



Media Brief Planning Document

Event Logistics

- 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Oct. 28, 2025, Niagara Arts and Culture Center: 1201 Pine Ave., Studio 208-A, Niagara Falls, NY 14301
- Speakers:
 - Patrick Kaler, president and CEO of Visit Buffalo Niagara
 - J. Conrad Seneca, president of Seneca Nation of Indians
 - Tadodaho Sidney Hill, Haudenosaunee Confederacy spiritual leader
 - Jordan Smith, head of native programs at Old Fort Niagara

About the Organization

Visit Buffalo Niagara is the official tourism organization for Erie County, dedicated to promoting the Buffalo-Niagara region as a premier travel destination. Founded in 1987 and based in downtown Buffalo, the organization showcases the area's culture, architecture, food and proximity to Niagara Falls through marketing and visitor services. With a team of about 30 employees, Visit Buffalo Niagara has earned state and national recognition for its award-winning campaigns, including "That's Buffalo For You".

Speaker Biographies



Patrick Kaler, President and CEO of Visit Buffalo Niagara

Kaler oversees three tourism organizations with a team of over 150 employees and a combined budget of nearly \$12 million. Since joining Visit Buffalo Niagara 2014, he has led efforts to position Buffalo Niagara as a premier destination for visitors, conventions, and sporting events. With more than 30 years of leadership experience in the tourism industry, Kaler has held senior roles at Visit Loudoun and LA INC. The Los Angeles Convention & Visitors Bureau. He holds an M.S. in Tourism from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a B.S. in Tourism from Western Illinois University.



J. Conrad Seneca, President of Seneca Nation of Indians

J. Conrad “JC” Seneca is the President of the Seneca Nation, sworn into office on Nov. 13, 2024. As a U.S. Air Force veteran and lifelong public servant, he has also served as Seneca Nation Treasurer, multiple-term Councilor and Northeast Area Vice President for the National Congress of American Indians. Seneca is a celebrated entrepreneur and founder of Tallchief Territory, Home of Native Pride Travel Plaza along with Six Nations Manufacturing and the JC Seneca

Foundation. His leadership has earned him recognition as Native Business Entrepreneur of the Year and one of Buffalo Business First’s Most Powerful People in Western New York. As president, he is dedicated to advancing public safety, health care, economic development and unity within the Seneca Nation and across Indian Country.



Tadodaho Sidney Hill, Haudenosaunee Confederacy Spiritual Leader

Tadodaho Sidney Hill is the spiritual leader of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, representing the Onondaga Nation’s Eel Clan. Chosen for the lifetime position of Tadodaho in 2002 by the Confederacy’s 49 chiefs, he has dedicated his leadership to advancing human rights, environmental protection, and the preservation of Haudenosaunee traditions. Hill has spoken at the United

Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for over a decade and has been active in global discussions on the Doctrine of Discovery. He helped establish the Skä•noñh: Great Law of Peace Center to promote Haudenosaunee history and values.



Jordan Smith, Head of Native Programs at Old Fort Niagara

Smith, a member of the Mohawk Nation and Bear Clan, serves as the Head of Native Programs at Old Fort Niagara. With 30 years of experience in public history, Smith leads the fort’s Native educational and cultural initiatives, ensuring that Haudenosaunee history and traditions are accurately represented and shared. Their work includes traditional singing, dancing, storytelling and historical interpretation of Mohawk life in the 18th century. Smith is also helping to

develop a new Native American Education Center at the fort, which aims to deepen cultural understanding and foster dialogue.

Objectives

- **Authentic Representation**
 - This initiative was co-created with Indigenous leaders to ensure that the stories and perspectives of the Haudenosaunee and other Indigenous peoples are told accurately and respectfully.
- **Continuing the Cultural Narrative**
 - We are not rewriting Buffalo Niagara's established history; we are continuing to highlight aspects of the culture regarding indigenous populations and their history that have been left out.
- **Community Partnership and Equity**
 - Indigenous representatives guided every step of this initiative, from content development to policy and revenue-sharing agreements, ensuring genuine collaboration and fair benefits.
- **Education and Awareness**
 - The initiative promotes deeper understanding through interpretive materials, staff training and visitor education that highlight Indigenous heritage and ongoing contributions to the region.
- **Sustainable Cultural Tourism**
 - By highlighting Indigenous-owned businesses, artists and cultural sites, this initiative creates meaningful, lasting economic opportunities while honoring cultural preservation.

Audience

- Dale Anderson, Reporter at The Buffalo News, danderson@buffnews.com
- Newell Nussbaumer, Editor at The Buffalo Rising, newell@buffalorising.com
- Donna Collins, Reporter at Buffalo Business First, dcollins@bizjournals.com
- Jennifer Schuessler, Culture Editor at The New York Times, schuessler@nytimes.com
- Dianna Hunt, Reporter at Indian Country Today, dianna@ictnews.org

Key Messages

- This initiative ensures that the full history of the Buffalo Niagara region is told, one that honors and centers the voices, experience and presence of the Haudenosaunee and other Indigenous peoples.
- Developed in collaboration with Haudenosaunee Confederacy leaders, Indigenous educators and cultural organizations, this initiative reflects a shared commitment to authenticity, respect and long-term partnership.
- By creating Indigenous-led tourism experiences, from storytelling programs to traditional craft workshops, the initiative strengthens cultural preservation while generating new economic opportunities for Indigenous communities.
- Through new interpretive signage, exhibits and staff training, visitors and tourism partners will gain a deeper understanding of Indigenous history, values and contributions to the region.

- A new revenue-sharing model will ensure that a portion of regional tourism income directly supports Indigenous community development, cultural programming and land stewardship initiatives.

Event Details

- Attire: business casual
- Materials: talking points sheet, press release on the initiative, bio of the CEO of Visit Buffalo Niagara, fact sheet of initiative
- Arrival: Enter through the main doors; signage will direct you to the correct room.

Tough Q&A

- Question #1: Why change the history visitors have been hearing for generations?
 - Recommended Response: We are not changing history, we are completing it. Indigenous voices have been lost in the narrative of the Buffalo Niagara region. This initiative brings accuracy and integrity to the history of Buffalo Niagara's story.
- Question #2: How were Indigenous leaders involved in the creation of this initiative?
 - Recommended Response: This has been a co-created initiative from the start of the project. Haudenosaunee representatives, such as Tadodaho Sidney Hill, designed the interpretive content, approved cultural materials and developed policy measures alongside our team to ensure equity and revenue-sharing.
- Question #3: What steps are being taken to educate visitors and staff about Indigenous history and perspectives?
 - Recommended Response: We're integrating cultural sensitivity and Indigenous history training for Visit Buffalo Niagara staff and partners. In addition, visitor materials, tours and exhibits will include educational components developed by Indigenous educators to deepen visitor understanding and respect.