

Ferry: Buffalo needs to act now

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their communities into the big time. The Peace Bridge has a tremendous economic impact on the Buffalo region, perhaps as high as \$7 billion. Rochester and Erie are trying to take a chunk of that business. Buffalo officials need to go on the offensive. They need an aggressive marketing approach aimed at keeping cars flowing through this area and over the Peace Bridge.

Buffalo, Rochester and Erie are often thought of more as punch lines of jokes

than tourist destinations. But the new competition between them could benefit all three cities. All three sometimes suffer from inferiority complexes. But the commencement of the ferry service could serve as a civic shot in the arm. Buffalo may lose some business in the short run, but that threat could help the city find bold new ways to market itself in the long run.

For years, Cleveland was known as "The Mistake by the Lake," but recent triumphs such as the securing of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame have begun to shake the rust off that city's image as a dying industrial town. Cleveland, too, is

jumping into the ferry sweepstakes, planning service to Port Stanley, Ont. But that service is less of a threat to Buffalo than nearby Rochester and Erie.

Buffalo will have to fight for the bridge business it once took for granted. That battle needs to begin now. Waiting until ferry service to Canada turns from an idea into a reality will make that battle a lot tougher.

KEITH FORREST lives in Edinboro, Pa.

He is a doctoral candidate in political science at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.