WHY THE GNCC?

Too often, businesses and entrepreneurs feel isolated and struggle to achieve their personal and business goals. We are here to help make your business better by providing you with networking, savings, marketing opportunities and a large audience to make it easy for you to power your business growth.

The GNCC is the voice of business. We impact public policy at all levels of government so that you can succeed and prosper in local and global economies. We are also members of the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce, which makes our voice even stronger. Our councils represent specific demographics and guide our programing to ensure Niagara achieves its economic and social best.

ACCREDITATION

Excellence is Accreditation. It is the formal acknowledgement that the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce has been successfully evaluated against rigorous national standards of policy, service, and performance by the Chamber Accreditation Council of Canada (CACC).
## CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision, Mission, Values</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair’s Message</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update from the CEO</td>
<td>6–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Councils</td>
<td>10–11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>12–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Response</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects &amp; Initiatives</td>
<td>16–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature Events</td>
<td>18–19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longest Serving Members</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VISION
Niagara to be at our economic and social best

MISSION
With broad engagement, we advance the interests of our membership through advocacy and services, building prosperity for the people of Niagara

VALUES
Forward-thinking
Non-partisan and principled
Inclusive, collaborative and respectful
Accountable and responsible
“We cannot do it without you,” said CEO Mishka Balsom five years ago at our Annual General Meeting. That message, shared when I first joined the GNCC Board, was very apropos for a Chamber, and it couldn’t ring more true as we move into 2022 and reflect on 2021.

The pandemic restrictions are easing as I craft this message, but we are now entering a sixth wave of COVID-19. I believe our community is prepared, with 91% of eligible citizens having received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine, and we have demonstrated our willingness to work together to fight the pandemic. As a community, we mourn those lost to COVID-19. We have also witnessed a great deal of economic and emotional pain during this historical disruption of everyday life. Even as Niagara recovers and adapts, we are witnessing a growing humanitarian crisis in Europe. Again, the Niagara community is stepping up to support those in need; we are a caring and resilient community.

The GNCC could not have faced the challenge of 2021 without our members and sponsors. It was imperative to our successful advocacy that we had your voice informing our work. In response to the rapidly changing environment, the staff published the Daily Update. This publication became a ‘must read’ in Niagara, and our members told us they read it daily and trusted they were informed. GNCC advocated at the municipal, provincial and federal levels to influence COVID policy and gain financial support for our community. GNCC also made the time to advocate for long-term Niagara initiatives, such as an integrated transit system. Members realize the economic and social value of transit and appreciated Niagara collaborating on this issue.

GNCC could not have made it through 2021 without a dedicated and talented staff team, led by CEO Mishka Balsom. The workload was heavy and the stress high, but under Mishka’s leadership we retained our staff and they delivered. I only have time to highlight a fraction of their contributions. The distribution of rapid tests in collaboration with Great Wolf Lodge was beyond our normal Chamber mandate, but the staff embraced the work. The demand outpaced supply, so GNCC advocated that Niagara get its fair share. Another highlight was the staff’s rapid adaptation to the virtual world. Our members participated in virtual events such as the Niagara Economic Summit, Women in Business Awards, and our Espresso Live Webinars.

And we could not have made it through 2021 without our highly dedicated board of directors. Although they were facing challenges in their work environment, they took the time to actively engage in the GNCC Board and committee meetings to serve the Niagara community. Their knowledge of the market and deep skills in their respective sectors infused the work of staff for optimal results.

As I finish my three years as board chair, I am optimistic about Niagara’s future. We have learnt that we can build a healthy and prosperous Niagara if we work together.

Thank you. We certainly could not do it without you.
Although the challenges of the pandemic shaped our lives throughout 2021, both professionally and personally, it also gave us further purpose to keep our vision at the forefront of all of our activities: Niagara at its economic and social best, even during very challenging times.

In the past two years, we were called upon to support you in different ways than we had before, especially in providing information and tools that ensured your continuous resilience, strengthening your operations, and tapping into new resources. Here are a few such services that our members have come to value:

• We expanded our array of affinity partners to help you save money, including extended insurance benefit programs, affiliate discounts and savings.

• Our Daily Updates, an end-of-day brief read by over 3,600 people, providing timely and relevant information about government policies, business news, and resources to help you run your organization.

• Although we were prevented from meeting in-person, your wish to connect virtually to learn from experts, to be inspired by speakers, to celebrate business successes, was at a record high.

• We executed a number of special projects, most noteworthy the distribution of over 120,000 free Rapid Antigen Test Kits to almost a thousand small and medium-sized businesses, and the extensive Shop Local initiative branded #NiagaraMyWay, providing critical marketing opportunities to businesses to help stimulate our local economy across the region.

• We met with many provincial and federal politicians to discuss how their governments and parties could further Niagara businesses interests, among them Canadian Conservative leader Erin O’Toole, Ontario Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade Vic Fedeli, Ontario Liberal leader Steven Del Duca, Ontario NDP & Official Opposition leader Andrea Horwath, and Ontario Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries Lisa MacLeod.

• And above all, the steadfast advocacy at all levels of government for services and policies that would not only get organizations through the pandemic, but also support their ongoing success. We have quite a few advocacy wins, but most important among them is the integrated regional public transit commitment.
Last year, after extensive consultation with our members, board, and alumni, community partners, colleagues and advisory councils, we developed our 2022-2024 strategic plan. Throughout the process, paramount to any decision was the commitment to build prosperity for the people of Niagara. Our three key strategies are as follows:

• In our commitment to continuously deliver value to you, we will provide the most relevant programs and services so that businesses can prosper and connect to/network with new customers and partners

• Strengthen existing policy development and advocacy by introducing new ways to increase impact and value for members and community

• Invest in staff and talent development to support capacity building while at the same time strengthen our brand through targeted stakeholder collaboration and partnerships.

Lastly, we were honoured to be bestowed, for a third time, with the Accreditation with Distinction from the Chamber Accreditation Council of Canada for our governance and policy work.

As always, it is an honour to be entrusted with the vision of our organization. And even more, it is a privilege to have earned your trust and support. Thank you to our members, partners, volunteers, board and colleagues for your collective commitment to the GNCC and Niagara. We are better for it.
LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE

CHAIR
Colleen Fleming
C. Fleming & Associates

VICE CHAIR
Noel Buckley
Niagara Falls Convention Centre

HONORARY TREASURER
Rob DePetris
Wormald Masse Keen Lopinski LLP

HONORARY SOLICITOR
Harry Korosis
Lancaster Chown & Welch LLP

BOARD

Janice Arnoldi
Janice & Robin Digital Communications

Lisa Benger
Walker Industries

Todd Dougall
FreshCo

Mohamad El-Kayed
Business Development Bank of Canada

Dr. Andrew Gaudes
Goodman School of Business, Brock University

Scott Glover
Meridian Credit Union

Kevin Hooiveld
Book Depot

Ron Hurst
Nitec Energy Services

Emily Kovacs
Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre

Clayton Letourneau
NEXTNiagara

Roseanne Morissette
Performance Auto Group

Dr. Marc Nantel
Niagara College

Rick Nero
Baker Tilly Niagara LLP

Taylor Wilson
Colliers International Niagara Ltd.
STAFF

Mishka Balsom
CEO
mishka@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 227
@MishkaBalsom

Hugo Cheshire
Director of Policy &
Government Relations
hugo@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 224
@GNCCadvocacy

Corrina Massicotte
Director of Operations &
Communications
corrina@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 225
@GNCCpromoter

Danielle Babineau
Account Manager
danielle@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 231

Emma Cavanagh
Digital Content Lead
emma@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 228

Brad Demers
Graphic & Web Designer
brad@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 223

Stephanie Farr
Admin & Finance
Coordinator
stephanie@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 229

Beth Fletcher
Account Manager
beth@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 229

Amy Lloyd
Member Program Manager
on short-term leave
amy@gncc.ca
905-684-2362 ext. 231
BUSINESS COUNCILS

The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, in an effort to continuously improve its effectiveness, has specialized councils. The overall goal is to stay leading-edge in membership services and policy-focused work.

We will harness the experience, credibility, as well as the intellectual and leadership capacities of our council members to mobilize community stakeholders to support businesses and Niagara’s prosperity.

WOMEN IN NIAGARA (WIN) COUNCIL

Mission: To foster the growth and success of women in business in Niagara

Purpose: To provide strategic and tactical direction to support the Council’s mission and strategic priorities. Responsibilities include identifying issues relevant to women in Niagara and providing strategic guidance to address these challenges and opportunities.

2021 Chair: Julie Rorison, Mayor’s Office, City of St. Catharines

Staff Liaison: Corrina Massicotte, corrina@gncc.ca

Social Media: @GNCC_WIN

Women in Niagara
WomenInNiagara
womeninniagara
VISION: Seeing Niagara grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous community where the NEXT generation can create, connect, collaborate and call home.

MISSION: To represent and amplify the voice of the NEXT generation in Niagara by creating opportunities for community engagement and empowerment.

2021 Chair: Clayton Letourneau, Custom Sign Lab
Staff Liaison: Corrina Massicotte, corrina@gncc.ca
Social Media: @NEXTNiagara, NEXTNiagara, NEXTNiagara, @NEXTNiagara

NON-PROFIT NIAGARA COUNCIL

The mission of the Non-Profit Council is to be a champion for Niagara’s non-profit and charity sector by raising awareness of their economic and social impact on our community, cultivating stronger partnerships between the non-profit and for-profit sectors, and advancing policies impacting community wellbeing.

2021 Co-Chairs: Lori Beech, Bethlehem Housing & Support Services and Adam Durrant, City of Hamilton
Staff Liaison: Hugo Chesshire, hugo@gncc.ca

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COUNCIL

The Government Affairs Council supports the GNCC’s mission of influencing government and public institutions on behalf of business by monitoring, anticipating, and advising on governmental and political matters at all levels wherever and whenever they affect Niagara business.

2021 Chair: Michael Ras, Counsel Public Affairs
Staff Liaison: Hugo Chesshire, hugo@gncc.ca
Social Media: @GNCCAdvocacy
ADVOCACY

FEDERAL

ACHIEVED DIRECTIVES:

- Extended CEBA loan deadlines
- Delayed CEWS/CERS tapering
- Called for a border reopening plan with the Hamilton Chamber and Buffalo-Niagara Partnership, echoed shortly after by the Canadian Chamber

PROVINCIAL

ACHIEVED DIRECTIVES:

- Called for the Government of Ontario to join the federal affordable childcare plan
- Recommended that liquor delivery for restaurants and bars be made permanent

NEARING COMPLETION:

- In partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, advanced policy resolutions to address hospitality sector labour shortages, extending the CEWS for hard-hit sectors, incentivizing local tourism, and extending free rapid testing
- Lobbied for reduced electricity rates and a cost-benefit economic analysis of time-of-use billing

MUNICIPAL

ACHIEVED DIRECTIVES:

- Clarity and communication around local public health orders for business
- Acted to preserve vital employment lands in Niagara from being converted to residential use
- Advocated for regional transit amalgamation directly and through grassroots campaign
- Lobbied for continuation of sidewalk patios for bars and restaurants
ON GOING DIRECTIVES:

FEDERAL

• Lobbied for increased housing start targets, financial incentives for people moving to low-cost-of-housing areas, multi-modal Seaway transport links and tourism promotion in the federal budget
• Fast-track immigration for skilled immigrants, especially to areas with significant job vacancy rates and slower-than-average population growth
• Recommended the deferral of the excise escalator tax
• Produced a federal election platform asking for more financial support to affected industries, modernizing the tax system, increasing the GST/HST threshold, offering a social safety net for entrepreneurs, investing in transport infrastructure, and more

PROVINCIAL

• Third round of small business grant funding, transparency, and an appeals process
• Support for businesses required to enforce mask bylaws and check vaccine status via grassroots email campaign
• Clarity on reopening plans, trigger metrics, and other data and decisions
• Advocated for more incentives for developers to build affordable housing
• Produced an arts sector support whitepaper in conjunction with local sector leaders
• Lobbied the Ontario Chamber to join us in calling for applied research funding at Ontario colleges to match levels seen in Quebec
• Delivered the Ontario Economic Report locally
• Advocated for provincial funding for any employee paid sick day policy
ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND LEADERS HOSTED

Canadian Conservative leader
ERIN O’TOOLE

Ontario Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade
VIC FEDELI

Ontario Liberal leader
STEVEN DEL DUCA

Ontario NDP & Official Opposition leader
ANDREA HORWATH

Ontario Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries
LISA MACLEOD
The GNCC launched its free rapid antigen testing kit program for businesses in May, 2021. This program is delivered in partnership with the COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative from the Ontario Chamber Network and with Great Wolf Lodge, our distribution partner.

Any business or non-profit with fewer than 150 employees can access the program and obtain free testing kits for their workforce.

The testing kits have helped identify many asymptomatic cases before they could cause workplace outbreaks.

120,000+

testing kits distributed throughout Niagara

900+

participating businesses and organizations

Through the Daily Updates, the GNCC delivers important business news in a timely manner.

We disseminate news and information we feel will be important to businesses, plus member updates, special offers, breaking news, and more.

3,500

unique subscribers and continues to grow

247

editions in 2021

190,366

total opens

23,622

links clicked
PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CANADIAN SMEs: Unleashing Learning Management Systems at Scale

In partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Magnet, and the Future Skills Centre we developed a Learning Management System (LMS) aimed at offering small to medium sized businesses (SME’s) access to curated training content as well as a host of resources to support their recruitment and skill development needs.

HACKATHON REPORT

The Hackathon Report lays out a path to Ontario’s “she-covery” in Niagara by examining data on the gendered labour market impacts of the pandemic and offering policy solutions to confront both immediate and longer-term challenges. Throughout this, an intersectional lens is essential to ensure no women are left behind.

Read the full report at gncc.ca/councils/women-in-niagara/the-hackathon/
In Partnership with Magnet and the Talent Opportunity Program (TOP) to connect chamber members to the Magnet platform, a digital social enterprise at Ryerson University. Through Magnet, businesses can connect with new talent, access business growth opportunities and tools to navigate the impacts of a changing labour market and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce and the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce launched #NiagaraMyWay, a campaign designed to encourage people to shop locally to support local businesses of every sector — retail, seasonal, eateries, wineries — and more.

358,000 people reached via social media
2,615,000 impressions generated
SIGNATURE EVENTS

STATE OF THE CITY ST. CATHARINES

The Mayor of St. Catharines Walter Sendzik shared his plans for the future of St. Catharines and its role in the Niagara Region with the business community.

STATE OF THE REGION

Regional Chair Jim Bradley delivered a keynote address to the Niagara business community which was followed by an expert panel discussion on the issues Niagara faced in 2020 and opportunities in 2021.

NIAGARA BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Over 35 finalists were recognized at the 17th Annual Niagara Business Achievement Awards. The Bestowed Award Recipients were businesses that have used creative and original approaches within their organization to improve planning, response and recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 and/or significant contributions to the community to aid in our recovery. They are: Community Leadership Award: Niagara Industrial Association; Entrepreneur of the Year: Geoff Dillon, Dillon’s Distillery; Innovative Leader Award, Dr. Yousef Haj-Ahmad, Norgen Biotek.
**WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS**

The Women in Niagara Council (WIN), held the annual Women in Business Awards (WIBA) to honour the outstanding achievements of Niagara’s leaders in business and non-profits. Over 40 finalists were recognized at the 20th annual event. General Motors’ Carolyne Watts was presented with a lifetime achievement award in recognition of her trailblazing career in automotive manufacturing and her support of women in STEM careers.

**ENGAGE: A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL’S CONFERENCE**

The NEXTNiagara Council launched an annual conference. ENGAGE was created as a day for young professionals across all industries and sectors to learn, connect, and grow with like-minded individuals across Niagara and beyond. The council worked to provide engaging sessions and conversations about personal, professional, and community growth.

**NIAGARA ECONOMIC SUMMIT**

Niagara’s ninth annual economic summit, which was hosted by the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce on the morning of November 2nd, once again gathered great minds from across the country in search of solutions for Niagara and ways to grow economically and socially. The keynote address from BDC’s chief economist Pierre Cleroux outlined the economic situation for Niagara and how it compared to the country, followed by expert panels.
## COMMUNICATIONS

### Impressions — What Our Visitors See

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook impressions</td>
<td>483%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram impressions</td>
<td>676%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impressions across all channels</td>
<td>6,704,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users visited our website</td>
<td>97,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pages viewed on our website</td>
<td>225,698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Engagements — What Our Visitors Did

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likes, comments, and shares</td>
<td>46,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links clicked from social media posts</td>
<td>8,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views of video content</td>
<td>675,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website sessions</td>
<td>128,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website searches</td>
<td>29,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in video viewership</td>
<td>3,030%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Member Email — What Our Visitors Read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of all readers who are highly engaged and interact with our emails</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female subscribers</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscribers across GNCC channels</td>
<td>6,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged 55–64</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LONGEST SERVING MEMBERS

10+ UNINTERRUPTED YEARS

13th Street Winery
Advanced Office Solutions AOS
All-Source Heat Treating Inc.
Anfra-Tile & Stone
Art's Tool Sales Ltd.
b4 Networks
Beatties
Big Brothers Big Sisters of North & West Niagara
Big Red Markets
Boyce Dentistry Professional Corporation
Boys & Girls Club of Niagara
Brand Blvd. Inc.
Brian's On Fourth Avenue
Brock University — Goodman School of Business
Business Builders Club of Niagara
C.R. Smith Financial Services Inc.
Canadian Tire Bank
Carousel Players
CEE Green
Central Industrial Supply
CIBC - Fairview Mall Banking Centre
CIBC - Lake & Lakeshore Banking Centre
CIBC - Niagara & Scott Banking Centre
CIBC - Ridley Heights Banking Centre
CIBC - The Pen Banking Centre
CIBC Small Business
Citrus Boutique Inc.
The Club at White Oaks
CMI Heavy Industries
Cobblestone Gardens Retirement Residence
Computan Ltd.
Coppola's Ristorante & Banquet Facility LTD
Credit Bureau Services Canada
DDL & Co.
Deloitte LLP
Economic Development & Tourism Services (EDTS)
Elio's Foot Comfort Care
Employment Solutions
Enns Cabinetry Inc.
Fascination Dance Studio
Frank Drasnin, CA
Front Row Sports
Gales Fuels
Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP
Growth Associates
H2Oonly Inc
Heatherwood Retirement Residence
Helen's Delicatessen
Henley Honda
Herb Lodde & Sons Roofing Ltd.
Hernnder Estate Wines
Hotel Dieu Shaver Health & Rehabilitation Centre
Ideal Plumbing & Heating
Inniskillin Wines Inc.
Innovate Niagara
Jackson-Triggs, Niagara Estate
Johnny Rag
Jolanta Bula Legal Professional Corporation
Ken's Salvage Co. Ltd.
Kenneth McGowan Financial Knight Archives
KPMG LLP
Lakeshore Chiropractic Group
Lancaster Chown & Welch LLP
Larry's Rentall Inc.
Linzel Distributing
Lord Durham Rare Books
Lost 'N' Found Yoga
Mac Outpost
Magiclean Services Inc.
Markland Property Management Inc.
McGowan Office Interiors
Mentor Safety Consultants Inc.
Mentor Safety Consultants Inc.
Meridian Credit Union - Corporate Office - St. Catharines
Merit Contractors Niagara
Modern Landfill Inc. (Modern Corporation, Canada)
Morison Insurance Brokers Inc.
Mountainview Homes
National Bank Financial Wealth Management
Niagara Centre for Independent Living
Niagara District Airport
Niagara Falls Convention Centre
Niagara Granite & Marble Ltd.
Niagara IceDogs Hockey Club - OHL
Niagara Regional Literacy Council
Niagara Skilled Trades Academy
Niagara Training & Employment Agency
Nitec Energy Services Inc.
Ontario Chamber of Commerce
Ontario Craft Wineries
Ontario Power Generation (Niagara)
Patrick's CO2
Pen Storage
PenFinancial Credit Union - Fourth Avenue Branch
PenFinancial Credit Union - Dorchester Road Branch
PigOut Roasters
PlanET Biogas Solutions Inc.
Professional Cleaning Specialists
Pure Non-Scents
R2 Gaming Inc.
The RAFT - Resource Association For Teens
Rankin Construction Inc.
Rankin Construction Inc.
RE/MAX Garden City Hendriks Team Realty
Regional Doors & Hardware
Reif Estate Winery
Robertson Rentals
Royal Niagara Golf Club
Salon Alessandro
St. Catharines Mazda
St. John Ambulance
The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation
Steadman Jewellers
Stokes Seeds
Systems Plus Inc.
TAG Art Gallery
Telecable.ca & Security
Thorold Automotive Solutions
Treadwell Farm to Table Cuisine
Trilogen Technologies Inc.
U-Cart Concrete
Ukrainian Credit Union
VandenDool Jewellers
The Verge Insurance Group
VinFirst Inc.
Visiting Angels Inc.
Walker Industries Holdings Limited
Welland Avenue Car Wash Limited (WACW)
Wellington Court
The Wine and Beer Co.
Yates Renovations Ltd.
Young McNamara