

Subject: Strategic Marketing Update

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Recommendations

1. That Report ED 5-2025 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the activities of Niagara Region Economic Development (NED) related to strategic marketing efforts to promote Niagara as a prime destination for international investment attraction.
- NED continues to focus on marketing Niagara's strategic advantages and fostering international relationships to attract foreign direct investment, particularly in key emerging and core sectors such as electric mobility, life sciences, marine, film, agriculture and manufacturing.
- These marketing initiatives align with the 10-Year Economic Development Strategy (2022-2032) and aim to promote Niagara's robust economic environment, infrastructure, and growth opportunities to international business leaders.

Financial Considerations

The activities discussed in this report are in line with the Council-approved 2025 Economic Development operating budget.

Analysis

Niagara Region Economic Development (NED) has been actively working to strengthen the region's international presence through various targeted marketing strategies. These efforts have been designed to showcase Niagara's competitive advantages to global business leaders and investors.

1.1 Discover Niagara: Invest, Inspire, Grow Video

A new video was launched to highlight Niagara's business potential and its strategic advantages in the global market. The video emphasizes Niagara's strong infrastructure, skilled workforce, and key sectors such as electric mobility, advanced manufacturing, and agriculture. It showcases a business executive with his family moving to Niagara and what it might look like as they transition to the region. The video was developed over six months to capture all seasons, providing a comprehensive and visually engaging representation of life in Niagara year-round.

This video is aimed at global business leaders, showcasing the region as an ideal destination for investment and expansion. The focus is on the key factors that decision-makers prioritize when considering a location, particularly for senior executives.

2.0 Strategic Digital Marketing Campaigns

2.1 New Landing Pages

NED launched several new landing pages to further engage potential investors and businesses. These pages are integral to showcasing Niagara's advantages across various sectors:

- **Electric Mobility Sector Page:** Highlighting Niagara's positioning as a hub for the electric vehicle and mobility industries. The page outlines key advantages, infrastructure, and local initiatives that support this growing sector.
- **Tariff Support Page:** Offering resources for businesses seeking support with tariffs and trade challenges. This page provides information on available tariff relief programs and how Niagara can assist businesses in navigating international trade barriers.
- **Niagara Business Directory:** An interactive tool that helps potential investors connect with local businesses and discover opportunities across Niagara. This directory also serves as a valuable resource for businesses looking to network, find collaborators, and identify local suppliers.

These pages are part of the [Niagara Economic Development website Niagara Canada](https://niagaracanada.com) (https://niagaracanada.com) and are designed to be the go-to resource for businesses considering expansion into Niagara. The content is carefully curated to attract high-value investments in key sectors, while providing practical tools for businesses to engage with the local community.

2.2 Shop, Support, Share Local Campaign

NED in collaboration with all local area municipalities, local chambers of commerce, and the Niagara Industrial Association (Team Niagara), launched a campaign to support local businesses and encourage residents to engage with their community. This initiative aims to strengthen Niagara's local economy by increasing consumer spending within the region.

- **Campaign Overview:** The campaign officially launched on March 31 and runs for nine weeks. It targets Niagara residents, encouraging them to support local businesses not only through purchases, but also by writing reviews and engaging on social media.
- **Advertising and Media Coverage:** The campaign will run across multiple platforms, including social media, radio, print, and digital ads. Radio stations across Niagara will feature rotating ads for each municipality, ensuring all areas are represented equally. In line with the campaign's objectives, approximately 85% of the campaign spend was allocated to local media, while 15% was spent on traditional social media.

Additionally, NED has created a set of campaign materials, including stickers for businesses to hand out to customers to indicate they supported a local Niagara business, window clings, and posters. These materials are available digitally on the Niagara Business Directory. Physical items such as stickers, decals, and posters can be picked up at Niagara Regional Headquarters customer service and all local area municipalities' customer service desks, where applicable.

3.0 Film and Media Industry Support

As part of Niagara's broader economic diversification strategy, NED has focused on positioning the region as an ideal location for the film and media production industry. This aligns with Niagara's growing reputation as a film-friendly destination with competitive incentives, creating significant opportunities for local businesses and attracting external investments.

3.1 Cannes Film Festival Promotion

NED is leveraging high-profile international events to raise Niagara's visibility within the film industry. At the Cannes Film Festival, Niagara will be featured in the World of Locations magazine. This publication surveys the global production landscape and

provides essential insights into filming locations, production trends, and global incentives. The magazine will run for 12 months and is distributed at major film events worldwide, including Cannes, Venice, Toronto, Sundance, Berlin, Hong Kong, San Sebastian, Busan, MIPCOM, AFM, Red Sea, and more. This exposure aims to position Niagara as a prime filming location for international production companies.

Additionally, Niagara will be featured in a Film Festival-exclusive glossy magazine, which will be directly mailed to over 10,000 recipients and will also be the featured magazine at the Cannes Film Festival. Both promotions will drive traffic to Niagara's dedicated Film Production page on the Niagara Economic Development website, where potential clients can explore the region's offerings and request more information.

4.0 Sponsorship and Industry Engagement

NED collaborated with the Ontario Agri-Food Venture Centre (OAFVC) to support the development of the next generation of agricultural professionals. Fifty four (54) students from Niagara College's School of Horticulture attended a local conference organized by OAFVC, where they gained insights into food processing, business expansion, and sustainable agricultural practices. This sponsorship highlights NED's commitment to fostering workforce development in the agri-food sector.

Additionally, a one-page breakdown has been created for Niagara's Agriculture Action Plan strategic initiatives, "Grown in Niagara", which outlines the region's priorities and actions for growing the agri-food sector.

Alternatives Reviewed

None to report.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report supports the Prosperous Region priority by helping to grow Niagara's economy and create a strong, healthy business environment. Through marketing campaigns, workforce development, and partnerships with local and international organizations, we are making Niagara an even more attractive place for businesses to invest and grow. These efforts not only help local businesses thrive, but also bring new opportunities, ensuring long-term success and prosperity for the region.

Other Pertinent Reports

None applicable.

Prepared by:

Katie Desharnais
Manager, Strategic Marketing
Economic Development

Recommended by:

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

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

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

Appendices

Not applicable.