



EXPLORE MINNESOTA – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State of Minnesota

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Explore Minnesota Unveils ‘Find Your True North’ Marketing Campaign

Minnesota tourism promotion office builds on statewide grassroots movement

ST. PAUL, Minn. (Feb. 4, 2019) – Over the past decade, a grassroots movement has been subtly shifting Minnesota’s reputation as another Midwestern state into a new region of its own making, known simply as the North.

That’s why today, at the state’s annual tourism conference in St. Paul, Explore Minnesota announced the all-new “Find Your True North” tourism marketing campaign to hundreds of tourism industry leaders. Set to debut this spring, the new campaign leverages a larger movement in the North Star State. In the same way the South, Southwest and Pacific Northwest all mean something distinct, Explore Minnesota aims to help make the North less of a direction and more of a calling—one filled with a sense of adventure, culture and curiosity.

‘True North’ State of Mind

In Minnesota, the word North isn’t solely about geography. A year ago, Minnesota Super Bowl 52 and its “Bold North” tagline helped prove that people here are warm and proud in any season. And the state is far from flyover country. In fact, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport is one of the nation’s busiest, serving 164 non-stop markets.

From major sports teams to popular products to fashion and culture, everyone seems to have defined their own version of the North. The “Find Your True North” campaign was designed to tell specific stories that make Minnesota stand apart as a unique travel destination, and invite people to have real and meaningful experiences around the state.

“Tourism in Minnesota is a \$15.3 billion industry that touches every corner of the state,” said Governor Walz. “I’m excited about this new campaign that will attract even more visitors to the True North.”

Research shows that travelers want to experience new and unique things when they travel. The True North campaign not only highlights the hidden gems and popular attractions found throughout Minnesota—including distinct outdoor adventures, urban cultural experiences and notable landmarks—but the passion points of travel and human connections that all visitors can relate to. True North isn’t a direction. It’s a state of mind.

“Skipping across the headwaters of the Mississippi with your kids. Fishing one of our 11,842 lakes. Dining at James Beard Award-winning restaurants. Travelers can experience all of these moments and more when they find their ‘True North’ in Minnesota,” said John Edman, director of Explore Minnesota. “This is an exciting state and an exciting time. We’re thrilled to part of a larger movement that will help differentiate and more clearly define Minnesota as the North.”

New Strategies for New Visitors

The new campaign will begin this spring and feature an all-new series of television, print and digital ads in Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, and across Minnesota. Additional target markets include Chicago, Denver, Kansas City, Omaha and Winnipeg. The campaign will

also bring Minnesota to a national audience with hyper-focused online targeting based on relevant sites and lifestyle characteristics. This new strategy will reach people who are passionate about hiking, biking, and arts and culture, and are willing to travel and take on new experiences. Creative materials will incorporate Minnesota talent, including music by Michael Shynes, Dan Rodriguez and Chris Koza, Minnesota-based actors, directors, photographers and production crews.

“This new approach to promoting Minnesota allows the state to better reach potential visitors who are interested in our lakes, wilderness and urban assets,” said Courtney S. Ries, vice president of destination branding and strategy at Meet Minneapolis, the city’s tourism board. “Exploring our museums, festivals, diverse neighborhoods and more are part of the True North, and we’re excited about the campaign’s energy.”

Find Your True North #OnlyinMN

Since 2014, Explore Minnesota has invested in the award-winning “Only in Minnesota” campaign. With more than 1 million uses, the popular #OnlyinMN hashtag has effectively raised awareness for Minnesota with residents, travelers, media and influencers. True North is an evolution of this effort and supports and strengthens the #OnlyinMN positioning with a new campaign slogan that states “Find Your True North. #OnlyinMN.”

The new campaign was created in partnership with Minnesota-based agencies [Adventure Creative](#) and [True Media](#). Campaign elements will be integrated on [exploreminnesota.com](#), Explore Minnesota social channels, statewide publications and more.

“We are excited about the new campaign,” said Nick Leonard, communications and external relations director, Otter Tail County. “Destinations like Otter Tail County trust Explore Minnesota to set the tone and lead the state’s tourism marketing efforts. True North is a concept the entire state can rally around.”

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About Explore Minnesota

As the state’s tourism promotion office, Explore Minnesota pursues an entrepreneurial approach, leveraging the state’s tourism investment with increased involvement by the private sector. Tourism is a \$15.3 billion industry in Minnesota, and a key sector of the state’s economy. The leisure and hospitality industry—a major provider of tourism services—employs more than 270,000 workers, representing 11 percent of Minnesota’s private sector employment. Leisure and hospitality also generates 18 percent of the state’s sales tax revenues. Minnesota welcomes more than 73 million domestic and international travelers annually.

A video highlighting Minnesota’s tourism and economic impact can be viewed [here](#).

Find Your True North at [exploreminnesota.com](#), and share it with [@exploreminn](#) on Twitter, or [@exploreminnesota](#) on Instagram and Facebook, using #OnlyinMN.