



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## On National Chocolate Day, Platter's Chocolates Relocates to Historic Wurlitzer Building in Niagara County and Commits to Creating 35 New Jobs

PAMM LENT October 28, 2016

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS**



State and local officials today cut the ribbon on a new \$1.3 million chocolate factory in Niagara County. Platter's Chocolates, a family-owned business since 1938, relocated to the historic Wurlitzer building in North Tonawanda to expand its production lines, packaging capabilities, and offer culinary tours to visitors.

"Platter's Chocolates' decision to relocate within Western New York is a sweet victory for

North Tonawanda and the entire region," **Governor Cuomo said.** "With expanded production and the addition of factory tours, we look forward to the creation of new jobs, new economic activity and increased tourism in Niagara County."

**Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul said,** "Platter's is taking its chocolate making to a whole new level by inviting visitors to tour every step of the production. The new factory in the historic Wurlitzer Building will be a magnet for tourists visiting Niagara Falls and looking for some extra family activities to enjoy. Chocolate, tourism and increased spending by visitors adds up to a sweet success for Niagara County."

Platter's Chocolates moved to the 24,000 square-foot facility in North Tonawanda to expand its operations, made possible by state-of-the-art climate control capabilities. The facility's climate control allows for the manufacturing of chocolate year round, even during hot summer months, a process that was not possible at the company's previous location. Platter's Chocolates currently has 20 employees and will create 35 more jobs to meet the increase in production and addition of tours.

"On behalf of Platter's Chocolates we would like to thank Governor Cuomo and New York State for the overwhelming support of our business," **said John DiGiuseppe, Vice President of Business Development for Platter's Chocolates.** "Our family business started in the basement of a small house in North Tonawanda and now, three generations later, we are proud to open a facility which will allow us to expand our distribution and provide sweet tours for visitors to our region."

Platter's Chocolate Factory was designed to accommodate tour buses and tour groups, featuring a walking tour that highlights the history, production and art of chocolate making. Tour participants will see each step of the chocolate making process, talk with chocolate

experts and enjoy samples of Platter's famous sponge candy. Visitors can also explore the Factory's store, which features both a chocolate shop and coffee café offering Wi-Fi, beverages and local ice cream. The space will also be available for small meetings, community events and holiday family activities.

The addition of Platter's Chocolate Factory and tours will support the region's tourism industry, which attracts nearly 8 million visitors each year, and add to the area's growing number of food and beverage attractions like the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute and regional wine trails.

**Empire State Development President & CEO Howard Zemsky said,** "Culinary tourism has grown exponentially with the popularity of chef tours and the exploration of New York State's wineries and breweries. A chocolate tour is a sweet way to encourage visitors to stay just a little longer and enjoy watching the production of our world famous sponge candy, Western New York's one-of-a-kind delicious chocolate treat."

**Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation President & CEO John Percy said,** "As the official destination marketing organization for Niagara Falls and Niagara County, we are thrilled for Platter's on their growth and expansion and to now gain an additional attraction to market to our visitors. We have seen fantastic success with the Culinary Institute as well as the Niagara Wine Trail which proves that tourists want to experience local flavors. Platter's has long been a favorite in our office and we often gift their chocolate as part of our welcome bags for VIP guests. Now we get to show off yet another Niagara County gem to the world!"

The New York State Power Authority provided \$200,000 to support the relocation and renovation of Platter's Chocolates through its Western New York power proceeds program, which uses earnings from the sale of unused hydropower from the Niagara Power Project to

fund economic development projects in the region. In addition, Empire State Development will provide Excelsior Tax Credits of up to \$175,000 in return for the creation of 35 jobs.

**NYPA President and CEO Gil C. Quiniones said,** "The program has provided \$32 million since its inception and it's gratifying to help a company with long-term roots in the area that's poised to grow even more. Platter's is another example of how the Niagara Power Project is an important driver of economic activity in the region."

**State Senator Rob Ortt said,** "Platter's Chocolates has become a staple for sweets in North Tonawanda and the region. It's become a tradition for so many families, including mine. Growing up a few blocks away from Platter's, my family and I would make regular stops there, so I'm excited it'll be able to expand in its hometown. This locally-grown company will create more jobs, continue to thrive and strengthen our local economy, and continue to be a tradition for many more families."

**North Tonawanda Mayor Arthur G. Pappas said,** "I have lived in North Tonawanda most of my life and Platter's Chocolates is a large part of my childhood. I remember going to the original location on Felton St. way back when and this continued to the Oliver St location. I am very excited to see Platter's continue to thrive and it's interesting they pick the former home of a once grand North Tonawanda company in the Wurlitzer building to move into. I wish Platter's good luck in continuing as a true mainstay of the community."

For more information about tours and Platter's Chocolates, visit:

[www.platterschocolates.com](http://www.platterschocolates.com).