

THE BUFFALO NEWS

Buffalo Hosting More Than 600 Tour Operators Hope is to attract future conventions and group tours

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The travel professionals are attending an invitation-only trade show at the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center to learn more about the more than 125 destinations with exhibits. The attractions making their pitch are from Buffalo as well as other parts of the East Coast and Canada.

This is the fifth time Travel Expo New York has been held in Buffalo; the last time was in 2006. In addition to the trade show, the travel professionals are touring the region aboard motorcoaches, giving them a firsthand look at 55 area tourism destinations.

The hope is that the travel professionals will leave here with a favorable impression and return with buses full of travelers in the next year or so, said Richard Geiger, president and chief executive officer of the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau.

"This is an ideal opportunity to show off Buffalo and Erie County," Geiger said.

The familiarization tours expose the travel leaders to area destinations in addition to familiar sights like Niagara Falls, and lets them see new attractions such as Erie Canal Harbor, he said.

Geiger said attracting out-of-town groups on motorcoach tours also benefits area restaurants, entertainment venues and shopping facilities. **According to the American Bus Association, an overnight tour group produces more than \$12,000 in revenue for a community.**

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