“WHEREVER YOU GO BECOMES A PART OF YOU SOMEHOW.”
- ANITA DESAI
Greetings,

Minnesota tourism has continued to build momentum over the past several years, but it has never been more exciting than it is today. 2018 kicked off with one of the biggest events in the state’s history (Super Bowl LII), and that was only the beginning. New attractions like the Bell Museum and TopGolf opened their doors this year, a new scenic byway was established in Mille Lacs, and new hotels, restaurants and events in cities and towns across the state all contributed to increased visitation, spending and jobs in Minnesota’s leisure and hospitality sector.

In the latest evolution of the popular #OnlyinMN campaign, Explore Minnesota generated 3.5 million trips to Minnesota and more than $415 million in traveler spending. We engaged hundreds of thousands of people through social media, surpassing 1 million uses of the #OnlyinMN hashtag since its inception in 2014. And we made a big splash in places like Chicago, Denver, Kansas City and abroad with expanded public relations and advertising efforts.

On top of all this, we reached an all-time record private sector match of $14.2 million to further our marketing reach. Our co-ops and partnerships also grew to new heights.

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; engaged with millions of consumers through welcome centers, at trade shows and online; and reached a record number of prospective travelers through our website and other digital channels.

Looking forward to 2019 and beyond, the excitement around Minnesota continues to grow. Our new “Find Your True North” campaign, debuted by Gov. Tim Walz at the annual state tourism conference, is gaining traction as part of the larger North movement, inspiring even more people to experience firsthand what all the buzz is about.

The following 2018 Annual Report gives a quick look back at some of the things we accomplished this past year. Take a look and let us know what you think.

Thank you for all of your hard work this past year bringing both new and returning travelers to our great state and ensuring they leave with a smile on their face. Minnesota would not be the amazing destination that it is without you.

Here’s to another great year!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John F. Edman, Director
TOURISM INDUSTRY GROWTH IN BILLIONS

Sales at leisure and hospitality businesses grew more than 28% from 2011 to 2017.

2011
$11.9

2014
$13.6

2017
$15.3

SALES

Leisure & hospitality
$15.3
Billion in gross sales annually

Almost
$42
Million a day

REVENUE

$996
Million in state sales tax

18%
of total state sales tax revenue

JOBS

270,000+
Full- and part-time jobs

11%
of total private sector employment

$5.8
Billion in wages

Note: Sales, revenue and jobs data is for the leisure and hospitality sector, 2017. Data not available yet for 2018.
GENERAL FUND OPERATING BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEARS 2018-19:

$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.

Explore Minnesota generated a record amount of match dollars in FY18

PRIVATE INDUSTRY MATCH

Cash: $5 million

In Kind: $9.2 million

Total: $14.2 million

PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET

5% Welcome Centers

5% Partnership Grants

8% Industry Outreach

8% Market Development

12% Technology & Operations

62% Marketing & Communications
INNOVATIVE MARKETING AND BRAND AWARENESS

$415 MILLION
IN TRAVELER SPENDING

New TV spot debuted during Super Bowl broadcast
Increased winter advertising budget to leverage the Big Game

'Sota Pop activation attracted 35,000 visitors and
59 MILLION
in estimated audience reach

PLAN YOUR MINNESOTA VACATION AT EXPLOREMINNESOTA.COM.
CALL 1-888-847-4866 FOR MORE INFORMATION.
ADVERTISING MEDIA

The #OnlyinMN monument traveled to 11 locations statewide

Achieved a 10-TO-1 return on investment of Explore Minnesota spring/summer marketing

CO-OP

150 industry partners participated in

OVER 450 co-op marketing programs

MARKETING PARTNERS

KARE 11
FOX Sports NORTH
Minnesota Ski Area Association
Star Tribune
MPA
**CONSUMER REACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

**SURPASSED**

**1 MILLION**

USES OF #ONLYINMN

**SOCIAL MEDIA REACH**

143 MILLION
Total engagements 1.2 Million

Totaling more than

477,000
followers

Grew audience by

16%

Website visits

5 MILLION

Email subscribers

246,000

Generated roughly

4 BILLION
in estimated audience reach via internal and agency public relations

**HIGH-PROFILE STORY PLACEMENTS**

AP  MidwestLiving  Reader’s digest  NBC  The Washington Post  TRAVEL+LEISURE  THRILLIST

CREDIT: JESSICA BROUILLETTE, JENNY ANDERSON
202,000 Photos tagged with #OnlyinMN
500,000 likes
860,000 Story impressions

78.5 MILLION Impressions

1.6 MILLION Minutes of video viewed
PROVIDED PERSONALIZED CUSTOMER SERVICE TO NEARLY

4 MILLION

TRAVELERS

PERSONALIZED SERVICE

2.9 MILLION

Welcome Center visitors

Distributed over

1.8 MILLION

Minnesota travel publications and maps
“JOBS FILL YOUR POCKET, BUT ADVENTURES FILL YOUR SOUL.”

– JAMIE LYN BEATTY
STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

GOVERNOR’S OPENER EVENTS

MINNESOTA \textsuperscript{2018}
GOVERNOR’S FISHING OPENER
WILLMAR LAKES AREA

LUVERNE
Minnesota \textsuperscript{2018}
GOVERNOR’S PHEASANT HUNTING OPENER

MINNESOTA
GOVERNOR’S
18
DEER OPENER

TOURISM CONFERENCE

Held annual Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference at the Verizon Center in Mankato

GRANTS

$1.6 MILLION
in grants awarded to over 120 organizations
48% of awards went to Greater Minnesota

EVENTS

$900,000
awarded to 19 new events statewide

1.1 BILLION
in estimated audience reach and

1.7 MILLION
in ad value

GENERATED A COMBINED

EXPLORE MINNESOTA

EXPLORE MINNESOTA
MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Published 2018 Minnesota Group Planner

30 partners met with 52 clients at Group Tour Showcase

Successful sales missions to Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa

Exhibited at the American Bus Association show with 8 industry partners

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Strong partnership and board representation with Brand USA, which invested $200 million in global markets

456,800

international visitors (not including Canada)

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

TIMELY RESEARCH

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

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

Minnesota’s lodging industry experienced growth in all six tracked metrics, with 8.4% lodging revenue growth

Hosted 15 journalists from 10 countries