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COVID-19 BUSINESS IMPACT SURVEY

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Private & Public Sectors Launch Survey to Determine COVID-19 Impact on WNY Business

Western New York's public and private sectors are joining forces to assess the full economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses throughout the region.

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership, the cities of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, the counties of Erie and Niagara, and local chambers of commerce, tourism bureaus and economic development organizations will launch the WNY COVID-19 Business Impact Survey on Tuesday, April 14.

The information gathered from the survey will be essential to better understanding how the public and private sectors can work together to address potential gaps in available resources now and during the inevitable economic recovery period that lies ahead. The survey will ask employers to weigh in on a variety of topics including lost revenue, workforce impacts, and their ability to operate remotely.

Buffalo Niagara Partnership President & CEO Dottie Gallagher said, "Now more than ever, real world data and insights from the business community have the power to inform necessary decisions in both the public and private sectors. This is been an incredibly challenging time for our region's employers. This survey represents an unprecedented coming together of strategic partners from both the public and private sectors to best assist businesses when our community can pivot to recovery."

Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz said, "The WNY Business Impact Survey will be an essential tool in assessing the impact the coronavirus has had on local business. We know that impact has been severe, and the Survey will help us better understand where and how businesses need help. I urge every business, large and small, essential and non-essential, to complete the Survey as soon as possible."

Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown said, "My Administration is pleased to work with the Partnership on this critical public-private sector effort to learn exactly what challenges our businesses and nonprofit organizations are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The information collected through this confidential survey will not only provide insight into what businesses -- large and small, start-ups and decades-old, and those owned by minorities, women, immigrants and veterans -- are experiencing, it will also provide valuable feedback on what's needed to restart our local and regional economy as this once-in-a-lifetime health crisis abates. I urge Buffalo entrepreneurs and businesses from all industries to take part in this survey that will bring to light problems and potential solutions so we can make a successful return to economic health, across the City of Buffalo, Erie County, City of Niagara Falls and Niagara County."

Niagara County Legislature Chairman Becky Wydysch said, "This survey is going to help us promote the policy positions in state and federal government that will have the most meaningful impact on local businesses. We all want to do whatever we can to jump start our local economy when the COVID-19 lockdown ends, so the better the data we get back from local employers, the more effective our joint advocacy on their behalf will be."

Niagara Falls Mayor Robert M. Restaino said, "The City of Niagara Falls and our business community, like so many others, have felt the impact of the pandemic. Through this information we can work collaboratively to see our way through this health crisis; and once we are past these challenging times, grow stronger as a community."

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and will close April 24. All respondents' information will be confidential and only aggregate data will be shared. While the survey is confidential, there is an opportunity for businesses to request information on resources and to volunteer their expertise to assist other Western New York businesses in recovery.

The survey was designed and distributed using best practices and benefited from the expert research help of Mower, who donated its services. **Mower Vice Chairman and Chief Branding Officer Douglas Bean** said, "Mower is pleased to have the opportunity to help the Buffalo Niagara Partnership and its efforts to advocate for the Western New York business community during this unprecedented time."

In addition to the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, the members and/or customers of the following organizations will be receiving an email with a link to the survey:

Amherst Chamber of Commerce

AJ Baynes, CEO and President said, "There's no playbook for navigating this enormous health threat and its impact on the economy. We have rolled up our sleeves and are working hard collaboratively to help businesses large and small overcome their challenges. Through collaboration and a unified voice, the Buffalo Niagara region will prevail."

Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce

Kristina Groff, President and CEO said, "Chambers of Commerce will play a critical role in convening the necessary people and resources for long term economic recovery plans in our communities. The results from this survey will enable our teams to narrow their focus, and this organizational collaboration shows how the region is united in our efforts."

County of Cattaraugus Industrial Development Agency

Corey Wiktor, Director said, "In these unsettling times, it's assuring that strategic partners are coming together to serve businesses and the greater community. Partnerships are invaluable in these times of change and we look forward to engaging our members in this important survey."

Destination Niagara USA

John Percy, President and CEO said, "We have been working tirelessly to respond and adapt to this crisis and the impact that it is having on the tourism industry. We are proud to work with the Buffalo Niagara Partnership to help collect vital information from local businesses that will help lay the groundwork to advocate for resources as we look towards economic recovery."

Erie County Industrial Development Agency

John Cappellino, Executive Vice President & COO said, "ECIDA is working with our partners to help businesses affected by the COVID workforce restrictions and quarantines. A data driven response will be critical in allowing us to determine where resources can best be allocated to help our local businesses recover as quickly as possible. We would encourage all businesses to take the survey to help us develop a regional approach to economic recovery."

Greater East Aurora Chamber of Commerce

Gary Grote, Executive Director said, "The Greater East Aurora Chamber of Commerce feels strongly that this survey and the responses we receive back from our members will be vital in helping the businesses in our community recover from the COVID-19 situation and assist them in growing stronger in facing future challenges."

Invest Buffalo Niagara

Thomas Kucharski, President & CEO said, "It is vitally important to assess the impact of Covid-19 on our region to help to determine the best course of action to address the economic impact. We are encouraging all of our regional businesses to complete the Buffalo Niagara Partnership survey so that we can identify the most pressing needs of local businesses and collaborate to solve them together."

Kenmore and Tonawanda Chamber of Commerce

Cathy Piciulo, President and CEO said, "It is a challenging time for all businesses, but through strategic partnerships, we must embrace the new normal and figure out how to go forward. The Buffalo Niagara Partnership survey will help inform our next steps as a community."

Niagara County Center for Economic Development

Michael Casale, Commissioner said, "As we continue to keep our businesses informed of available resources they can take advantage of during these challenging times, we need to understand from our businesses what the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be now, and in the immediate future."

Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce

Kory Schuler, Executive Director said, "As business advocacy organizations it is important that we all continue to gauge the business climate around our region, understand the various ways this pandemic has impacted our business community and find ways we can help mitigate that impact."

Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce

Donald Lorentz, Executive Director said, "The Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce is working on behalf of our members by collaborating with strategic partners and gathering the most updated information possible. This survey is an effective way to gather real time data at a time it is needed the most."

Springville Area Chamber of Commerce

Debbie Hintz, Executive Director said, "The Springville Area Chamber of Commerce has chosen to partner on the COVID-19 Business Impact Survey because it gives Western New York businesses the opportunity to share the impact of the pandemic on their business. Survey data collected will result in a more direct focus of advocacy efforts on behalf of all Western New York businesses now and into the future."

Visit Buffalo Niagara

Cindy Kincaide, Director of Industry Relations said, "Travel and tourism have become an integral part of the Buffalo economy, providing more than 32,000 jobs within Erie County and generating more than \$1.8 billion annually in visitor spending. The unprecedented public health crisis we're facing right now has ground travel to a halt and put the businesses and workers who rely on visitor spending in peril, endangering livelihoods and potentially undermining much of our collective progress. The travel industry businesses that helps define the Buffalo experience to our visitors and set our city apart – from boutique hotels to neighborhood coffee shops and pubs, independently owned restaurants and boutiques – simply cannot weather this storm on their own and that is why Visit Buffalo Niagara is pleased to join the Buffalo Niagara Partnership in the collaborative effort."

Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

Scott Gardner, President & CEO said, "In this unprecedented time, it is critically important for our organizations to hear from the business community across Western New York. This vital data will help us to position our recovery efforts and strongly advocate for our business community."

Western New York businesses not affiliated with a survey sponsor can participate by visiting thepartnership.org/ImpactSurvey.