



Tourism Is Essential in Grand Rapids & Itasca County, Minnesota

Megan Christianson
Executive Director
Visit Grand Rapids





U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION®

***National Travel & Tourism Week
May 3-9, 2026***

In 2026, the theme "**Postmarked: Essential**" highlights a simple truth: travel is not optional—it is fundamental to America's economy, workforce and way of life.

Travel in U.S. generates \$3 trillion in economic output and supports 15 million jobs, representing a significant 2.4% of America's GDP.

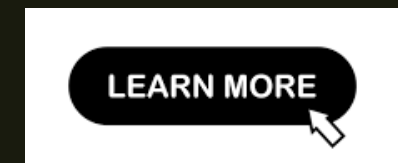
**Travel drives opportunity, fuels growth
keeps America connected.**

[LEARN MORE](#)



In 2024, visitor spending saved each Minnesota household \$1,031 in state and local taxes.*

Sources: *Tourism Economics 2024; SMARI Advertising Effectiveness Study, 2025



<https://mn.gov/tourism-industry>

Explore Minnesota has developed a comprehensive model to quantify Minnesota's visitor economy and better detail the far-reaching impacts of visitor spending.

NE MINNESOTA TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT

County	Economic Impact (millions)	Total jobs	State & local taxes (millions)
Carlton	\$128.9	783	\$11.3
Cook	\$227.7	1,789	\$27.8
Itasca	\$208.7	1,409	\$19.2
Kanabec	\$22.2	155	\$2.2
Koochiching	\$88.2	749	\$8.5
Lake	\$152.0	1,146	\$13.7
Pine	\$163.8	868	\$12.8
St. Louis	\$1,049.5	5,188	\$103.0
Region Total	\$2,053.1	12,086	\$188.4



Tourism is Essential in Grand Rapids & Itasca County, Minnesota.





- **Started in 1983 as 501 (c) 6 non-profit**
- **Destination Marketing Organization**
- **Marketing agreement with the City of Grand Rapids in accordance of MN State Statue 469.10**
- **Market and promote to attract visitors to vacation here in the greater Grand Rapids/Itasca Co area.**
- **Funded by 3% lodging tax**
- **50 lodging properties collect lodging tax and are a part of a destination marketing collaborative.**

2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Adam Lambrecht, President
(Rising Eagle Resort)
- Sara Thompson, Past President
(Itasca County Land Department)
- Sherrie Porth, Secretary/Treasurer
(Loon Point Resort)
- Kris Ives (Timberlake Lodge Hotel &
Event Center)
- Pete Malsted (Forest History Center)
- Tara Bender-Paulson (Benders)
- Kim Jamtgaard (Wildwood Resort)
- Matt Holmes (Trout Lake Campground)

STAFF

- Megan Christianson, Executive Director
- Amanda Templin, Group Marketing &
Community Engagement Manager



Mission Statement:

“To generate a positive economic impact through destination marketing, and tourism and hospitality advocacy in the greater Grand Rapids, Minnesota area.”



2026 Goals & Priorities

Goal 1: Aligning brand strategies to strengthen and enhance destination marketing tactics.

Goals 2: Expanding organization growth capacity through additional resources.

Goal 3: Deepen community stakeholder engagement.

Goal 4: Strategic Visioning focus on growth opportunities in Itasca County.

Goal 5: Grow small to medium group tourism that helps fill shoulder seasons (September to May).



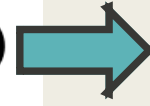
2026 Marketing Strategy

- Fulfill the mission of the Visit Grand Rapids
 - 1. conduct destination marketing to market and promote the greater Grand Rapids, MN area, and
 - 2. to advocate on behalf of tourism and hospitality.
- Promote Vacations (not day trips) of one+ nights.
- Book Groups for bus tours, meetings, conferences, events and trainings. Has their own strategy guide.
- Continue to priority focus on: Family Leisure, Outdoor Recreation & Groups

NEW Website

Hosted & Built By: SandPieper Design

LEARN MORE



<https://visitgrandrapids.com>

Get Inspired

Trip Ideas Outdoor Adventures Eat & Drink State Parks, Forests & Beaches Area Attractions



• **NEW** Travel Itinerary Section

Find Accommodations

See all Accommodations →



Hotels / Motels

Resorts

Vacation Rentals

Bed & Breakfasts

Camping

Adventurous Spring 3 Day Getaway | Grand Rapids, MN

Spring 3 Day Getaway Are you looking for the perfect adventurous spring 3 day getaway? Then, this blog is for you! Located in Northern Minnesota, Grand Rapids is a going to the...

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Adventurous 3-Day Spring Getaways Grand Rapids, Minnesota



Book Now

Check-In:

05/01/2026

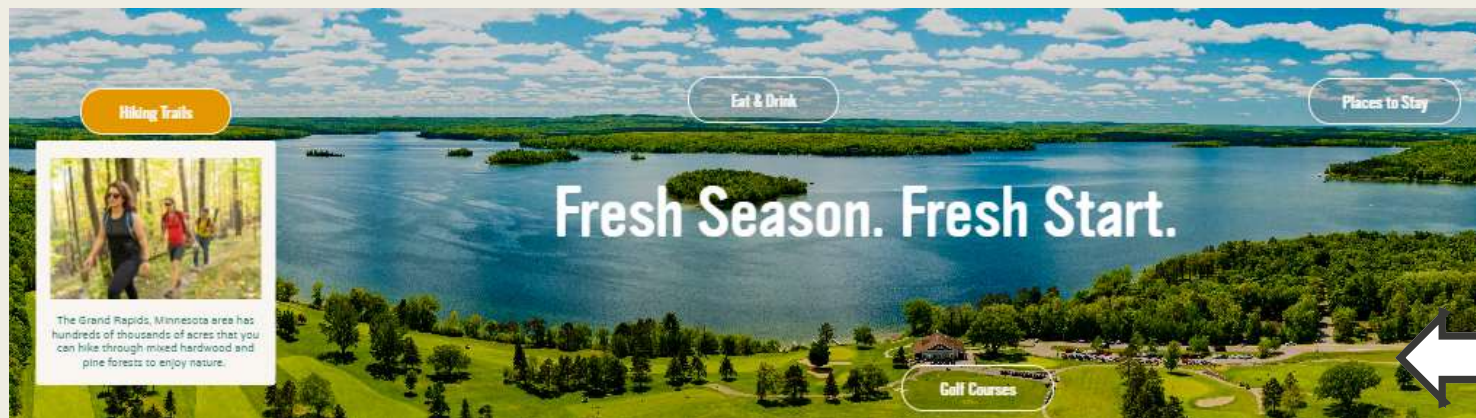
Check-Out:

05/08/2026

All Lodging

SEARCH

• **NEW** Accommodations Design & AI Search Section For Lodging



• **NEW** Interactive Headers

Advertising Tactics & Media Companies

MEDIA COMPANIES

- Adams MultiMedia
- AAA Living
- Explore Minnesota Magazine
- Facebook
- Google
- Lake Time Magazine
- MN DNR
- Minnesota Meetings + Events
- MN Monthly
- MN Snowmobiler
- MN USA
- Offroad Magazine
- Outfront Media
- Pride Journeys
- Snowgoer Magazine
- Star Tribune
- Strike Social
- YouTube

TRADITIONAL MEDIA ADS

- Print Ads
- Radio Ads
- Newspaper Ads
- Billboard Ads

DIGITAL ADS

- E-blasts
- GeoFence & Heat Map
- Google Search
- Google Performance Max
- Paid Social Ads
- Pre-Roll Video
- Programmatic
- Retargeting Mobile
- Search Engine Optimization
- Streaming Radio Ads
- Streaming TV Ads



2025 Website

Source: SandPieper Design

Stats

Web Visits

162,554

AVG Session Duration

2:15

New Users

132,363

AVG Page Views

1.78

Users By Type

69.9% Mobile • 23.8 Desktop

55.7% Women • 44.3% Male

Total Ad Impressions

3,743,321

Total Google Ad Clicks

76,218

AVG Cost Per Click

\$.27

- YouTube Video Views=429,185
- Watch Time=1,800 hours

Facebook

24,064 FOLLOWERS

Instagram

2,757 FOLLOWERS



Visitor Profile Data

Source: Zartico & PlacierAI

41%
Visitors

59%
Residents

18%
Visitor Spend of
Overall Spend

\$86
Avg Spend at
Restaurants

\$117
Avg Visitor
Spend

\$48
Avg Spend at
Attractions

**Spend is Per Person*

55%
are 25-54 years old

52%
Have an average of
\$100k+ household
income

36%
Do not have children
in the household

Visitor Profile

Source: Zartico & PlacierAI

Top Cities

- Minneapolis/St Paul, MN
- Duluth, MN/Superior, WI
- Fargo, ND
- Rochester, MN
- Mankato, MN
- LaCrosse, WI
- Chicago, IL Suburbs
- Des Moines, IA

63%

Visitors Are
From
Minnesota!

Top States

- Minnesota
- North Dakota
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Wisconsin
- South Dakota

- The number one reason that people vacation in Itasca County is for **OUTDOOR RECREATION.**
- The number one location that they enjoy outdoor recreation is the

CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST.

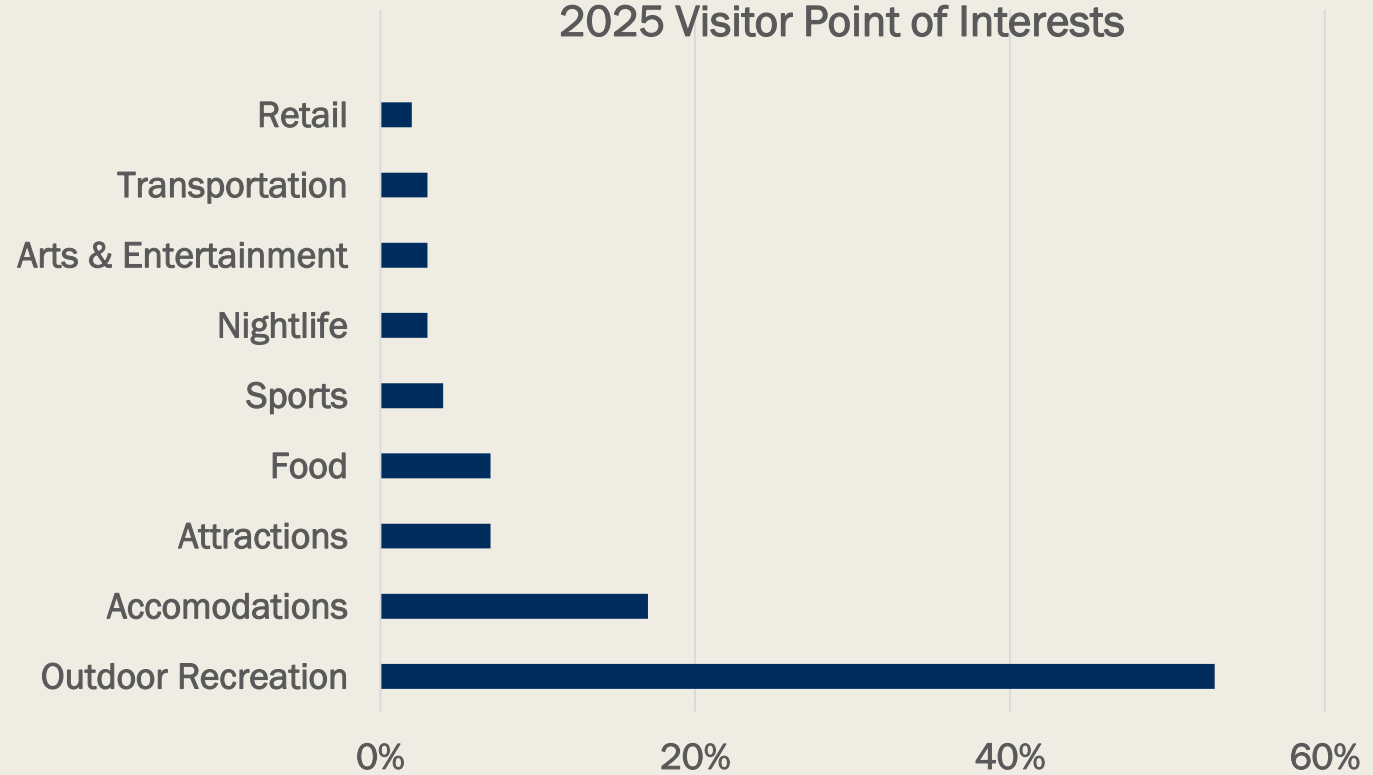


Point of Interests

Where Visitors Spend Their Time

Source: Zartico & PlacierAI

2025 Visitor Point of Interests





**THANK
YOU!**

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www.visitgrandrapids.com

