



## **Joseph Saffire Named First Niagara Executive Vice President of Commercial Financial Services**

*-- Experienced leader of commercial lending businesses and industry veteran to join the regional bank holding company's executive team --*

BUFFALO, N.Y., March 31, 2014 – First Niagara Financial Group (Nasdaq: FNFG) today named Joseph Saffire to serve as executive vice president, commercial financial services.

Saffire brings more than two decades of commercial banking experience to the regional bank holding company and its executive leadership team. He spent the majority of his career with HSBC Bank, where he held a variety of increasing leadership positions, including executive vice president and regional president of corporate and commercial banking, responsible for 16 Eastern and Midwestern states, covering all of the markets served by First Niagara. While with HSBC, he also served as chief operating officer and head of international corporate and commercial banking in Germany, where he drove strategic design and implementation. He joins First Niagara from Wells Fargo & Company in London, where he served as executive vice president and head of global banking for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

“Joe’s wealth of experience formulating and executing product development and growth strategies, leading multi-disciplined teams and serving sophisticated customers of larger banking platforms make him an exceptional addition to our team,” said Gary M. Crosby, president and chief executive officer. “As leader of the commercial services team, Joe will report directly to me and will be responsible for executing our strategy to acquire, grow and deepen customer relationships and continue to enhance our already strong commercial banking businesses.”

“First Niagara is well known for providing increasingly sophisticated products to meet the needs of businesses of all size in the markets it serves, supported by a strong credit culture,” Saffire said. “What attracted me to this company is the opportunity that First Niagara’s bankers and other financial services professionals have to make their customers, company and communities even more successful. I look forward to working with the talented team the company has assembled and to expand upon the solid foundation that has already been built.”

Saffire graduated *magna cum laude* from Boston College with a B.S. in finance and from University at Buffalo with an M.B.A in finance and international management.

### **About First Niagara**

First Niagara, through its wholly owned subsidiary, First Niagara Bank, N.A., is a multi-state community-oriented bank with approximately 420 branches, \$38 billion in assets, \$27 billion in deposits, and approximately 5,800 employees providing financial services to individuals, families and businesses across New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. For more information, visit [www.firstniagara.com](http://www.firstniagara.com).

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