EXPLORE MINNESOTA℠

2018
ANNUAL REPORT

#ONLYINMN

"WHEREVER YOU GO BECOMES A PART OF YOU SOMEHOW."

- ANITA DESAI

CREDIT: ALYSSA HEI, BLK WLF PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE GREAT NORTHERN

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

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,

John F. Edman, Director

COVER: WAQAR AHMAD, LISA MCCLINTICK, JENNY ANDERSON, JESSICA BROUILLETTE, @WORLDPINS, @LINZ_LARSON, MALI MISH FAMILY, JENNIFER KOHLMAN

73 MILLION

VISITORS IN 2017

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

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

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

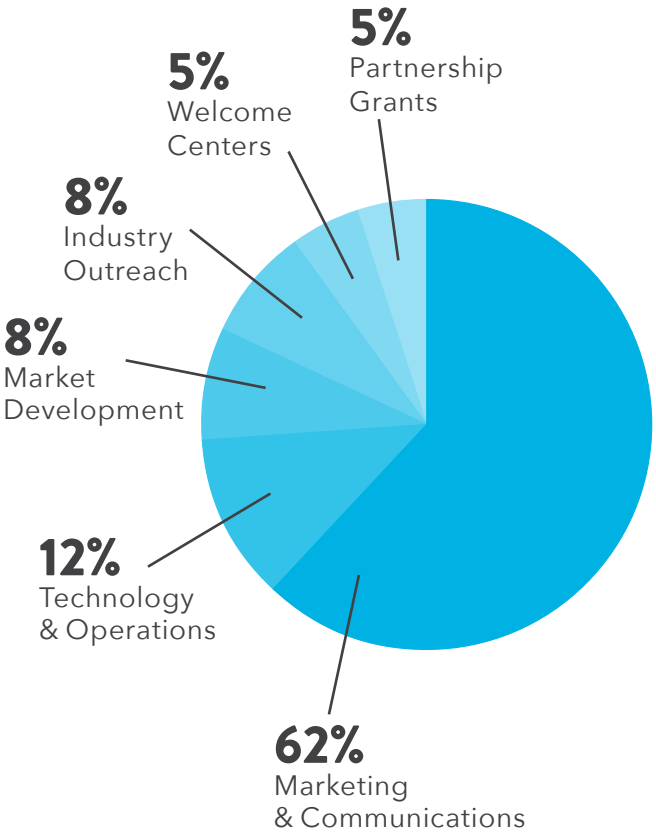
PRIVATE INDUSTRY MATCH

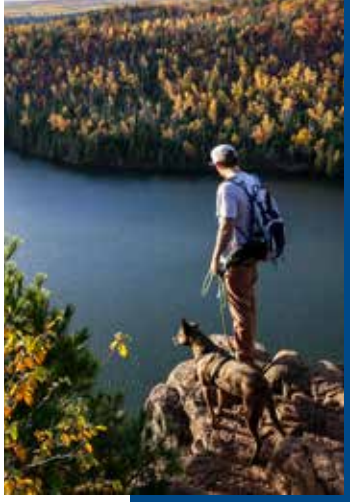
Cash: **$5 million**

In Kind: **$9.2 million**

Total: **$14.2 million**

PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET





CREDIT: ALYSSA HEI, JESSICA BROUILLETTE

INNOVATIVE MARKETING AND BRAND AWARENESS

GENERATED

$415 MILLION

IN TRAVELER SPENDING

MINNESOTA

SUPER BOWL LII HOST COMMITTEE

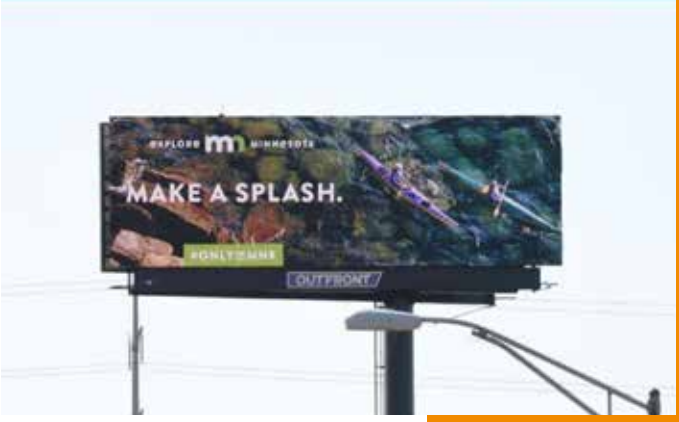
New TV spot debuted during Super Bowl broadcast

Increased winter advertising budget to leverage the Big Game

'Sota Pop activation attracted **35,000 visitors** and

59 MILLION

in estimated audience reach



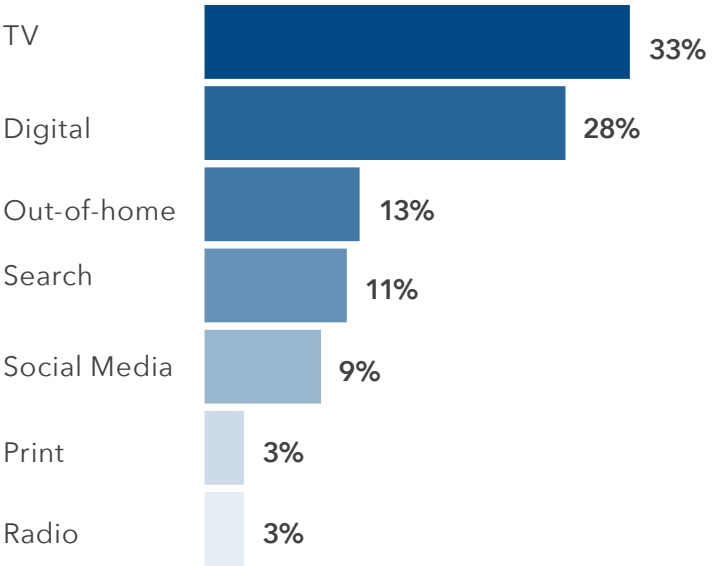
ADVERTISING MEDIA

Spring/Summer
70%

Fall
9%

Winter
21%

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



CO-OP

The #OnlyinMN monument traveled to **11 locations** statewide

150
industry partners participated in

OVER 450
co-op marketing programs

MARKETING PARTNERS

KARE 11 · FOX SPORTS NORTH · Minnesota Ski Areas Association · Minnesota United FC · Minnesota Public Radio · Mall of America · Minnesota Lynx · Minnesota Mallards · Minnesota Wild · Star Tribune · moa

CONSUMER REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

SURPASSED
1 MILLION
USES OF #ONLYINMN

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

143 MILLION
Total engagements **1.2 Million**

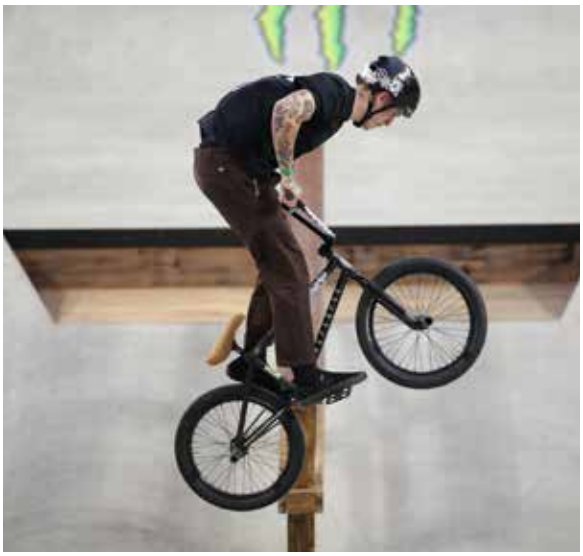
Totaling more than
477,000
followers

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



CREDIT: JESSICA BROUILLETTE, JENNY ANDERSON

HIGH-PROFILE STORY PLACEMENTS

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

INSTAGRAM

202,000

Photos tagged with **#OnlyinMN**

♥ **500,000** likes

860,000

Story impressions

TWITTER

78.5 MILLION

Impressions

FACEBOOK

1.6 MILLION

Minutes of video viewed

CREDIT: ALYSSA HEI, THE GREAT NORTHERN FESTIVAL, @TTAMY0000

PERSONALIZED SERVICE

PROVIDED PERSONALIZED CUSTOMER SERVICE TO NEARLY

4 MILLION

TRAVELERS

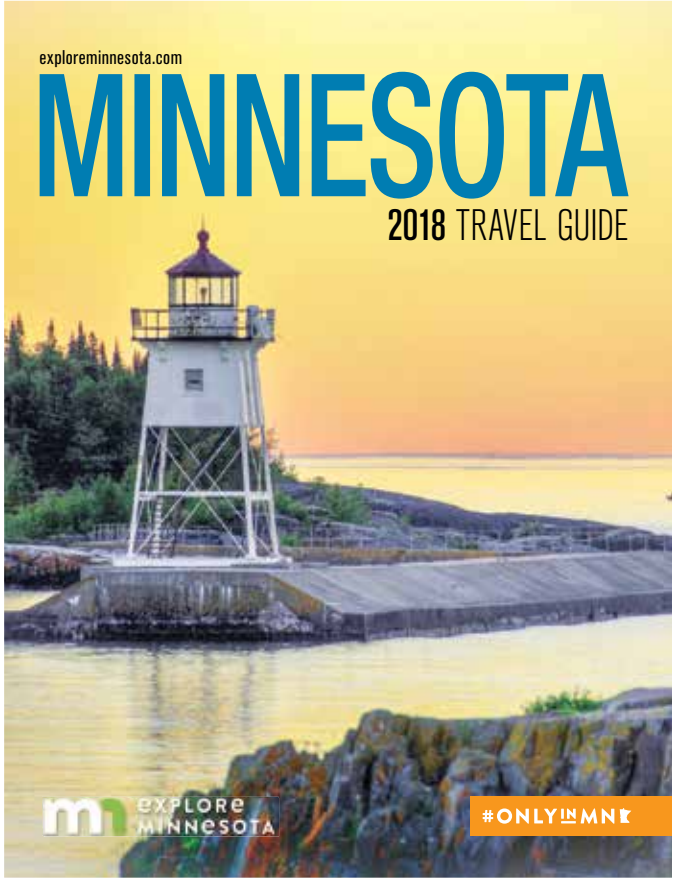
2.9 MILLION

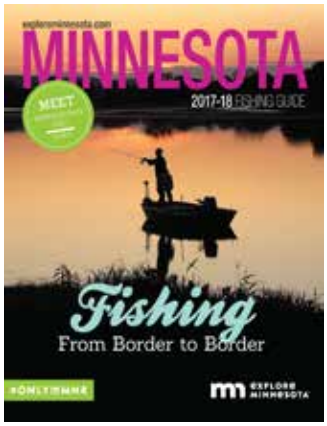
Welcome Center visitors

Distributed over

1.8 MILLION

Minnesota travel publications and maps





"JOBS FILL YOUR POCKET, BUT ADVENTURES FILL YOUR SOUL."

– JAMIE LYN BEATTY

CREDIT: COURTESY WALKER ART CENTER

STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

GOVERNOR'S OPENER EVENTS

MINNESOTA 2018
GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER
WILLMAR LAKES AREA

LUVERNE
Minnesota 2018
GOVERNOR'S PHEASANT HUNTING OPENER

MINNESOTA
GOVERNOR'S
18
DEER OPENER

TOURISM CONFERENCE

2018
EXPLORE MINNESOTA
TOURISM CONFERENCE
MANKATO | MARCH 6-7

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

GENERATED A COMBINED

1.1 BILLION

IN ESTIMATED AUDIENCE REACH AND

$1.7 MILLION

IN AD VALUE

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

Visit TheUSA.com

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**

523,600

Canadian overnight visitors

Hosted **15 journalists** from **10 countries**

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**

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