



## **First Niagara Completes HSBC Branch Acquisition**

*Acquires Branches throughout New York and Connecticut; Adds 1,200 New Team Members and More than 500,000 New Customers*

*Market Leading Position across Upstate New York Strengthens Franchise and Provides Customers with Greater Access and Convenience*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – May 18, 2012 - First Niagara Bank N.A., a subsidiary of First Niagara Financial Group, Inc. (NASDAQ:FNFG), today completed its acquisition of the Upstate New York and Connecticut branches from HSBC Bank USA, N.A., further enhancing the bank's regional franchise to 430 branches and 6,000 professionals, serving customers throughout New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

The company will convert more than 100 former HSBC branches and transition all customer accounts over the weekend. Those locations will open as First Niagara branches Monday morning, May 21, with 1,200 new team members serving 500,000 new households. As a result of the acquisition, the Bank will now have more than 200 locations across New York and an expanded presence in Fairfield County, CT.

“We’re incredibly proud to complete this transaction and welcome all of our new customers to First Niagara,” said First Niagara President and Chief Executive Officer John R. Koelmel. “We also warmly welcome all of our new teammates. They’re energized, fully engaged and now even more empowered to wow their customers and communities. We won’t disappoint.”

Mark Rendulic, First Niagara Executive Vice President, Retail Banking, added, “We are very excited to open these branches under the First Niagara banner. The team has worked tirelessly to prepare and we look forward to welcoming our new customers on Monday with the same great team, a full array of products and services and our special commitment to make good things happen.”

First Niagara announced its plans to acquire 195 Upstate New York and Connecticut HSBC branches on July 31, 2011.

Customers with any questions about the transition of their accounts are encouraged to stop by any First Niagara branch and ask to speak to a team member during business hours; call the bank's Customer Contact Center at 1-800-421-0004; or visit [www.welcometofirstniagara.com](http://www.welcometofirstniagara.com).

Note to Editors: Please visit [www.firstniagara.com](http://www.firstniagara.com) for a map of the First Niagara branch network.

## **About First Niagara**

With the acquisition of HSBC branches now complete, First Niagara has an enhanced leadership position in the Northeast, with nearly 430 locations and more than 6,000 employees serving consumers, businesses and communities across New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts. First Niagara also has number-one retail market share across Upstate New York, and has virtually doubled its number of branches in New York State to more than 200, stretching from Buffalo to Albany and down through the Hudson Valley.

## **Forward-Looking Statements**

Certain statements in this document are “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act. Words such as “believe,” “estimate,” “will be,” “will,” “would,” “expect,” “anticipate,” “plan,” “project,” “intend,” “could,” “should” or other similar words or expressions often identify forward-looking statements. Such statements are based on current expectations only, and are subject to certain risks, uncertainties and assumptions, many of which are beyond our control. Should one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or should underlying assumptions prove incorrect, including risks, assumptions and uncertainties relating to the acquired branches, completion of the transaction, regulatory approvals for the transaction, integration of the acquired branches and related operations and any required or planned divestitures and the related process, actual results, performance or achievements may vary materially from those anticipated, estimated or projected. More information about the factors that could cause actual results to materially differ is contained in our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. We undertake no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

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