

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL



Host the Minnesota Governor's
Pheasant Hunting Opener
October 10-11, 2025

m EXPLORE
MINNESOTA™

MINNESOTA GOVERNOR'S PHEASANT HUNTING OPENER EVENT

Explore Minnesota is seeking proposals from communities interested in hosting the 2025 Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener (GPHO). This event is a cooperative effort between the host community, Explore Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the office of the Minnesota Governor (GOV).

Through several high-visibility events specifically for outdoor and general media, the Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Opener can help elevate visitor awareness of the host community and create a lasting local impact. Please consider your community's marketing, media relations and civic goals, and how hosting this significant event can help achieve your objectives.

Event Overview and Background Information

The Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener (GPHO) was established in 2011 by Governor Mark Dayton. The GPHO is held annually in October on the opening of the Minnesota pheasant hunting season. This document outlines the basic goals and responsibilities of hosting the Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener (GPHO).

Event Goals

- Promote the intersection of tourism, outdoor recreation, and hunting/hunting-related activities to the general public.
- Introduce and promote pheasant hunting to a broad and diverse cross-section of Minnesotans.
- Highlight the many benefits of public and private grasslands in Minnesota and tie to Governor's conservation and climate agendas.
- Build and maintain short-term and long-term relationships with communities, stakeholders, and elected leaders.

Community Benefits of Hosting the Event

The GPHO provides the host community with an opportunity to highlight area hunting and other outdoor recreational activities, tourism attractions, and points of interest. Numerous media outlets attend the event and generate countless media placements, stories, social media and reels that appear locally, regionally, and nationally. The event creates earned media exposure for the host community before, during and long after the event has concluded.

Invited Guests

All GPHO guests must register in advance and be approved to participate. Estimated attendance includes 50 Media, 25 state agency staff, 25 legislative invitees, 50 hunter hosts, 20 community invites and/or sponsors. Explore Minnesota will assist the host organization in setting up event registration and payments. Invited media receive complimentary registration, whereas all other invited guests pay to attend the event and cover their own lodging and meals.

Eligible Host Community

Eligible community organizations that may apply to host the event include chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, resort associations, cities and municipalities, or a committee formed specifically for the purpose of hosting the event.

Agreement

A formal agreement between the host community organization, Explore Minnesota and DNR, solidifies the promotion and participation for the GPHO event. Explore Minnesota will present the agreement to each entity for review and signature. Once signed by all partners, copies of the agreement will be given to each entity.

CORE EVENT COMPONENTS

Listed are the core components of the GPHO that a host community, working with Explore Minnesota and DNR, are responsible for coordinating.

Friday

- **Registration – Friday:** The host community/organization is responsible for registration on Friday, including the location and coordination of attendee check-in. Explore Minnesota will coordinate the event website and online event registration system. Individual registration fees collected through this system will be paid directly to the sponsoring organization via their credit card processor.
- **Public Land Ceremony/Community Dedication - Friday:** It has become a tradition, but not a requirement of the GPHO, to hold a public land ceremony or community dedication. This is an opportunity to highlight and celebrate a recently purchased piece of public land open to hunting, or community infrastructure related to outdoor recreation/tourism activities.
- **Community Celebration - Friday:** This will be complimentary for media and others as determined by the host community, with a set price included with attendees' registration or per ticket price or other invited guests and can be open to the general public to attend.

Saturday

- **Media Row/Hunter Breakfast – Saturday:** Breakfast must be available for the hunting parties, guests and media at a designated location, with space for media interviews beginning around 6 a.m. This will be complimentary for media and others as determined by the host community, with a set price per ticket for other invited guests. Estimated attendance: 75 -125
- **Hunting/Lunch – Saturday:** Lunch must be available for the hunting parties, guests and media at a designated location. This will be complimentary for media and others as determined by the host community, with a set price per ticket for other invited guests. Estimated attendance: 75 -125
- **Additional Event Activities:** The host community/organization can offer alternate/ optional activities for guests and media who do not hunt. There could be one activity on Friday afternoon, Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon. Examples may include tours highlighting area points of interest, outdoor recreational activities and/or children's school programs related to the outdoors.

LODGING REQUIREMENTS

Lodging

The sponsoring organization/host community must provide lodging as follows:

- **Thursday Night** – Complimentary lodging is optional for the host community to provide based on the desire of hosting a Friday morning media row. Some rooms should be blocked for agency and governor's staff.
- **Friday Night** - Complimentary lodging for between 15-30 media guests. Non-complimentary lodging for up to 50 people; including legislators, invited guests, staff, etc.
- **Saturday Night** – Host Community is not obligated to offer complimentary lodging for Saturday night but may want to offer it to media who may be staying for the weekend.

If adequate lodging is not available at one property, other arrangements may be considered and should be outlined.

Lodging properties should be dog-friendly for this event and must include documentation, on lodging letterhead by an authorized representative, indicating the property is dog-friendly. The rate charged to the planning committee by the lodging properties should be the same at each property. Friday night lodging is part of the event package. A flat rate is charged to the attendees for Thursday evening. All money for lodging is paid to the host organization, which in turn will pay each lodging property.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

Budget

The host community must generate the necessary event support funding for this event through existing budgets, sponsorships, and/or fundraising activities. Include a preliminary budget estimating lodging, events, food and beverage, marketing, and other costs in your proposal, along with the primary funding mechanism(s) you propose. Regular budget and financial reports will be included in the monthly planning meetings showing income and expenses to date.

Event Grant

Explore Minnesota will provide a grant of up to \$12,000 to the host community to assist with costs of event operations and execution of the event. This grant is subject to expenditure limitations, eligible tactics and requires a 1:1 cash match.

Sponsorships and Fundraising

The host community must receive approval from Explore Minnesota before selecting contributors, supporting sponsors or in-kind contributions for the GPHO. The State reserves the right to approve or reject potential sponsors.

While fundraising should concentrate on covering the expenses of the event, some communities have had funds remaining after expenses have been met. In the event that fundraising for the GPHO results in revenue over expenses, the host community must work with Explore Minnesota to develop a marketing plan to promote the host community/area.

Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener Event Commemoratives

The host community is responsible for providing a blaze orange commemorative hat with the official GPHO logo at the front center of the orange hat. Estimated 250 hats.

Other commemorative items such as clothing, bags, etc. Commemorative items are distributed to officially registered attendees of the event. Background information, schedules, maps, community visitor guide, DNR and Explore Minnesota materials should also be given to registered guests.

ADDITIONAL HOST COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Name Badges/Lanyards

The host community is responsible to provide name badges/ lanyards for all official participants.

Event Insurance

The host community/organization will be responsible to secure event liability insurance in the amount of \$2 million to cover all aspects of the event. Hunter Hosts are required to provide liability insurance as part of the agreement to become a volunteer for the event.

Event Contact with Health Department

The planning committee/host community must contact the Health Department to determine any needs regarding food handling at the event.

Hunting Land

The hunt portion of the event should be held on public hunting land within 25 miles of the host community OR on private land solicited by the event committee. Private land must still be solicited for the Governor's and Lt Governor's hunting parties (about 200 acres).

Hunter Host Information

Approximately 50 volunteer hunter hosts will be solicited from the host community to lead guests on the hunting portion of the event and serve as local ambassadors. Hunter hosts should be experienced pheasants hunters but will not carry a shotgun during the hunt. Hunter hosts with trained hunting dogs will receive preference.

A meeting for the hunter hosts should be held within 1-2 weeks in advance of the GPHO to share event information and pair the hunter hosts with their hunting parties and hunting land. Hunter hosts, landowners, local planning committee and staff attend the meeting. Estimated attendance: 50 – 75

Transportation

The host community must be within reasonable driving time of an airport. There may be a need for limited transportation for media and other guests to and from the airport. There may be an additional need for limited transportation to the event locations.

Example Event Schedule (can be changed based on community needs)

Friday

6 – 9:30 a.m.	Media Row
9 a.m.	Registration Opens
10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Media Tours
4 p.m.	Public Land Ceremony or Community Event
5-7 p.m.	Community Celebration

Saturday

6-8 a.m.	Media Interview Opportunities
6-8 a.m.	Breakfast & Final Hunting Host Pairing
8:15 a.m.	Depart for hunting
11:30 a.m.	Lunch for Hunters and Invited Guests.
12:30 p.m.	Interview Opportunities & Event Ends
1:00 p.m.	Optional Afternoon Hunting (if community can accommodate and chooses to offer)

Additional Notes

This outlines the basic responsibilities of hosting the Minnesota Governor’s Pheasant Hunting Opener event. The host community must work with Explore Minnesota to develop an event schedule that not only highlights the Pheasant Hunting Opener, but also provides opportunities to showcase tourism activities within the area. The host community can also work with DNR to develop additional events designed to promote pheasant hunting to historically underrepresented communities.

Governor’s Pheasant Hunting Opener Event Logo

Explore Minnesota will provide the host community with the official GPHO logo to be used on commemorative items. All uses of the official logo must receive approval prior to being utilized.

The host community agrees to limit use of the official MN GPHO logo and marketing of the event to official parts of the Opener Event agenda. Events outside of the official Opener Events may not mention the Governor, Explore Minnesota, DNR and the event, nor may the official MN GPHO logo be used by the host community any event not sanctioned by the DNR or Explore Minnesota.

2025 MINNESOTA GOVERNOR’S PHEASANT HUNTING OPENER EVENT

Event Dates: October 10-11, 2025

Explore Minnesota is seeking proposals to host the 2025 Minnesota Governor’s Pheasant Hunting Opener Event. A competitive scoring process will be used to evaluate proposals to select the location. This request for proposal does not obligate the State to award the proposal.

Complete the proposal agreement form and attach it to your written event proposal. The event proposal must include details for the following event requirements:

- 1. Lodging** – include proposed lodging headquarters and names and location of any other committed lodging facilities. *Lodging properties should be pet/dog-friendly for this event and must include documentation, on lodging letterhead, by authorized representative indicating the property is dog-friendly.
- 2. Community Support** – provide letters of support from local/county government, conservation clubs and/or other related organizations to help make this event appealing and welcoming to a broad audience, including those who are first time hunters or not hunters (i.e. businesses, agriculture, natural resources, gun clubs, etc.)
- 3. Marketing** – provide examples of hunting and outdoor recreation/tourism promotion in organization’s marketing program. (i.e. website, brochures, advertising)
- 4. Financial Commitment** – include experience of the organization with fundraising.
- 5. Facilities** – Propose locations and facilities for the following activities/events:

Friday Locations

- Media Row Location 6 – 9:30 a.m.
- Registration Location 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Media Tours 10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- Public Land Ceremony or Community Event 4:30 p.m.
- Community Celebration 5-7 p.m.

Saturday Morning Location 6-8:30 a.m.

- Media Interviews
- Hunter Host Pairing at Breakfast Tables
- Saturday Morning Breakfast

Saturday Afternoon Location **11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

- Hunters Lunch
- Media Interviews
- Any Additional/Optional Community Activities

6. Public Hunting Land – identify availability of commitment and ability to secure public and private hunting lands through local agencies, partners, and private parties.

7. Hunter Hosts – how will you recruit Hunter Hosts?

8. Event Planning – please provide details about your organizations experience of the organization and hosting events.

9. Optional Activities – include samples of the types of optional activities that may be planned for the event.

10. Transportation Information – include distance from a commercial airport and driving distances to proposed hunting sites.

11. The sponsoring organization must provide a current copy of the Board of Directors of the CVB or Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes with the approval of the governing board of directors' acceptance and commitment to host and sponsor the event should it be awarded.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposals must be received no later than **August 15, 2024** to be considered for hosting the 2025 event. A competitive scoring process will be used to evaluate proposals to select the event location. This request for proposal does not obligate the State to award the proposal.

Below is a tentative timeline for a site visit, notification, attending the current year event and first planning meeting for the following year's event.

2025 Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener - Event Timeline

- August 15, 2024 2025 MN GPHO Event Proposal Due
- September 2024 Prospective Host Community Site Visit with Event Chair
- October 2024 Notification to Responders/Event Awarded
- October 11-12, 2024 Attend 2024 MN GPHO Event in Sleepy Eye, MN
 - » Up to four representatives from the 2025 host community may attend
 - » Governor officially announces 2025 GPHO Location at current year event
- December 2024 First Planning Meeting for 2025 GPHO Event

Please contact Explore Minnesota's Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener Event Coordinator with any questions or to submit a proposal.

Lisa Havelka, Event Coordinator
Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener
Explore Minnesota Tourism
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Email: lisa.havelka@state.mn.us

2025 MINNESOTA GOVERNOR’S PHEASANT HUNTING OPENER EVENT PROPOSAL APPLICATION FORM

Please complete and sign the agreement below and attach to the proposal information requested in the specifications along with a copy of the sponsoring organization (CVB or Chamber of Commerce), current meeting minutes showing approval of support for submitting to host the 2025 Governor’s Pheasant Hunting Opener; including the signature of the Officer of the Sponsoring Organization.

Name of Sponsoring Organization _____

Host Community _____

Contact Person _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____ Website _____

Tourism Region: Southern ____ Central ____ Northwest ____ Northeast ____ Metro ____

Signature of Officer of Sponsoring Organization _____

Printed Name _____

Signing this form signifies agreement of the organization to provide a minimum of the requirements as outlined in the attached proposal information if selected as the 2025 Minnesota Governor’s Pheasant Hunting Opener event host community and sponsoring organization.

****Please attach a copy of the organization’s (CVB or Chamber of Commerce) meeting minutes showing approval of submitting a proposal for the Minnesota Governor’s Pheasant Hunting Opener event; including the signature of the Officer of the Sponsoring Organization.****

Disclosures

Proposals are carefully considered and compared. This request for proposal does not obligate the State to award the proposal. The State reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest.

All documents must be received by August 15, 2024 to be considered.

Please return to: Explore Minnesota | Lisa Havelka, Southern Industry Relations
lisa.havelka@state.mn.us



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