-style space and banquet meal rooms. Conference centers are more often referred to as singularly focused space.

Plus, "Niagara Falls Convention Center" ranks higher than "Conference Center" in terms of online keywords and search vis-

ibility.

"The Niagara Falls USA brand, which we launched in 2017, has been extremely effective in all of our marketing efforts, and we are excited to extend that brand and level of marketing quality to this building," Percy said. "We believe that, with a new brand focus, we can reintroduce the Niagara Falls Convention Center to the meetings and conventions world to see even greater success."

USA Niagara Development

Corp. President Anthony Vilardo said, "Destination Niagara USA was selected as the operator of this facility because of the shared mission and synergies with the Niagara Falls Convention Center. The research supporting Destination Niagara USA's initiative to rebrand our facility reflects a greater need for strategic decision-making as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic."

Over the next several months, new and more prominent signage reflecting the name change will go up on the building's exterior. The interior will also be re-branded, along with all sales and marketing materials, including updates to the website nconventioncenter.com.

The mission of Destination Niagara USA is to expand the economic prosperity of the Niagara Falls USA communities by generating individual and group visitation. For more information, visit niagarafallsusa.com.



Niagara USA Chamber announces Niagara County inclusion in popular Shop 716 eGift card program

Support local restaurants, retailers & attractions

The Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce on Friday announced Niagara County's inclusion in the Shop 716 eGift card program.

The initiative is organized by the Amherst Chamber of Commerce, which said on its website, "Western New York has a long history of meeting daunting challenges. As always, when all of us work together, great things can happen. This is our home. These are our neighbors. The survival of local businesses is our responsibility."

"As we searched for innovative ways to grow our members' businesses, spark some recovery from the pandemic and build community, we're excited to introduce this program. ...

"Consumers can purchase the Shop 716 eGift cards as gifts or for self-use, and companies can use it for employee rewards, anniversary gifts, customer appreciation, survey incentives, contests and or simply to be an extension of the shop local theme. The dollars stay local and benefit our retailers, restaurants, co-ops and attractions."

The goal is to keep local shoppers shopping local, thus support-



Shop 716 is now including Niagara County. (Image courtesy of the Amherst Chamber of Commerce/Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce)

ing merchants and ensuring their survival.

The Shop 716 eGift card is powered by the chamber's technology partner, Yiftee. An electronic Mastercard gift card is texted and/or emailed to patrons, and can be used or gifted to a family member, friend or co-worker. Consumers purchase the Shop 716 eGift card online and then email, text or print it for use. The electronic card works at participating local independent mer-

chants.

To accept the Shop 716 eGift card, retailers need to be able to process a key-entry (like a phone order) Mastercard. They are paid through the credit card bank in their normal settlement.

Visit <https://amherst.org/shop716/> to sign up.

Shop 716 was originally announced in November 2020. It was the product of a partnership between the Amherst Chamber of Commerce, the Erie County Busi-

ness Task Force, Visit Buffalo Niagara, the Erie County Industrial Development Agency and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority.

Last September, Erie County announced the program had generated nearly \$1.2 million in new revenue for local small businesses, with another \$1 million in revenue estimated from the latest buy-one-get-one gift card promotion.

At that time, Visit Buffalo Niagara President and CEO Patrick Kaler said, "Money spent locally is money earned locally. Buying local invigorates our small businesses and invests in our economy. This marketing campaign aims to bring local residents back to Erie County's incredible restaurants, retail shops and cultural attractions. Shop local and let's get back to our comeback!"

Niagara County Youth Bureau seeking Governor's Youth Council representative

The Niagara County Youth Bureau is seeking a new representative for the New York State Governor's Youth Council, which is to be made up of one young person ages 13-21 from each of 62 counties. Members are chosen through an online selection process.

In 2021, Niagara County was represented on the council by Cameron Kiner of Barker. Cameron will be graduating in June from Barker High School. Beyond the Youth Council, Cameron has been very active in his community and school, including serving as vice present of the student council and as a mentor in the school's M &

M program.

A press release stated, "The Youth Council provides an effective way to engage youth in state government, and creates a platform for their voices to be heard by policymakers. Members of the NYS Governor's Youth Council offer their solutions to key issues facing young people in NYS. Youth voice is recognized through this initiative; if you would like your voice heard apply today."

"Those interested should understand the great opportunity offered upon selection, and commit to the following if appointed to the NYS Governor's Youth Council." The list includes:

√ Participate in virtual statewide youth-led networking and training events about government, civic engagement and positive youth development;

√ Attend regional meetings via online platforms;

√ Work on selecting policy issues to inform local, regional and/or state changes;

√ Seek out, listen and respect others' opinions and experiences; and

√ Maintain your membership until March 30, 2023.

For more information or to apply online, visit <https://nysylc.secure-platform.com/a>.

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