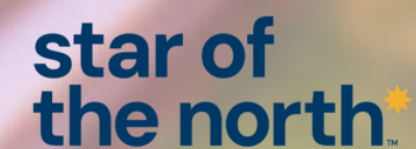


explore minnesota tourism council meeting

September 16, 2025



agenda

10:00 a.m.: Welcome / Approval of Minutes

10:05 a.m.: Explore Minnesota Q2 look forward

- Travel + Livability Marketing (Destination Marketing)
- Education + Industry Engagement + International Marketing (Destination Development)
- Outdoor Recreation
- Tribal Liaison
- Film
- Legislative/Administrative

11:30 a.m.: Adjourn





marketing

- >> Committee update
- >> Department look-ahead

Presented by: Kat Sutton, *Deputy Director*



public relations RFP

- 5+ year contract RFP cycle
- 15+ organizations submitted by deadline; two rounds of evaluation
- Goal to announce new contract by November

Seeking a partner who will...

- Elevate Minnesota's profile as the best state to visit, as well as live and work
- Increase visibility of outdoor recreation, cultural experiences, family adventures, and urban/nature access across the entire state
- Deliver creative, bold ideas that break through the noise and offer measurable value for Minnesota tourism



paint the town purple

- **What:** Purple Rain the Musical debut press trip in partnership with Meet Minneapolis (early Nov.); includes pre-Broadway premiere, Paisely Park, First Ave, culinary highlights
- **Goal:** Highlight Minneapolis and Minnesota as music and cultural destination
- **Journalists traveling from:**
 - Ebony/Essence (Freelance)
 - NYTimes/Rolling Stone (Freelance)
 - The Root
 - RANGE Magazine
 - The Grio
 - Washington Post
 - Lonely Planet

FARM AID



SEPTEMBER 20, 2025
MINNEAPOLIS, MN

WILLIE NELSON & FAMILY
NEIL YOUNG AND THE CHROME HEARTS
JOHN MELLENCAMP
DAVE MATTHEWS & TIM REYNOLDS
MARGO PRICE
BILLY STRINGS
NATHANIEL RATELIFF AND THE NIGHT SW
TRAMPLED BY TURTLES • WAXAHATCH
ERIC BURTON OF BLACK PUMAS
JESSE WELLS • MADELINE EDWARDS

THE USA CYCLING
GRAVEL NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHAMPIONED BY EXPLORE MINNESOTA



new event partnerships

- **Farm Aid 40 (Sept 20)** brand, logo and content integration across festival comms, lanyards, concession menus, digital signage, social media with a featured branded selfie spot, travel guide distribution and more.
- **2025 Gravel National Championship / Explore La Crosse - La Crescent (Sept 20)** brand visibility throughout the event and inclusion within press releases, race bibs, commemorative posters, website, on-course signage, PA announcements, and more.
- **Professional Golfers' Association (PGA)** community Partner of the 2026 KPMG Women's Championship Cup in Hazeltine with digital media assets running throughout 2025 and 2026, inviting golf fans across the country / world to visit Minnesota. *Begins in October.*

new sports partnerships



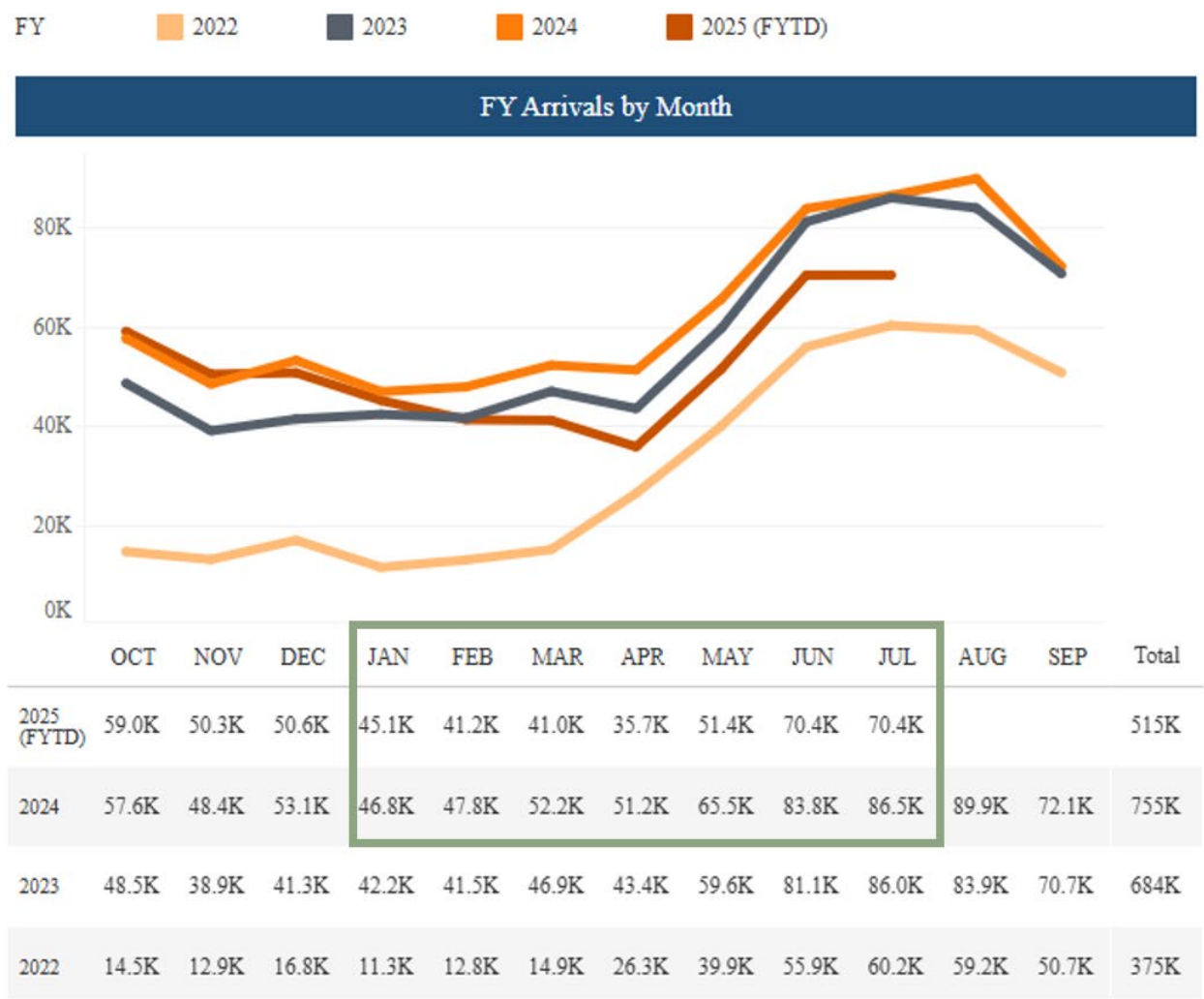
Signage on display at MOA before championships;
at Rice Park during championships

- **World Junior Hockey Championship (Dec. 26 – Jan. 6)** we love hockey fan photo-op, digital campaign, social media, fan guide, sponsored Minnesota movie watch party at RiverCentre.
- **Badger Sports Properties** football radio spots, basketball baseline LED TV-visible signage, Minnesota Gameday sweepstakes, video spots running across campus
- **UND Fighting Hawks Men's Hockey** includes in-arena signage, Minnesota Gameday sweepstakes, radio spots, featured name mentions.
- **Chicago Bears partnership in the works!**

canada update

- Cancelled social buys, but secured broadcast spots (June), engaged GO on welcome statement (July)
- Conducting another in-state sentiment survey with Canada questions in September, results available in October

Year to date through July, Canadian arrivals to MN down 18% YoY in 2025 relative to 2024



Source: U.S. Customs & Border Protection



media buy shifts

Bundle niche strategy into outdoor interests and culture-based interests, alongside traditional regional brand campaign

WHY?

- Culmination of research & new media buyer
- Concentrate on gravity (regional affinity, multiple trips) & high ROI markets (likely to spend more time, money in Minnesota) + some “tastemakers”
- Headwinds-proof with likelihood of more consumer road trips, trips closer to home

Implementation in winter 2025/2026 campaign

sneak peek: winter



how livability work lives on

- Organic assets remain live and updated, optimized
- SEM campaign remains live
- Messaging toolkit and practices to debut this fall
- MN higher ed messaging framework & article(s)
- Additional strategies, incl. with key partners, to launch in CY2026





destination development

- >> Committee update
- >> Department look-ahead

Presented by: Beth Helle, *Deputy Director*



education subcommittee

Education resources bank compilation and organization

2026 Tourism Conference: Duluth, DECC, Feb. 11-12

- Sponsorships now open
- Registration, scholarships, mentors, open September
- 17 keynote and breakout sessions



industry relations

- New metro regional rep, Chelsea Fey
- Annual industry survey findings
- FY26 grant status
- FY26 co-op program status



industry relations

- Sep/Oct/Nov Regional Meetings, virtual
- 9/8-10 UMCVB Annual Conference, WI
- 9/11 Byway Alliance Meeting, Morton
- 9/17 State of the Range, Virginia
- 9/18 State of the Airport Luncheon, Minneapolis
- 9/25 Experience Rochester event, St. Paul
- 9/26-27 Doors Open Duluth
- 9/30 MNDOT Corridor Planning PAC Meeting, virtual
- 10/1-3 MNTA Fall Conference/Annual Meeting, Bemidji
- 10/5-7 Hospitality MN 2025 Conference, Duluth
- 10/24-26 CMR Fall Conference, Bemidji
- 10/30 Visit Cook County Fall Gala, Grand Portage
- 11/13 MNDOT Corridor Planning PAC Meeting, virtual



market development

- Brand USA Travel Week, London, Oct. 20-23, 2025
- Registration for IPW 2026; possible industry participation
- New International Trade and Media Newsletter
- Group tour meeting scheduled before November 15
- Leisure Group Travel Magazine, MN section/industry co-op, October issue
- RonReizen – NL TV airs, filmed June 2025
- Wideoyster – NL/DE publish from June 2025
- America Journal/DE, published article for Oct print



welcome centers/visitor services

- St. Croix reopened July 28; August traffic counts around 1K/day
- Security systems and traffic counter updates
- Relocation resources for welcome center teams
- U of M customer service training for teams; reviewing for feedback
- 2 PT openings: Thompson Hill & St. Croix



outdoor recreation

- >> Committee update
- >> Department look-ahead

Presented by: Randolph Briley, *Deputy Director*



outdoor recreation committee update

- Topics for discussion included:
 - Overview of the Outdoor Recreation Industry Economic Impact Report
 - Outreach and engagement for the remainder of 2025 - 2026
 - Working group support and input for ORIP's 5-Year Strategic Roadmap + 2026 Annual Summit (Sept. 25)



ORIP updates

- **Annual Summit 2026 (Sept. '26)**
 - Upcoming work on programming and sponsorships
- **Outdoor Industry Economic Impact Report**
 - The recently-released impact report will be updated in November based on the latest BEA numbers
 - Communications campaign to highlight the growing industry
- **Outdoor Outreach Campaign '25-'26**
 - Upcoming meetings include Rochester (October), Fergus Falls (November), Winona (December)



strategic updates

- **5-Year Strategic Roadmap**
 - Drafting early 2026 for release at the September Summit
- **Explore Minnesota More**
 - CLN Media extended through FY26
 - Upcoming episodes: State Fair Listener Stories, Fishing for Native Fish on the Mississippi, Adult-Onset Pheasant Hunters, Importance of Public Lands
 - Goal is to begin transitioning into more field/video content and collaborate with other EMN divisions on content.



Tribal Relations

Dawn Blanchard

Tribal Liaison



Tribal Relations

Completed five (5) of nine (9) Tribal consultations for CY2025.

- Upper Sioux, Lower Sioux, Mille Lacs Band, Grand Portage, White Earth Nation
- October and November: Red Lake, Bois Forte, Leech Lake, and Prairie Island
 - Tribes declining consultation: Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and Fond du lac Band

Ideas from consultations:

- More educational, historical, and language references
- Tribal Travel Guide
- Refining the Film Production Guide
- Tribal Tourism Office/Organization
- Assisting Tribes in finding the proper place/agency to develop signage and materials specific to outdoor recreation and land preservation/conservation for the non-Indian community.



explore mn film

Sarah Gebeke

Production Liaison



tax incentive

Three new productions July and September 2025 —feature film, episodic documentary series, and a slate of commercials

in state updates

- Ongoing collaboration with Minnesota Film Alliance, a state-wide non-profit trade association representing the state's film, episodic, and digital content production industry
- 14 certified Film-Ready communities
- July - FilmNorth Grand Opening – Saint Paul
- October - Twin Cities Film Festival (TCFF) – Saint Louis Park

industry outreach

- August - Conversations with Action! Wisconsin and Iowa Film Office
- September - Gotham Week, New York Film Festival (NYFF) – New York, NY and Association of Film Commissioners International Conference (AFCI) – Cincinnati, OH



legislative updates

Executive Director, Lauren Bennett McGinty

- Policy Proposals have been submitted to the Governor's office for review
- EMN Film and updates to our Councils
- First day of Session is February 17, 2026



2025 council meeting schedule

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

2026 Council meeting dates will be shared soon!

thank you!

