



CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION AGENDA

Monday, May 11, 2026

4:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Pursuant to due notice and call thereof, a Worksession (or Special) meeting of the Grand Rapids City Council will be held on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 4:00 PM in the City Hall Council Chambers, 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

ROLL CALL:

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT:

1. Police Department - Chief Andy Morgan

BUSINESS:

2. Tourism Annual Report - Megan Christianson, Visit Grand Rapids

REVIEW OF REGULAR AGENDA:

ADJOURN:

Attest: Kimberly Gibeau, City Clerk



Tourism Is Essential in Grand Rapids & Itasca County, Minnesota

Megan Christianson
Executive Director
Visit Grand Rapids



Item 2.



2



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.**





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>

mi
EXPLORE
MINNESOTA™

mi
EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 86.1 Million Visitors
- \$14.7 Billion Gross Sales
- \$2.4 Billion Sales Tax
- 182,435 Employed

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

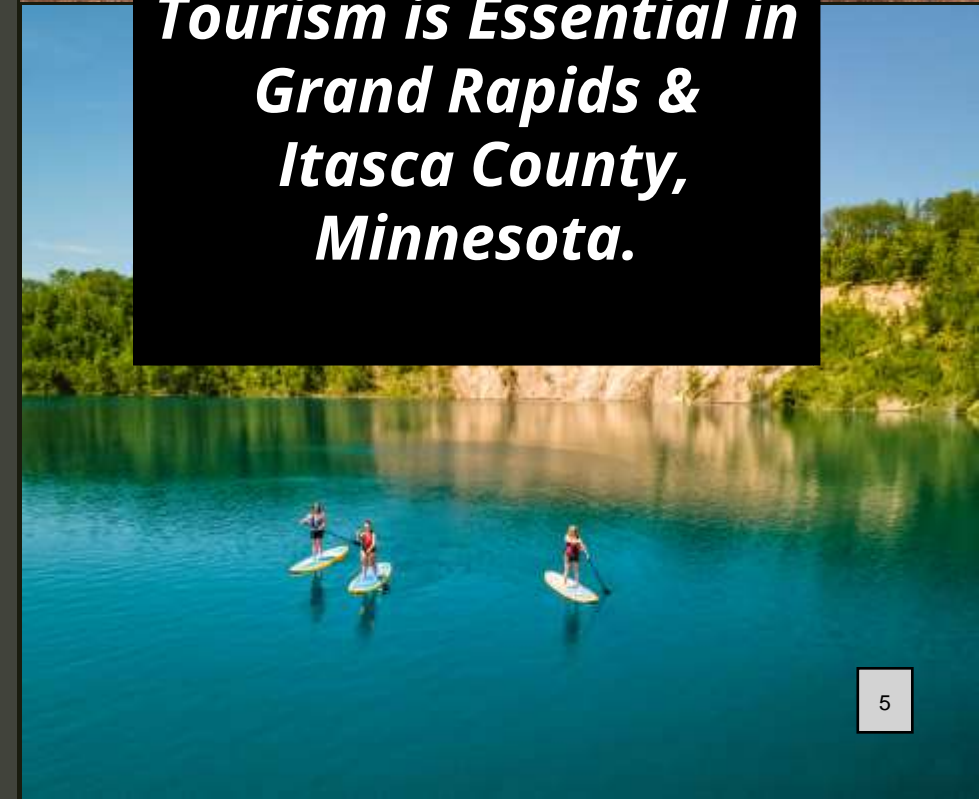
NE MINNESOTA TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT

County	Economic Impact (millions)	Total jobs	State & local taxes (millions)
Carlton	\$128.8	783	\$11.3
Cook	\$227.7	1,788	\$27.8
Itasca	\$208.7	1,409	\$19.2
Kanabec	\$22.2	155	\$2.2
Koochiching	\$88.2	749	\$8.5
Lake	\$152.0	1,148	\$13.7
Pine	\$183.8	868	\$12.8
St. Louis	\$1,049.5	5,188	\$103.0
Region Total	\$2,053.1	12,086	\$188.4



Item 2.

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.”



GET OUTDOORS

INTO MINNESOTA'S NATURE

VISIT GRAND RAPIDS, MN

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).



GET OUTDOORS

INTO MINNESOTA'S NATURE

VISIT GRAND RAPIDS, MN

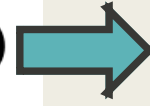
2026 Marketing Strategy

- 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> Item 2.

Get Inspired

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

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...

[Read More](#) [See all Stories](#)

• NEW Travel Itinerary Section

Find Accommodations

[See all Accommodations →](#)

[Book Now](#)

Fresh Season. Fresh Start.

Hiking Trails Eat & Drink Places to Stay Golf Courses

The Grand Rapids, Minnesota area has hundreds of thousands of acres that you can hike through mixed hardwood and pine forests to enjoy nature.

• NEW Accommodations Design & AI Search Section For Lodging

• NEW Interactive Headers

Advertising Tactics & Media Companies

Item 2.

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 Item 2.

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
- DesMoines, 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.

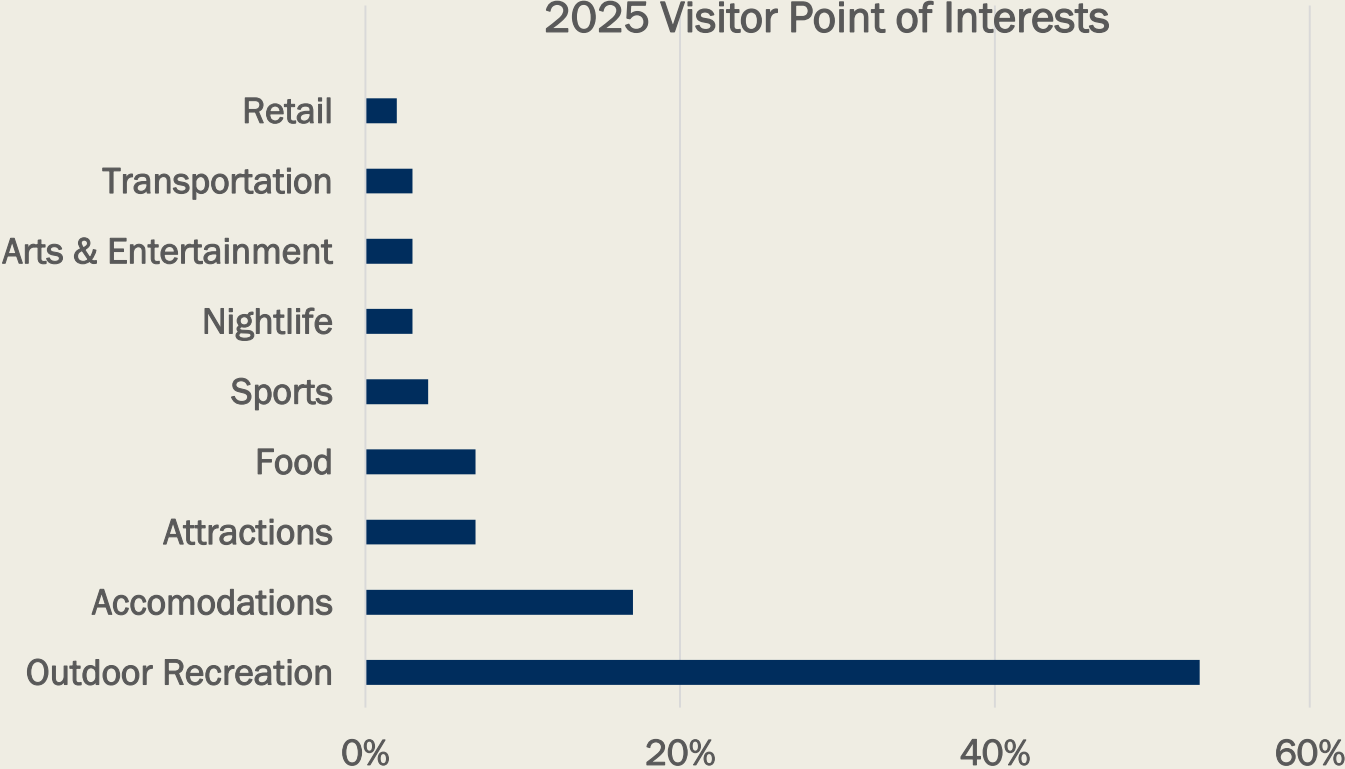


Point of Interests

Where Visitors Spend Their Time

Source: Zartico & PlacierAI

2025 Visitor Point of Interests





THANK YOU!

Megan Christianson
Executive Directors

Email: megan@visitgrandrapids.com

www.visitgrandrapids.com



WWW.VISITGRANDRAPIDS.COM

NEW USERS
132,363
AVG PAGE VIEWS
1.78

TOTAL SESSIONS
162,554
AVG SESSION DURATION
2:15

USERS BY TYPE
55.6% female
44.4% male

USERS BY DEVICE
71.8% mobile
24.6% desktop

TOP 10 PAGES VIEWED

1. Sweepstakes
2. Home
3. Places to Stay
4. Event Directory
5. Things To Do
6. Monthly View Calendar
7. Summer
8. Spring
9. Winter
10. Event/RockFest

TOP PAID SESSIONS

Google Organic Search:	71,252
Google CPC Ads:	38,752
Direct Search:	20,456
Bing Organic Search:	4,118
Facebook Mobile:	3,410
Explore MN Facebook Ad:	3,361
Outfront Mobile Retargeting:	2,539
Yanahoo Organic Search:	1,780
Star Tribune Paid E-blast:	1,412
DuckDuckGo Organic Search:	1,102

TOP 10 CITIES

- Minneapolis
- NOT Set
- Grand Rapids
- Chicago
- St Paul
- Cohasset
- New York
- Duluth
- Maple Grove
- Hibbing

TOP 10 STATES

- Minnesota
- Texas
- Illinois
- Wisconsin
- Iowa
- Missouri
- New York
- Kansas
- North Dakota
- California

Sweepstakes Sign-ups: 6,450

Newsletter Sends: 82,560

Newsletter Open Rate: 33%

Newsletter CTR: 3%

LOGGING PROPERTY LEADS=10,583 AND ONLINE BOOKING LEADS=3,910

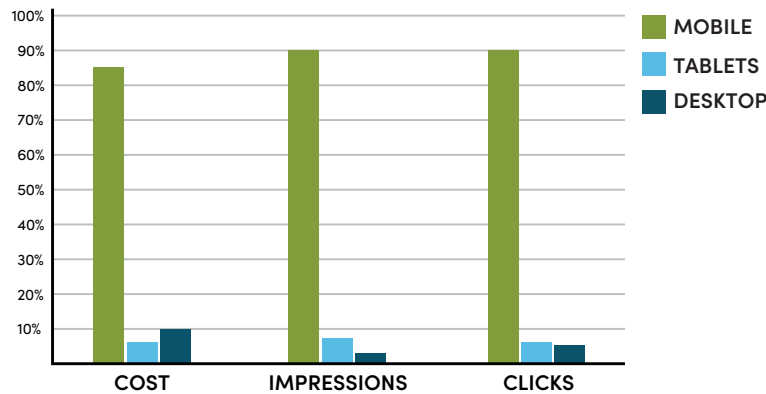
2025 GOOGLE AD DATA

Total Ad Impressions
3,743,321

Total Google Ad Clicks
76,218

Avg. Cost Per Click
.27

AD PERFORMANCE



2025 VIDEO VIEWS
429,185

WATCH TIME
1.8k hours



2025 MARKETING CAMPAIGNS & TACTICS:

AAA Living: Print, Programmatic Digital

Adams MultiMedia: Print, Programmatic Digital, Streaming Video

Biking Minnesota: Print, Programmatic Digital

Explore Minnesota Magazine: Print, Programmatic Digital, Lead Generation Program

DSM Magazine: Print

Group Travel Magazine: Native Article, Print, Programmatic Digital

MN DNR Regulations Guides (ATV, Fishing & Snowmobiling): Print

MN Meetings & Events: Native Article, Print, Programmatic Digital, E-blast

MN Monthly: Print, Programmatic Digital, E-blast

MN Snowmobile Destinations: Print, Programmatic Digital

MN Snowmobile Magazine: Print, Programmatic Digital

MN Traditions/Mississippi Headwaters Board: Paid Social, Travel Influencer, Paid Videos

MSP/St Paul Magazine: Print

Offroad Magazine: Print

Outfront Media: 18 Billboards, Mobile Retargeting through GeoFence & Heat Maps

Pride Journeys Magazine: Print, Programmatic Digital

Rider Magazine: Print

Snowgoer Magazine: Print, Programmatic Digital

Star Tribune: Programmatic Digital utilizing GeoFence, E-blast

StrikeSocial: Streaming Video

TOURISM IS VITAL IN MINNESOTA Item 2.

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

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

Scan the QR code for a complete report by Tourism Economics.



NE MINNESOTA TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT

County	Economic impact (millions)	Total jobs	State & local taxes (millions)
Carlton	\$129.9	783	\$11.3
Cook	\$227.7	1,769	\$27.8
Itasca	\$208.7	1,409	\$19.2
Kanabec	\$22.2	155	\$2.2
Koochiching	\$99.2	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	12,066	\$198.4

STATE OF MINNESOTA

- 81.6 Million Visitors
- \$14.7 Billion in Gross Sales
- \$2.4 Billion in Sales Tax
- 182,435 Employed

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

PRESIDENT: Sara Thompson, Itasca County Land Department
PAST PRESIDENT: Lewis Kellin, Hotel Rapids & CoHaus
VICE PRESIDENT: Grant Prokop, Thousand Lakes Sporting Goods
SECRETARY/TREASURER: Adam Lambrecht, Rising Eagle Resort
 Kris Ives, Timberlake Lodge Hotel & Event Center
 Jeff Johns, MN Historical Society
 Jim Mack, The Reif Center
 Charlotte Jarrett, Best Western Plus
STAFF: Megan Christianson, Executive Director

TOURISM IS VITAL AND VIBRANT IN THE GRAND RAPIDS, MN AREA.

AmericInn by Wyndham
 Balsam Lake Cabin
 Bear's Den
 Best Western Plus
 Campfire Cottage
 Birch Bay Resort
 Bowstring Shores
 Camp Hiwatha
 Country Inn & Suites by Radisson
 Doc House
 Downtown Charmer
 Dudley Cottage

Eagle Lake Retreat House
 Eagle View Lodge
 First Avenue Suite
 Forest Lake Lodge
 Forest Lake Motel
 Hatch Lake Tiny Home
 Historic Gilbert Mansion
 Hideaway on Little Jay
 Hotel Rapids
 IM Hotel
 Itasca Trails Campground
 Itascan Motel
 Jessie View Resort

Lake Loft
 Little Buck Camp
 Lone Star Lodge
 Long Lake Dome
 Long Lake Lookout
 Loon Point Resort
 Loon's Landing
 Malbay Estates
 Mallard Point
 Mid Mod Lake House
 Moose Point Look Out
 My Place Hotel
 Northland Wonderland

Pokegama Lake Resort
 Rising Eagle Resort
 Timberlake Lodge
 Tioga Basecamp
 Trout Lake Campground
 Turtle Lake Beach House
 Twin Lakes Retreat
 Two Rivers RV Park & Campground
 West Pines Motel
 White Pine Lake Home
 Wildwood Resort



tourism matters for itasca county

2024 DATA

total visitor spending
\$130 million

0.9% share of state
tourism visitor spending



lodging*
\$61.9 million



food & beverage
\$24.2 million



recreation
\$10.8 million



retail
\$19.5 million



transportation^
\$13.5 million

Each Minnesota household would need to be taxed \$1,031 more annually to make up for visitor-generated dollars.†

* Lodging spending includes second-home spending.

^ Transportation spending includes both ground and air transportation.

† Minnesota household tax savings are based on state-level analysis.

itasca county tourism impacts

Tourist activity benefits households, businesses and government entities across our state. Explore Minnesota partners with Tourism Economics to quantify the economic impact of Minnesota’s visitor economy, including the far-reaching impacts of visitor spending.

Employment, income, and state and local tax revenue estimates prove the value of tourism in Itasca County.

 **1,409 jobs**

 **\$208.7 million in economic impact**

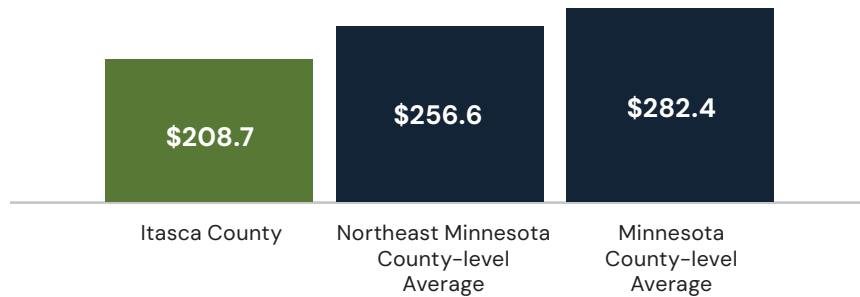
 **\$19.2 million in taxes**

Visitors include Minnesotans and non-Minnesotans who stayed overnight or traveled at least 50 miles to reach their destination.

Direct impacts are business sales, jobs, income and taxes created directly by visitor spending to tourism-related sectors (e.g., lodging, transportation, recreation).

Indirect and Induced impacts are included in estimated total economic impacts. Indirect refers to wider impacts (e.g., food wholesalers, utilities, business services) in the supply chain. Induced impacts are created from local spending by employees whose wages are generated by visitor spending.

total economic impact comparison by geography (\$ millions)



To learn more about Itasca County tourism trends, and how your metrics compare to other Minnesota counties, scan the below QR codes.



2024 minnesota report



2024 county-level report

2024 visitor economy impact

MINNESOTA TOTAL

- 81.6 million visitors*
- \$24.7 billion in total economic impact
- 182,435 jobs supported
- \$2.4 billion in state & local taxes

Northwest region

County	Economic impact (millions)	Total jobs	State & local taxes (millions)
Becker	\$152.0	1,186	\$13.9
Beltrami	\$241.0	1,927	\$22.5
Cass	\$364.8	2,989	\$36.0
Clay	\$130.9	1,048	\$11.7
Clearwater	\$16.2	89	\$1.4
Hubbard	\$84.6	521	\$7.8
Kittson	\$8.9	38	\$0.7
Lake of the Woods	\$90.2	800	\$9.6
Mahnomen	\$60.3	316	\$5.8
Marshall	\$8.2	40	\$0.7
Norman	\$5.0	26	\$0.4
Pennington	\$94.5	858	\$7.7
Polk County	\$88.3	653	\$7.9
Red Lake	\$4.1	25	\$0.3
Roseau	\$81.8	676	\$7.5
Wilkin	\$8.2	42	\$0.6
Region Total	\$1,439.1	11,235	\$134.5

Northeast region

County	Economic impact (millions)	Total jobs	State & local taxes (millions)
Carlton	\$129.9	783	\$11.3
Cook	\$227.7	1,769	\$27.8
Itasca	\$208.7	1,409	\$19.2
Kanabec	\$22.2	155	\$2.2
Koochiching	\$99.2	749	\$8.5
Lake	\$152.0	1,146	\$13.7
Pine	\$163.8	868	\$12.8
Saint Louis	\$1,049.5	5,188	\$103.0
Regional Total	\$2,053.1	12,066	\$198.4

Minneapolis–St. Paul area

County	Economic impact (millions)	Total jobs	State & local taxes (millions)
Anoka	\$724.6	5,787	\$68.3
Carver	\$224.3	1,884	\$21.7
Chisago	\$85.5	642	\$7.9
Dakota	\$1,563.6	11,458	\$136.7
Hennepin	\$9,342.9	67,204	\$902.7
Isanti	\$67.5	470	\$5.9
Ramsey	\$2,147.6	17,595	\$219.6
Scott	\$516.6	3,764	\$50.0
Washington	\$743.1	6,125	\$73.0
Wright	\$269.4	2,125	\$24.7
Regional Total	\$15,685.1	117,053	\$1,510.3

Sources: *Longwoods 2024; Tourism Economics Study of the 2024 Minnesota Visitor Economy



Southern region			
County	Economic impact (millions)	Total jobs	State & local taxes (millions)
Big Stone	\$9.4	48	\$0.9
Blue Earth	\$266.4	2,237	\$25.3
Brown	\$71.3	633	\$6.4
Chippewa	\$24.2	148	\$2.2
Cottonwood	\$20.8	127	\$1.8
Dodge	\$12.9	102	\$1.2
Faribault	\$19.5	132	\$1.7
Fillmore	\$27.9	237	\$3.0
Freeborn	\$121.1	873	\$10.4
Goodhue	\$195.9	1,448	\$17.2
Houston	\$26.7	210	\$2.4
Jackson	\$24.8	195	\$2.3
Lac qui Parle	\$5.1	31	\$0.5
Le Sueur	\$30.8	189	\$3.2
Lincoln	\$6.7	34	\$0.6
Lyon	\$91.8	711	\$8.3
Martin	\$60.4	360	\$5.6
Mower	\$91.4	674	\$8.6
Murray	\$13.0	90	\$1.1
Nicollet	\$55.8	476	\$5.4
Nobles	\$68.7	513	\$6.1
Olmsted	\$1,212.6	9,072	\$107.4
Pipestone	\$21.1	129	\$1.7
Redwood	\$62.9	364	\$6.0
Renville	\$20.4	106	\$1.7
Rice	\$154.1	1,271	\$14.5
Rock	\$20.7	134	\$1.9
Sibley	\$12.7	74	\$1.1

Steele	\$131.6	1,064	\$11.4
Swift	\$16.4	104	\$1.3
Traverse	\$4.4	20	\$0.3
Wabasha	\$42.3	340	\$3.8
Waseca	\$26.3	216	\$2.4
Watonwan	\$18.7	122	\$1.6
Winona	\$164.6	1,411	\$14.7
Yellow Medicine	\$35.0	203	\$2.6
Regional Total	\$3,188.2	24,101	\$286.9
Central region			
County	Economic impact (millions)	Total jobs	State & local taxes (millions)
Aitkin	\$75	388	\$6.2
Benton	\$66.8	532	\$6.3
Crow Wing	\$507.7	3,952	\$52.0
Douglas	\$234.3	1,812	\$21.0
Grant	\$9.5	42	\$0.7
Kandiyohi	\$140.6	1,142	\$15.5
McLeod	\$78.9	547	\$7.0
Meeker	\$32.1	224	\$2.8
Mille Lacs	\$115.5	689	\$10.1
Morrison	\$71.7	582	\$6.7
Otter Tail	\$211	1,448	\$18.8
Pope	\$42.5	264	\$3.7
Sherburne	\$130.9	1,144	\$12.2
Stearns	\$535.2	4,472	\$49.8
Stevens	\$33.1	282	\$3.0
Todd	\$43.8	267	\$3.9
Wadena	\$31.1	193	\$2.7
Regional Total	\$2,359.8	17,980	\$222.4