



## Tourism Minister attends Annual Dinner, announces new partnership with Corporation

The Niagara Economic and Tourism Corporation held its annual general meeting and dinner in Niagara-on-the-lake on April 13. **Gordon Marasco**, Chairman of the Corporation, welcomed more than 150 local business people and politicians by offering commentary on the tremendous growth in economic development activity throughout the Niagara region.

Marasco also utilized the occasion to announce the appointment of two new members to the corporation's Board of Directors. **Mr. Jay Mielstrup**, General Manager of Casino Niagara, and **Mr. Alan J. Thoms**, President of Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering are the new directors. Retiring board member, **Mr. John Palumbo**, was acknowledged and thanked for his contribution to the corporation.

Guest speaker for the evening was **Ontario Tourism Minister, Cam Jackson**. Jackson's remarks commented on the growth of Niagara's tourism infrastructure and the many attractions that are developing throughout the region. He also confirmed the important partnerships that have been formed with local economic development and tourism organizations.

The Minister praised the Niagara Economic & Tourism Corporation's efforts to identify and promote new tourism investment opportunities in the region and announced a new partnership between the Tourism Ministry and the Corporation. A cheque for \$24,700 was presented to the Corporation to help further the efforts that are successfully attracting tourism investment to Niagara. [www.niagaracanada.com](http://www.niagaracanada.com)

## Welland Canal opens for 2000 shipping season

The Welland Canal opened for another season with the traditional Top Hat ceremonies in St. Catharines and Port Colborne. The ceremonial events are an opportunity to bring attention to the significance of the marine industry to Niagara's economy. The local marine industry provides direct employment to an estimated 2,178 people, contributes more than \$158 million in direct spending to the local economy, furnishes \$88 million in salaries, and \$71 million on goods and services through more than 300 companies.

## \$18 Million upgrade to Garden City Skyway

The Garden City Skyway is undergoing improvements to modernize this key stretch of highway. Once completed, the improvements are expected to keep goods, services and travelers moving freely through the QEW corridor for another 20 years. A contract for \$17.8 million will be the first phase of a \$98 million plan to upgrade and expand the QEW through St. Catharines to Highway 420 and Niagara Falls. It is estimated that \$167 million of goods pass through the QEW highway every day. Approximately 85,000 vehicles cross the Garden City Skyway during peak summer travel periods.

## Niagara Grape and Wine Festival is Ontario's best

Niagara's Grape and Wine Festival has been named Ontario's best cultural event by **Attractions Canada**. This distinction will advance the festival for judging at the national level. The 48 year-old festival includes some 100 events over a 10-day harvest celebration of Niagara wines, regional cuisine, concerts and parades. The winner of the national festival competition will be announced in April. [www.grapeandwine.com](http://www.grapeandwine.com)

## New Marriott hotel opens

The **Courtyard by Marriott Hotel**, located at Victoria Avenue and Ferry Street in Niagara Falls, opened on March 31. The 10-storey Courtyard hotel has 285 rooms and employs 130 people. The Menechella family, who own the Courtyard, are currently erecting a 13-storey addition to another of their hotels, the Marriott Fallsview. Plans are also in the works to build a new 30-storey hotel nearby.

## \$20 Million contract for dry docks

President and CEO of **Canada Steamship Lines**, Sam Hayes, announced that their shipyard in Port Weller will be awarded a \$20 million contract to widen the 31-year-old carrier Tadoussac. The project is expected to begin this winter. The announcement means continuation of work for about 400 employees.

## TRW celebrates 70 years

Auto parts manufacturer Thompson Products opened its St. Catharines operations with one factory in 1930. Today the company is a subsidiary of **TRW Inc.** and employs 1,100 people in two plants. The company makes steering linkage components for Ford, Daimler-Chrysler and General Motors. In recent years the company has invested over \$33 million in capital improvements to address demand for the popular sport utility and light truck products manufactured by the automotive industry.

## Fruit Wines of Canada receives financial support

Fruit Wines of Canada will soon be established with the assistance of an \$84,000 grant from **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada**. The new organization's first order of business will be to establish winemaking standards similar to the Vintner's Quality Alliance so that consumers know what kind of product they are getting. **Sunnybrook Farm Estate Winery** of Niagara-on-the-Lake is one of 14 Ontario fruit winemakers and 37 fruit wine producers across Canada. The funding will go toward turning the independent fruit wineries into a national organization to develop quality standards and effectively market the product.

## New senior economic development officer

The Niagara Economic and Tourism Corporation has hired **Renato Romanin** as the corporation's senior economic development officer. "Mr. Romanin will help the Corporation promote the region's competitive advantages in key economic sectors such as manufacturing and tourism," said chief executive officer William Connor .

Romanin has thirteen years of municipal economic development experience. He was most recently the general manager for the Fort Erie Economic Development Corporation where he initiated a national award-winning marketing campaign for that municipality.

Mr. Romanin can be contacted by calling (905) 685-1308 or email at [rromanin@niagaracanada.com](mailto:rromanin@niagaracanada.com) .

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## Call for Submissions

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## Teamwork helps promote Niagara in International publications

Co-operative advertising partnerships organized by the Niagara Economic and Tourism Corporation are helping to spread the word about Niagara's vibrant business climate. Corporation partnerships with the cities of Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Welland, and the Town of Fort Erie, are enabling Niagara to gain a presence in major US and Canadian trade publications. So far in 2000, Niagara has been featured in the following trade publications.

- **Royal LePage Industrial Property Guide 2000** - An overview of primary Canadian industrial markets
- **US Sites and Development** - A major US site selection publication
- **Site Selection Canada 2000 Supplement** - A major US site selection publication. The Canada 2000 Supplement is the Official Program for the 2000 International Development Research Council
- **Places to Retire Magazine** - May issue and German Congress trade show supplement

## Greenhouse expands

**Bayview Flowers** has received approval to build a 644,000-square-foot greenhouse on Haynes Street in Lincoln. The company will also be expanding their warehouse from 29,000 square feet to 80,200 square feet.

## Niagara's youth gain new source for venture capital

The Canadian Youth Business Foundation, a non-profit, private-sector organization that provides business financing for Canadians 18 to 29, is now making loans available to local aspiring business owners through a partnership with the **Institute for Enterprise Education (IEE)** in Thorold, a research and educational centre for self-employed professionals. In addition to the foundation's initial \$100,000 contribution to the loan initiative, the program will also be privately financed by businesses and organizations in the region. Gene Luczkiw, the executive director of IEE said, "From the original \$100,000, we intend to raise \$500,000 in Niagara so we can meet the needs of young people who want to start their enterprises right here in Niagara."

## Kaneff Group invests in Niagara

Ignatt Kaneff, President of The Kaneff Group of Companies spoke to **Venture Forum Niagara** participants about his recent investment in the Niagara region. Royal Niagara Golf Club, opening May 2001, is located in Niagara-on-the-lake adjacent to the QEW highway. It is situated on lands between the Niagara Escarpment and the Welland Canal. The 27-hole championship golf course is an expansion of Kaneff's corporate niche of premier golf facilities. Kaneff was the developer of Lionhead Golf and Country Club, one of Canada's premiere golf facilities

## 340 single family homes to be built in Port Colborne

Meadow Heights Village is the newest Port Colborne subdivision. The first phase of a five-phase, 340 home project, will see 56 homes built in the first two years. The developer, Ray Khana indicated that he hopes phase two could start within two years. The timing will depend on interest in the community and in the housing market overall. New homes will sell in the \$130,000 to \$170,000 price range.

## Comfort maple has deep roots in Niagara

Town of Pelham council recently agreed to support a **Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee** recommendation that the **Comfort Maple** be designated as a site of historic value and interest. The **Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority** estimates the majestic tree to be the oldest and the largest sugar Maple in Canada. Over 400 years old, the Comfort maple was named for the Comfort family who had previously owned the property. The Comforts were United Empire Loyalists who bought the lot from Major David Secord, Laura Secord's brother-in-law, in 1816.

## \$1 Billion in assets

**Niagara Credit Union** announced it has reached \$1 billion in member assets. It is the first credit union in Ontario to achieve this mark. The Niagara Credit Union was established in 1945 with \$24 in assets. Today, the company employs over 400 people in 15 branches across the Niagara region. [www.niagaracu.com](http://www.niagaracu.com)