

# Marketing to center on domestic travel, 'staycations'

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Last week, it was announced that, beginning April 2, event, arts and entertainment venues can reopen at 33% capacity, with up to 100 people indoors and up to 200 people outdoors. If all attendees present proof of a negative COVID-19 test prior to entry, capacity can increase up to 150 people indoors and up to 500 people outdoors.

Beginning March 22, residential gatherings of up to 25 people can be held outdoors, and social get-togethers can climb to 100 people indoors and up to 200 people outdoors.

"I know that even the couple festivals in Buffalo have announced that they will be up and running," Percy said. "I think it's so fluid that we take this day by day. ...

"It changes on a day-by-day basis - and it's only March, so everything could change - especially with the uptick in vaccines and so forth. But please go to New York state sites. Those are updated pretty frequently; but we'll make sure any new information is sent out to our mass-mailing list."

He added, "We do look forward to (events returning). I know restaurants have been increased

on March 19 to 75% of indoor capacity, which is a great sign. So, again, I think we're starting to see things loosen up, and signs that we will get back to some normalcy. I don't think we'll be 100% over the summer, but far better than we were last summer."

The Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls, a popular site on Old Falls Street - and right in the heart of the downtown business and tourism districts - recently was named a coronavirus mass-vaccination site. Dates and times have yet to be announced.

"I think, Old Falls Street, they were looking and still watching the fluid activity," Percy said. "They were worried about hosting events on Old fall Street, just with the restrictions that have been in place. So, I think they're, again, trying to stay fluid and watch it on a day-to-day basis."

"The vaccination site would be indoors, of course, and I don't think would impact any activity or activities that are taking place out on the street level."

Gilbert also spoke of the Niagara Wine Trail. She called it "a very important asset for the destination all seasons. It really provides us additional product to sell and promote ... because there's always something to do."

## COVID-19: REOPENING

# Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls to serve as mass-vaccination site

### State-run mass vaccination sites to open in coming weeks

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday announced, that as the federal vaccine supply continues to increase, New York will establish 10 additional state-run mass vaccination sites - including one in Niagara Falls - to further grow New York's vast distribution network. The sites remain in development and are expected to launch in the coming weeks. Final details, including appointment scheduling information and hours of operation will be released in the coming days.

The local mass-vaccination site is the Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls, at 101 Old Falls St.

"Thanks to increasing vaccine supply from our partners in Washington, we can utilize more of our state's capacity to distribute doses and, once they are open, these new sites will allow us to continue to get shots into arms on a large

scale," Cuomo said. "We know the vaccine is the weapon that will win this war, but it's only effective if we all take it, which is why we are working around the clock to establish sites like these across the state to reach as many New Yorkers as possible. The more people we vaccinate, the more we can continue our progress in keeping the infection rate at bay, reopening our economy and defeating COVID once and for all."

The sites remain in development and are expected to launch in the coming weeks. Final details, including appointment scheduling information and hours of operation, will be released in the coming days. Once appointments are opened, eligible New Yorkers will be able to schedule appointments by utilizing New York's "Am I Eligible" website or by calling the state's COVID-19 vaccina-

tion hotline at 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829).

A press release said, "The establishment of these 10 sites further expands New York's already vast vaccine distribution network. Not only has New York already established 13 other state-run mass vaccination sites, but, in order to meet the governor's mandate to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of the vaccine, numerous other sites have been established to ensure those New Yorkers living in underserved communities have direct access to the vaccine. This includes six joint state-FEMA community-based vaccination sites, the Yankee Stadium mass-vaccination site, and more than 120 community-based pop-up sites in public housing developments, churches and community centers."

## COUNTY LEADERS FRUSTRATED OVER VACCINE ALLOCATIONS

Niagara County Legislature Chairwoman Becky Wydysh and Director of Public Health Daniel J. Stapleton on Tuesday said it does not appear Niagara County will be getting the amount of vaccine doses it expected from New York state. The county ordered 6,500 doses of vaccine, including 5,000 of Johnson & Johnson. The county is still expecting a small supply of Moderna.

"We are disappointed and are working with the state to find out why we didn't get the requested allotment and, more importantly, how we can get more vaccine

flowing into Niagara County," Wydysh said. "Yes, we are frustrated, but we do not want to lose focus on our goal of getting shots in arms as quickly as possible."

Stapleton said the Niagara County Health Department had adjusted its operation in anticipation of the large vaccine delivery, lining up staff and volunteers who were prepared to administer 2,500 shots a day.

"This is why I have been adamant about not scheduling appointments until we have the vaccine in hand," he said. "As of today, we do not have the vaccine

doses that we thought we were getting."

Stapleton added, "I recognize the tremendous effort this undertaking is, and that is why I continue to believe county health departments need to be more front and center in this effort. We are trained for mass vaccinations, we submitted plans to New York state on how it would be done, and we are best in tune with the needs of our respective communities. We can then coordinate with our partners across the community much more efficiently to distribute vaccine."

## Restaurants can move to 75% indoor capacity starting March 19

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Sunday announced restaurants outside of New York City, which have been operating at 50% capacity, can now move to 75% capacity starting March 19.

A press release stated, "The data has shown restaurants can operate safely and in accordance with strict health protocols at 75% capacity. New York City restaurant capacity will remain at 35% capacity."

In that same announcement, Cuomo said, "Our fight in the war against COVID-19 continues, but we are encouraged by the decrease in infection and hospitalization rates and the rise in vaccinations. As we expand our vaccine distribution and celebrate the arrival of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, we have never been closer to defeating this beast once and for all. It is critical that New Yorkers not succumb to COVID

fatigue and remain vigilant. Until the day the war is won, we all need to continue the practices we know work - washing hands, social distancing and masking up. The numbers are a reflection of our actions and when we work together, we will see the light at the end of the tunnel."

Speaking on a conference call, Cuomo said, "The numbers are down. When the numbers are down, we adjust the economic reopening valve. Connecticut is going to 100% restaurant capacity on March 19. Massachusetts went to 100% restaurant capacity on March 1. New York on March 19, same day Connecticut goes to 100, our restaurants outside of New York City which have been at 50%, will now go to 75%. That is everywhere outside of New York City."

"That is all very good news. It's not just good news for the restau-

rant owners. Remember you have a lot of staff at restaurants, there are a lot of jobs, there are a lot of suppliers, so we'll go to 75%. We also think that 75% is what the consumer is ready for.

"All the same safety capacities remain in effect, but we will go to 75%. (New York State Health Commissioner) Dr. (Howard) Zucker adds a caveat between now and March 19. If the numbers change, if something happens, if there is a downturn, then obviously we will adjust."

"With the new law that the Legislature passed (limiting the governor's emergency powers), we will make this public - the Legislature has five days to review the change and we'll discuss it with any members of the Legislature or local governments who have issues. Legislature has the ability to cancel it with 50% of the vote."

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