

Subject: Strategic Marketing Update

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, October 9, 2024

Recommendations

1. That Report ED 12-2024 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide the Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) with an update on key strategic marketing activities for Q3 2024.
- Niagara Economic Development (NED) continues to focus on promoting the region as a prime location for business relocation and investment, through both digital and in-person marketing initiatives.
- Successful collaborations with local municipalities, federal and provincial partners, and the private sector have resulted in several high-profile events and initiatives.

Financial Considerations

The activities described in this report are within the Council approved 2024 Economic Development operating budget.

Analysis

Niagara Economic Development (NED) continues its mandate to attract investment and raise the region's profile as a global destination for business. This report outlines the key completed projects, upcoming initiatives, and collaborations that are central to achieving these objectives.

1.0 Completed Projects

1.1 Company Relocations via Website Engagement

Our targeted marketing efforts and website optimization have directly led to the successful relocation of two international companies:

- **CBB International (Finland):** A consulting firm specializing in international trade and business expansion, CBB International inquired through our website on June 3, 2024. They are currently incorporating in Ontario and setting up their Canadian subsidiary in Niagara.
- **Vichnet (China):** A manufacturer of cable trays and machine guards. Initially, they will focus on warehousing before moving into manufacturing, with an estimated \$5 million investment and the creation of 10 new jobs.

1.2 Prime Minister's Announcement – Electric Vehicle (EV) Supply Chain

In collaboration with the City of Port Colborne, NED successfully organized and hosted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's announcement of a \$1.6 billion investment by Asahi Kasei Corporation. The announcement of the EV supply chain plant, held at the Port Colborne Engineering and Operations Centre, marked a historic milestone for Niagara. The new facility will produce advanced lithium-ion battery separators, positioning Niagara as a key player in Canada's growing EV supply chain.

The announcement attracted significant international media attention, with coverage in national Canadian outlets and major Japanese news organizations. The project underscores Canada's commitment to strengthening its EV infrastructure, as emphasized by Prime Minister Trudeau, while Premier Doug Ford highlighted Ontario's leadership in the electric vehicle revolution. Local officials noted that this investment is the largest industrial project in Port Colborne since 1914, representing a transformative moment for the city and the region.

Media outlets across Canada, Japan, and the United States published articles covering the collaboration and its implications for the North American automotive market amplifying Niagara's brand recognition.

1.3 Launch of the Niagara Economic Development Magazine

The **Niagara Economic Development Magazine** was successfully launched in Q3 2024. This magazine serves as a comprehensive resource, showcasing the region's economic landscape and investment opportunities. Key sectors such as agriculture, electric vehicles, and local innovations, with profiles of each municipality. The magazine will be in circulation for a year and has been translated into Japanese to support our Foreign Direct Investment activities in Japan.

2.0 Upcoming Initiatives

2.1 International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)

Niagara Region Economic Development is leading the planning and coordination for the **International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)** event, which is held from October 7-9, 2024. We have collaborated with all 12 local municipalities to organize a unified Niagara booth, designed to highlight investment-ready sites and opportunities.

With over 70,000 members worldwide, ICSC is a pivotal event for commercial real estate and retail development. Our participation is a strategic move to attract both national and international investors, aligning with our goal of promoting Niagara as a thriving and business-friendly region. This initiative serves as a platform to engage potential investors, strengthening ties between Niagara's municipalities and the global retail development community. By participating, we aim to boost investment, increase job creation, and further establish Niagara as a premier destination for business growth.

2.2 Collaboration with Metrolinx

Our ongoing collaboration with Metrolinx has been a strategic focus, and their support for Niagara has been prominently showcased. In a recent advertisement, Metrolinx featured a family visiting Niagara Falls, promoting the Go train service as a convenient option for both tourists and businesses. Working closely with Niagara-based partners, we provided Metrolinx with a curated list of regional activities to highlight Niagara as a prime destination.

This collaborative marketing effort has yielded impressive results, contributing to a 77% year-over-year increase in interest using Go Transit to visit Niagara. According to Metrolinx's Regional Ridership: Trip Purpose Research, 46% of visitors now consider Niagara Falls as their top destination.

2.3 Skilled Trades Recruitment Initiative

Niagara Region Economic Development has actively taken steps to attract more local high school students into skilled trades careers. In collaboration with local municipalities, we launched a dedicated landing page on May 15, 2024, hosted on [NiagaraCanada.ca](https://niagaracanada.com/niagara-advantage/workforce/skilled-trades/) [https://niagaracanada.com/niagara-advantage/workforce/skilled-trades/] which provides vital resources on skilled trades. The page includes information on high-demand jobs in Niagara, average salaries, and details on funding and financial support options.

As part of our efforts, we supported Niagara-based high school open house, in creation of distribution materials that included Niagara region data. These materials provided students with clear insights into career opportunities and how they can access financial assistance to pursue them. Since the launch, the website has attracted over 200 unique visitors, many of whom have navigated directly to finding support resources from our platform.

This initiative aligns with our long-term goal of addressing the region's labor needs, ensuring that Niagara's future workforce is prepared for the skilled jobs driving our local economy.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The activities described in this report directly support the Growing Better Together strategic priorities of Council, specifically in fostering a Prosperous Region. By promoting Niagara as a premier destination for business relocation and investment, and leveraging partnerships with local and international stakeholders, NED is helping to drive sustainable economic growth for the region.

Other Pertinent Reports

There are no other pertinent reports.

Prepared by:

Katie Desharnais
Manager, Strategic Marketing
Economic Development

Recommended by:

George Spezza, Ec.D., CEcD
Director,
Economic Development

Recommended by:

Michelle Sergi, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner, Growth Strategy and
Economic Development

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Marco Marino, Associate Director, Economic Development.

Appendices

Not applicable