



“Eliminating the Barriers to Cross-Border Tourism Development”

**NEWS RELEASE
LAUNCH OF THE BINATIONAL TOURISM ALLIANCE**

**BUFFALO, MAY 5, 2005
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

The Binational Tourism Alliance, formed to break down the barriers to cross-border tourism in the Niagara's, held its official launch Thursday, May 5 at the Buffalo Transportation Pierce Arrow Museum in downtown Buffalo.

Over 200 invited guests participated in this launch event to show their support for the organization whose mandate is to promote cross-border tourism in the binational communities served by the International Niagara bridge crossings.

The launch event formally introduced the BTA Board members, addressed current cross-border tourism issues and showcased the new BTA website, along with training and membership opportunities. Participants got a sneak preview of the 2005 Binational Doors Open Niagara program, as well as advanced notice of the upcoming Binational Tourism/Economic Development conference to be held stateside in November 2005.

Incorporated in April 2004 in New York State and in April 2005 in Ontario, the Binational Tourism Alliance is a Not-for-Profit tourism membership organization created specifically to support high calibre, year-round, customer driven and profitable tourism product and service development and to advocate for the issues that are critical to tourism destination development in this binational region.

The organization is led by a volunteer board of Canadian and U.S. directors representing the major tourism sectors and partners from the cross-border region: hotels, wineries, theatre, transportation, restaurants, cultural and heritage sites, media and the tourism organizations that support the industry.

Executive members of the board are:

President	Del Rollo, Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate Winery
1 st Vice President	James Sandoro, Buffalo Transportation Pierce-Arrow Museum
2 nd Vice President	Paul Mountain, Niagara Air Bus
Treasurer	Howard Zemsky, Upper Canada Hotels
Secretary	Walter Sendzik, Vines Magazine

"The Binational Tourism Alliance will work to eliminate the current barriers to cross-border tourism development in the Niagara corridor and provide a unified and consistent advocacy voice for tourism members and visitors when it comes to critical issues like cross-border traffic, security and tourism development issues," explained Del Rollo, Hospitality Manager for Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate Winery and President of the BTA Board of Directors.

"We are going to do what's never been done before in this area. Imagine the BTA as the "master electricians" that wire all these diverse tourism sector partners together to capitalize on the power of this Greater Niagara Region" said Jim Sandoro, Founder and President of the Buffalo Transportation Pierce-Arrow Museum, and 1st Vice President of the BTA.

The Binational Tourism Alliance board members have already begun advocating for improvements to cross-border security and servicing and will continue to work with Congressional and Parliamentary representatives and Customs officials to come up with innovative solutions to the challenges faced by this border community and the tourism industry.

"By working collaboratively with tourism operators on both sides of the border, we enhance our binational region's potential as an international destination and we will all reap the benefits of this collaboration" said Howard Zemsky, Partner in the Upper Canada Hotels and Treasurer of the BTA. "It's about delivering the best products and services to our customers, both the ones we serve locally at the community level, as well as those from further afield – and thanks to our location and natural assets, we have an advantage few other destinations can claim."

Since 1999, Binational Tourism Alliance partners informally collaborated on various initiatives: the Binational Tourism Guide/Map, Binational Doors Open Niagara, Binational Tourism Conferences and training sessions to name a few. The official launch of this one-of-a-kind organization provides members with a central point of contact, consistent communication and new and innovative ways to work together to build this binational tourism destination.

For more information about the Binational Tourism Alliance, contact:

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