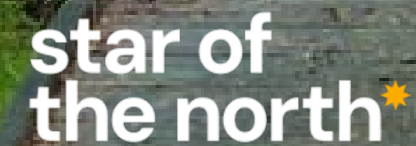


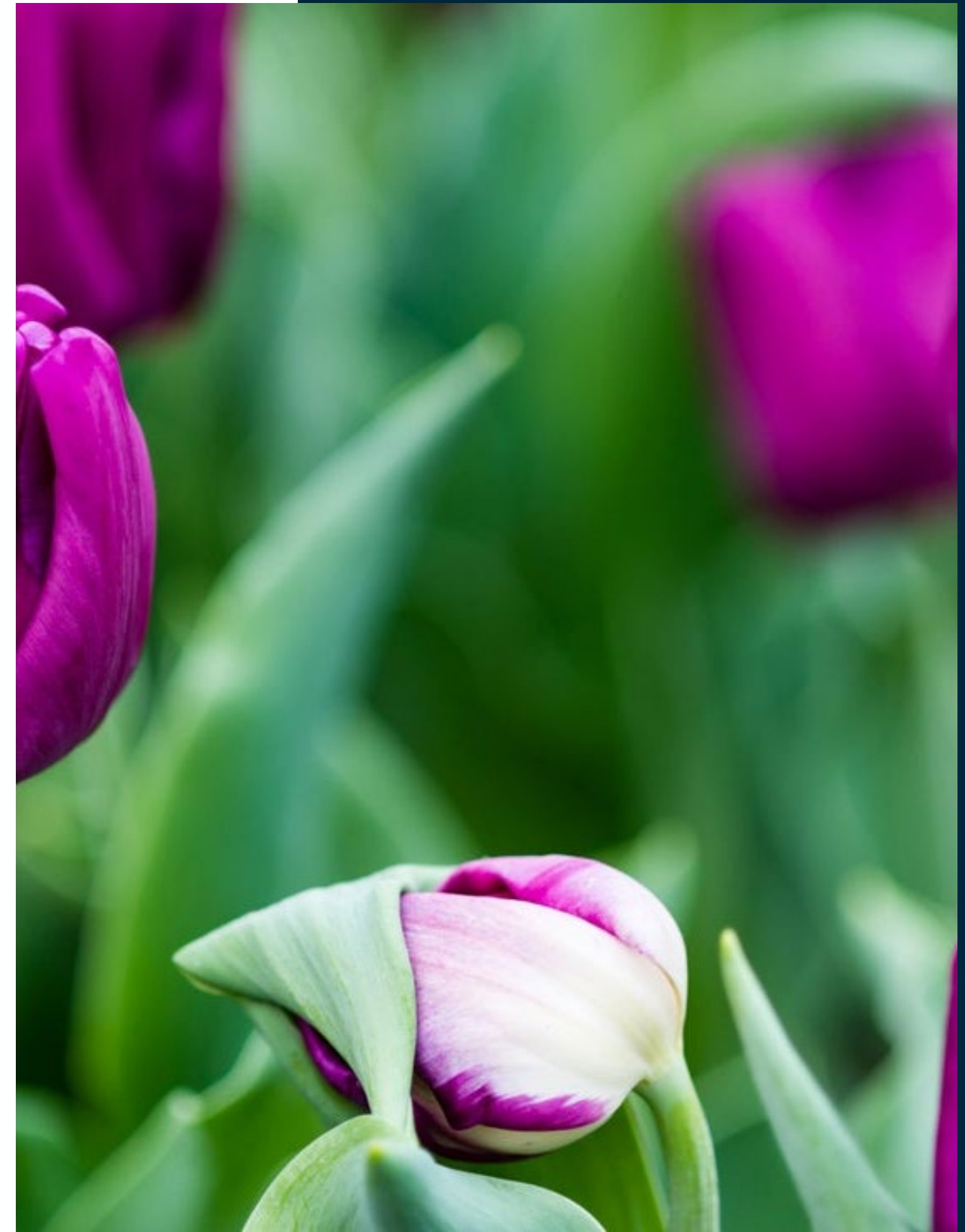
Explore Minnesota Tourism Council Meeting

March 4, 2025



Agenda

- 10:00 a.m. Welcome
- Approval of Minutes
- 10:05 a.m. Team Updates and Updates from Council Committees
- Destination Marketing
 - Marketing Committee Update
 - Livability Marketing
 - Livability Committee Update
 - Destination Development
 - Education / Industry Resources Committee Update
 - Outdoor Recreation
 - Outdoor Recreation Committee Update
 - Tribal Relations
 - Film
 - Legislative/Administrative
 - Legislative Committee Update
- 11:30 a.m. Adjourn





Welcome

- Approval of Minutes from December 10 meeting



Explore MN Updates

- Marketing
 - Marketing Committee Update
- Livability Marketing
 - Livability Committee Update
- Destination Development
 - Education / Industry Resources Committee Update
- Outdoor Recreation
 - Outdoor Recreation Committee Update
- Legislative/Administrative
 - Legislative Committee Update
- Tribal Liaison
- Film



Marketing

Kat Sutton

Deputy Director





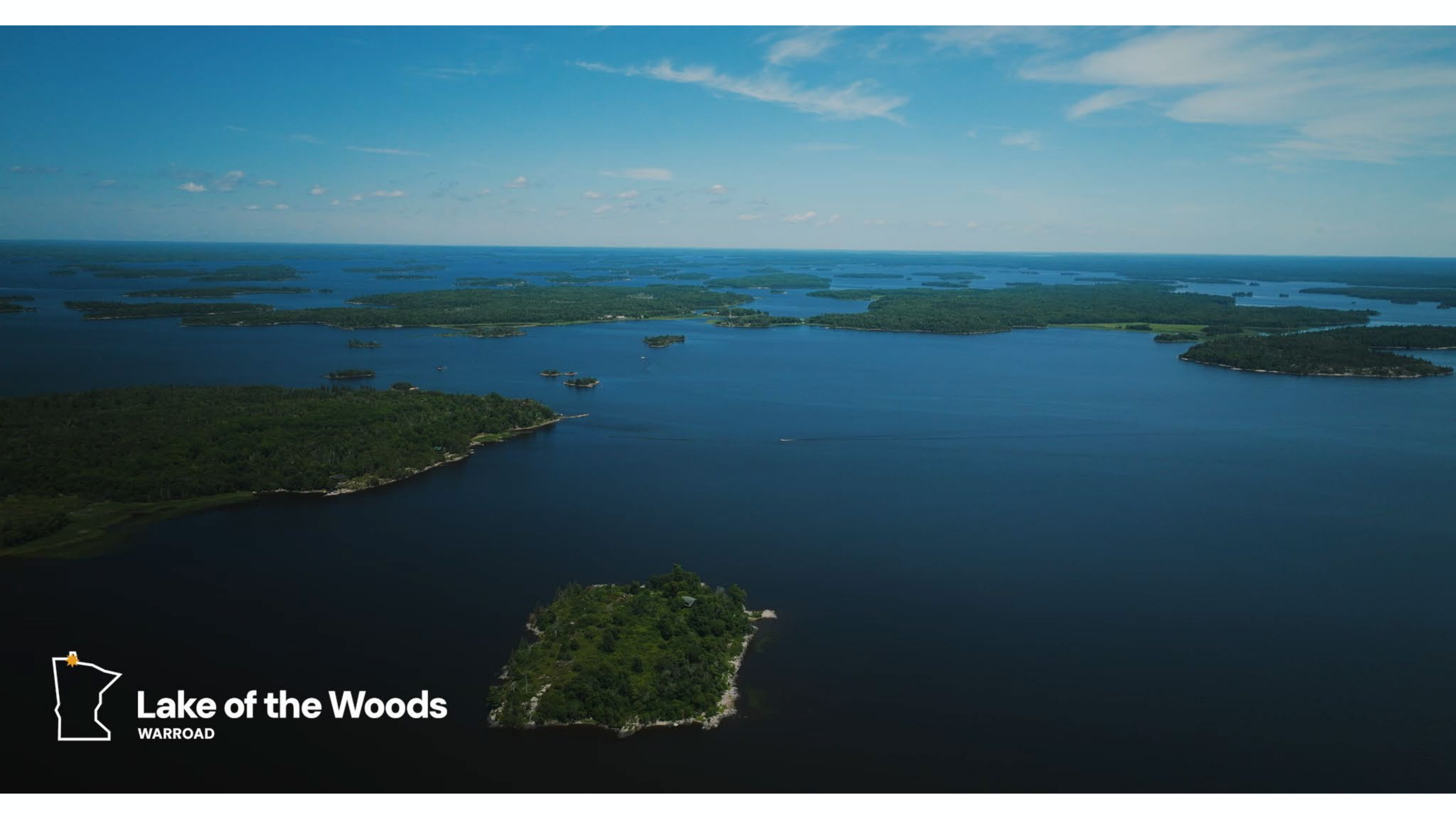
2025 summer campaign

- Debuts Mar. 10, runs through Jun. 30
- Special highlights: Voyageurs 50th anniversary, Prince's Purple Rain (key 2025 events)
- Tactics
 - Custom content packages with AFAR and Nativio
 - Programmatic video, native and display ads through vast array of media partners
 - Programmatic interactive display, TV, video, CTV
 - Facebook, Instagram and TikTok ads
 - YouTube: skippable and non-skippable ads
 - Flight market: Dallas, Texas
 - Includes TripAdvisor/Kayak Mobile rich media buy)



2025 summer niches

- Debuts Apr. 14, runs through Jun. 30
- Niches
 - Lake Life
 - Music Live Events/Food & Drink
 - National & State Parks
- Tactics
 - Programmatic video and radio
 - Instagram/Facebook/Tik Tok ads
 - Native display ads across vast array of media partners
 - YouTube: skippable and non-skippable
 - Sponsored articles and packages with *Rolling Stone*, *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *Travel + Leisure*



Lake of the Woods
WARROAD



Paisley Park
CHANHASSEN

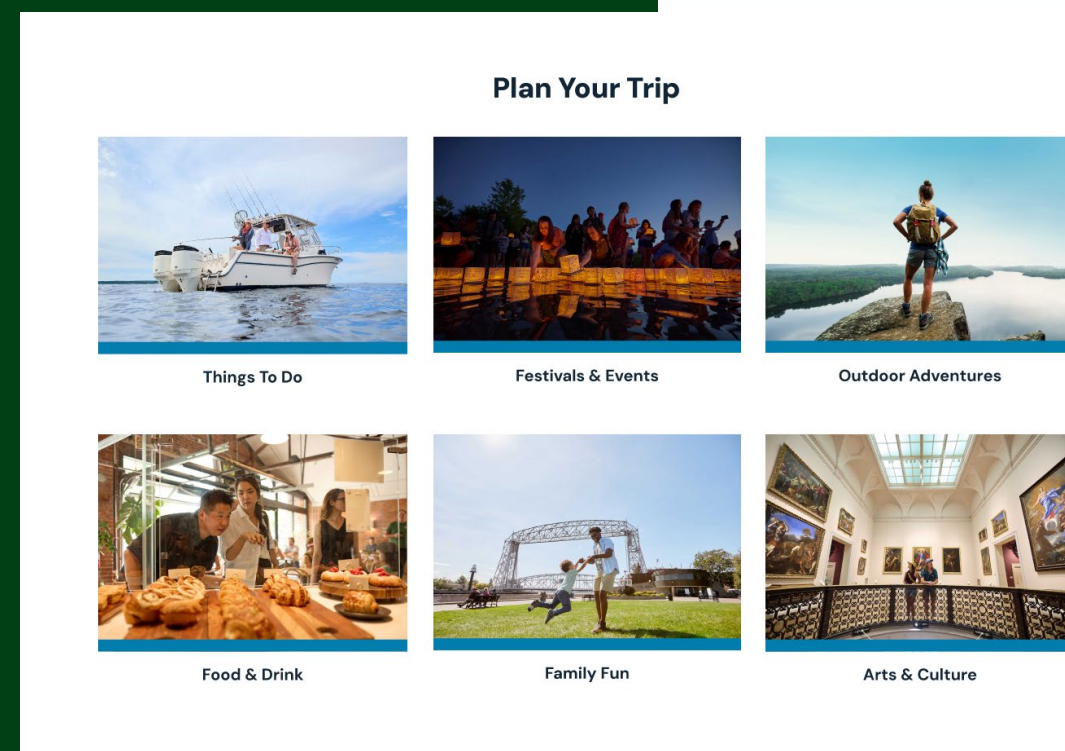
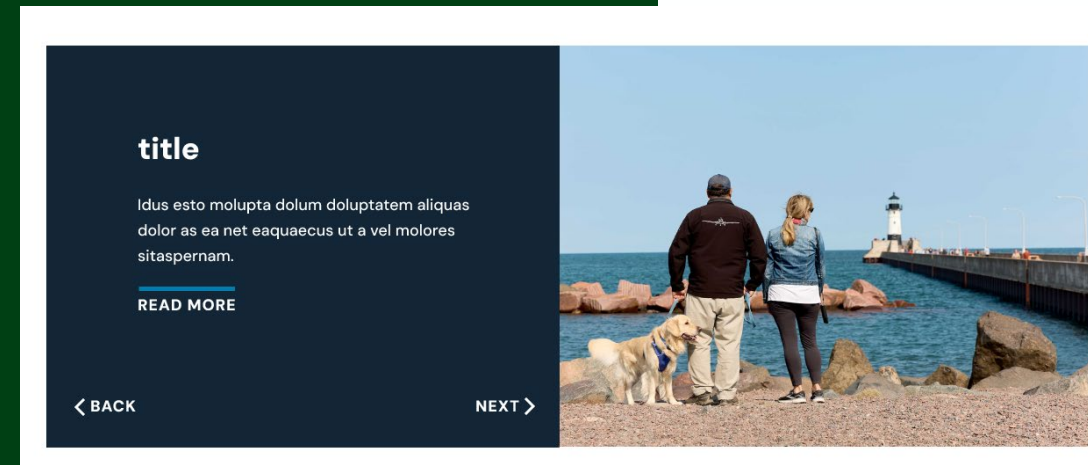
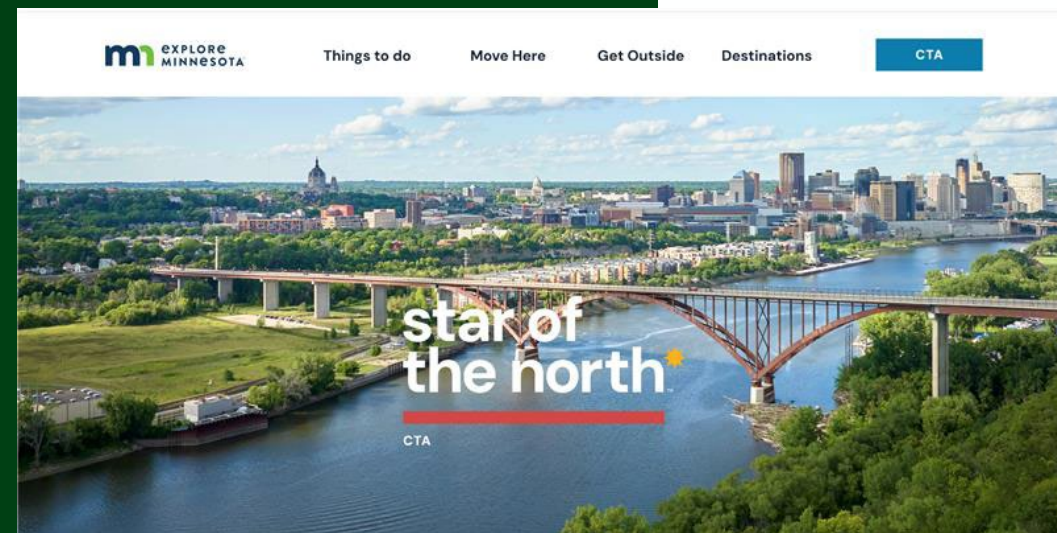


Boundary Waters Canoe Area



communications & media plans

- April IPT around Charli XCX highlighting Minnesota as a great place to debut or catch a U.S. tour
- Began pitching Voyageurs National Park anniversary
- Scoping summer national morning news program strategy
- Continued success in local PR strategy focusing on Fox 9 and Minnesota Live morning shows
- Planning phase for Purple Rain musical (Fall)

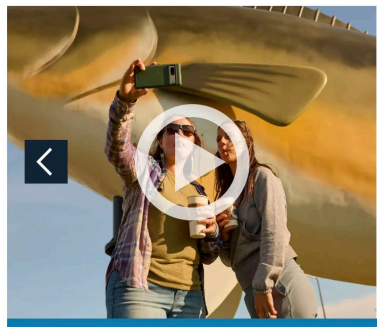


website facelift

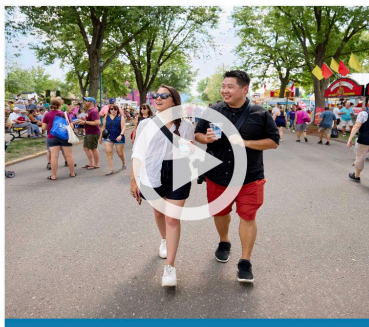
- Aging codebase, end-of-life version of Drupal + out-of-date design elements, branding → Refresh (but not rebuild).
- We will go 2 versions ahead, to Drupal 11.
- Overall priority to create an updated, sleek design alongside an improved user experience.
- Will be complete by FY26 (Jun. 30, 2025) and ensure a well-working website until the next legislative biennium (FY28).
- Saving state over \$700k in rebuild cost and later code updates.

Item 1 – Item 2 – Item 3 – **Item 4**

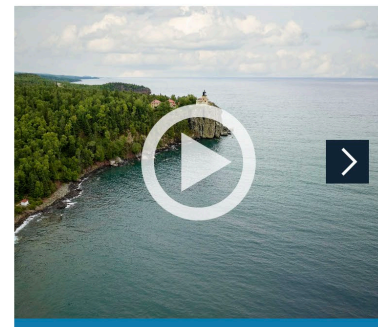
Itineraries



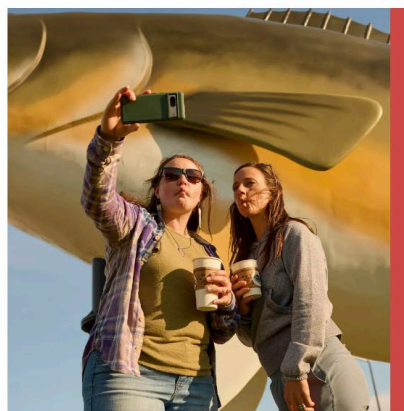
★
Minneapolis to
Lake of the Woods



★
Minneapolis to
the Iron Range



★
Minneapolis to
the North Shore



“Pull quote that is left aligned and uses a photo.”

website facelift

- Modular design elements prioritizing navigational clarity and design flexibility.
- Breadcrumb pathway structure for ease of use.
- Designed internally, with implementation by Miles Partnership. This both saved over \$200k and allowed us to make sure designs were internally consistent with campaign branding.
- New sitemap based on search and usage data and all-staff feedback.



Title

Idus esto molupta dolum
aliquas dolor as ea net.

MORE >



TAG

Title

Idus esto molupta dolum
doluptatem aliquas dolor as ea
net eaquaecus ut a vel molores
sitaspernam.

MORE >

website facelift

- Dovetails with end of audit project that started in summer 2023.
- Content will be evergreen for longer, with focus on showing in AI scrapes and encouraging clicks for deeper engagement.
- We aim for all content to be: IDAS – In-depth, authoritative and scannable.
- By using this framework, we are able to rank #1 on SERP for even newly-posted content, like [this IDAS article](#) that went live only a couple weeks ago.



brand sentiment research

- Update from 2021 commissioned with KRC (post murder of George Floyd, amidst COVID)
- Opportunity to understand changes over time, add new questions having to do with current climate and new travel modes
- Hope to reestablish baseline, serve as a brand foundation research for the next two biennium

niche planning & research

- What are we known for?
What can we own?
- What could we better establish ourselves to be known for?
- Research complete by May
 - ✓ Lakes
 - ✓ Fishing, incl. ice fishing
 - ✓ Biking
 - ✓ Winter outdoor recreation
 - ✓ Performing arts
 - ✓ Shopping
 - ✓ Live sporting events
 - ✓ Live events
 - ✓ State & national parks
 - ✓ Food culture (emerging)





winter 2026 sneak peek

- Friends Pete (a Wiscosinite turned Minnesotan) invites friends Victor (New York) and Jake (Palm Springs) to join him on a winter weekend in Minnesota
 - First “boys trip” documented
 - Focus on outdoor activities and indoor Minnesota winter charm
 - Alignment with livability marketing – Victor is moving here in Spring 2025!
 - Run in tandem with winter sports / food & drink niches

LOCATIONS

CENTRAL

- Pelican Lake for ice fishing and spearing
- Fat tire biking in Crosby (Red Raven Bike Store)
- Cuyuna Cove cabins
- Meat Raffle at Midway Bar

METRO

- Sauna Camp (Chanhassen)
- Brother Justus Whiskey Company
- **Dining:** The Nook, Marty's Deli, Bucheron



livability marketing

Kat Sutton

paid campaign continues until Jun. 30

- Continue to outperform benchmarks in CTV, Meta, and other paid partnerships
- Compiling deeper-level insights on best messages
- Considering additional audience and creative testing
- FY26-27 budget update



EXPLORE **m** MINNESOTA

life in minnesota



10 reasons minnesota is the best

explore mn newsletters 2.0

Gathered inspiration from:

- DMO newsletters
- MN newsletters
- Travel newsletters
- Media newsletters
- Out-of-the-Box Retail newsletters

Direction we're seeing newsletters move in:

- Adaptable and fluid schedule
- Longer format emails (rise of Substack)



Subscribe!

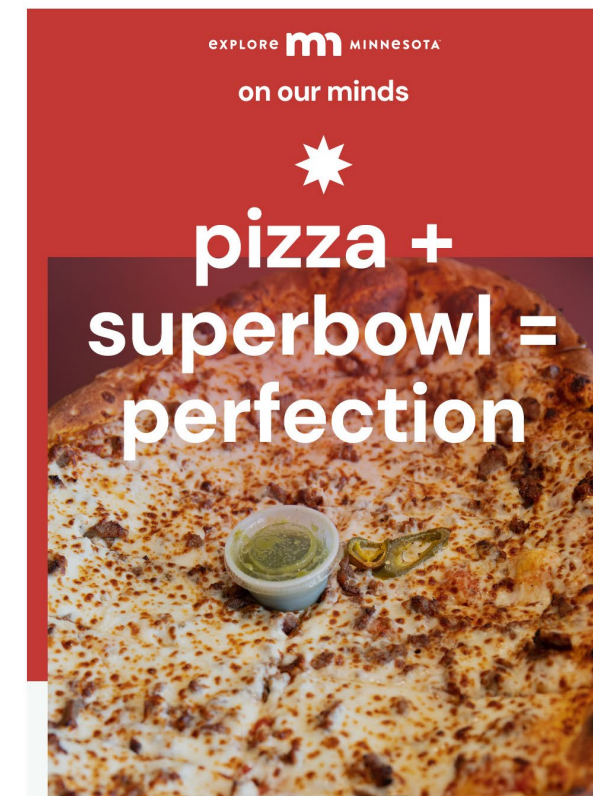
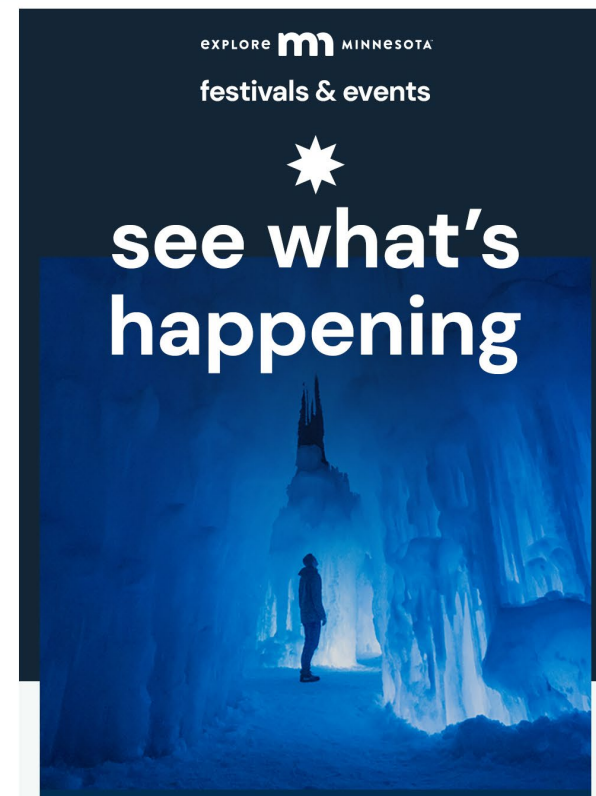
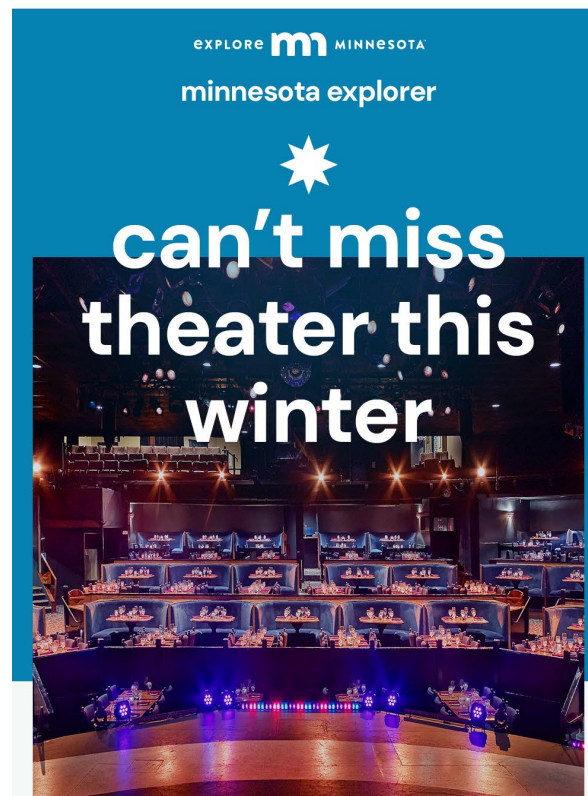
launching all 2.0 newsletters

4 Recurring Newsletters

- minnesota explorer
- minnesota outdoors
- festivals & events
- **life in minnesota**
 - Bi-monthly or when relevant
 - Storytelling format

4 Serialized Newsletters

- Seasonal
- Stars of the North
- On our Minds (re: to large one-off events)
- Partner



life in minnesota 2.0

Send Cadence

- 12 welcome flow emails introducing subscribers to Minnesota:
 - Welcome #1 – thank you for subscribing / intro to other newsletters
 - Welcome #2 – 10 reasons to move to Minnesota
 - Welcome #3 – introduction to Minnesota's four seasons
 - Welcome #4 – introduction to Minnesota's food & drinks scene
- Bi-monthly or as relevant (after welcome flow is complete)
- Optional re-targets to engaged subscribers

Newsletter Format

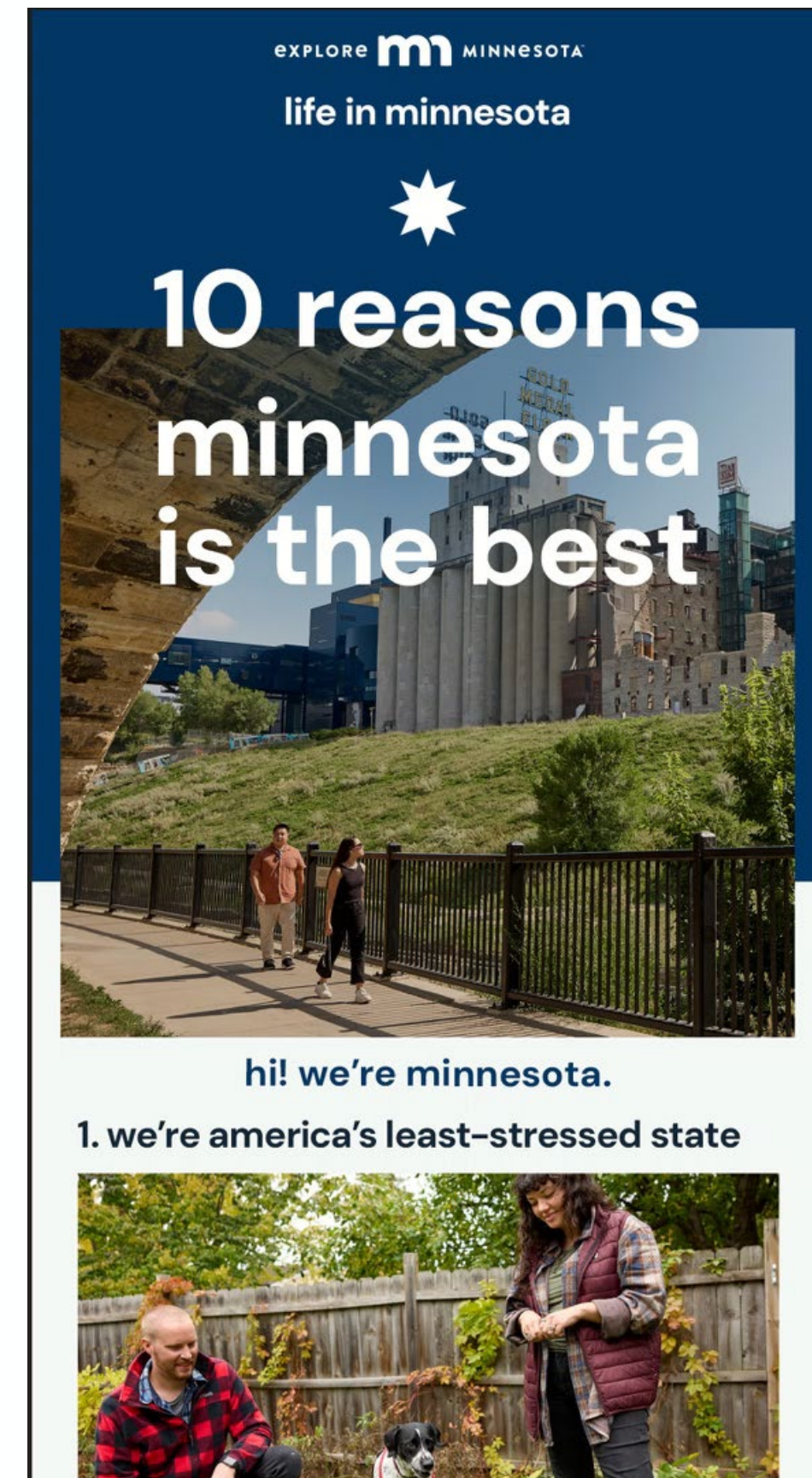
- Storytelling

Storytelling Content Options

- Guest experts
- Interviews
- Long format articles

Categories/Niches ft. in content:

- People in different industries and regions
- Life in MN stories



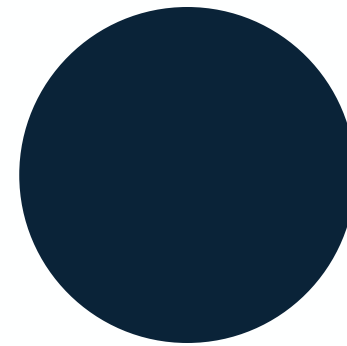


resident retention update

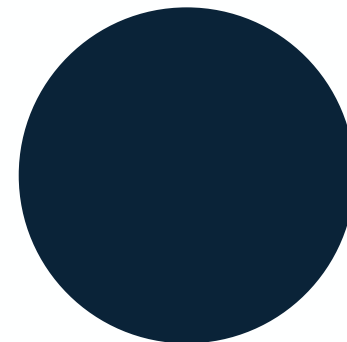
- Stakeholder meetings conducted:
 - ✓ Minnesota State Demographer
 - ✓ DEED / Workforce Development Team
 - ✓ Minnesota Department of Labor & Industry
 - ✓ Minnesota Department of Higher Education
 - ✓ Minnesota Department of Education
 - ✓ Explore Minnesota Tourism Livability Committee
 - ✓ Greater MSP
 - ✓ Minnesota Universities & Colleges (University of Minnesota, Metro State, Mankato State, St. Thomas)
- Extensive secondary research conducted
- Primary qualitative/quantitative research, including message testing, under consideration



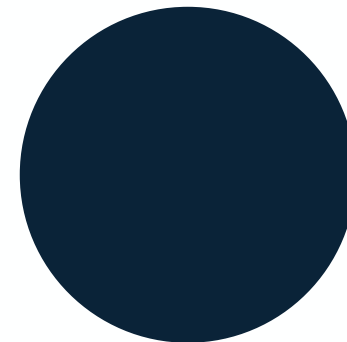
strategic thinking



Moving propensity among ages 16-25: we are working against national, non-Minnesota-specific trends



To stem, capitalize retention on state pride, guardian influence + "gravity" from surrounding states



To grow, expand our workforce attraction campaign to focus on recovery (boomerangs) who have higher likelihood to respond, result in much higher marketing spend ROI



retention and recovery audiences

launch May 2025 (6-8 weeks)

1. **In-State Young College Attendees / Graduates:** Young adults pursuing college; convince them to stay in Minnesota as and after they prepare for/begin career or post graduate endeavors.
2. **Out-state Boomerangs:** An extension of our existing nationwide workforce attraction campaign targeting previous Minnesota residents/natives ages 25-45; specific messaging to convince them to return to Minnesota



timeline & next steps

- Research: now thru March (complete)
- Stakeholder mapping: thru Jan (complete)
- **Kick-off with agency partners: February (in progress)**
- **Media plan, messaging, content & creative: now thru April (in progress)**
- **Launch internal pilot initiatives: May - June 2025**



destination development

Beth Helle

Deputy Director



2025 explore minnesota tourism conference

Minneapolis Convention Center, Feb. 18-19

565 Registrations

- In-Person attendance 393 registered
- Virtual attendance more than 172 registered

[Conference Recap with recordings posted on the Explore Minnesota Industry Website.](#)



visitor services & welcome centers

- Equipment upgrades at state-run welcome centers
- Move St Croix Welcome Center operation into the new facility (est. April).
- Identify AI interface for visitor services



industry relations

Scheduled Meetings and Events:

- 3/5 Excelsior Rotary Club presentation
- 3/5-7 Minnesota Festival & Events Association annual meeting
- 3/19 Visit Lakeville board presentation
- 5/7 Visit Lakeville annual meeting presentation
- 5/9-10 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener, Crosslake
 - *Note: 2026 GFO RFP to be released in Mar. Open for 8 weeks.*



market development

Partner Activities

- Brand USA optimized audience campaign India; Expedia partner bookings. (Mar. – April)
- Mississippi River Country Strategic Planning and Board Meeting. (Chicago, Mar. 6)
- Great Lakes USA/Cruise the Great Lakes Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors and Partners (Milwaukee, Mar. 17 – 19).
- Circle Wisconsin Midwest Marketplace (April 6-8, Dubuque, IA)



international marketing projects

- **Germany:** Article: Bob Dylan and Prince: How Music from Minnesota Went Around the World. (Mar.)
- **United Kingdom:** National Geographic Traveler Magazine Feature, Print and Digital. (Mar.)
- **France:** Marketing campaign with Evaneos travel. Web content, MN itinerary, social media, newsletter, and search engine ads. (Mar. - May)
- **Nordic**
 - **Icelandair campaign.** (Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway), newsletter and social media. (Mar. – May)
 - **Denmark:** FDM Campaign; website content, itineraries, and travel agent training. (Mar. – June)
 - **Sweden:** Swanson's Consumer Travel Show, Minnesota presentation (Mar. 1)
 - **SE/NO:** Ticket Travelz: newsletter, website content, and social media. (Mar. – April)



Outdoor Recreation

Randolph Briley

Deputy Director



first annual ORIP summit

- Planning for the First Annual MN Outdoor Industry Summit is in full swing
- Focus will be on the current economic impact of outdoor recreation
- 120 attendees
- Hyland Hills Chalet
- June 26, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Currently working on locking down the invitee list before circulating an invitation at the beginning of March.



comprehensive economic impact report

- The first-of-its-kind Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Report (COREIR) is still on track for a June release (at the Summit).
- We will have preliminary drafts in April.



outdoor industry advisory group

- ORIP is developing an Outdoor Industry Advisory Group to engage and inform the work of the partnership
- This group will have members from each region and each industry segment
- We are currently developing the charter and will be seeking members in the second half of 2025



2025 summit series

- The bi-annual ORIP Outreach Campaign commences July 1
- We'll host regional “mini summits” throughout the state for stakeholders who are unable to attend the June event
- Additionally, we will schedule meetings with local businesses and civic leaders to highlight the local importance of outdoor recreation



explore minnesota more

- The Explore Minnesota More Podcast is on its twentieth episode and we are showing no signs of slowing down
- We are currently contracting a producer to edit and mix the episodes for improved quality
- We also recently invested in top-of-the-line equipment for both in-studio interviews and field interviews



toolkits!

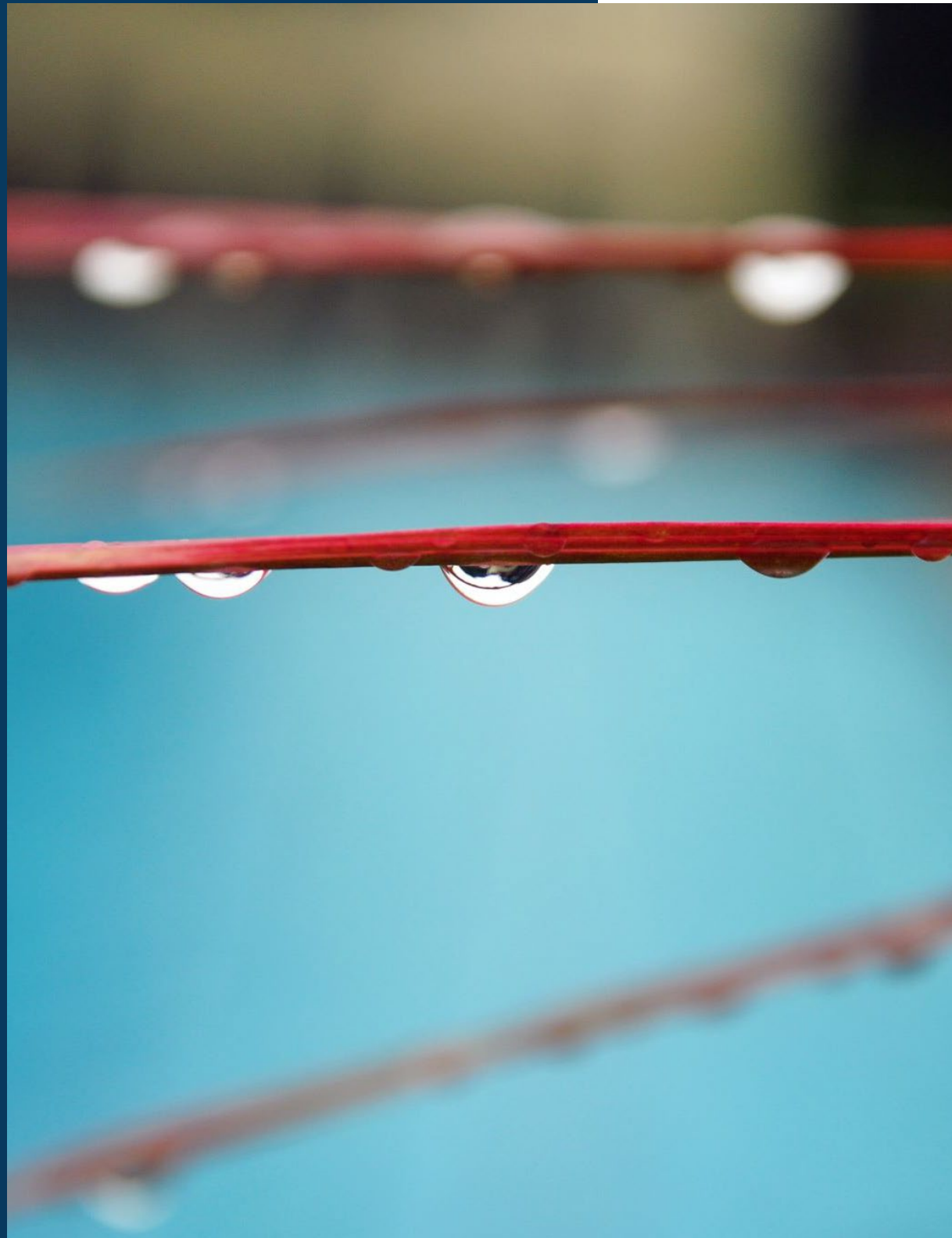
- ORIP is currently developing a set of toolkits for stakeholders
- One focused on outdoor recreation business development
- The other focused on outdoor recreation community development
- We hope to have these published for consumption prior to the summer summit.



Tribal Relations

Dawn Blanchard

Tribal Liaison



Tribal Relations

- Tribal Consultation Policy being finalized. After being put out to Tribes for comment and changes.
- Have requested Tribal Consultation dates from several Tribes. We hope to start consultations in June 2025.
- Requested feedback from the Tribes about adding Indigenous film to sizzle reel for future film conferences, festivals, etc.
- Tribal State Relations Training (TSRT) for FY2025 = 13 attended
- Tribal Nations Grant – FY2025 Six Tribes participating (Bois Forte, Red lake, Mille Lacs, Lower Sioux, Grand Portage, and Fond du Lac)
- Progressing with messaging to staff about giving Tribes enough time to weigh in on media regarding their history, issues, culture, or their lands and activities.



explore mn film

Melodie Bahan

Deputy Director



film ready communities

Elevating tourism and economic growth through the power of storytelling



WILSON
COMO TOWN, ST. PAUL

film ready communities

Steps to get started

Visit our website: exploreminnesota.com/film

Schedule your consultation call with Sarah Gebeke

Take the steps to proudly join Minnesota's network of Film Ready Communities!

explore minnesota's movie magic with SetJetters

★ *Rescuing Christmas*
DULUTH

READY TO EXPLORE THE SCENES OF YOUR FAVORITE FILMS?

Download the free
SetJetters app and
take the ultimate
film-inspired journey—
right in your backyard.



m EXPLORE
MINNESOTA
FILM

SetJetters
From Reel to Real

Step into the
scenes of iconic
movies filmed
in Minnesota.



★ *Wilson*
COMO TOWN, ST. PAUL

Share your
experience:
#onlyinmn
#setjetters



★ *Dear White People*
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA CAMPUS,
MINNEAPOLIS

Explore real-world
locations where
your favorite
Minnesota-made
movies came to life.



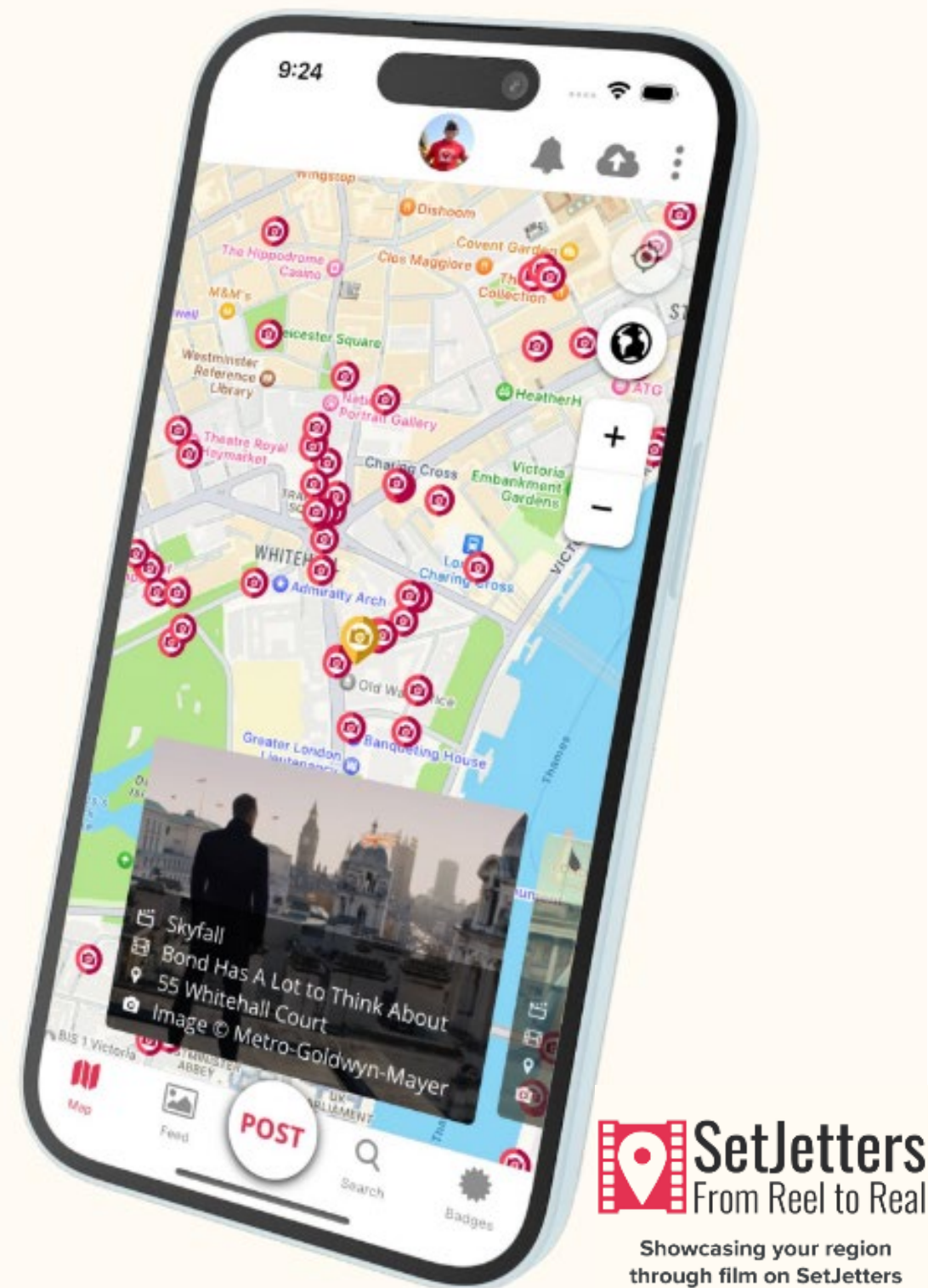
★ *North Country*
EVELETH AUDITORIUM, EVELETH

film tourism

A platform for film lovers to discover and visit filming locations.

www.setjetters.com

- Minnesota scene locations
- Strengthens Minnesota's brand as a destination for film tourism
- Promotes local businesses





legislative / administrative updates

Lauren Bennett McGinty

Executive Director



committee hearings

Explore MN has presented our agency overview in:

- House Workforce, Labor & Economic Development Finance & Policy Committee
- Senate Jobs & Economic Development Committee

The February forecast will be released on Thursday, March 6.



2025 council meeting schedule

- ✓ Tuesday, Mar. 4 (virtual – 10 a.m.)
- Tuesday, Jun. 3 (hybrid – 10:30 a.m.)
- Tuesday, Sep. 16 (virtual – 10 a.m.)
- Tuesday, Dec. 9 (virtual – 10 a.m.)

thank you!



star of
the north[★]

