



FIRST NIAGARA PROVIDES \$13.3 MILLION TO FINANCE 88 LUXURY APARTMENTS IN SIMSBURY

NEW HAVEN, Conn. – December 4, 2013 – First Niagara Financial Group (Nasdaq: FNFG) today announced it has completed a \$13.3 million dollar construction and permanent mortgage to Mill Commons LLC, of Farmington, CT. Mill Commons is a recently completed, 88-unit, award-winning luxury apartment community located in Simsbury, CT.

First Niagara's Commercial Real Estate Group provides financing for a variety of property types and construction projects across multiple states and regions including New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.

The Mill Commons apartments are a key part of the larger Hop Brook Development, a mixed-use community created by Landworks Development, LLC, based in Farmington. In addition to the apartment community, the Hop Brook development includes 20 luxury townhomes, office space and the five-star Millwright's Restaurant and Tavern. Mill Commons recently received several 2013 HOBI awards from the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut, including "Community of the Year."

Landworks' member, Chris Nelson, credited First Niagara for committing to finance the project at a time when most banks were shying away from any real estate venture. "We've found the perfect balance with First Niagara as our lender," Nelson said. "The commercial real estate team is local, so they understood the value of this project in Simsbury; but also, First Niagara was large enough to provide the resources, products and services we required for a development of this size."

"The Landworks team has an outstanding reputation as a single and multi-family builder in the Farmington Valley," said Jeanneen Griffin, Commercial Real Estate Team Leader for First Niagara's New England and Tri-State Regions. "The combination of the team's experience and the in-depth market research they conducted for Mill Commons gave us great confidence in their ability to succeed in their first rental community. We're happy to partner with a local company like Landworks that recognizes and responds to opportunities in the state's real estate market."

Mill Commons' one- and two-bedroom apartments range from 900 to 1,600 square feet. All apartments have balconies, elevator access and private garages. The "Pond House" community building provides gathering space, a fitness center and deck area, while the outdoor "Village Green" has patio areas with an outdoor brownstone fireplace. Mill Commons is one of the first apartment communities in the state to be certified Energy Star 3.0.

"As companies relocate to suburban areas to reduce costs and attract talent, it drives growth in the rental markets," said Albert Clemente, First Niagara's Vice President of Commercial Real Estate for the New England region. "The Mill Commons team created a development that is accommodating that growth, and exceeded the expectations of the local renters."

Wherever possible, Landworks utilized local vendors for building materials and finishes. Approximately 500 cubic yards of stone, excavated from the construction site, was cut at Grays Bridge Farm and Earth Products in Brookfield and used to veneer the ground level exteriors. Simscroft-Echo Farms from Simsbury completed all site work; 84 Lumber provided and installed lumber, siding and roofing; Sanford & Hawley of Farmington provided trim and doors; Hartford-based Connecticut Lighting Centers supplied and installed LED lighting for interior and common spaces; and Dalene Flooring provided tile, carpet and hardwood flooring. For more information on Mill Commons, visit www.millcommons.com or call the leasing office at 860-651-4100.

About First Niagara

First Niagara Financial Group through its wholly owned subsidiary, First Niagara Bank, N.A., is a multi-state community-oriented bank with approximately 420 branches, approximately \$37 billion in assets, \$27 billion in deposits, and approximately 6,000 employees providing financial services to individuals, families and businesses across New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. For more information, visit www.firstniagara.com.

About Landworks Development LLC

Developer Ron Janeczko and builder Chris Nelson of Nelson Construction, are partners in Landworks Development, LLC. Together they combine land planning and site development skills with the construction experience and knowledge of a second-generation builder. Landworks offices are located in Farmington, Connecticut. They have built several residential communities in the greater Hartford area. Advanced construction systems, quality materials, fine craftsmanship, and superior design guarantee each community's lasting beauty and lower maintenance. For more information visit: www.Landworksdevelopment.com