



## **First Niagara Earns Top Honors in Greenwich Associates Annual Awards**

*--Bank is cited for overall satisfaction, relationship manager performance, treasury management and more—*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Feb. 8, 2012 – First Niagara Bank, N.A. racked up six national awards and several regional honors in the 2011 Greenwich Excellence Awards for Small Business Banking. Greenwich Associates, a Connecticut-based global consulting firm, surveyed representatives from nearly 13,500 national businesses with sales of \$1 to \$10 million. Company representatives cast their votes for high performers in 14 categories ranging from website performance to accuracy of treasury operations and overall customer satisfaction.

Of the more than 750 banks that were evaluated, First Niagara was a national winner in the following categories:

- Overall Satisfaction
- Relationship Manager Performance
- Branch Satisfaction
- Treasury Management – Overall Satisfaction
- Treasury Management - Accuracy of Operations
- Treasury Management - Product capabilities

The bank also captured Northeast regional awards for Overall Satisfaction - and - Treasury Management Overall Satisfaction

“It’s an honor to be among the 43 banks nationwide with ‘distinctive qualities,’” said Daniel Cantara, executive vice president of commercial banking for First Niagara. We are an institution that takes great pride in providing superior customer service and helping small businesses succeed.”

To qualify for consideration for the national awards designation, at least 50 of a bank’s clients must respond to the survey. For regional awards, at least 30. A bank is deemed “excellent” if it has a significantly higher percentage of “excellent” ratings than the mean for all banks, which is a 95 percent confidence level.

First Niagara is not a newcomer to Greenwich Associates' annual lineup of the nation's best banks. It received four awards in 2010 in the small-business category and one for its work with businesses with sales from \$10 to \$500 million.

"We have a saying at First Niagara that we win with talent," said Cantara. "The Greenwich Excellence Awards are a testament to that."

#### **ABOUT FIRST NIAGARA**

First Niagara, through its wholly owned subsidiary, First Niagara Bank, N.A., is a multi-state community-oriented bank that currently has approximately \$33 billion in assets, \$19 billion in deposits, more than 330 branches and 5,000 employees providing financial services to individuals, families and businesses across Upstate New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. For more information, visit [www.fnfg.com](http://www.fnfg.com).

When First Niagara completes its acquisition of the HSBC branches, expected to occur in the second quarter of 2012, the regional bank will have an enhanced leadership position in the Northeast, with nearly 430 locations, \$30 billion in total deposits, \$38 billion in assets and more than 6,000 employees serving consumers, businesses and communities across New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. The transaction will also provide First Niagara with number-one retail market share across Upstate New York, virtually doubling its number of branches in New York State to more than 200, stretching from Buffalo to Albany and down through the Hudson Valley.

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