



A 250th Birthday Letter to the United States

Two hundred and fifty years ago, a new nation placed an audacious bet on ordinary people: that they could govern themselves, speak freely, build lives through their own labor and enterprise, and create something greater together than any one person could build alone. Generation after generation, Americans have accepted the responsibility of keeping that promise alive.

Buffalo was burned during the War of 1812 and rebuilt. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 made the city its western gateway, connecting the Great Lakes to the Atlantic and helping transform the nation's economy. The Niagara River became a passage to freedom for people escaping slavery. Grain elevators reshaped commerce. The power of Niagara Falls helped electrify Buffalo and fuel a new industrial age. In 1901, Theodore Roosevelt took the oath of office here, placing Buffalo at the center of another defining moment in the American story.

Our region's progress has never come from a single project or generation. It has come through continuous reinvention. Immigrants, Black migrants, entrepreneurs, workers, and civic leaders built businesses, institutions, and neighborhoods that helped sustain American growth. Each generation inherited an economy, added its own ingenuity and labor, and carried it forward.

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership is proud to carry on that tradition. Our roots reach back to the Buffalo Board of Trade, formed by local merchants in 1844. For more than 180 years, our business community has understood that prosperity is not automatic and progress is not a spectator sport. It requires people who show up, take the long view, invest in their community, and work across differences to solve problems. That is the work chambers of commerce exist to support, and it is more important today than ever.

As we look toward the next 250 years, Buffalo Niagara must keep building an economy in which opportunity is broader and growth is shared. That means strengthening small businesses and preparing people for good jobs; investing in housing, transportation, digital infrastructure, and reliable, affordable energy; and creating the conditions for innovation in advanced manufacturing, life sciences, semiconductors, and artificial intelligence to thrive. It also means protecting the Great Lakes and strengthening our relationship with Canada, because our cross-border connections remain one of this region's greatest economic advantages.



Throughout our history, America has moved forward not because we agreed on everything, but because enough people remained committed to the difficult work of building something better. We debated, listened, compromised, adapted, and kept going. The next chapter will ask the same of us.

On behalf of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership and the employers and people who make this region special, I send our warmest greetings and our confidence in what this country can become. We will continue to convene, advocate, build, and lead. America's best years can still be ahead, but only if we choose to build them together.

Here's to the next 250,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Grant Loomis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Grant" and last name "Loomis" clearly distinguishable.

Grant Loomis

President and CEO

Buffalo Niagara Partnership