

RESOURCE GUIDE



2025

VISION

Position Minnesota as the best state for travel, quality of life and economic opportunity.

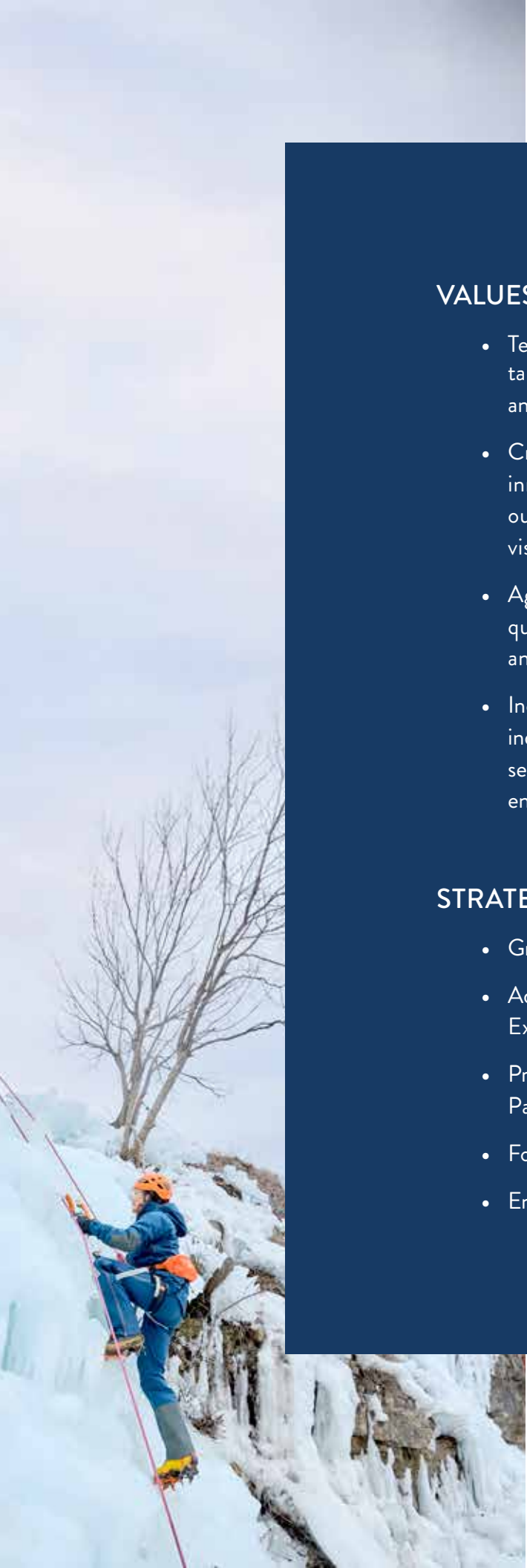
MISSION

We sustainably grow Minnesota's economy by welcoming all through innovative and inclusive marketing, storytelling and industry partnerships.

POSITION

We lead Minnesota's growth by fostering collaboration and marketing the state for the economic benefit of all Minnesotans.





VALUES

- Teamwork. We collaborate, harnessing unique talents and strengths, to share the workload and trust each other to deliver the best results.
- Creativity. We challenge the status quo, find innovative ways to solve problems and use our talents for the benefit of Minnesota's visitor economy.
- Agility. We remove roadblocks and respond quickly to new opportunities; we are nimble and dynamic.
- Inclusivity. We welcome all, respect individuality, treat each other with dignity, and seek to ensure a safe, inclusive and equitable environment at Explore Minnesota.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

- Grow Minnesota's Economy
- Advance and Champion Welcoming Experiences for All
- Provide Industry Leadership and Maximize Partner Collaboration
- Foster State Stewardship
- Ensure Organizational Excellence

INTRODUCTION

Explore Minnesota is the state's official promotion agency, championing why it is the best place to visit, live, work and do business.

In this guide, you will find brief introductions to the many ways you can get involved in Explore Minnesota partnerships and programs, all designed to help you grow your organization. Highlights include educational opportunities, grant programs, marketing partnerships and co-ops, advertising and public relations opportunities, events and trade show support, and more.

For more information on any of these programs, please visit the links provided; contact the staff person listed or your **regional coordinator**.



INDUSTRY RESOURCES



ABOUT US

Our Marketing

We love sharing the unique stories of Minnesota. Our state is diverse and dynamic, offering access to abundant nature, and a wide range of vibrant cultural experiences. Explore Minnesota invites people to discover both our iconic destinations and our hidden gems, and even provide reasons why Minnesota is the best place to live.

Explore Minnesota develops high-level, inclusive branding and consistent statewide messaging and marketing campaigns to promote Minnesota as a top place to live, work, and of course, vacation.

We also run robust campaign, media relations and digital strategy initiatives (including the upkeep of exploreminnesota.com) to ensure Minnesota remains a top destination for any need.

Our popular hashtag #OnlyinMN attracts conversation and is a point of pride. We encourage everyone to join in and use the hashtag in organic or paid posts.

To learn more, please reach out to Kat Sutton at kathryn.sutton@state.mn.us.

Tourism Industry Research

Explore Minnesota provides timely [research and data](#) for the tourism industry. Minnesota tourism research includes traveler profiles, industry business conditions reports and seasonal travel indicators.

Economic research helps convey the positive impact of tourism across the state. Economic impact and Leisure and Hospitality data are available at the state and county levels. [Review 2023 economic impact data](#) to learn about tourism-generated spend, jobs and taxes in your area.

To learn more, please contact Gretchen Nussbaum, Research Analyst, at 651-757-1868 or gretchen.nussbaum@state.mn.us.

Workforce Attraction and Business Attraction Marketing

As of 2024, Explore Minnesota expanded its promotional reach to extol Minnesota not just as the best place to visit, but one of the best places to live, work and do business. The core goals of our economic development marketing, which works in tandem with our tourism marketing, is to promote the overall livability and economic opportunity of Minnesota, fostering the state's ecosystem of innovation by growing opportunities for residents, workers and business developers.

Alongside tourism marketing, Explore Minnesota develops high-level, inclusive branding and consistent statewide messaging and marketing campaigns to promote Minnesota as a top place to live, work and do business.

Our work also leverages public and private partnerships and connects multiple government and non-governmental organizations to one another through marketing and development initiatives to highlight the vitality, diversity and livability of Minnesota.

To learn more, please reach out to Frances Fyten at frances.fyten@state.mn.us.

Outdoor Recreation Industry Partnership

The Outdoor Recreation Industry Partnership (ORIP) is an inter-agency collaboration between Explore Minnesota Tourism, the Department of Natural Resources, The Department of Employment and Economic Development and Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation.

The purpose of the Outdoor Recreation Industry Partnership is to support and grow Minnesota's outdoor economy by developing tools, providing opportunities for connection and telling the story about the value of outdoor recreation to Minnesota's economic portfolio.

Explore Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have teamed up to launch a new podcast: [Explore Minnesota More](#). Here, we tell the stories of the benefits of Minnesota outdoors through the stories of the people, places, and businesses that make up Minnesota's thriving outdoor recreation ecosystem.

To learn more about ORIP, sign up for their newsletter or to suggest podcast subjects, please contact Randolph Briley, Deputy Director of Outdoor Recreation at randolph.briley@state.mn.us.

Explore Minnesota Film

Explore Minnesota Film is a new division of Explore Minnesota, established to administer the state's Film Production Tax Credit Program; provide information on Minnesota locations, crew, and vendors; and promote Minnesota as a great place to produce movies, TV, and streaming content. The division's core goals are to attract new spending to the state and increase job growth for Minnesota workers.

To learn more, please reach out to Melodie Bahan at melodie.bahan@state.mn.us.

Government Relations

The Explore Minnesota team attends and testifies in House and Senate committee hearings throughout legislative session. We work hard to share the needs of the industry and garner support for Explore Minnesota's legislative priorities. The next legislative session begins on January 14, 2025.

If you have questions or concerns about the legislative process, please contact our Government Relations Supervisor, Lyndsey Hanson at lyndsey.hanson@state.mn.us.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference

The Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference is the annual learning opportunity designed specifically for the Minnesota tourism industry. This educational event includes national keynote speakers, topical breakout sessions, networking and plenty of fresh and actionable ideas. Conference information is available at exploreminnesota.com/conference.

Are you interested in speaking to Minnesota tourism professionals or do you know someone who would make a great speaker at a future tourism conference? Submit now through this [online speaker form](#) to be considered.

Educational Opportunities

Educational programs on various topics of interest to the state's industry are often offered in conjunction with regional meetings and association meetings and through tourism partner organizations. Watch for these opportunities in [Industry News](#) and on the [industry website](#).

INDUSTRY RELATIONS

Meet Your Regional Coordinator

The state is divided into five regions for outreach. Each area is administered by a regional coordinator, who serves as the agency contact and resource for businesses, organizations and communities within that region.

Northeast Region

Counties: Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Kanabec, Koochiching, Lake, Pine and St. Louis

Derek Ramthun
121 7th Place East, Suite 360
St. Paul, MN 55101
P: 612-231-3889
derek.ramthun@state.mn.us

Metro Region

Counties: Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott, Washington and Wright

Michael Hernandez
121 7th Place East, Suite 360
St. Paul, MN 55101
P: 651-757-1876
michael.hernandez@state.mn.us

Northwest and Central Regions

Counties: Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Benton, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Sherburne, Stearns, Stevens, Todd, Wadena and Wilkin

Kari Brumback
121 7th Place East, Suite 360
St. Paul, MN 55101
P: 651-757-1849
kari.brumback@state.mn.us

Southern Region

Counties: Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Jackson, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Rock, Sibley, Steele, Swift, Traverse, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Winona and Yellow Medicine

Lisa Havelka
121 7th Place East, Suite 360
St. Paul, MN 55101
P: 507-389-2683
lisa.havelka@state.mn.us

Explore Minnesota Tourism Council

The Explore Minnesota Tourism Council is comprised of tourism industry representatives appointed by the Governor to provide broad-based input into Explore Minnesota's direction and activities. Representing various sectors of the tourism industry, the Council advises Explore Minnesota on programs and policies and is a key communication channel between the state office and the tourism industry. A list of [**current members**](#) is posted on the industry site.

For more information, or if you are interested in serving on the council, please contact Beth Helle at [**beth.helle@state.mn.us**](mailto:beth.helle@state.mn.us) or 651-757-1872.

Explore Minnesota Business Council

The Explore Minnesota for Business Council is comprised of members from economic development, talent acquisition, higher education, and business sectors across the state. They work to advise Explore Minnesota on marketing and promotional efforts related to overall livability, workforce, and economic opportunity in Minnesota. A list of current members is posted on the [**industry site**](#).

For more information, or if you are interested in serving on the council, please contact Beth Helle at [**beth.helle@state.mn.us**](mailto:beth.helle@state.mn.us) or 651-757-1872.

CONNECT WITH US

Share what's new and notable in your community

Explore Minnesota always wants to know about the latest openings, attractions and local events that might interest travelers. Please share as many details as possible in this [short form](#) about what may be worth pitching to Explore Minnesota's media contacts or featuring in our print and digital channels.

Logos, Graphics, Photos and Video

Explore Minnesota's official logos and social media graphics are available to you free of charge for use in your advertising campaigns for tourism marketing or livability marketing.

We can also provide you with photos and video of destinations across the state. For access to our extensive collection of digital assets, please contact Melanie Graves at melanie.graves@state.mn.us or 651-757-1870.

Social Media

Explore Minnesota is active on major social media channels, including Instagram, Facebook, Threads and TikTok. Tourism businesses and destinations are encouraged to interact with Explore Minnesota by tagging our account or using our popular hashtag, #OnlyinMN, which has been used more than 1 million times and counting! Watch [Industry News](#) for additional opportunities to get involved, including seasonal campaigns, co-op programs and more.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Hannah at caitlin.hannah@state.mn.us or 651-757-1874.

Handles and Hashtags

- Facebook: [@ExploreMinnesota](#)
- Instagram: [@exploreminnesota](#)
- Threads: [@exploreminnesota](#)
- X (Twitter): [@exploreminn](#)
- TikTok: [@exploreminnesota](#)
- Pinterest: [@exploreminn](#)
- LinkedIn: [@exploreminnesota](#)
- Youtube: [@ExploreMinnesota](#)

INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES



CONNECT WITH US

Executive Director's Forum

Explore Minnesota's Executive Director's Forums are virtual sessions designed to create more ongoing communication and engagement opportunities with industry stakeholders. These sessions are held several times each year and feature interactive discussions with Explore Minnesota's Executive Director and staff on various topics including current issues or conditions affecting the industry, industry advocacy, and Minnesota legislative sessions.

Watch for future dates in our [Industry News weekly newsletter](#).

Industry News Weekly Newsletter

Our weekly Industry News e-newsletter provides the tourism industry with timely information on marketing opportunities, travel and industry trends, and other relevant news. It's the best way to stay up to date on industry news, upcoming opportunities, and marketing initiatives. Sign up to receive the newsletter at exploreminnesota.com/industrynews.

News of broad interest to the tourism industry can be submitted for possible inclusion to Lisa Havelka at lisa.havelka@state.mn.us.

Becoming a Film-Ready Community

Explore Minnesota Film can help your community become a star with our Film Friendly program, offering knowledge, tools and resources to attract productions and boost your local economy. Certified Film Friendly Communities are promoted on exploreminnesota.com/film, positioning your unique locations as must-see destinations for filmmakers.

Contact Sarah Gebeke at sarah.gebeke@state.mn.us or 612-803-0053.

Editorial Content

Explore Minnesota produces editorial content for all of its print publications and exploreminnesota.com. Information and travel news about destinations and attractions, and suggestions for story ideas, are welcome.

Please send ideas to Andrew Parks at andrew.parks@state.mn.us or 651-757-1871.

Share your Images

Explore Minnesota is always in need of high-resolution, professional-quality images and videos of your destinations, attractions, events and other tourism offerings. Explore Minnesota may use these assets in print publications, on exploreminnesota.com, in social media posts, advertising and in a variety of other ways. Explore Minnesota may also share them with media outlets for potential use in articles, blog posts and TV segments about Minnesota.

To request an upload link, please contact Melanie Graves at melanie.graves@state.mn.us or 651-757-1870.

Domestic and International Media Relations

Explore Minnesota works with the tourism industry to promote Minnesota as a top travel destination through media coverage regionally, nationally and internationally. Tourism destinations and businesses can participate in the media relations program by assisting with itineraries, lodging, attraction passes, and meals for working travel media and sharing ideas, travel news, and high-resolution multimedia assets from your area for consideration in story pitches.

To share your media story, please contact Jake Juliot, Public Relations and Communications Specialist, at jake.juliot@state.mn.us or 651-757-1864.

OUR WEBSITE

Free Business and Event Listings

As a powerful extension of the Explore Minnesota brand, exploreminnesota.com inspires and connects travelers with a vast amount of searchable travel information throughout Minnesota.

Our extensive Explore Minnesota extranet database features thousands of tourism businesses, organizations and events. Travel counselors and other staff use this information to provide customized travel planning for consumers.

Robust free listings are available to attractions, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, events and tourism promotion organizations (such as chambers and visitors bureaus). Listings can include general information about your business or event, descriptive copy, photos, videos, social channel sharing, links to your website, a Google map, and more!

Destination marketing organizations have ownership over their area's listings. For more information on listings and qualifications, see exploreminnesota.com/ourwebsite.

To set up a new listing account or have questions, please visit exploreminnesota.com/extranet or contact Anne Paterson at anne.paterson@state.mn.us or 651-539-5103.

Link to our Website

A reciprocal link will increase the likelihood of exploreminnesota.com AND your organization's ranking in search engines – potentially increasing your traffic from organic search results. In addition, linking to quality sites that are relevant to your content enhances a visitor's overall experience on your website.

Advertising Opportunities

ExploreMinnesota.com features a mobile-first, content-centric design to inspire travelers to discover all there is to see and do across our great state. Through this website, you will be able to reach highly qualified and engaged leisure visitors through advertising opportunities, including banner ads, featured business listings, lead generation and e-newsletter advertising.

For more information on these opportunities, contact Sebrina Williams with Miles Partnership, at sebrina.williams@milespartnership.com or 773-616-8176.

Travel Guide Lead Generation / Advertiser Leads Program

This opportunity is only available to Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). Gain exposure with Explore Minnesota's most qualified audience, as these potential visitors have shown an interest in receiving information about your destination by requesting a printed travel guide to be mailed to them directly by the DMO.

Visitors will receive a confirmation email from Explore Minnesota with a short custom message from each of the communities they requested. Participating partners receive an automated email daily with any leads and are responsible for fulfilling the requests by mailing each lead their travel guide.

For more information on this opportunity, contact Sebrina Williams with Miles Partnership, at sebrina.williams@milespartnership.com or 773-616-8176.

EVENT PARTNERSHIPS

Host a Governor's Opener

Explore Minnesota annually seeks host communities for annual Governor's fishing and hunting opener events. These high-visibility events attract large numbers of media — generating travel, sporting and lifestyle stories — and create a positive and lasting impact for the host communities through significant media exposure and coverage of these events. Convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce and resort associations may submit proposals to host these events.

For more information on the Governor's Openers, contact your [regional coordinator](#).

TOURISM MARKETING GRANT PROGRAM

Tourism Marketing Grants are available to eligible non-profit Minnesota organizations whose primary purpose is to promote its community or area as a tourism destination and/or has the promotion of its community or area as a tourism destination as a major part of its work.

For more information see exploreminnesota.com/grants or contact your [regional coordinator](#).

CO-OP PROGRAM

Looking to stretch your marketing budget further? Explore Minnesota's Co-op Program offers a collection of discounted and state-subsidized, turn-key marketing options. This program is perfect for Minnesota tourism businesses of all sizes, giving you the tools to:

- Get the most out of your marketing dollars: Our co-op options are a cost-effective way to promote your business.
- Test new marketing tactics with less risk: Explore a new marketing avenue without a significant investment.
- Gain access to prominent publications and campaigns: Reach a wider audience you might not be able to reach on your own.

The program is available to all Minnesota tourism-related businesses, such as: convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, tourism bureaus, lodging properties, attractions, outdoor recreation outfitters, theater/performing arts groups, museums, sightseeing companies, destination retailers, golf courses, hospitality businesses and events open to the public.

Find a detailed list of programs at exploreminnesota.com/coop or contact Derek Ramthun at derek.ramthun@state.mn.us or 612-231-3889.

ADVERTISING

Print

Amplify your message by purchasing a print ad with the state's official [**Minnesota Travel Guide**](#). This expertly produced guide is distributed to a variety of high-traffic areas and delivered to individuals that request it on exploreminnesota.com. We're proud to offer competitively priced ad space to our industry partners.

For more information on this opportunity, contact Sebrina Williams with Miles Partnership, at [**sebrina.williams@milespartnership.com**](mailto:sebrina.williams@milespartnership.com) or 773-616-8176.

Digital

In addition to free website listings (see above), there are paid opportunities for featured business listings and banner advertising both on the website and in e-newsletters to draw travelers to your destination.

- Native Banner Advertising – The new native advertising model on exploreminnesota.com is based on impressions over time and allows you to target your message by site content, season or geography.
- Featured Listings – Available for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and tourism businesses only, featured listings are displayed in a top-tier random sort order with premium positioning.
- E-newsletters – Align your banner advertisement with highly engaged audiences in our monthly and periodic newsletters.

For more information on this opportunity, contact Sebrina Williams with Miles Partnership, at [**sebrina.williams@milespartnership.com**](mailto:sebrina.williams@milespartnership.com) or 773-616-8176.

VISITOR SERVICES

Become an Affiliate Welcome Center

Dozens of community Welcome Centers across the state are designated as Explore Minnesota Affiliates. Explore Minnesota provides these centers with the use of the Explore Minnesota logo on signs and state travel brochures to distribute to visitors. Affiliate locations are also included in Explore Minnesota publications and promoted on exploreminnesota.com.

Contact Linda Vuicich at linda.vuicich@state.mn.us or 651-539-5801.

Free Travel Guide Distribution

Minnesota's communities, travel areas and non-profit attractions may have their Minnesota travel information distributed free of charge at Explore Minnesota's highway Welcome Centers. Brochures must be approved prior to distribution.

Contact Julie Ramer at julie.ramer@state.mn.us or 651-539-5105.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Group Tour Marketing

Group tour marketing focuses on travel professionals who conduct tours for groups of leisure travelers and primarily includes trade shows and advertising. Promotion is targeted to reach U.S. travel trade markets, including tour operators, package travel operators, group travel leaders and group tour media representatives.

For more information, contact Jennifer Schak, Market Development Manager, at jennifer.schak@state.mn.us or 651-757-1875.

International Marketing

Explore Minnesota's international marketing program increases consumer and trade awareness of Minnesota as a must-see travel destination and increases visitation from international markets. Primary markets include the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the Benelux region, and the Nordics region.

Marketing initiatives focus on inspiring travelers through innovative marketing techniques and unique storytelling about Minnesota's unique natural assets, art and culture.

For more information, contact Jennifer Schak, Market Development Manager, at jennifer.schak@state.mn.us or 651-757-1875.

International Media and Travel Trade

Explore Minnesota pitches story ideas and hosts familiarization (Fam) trips for domestic and international tour operators and international media representatives to familiarize them with destinations and provide information they need to develop travel programs or to publish travel stories.

For more information, contact Jennifer Schak, Market Development Manager, at jennifer.schak@state.mn.us or 651-757-1875.



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exploreminnesota.com/industry