

# MADE IN NIAGARA

## DISCOVER NIAGARA'S WONDER



ARIE BARENDRGT  
PRESIDENT & CEO

The image shows a sophisticated industrial automation system. A large red and silver robotic arm is mounted on a metal base. On the base, there is a control panel with a digital display showing a sequence of right-pointing arrows. To the left of the display is a black remote control unit with several buttons. To the right is a red emergency stop button. Below the display, there is a green circular logo with a stylized 'T' and 'A' intertwined, with the words 'TRIPLE AUTOMATION' written in green text below it. The entire setup is set against a dark background.

### DRIVING AUTOMATION FORWARD

### THE VISION OF TRIPLE AUTOMATION

JAKA



Business Link  
Media Group

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# GREETINGS FROM THE PUBLISHER: MADE IN NIAGARA 2024

Dear Readers,

I am thrilled to welcome you to the latest edition of "Made in Niagara." As we navigate an ever-evolving business landscape, our dedication to building lasting connections with visionary individuals like you remains unwavering.

Since 2003, Business Link has proudly championed the vibrant businesses of the Niagara region. In this edition, we shine a spotlight on the most resilient and forward-thinking companies that are making a mark not only locally but also on the global stage.

"Made in Niagara 2024" focuses on key sectors, such as manufacturing, agriculture, and technology, highlighting how they adapt with creativity and strength. Our aim is to foster new partnerships and growth opportunities, emphasizing Niagara's rich economic potential and stunning natural beauty.

This magazine serves as an exploration of the rich cultural heritage, diverse industries and collaborative spirit that makes Niagara unique. We invite you to dive into the stories and insights shared within these pages, discovering how tradition and modernity coexist harmoniously in our region.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our partners, advertisers, and contributors who have made this publication possible. Your support is the driving force behind "Made in Niagara."

Join us in celebrating the successes of our community and envisioning the bright future ahead. Together, let's continue to elevate Niagara's narrative.

Thank you for being a vital part of our journey.  
Happy reading!

Marilyn Tian, MBA  
President & Co-Publisher  
Business Link Media Group





# Triple Automation



***At Triple Automation, we are passionate about providing our clients with the best robotic solutions on the market. We pride ourselves on our fast, creative approach to problem-solving, and all our solutions are designed with safety, speed and efficiency in mind.***



***Increase Your Productivity Today***

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# GREETINGS

2024

"Made in Niagara"

*greetings* from

**MAYOR JIM DIODATI**

&

**MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

There is something  
for everyone  
in Niagara Falls.

We invite you to visit  
our buffet of fun  
& entertainment.

**EXPLORE . ENJOY . REPEAT .**



[NIAGARAFALLS.CA](http://NIAGARAFALLS.CA)



**Mayor Mat Siscoe**

City of St. Catharines

stcatharines.ca

# Welcome to St. Catharines!

On behalf of St. Catharines City Council, I am thrilled to welcome you to our vibrant city! St. Catharines boasts a rich history, diverse cultures, and plenty of opportunities waiting to be explored. Our city is filled with picturesque parks, serene waterfront views of Lake Ontario, and a bustling arts and culinary scene that cater to a wide range of interests. Whether you are seeking a peaceful retreat in nature or craving a culinary adventure, St. Catharines has something for everyone.

Our parks, such as Montebello Park and Lakeside Park, offer tranquil green spaces where residents and visitors can unwind, play, and connect with nature. The waterfront along Lake Ontario provides a stunning backdrop for leisurely strolls, picnics, and water activities, creating a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

In addition to our natural wonders, St. Catharines is a hub of artistic expression and culinary delights. The city is home to numerous art galleries, theaters, and music venues that showcase the talents of local artists and performers.

When it comes to dining, St. Catharines is a food lover's paradise. Our city is renowned for its diverse culinary scene, offering everything from cozy cafes and trendy bistros to fine dining restaurants serving up gourmet experiences - with one of them, oddBird., being recognized as one of the top 100 restaurants across the country.

I urge you to take the time to explore all that St. Catharines has to offer and create cherished memories in our welcoming community. Check out [lovestc.ca](http://lovestc.ca) for more details on events and places to see!

Thank you for being a part of our city's vibrant story and for embracing the beauty and diversity that make St. Catharines truly special.

Sincerely,

**Mayor Mat Siscoe**



# Welcome to the Niagara Region

Where Industrial Excellence and Family Values Go Hand in Hand!

---

Niagara's industrial sector continues to be the backbone of our economy, boasting over 650 businesses that provide employment to more than 22,000 dedicated workers. This thriving sector contributes a substantial \$2.5 billion in nominal GDP and generates over \$7 billion in exports, underscoring its vital role in our regional prosperity.

More recently, the industrial sector has seen remarkable growth, with over \$400 million in investments leading to the creation of 1,200 new jobs in just the past two years alone. This expansion highlights the dynamic, unique, and forward-looking nature of our region, making it an ideal destination for businesses seeking to grow and innovate.

At the heart of Niagara's industrial success are the many family-owned businesses that have long been the cornerstone of our community. These enterprises not only contribute to our economic vitality, but also embody the values of hard work, dedication, and continuity that define our region. As we continue to grow, it is more important than ever to be mindful of the changing family and economic dynamics that shape these businesses. Succession planning and long-term vision are challenges, yet are critical to ensuring that these organizations can thrive for generations to come. Our mandate is to assist our members to overcome these challenges by acting as a network, resource, and advocate.

On behalf of the Niagara Industrial Association, I look forward to welcoming your business to the Niagara Region and supporting your journey toward growth and success in our vibrant industrial community!

**Bailey Charles**  
Chair, Niagara Industrial Association (NIA)



## The Voice & Hand of Industry in Niagara

# MADE IN NIAGARA

## Introduction to Niagara's Economic Landscape

### Business Growth and Innovation

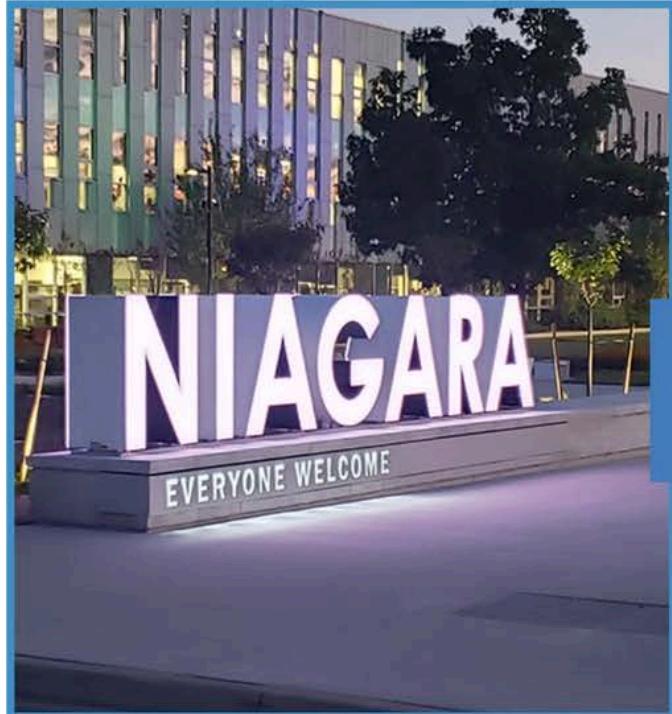
Renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and iconic falls, the Niagara region also thrives as an economic powerhouse, offering a wealth of opportunities for businesses and tourists alike. This area seamlessly blends tradition with modern practices, highlighted by its vibrant culinary scene, innovative technology, and commitment to sustainability. This feature explores the various aspects that make Niagara an attractive destination for entrepreneurs and visitors.

Niagara's economy thrives due to its strategic location near the U.S. border, which facilitates robust exports and international trade. The region has achieved impressive export performance, totaling **\$8.2 billion** and involving over **614 exporters**. Manufacturing is a significant contributor to this total, playing a crucial role in the economic landscape. Companies like **Maple Ville** have emerged as key players in the import and export sector, enhancing the region's economic diversity. Recent investments in infrastructure, including upgrades to local transportation facilities and the new **South Niagara Hospital**, further bolster Niagara's appeal as a prime destination for business growth.

The region supports **12 municipal economic development business growth hubs**, including the **City of Niagara Falls** and the **Town of Fort Erie**, which provide resources and support for local entrepreneurs, helping to stimulate job creation and economic vitality. Key sectors such as renewable energy and hospitality are projected to experience positive job growth of approximately **10%** over the next five years.

Emerging as a hub for innovation, Niagara fosters an environment conducive to technology startups and green initiatives. In the manufacturing sector, companies like **Triple Automation** and **Hamill APS** are making significant strides. **Triple Automation** enhances productivity through user-friendly robotics, while **Hamill APS** specializes in designing harvesting equipment for Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA). Both firms leverage local talent and advance automation, positioning themselves as key players in Niagara's evolving industrial landscape.

With its rich blend of tradition and innovation, Niagara is well-positioned for continued growth, offering a dynamic environment for businesses and a promising future for its residents.



*Photo credit: Niagara Region*

# NIAGARA FALLS

## A THRIVING CENTER FOR BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LIFE

BUSINESS GROWTH

Niagara Falls is not only famous for its breathtaking natural beauty, but also for its vibrant business environment. As highlighted in the 2023 Community Investment Profile, the city boasts a diverse economy anchored by key sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, healthcare and knowledge-based services. With a population of over 94,000, Niagara Falls presents a unique opportunity for businesses to thrive in a community that values both quality living and economic growth.

The city's strategic location allows businesses to connect easily with major North American markets, reaching over 2 million consumers within an hour's drive. This accessibility is complemented by robust infrastructure, including extensive road, rail, and air networks, making it ideal for logistics and distribution operations. Additionally, Niagara Falls is designated as a Canadian Foreign Trade Zone, offering businesses tax and duty exemptions that enhance competitiveness in international markets.

The Niagara Falls Business Development Department actively supports local enterprises through various incentives and programs, ensuring a conducive environment for startups and established companies alike. The city's commitment to innovation is evident in initiatives like the Niagara South Hospital and the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub, which aim to bolster economic activity and community well-being.

In conclusion, Niagara Falls stands out as a dynamic location for investment and living, merging the charm of a small city with the advantages of a major economic hub. For more information on opportunities in Niagara Falls, visit Niagara Falls Business Development (<https://niagarafallsbusiness.ca>)



THE CITY OF  
NIAGARA FALLS  
**BUSINESS**  
**DEVELOPMENT**

## OPPORTUNITIES FLOW IN NIAGARA FALLS.

SCAN TO  
LEARN MORE



**NIAGARAFALLSBUSINESS.CA**

Located in the heart of North America's most affluent consumer market, Niagara Falls is a dynamic, internationally renowned city with a prosperous business community.



### ACCESSIBILITY

With **more than 150 million consumers** within a day's drive, our road, rail, water, and air transport networks keep products and materials moving between suppliers and customers.



### BRANDING

Leverage the influence, natural beauty, and might of a world-renowned destination that draws **over 14,000,000 visitors** each year.



### WORKFORCE

Draw from a skilled and technologically inclined region-wide **workforce of over 400,000** to support your short-term and long-term labour goals.

# Fort Erie

## A Rising Hub for Investment and Business Growth in Niagara

Fort Erie, located in Ontario, Canada, is rapidly emerging as a dynamic center for investment and business development. Positioned in one of North America's most active economic corridors, the town seamlessly blends small-town charm with the opportunities of a thriving metropolitan area.

In 2024, Fort Erie has seen remarkable growth, with residential building values exceeding \$87 million and commercial development reaching \$6 million as of July. This growth reflects a thriving economy supported by diverse sectors, including retail, healthcare, manufacturing, and construction. Its strategic location provides access to key border crossings, major international airports, and highways, positioning it advantageously between Buffalo, New York, and the Greater Toronto Area.

The community's appeal is enhanced by its recreational offerings, including stunning beaches, parks, and trails that encourage an active lifestyle.

Fort Erie's rich history is preserved through museums and heritage sites, while local attractions draw visitors year-round.

Education is a cornerstone of Fort Erie's community, with institutions such as Greater Fort Erie Secondary School (GFESS), Fort Erie International Academy (FEIA), Niagara Christian Collegiate (NCC) and Sheridan at the Canadian College of Technology and Trades (CCTT) providing quality learning opportunities. The town's proximity to renowned educational institutions like Brock University, Niagara College, and several colleges and universities in Buffalo further enhances its appeal.

Fort Erie has also become a magnet for new businesses, with over 150 new enterprises establishing themselves locally since January 2020. With its blend of history, economic vitality, and community-focused initiatives, Fort Erie is well-positioned to continue its growth and remain a highly desirable location for living, working, and investing.



**FORT ERIE**  
ONTARIO

**STRATEGIC LOCATION**



FORT ERIE IS THE HUB LINKING ONTARIO AND WESTERN NEW YORK ECONOMIES. \$40 BILLION IN TRADE CROSSES THE PEACE BRIDGE EVERY YEAR.

**OPEN FOR BUSINESS**



THE TOWN OF FORT ERIE WELCOMES NEW BUSINESSES AND HELPS LOCAL COMPANIES.

**IN GOOD COMPANY**



DOZENS OF ADVANCED MANUFACTURERS CALL FORT ERIE HOME, AND MANY MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FORT ERIE'S EXCEPTIONAL ACCESS.

# NIAGARA'S **ECONOMIC** *Gateway*

10

edts@forterie.ca

Fort Erie Economic Development & Tourism Services

forterie.ca

# Why the City of Welland is a Great Place to Live, Work, Play, and Invest

Nestled in the heart of Niagara, the City of Welland is a thriving hub for those seeking a vibrant and connected community. With its unique combination of economic opportunities, recreational amenities, and welcoming neighborhoods, Welland is the perfect place to live, work, play, and invest.

## Live

Welland offers an exceptional quality of life, blending the charm of small-town living with the convenience of urban amenities. Residents enjoy affordable housing, access to excellent healthcare, and proximity to top-rated schools. The city's growing neighborhoods are complemented by a strong sense of community, where cultural diversity is celebrated, and neighbors feel like family. With its picturesque parks, trails, and waterways, Welland provides a serene environment for families and individuals alike.

## Work

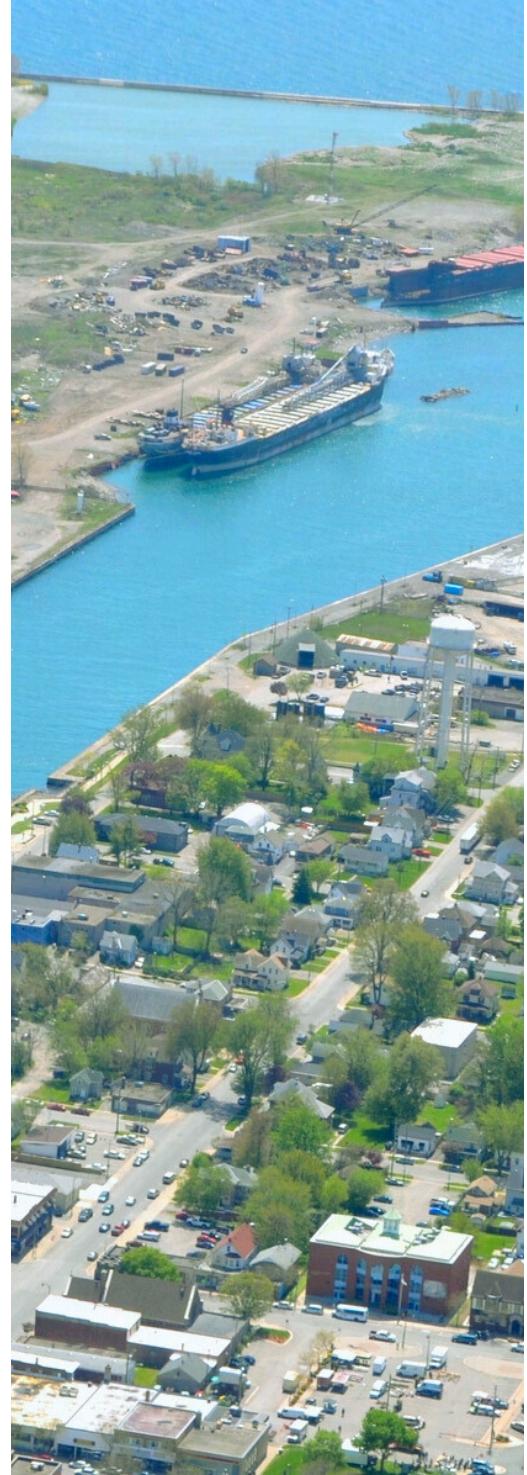
Welland is strategically located at the center of the Niagara Region, offering unparalleled access to multimodal transportation hubs, including the Welland Canal, railways, and highways. This connectivity has attracted global businesses to the area, particularly in advanced manufacturing, logistics, and technology. With a workforce known for its skills and dedication, Welland is a place where industries thrive. The city also supports entrepreneurship, fostering a culture of innovation through resources like the Niagara College-led Walker Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre.

## Play

From outdoor adventures to cultural events, Welland is brimming with opportunities for fun and relaxation. The Welland Recreational Canal provides an ideal setting for kayaking, rowing, and paddleboarding, while the nearby hiking trails invite exploration. Festivals like the Welland Rose Festival and the FloatFest bring the community together in celebration, while sports facilities, art galleries, and theaters cater to diverse interests year-round.

## Invest

For investors, Welland represents a golden opportunity. With shovel-ready industrial lands, competitive business costs, and a robust support network, the city is positioned for economic growth. Its commitment to sustainability and innovation ensures long-term success for businesses. Combined with the city's proactive approach to economic development, including incentives and streamlined processes, Welland is a prime destination for investment.



**Discover the unmatched potential and community spirit that make Welland a city of opportunity.**

# Invest in WELLAND

Economic growth.  
Strategic location.  
Local infrastructure.  
Growing population.



CITY OF  
**Welland**  
ONTARIO, CANADA

[welland.ca](http://welland.ca)



# DRIVING AUTOMATION FORWARD

## The Vision of Triple Automation

At Business Link Media Group, we celebrate innovation, and Triple Automation stands out as a beacon of transformative potential. Founded by Arie Barendregt, a visionary with over 20 years in agricultural automation, Triple Automation is revolutionizing multiple industries by integrating advanced robotics into their operations.

### From Agriculture to Diverse Industries

Arie's journey began in agriculture, where he recognized the limitations of focusing solely on one sector. This insight led to the creation of Triple Automation, aimed at developing user-friendly, plug-and-play robotic solutions that enhance productivity across various fields, including manufacturing and healthcare. By prioritizing adaptability, Triple Automation has positioned itself as a leader in making robotics accessible and efficient.

### Niagara: A Thriving Hub

Located in the heart of Niagara, Triple Automation benefits from its proximity to major urban centers like Toronto and Buffalo. The region's industrial landscape, including steel mills and diverse businesses, provides ample opportunities for partnerships. These collaborations enable the company to test and refine their innovative solutions in real-world environments, ensuring they meet market needs effectively.

Moreover, Niagara's skilled workforce plays a crucial role in Triple Automation's success. The local pool of engineers and software developers is eager to engage in cutting-edge projects, helping the company stay ahead in the rapidly evolving field of robotics.

### Personalized Solutions for Maximum ROI

At Business Link Media Group, we understand that personalization is key to success. Triple Automation shares this philosophy, beginning each

project with a comprehensive analysis of the client's operations. By identifying specific pain points and goals, the team crafts customized solutions that integrate seamlessly into existing workflows. This collaborative approach not only differentiates Triple Automation but also ensures significant returns on investment, making automation a practical addition for businesses of all sizes.

### Rapid Deployment and Commitment to Innovation

A recent project exemplifies Triple Automation's agility and commitment to innovation. When tasked with automating the assembly line of a large manufacturing plant under tight deadlines, the team quickly developed and deployed a robotic solution that increased output and precision. This success story highlights the company's ability to deliver impactful solutions that drive operational efficiency.

### Looking Ahead

As industries in Niagara and beyond continue to embrace technology, automation will be vital for economic growth. Triple Automation is investing in the future, focusing on AI-driven robotics and IoT integration. Their vision is to lead the way in making advanced automation accessible to all sectors, fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration.

Business Link proudly spotlights businesses like Triple Automation, who are not only shaping the future of technology but also driving economic progress in our communities.

## Cultivating Innovation

### Hamill APS's Commitment to the Future of Indoor Farming

With 25 years of experience in the manufacturing sector, Bob Benner, the founder and CEO of Hamill APS, recognized the imperative to evolve alongside changing times. The rapid growth of healthy eating and indoor farming highlighted a gap in the availability of suitable harvesting equipment.

At Hamill APS, we specialize in the design and construction of harvesting equipment tailored for the Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) industry. What differentiates us from our competitors is our genuine passion for understanding and addressing our customers' needs, allowing us to implement changes that truly benefit them. In addition to harvesting equipment, we also manufacture tray washers and other essential post-harvest tools for growers.

One of the most rewarding aspects of running Hamill APS is witnessing the success and growth of the farms we serve. Since our inception as a sister company to Hamill Machine, we have proudly seen many of our customers' fresh greens make their way to grocery stores. Their success enables all of us to enjoy access to fresh products. We also take great pride in offering co-op and apprenticeship students opportunities to work and engage within this industry.

To navigate future market changes and challenges, we remain actively engaged with our customers. Our strong relationships allow us to listen closely to their needs and challenges, while our dedicated and efficient staff contributes significantly to our success.

Furthermore, we are committed to giving back to the community by collaborating with local colleges and programs, providing youth with valuable opportunities for learning and growth.

We believe that investing in the next generation is crucial for the continued innovation and sustainability of the CEA industry. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and development, we not only ensure the growth of our company but also contribute to the broader ecosystem of agriculture and technology.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the potential advancements in automation and smart technology. These innovations could revolutionize the way indoor farms operate, making them more efficient and environmentally friendly. At Hamill APS, we are already exploring ways to integrate advanced sensors, AI, and robotics into our equipment to better serve our customers.

Our commitment to quality and innovation has earned us a reputation as a trusted partner in the CEA industry. We are proud of the impact we have made and remain dedicated to pushing the boundaries of what is possible in indoor farming. As we continue to grow and evolve, we invite our customers and partners to join us on this journey toward a more sustainable and prosperous future.

*Thank you for being a part of the Hamill APS story. Together, we can cultivate a healthier world, one harvest at a time.*



Bob Benner, Founder and President of Hamill APS

# WHY CHOOSE US FOR YOUR HARVESTING NEEDS?

- ✓ Experienced and knowledgeable team of engineers
- ✓ Manufactured in Canada
- ✓ Harvest a tray every 3 seconds
- ✓ Improves productivity & reduces costs
- ✓ Fast, consistent and clean cut every time with our exceptional blade and cutting head system



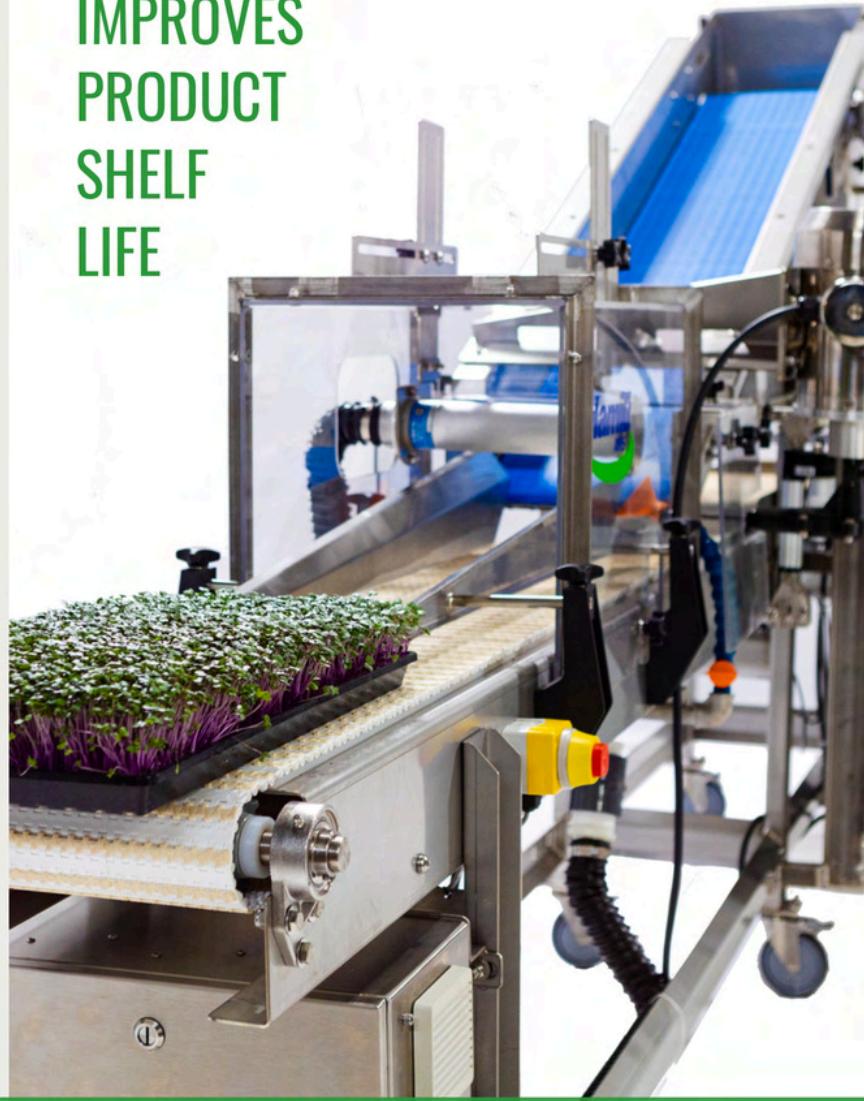
**905-354-2922**

Contact us today for more information



## ADVANCED MANUFACTURING FOR A GROWING INDUSTRY

**FAST, CONSISTENT  
AND CLEAN CUT  
EVERY TIME  
IMPROVES  
PRODUCT  
SHELF  
LIFE**



MapleVille was established in 2009, rooted in the Niagara region of Canada, with the Canadian Ice Wine United Group as its main entity. It has established import and sales service companies in China, specializing in the import and export business of Canadian wines and ice wines. In 2013, it established an agricultural products trading company in Vancouver and a dairy import and sales service company in China, focusing on high-quality Canadian agricultural products such as milk, flour, honey, and maple syrup.

MapleVille upholds a philosophy of healthy eating and advocates for strict food industry standards. The basic principle for selecting agency products is to choose high-quality products available in mainstream supermarkets in Canada (or the country of origin). The company insists on importing products in their original packaging and has obtained exclusive agency rights for several high-quality manufacturers in mainland China.

The group currently has over 100 scaled sales outlets in China and a large, stable, and influential core customer base. Leveraging deep local resources in Canada and a professional localized team rooted in the Chinese market, MapleVille has been continuously providing customers with various one-stop personalized comprehensive services, including product development, planning consultation, and sales support.

MapleVille has a professional and mature sea transport and customs clearance chain, with three major storage bases in mainland China (Langfang, Xiamen, and Xuzhou) and two bonded warehouses (Hainan and Xuzhou). The company has established long-term and in-depth cooperative transportation routes with major domestic express logistics companies, covering the entire country through a sound logistics network. The workforce is rigorously trained to ensure professional and efficient completion of tasks such as outbound and inbound logistics, loading, unloading, and handling.

The group integrates trade, asset management, investment, immigration and study-abroad services. Based on Canada's unique natural resources and rich products, it extends its development network upstream and downstream of the industrial chain through the operation of various specialized projects, aiming to build a high-quality platform for economic, trade, and cultural cooperation between China and Canada, providing exchange and cooperation services for a broad range of like-minded individuals.



**For more information, please visit:**  
[www.mapleville.com/lxwm](http://www.mapleville.com/lxwm)



# Introduction to Niagara's Economic Landscape: Education and Workforce

The Niagara region boasts key educational institutions, including **Brock University**, **Niagara College**, and the **University of Niagara Falls Canada**, alongside various public and private post-secondary schools. These institutions are crucial for shaping the local workforce and driving economic growth.

**Brock University**, founded in 1964, is known for its research and community engagement, offering diverse programs in business, health sciences, and environmental sustainability. Its focus on experiential learning enhances its local economic impact. **Niagara College**, established in 1967, emphasizes applied learning and industry connections, providing hands-on experiences that prepare students for the workforce. Its programs are designed to meet the evolving needs of local industries, ensuring graduates are job-ready. The newly opened **University of Niagara Falls Canada** aligns its specialized programs with regional industry needs, focusing on tourism, hospitality, and technology to address specific workforce demands. In addition, the region features various other post-secondary institutions that contribute to a robust educational ecosystem, offering diverse programs for a range of career paths.

Together, these educational entities not only prepare future leaders but also collaborate with local businesses to keep curricula relevant to industry trends. This partnership fosters innovation and adaptability, essential for the region's economic success. By investing in education, Niagara cultivates a skilled workforce for future growth.



Our vision is to enrich the lives and fulfill the dreams of every student and we do this by providing outstanding applied education and training for a changing world.

**That's ncLIFE.**

[niagaracollege.ca/why](http://niagaracollege.ca/why)

**Student-focused & innovative.**

**It's who we are.**



**Niagara  
College**

# **Business Education at its Best in the Heart of Niagara**

In September 1971, Brock University launched its Bachelor of Administration program to respond to the Niagara community's need for business education. Now, more than 50 years later that initial commitment – which is now the Goodman School of Business – is yielding a significant return.

"We strive to be a vital resource for Niagara's economic growth," said Dean Barry Wright. "As a business school, our mission extends beyond the classroom. We have a strong history of empowering local businesses through practical education, innovative research, and strong partnerships."

The School's undergraduate and masters programs are characterized by small class sizes, interactive lectures and real-world experiences. Through experiential education opportunities – like in-class consulting projects with local businesses and paid co-op work terms – students are connected directly with the Niagara business community during their studies.

For students, Goodman provides them a chance to chart their own path to success. From innovative degree programs that provide a holistic learning experience to clubs and competition teams that build foundational leadership skills, students can shape their experience to match their career goals.

Through Goodman Group, the continuing education wing of the School, Niagara businesses are supported in their continued professional development needs.

Wright says that the School strives to be a vital resource for Niagara's economic growth by fostering entrepreneurship, partnering with businesses on experiential learning projects and by developing the next generation of business leaders.

"Our faculty, students, and alumni work hand-in-hand with local businesses to solve real-world challenges, ensuring that our region thrives in today's competitive landscape and is ready for the challenges of tomorrow."



## **Break through in business.**

**With Niagara's Business School,  
you can:**

- Enroll in our accredited degree programs
- Connect with leading researchers
- Upgrade employee skills with our professional development
- Become an experiential learning partner

**Get there with Goodman.  
[brocku.ca/goodman](http://brocku.ca/goodman)**

# The Journey of Dr. David Gray

Shaping the Future at the University of Niagara Falls Canada

Dr. David Gray, the Provost and Vice-President, Academic at the University of Niagara Falls Canada (UNF), has dedicated over 25 years to higher education, navigating the complexities of academia and administration. His journey has been marked by a commitment to innovation and a deep desire to empower students.

From the outset, David's passion for education was evident. "I've always believed in the transformative power of education," he shared. His extensive experience in senior administration provided him with a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities within the academic landscape. "This role allows me to work with people, helping them upskill and achieve their aspirations," he noted, emphasizing his dedication to student success.

Joining UNF, Canada's newest university, was a significant step for David. He saw the potential to create an institution that embodies the ideals of modern education. "We're building a university from scratch for the 21st century," he explained, highlighting the university's focus on flexibility and accessibility. With 98% of students seeking good job prospects, UNF aims to reduce barriers to education, allowing students to learn in ways that fit their busy lives.

David's vision for the university is clear: to prepare graduates for a rapidly evolving job market. "In our modern, technologically driven world, data is the new gold," he stated. Recognizing the importance of digital competencies, the university integrates technology into every program. "Every student will develop a 'digital mindset,' essential for success in their careers," he emphasized, showcasing his forward-thinking approach.

**"WE'RE BUILDING A  
UNIVERSITY FROM SCRATCH  
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY."**



David Gray, PhD, BSc (Hons).  
Provost and Vice-President, Academic



When David joined the university last November, the downtown Niagara Falls campus was still under construction. UNF opened its doors and welcomed its first students into two graduate programs in April. This fall, it celebrated its official grand opening with more than 1,000 new students starting in five distinct programs.

A significant aspect of David's leadership is fostering a diverse and inclusive environment. He believes that a university thrives on the strength of its diversity. "Education isn't just about learning from professors; it's also about learning from each other," he remarked. The university provides support for both domestic and international students, ensuring a safe and welcoming atmosphere.

Partnerships with local businesses have also been a cornerstone of David's strategy. "We have over 20 local business partnerships offering discounts to our students, strengthening community ties," he explained. This collaboration not only benefits students but also aligns educational programs with local labour market needs.

**"WE'RE ATTRACTING FACULTY FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, UNITED BY A VISION TO CREATE SOMETHING DIFFERENT."**

Looking ahead, David envisions a university that continuously adapts to technological advancements. "We're committed to being early adopters of best practices," he stated, describing the integration of virtual reality into the curriculum. This innovative approach prepares students for careers in fields like medicine, where practical skills can be taught through immersive experiences.

David's commitment to sustainability is evident as well. As a signatory of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, he aims to produce leaders who will address pressing global challenges. "We want to lead the way in sustainability," he asserted, with plans for new programs in the green economy and food security.

As he reflects on his journey, David is proud of the unique community being built at UNF. "We're attracting faculty from all over the world, united by a vision to create something different," he noted. With state-of-the-art facilities and a prime location near the iconic Niagara Falls, the university is poised to become a leader in higher education.

In his own words, Dr. David Gray said, "This is an accredited university that is committed to innovation and excellence, and ready to shape the future." David's journey continues as he leads UNF into a promising future, dedicated to the success of its students and the community it serves.



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# Introduction to Niagara's Economic Landscape: Culinary and Distilleries

Niagara's culinary scene is a standout feature of the region, celebrated for its talented chefs, farm-to-table restaurants, and an abundance of seasonal ingredients. The area is home to a growing number of culinary artisans dedicated to sustainability, local sourcing, and creating unique gastronomic experiences. The farm-to-table movement is not just a trend; it represents a lifestyle embraced by many local establishments, where chefs increasingly collaborate with nearby farms and vineyards to craft menus that highlight the region's agricultural bounty.

From seasonal dishes featuring fresh produce to exquisite wine pairings from local vineyards, the culinary offerings in Niagara are truly a feast for the senses. The region's diverse culinary landscape reflects its rich heritage and commitment to exceptional dining experiences.

One exemplary establishment is **Havana Restaurant**, located in Niagara Falls. This vibrant venue offers authentic Cuban cuisine, skillfully blending traditional recipes with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Another highlight of the local scene is **Queenston Mile Vineyard**, known for its stunning views and exceptional wines. This winery emphasizes sustainable practices and local sourcing, producing a range of high-quality wines that perfectly complement the region's culinary offerings.

Beyond these notable venues, numerous other restaurants and wineries in the region celebrate Niagara's rich culinary heritage. Many establishments prioritize the use of local ingredients and innovative cooking techniques, contributing to a dynamic food culture that attracts both residents and visitors alike. This commitment to quality and sustainability not only enhances the dining experience but also supports the local economy and fosters a sense of community.



# Cuban Flavour Meets Record-Breaking Mojito

## Discover Niagara's Havana Restaurant

Havana Restaurant & Cocktail Lounge, led by Chef Daelys Faife and his wife Marija Faife, is a vibrant celebration of Cuban culture in the heart of Niagara. Daelys, originally from Santa Clara, Cuba, fulfilled his dream of sharing his culinary heritage after relocating to Canada. The restaurant offers authentic Cuban dishes, including standout options like Ropa Vieja, a slow-braised beef dish, and Cuban-style Paella, blending meats and seafood.

Havana gained significant attention by setting a Guinness World Record for the largest glass of mojito, a 4,500-liter spectacle, with proceeds supporting the Niagara Children's Centre. The restaurant stands out for its use of traditional Cuban ingredients, like cumin and cilantro, ensuring an authentic dining experience.

Beyond the food, Havana immerses guests in Cuban culture with live music, dance performances, and lively decor that transport visitors to the Caribbean. The local Niagara community has embraced the restaurant, helping it thrive in a competitive market, and Havana was recognized with multiple "CommunityVotes Niagara Region" awards.

Though attracting customers and shifting perceptions of Cuban cuisine have been challenging, Daelys and Marija remain committed to enhancing the dining experience. Looking ahead, they plan to expand cultural events and emphasize sustainability, sourcing local ingredients to align with environmental goals.

### Bringing Authentic Cuban Cuisine to Niagara Falls



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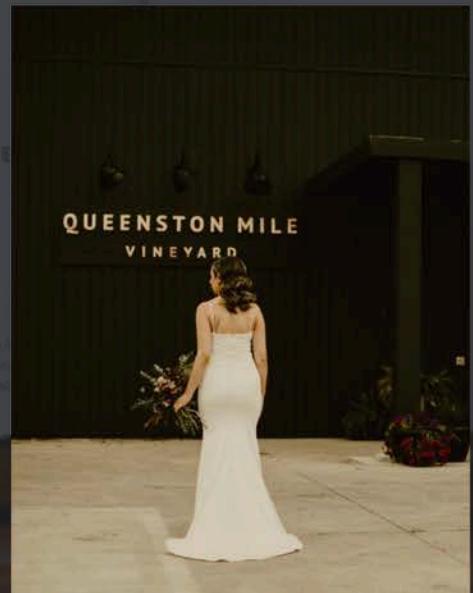
## Queenston Mile Vineyard | Tradition Redefined

Nestled alongside the stunning Niagara Escarpment in the St. David's Bench, Queenston Mile Vineyard is a premier boutique winery renowned for its exceptional wines and breathtaking views. The unique topography and micro-climate of this 50-acre parcel make it one of Niagara's most coveted locations for cultivating high-quality grapes.

This award-winning winery boasts a diverse selection of premium wines and an exquisite culinary experience, making it a must-visit for wine enthusiasts and food lovers alike. Savour authentic wood-fired pizzas and handcrafted mimosas, designed to delight even the most refined palate.

As the newest gem in the 43 North Group's portfolio, Queenston Mile Vineyard features modern-chic décor set against sprawling vistas, providing the perfect backdrop for weddings and special events. Their experienced events team collaborates closely with each client to create personalized experiences that ensure every celebration is unforgettable.

**Don't miss the chance to join their Mile High Club which has member exclusive privileges, such as complimentary tastings, curated monthly wine delivery, incredible discounts at all 43 North Group full-service restaurants and much more!**



Visit [QueenstonMileVineyard.com](http://QueenstonMileVineyard.com) to explore winery experiences and upcoming events.

## Introduction to Niagara's Economic Landscape: Art and Culture



Niagara's strength lies in its vibrant community and rich cultural scene, where artists, musicians, and performers come together to create diverse and inspiring experiences. The region beautifully blends heritage and innovation, offering a dynamic arts landscape. A standout example is **My Mulan**, a captivating production that merges local talent with international influences, showcasing Niagara's artistic depth and enriching the region's cultural offerings for a unique, immersive audience experience.

Arts and culture are essential to our vibrant community, providing opportunities for reflection and fostering dialogue and creativity. The **FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre (PAC)** serves as a vital hub for the Niagara region, reflecting our community's diversity while acting as a key driver for its future.

Beyond cultural enrichment, the PAC plays a significant role as an economic engine for the region. Its events attract audiences that support local businesses, stimulate tourism, and create jobs. By investing in the arts, we are investing in the long-term viability and vitality of Niagara's economy and enhancing its appeal as a destination.

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre proudly presents the 24/25 PAC Season featuring over 60 performances by Canadian and international artists including **Feist, Rick Mercer, Tom Cochrane and so many more!** We are very proud to bring to our stage presentations by some of Niagara's beloved arts organizations including **Femmes du Feu Creations** and the **Niagara Jazz Festival** alongside partnerships with **Brock University, Niagara Grape & Wine Festival, Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre, St. Catharines Downtown Association, Future Black Female and Black Owned 905**. In addition to the 24/25 Season, the PAC is also home to arts, community and commercial clients. For more information, or to become a member or to purchase season tickets, contact the Box Office at 905-688-0722 or visit [www.firstontariopac.ca](http://www.firstontariopac.ca).

## **Exploring Niagara Falls**

### **History and Community at the Exchange**

The City of Niagara Falls has greatly expanded our offerings to the community through the ongoing work at the Niagara Falls History Museum, as well as the addition of the Niagara Falls Exchange. This complex in the heart of Historic Drummondville provides opportunities for all audiences.

The Niagara Falls History Museum continues to be a vital link to our past and what it means for the present. The galleries showcase the history of our unique community that has welcomed the world for generations. As well, our upcoming rotating exhibitions include “Water for Life”, “Refuge Canada” from Pier 21 and an exhibition on 50s Fashion. Programming at the Museum includes an ongoing film series, workshops, community art projects and more.

The Niagara Falls Exchange is our newest edition. It houses the Niagara Falls Farmers Market, Woodworking studio, artist studios, a gallery and a café where you can soak in some local art and a coffee at the same time. Onsite events include Deck the Halls, Niagara Falls Night of Art, Niagara Laughs comedy series, roller skating nights, gallery openings, art and woodworking workshops and so much more.

**Check out [www.nfexchange.ca](http://www.nfexchange.ca) to see all that is happening in Niagara Falls.**



# **My Mulan Fantasy Dance Drama**

## **A Dance Spectacle That Enchanted Niagara in 2024 and Returns in 2025**

The vibrant dance production "**My Mulan**" captivated audiences in 2024 and is set to enchant once again in Niagara Falls in 2025. Under producer Xu Hu and artistic director Lin Li, this original dance drama blends culture and artistry, offering an unforgettable experience that reimagines the legendary tale of Mulan through the lens of a modern girl named Michelle. As she faces her own challenges, the narrative explores themes of identity and resilience.

The 2024 show featured local talent, including dancer Molly Levay, who enriched the production with her connection to the Niagara region. Her journey resonated with the themes of empowerment and self-discovery central to "**My Mulan**." Lin Li, a respected figure in the dance community, emphasizes the importance of local engagement, stating, "By featuring local dancers like Molly, we aim to inspire the next generation of artists."

Audience feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with parents noting the life-changing impact on their children. Mayor Jim Diodati also highlighted "**My Mulan**" as a must-see for tourists visiting Niagara Falls. As anticipation builds for the 2025 performance, the collaboration between Xu Hu, Lin Li, and their team promises a visually stunning and emotionally charged show, celebrating both tradition and modernity. For updates, check the Lindance Academy website and local event listings.



# Introduction to Niagara's Economic Landscape: Community and Sustainability

The Niagara region is emerging as a hub for sustainability, exemplified by several notable business initiatives. **Asahi Kasei Corporation**, in partnership with Honda, plans to invest \$1.6 billion in constructing EV battery separators in Port Colborne, with operations slated to begin in 2027. This significant investment promises job creation and supports the transition to electric vehicles, thereby reducing environmental impact.

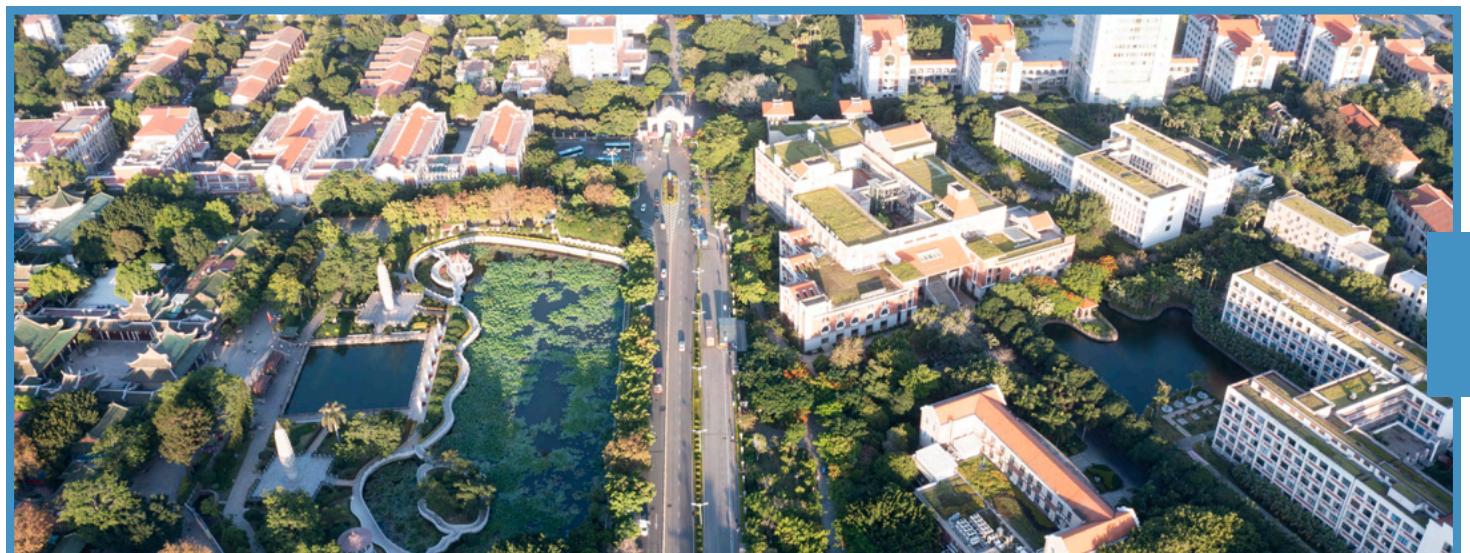
Additionally, **Elevate Living** is at the forefront of new urbanism, developing communities that prioritize sustainability and social connectivity. Their projects focus on creating walkable neighborhoods with eco-friendly designs, enhancing community health while minimizing ecological footprints.

Beyond these specific examples, numerous businesses across various sectors are embracing sustainable practices. Local manufacturers are embracing green technologies to reduce waste and energy consumption, while service-oriented companies are implementing eco-friendly policies and promoting sustainable products. Retailers are increasingly offering locally sourced goods, supporting both the economy and environmental stewardship.

A key player in this movement is **NPG Planning Solutions**, a leader in community development and sustainability in Southern Ontario. With a strong commitment to community engagement, NPG aims to create vibrant communities while preserving the unique character and natural resources of the Niagara region.

A significant addition to the region's commitment to health and sustainability is the **South Niagara Hospital**. This facility not only enhances healthcare access but also incorporates sustainable building practices, further contributing to the community's well-being.

Together, these initiatives underscore Niagara's dedication to fostering a sustainable future, blending economic growth with environmental stewardship and community well-being.



## South Niagara Hospital

### Raising the Bar for Healthcare in Niagara

Niagara Health is transforming the way healthcare is delivered in Niagara, and the South Niagara Hospital is going to play a significant role in these positive changes. When the hospital opens in 2028, it will become one of Niagara Health's three cornerstone hospitals, along with the Marotta Family Hospital in St. Catharines and the Welland Hospital.

Located in Niagara Falls at the corner of Montrose and Biggar roads, the 1.3-million-square-foot facility will offer a full scope of hospital services, including emergency, critical care, diagnostic, therapeutic and surgical services, as well as Centres of Excellence in complex care, wellness in aging and stroke. It will hold 469 single-patient bedrooms, which will increase privacy for patients and improve infection prevention and control. The building will also feature an Indigenous healing space and garden that was designed with Indigenous partners to create culturally safe and welcoming areas for Indigenous Peoples.

The South Niagara Hospital recently achieved WELL Precertification, and is on-track to be the first WELL Certified hospital in Canada. Governed by the International WELL Building Institute and organized around 10 concepts of building performance — Air, Water, Nourishment, Light, Movement, Thermal Comfort, Sound, Materials, Mind and Community — WELL is a program that details design and operational guidelines specifically focused on improving health and wellness outcomes of people using the building.

“WELL principles are backed by years of research and scientific studies. By participating in the WELL program, we are investing in better outcomes for our patients and a healthier workplace environment for staff. It will help us to recruit and retain healthcare professionals by providing a healthier and more enjoyable environment that people will want to be a part of,” said Lynn Guerriero, President and CEO of Niagara Health.

Improved air and water quality, encouraged walkability, and more nutritional food offerings are some examples of WELL features in the building, however one of the key features is the emphasis on nature that has been incorporated in the hospital’s design. Shown to help improve overall health and wellbeing, connecting people to nature was a priority for this project. The hospital will feature 14 gardens and terraces through the building, as well as outdoor walking paths, large windows for natural daylight and outdoor views, and a wayfinding and art strategy that will feature natural imagery. A state-of-the-art facility, the South Niagara Hospital is going to have a positive impact on healthcare in our region for years to come, and improve the overall patient experience.



South Niagara Hospital



Lynn Guerriero  
President and CEO, Niagara Health

# Elevate Living

## Redefining Community Development in Niagara

SUSTAINABILITY

In an insightful interview with Drew Toth, founder and lead developer of Elevate Living, the company's commitment to new urbanism and community engagement in Niagara was highlighted. Elevate Living aims to enhance residents' lives through thoughtful real estate development that prioritizes sustainability and connectivity.

### New Urbanism Principles

Toth explained that new urbanism emphasizes traditional neighbourhood design, offering diverse housing types and mixed-use spaces. This approach counters modern trends of disconnection and sprawl, promoting walkable communities that encourage social interaction and inclusivity. By integrating these principles, Elevate Living seeks to create environments that enhance human development and well-being.

### Community Engagement

Elevate Living goes beyond standard public consultations by actively involving local residents in discussions about new developments. Toth emphasized the importance of understanding community needs and preferences, ensuring that projects integrate seamlessly into Niagara's existing fabric. The company also participates in initiatives like the Annual Spring it Forward Campaign, supporting local food banks and enhancing community quality of life.

### Innovative Housing Solutions

One of Elevate Living's standout contributions is its innovative infill housing solutions. Toth described how the company transforms underutilized spaces into vibrant residential areas, significantly increasing housing supply without expanding city limits. This approach benefits the community by boosting the tax base and addressing the urgent need for more housing options.

### Sustainability Practices

Sustainability is central to Elevate Living's mission. The company conducts third-party energy performance audits and aims for net-zero certification in its projects. Collaborations with micro-mobility providers and robust landscape planning further enhance their commitment to low-carbon transportation and environmental responsibility.

### Exciting Future Projects

Looking ahead, Toth expressed enthusiasm for the Warbler Place Urban Village project, which promises a variety of housing types and convenient access to amenities. This development epitomizes Elevate Living's commitment to transforming spaces from "parking lot to paradise" reinforcing the vision for vibrant, connected communities.

### Customer Experience and Local Partnerships

Elevate Living prioritizes positive customer experiences, providing timely support and quality construction. Toth emphasized the value of partnerships with local organizations such as Better Neighbourhoods Inc., Kite Mobility, SmartONE, Bell, as well as the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and Urban Economy Forum. These collaborations play a crucial role in achieving their urbanism goals.

Elevate Living, under Drew Toth's leadership, is not just developing homes; it is fostering a sense of community and belonging in Niagara, paving the way for a more sustainable and connected future.



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## Designing Niagara's Future: A Conversation with NPG Planning Solutions

NPG Planning Solutions is a leader in community development and sustainability in Southern Ontario. With a strong commitment to community engagement, NPG aims to create vibrant communities while preserving the unique character and natural resources of the Niagara region.

### Community Engagement:

#### Meeting Stakeholders Where They Are

NPG's success is rooted in its dedication to engaging local communities and stakeholders. Mary Lou Tanner, President, emphasizes the importance of understanding the needs and concerns of those affected by their projects. "Our approach is to meet people where they are," she explains, highlighting their willingness to listen and adapt project designs based on community feedback. This inclusive strategy fosters a sense of ownership and cooperation, ensuring developments reflect the values and aspirations of the community.

### Sustainable Development:

#### Balancing Growth and Environmental Responsibility

In today's world, sustainability is crucial in planning. NPG integrates environmental considerations into all their projects, addressing the unique challenges posed by Southern Ontario's urban and agricultural landscapes. Their multidisciplinary approach involves collaboration with experts like engineers and ecologists to create sustainable design solutions. "Protecting the natural environment is a priority," Ms. Tanner states, while also incorporating landscaping and low-impact development methods.

This comprehensive approach not only applies to individual site developments but also to broader policy initiatives, contributing to the long-term sustainability of the Niagara region.

### Future Vision: Building Niagara's Next Chapter

Looking ahead, NPG has ambitious goals for the Niagara region. As the population grows, they are committed to shaping a future that emphasizes opportunity and innovation. "Niagara is home for NPG and always will be," she affirms, expressing excitement about upcoming projects, including housing developments, economic activity around GO Transit Stations, and agricultural growth.

## Introduction to Niagara's Economic Landscape: Travel and Tourism

Travel and tourism in Niagara continue to show signs of a strong recovery coming off of the past few years and 2025 is poised to continue that trend. The international travel markets are going to be vital to the growth and success of the region and those living in it. The stunning views of the 3 majestic waterfalls that make up Niagara Falls are the main reason people travel from all around the world to Niagara, but it is everything else that we can offer as a destination that keeps them staying longer or making a return visit. The region is so rich and diverse in all that it offers, the itinerary options for whatever type of trip a guest might be looking for are here, from culinary delights to outdoor adventure in all seasons, to family-focused fun to learning about the deeply rooted history of the region.

Signature events continue to play a pivotal role in attracting travellers from the drive markets and those from afar. Canada's longest-running free outdoor light festival, **The Niagara Falls Winter Festival of Lights** continues to sparkle and animate the city with over 3 million twinkling lights from mid-November to early January. Now in its 42nd year, the festival also offers a **Hot Chocolate Trail** for guests to explore over 30 different Hot Chocolate offerings. On the heels of this winter festival, the focus shifts to the celebration of **Icewine**, with the Cool as Ice, Icewine Gala taking place at the Niagara Parks Power Station. With a wide offering of entertainment and educational opportunities throughout the year from **The Shaw Festival** to countless high-quality acts playing at the OLG Stage and Avalon Theatres, to learning about Monarch butterfly migration or the history of the War of 1812. The offerings for Niagara are seemingly endless and the outlook for visitation remains optimistic.



*Photo credit: Niagara Falls Tourism*

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