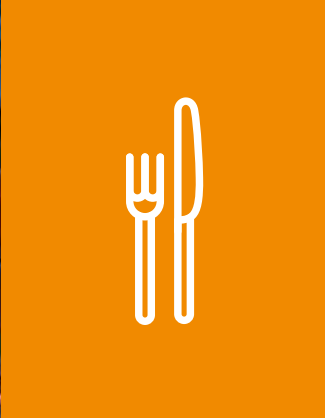


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2019 ANNUAL REPORT



EXPLORE **m** MINNESOTA



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Greetings,

We often talk about travel and tourism in quantifiable terms: \$16.0 billion in sales, \$1.04 billion in state sales tax, and 273,000 leisure and hospitality jobs are all figures we can be proud of. We also achieved impressive results from our marketing efforts, including \$708.6 million in traveler spending and a return on investment of 18-to-1 from our spring/summer advertising campaign. Not to mention a record 5.4 million visits to our website, 2.5 billion in estimated audience reach from public relations, and 125 million impressions on social media.

But as we all know, travel and tourism is about much more than numbers. It's about the experiences that our 73 million annual visitors have while they're here, from crossing the Mississippi headwaters to catching their first walleye to seeing a world-class live performance. It's about fulfilling lifelong dreams, like walking in the footsteps of your favorite artist, riding a roller coaster inside a mall or eating a fried candy bar on a stick.

This year, we took all of those experiences and more and gave them a name. We called it "Find Your True North," which is not a specific place or even a latitude but something you find within yourself. It's that moment, or a series of them, when you realize that no matter where you are, you're exactly where you're supposed to be.

This message was shared with travelers who already know us, as well as new audiences who may have never considered visiting Minnesota before. This new national strategy reached people from California to New York to Texas who have a vested interest in some of the things that our state does best, such as biking, hiking, arts and culture, golf, shopping and winter sports. And it worked: The tax ROI from these national niche markets was triple that of traditional markets, at \$31.

Internationally, Minnesota continued to grow as a global destination. We worked with our partners, multi-state groups and Brand USA to promote Minnesota to markets from France to China to the U.K. We continued our group tour efforts, and interacted with millions of prospective travelers in person, on the phone and online.

Looking forward to 2020 and beyond, the excitement around Minnesota continues to grow. The second year of the "Find Your True North" campaign is poised to reach new and existing audiences, inspiring even more people to experience firsthand all they can discover on a trip to Minnesota.

Of course, none of these successes would have been possible without your hard work to welcome travelers to our great state and ensure they have the experience of a lifetime. Because at the end of the day, it's these experiences that make a Minnesota vacation something that cannot be measured.

Sincerely,

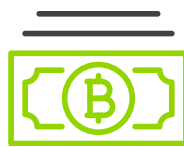
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Edman".

John F. Edman, Director



SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

SALES



Leisure & hospitality

\$16.0 BILLION

in gross sales annually



Nearly

\$44 MILLION

a day

REVENUE



\$1.04

Million in state sales tax



Representing

18%

of total state sales tax revenue

JOBS



273,000

Full- and part-time jobs



11%

of total private sector employment



\$6.1

Billion in wages

73 MILLION

Visitors in 2017

TOURISM INDUSTRY GROWTH IN BILLIONS

Sales at leisure and hospitality businesses grew nearly 22% from 2012 to 2018

2012

\$12.5

2015

\$14.4

2018

\$16.0

Note: Sales, revenue and jobs data is for the leisure and hospitality sector, 2018. Data not available yet for 2019.

GENERAL FUND OPERATING BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEARS 2019-20:

\$14.2 MILLION

Annually*

*Includes \$500,000 in supplemental state funding available when private sector support generated by Explore Minnesota is at least \$3 million.

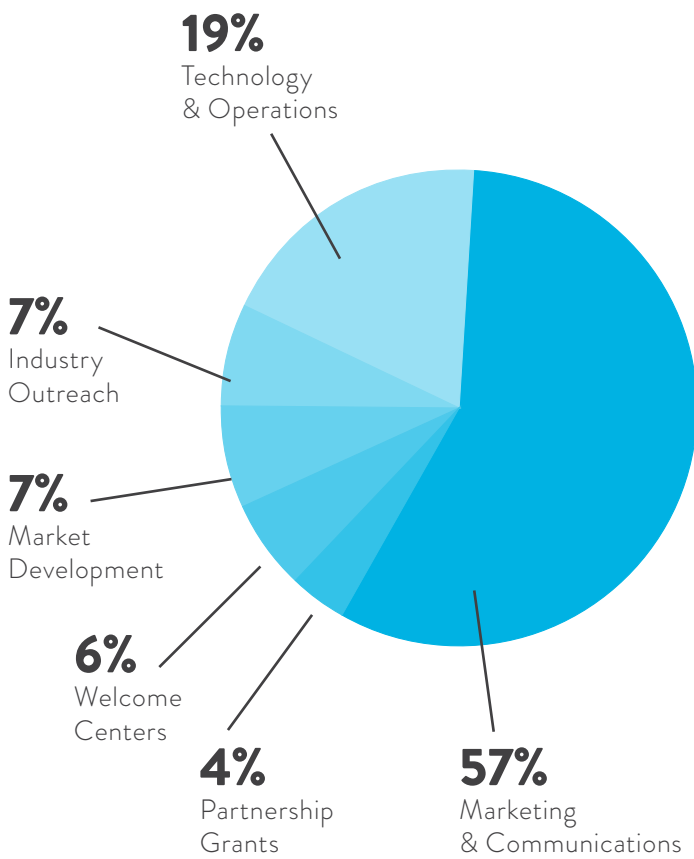
PRIVATE INDUSTRY MATCH

Cash: **\$3.2 million**

In Kind: **\$7.6 million**

Total: **\$10.8 million**

ALLOCATION OF BUDGET





FIND YOUR TRUE NORTH: BRAND CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

ADVERTISING MEDIA



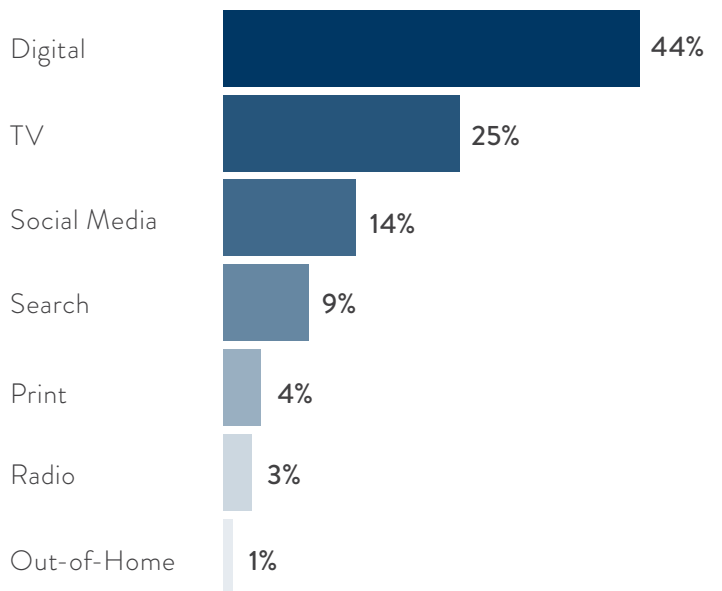
Spring/Summer
60%



Fall
19%



Winter
21%



GENERATED

\$708.6 MILLION

in traveler spending

WEBSITE VISITS

5.5 MILLION

+10%

YOY growth in website visits

ACHIEVED AN

18-TO-1

total return on investment from spring/summer marketing efforts, including a **10-to-1 ROI** from core markets and **31-to-1 ROI** from new national niche markets

MARKETING PARTNERS



FIND YOUR TRUE NORTH

#ONLYINMNE

The True North campaign highlighted the hidden gems and popular attractions found throughout Minnesota, including distinct outdoor adventures, urban cultural experiences, and iconic landmarks.

Find Your True North was launched in spring 2019. The campaign features a series of television ads, radio, print and digital ads.

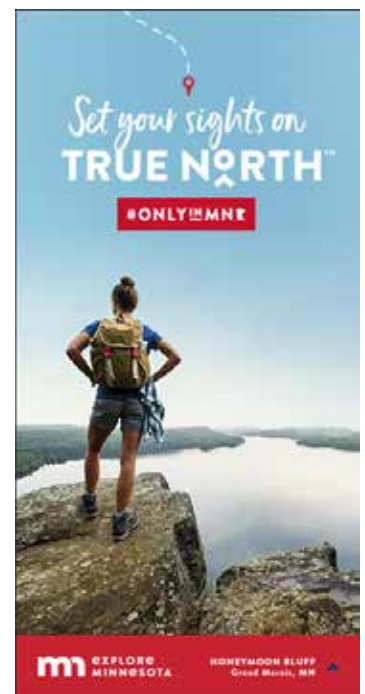
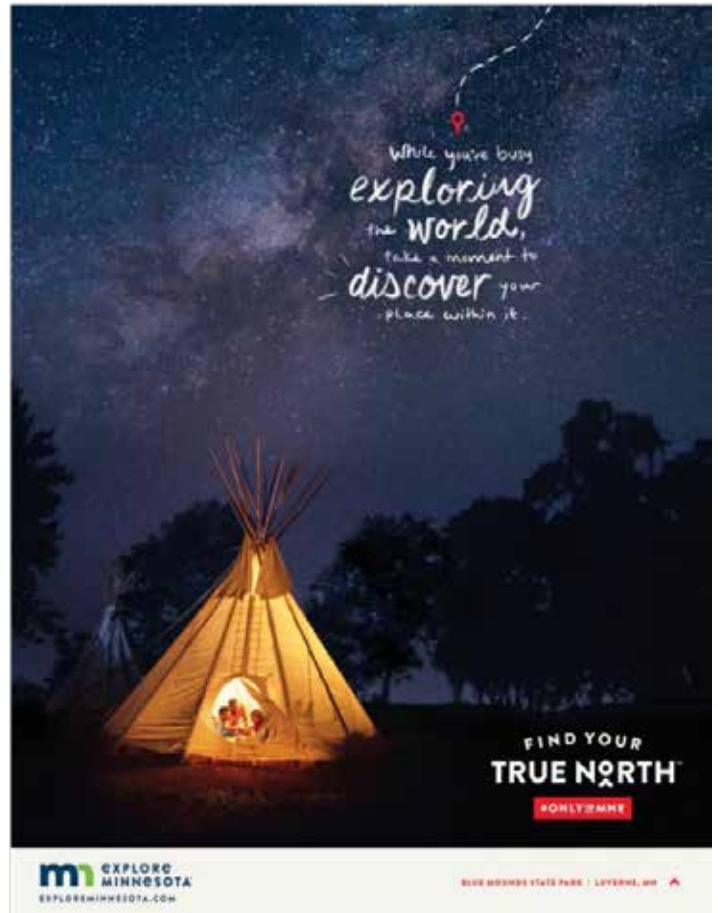


Core markets: Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and across Minnesota. Additional target markets include Chicago, Denver, Kansas City, Omaha, and Winnipeg



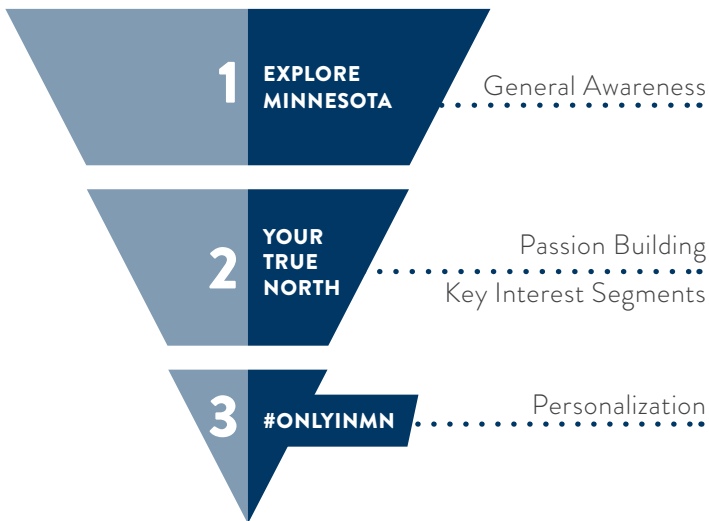
Top increases by State (YOY web visitation):

- 1.) New York +95%
- 2.) California +94%
- 3.) Florida +87%



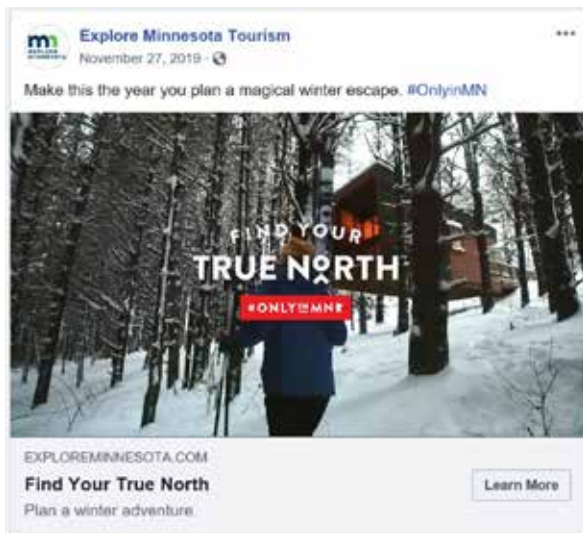
Highest growth sources: paid social media, native advertising, organic search

NICHE STRATEGY

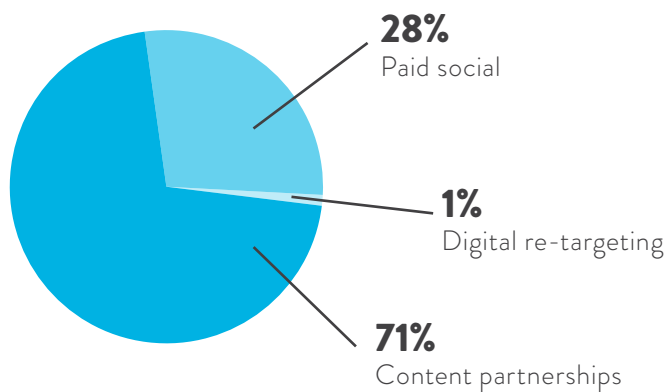


- Focus on interests vs. sheer proximity
- Talk to these audiences in their natural habitats through content partnerships
- Leverage known Minnesota connections/affinity

Niches for 2019: hiking, biking, arts and culture, winter recreation, shopping and golf



DIGITAL MEDIA BREAKOUT



CONTENT PARTNERSHIPS





CONSUMER REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL MEDIA



DIGITAL REACH

1.5 MILLION

total engagements

Totaling nearly

530,000

followers

251,933

email subscribers

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Generated roughly



2.5 BILLION

in estimated audience reach via internal and agency public relations



3,695

story placements

COVERAGE OF



**MINNESOTA'S
UNIQUE
REGIONS**

**ALL FOUR
SEASONS**



**INDOOR AND OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES**



TRAVEL & LEISURE



BUSINESS & TRADE



NOTABLE COVERAGE

AP 'Find Your True North' is new Minnesota tourism campaign

Best of the Midwest: 9 must-see destinations worth a visit in 2019



Chicago Tribune

St. Paul, Minn.



Off the Beaten Path: 27 Epic Views Every Hiker Should See



TRAVEL

America's Best Places to See Fall Colors (That Aren't in New England)



THRILLIST

Great River Bluffs, Minnesota

Summer Tourism in Minnesota Proved Strong in 2019

Based on 300 responses to a survey conducted by state tourism agency Explore Minnesota, a majority of helping businesses saw revenue grow this summer.



10 Best Cold Weather Winter Vacations to Book Now

Here's where to go to revel in a winter wonderland and make the most of a snow-covered winter vacation.



It's Hot to Get Cold This Winter

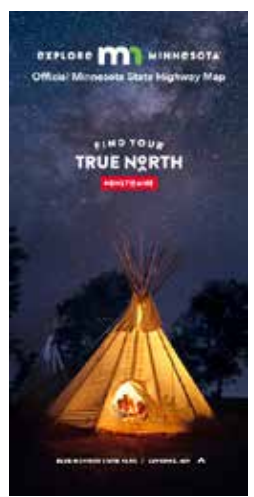
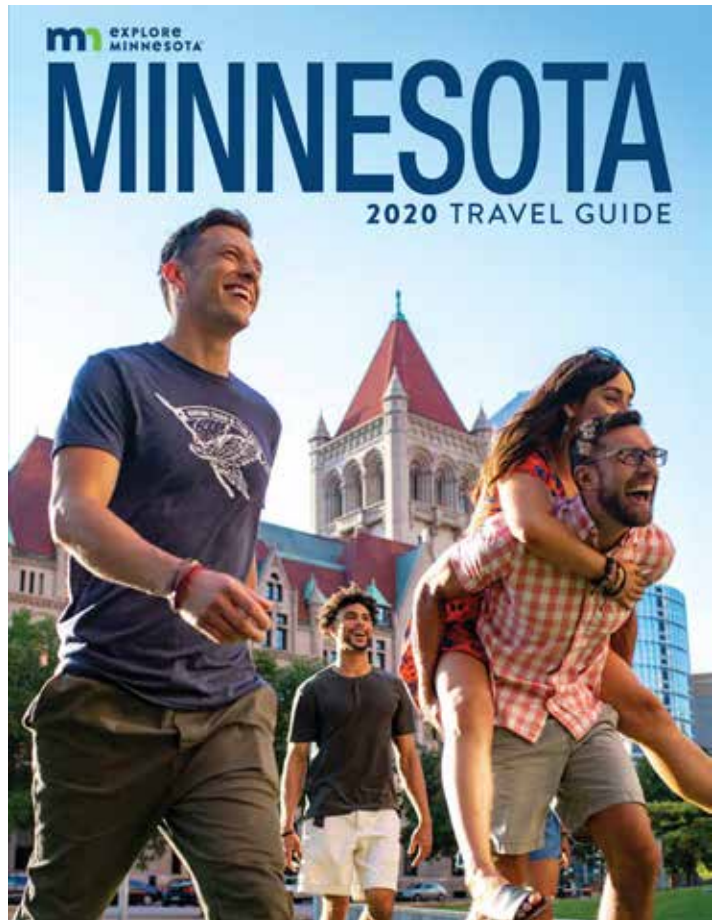
Minnesota is looking to make a name for itself this winter season. From the best ski resorts to the best snow-covered winter vacations, here's where to go to revel in a winter wonderland and make the most of a snow-covered winter vacation.

HIGH-PROFILE STORY PLACEMENTS





PERSONALIZED SERVICE



PROVIDED PERSONALIZED CUSTOMER SERVICE TO NEARLY

4 MILLION

travelers

2.8 MILLION

visitors to Welcome Centers

DISTRIBUTED OVER

2 MILLION

printed Minnesota travel publications and maps



STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

2019
EXPLORE **m1** MINNESOTA
TOURISM
CONFERENCE
ST. PAUL | FEBRUARY 4-6

Produced the annual **Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference** and **Explore Minnesota Tourism Awards**. This two-day educational event was held at the Intercontinental Saint Paul Riverfront hotel and welcomed over 350 industry and partner attendees.

Co-op



170

industry partners participated



Credit: 218 Gift in Bemidji

The #OnlyinMN monument has traveled to **21 locations** statewide

GOVERNOR'S OPENER EVENTS

- Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener
- Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener
- Minnesota Governor's Deer Opener

TIMELY RESEARCH

Collaborated with **Department of Revenue** on reporting of leisure and hospitality sales tax data used to track industry performance



Surveyed lodging properties and campgrounds on business levels, revealing **very strong year-over-year growth** in summer occupancy and revenue

Conducted new traveler profile study of Minnesota visitors. Dining at local restaurants and shopping were the top activities, and visiting friends/relatives was the top trip motivator

GENERATED A COMBINED

828 BILLION

in estimated audience reach and

NEARLY

2,000

total media placements

\$1.3 MILLION

grants awarded to 120 organizations statewide

OVER 420

co-op ads placed



GROUP & INTERNATIONAL MARKET DEVELOPMENT



Published **2019 Minnesota Group Planner** distributed to over **2,000** tour operators nationwide

Hosted Partner Participation booths at:

- American Bus Association Marketplace – Louisville, KY
- Minnesota Group Tour Marketplace – Chanhassen, MN
- IPW – Anaheim, CA

Generated over **150** group tour operator leads & over **200** international tour operator leads



Visit
TheUSA
.com

Strong partnership and board representation with Brand USA, leveraging Explore Minnesota's investment in international consumer marketing programs valued at \$34 for every \$1 spent



Majority of visitors from **Europe** and **Asia**, including the **U.K.**, **Japan**, **Germany** and **China**



\$1.1 BILLION

in spending from international overseas visitors (not including Canada)

476,800

international visitors (not including Canada)

567,400

Canadian overnight visitors

\$5.5 MILLION

generated in media value resulted from hosting 33 international writers



Explore Minnesota
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St. Paul, Minnesota 55101, USA

[exploreminnesota.com/industry](https://www.exploreminnesota.com/industry)