

OLD FORT NIAGARA
GRAND OPENING AGENDA
FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2006. 1:00 P.M.

WELCOME

Robert L. Emerson, Executive Director, OFN

INTRODUCTION OF NATIONAL ANTHEMS

Robert L. Emerson

Trumpet Soloist: Lewis D. Custode, Jr.
 French, British, Canadian, United States
 Color Guard: United States Coast Guard, Station Niagara

INVOCATION

The Reverend Joseph L. Lovesque, c.m.,
 President, Niagara University

REMARKS

Don Courara, Founding President, Buffalo-Lake Association
 Chevalier, National Order of Merit
 Stephen Brereton, Consul General of Canada
 Jane E. Schmeider, Assistant, Senator M. Slaughter,
 United States Congress, 28th District

Ginger McNally, President, Old Fort Niagara Association

Beaussette Castro, Commissioner
 New York State Office of Parks,
 Recreation & Historic Preservation

George D. Maziarz, NYN Senator, 62nd District

Antonio Del Monte, NYA Member of Assembly, 128th Dist.

SYMBOLIC RIBBON-CUTTING

Old Fort Niagara Welcome Center Grand Opening
Friday, June 23, 2006

Excerpt from Canadian Consul General Stephen Brereton's Speech at the opening ceremonies...

I probably need not point out to anyone living in a border community just how important and special the relationship between Canada and the United States is today. Our countries have enjoyed almost 140 years of peace (some would say 200) and are united as much by family, kinship and shared values as by our commercial relationship which is the largest of any two countries, as well as by the world's longest, safest and un-militarized border -- to which Old Fort Niagara pays important tribute with the official plaque commemorating the 1817 Rush-Bagot Treaty demilitarizing the Lakes here on Fort Niagara's grounds.

The longest standing structure in the Great Lakes Basin, Old Fort Niagara is as critical to the history of Niagara as it is to the broad tourism industry on which so many depend in this region, and to the growing heritage tourism sector which holds much promise and new opportunity for Niagara area tourism.

With the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 coming in just 6 years time -- there are many exciting opportunities before the cross-border Niagara region -- opportunities to commemorate and celebrate the region's rich military, cultural and natural heritage; to build tourism and visitation to the region; and in the process, to create a dynamic and enduring cross-border tourism infrastructure to ensure that Niagara is positioned as strongly as possible to benefit from the global tourism market.

The single greatest decision that any of the region's heritage sites and tourism operators can make in preparation for the 2012 Bicentennial is to build and strengthen their capacity and visitor readiness. In opening this visitor center today, Old Fort Niagara has led the way --- and in so doing, set the highest of standards.

I thank you for inviting me here today and I look forward to being part of the regional dialogue and planning for the 2012 Bicentennial which will bring Fort Niagara, along with all of the other 1812 sites -- on both sides of the border -- a bright international spotlight, and I hope, much success.



Front Gate – Old Fort Niagara – Youngstown NY



Ribbon Cutting – Old Fort Niagara Welcome Center



Canadian Consul General Stephen Brereton giving remarks at opening

Meet Me
 at the Border



Old Fort Niagara Aerial View



The Crowd Looks on during Welcome Center Opening Ceremonies