

**Explore Minnesota for Business Council Meeting**  
**Thursday, July 17, 2025**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Attendees**

**Council Members:** Michael Flynn, Pamela Schechtman, Tawnya Stewart, Amanda Taylor, Denise Williams

**Explore Minnesota and DEED Staff:** Marya Barsanti, Lauren Bennett McGinty, Frances Fyten, Karina Hill, Kevin McKinnon

**Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

- The Council voted to approve the minutes from the April 15, 2025, meeting.

**Workforce Attraction Campaign Update**

- The campaign ended June 30, 2025, with June seeing the highest ever web traffic and significant increases in overall performance.
- Tourism campaigns were helping drive growth in livability and talent attraction campaigns (and vice versa).
  - A new tourism campaign was launched in March 2025.
- The workforce attraction campaign targeted the mid-career demographic, especially “boomerangs” who are from MN and may want to return to MN.
- There has been a lot of good PR for the state, including some new high rankings for MN related to tourism and livability.
- There were over 2,300 newsletter signups between March and May 2025.
- The campaign exceeded benchmarks in all areas (consideration, awareness, intent, retargeting, click-through, etc.)
- Explore MN conducted testing to assess the performance of messaging.
  - Testing was intended to demonstrate the potential for growth in future campaigns if additional funding is made available.
  - 8 of 10 viewers tested said they had a favorable reaction (across all formats).
  - Prospective residents said they were drawn to MN’s natural beauty, strong sense of community, family-friendly environment, and career opportunities.
  - Significant majorities said ads were believable and appealing and inspired them to consider moving to MN.
  - The Star of the North concept resonated with prospective residents, who felt it helps MN stand out in the region and the country as a top place to visit and live.

**Business Attraction Campaign Update**

- The campaign ended on June 30, 2025; the second quarter of 2025 showed decreased traffic for this campaign.
  - Headwinds in the economy may have impacted performance; it will be important to monitor the impact of the economy on any potential future campaigns if

- additional funding is made available.
- DEED Economic Development hired a marketing coordinator to coordinate and work collaboratively across programs.
  - This position is funded federally for approximately the next 18 months.

### **Resident Retention Pilot Update**

- Initial results from this pilot were very positive.
- The campaign targeted in-state young adults in their final year of college and recent college graduates to reach them when they are making decisions about the future.
- The campaign was focused on college campuses and digital marketing platforms.
- There were over 24,000 sessions during the pilot with 2 minutes and 34 seconds average time on site (over a minute higher than benchmark).

### **FY26 Planning Update**

- The legislature did not approve additional new / permanent base budget funding for Explore Minnesota for Business.
- Limited funding will carry forward to the new biennium to fund organic content (web, social, newsletter drip campaign) and limited paid content (SEM, LinkedIn, etc.) , as well as PR efforts.
- Explore MN and DEED will continue to pursue earned media and PR opportunities for livability messaging; Explore MN's staff videographer will work to refresh content.
- Explore MN will focus on branding alignment for out-of-state marketing across state agencies.
- Explore MN will continue to engage with colleges and universities to develop and support messaging around attracting in-state and out-of-state students to attend MN institutions of higher education.
- Explore MN will conduct stakeholder outreach in several communities across the state.
- An increasing number of requests have been received from cities, counties, and destination marketing organizations who want to use Explore MN's branding.
  - A toolkit is being developed to meet this demand.
- External organizations are encouraged to share ideas with Explore MN that may help amplify events, positive news about the state, and the messaging of these campaigns.
  - Any information can be sent to [frances.fyten@state.mn.us](mailto:frances.fyten@state.mn.us).
  - Organizations are encouraged to consider including this email on PR lists.

### **Coming Up**

- Several Council seats are open:
  - Minnesota Tribal Leadership Representative
  - Minnesota's Ethnic Chambers of Commerce Leadership Representative
  - Representative in Marketing, Human Resources, or Executive Leadership from Minnesota-Based Companies with more than 100 Employees Representing Minnesota's Key Industries

### **Future Council Meeting Dates:**

- Tuesday, October 14 (virtual – 1-2 p.m.)