

MARKETING PLAN



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Purpose

03 Minnesota's Unique Selling Proposition

08 Insights that Shape our Thinking

17 The State of Minnesota's Visitor Economy

20 Visitor Profiles

30 Priority Audience Segments

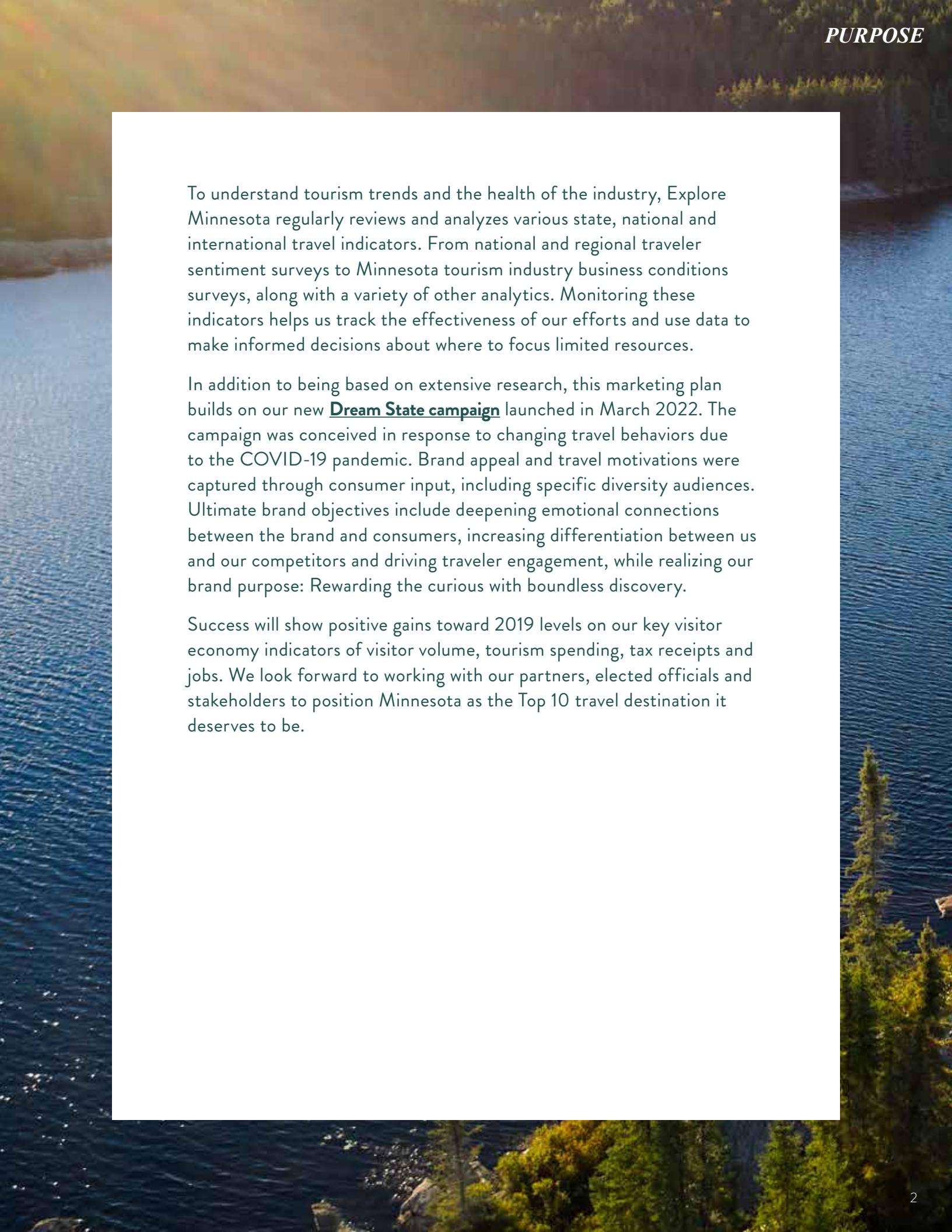
33 Marketing Strategies

49 Putting It All Together

A MARKETING PLAN FOR A NEW ERA IN MINNESOTA TOURISM

A thriving leisure and hospitality industry is essential to a robust Minnesota economy. The COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning prompted by the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis dealt significant blows to the travel and tourism industry in Minnesota, and throughout the world, in 2020. Recovery is happening in Minnesota, but the gains have been uneven across the state. This marketing plan outlines how Explore Minnesota intends to help lead the state's hospitality industry back to – and beyond – pre-pandemic business levels, across all regions and all sectors.

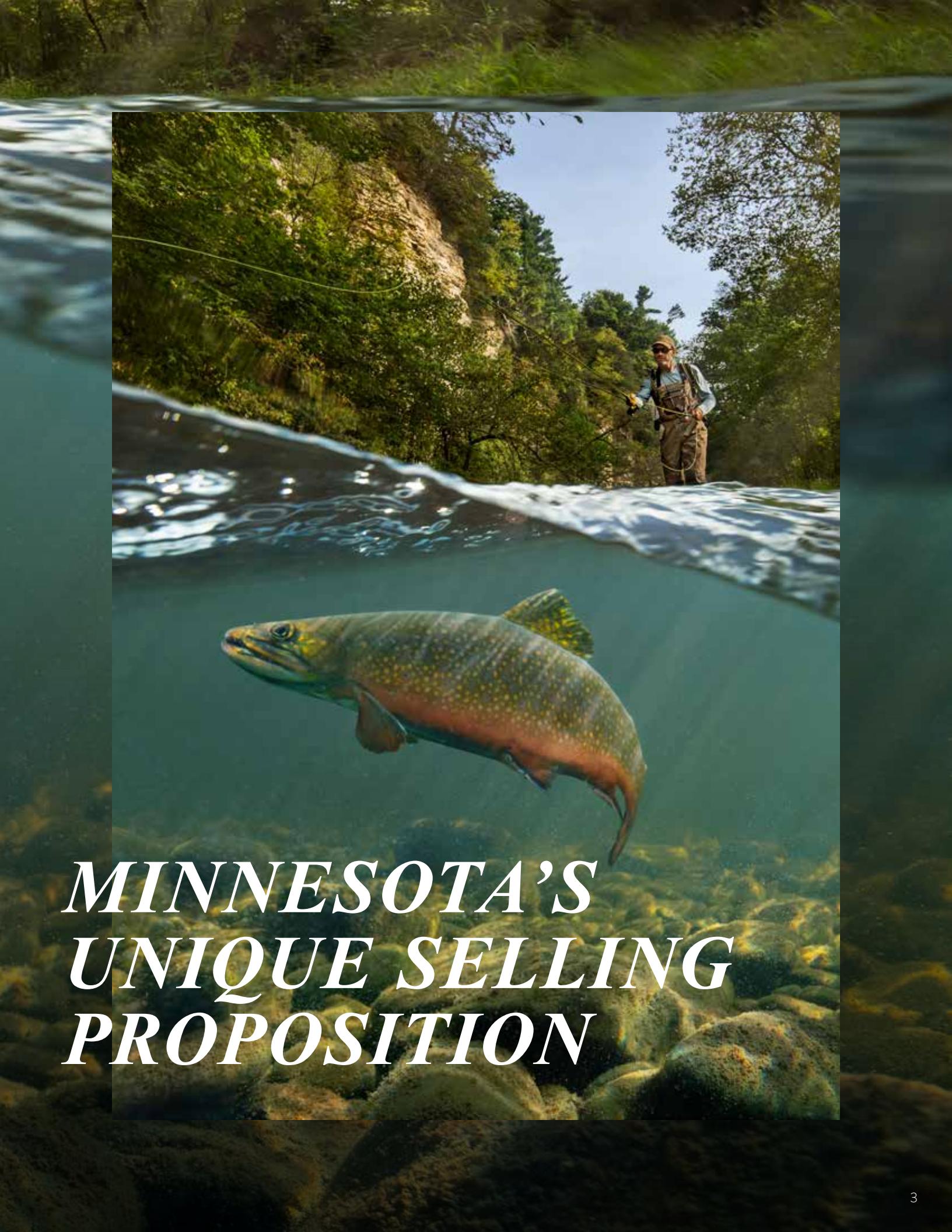
We are well positioned to do so. We have an ambitious new executive director, Lauren Bennett McGinty, whose goal is to make Minnesota a Top 10 travel destination; a dedicated staff and growing staff; and a new three-year strategic plan, which incorporates recommendations from hundreds of industry stakeholders throughout the state. We have strong partners among the state's DMOs, we consult regularly with the Minnesota Tourism Council, and are increasingly collaborating with the DNR and DEED on shared goals. We also have the benefit of working with an award-winning ad agency and a global PR agency to help us raise our profile, expand audiences and strategically position Minnesota's tourism industry for future growth.



To understand tourism trends and the health of the industry, Explore Minnesota regularly reviews and analyzes various state, national and international travel indicators. From national and regional traveler sentiment surveys to Minnesota tourism industry business conditions surveys, along with a variety of other analytics. Monitoring these indicators helps us track the effectiveness of our efforts and use data to make informed decisions about where to focus limited resources.

In addition to being based on extensive research, this marketing plan builds on our new **Dream State campaign** launched in March 2022. The campaign was conceived in response to changing travel behaviors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Brand appeal and travel motivations were captured through consumer input, including specific diversity audiences. Ultimate brand objectives include deepening emotional connections between the brand and consumers, increasing differentiation between us and our competitors and driving traveler engagement, while realizing our brand purpose: Rewarding the curious with boundless discovery.

Success will show positive gains toward 2019 levels on our key visitor economy indicators of visitor volume, tourism spending, tax receipts and jobs. We look forward to working with our partners, elected officials and stakeholders to position Minnesota as the Top 10 travel destination it deserves to be.



A composite image at the top of the page features a fly fisherman standing on a rocky riverbank, casting his line into the water. Below him, a large brook trout is captured mid-leap, its body arched as it swims through the water. The background shows dense green foliage and trees along the river's edge under a clear sky.

MINNESOTA'S UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

SETTING MINNESOTA APART



Award-winning Airport

Seventeen commercial passenger airlines service Minneapolis-St. Paul at the **MSP airport** (**ranked the best for its size in North America in 2022**). Our location in the middle of the continent makes Minnesota an easy destination to reach and a popular connection point for air travelers.

National Treasures

Internationally recognized natural assets include Lake Superior, the Headwaters of the Mississippi River and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.



The Outdoors Beckon

Our lakes, parks, bike trails, Voyageurs National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness have always been top draws and now beckon a new market of travelers who rediscovered the joy of spending time outdoors as they social distanced during the pandemic.



Dark Skies

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness was designated as an **International Dark Sky Sanctuary** in 2020 and Voyageurs National Park became certified as a Dark Sky Park in 2021, positioning them among the world's best stargazing destinations amid the rapidly rising interest in astrotourism.

Urban Accolades

Compelling new reasons to visit **Minneapolis** include the state's first five-star hotel – Four Seasons Minneapolis – which opened in 2022 and a restaurant – Owamni – that won the 2022 James Beard Award for Best New Restaurant in North America.



Shopping Mecca

Mall of America, which is celebrating its 30th birthday in 2022, remains the top tourist destination in the Midwest, welcoming more than 40 million annual visitors (nearly double the number who visit Disney World each year!).



Four Season Adventures

Minnesota offers **four seasons of travel** opportunities, including major seasonal events, professional sports, performing arts and cultural activities.

Value Added Vacations

Enjoy a great vacation on a budget. Camping, family-owned resorts, or budget-friendly hotels make a great home base for visiting free or inexpensive attractions like the SPAM Museum, Como Zoo, Franconia, Nyberg or Walker Sculpture parks, aerial lift bridge or 75 state parks.



Golf Worth the Drive

Minnesota boasts an impressive array of nearly **450 golf courses**, many championship-quality and award winning, designed around a beautiful variety of terrains.

Minnesota has hosted every major tournament including the PGA Championships, the U.S. Open and the Ryder Cup.



Highly Recommended

Minnesota regularly gets **positive media coverage** and its unique selling points frequently appear in travel-related **Top Ten lists** such as outdoor adventure, fishing, biking, affordable road trips, destinations for food lovers and quaint small towns.

Bike-Friendly Destination

Over 4,000 miles of paved bike trails is a cyclists dream, including the Paul Bunyan State Trail – the longest continuously paved trail in the country, plus two U.S. Bicycle Routes (Mississippi River Trail and North Star Route), ranks 5th among bike-friendly states and boasts 33 designated bike-friendly communities (Source: The League of American Bicyclists, 2022).



Diverse Culture

The largest Somali, Hmong and Karen communities in the country join Scandinavian, German, Irish and Czech heritage to create a **wealth of diversity**.

INSIGHTS THAT SHAPE OUR THINKING

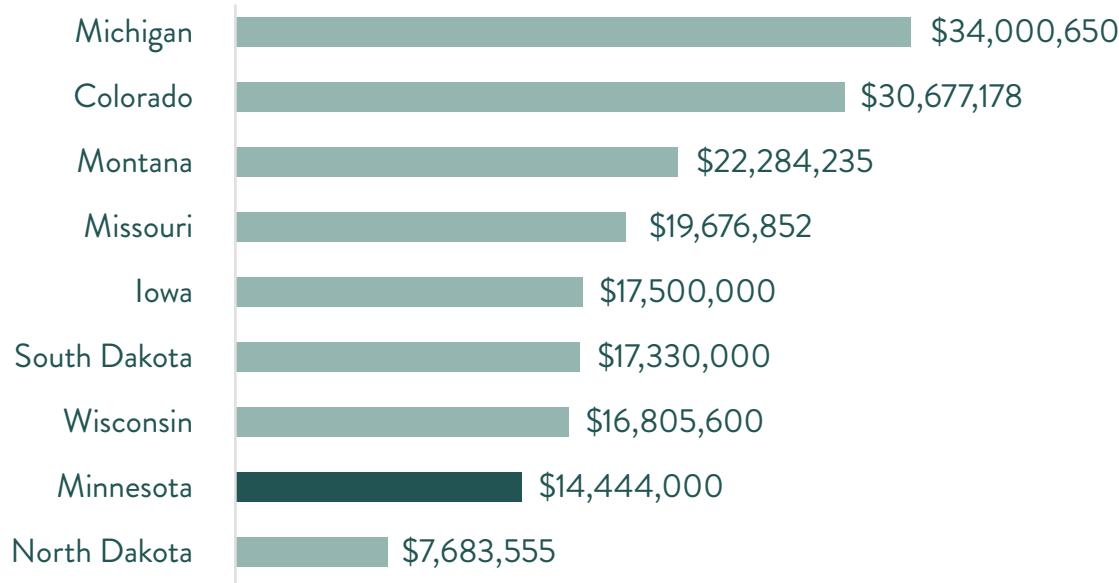


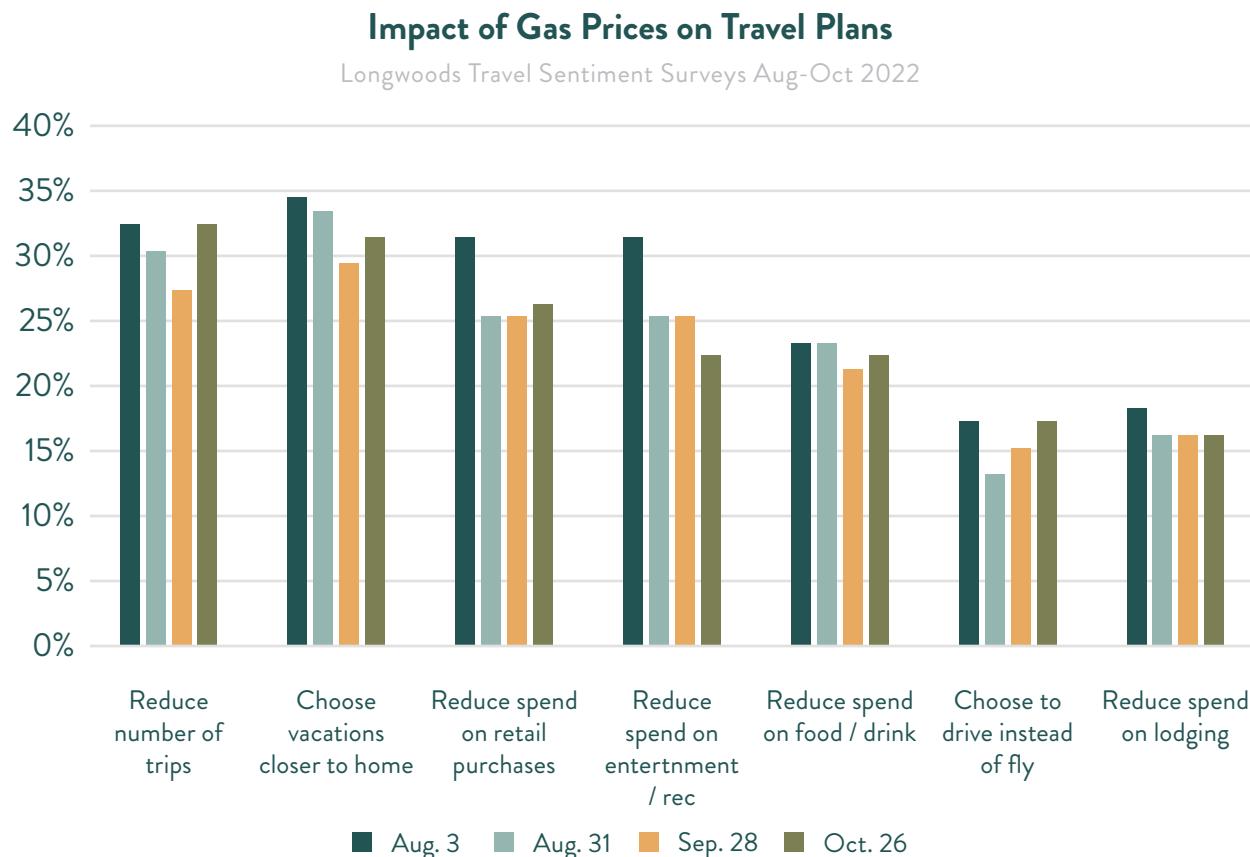
CHALLENGES TO GROWTH

- Competitive pressure is growing.
 - Explore Minnesota has not received a budget increase since FY14.
 - Explore Minnesota's provisional FY22 operating **budget ranked 27th** amongst 40 states reporting to the US Travel Association.
 - Of those not reporting, at least five states have historically ranked significantly higher than Minnesota.
 - 23 states reported receiving an average \$14.6 million in COVID-19 relief funding. Explore Minnesota received \$4 million.
 - The median budget of responding states for 2022 was \$17,415,000.
 - Among key competitors (CO, IA, IL, MO, MT, ND, SD, WI) all had larger budgets than Minnesota except for North Dakota.

Competitive State Budgets - FY22

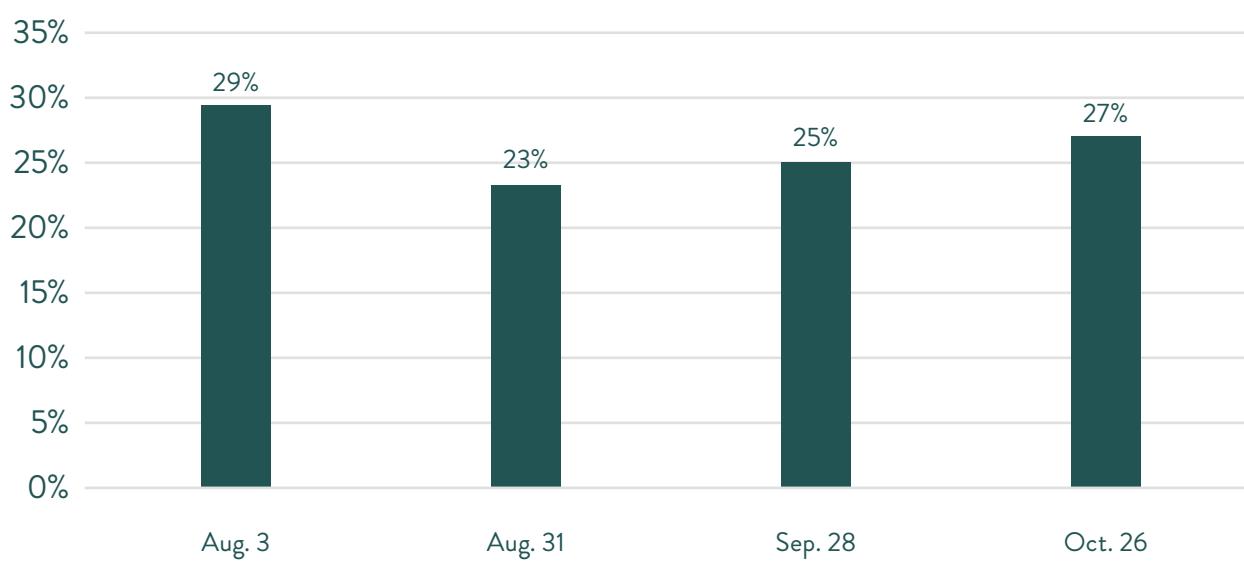
as reported to USTA





Travelers concerns about finances impacting decision to travel

Longwoods Traveler Sentiment Surveys Aug-Oct 2022



GROWTH INDICATORS

Destinations International released a study at their annual convention in July 2022, *Multi-Cultural Multiplier: Cultural Diversity's Impact on Travel Intent*. It revealed that destinations that intentionally lead with **multi-cultural messages result in a 26% increase in spend/stay** from developed markets.

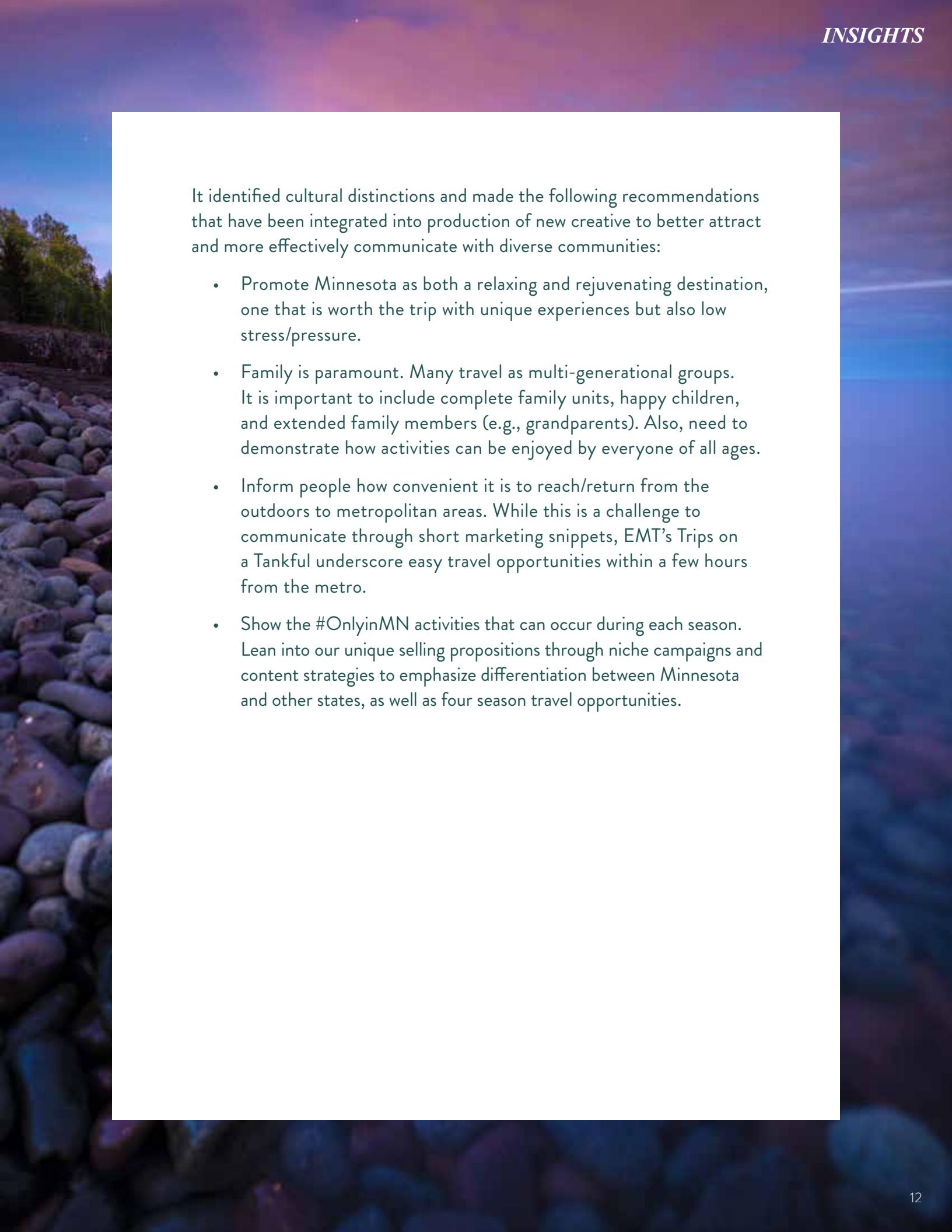
Minnesota will host the **Special Olympics in 2026**, providing a new incentive to accelerate efforts to increase information about accessible travel opportunities.

73% of travelers are prioritizing sustainable travel, according to [Booking.com](#), which recognizes hotels that take initiatives to reduce their environmental impact with a Sustainable Travel Badge.

The Minnesota Council on Economic Expansion recently released [**Minnesota Moment: Roadmap for Equitable Economic Expansion**](#), which identifies several ways to achieve a more equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient Minnesota economy, one of which is to “enhance coordination between Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Tribal Partners, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Explore Minnesota Tourism to **better coordinate activities, promote the outdoors in new ways**, and help the sector increase engagement with historically and currently under served people.” (p. 10).

FY22 Brand Lift study showed diverse audiences were 64% more likely to choose Minnesota as their next travel destination after seeing Explore Minnesota ads (Hispanic Americans +37%, Asian Americans +20%, and African Americans +16%).

After the murder of George Floyd and the spotlight on racial justice and equity, EMT approved research to evaluate the Find Your Truth campaign through the lens of diversity. The study was conducted in July 2020 by Ebony Marketing Research and consisted of focus groups with a total of 48 Black and Latinx travelers.



It identified cultural distinctions and made the following recommendations that have been integrated into production of new creative to better attract and more effectively communicate with diverse communities:

- Promote Minnesota as both a relaxing and rejuvenating destination, one that is worth the trip with unique experiences but also low stress/pressure.
- Family is paramount. Many travel as multi-generational groups. It is important to include complete family units, happy children, and extended family members (e.g., grandparents). Also, need to demonstrate how activities can be enjoyed by everyone of all ages.
- Inform people how convenient it is to reach/return from the outdoors to metropolitan areas. While this is a challenge to communicate through short marketing snippets, EMT's Trips on a Tankful underscore easy travel opportunities within a few hours from the metro.
- Show the #OnlyinMN activities that can occur during each season. Lean into our unique selling propositions through niche campaigns and content strategies to emphasize differentiation between Minnesota and other states, as well as four season travel opportunities.

Explore Minnesota Traveler Survey Findings

Travel Plans

Summer ('22)

89% of survey respondents intend to travel.

91% of Minnesotan travelers plan to take trips that include time in Minnesota.

76% of non-Minnesotan travelers plan to take trips that include time in Minnesota.

Winter

71% of survey respondents intend to travel.

88% of Minnesotan travelers plan to take trips that include time in Minnesota.

75% of non-Minnesotan travelers plan to take trips that include time in Minnesota.

While financial pressures, including transportation and gas prices, are among the top influencing factors for those not traveling, **54% plan to spend about the same amount of money as last winter, and 39% will spend more – \$1,000 to \$3,000 – on travel.**

Lodging Plans

Hotels of the preferred lodging option.

Summer ('22)

65% of travelers will stay at a hotel or motel.

33% of travelers will stay at a campground.

Winter

76% of travelers will stay at a hotel or motel.

22% of travelers will stay at a resorts.

Activity Plans

Travelers plan to spend time outdoors.

Summer ('22)

63% Hiking

35% Camping

33% Fishing

Winter

60% Seasonal attractions (e.g. ice castles)

55% Hiking or snow shoeing

33% Festivals

36% Shopping

32% Museums

Source: [Summer study results](#) | [Winter study results](#)

Adventure Creative Group's Post-Covid Travel Research Findings

Travel is a shared experiences with family or friends and a significant way to connect with new people.

81%

engage in travel to learn (exposure to different experiences and understanding others).

83%

confirm that COVID-19 did not significantly change their travel attitudes. Health and safety are modifications to how they travel.

Positive changes in consumer values include:

- Expressions of appreciation
- Desire to seize the day
- Plug into the larger world
- Acknowledgment that life is precious and short

Travelers' reasons to visit Minnesota are widespread

- Tax-free shopping at MOA
- Museums
- Vibrant music scene
- Camping and fishing in northern Minnesota
- Golfing and boating in the central region
- Charming river towns along the Mississippi River in southern Minnesota

Weber Shandwick's July 2021 Reputation and Travel Preferences Study

While the vast majority of respondents were aware of George Floyd's murder (74%) and the subsequent unrest, **88% still perceive Minnesota as a Very or Somewhat Safe Destination.**

Message testing showed most appealing statement was Minnesota is the Land of 10,000 Lakes and so much more, including world-class art museums, food and dining, and cultural attractions celebrating our small-town charm and diverse communities.

Good Vacation Value, Cleanliness, Nice Climate, Safety and Welcoming Atmosphere as key features positively impacting the likelihood to visit Minnesota.

The last EMT Return-on-investment study showed:

A tax **ROI of \$18** (\$10 for general campaign; \$31 for niche campaigns).

Ad-aware visitors spent more, stayed longer and were more likely to bring children.

EMT's advertising influenced over **720,000 trips.**

Niche marketing yields higher ROI than our general brand campaign and is more efficient with travelers with higher awareness levels, destination ratings and likelihood to visit than travelers receiving the general campaign.

Minnesota Economic Impact Study (Tourism Economics, 2017)

Minnesota's tourism economy positively impacts all Minnesotans.

In order to generate the amount of taxes generated by tourism in Minnesota, **each household in the state would need to pay an additional \$625.**

International Growth Opportunities

Passenger numbers through MSP International Airport are rebounding (2019 - 39.6 million; 2020 - 14.8 million; 2021 - 25.2 million).

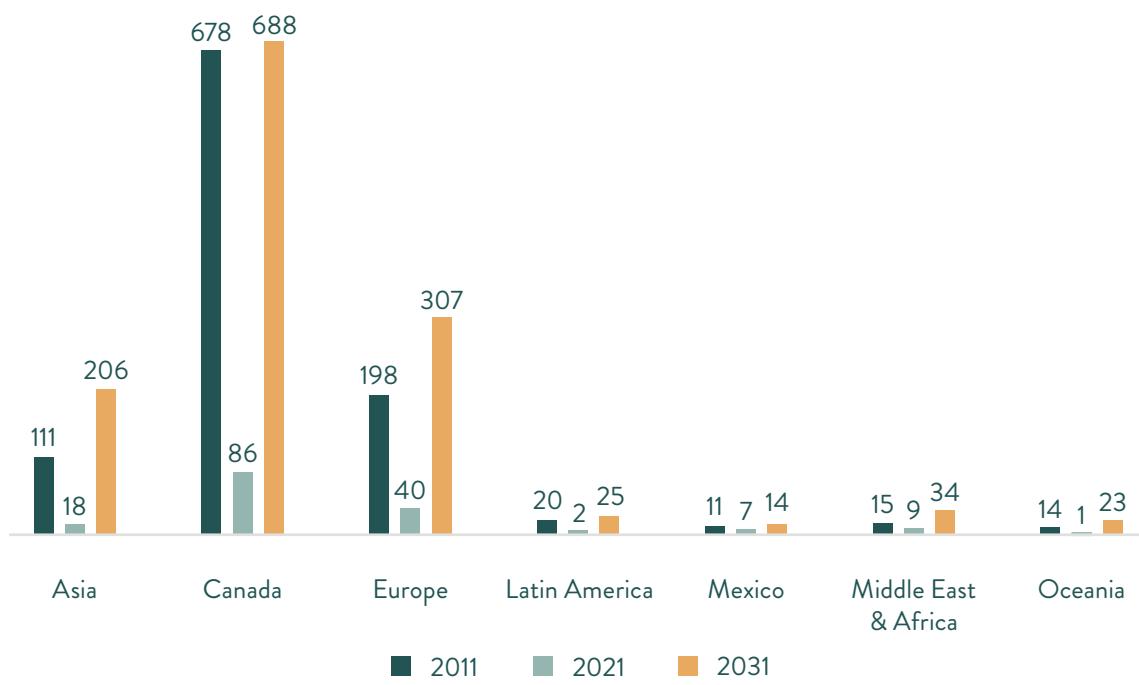
Flights, especially to international markets, have been resuming at a steady rate and will continue to do so into 2023.

International arrivals are projected to grow rapidly through the remainder of 2022 with a full recovery to pre-pandemic levels (volume and spending) in 2025. (U.S. Travel, July 2022)

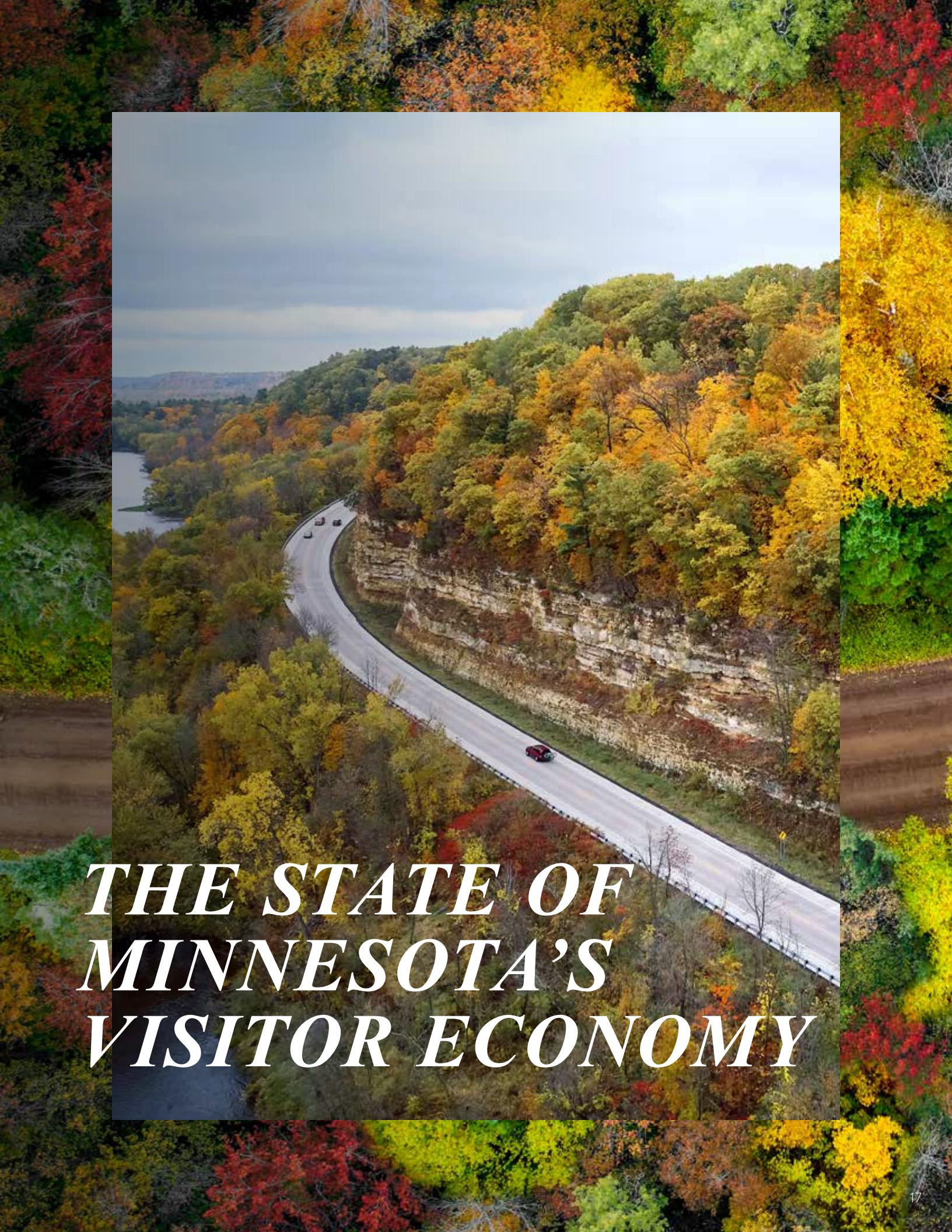
International travel is a high growth and high yield market segment for Minnesota. International travelers stay longer in a destination and spend more money overall than their domestic counterparts.

Visits to Minnesota by region of origin, 2011, 2021 and 2031

Source: Tourism Economics



In FY23, Explore Minnesota will invest in an update of audience segmentation to identify the best opportunity segments for continued growth. New data partners will provide visitation tied to media, traveler movements, spending data, geolocation information and enhanced traveler profiles for media targeting. Updates of economic impact and halo effects need to be considered.



THE STATE OF MINNESOTA'S VISITOR ECONOMY

Gross Sales:

	Billions
2019	\$16.6
2020	\$11.7
2021	\$13.4
2022	\$14.7
2023	\$15.9

States Sales Tax:

	Millions
2019	\$1,100
2020	\$731
2021	\$839
2022	\$923
2023	\$1,041

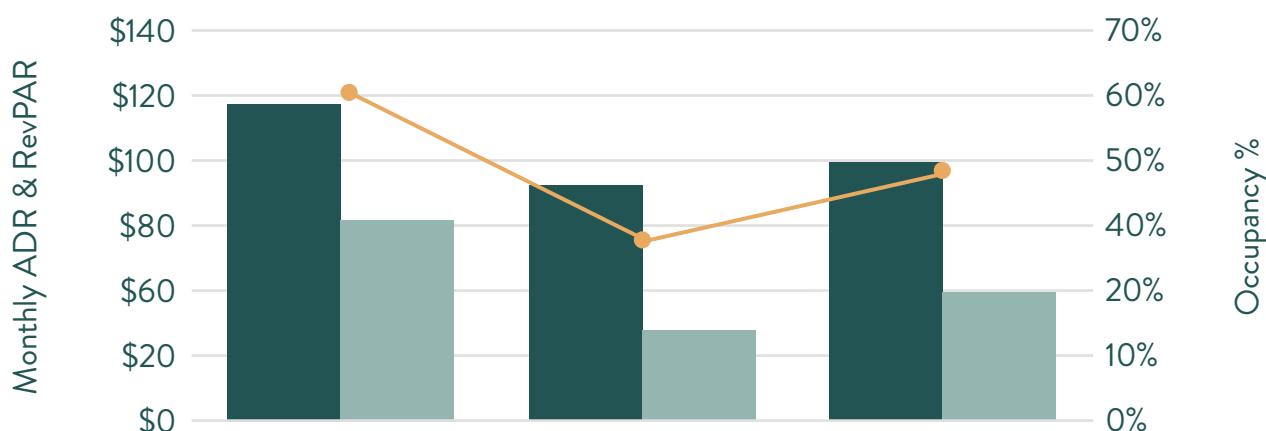
Average Annual Employment

	Jobs
2019	276,000
2020	205,000
2021	227,000
2022	244,000
2023	255,000
2024	276,000

■ Projected

HOTEL OCCUPANCY**STR Minnesota Hotel Performance Metrics**

2019-2021 Annual Average Comparison



	2019	2020	2021
ADR	\$114.57	\$83.13	\$101.33
RevPAR	\$71.64	\$33.39	\$49.93
Occupancy %	61.8%	36.3%	48.1%

Spend:
\$14.1 billion in losses

since January 2020 (June 2022 down 2% versus June 2019)

Total Person Trips

	Million per person trips
2019	76.0
2021	70.3
2022	73
2023	75
2024	76

Projected

**Domestic
Overnight Visitors**

	Millions
2019	32.2
2021	27.4
	Down 18%

Domestic Day Visitors

	Millions
2019	43.8
2021	42.9
	Down 2%

**Overnight Person Trips
by Season 2021**

Jan-March	20%
Apr-Jun	25%
July-Sept	29%
Oct-Dec	25%

**Overnight Expenditures
by Sector 2021**

Lodging	40%
Transportation at Destination	11%
Dining	23%
Retail Purchases	15%
Recreation / Entertainment	11%

Overnight Market after 2021 Adults 71% (19.5M) and Children 29% (7.9M)

Overnight Ave. Per Person Expenditures 2021=\$178

A photograph showing a person from behind, wearing a red jacket, black pants, and a grey beanie, walking away from the viewer through a narrow, light-colored tunnel. The tunnel appears to be carved out of a large block of ice or stone, with rough, textured walls. The light at the end of the tunnel is bright, creating a strong contrast with the darker interior. The overall atmosphere is cold and serene.

VISITOR PROFILES

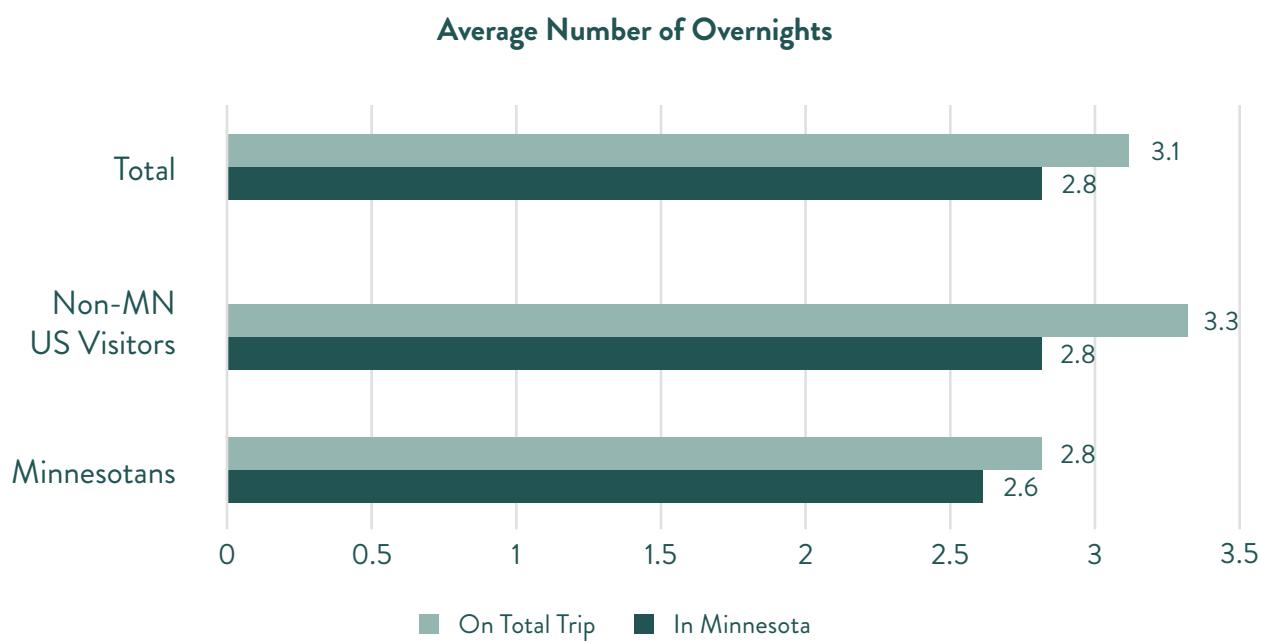
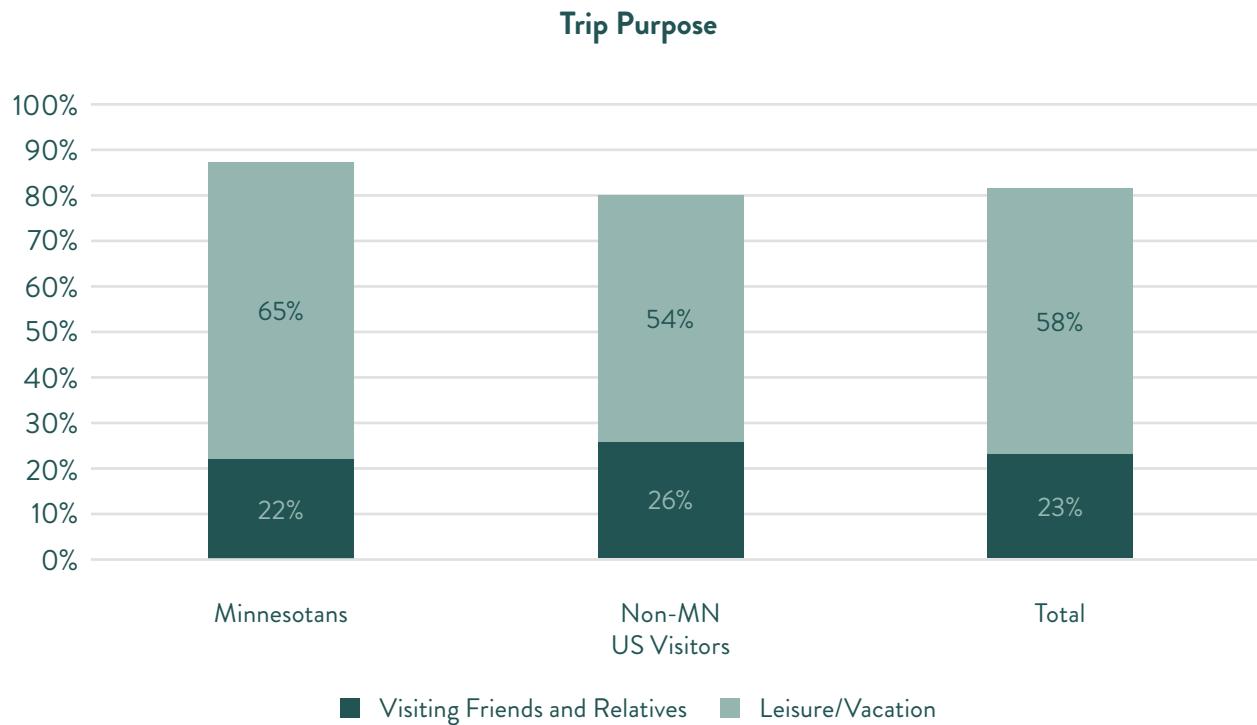
Visitor profile research conducted by SMARI throughout 2019

IMAGE OF THE STATE; 2019 TRAVELER PROFILE

PEACEFUL
WELCOMED
OUTDOORSY
 NORTH PROGRESSIVE
 HOMEY LIBERAL WINTER CLOSE RUSTIC COMFORTING
FRIENDLY FUN RURAL FAMILY
 OUTDOOR LAKES NATURE EXCITING HELPFUL HOME LAID BACK
LAKE OUTDOOR BIG OPEN MALL
 EASY PEOPLE SNOW ACTIVE
BEAUTY ADVENTURE HOME VIKINGS
 FISHING PRETTY RELAX DIVERSE SCENIC GOOD
 RUGGED QUIET COLD OUTGOING SCENIC SNOW KIND
COLD RELAX FUN
 OPEN BUSY DIVERSE
 EXCITING VIBRANT
 GREAT SEASONS **CULTURE**
 FISHING OUTDOORSY
 NATURE WILDERNESS
 WOODSY MIDWEST INTERESTING BIG
 HELPFUL LIBERAL RURAL FUN
COLD NICE HAPPY FRIENDLY
 SEASONS HOME KIND RUGGED LAID BACK
FRIENDLY SCENIC

OVERALL MINNESOTA TRAVELER PROFILE

Source: [SMARI, 2019, 1953 respondents](#)



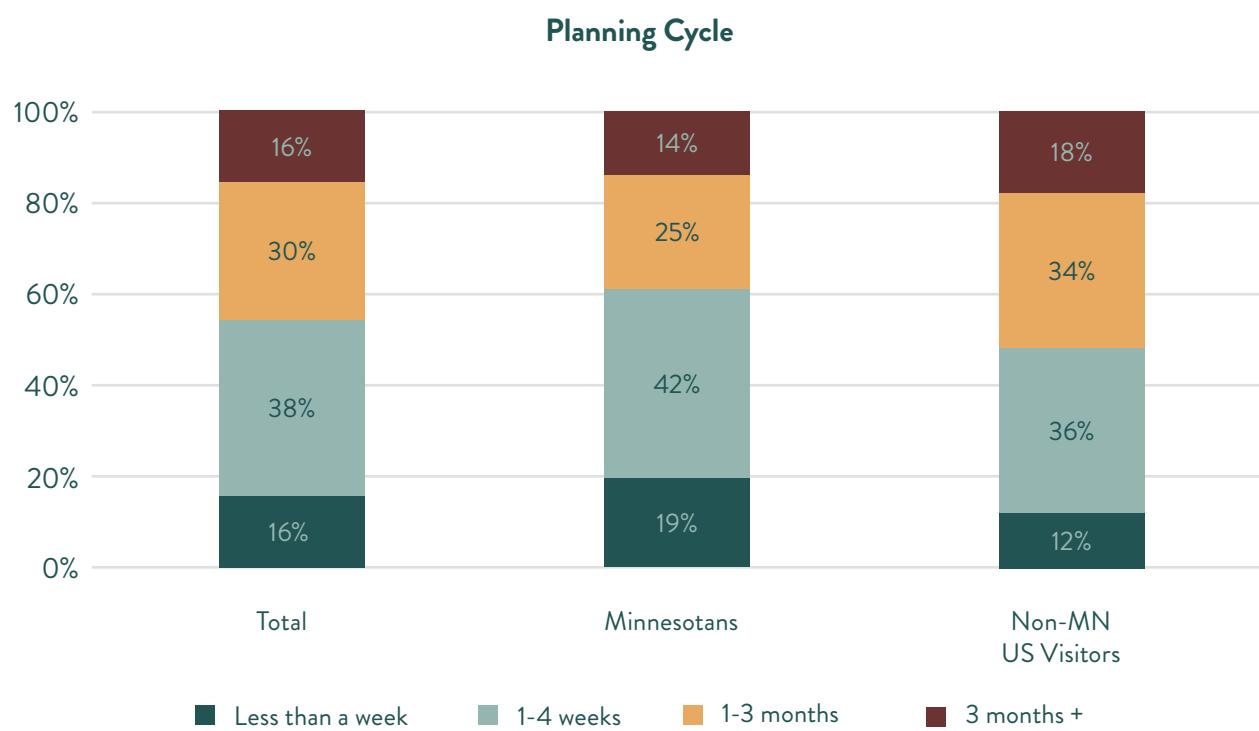
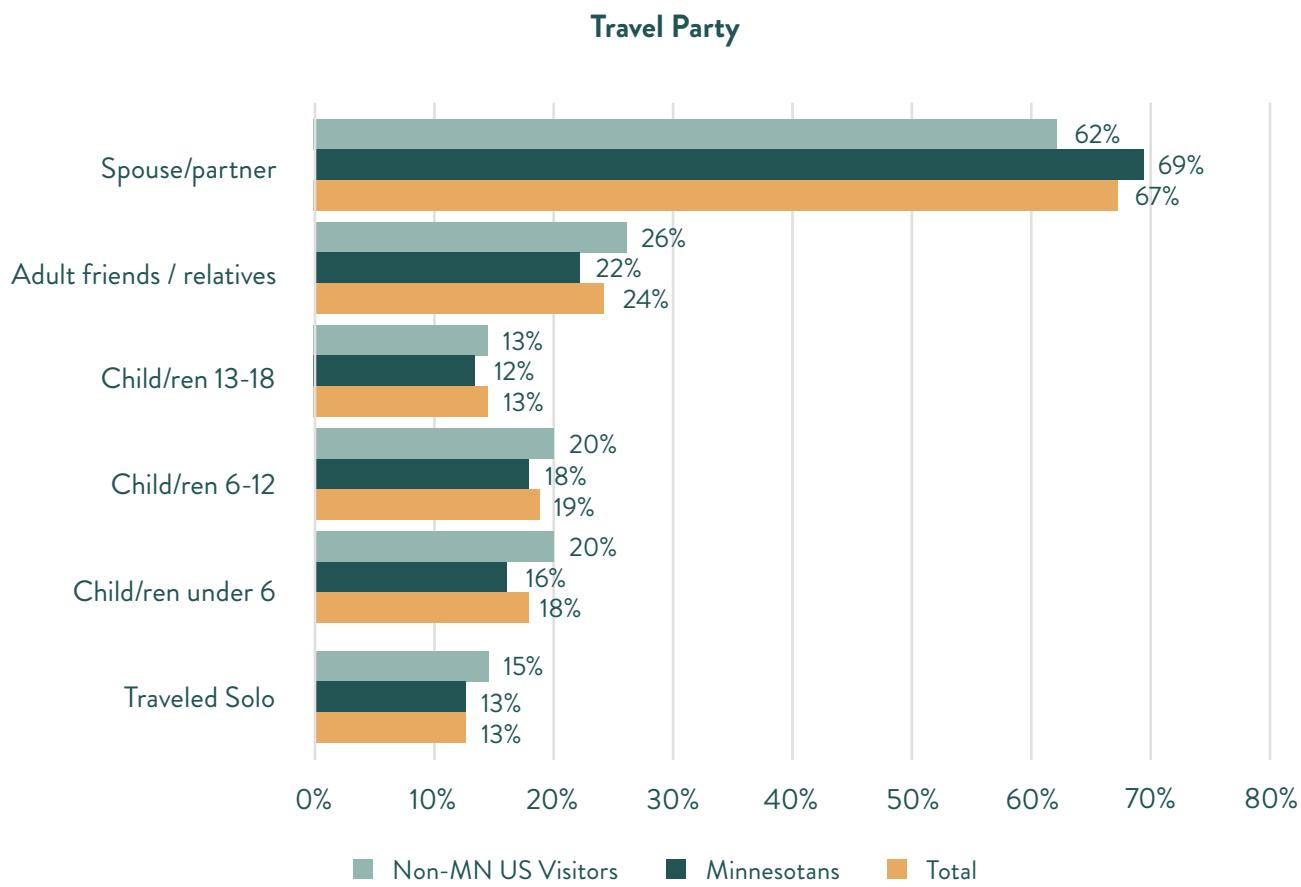
Activities

	Total	Minnesotans	Non-MN U.S. Visitors
Dining at unique / local restaurants	55%	54%	57%
Shopping	51%	42%	59%
Friends or Relatives	43%	40%	46%
Sightseeing	36%	36%	37%
Scenic Drives	34%	38%	31%
Mall of America	29%	17%	41%
State/National Parks	24%	28%	20%
Fairs/Festivals/Events	22%	20%	25%
Driving designated scenic byways	20%	24%	16%
Hiking/backpacking	19%	23%	15%

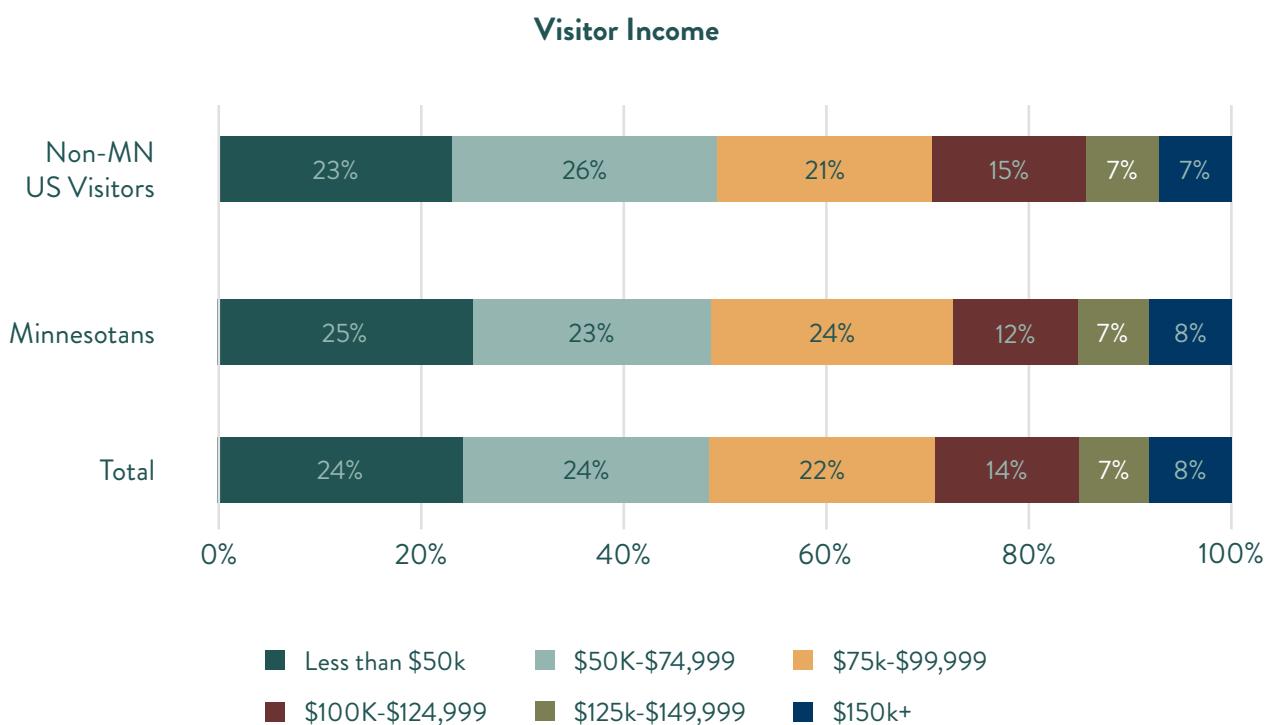
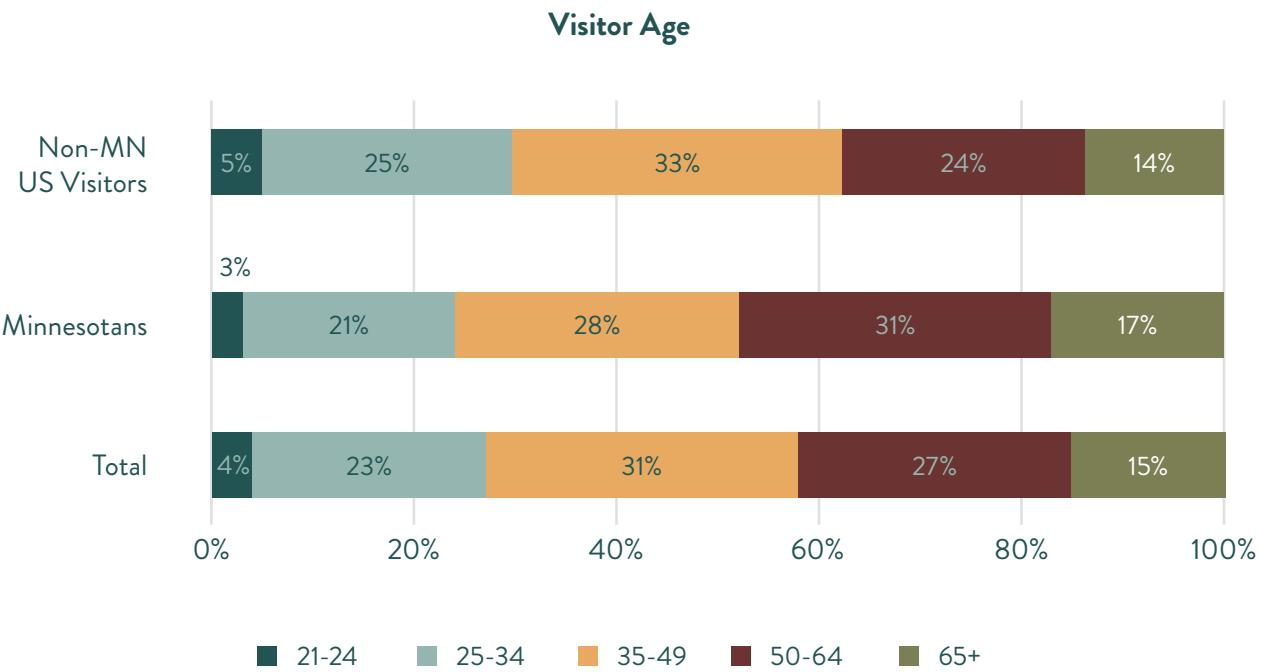
Top Trip Motivators

	Total	Minnesotans	Non-MN U.S. Visitors
Friends or Relatives	36%	36%	37%
Mall of America	21%	17%	26%
Shopping	19%	17%	21%
Dining at unique / local restaurants	18%	18%	18%
Scenic Drives	12%	14%	10%

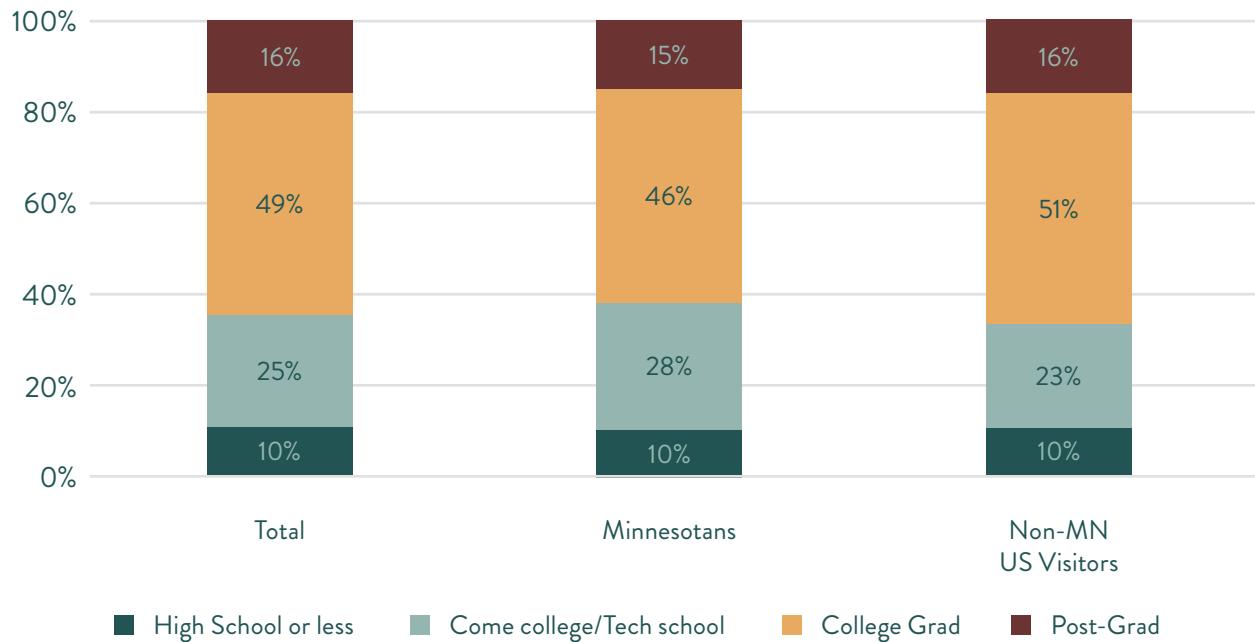
Average spending in Minnesota: \$611/travel party



TRAVELER DEMOGRAPHICS



Education Level

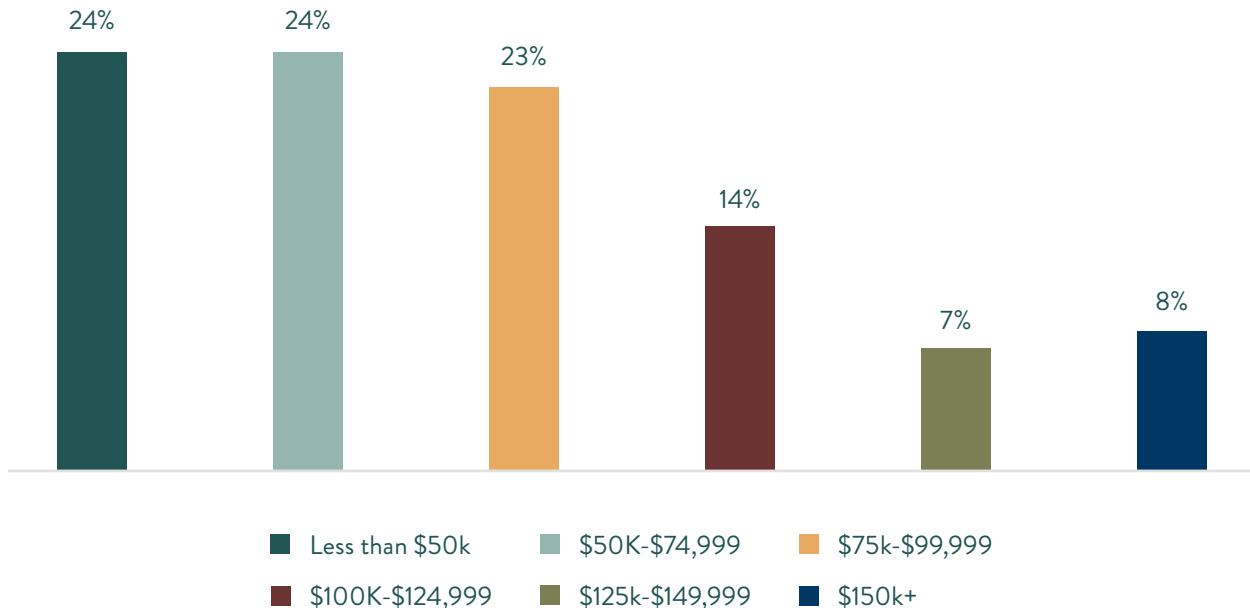
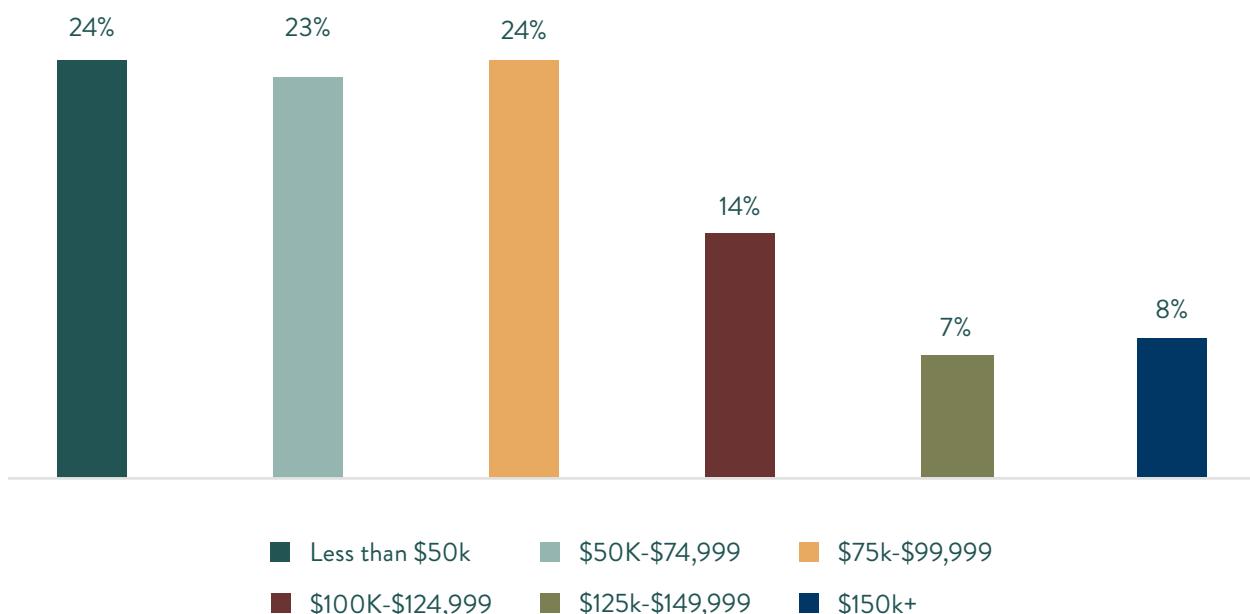


MN Visitation as a Share of Total

	2019
Minnesota	48%

Share of Out-of-State Visitors

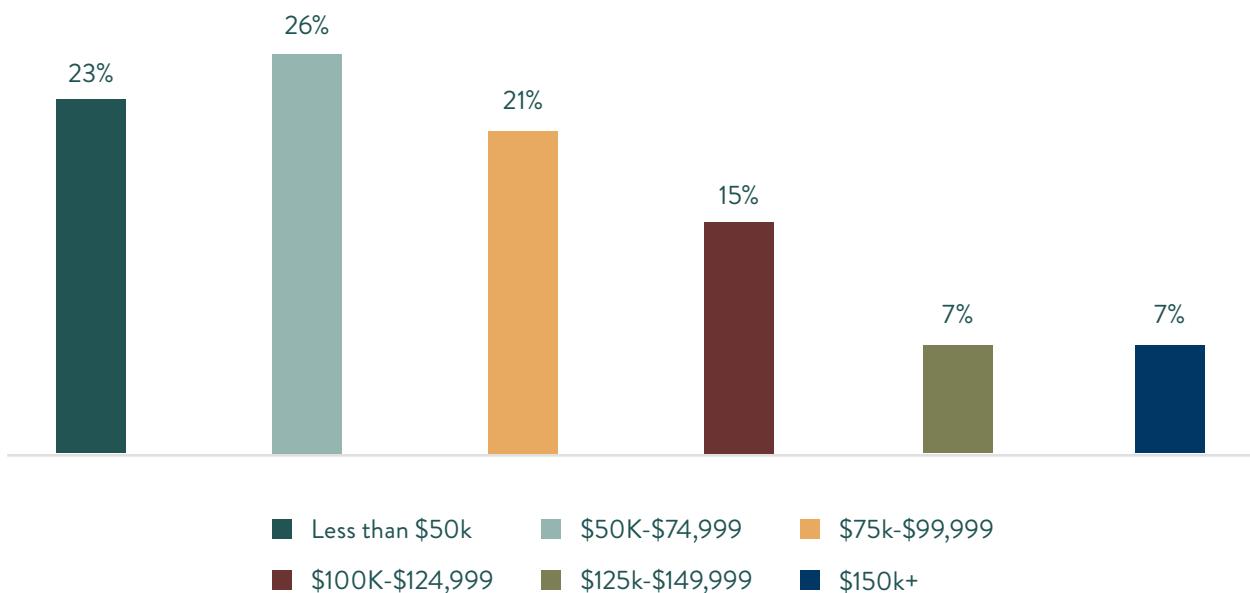
	2019		2019
Wisconsin	19%	California	2%
Iowa	11%	Nebraska	3%
Illinois	9%	Michigan	2%
North Dakota	9%	Indiana	2%
South Dakota	5%	Ohio	2%
Texas	3%	Colorado	2%
Florida	3%	New York	2%
Missouri	3%		

Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR) – 23%**Household Income****Household Income - Minnesotans**

Visitors by DMA

		2019
In-State	Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	83%
	Duluth, MN-Superior, WI	8%
	Rochester, MN, Mason City, IA, Austin, MN	6%
	Mankato, MN	3%

Household Income - Non-Minnesotans



INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

The proportion of Canadians surveyed in Manitoba and Western Ontario that are first-time visitors is higher than other markets (21%).

Average spend per trip is two-thirds higher than domestic overnight visitors.

Half of travel parties (49%) include children up to age 18.

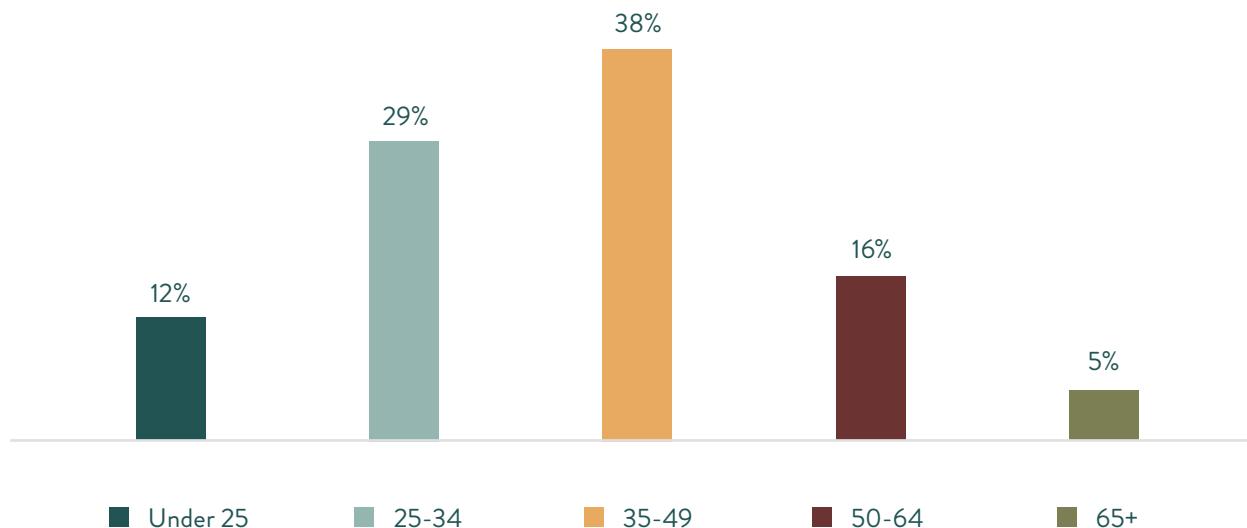
57% have HHI of \$75K+ (USD).

More diverse than domestic visitors with 16% identifying as Asian.

High familiarity (74% very familiar, 22% somewhat familiar) with Minnesota.

International Visitors Age

They are younger than domestic US visitors



Activity Participation (Net of Seasons)

Shopping	75%
Dining at a unique locally owned restaurants (non-chain)	64%
Mall of America	51%
Sightseeing	45%
Scenic drives	37%
Nightlife, concerts and entertainment	27%
Swimming	24%
Friends or Relatives	22%
Nature walks	22%
Arts and cultural activities	22%

PRIORITY AUDIENCE SEGMENTS



PRIORITY AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

The following audience personas have been identified through past research with IPSOS as key high-value opportunity targets for growth. Persona details guide messaging, creative development and media selection. These travelers are willing to consider Minnesota as a destination that aligns with their travel motivations, interests and passions. Many have never considered Minnesota as a vacation destination before.

New audience segmentation research is being conducted during the first half of FY23. Priority growth audiences will be reassessed once complete.

Cultural Explorers

- **Who are they?** Skews female, late 40s, children in their late teens or grown, skews master's degree, household income of \$116K+, averages nearly four leisure trips per year but wishes she could travel more, thinks vacations are a splurge, feels like she deserves luxury and self-indulgence, looks for high quality but still likes a deal.
- **Travel values:** Luxury, relaxation, new experiences, continual learning, creativity, fitness.
- **Visitation habits:** Prefers urban activities over roughing it outdoors, travels with partner or friends/without kids, looks for distinctive and stimulating experiences.
- **Motivations:** Quality time with partner or friends, juxtaposition of urban and outdoor activities, high-quality hotels and restaurants, good shopping, lakes.

Spontaneous Adventurers

- **Who are they?** Skews male, early 40s, young families with children under 12, college graduate, household income of \$120K+, averages over four leisure trips per year, but would like to do more, looks for value and/or deals, firmly believes in work/life balance, squeezes as much fun as possible out of personal time.
- **Travel values:** Adventure, health, innovation, family, fun.
- **Visitation habits:** Interested in both urban and outdoors-oriented, but really relishes quality time in nature, adventures, new experiences, spontaneous.
- **Motivations:** Making memories as a family, awe-inspiring scenery, four-season adventures, fascinated by history, feels it is important to carry on family traditions.

DIVERSE AUDIENCES

In FY23, Explore Minnesota will continue to make diversity, equity and inclusion a priority. Our research shows that the three groups most likely to travel to Minnesota (because they identify with the strongest travel behaviors, index high against Minnesota tourism offerings and are open to trying Minnesota) are African American, Latinx and LGBTQIA+.

Travel Values and Motivators: Relaxation, rejuvenation, adventure, family

Destinations:

- Are relaxing, rejuvenating and accepting (worry-free)
- Provide a variety of cultural activities, attractions and dining options
- Have activities that appeal to a multi-generational travel group
- Urban excitement with opportunities for outdoor adventures

EMT continues research to further our learnings about creative appeal and travel motivators, including testing of the Dream State campaign prior to launch and winter creative concepts in FY22.

A scenic waterfall in a lush forest with two people walking on a bridge.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE VISITATION

The vast majority of visitors are repeat visitors (88%) and visit satisfaction is high (89%). It is critical that our marketing gives them **new reasons to return and introduce travelers to new locations** throughout the state.

Increasing the base of first-time visitors is vital to a healthy visitor economy. EMT is focused on **expanding marketing to a national footprint, more aggressively targeting Gen Z and more intently incorporating DEI and A.** However, budgets are limiting.

Out-of-state visitors require longer planning windows, requiring media to be in these markets sooner than in Minnesota. EMT will **begin out-of-state media 1 month earlier in 2023.** Maintaining media duration will be a challenge at the current budget level.

Create deeper emotional connections to audiences and more differentiation between destinations. **Creatively focus on personal feelings and memories of Minnesota vacation experiences** through the evolution of the Dream State campaign, inspirational storytelling and ongoing consumer engagement through social media, PR and traditional communication channels.

The Midwest is considered “ordinary,” and travelers who haven’t been here perceive other destinations as more exciting. Winter perceptions of cold are continually emphasized by news media and other brands and a barrier to those who have never been here before. EMT is taking an “always on approach” to marketing, **showcasing great travel opportunities in all 4 seasons.**

While travelers’ top associations with Minnesota are around the outdoors, they also recognize developed/urban tourism opportunities (e.g. Mall of America, professional sports, music scene, museums and dining), which differentiate us from key competitors. It is vital to **promote both natural and developed assets** statewide.

TRAVELER PROFILE

Showcase family travel opportunities. The study indicates that 44% of travel parties include children. This is higher than the national average share of households with children. It emphasizes the importance of family vacations for Minnesota and for growing overall travel volume.

Nine out of 10 visitors to Minnesotans are Caucasian. This represents a clear opportunity to grow outreach to and visitation of BIPOC travelers and **become the industry leader in the advancement of DEIA.**

- Reach diverse audiences in a more integrated fashion across all initiatives.
- Conduct primary research to capture travel attitudes and values, cast diverse talent, be thoughtful about location selections, use inclusive brand voice and messaging and create bilingual assets.
- Approximately 34% of media budget will reach our diversity-specific audiences with 10% dedicated to support initiatives, including local partnerships with diversity-owned media and underrepresented communities.
- Showcase travelers of all abilities and promote the accessibility of destinations statewide. Provide education and resources to the tourism industry.

Reactivate international activities to travel trade, media and consumers as high-value international travel rebounds. Prioritize markets as airline access resumes, and consumer confidence increases. Utilize Brand USA programs and multi-state organizations to reenter markets efficiently and support key messages.

Environmental issues related to labor availability, inflation and ongoing supply chain issues continue to plague the industry in their ability to provide the highest quality services and experience. These issues are not unique to Minnesota. **A new initiative to market careers in the leisure and hospitality industry could be realized with new funding.**

CO-OP MARKETING

Strategic Goals:

Grow Minnesota's Visitor Economy

Maximize Partner and Stakeholder Leadership & Collaboration

Budget: \$700,000

EMT's co-op program is an industry favorite and is a key program to support ongoing recovery at a local level. It allows industry partners the ability to stretch their dollars, increase media presence and consideration of Minnesota destinations, while extending the Explore Minnesota brand.

- Assess industry interest through annual survey to determine parameters for annual program and vendor selection.
- Prioritize vendor proposal opportunities to position Minnesota as a prime leisure destination, create a balanced mix of media programs, with a variety of geographic and audience targets, that are affordable and contribute added value.
- Position EMT as a premier partner by negotiating exclusive terms that guarantee the lowest rates for industry participants with additional underwriting.
- Require co-branding and integrate EMT brand assets where relevant to extend our campaign.

PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Goals:

Grow Minnesota's Visitor Economy

Maximize Partner and Stakeholder Leadership & Collaboration

Budget: \$691,500

Partnerships yield collaborative and enhanced innovation, influence and impacts that are mutually beneficial. Together we can expand audience reach, increase brand awareness and develop strategies to effectively meet both tactical partnership objectives and high-level strategic goals.

- Identify partners with equal or greater brand equity, with clients who match EMT's intended traveler profile and can contribute to mutually beneficial advertising/promotion with a statewide footprint.
- Prioritize partnership objectives that can extend reach and influence with targeted audiences.
- Review marketing trends, media performance, proposals, reach, cost and in-kind tactics to determine appropriate media mix.
- Create marketing assets that support EMT brand look and feel, yet are distinct to the partnership (e.g., co-branded, custom logo/ headlines/CTA, etc.) and inspiring to consumers to take action.
- Engage industry partners with opportunities to provide prizing, passport deals, or encourage promotion of the campaign if partnership is applicable to their area.
- Inform partners, staff, industry and council of ongoing results against stated goals.
- Support EMT incentive funding by documenting match report values annually.

REACTIVATE INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Strategic Goals:

Grow Minnesota's Visitor Economy

Maximize Partner and Stakeholder Leadership & Collaboration

Budget: \$591,500

Reestablish Minnesota's presence in targeted international tourism markets (UK, Germany, select Nordic markets (Sweden, Norway), BeNeLux (Belgium/Netherlands/Luxembourg), Canada) and ensure that Minnesota as a travel destination is visible to consumers and represented to travel trade and media:

1. Prioritize partnerships with multi-state cooperative marketing organizations like Brand USA, Mississippi River Country (MRC), Great Lakes of North America (GLNA) and Rocky Mountain International/The Great American West (RMI) to leverage shared objectives to maximize marketing dollars, expand reach, and create opportunities for Minnesota and our destination marketing partners.
2. Focus efforts on earned media through active engagement with travel media sharing story ideas, news and familiarization trip opportunities.

The MSP airport has active service to the following international destinations: Amsterdam, Calgary, Cancun, Frankfurt, London, Mexico City, Montreal, Paris, Reykjavik, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg. More international flights are planned to return by the end of 2022 and into 2023. Although the majority of routes are established to meet the demand of business travel to and through Minneapolis, there is potential for conversion by encouraging travelers to extend a business trip or plan a future trip for leisure.

From a leisure perspective, western national parks continue to be a primary driver for visitation to the U.S. through our region, and MSP is used as a gateway to other points in the U.S. Encourage international leisure travelers to add a stopover in Minnesota to their plans and itineraries.

- Position Minnesota to consumers as a key gateway using MSP airport to connect European travelers to the western states (with RMI); eastern (with GLNA) and southern (with MRC).
- Focus marketing messages and promotion of itineraries on MSP as a gateway city and potential stopover, and Minnesota as a trip extension. Integrate overall brand campaign creative and messaging as appropriate for the specific market.
 - Partner on consumer and travel trade marketing with RMI, GLNA, MRC and Brand USA.
 - Implement multi-channel marketing programs with Brand USA including digital, social and transactional elements.
 - Utilize partnerships to conduct a tour operator and travel distribution product audit in target markets.
 - Create travel trade cooperative marketing programs.
 - Select digital retargeting campaigns to past visitors to the U.S., aligned with returning air service.
 - Increase earned media.
 - Produce quarterly international and trade media e-newsletter.
 - Create familiarization trip opportunities for travel writers from targeted markets.
- Leverage the promotion during the NFL's international Series as the Minnesota Vikings play as the home team in London October 2022, to deliver tourism messaging to consumers.
 - Launch a targeted in-market campaign which aligns with the timing of the game in cooperation with Brand USA, featuring content and digital components with The Telegraph.

LEVERAGING OUR OWNED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

EMT has built a variety of audiences of highly engaged travelers on social media platforms, through in-house digital properties and through earned media.

These platforms position Minnesota as a travel authority and give us ultimate flexibility to push content by season, activity, region or industry sector to capture the highest conversions to travel.

Channel	FY19	FY22	FY23 Projection	% Change
ExploreMinnesota.com (sessions)	5,138,725	6,819,031	7,733,749	+13%
Facebook	258,395	270,012	272,184	+.7%
Instagram	178,451	225,549	229,197	+1.6%
Twitter	64,291	71,457	76,990	+7.7%
Pinterest	-	11,321	12,736	+12.5%
Tik Tok	-	1,052	4,208	+400%
MN Explorer E-newsletter	91,062	151,283	169,436	+12%
Activity Emails – total subscribers	147,180	153,917*	164,408	+6.8%
Public Relations (audience reach)	2.9 billion	5.1 billion	5.2 billion	+2%

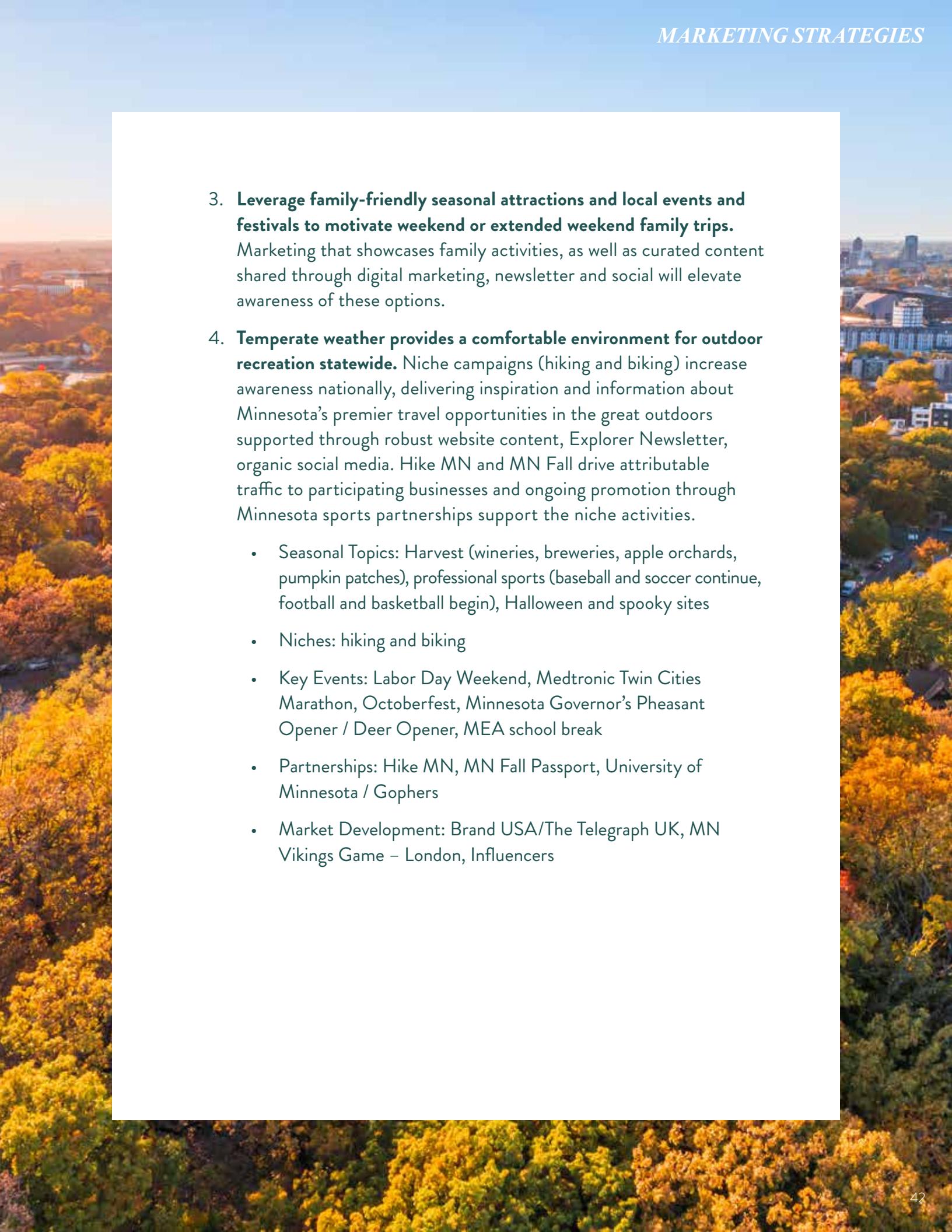
*Three activity emails were discontinued between FY19 and FY21 with 47,290 subscribers.

EMBRACING FOUR SEASONS VISITOR PROFILE TRIPS BY SEASON

Minnesota has four unique seasons, each with themes and activities that provide opportunities for growth of our overall tourism economy.

Opportunities to Drive Visitation in Fall (Aug. 22 – mid-Nov.)

1. **Encourage spontaneous travel timed with amazing peak fall colors statewide** (Spontaneous Adventurers) through inspirational marketing, website personalization of fall imagery and messaging, Fall Color and Monthly Newsletters, and social media
2. **Promote economical, mid-week trips** for travel parties without school-aged children to support lodging properties, cultural attractions and dining sectors during shoulder season (Cultural Explorers). Content strategy specific to Trips on a Tankful, scenic byways, seasonal listicals and itinerary-based articles and PR opportunities specific to value vacation opportunities are prime opportunities to share in-depth details. MN Fall and MN Sips Passports share travel ideas and deals throughout the state, engaging both travelers and industry partners.



3. **Leverage family-friendly seasonal attractions and local events and festivals to motivate weekend or extended weekend family trips.**

Marketing that showcases family activities, as well as curated content shared through digital marketing, newsletter and social will elevate awareness of these options.

4. **Temperate weather provides a comfortable environment for outdoor recreation statewide.**

Niche campaigns (hiking and biking) increase awareness nationally, delivering inspiration and information about Minnesota's premier travel opportunities in the great outdoors supported through robust website content, Explorer Newsletter, organic social media. Hike MN and MN Fall drive attributable traffic to participating businesses and ongoing promotion through Minnesota sports partnerships support the niche activities.

- Seasonal Topics: Harvest (wineries, breweries, apple orchards, pumpkin patches), professional sports (baseball and soccer continue, football and basketball begin), Halloween and spooky sites
- Niches: hiking and biking
- Key Events: Labor Day Weekend, Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon, Octoberfest, Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Opener / Deer Opener, MEA school break
- Partnerships: Hike MN, MN Fall Passport, University of Minnesota / Gophers
- Market Development: Brand USA/The Telegraph UK, MN Vikings Game – London, Influencers

Opportunities to Drive Visitation in Winter (mid Nov. – Feb.)

Promote the holidays mid-Nov. through Dec. / General winter Jan. and Feb.

1. For many travelers, winter is a novelty. **Educate non-residents on how to embrace and enjoy the season.** Share visuals of people bundled, but happy. Use warm/golden tones versus blue icy tones. Content on ways to embrace and celebrate winter will be promoted through digital marketing, social media, newsletters, co-op editorial, MN Slopes, Iowa Wild and Gopher Sports partnerships, MN Winter Sports Passport, PR and select publications (Travel Guide and Snowmobile Guide).
2. **Introduce holiday travelers who are visiting friends and relatives (VFR) to tourism products** such as holiday events, performing arts, shopping and dining. The website will display holiday imagery and personalization strategy will focus on holiday imagery and messaging, holiday happenings will be promoted through the Explorer and Events Newsletters, and social media.
3. **Leverage school break for the holidays as well as MLK and Presidents Days to influence family getaways** to enjoy resorts, waterparks, museums, seasonal attractions, shopping, and sporting events. Promote throughout Minnesota and border markets through social, newsletters, Mall of America, Iowa Wild, Gopher Sports and MN Slopes partnerships.

4. **Promote the new annual travel guide** as the premier Minnesota travel resource for trip planning in 2023. Marketing conversions will promote guide orders in Jan. and Feb. PR will focus media pitches on what's new for 2023.
 - Seasonal topics: outdoor recreation, museums, shopping, hygge – coziness
 - Niches: Performing arts and winter sports
 - Key Events: 2023 Travel Guide, Holiday Train, ice castles, World Snow Sculpting Championships, Hockey Day MN, Great Northern, Winter Carnival, Brainerd Jaycees Ice Fishing Tournament
 - Partnerships: MN Slopes (and MN Winter Sports Passport), Iowa Wild, Gopher Sports, Tourism Conference sponsors
 - Market Development: Brand USA programs, digital retargeting, National Tour Association and American Bus Association Marketplaces

Opportunities to Drive Visitation in Spring (Mar. 1 – Memorial Day)

1. **Influence early trip planning in out-state markets** and align with the media buys of our competition by launching new Dream State spring/summer marketing on March 6. Minnesota will be added to the buy on April 3. Personalization strategies on the website will separate winter and spring visuals and messaging based on geography during March. Also in April, spring/summer niches will launch nationally: National Parks, Events, and Dining. The niche topics provide a balanced approach, reaching a variety of audiences passionate about traveling for these experiences, represent multiple regions and a multitude of stakeholders.
2. **Support the industry during shoulder season** and relatively low travel volume by leveraging the cabin fever mindset in communications, social media and PR to promote daytrips and weekend getaways for relaxation and rejuvenation. Timing is weather-dependent.
3. **Promote Spring Break opportunities** for families and college-aged students in early March to keep residents in-state and to increase regional awareness of fun trips options close to home. Continue into early April. Resorts, waterparks, children's museums, zoos and aquariums, etc. are good options for families. Resorts, shopping, nightlife, late-season skiing and other sports, and unique dining are good motivators for older students traveling with friends.
4. **Shift focus when the weather turns to outdoor travel** drivers like waterfalls, parks and gardens, golf course openings, biking, migration viewing, wildlife centers and the walleye opener through content, social and PR strategies.

5. Influence a long holiday weekend and early summer trips throughout May and the lead-up to Memorial Day, giving the industry a strong start to the peak travel season.

- Marketing will be at peak in April and May, focused on memory-making storylines with stunning cinematography in multiple locations throughout the state.
- PR positions the tourism as a key industry to the overall vitality of the state by leveraging media opportunities during National Travel and Tourism Week, the Governor's Fishing Opener and pre-Memorial Day industry survey results on business activity and the recovery of the industry.
- Partnerships support campaign messaging through various opportunities with sports partnerships and continue to drive business through MN Sips Passport and new passports yet to be determined.
- Co-op marketing is in full force as destinations and businesses market at a local level with the power of the state behind them. A strong media mix extends EMTs brand and Minnesota's tourism opportunities to a wide variety of targeted audiences.
- Key Events: EMT Tourism Conference, golf course openings, Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener, opening of state park camping reservations, baseball opener, Travel and Tourism Week, Memorial Day weekend (unofficial kick-off to summer)
- Partnerships: MN Sips Passport, MN Aurora, Bally Sports North (MN Twins), St. Paul Saints
- Market Development: Brand USA Multi-Channel marketing programs, influencers, digital retargeting, Circle Wisconsin trade show

Opportunities to Drive Visitation in Summer (Memorial Day – mid Aug.)

The peak summer season is vital to the overall health of the tourism industry. Forty-six percent of all travel happens during the summer season and trips tend to be longer,

1. **Inspire trip planning throughout the summer** season by continuing the spring/summer marketing through the end of June. Maintain media partnerships (MBA, MPR, Bally Sports North), robust SEM and paid social until fall campaign launch.
2. **Highlight Minnesota as a welcoming destination for all** with continued diversity marketing through multi-media placements that align with PRIDE messaging and activities in June.
3. **Elevate regions and sectors that need support or have capacity** through nimble content curation, social media, newsletters and PR. Camping, events, outdoor recreation, resorts and lake life are strong travel drivers during the season.
4. **Leverage July Fourth events** to drive holiday trips through content, SEM, social and PR. Fireworks is consistently a top search term on our website and relevant articles are top performers year after year.
5. **Focus on family vacations, activities and entertainment** to increase daytrips among residents and longer getaways for bonding and relaxation through visual inspiration, content curation and PR with trip planning ideas. Use back-to-school shopping season in July and August as driver to influence long shopping weekends and last chances for getaways before the school year begins.
 - Niches: national parks, dining, events
 - Key Events: Grandma's Marathon, Pride, Aquatennial, Opening of Treetop Trail at Zoo, State Fair
 - Partnerships: MN Sips Passport, Bike MN, Bally Sports North (MN Twins), St. Paul Saints, MN Aurora
 - Market Development: U.S. Travel's IPW, Brand USA programs

Year-Round Support

- Increase earned media through active public relations efforts including pitches, deskside strategy, HARO and other opportunities
- Extend EMT branding and promotion of Minnesota destinations and tourism attractions through a wide variety of media options through co-op marketing.
- Provide timely information and ongoing engagement with high-value consumers through newsletters and social media platforms leading to website resources.
- Move consumers further down the planning funnel with relevant web articles that fulfill against advertising. Personalization strategies increase consumer engagements by serving up motivating visuals and content by market and audience segmentation.
- Diversify our storytelling and extend our audience reach by contracting with outside content creators and influencers.
- Leverage partnerships: Mall of America, MN Broadcasters Association (MBA), Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) provide year-round opportunities to reach their unique audiences with timely promotional messages. MBA and MPR give EMT efficient statewide media coverage to encourage residents to explore vacation adventures in their own state. MBA is EMT's largest contributor of in-kind value to the annual match report.
- Activate Brand USA programs that target priority international markets and audiences with the ability to impact consumer consideration of Minnesota and convert to high-value travel.

A photograph of a snowy winter scene at night. In the foreground, there's a large, transparent geodesic dome igloo with warm lights inside. To its right is a smaller wooden cabin with a glass door. A couple in winter clothing stands near the cabin. In the background, a long, multi-story building with a dark facade and many lit windows stretches across the frame. The sky is a deep blue with numerous stars and a faint, curved light trail or galaxy visible.

*PUTTING
IT ALL
TOGETHER*

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

With all the data and trends, how do we prioritize and activate? Here are considerations to help audit and prioritize the ideas, proposals and opportunities we receive everyday:

Opportunities must:

- Support Strategic Plan goal(s) and/or initiative(s)
- Align with an audience segment
- Have budget availability and staff capacity to execute

Opportunities may:

- Support and supplement niche campaigns
- Help achieve marketing or agency OKRs
- Address gaps in media markets (In-state vs. out-of-state), messaging, or marketing funnel (planning phases)
- Present opportunities high impact exposure
- Have demonstrated previous high performance
- Provide test and learn opportunity
- Encourage industry participation
- Provide key support to industry sectors
- Address competitive pressure (threat or opportunity)
- Contribute significant added value

Budget

General/Diversity Brand Media	\$2,652,286
New DEI Initiatives	\$313,046
Niche Media	\$1,427,465
Marketing Creative and Production	\$1,880,265
Marketing Partnerships	\$1,014,425
Co-op Marketing	\$700,000
International Marketing	\$591,500
Communications / PR	\$265,000
Website	\$411,000
Research and Measurement	\$371,000

Marketing Goal:

The role of Explore Minnesota's marketing is to inspire and engage travelers along all levels of the marketing funnel in order to realize additional trips. Producing incremental travel to Minnesota supports the state's tourism businesses, has positive indirect impacts on other industries and generates additional tax revenue that supports state programs that uplift all Minnesotans.

PRIMARY MARKETING KPIS

- Lift Minnesota's brand (Awareness) 3.0%
- Deliver engaged website traffic (Consideration)
 - Pageviews: increase of 10.6% to 13,296,942 pages
 - Sessions: increase of 13.4% to 7,733,749 sessions
- Drive e-newsletter sign-ups (Conversion): increase of 23.7% for 19,429 new subscribers

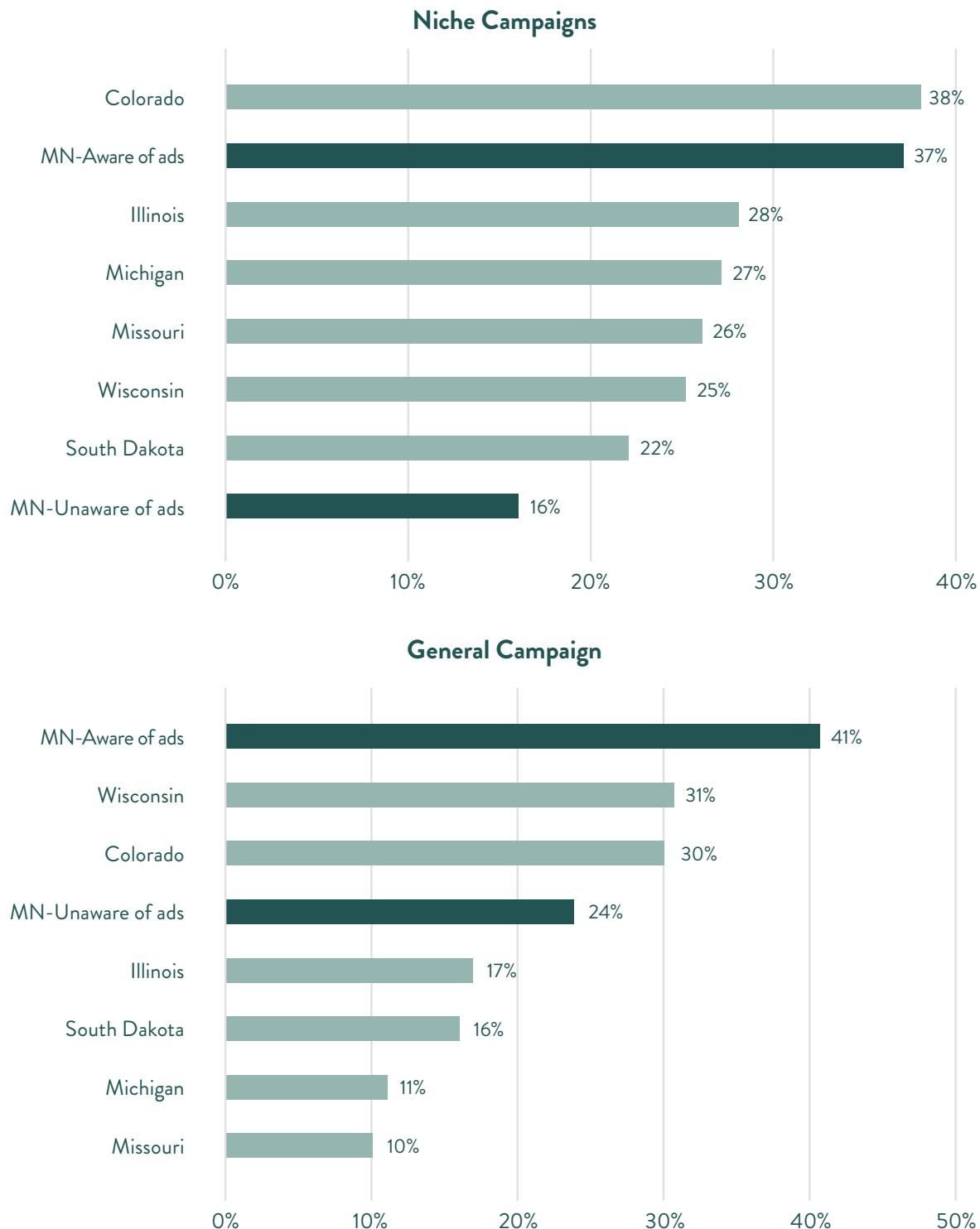
SECONDARY MARKETING KPIS

- Generate social engagement and hashtag use (#OnlyInMN + any additional hashtags)
 - Facebook: increase of .07% to 272,184 Likes
 - Instagram: increase of 1.6% to 229,197 Followers
 - Twitter: increase of 7.7% to 76,990 Followers
 - Instagram #OnlyinMN engagement: down 29% to 45,664 impressions
- Travel Guide interactions (downloads, orders, view online): increase of 8.7% to 46,469 engagements
- Partner Referrals: increase of 17% to 875,430 website referrals

Other Indicators:

- Annual ROI study to measure incremental travel and spending attributed to media
- Department of Revenue spending and tax reports
- Longwoods International reports on visitor volume
- International States Travel (IST) – international point of origin data
- Lodging data (STR and AirDNA)
- MSP airline passenger count

According to SMARI's Spring/Summer 2022 Brand Awareness Study, our marketing created familiarity and intent to visit among our competitive states. Among Niche audiences, Minnesota ranks last among those not aware of our campaigns, however among those who are, we rank second. Similarly with General campaign audiences. Overall, this underscores the need for marketing and how successful it is in cultivating interest.



MARKETING ALONG THE TRAVELER JOURNEY

All of Explore Minnesota's marketing initiatives fall into one or more of the four phases of the purchasing path: Awareness, Consideration, Conversion, and Brand Advocacy. All of EMT's marketing and communications should or could live in one of these areas.

1. Awareness	2. Consideration
<p>Where to go? Prospective traveler wants to go on vacation but hasn't decided where to go.</p> <p>Marketing drives awareness of Minnesota as a potential destination among prospective travelers.</p>	<p>Prioritize destinations. Prospective traveler is exploring activities and interests that suit travel style and inspire itinerary planning.</p> <p>Marketing educates prospective traveler about how Minnesota delivers against their interests and expectations. To facilitate planning, marketing drives prospective travelers to content and business listings.</p>
<p>Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV / online video • Print • Radio / podcasts • Digital display • Rich media • Social media • Email • Public relations 	<p>Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive display • Native display • Rich media • Social media • Search • Influencers • Content Partnerships • Email • Experiential • Public relations
<p>Measurements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media delivery • Adara – media optimization • Earned media hits • SMARI – advertising awareness study • Datafy – brand lift study • Reputation study • Share of Voice Report 	<p>Measurements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web traffic • Pageviews/time onsite • Business listing views • Earned media hits • Adara – media optimization • Datafy – brand lift

MARKETING ALONG THE TRAVELER JOURNEY (CONTINUED)

3. Conversion	4. Brand Advocacy
<p>Choose Minnesota. Consumer is indicating strong interest in booking/traveling.</p> <p>Marketing highlights peripheral interests and opportunities for ongoing brand engagement.</p>	<p>Post-trip referrals. Consumer is eager to recommend Minnesota to family and friends.</p> <p>Marketing encourages travelers to share their trip experience and become brand ambassadors.</p>
<p>Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital retargeting • Social retargeting • Search 	<p>Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Public relations
<p>Measurements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel guide orders and downloads • Activity guide orders • E-newsletters sign-ups • Business listing views • Passport check-ins • SMARI – return-on investment study • Datafy – brand lift study • Adara – revenue tied to media • IST – international traveler data 	<p>Measurements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social engagement • Repeat web visitors • Earned media hits • Repeat trips

MEASUREMENT ACROSS THE MARKETING FUNNEL

Business goal: Increase incremental travel to Minnesota, driving incremental tax revenue

Validating KPI: Year-long study to measure incremental travel from media

Campaign Objectives	Awareness	Consideration	Conversion
OKR	Awareness Lift	Pageviews	eNewsletter Sign-Ups
Secondary Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery • Video Completion Rate • Cost-Per-View • CPM • Reach/ Frequency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery • Clicks/CTR • Cost-Per-Pageview • Avg. Time on Site • Avg. Pages/ Session Bounce Rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery • Conversion Rate/CTA • Drop-Off Rate • Bounce Rate • Avg. Pages/ Session • Other Conversion Actions

GENERAL MARKETING STRATEGIES TO GROW TOURISM AND DIVERSITY

Strategic Goals:

Grow Minnesota's Visitor Economy
Create a Welcoming Experience for All Visitors

General/Diversity Media Budget: \$2,652,286

Markets/Timing:

Fall Timing: 8/24 – 10/31/2022

Fall Geography: MN, ND, SD, OMA, STL, IA, WI, Northern IL

Winter Timing: 11/14/2022 - 2/28/2023

Winter Geography: MN, ND, SD, IA, WI, Northern IL, IN, MI, OMA, STL, MO, CO, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay Canada

S/S Timing: 3/1/2023 - 6/30/2023

S/S Geography: MN, MT, WY, UT, CO, ND, SD, NE, IA, MO, WI, IL, IN, MI, Winnipeg, OH, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay Canada

GENERAL MARKETING

Near-Term

Conduct a creative audit of our competition at least annually. Identity points of differentiation that Minnesota can own.

Timing: Spring

Measurements: Same KPIs as campaign, Brand Lift in specified markets.

Prioritize key markets for TV presence. Where do we need to elevate awareness or need to be in market in order to compete?

Timing: July

Measurements: Brand lift study, web visitor origin, visitor origin (via Traveler Profile)

Social test: create more posts that drive followers to articles versus landing pages.

Timing: Winter 2022

Measurements: Engagements, pageviews, time on site

Incorporate of diverse and/or differently-abled talent throughout all campaign creative. Assets to be used in promotions and communications throughout the agency.

Timing: Sept. 2022

Measurements: Improve perception of Minnesota as welcoming to all YOY.

Conquesting is a high performing media tactic. Continue to identify opportunities to convert interest from a competitor to Minnesota.

Timing: Ongoing

Measurements: Brand lift study

Evolve Dream State campaign seasonally. Winter and spring/summer pacing changes to include more locations, story lines, and add energy.

Timing: Beginning with winter campaign – then ongoing.

Measurements: Brand Awareness, brand lift study

Personalize the delivery of creative and calls-to-action through use of AI technology. Integrate advertising with Miles/Bound personalization efforts. Web photos and content correlate to the ads that consumers are engaging with.

Timing: Ongoing

Measurements: Pageviews, time on site

Amplify Minnesota accolades with 3rd party credibility campaign to promote notable mentions from travel media and experts. Coordinate with Weber on earned media hits and to vet media sources. Miles to develop new landing page and oversee ongoing maintenance.

Timing: Launch Winter 2022

Measurements: Improve perception of Minnesota as welcoming to all YOY. Pageviews and time on page to establish benchmark.

Broaden our appeal to new and younger audiences by implementation of Tik Tok strategy. Be nimble and flexible to social opportunities and emerging platforms.

Timing: November 2022

Measurements: Engagements, followers

GENERAL MARKETING (CONTINUED)

Long-Term

Integrate new audience segmentation data into media and creative strategies for optimal growth. Review audience indexing data for travel behaviors, spending habits and interest in Minnesota.

Timing: FY24 and beyond

New creative campaign development: An RFP will present new campaign concepts and strategic foundation for coming years. This creative refresh will help continue to differentiate Minnesota and grow our visitor economy.

Timing: RFP – Q1 2023

July 2023 - New contract and production

Spring 2024 - Launch

Expand outreach into Canada. Priority markets and audiences that align with new segmentation to increase awareness and consideration of Minnesota as a leisure destination.

Timing: FY24. Dependent on additional funding.

Deeper integration of video throughout communications. Produce video assets via agency and in-house resources. Integrate into publications, email, newsletters, press releases, presentations and other communications.

Timing: FY24

DIVERSITY MARKETING

Near-Term

Conduct a market test campaign in 1-2 direct-flight markets with high diversity populations that index high with Minnesota's top tourism activities.

Timing: SS 2023

Measurements: Same KPIs as campaign, Brand Lift in specified markets.

Conduct a professional photo/video shoot to capture travelers with a variety of disabilities enjoying Minnesota destinations and activities. Assets to be used in promotions and communications throughout the agency.

Timing: Sept. 2022

Measurements: Improve perception of Minnesota as welcoming to all YOY.

Depict BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) authentically by including diverse talent in all production work to integrate representation.

Timing: Ongoing

Measurements: Improvement of perception of Minnesota as welcoming to all YOY.

Amplify positive organic stories about Minnesota through a DEI lens with targeted digital media. Coordinate with Weber on earned media hits and to vet media sources.

Timing: Ongoing

Measurements: Improve perception of Minnesota as welcoming to all YOY.

Broaden our appeal to new audiences with further investment in DEI influencers who visit Minnesota and share the experience with their followers. Coordinate with Weber Shandwick as needed.

Timing: Ongoing opportunistic

Measurements: Social followers, engagements

Hire to ensure diverse representation of cultures, ethnicities, lifestyles for writing assignments, advertising talent, public speaking and minority-owned vendors for production, creative testing, and media.

Timing: Ongoing

Measurements: Improve perception of Minnesota as welcoming to all YOY, percent of spend with minority-owned businesses.

Establish relationships with Minnesota's tribal nations. Open discussions on how to best promote assets and cultural heritage. Identify ways to help with product development, tourism expansion, cultural preservation, etc.

Timing: Ongoing

Measurement: Regular meetings, increase content integration, increase in native web profile listings

DIVERSITY MARKETING (CONTINUED)

Long-Term

Prioritize segments prime for growth. Review audience indexing data for travel behaviors, spending habits and interest in Minnesota.

Timing: FY24 and beyond

Expand engagement and influence among diverse communities. Conduct listening sessions and primary research to evolve campaigns, messaging and media selections.

Further develop ways to feature diverse perspectives through content, creative representation, accessible itineraries, etc.

Establish or expand relationships with diverse partners.

Advocate DEI principals and best practices with Minnesota's travel industry. Create and share resources, educational opportunities, and ways to collaborate

NICHE STRATEGIES TO REACH NEW TRAVELERS

Strategic Goals:

Grow Minnesota's Visitor Economy

Create a Welcoming Experience for All Visitors

Budget: \$1,427,465

Target national travelers nationally based on their desired experiences. Whether someone lives in Washington State or Washington, D.C., we invite them to Minnesota to participate in those activities we can successfully deliver.

Niche campaigns compliment the general campaign, but vastly broaden our audience reach affordably.

HOW A NICHE IS DETERMINED:

Indexing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top indexing activities for general audience Source: MRI Simmons
Season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal relevance
Opportunity Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size of nationwide audience per activity Source: MRI Simmons
Est. MN as authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural + Audience trends/relevancy EMT content to promote Industry stakeholder needs Historical high performance
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance of regional representation Balance of indoor/outdoor
Recommend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niche recommendations and potential alts for discussion

Prioritize segments prime for growth. Review audience indexing data for travel behaviors, spending habits and interest in Minnesota.

Implement digital and social media tactics for efficiency and ability to monitor and track.

Amplify storytelling with a content partner that strongly aligns with the chosen activity.

Website custom landing pages or personalization through Miles necessary.

A conversion tactic is necessary that aligns to the activity as closely as possible, e.g. subscribe to newsletter, order guide, order swag, enter sweeps, etc.

NICHES FOR FY23:

Fall: late-Aug. – Oct. 2022

- Hiking: Adults 36-60, no children, earn over \$125,000
- Biking: Adults 26-50, children at home age 6-15, earn over \$150,000

Winter: Dec. 2022 – Feb. 2023

- Performing Arts: Female 31-55, no children at home, earns over \$125,000
- Winter Sports: Even split Male/Female, Adults 35-54, multicultural, children age 6-15, earn over \$125,000

Spring/Summer: April – June, 2023

- National Parks: Female 25-34, no children, earns over \$175,000
- Dining: Even Gender split (male (51)/female (49)), children at home, earns over \$75,000
- Events: Female (55)/Male (45), Ages 21-54, no children, earns an Avg HHI of \$138,775

Measurements: Brand awareness study, ROI



Explore Minnesota
121 7th Place East, Suite 360
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101, USA

exploreminnesota.com/industry