

## **Background Brief to Celebration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 (March 2006)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In 2012, Canada, the United States, and Niagara will celebrate the Bicentennial of the War of 1812. The War of 1812 took place over three years between 1812 and 1814, with Niagara the site of many major engagements and much of the profile through historic figures such as Sir Isaac (General) Brock, General Scott, General Porter, and Laura Secord. This war ushered in 200 years of peace between Canada and the United States and provided a crucial chapter in Canada's nation-building process.

Niagara has an opportunity to provide leadership in the celebration of the Bicentennial as well as create the foundation for legacies in Niagara that will last well beyond the three-year period.

In order to successfully identify the opportunities and translate them into action, Niagara needs to work together in developing a comprehensive strategy and plan that will engage and enlist the private and not-for-profit sectors as well as the various levels of government.

The potential benefits of working together and coordinating this long-term project will accrue to a myriad of sectors including natural and cultural heritage, tourism, transportation and infrastructure development, education, etc. The ability to present a unified strategic plan for Niagara will assist all levels of government and the private sector to make the appropriate investments leading up to, during, and following the Bicentennial.

A Niagara 2012 Binational Working Group has gathered in order to support the above, consisting of many leading organizations from across all sectors in Niagara.

## **PROPOSAL**

With an event as complex and far-reaching as a bicentennial, the challenge will be for interested organizations and individuals to efficiently use their resources as well as effectively focus their efforts. There are groups and individuals already making well-intentioned but disparate efforts to address the opportunities which may exist from such an event.

There is a window of opportunity available to increase the coordination and collective planning for the Bicentennial that will enrich all of the individual organizations striving to celebrate the Bicentennial.

The “1812/2012 Niagara Bicentennial Legacy Leadership Council” was formed early in 2006, and it will has the following initial mandate:

1. Provide leadership and oversight to Niagara’s planning and implementation of initiatives related to the Bicentennial.
2. Create a “Niagara Bicentennial Strategic Plan” and critical path by December 31, 2007.
3. Establish a structure and process that will actively engage stakeholders.
4. Oversee program and funding proposals to governments and the private sector.

Members of the “1812/2012 Niagara Bicentennial Legacy Leadership Council” represent private, public, and not-for-profit sectors reflecting the major economic sectors across all Niagara and levels of government.

At the end of 2006, both the mandate and membership in the Council will be reviewed given the knowledge and experience gained over the course of the first year.

### **NEXT STEPS**

One of the first initiatives is the establishment of an 1812/2012 Bicentennial “Roundtable” which will bring together various private and public stakeholders. This Roundtable would establish the foundation and process for the development of a Strategic Plan and be held on June 20, 2006.

This Background Brief was prepared by the Niagara 2012 Binational Working Group noted earlier and is being used as a basis for bringing together Niagara stakeholders across all sectors in 2006, including the recruitment of the “1812/2012 Bicentennial Legacy Leadership Council.”