

Authority Helps Spearhead Launch of NEXUS Niagara Regional Marketing Campaign

A major community relations accomplishment of the 2012 calendar year involved the efforts of the PBA and the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission (NFBC) – in conjunction with Canadian and American Customs agencies, as well as numerous community groups, local organizations, and area attractions – in formulating a brand new regional marketing campaign to educate Western New York and Southern Ontario residents on the ease of border travel through enrollment in the NEXUS program.

Dubbed “NEXUS Niagara,” this marketing campaign brought about many new approaches to engaging residents, answering questions, providing enrollment information, and showcasing the advantages of NEXUS participation. Many outreach tools were also created to assist border travel “ambassadors” in their efforts to promote enrollment.

“Our region already has more combined NEXUS and Enhanced Driver’s License (EDL) registrations than any other location along the Can-Am border,” said PBA General Manager Ron Rienas. “However, our outreach work is far from over. By educating additional residents on the benefits of these programs through the NEXUS Niagara campaign, we can ensure even faster border travel for motorists and also reduce congestion on area bridge crossings.”

- Highlights of the NEXUS Niagara regional marketing campaign include:
- Creation of a new campaign website customized for local enrollees in the Buffalo Niagara Region.
 - Downloadable brochures, posters, enrollment checklists, and other educational information.
 - Available web buttons for placement on respective border travel “ambassador” websites.
 - Flyer distribution at Buffalo Niagara border crossings, Duty Free stores, and other select venues.
 - NEXUS information display table placements at area businesses, retail outlets, and attractions.
 - Promotional contests, social media outreach, and web video promotion.
 - Public service announcements (PSAs) and digital display advertisements.



Various operational improvements were also implemented through the “NEXUS Niagara” campaign to maximize the program’s local utility. Such enhancements encompassed regular expansion of a second NEXUS lane at the Peace Bridge Canadian Customs plaza during daily commuter hours, a substantial increase in overall applicant interview slots at the Fort Erie enrollment center, and extended lane hours following all Buffalo Sabres home games. Visit www.nexusniagara.com to learn more!

New Variable Message Signage System Installed at Peace Bridge for U.S.-Bound Vehicles

In October, the PBA and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), announced the completion of a U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) funded project to install new variable message signage units above the Peace Bridge U.S. Primary Inspection Lanes (PILs). This signage system is intended to provide clear instructions to U.S.-bound cars and trucks by directing them towards available CBP primary inspection lanes (PILs), while also providing greater flexibility in trusted travel (NEXUS) and Ready Lane configurations.



In addition, such signage will offer instantaneous or “click of a button” updating from port supervisor consoles, allowing the plazas to more rapidly adjust to real-time traffic situations and queuing patterns.

“The LED signage fits with Customs and Border Protection’s Active Lane Management strategy and allows operations to adapt to specific traffic demands on the facilities,” said CBP Acting Director of Field Operations Randy Howe. “This LED signage is an excellent upgrade to the Peace Bridge and Lewiston facilities.”

“These signs make it much, much easier for motorists to determine which inspection lanes are open at the Peace Bridge,” said PBA General Manager Ron Rienas. “They also provide an aesthetic update for the plaza that, unlike past flip board and static-lit signage, will be really hard to miss.”

A total of 18 color variable message signs were installed at the Peace Bridge. Design of the project was initiated in late-2011, with site construction completed in Fall 2012. The signs were produced by Daktronics and installation was coordinated by Brasfield & Gorrie (general contractor), along with staff guidance and assistance from GSA, CBP, and PBA.

The signs are able to showcase over 30 different informational messages, including closure notices, vehicle-type directions (truck, bus, rv, auto), and many other communications. To complement the variable message signage effort, the PBA also undertook a \$150,000 traffic statistics interface system upgrade, which will synchronize with the new signs and allow for further automation of crossing data collection.

Crossing Selected for Pre-Inspection Pilot

Efforts to enhance the Peace Bridge corridor took an interesting turn this past year, as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced that it would cease the ongoing Capacity Expansion Project environmental review, in order to allow for the pursuit of more cost-effective solutions to U.S. Customs plaza congestion reduction.

This termination followed extended dialogue, consultation, and concurrence amongst FHWA, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), United States General Services Administration (GSA), and the PBA, regarding the need for immediate action at the corridor. The Authority now intends to focus on basic facility renovations to improve plaza functionality and the flow of goods and people at the crossing. Preliminary concepts and design work is anticipated to come together in the first quarter of 2013.

Koessler Award Goes to Aspiring Engineer

This past summer, the Authority and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Buffalo Section awarded the Paul J. Koessler Memorial Scholarship to a deserving State University of New York at Buffalo (UB) student for demonstrating outstanding academic achievement, active participation in student organizations and activities, and pursuit of an education in Civil/Structural Engineering.

Named in honor of the esteemed former PBA Chairman, this year’s scholarship was given to Mr. Shawn Evilsizor who is enrolled in the Department of Civil, Structural, and Environmental Engineering at UB, where he is completing a Masters degree in Structural/Earthquake Engineering.

For more information on the award, please visit www.PeaceBridge.com/Scholarship.

1,265,351
Commercial crossings

1,200,000+
E-ZPass Transactions

750,000+
NEXUS Conveyances

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Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority

JANUARY 2013



Students take in a majestic view of the Peace Bridge from the deck of the *Miss Buffalo*.
(photo courtesy of Elizabeth Pellette Photography)



U.S. Plaza Renovations Move Forward

Following the formal termination of the Peace Bridge Capacity Expansion Project, the Authority began advancing a series of port renovations to improve the overall functionality of the U.S. plaza.

These renovations represent in excess of \$40 million in enhancements to the Peace Bridge corridor and offer significant improvements to current traffic patterns and the overall movement of vehicles at the crossing.

Several related request for proposals were issued for these projects during the course of the year, with the architectural firm Wendell Duschner selected to design a renovation of the current U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commercial Secondary Building. Construction on this project is scheduled to commence in fall 2013 and initial U.S. federal government concurrence has been granted. Meanwhile, the Parsons Transportation Group was enlisted to oversee an approach widening effort, with work set to start this year.

According to U.S. Congressman Brian Higgins, “the efficient and predictable flow of people and commerce across the Peace Bridge is critical to the local economy. For decades there has been talk about expansion, now we will witness real action. Construction on plaza renovations begins the process of opening up the bottleneck while putting people to work.”

For more information on the impending U.S. plaza enhancement projects, visit www.peacebridgerenovation.com.