

devils lake

Tourism

2025 FISCAL REPORT



As we reflect on the past year, one thing is clear—tourism in Devils Lake is doing more than attracting visitors. It is strengthening our economy, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the quality of life for the people who call this place home.

In 2024, visitors brought \$64 million in direct spending into Ramsey County, supporting nearly 1,000 jobs and generating \$5.7 million in state and local taxes. These numbers tell an important story: **tourism is not just an industry here—it is a key driver of our community's success.**

Over the past year, Devils Lake Tourism has continued to evolve its role. Through strategic marketing, expanded partnerships, and investments in infrastructure and placemaking, we are positioning Devils Lake as more than a destination—it's a place to explore, experience, and ultimately call home. From growing year-round tourism and supporting workforce attraction efforts to advancing meetings, sports, and group travel, our work is focused on long-term impact.

None of this happens in isolation. It is made possible through the collaboration of our partners, businesses, community leaders, and volunteers who share a common vision for Devils Lake's future.

As we look ahead, our focus remains clear: to connect visitors and community in a way that allows both to thrive. The momentum we are building today will continue to shape a stronger, more vibrant Devils Lake for years to come.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,



Suzie Kenner
Executive Director



SUZIE KENNER
Executive Director



VERANNA SCHIENDELE
Marketing/Communication Coordinator



RUTH MCBRIDE
Events/Membership Coordinator

2026 VISITORS COMMITTEE

Tom Haahr, Farmers Union Oil, President
Ryan Yoder, Decorated Wearable, Chamber President
Lisa Crosby, Lake Region Heritage Center
Erin Wood, Lake Region State College
Kristen Schlieve, Proz End of the Line
Christina Jaeger, Mr. & Mrs. J's
Jeff Schooler, Sleep Inn & Suites
Louise Prozinski, Proz Lakeside at the Cove
Kyle Blanchfield, Woodland Resort
Mayor Jim Moe, Ex Officio



MISSION

Connecting visitors and community to thrive together.

CORE PURPOSE

Devils Lake Tourism champions our visitor economy — driving local business growth, promoting our unique destination, and enhancing the quality of life for all who live, work, and play here.

TOURISM CORE VALUES

- **Spark Curiosity** – Invite exploration and highlight what’s unexpected.
- **Celebrate Local** – Promote our people, places, and homegrown experiences.
- **Inspire Wonder** – Make every story and photo worth sharing.
- **Welcome Everyone** – Extend true hospitality, no matter the season.



Priority 1: Strengthen the Destination Brand

Goal: Build on our strong, consistent identity that highlights Devils Lake as a place to explore, experience, and call home.

Strategies:

- Incorporate The Good Life is in Our Nature branding.
- Expand storytelling and influencer outreach beyond our fishing identity.
- Develop innovative marketing campaigns using Google Ads, YouTube, social media, and new traditional markets.
- Leverage the Chamber’s 100-year milestone to unify messaging.



Priority 2: Elevate Visitor Engagement & Industry Communication

Goal: Cultivate strong relationships with visitors, stakeholders, and the local community.

Strategies:

- Enhance CRM-driven audience segmentation.
- Expand cooperative marketing with local businesses.
- Publish monthly “Devilish Reads” and stakeholder updates.
- Promote cross-promotion opportunities for events.



Priority 3: Expand Infrastructure & Grant Development

Goal: Position tourism as a community investment strategy through placemaking.

Strategies:

- Grow the Artists on Main and Tourism Infrastructure Capital grant programs.
- Support improvements to Bridgestone Park and winter lake access.
- Encourage year-round and off-peak tourism infrastructure.



Priority 4: Support Workforce & Relocation Efforts

Goal: Showcase Devils Lake as a welcoming place to visit, live, work, and build a life.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with the Chamber to enhance relocation materials.
- Expand the “Live” section of the website.
- Support emerging leaders and young professionals.
- Highlight stories of individuals and families choosing Devils Lake.



Priority 5: Grow Year-Round Tourism & Community Alignment

Goal: Extend the visitor season and strengthen public support for tourism.

Strategies:

- Expand winter tourism offerings and lake access.
- Develop year-round activity itineraries.
- Educate residents on tourism’s economic impact.
- Align messaging with Chamber and Forward Devils Lake.



Priority 6: Meetings, Sports & Group Travel Growth

Goal: Position Devils Lake as a regional destination for meetings, sporting events, and group travel.

Strategies:

- Create Meet & Gather website content and a venue toolkit.
- Develop Sports in Devils Lake toolkit and landing pages.
- Promote new and enhanced facilities: The Shores at Woodland Resort, Ramsey County Event Center, Eastbay, Spirit Lake Casino, & KC Hall.
- Launch RFP capabilities and CRM sales tracking.
- Host familiarization tours for regional planners.
- Partner with venues for joint marketing and incentives.
- Explore opportunities to expand hotel accommodations.



Priority 7: Advocate for Fishery Management & Sustainability

Goal: Ensure Devils Lake remains a premier fishing destination by supporting practices that protect and enhance our fishery for generations to come.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with local, state, and tribal partners to promote policies that sustain fish populations and lake health.
- Serve as a tourism voice in fishery management discussions, highlighting the economic and community impact of fishing.
- Educate visitors and residents on responsible fishing practices, invasive species prevention, and conservation ethics.
- Support research and innovative approaches to fishery sustainability.
- Increase awareness and prevention efforts for Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) to safeguard the long-term health of Devils Lake.
- Promote Devils Lake as a model destination where recreation and conservation go hand-in-hand.



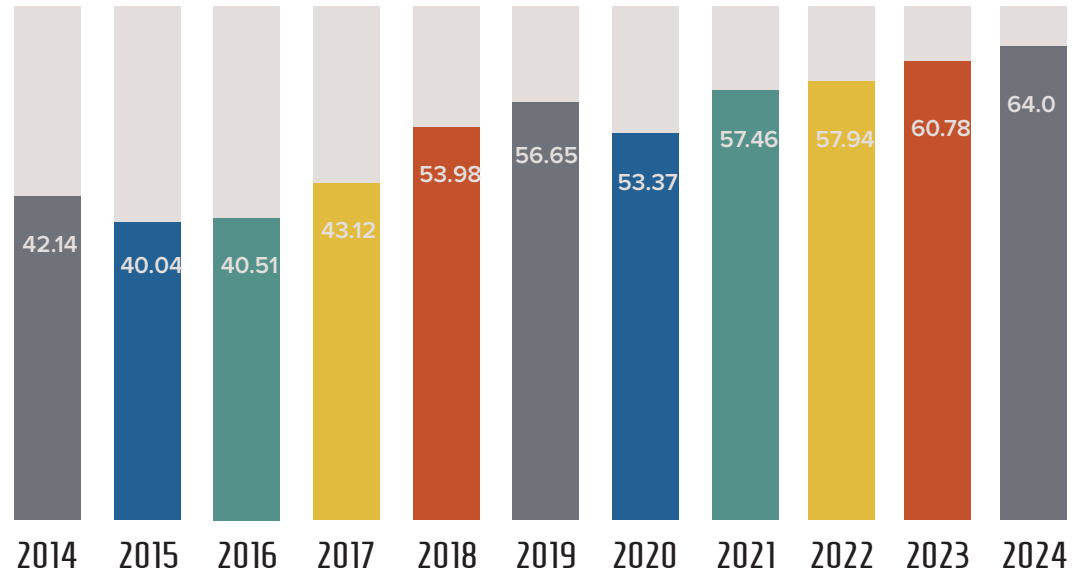
CONCLUSION This five-year plan expands Devils Lake Tourism’s focus beyond visitation, embracing workforce, placemaking, meetings, and quality-of-life advocacy. Through these six priorities, Devils Lake will lead with a partner-driven tourism strategy that deepens impact, fosters resilience, and welcomes the next generation of visitors & residents alike.

VISITOR SPENDING

Visitor spending is a major economic driver in Ramsey County, with travelers contributing \$64 million in direct spending in 2024. That activity supports local businesses, sustains jobs, and generates \$5.7 million in state and local taxes. As a result, tourism doesn't just benefit visitors—it delivers real value to residents, helping offset the local tax burden by approximately \$1,100 per household each year while strengthening the overall economy.

RAMSEY COUNTY VISITOR SPENDING

(millions)



The Tourism industry accounted for 970 total jobs in Ramsey County in 2024, making up 11.5% of the workforce in Ramsey County.



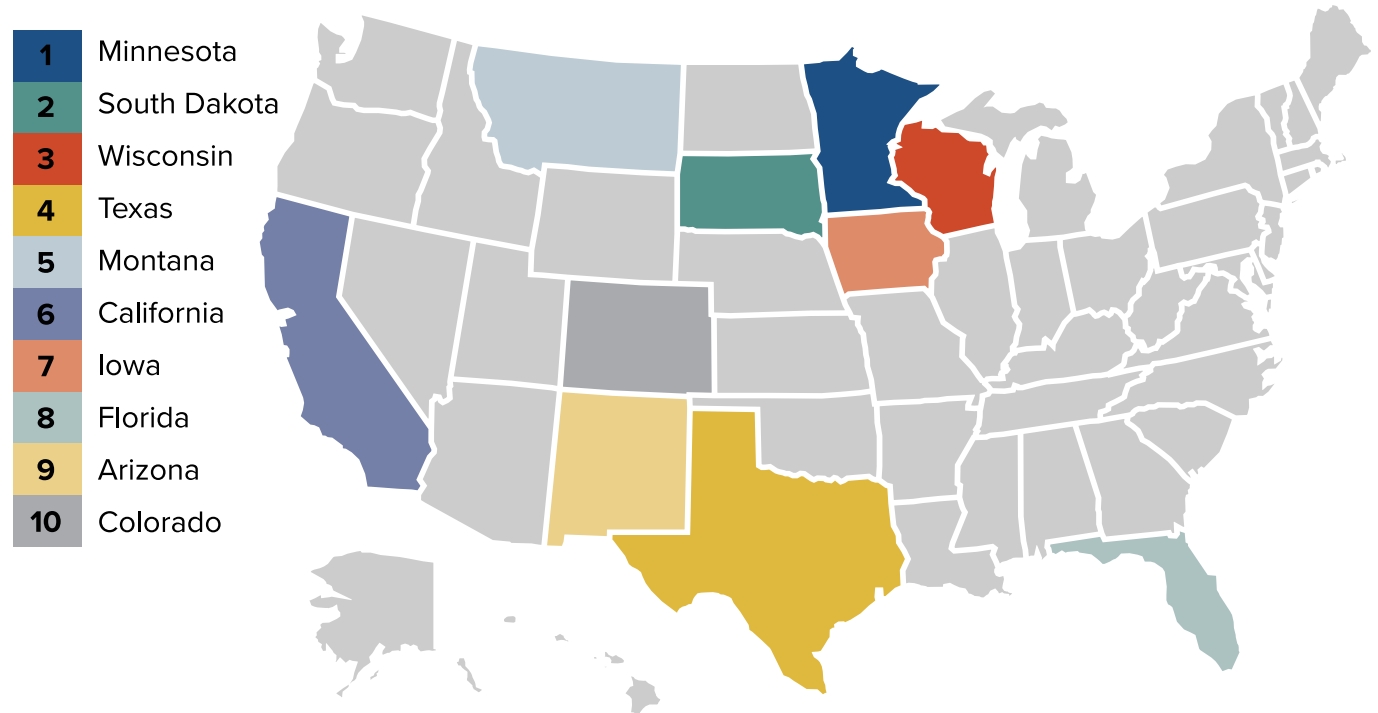
VISITORS AT A GLANCE

Average Nights in Destination
1.7
 ▼ 2.1% vs. Previous Year

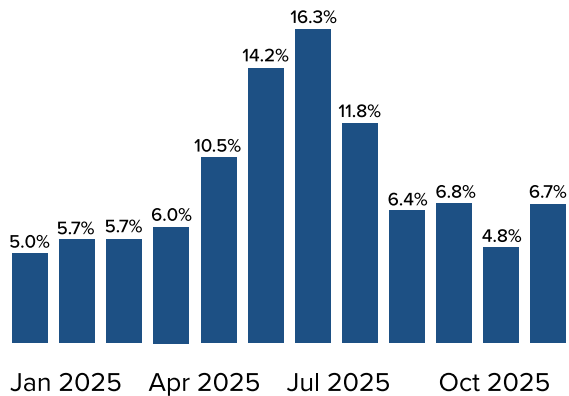
Trip Share by Origin DMA

RANK	LOCATION
1	Fargo/Valley City
2	Minot/Bismarck/Dickinson
3	Minneapolis/St. Paul
4	Sioux Falls/Mitchell
5	Rochester/Mason City
6	Duluth/Superior
7	Cedar Rapids/Waterloo
8	Green Bay/Appleton
9	La Crosse/Eau Claire
10	Des Moines/Ames

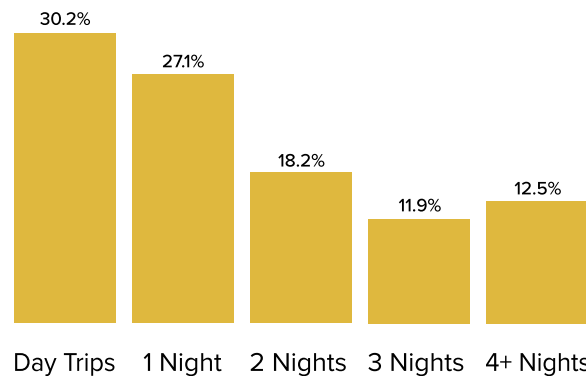
Top 10 Out-of-State Markets



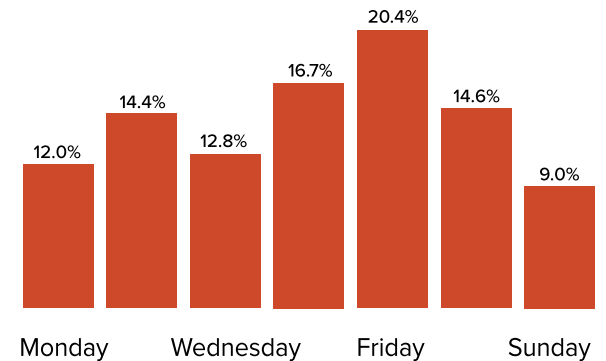
Trip Share by Month



Trip Share by Length of Stay



Trip Share by Day of Week



BUDGET & ADVERTISING

2025-2026 Total Budget

Total Budget	\$695,005
<i>Breakdown</i>	
Administration/Operations	\$227,937
Events	39,000
Marketing/Advertising	428,068

The total **advertising budget** for 2025 was **\$358,728**.

The breakdown includes:

Television | **\$68,650**

Media & Influencer Events | **\$30,000**

Miscellaneous/Mixed Marketing | **\$114,810**

E-mail | **\$30,500**

Digital | **\$44,800**

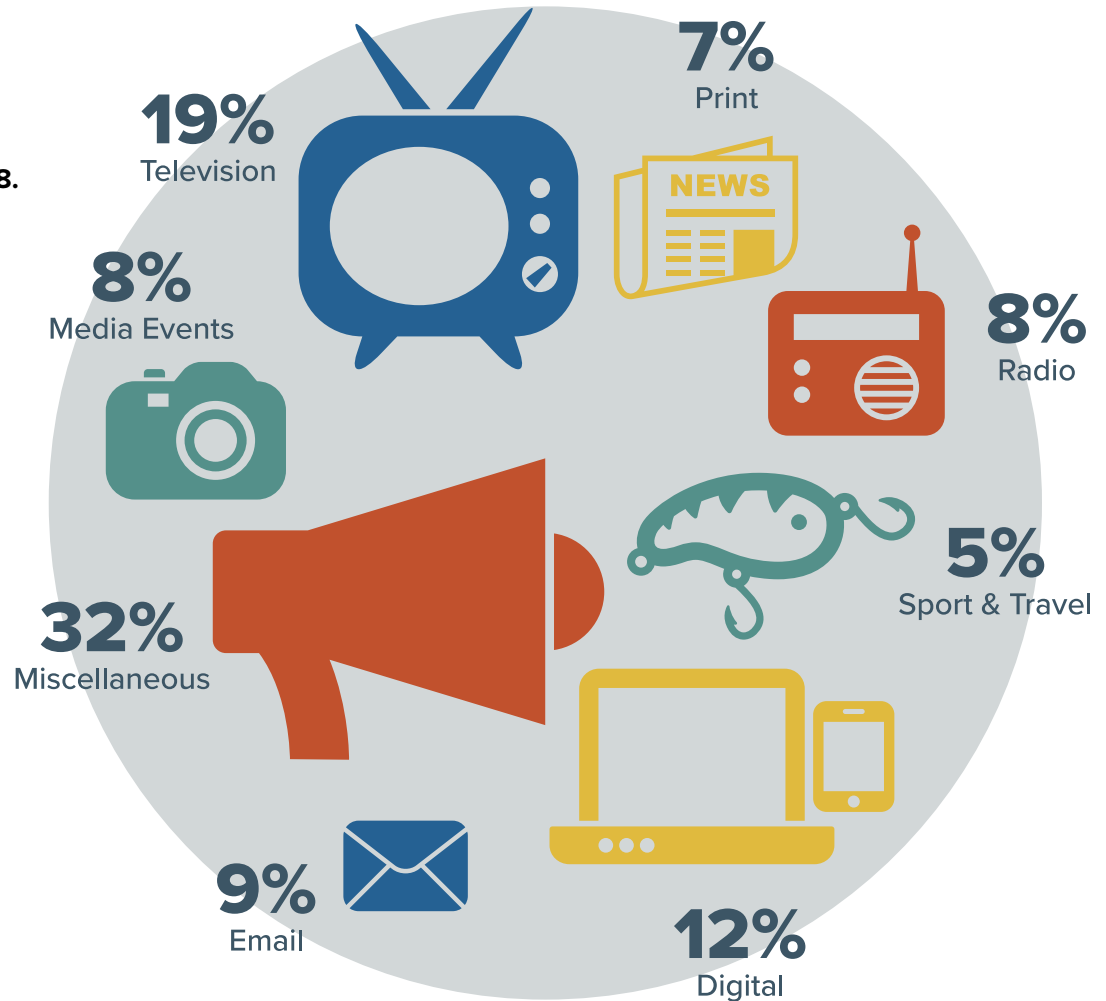
Sport & Travel Shows | **\$17,200**

Radio | **\$28,038**

Print | **\$24,730**

Key Partnerships include:

- Ducks Unlimited
- Northland Outdoors
- Midwest Outdoors
- Jason Mitchell Outdoors
- Fishing 411
- UND Hockey
- KFGO
- Sports Destination Management
- St. Paul Ice Fishing Show
- Wisconsin Ice Fishing Expo
- Madison Fishing Expo
- International Roundup
- IPW
- Dakota Country Magazine
- Iowa Sportsman
- North Dakota Tourism



SOCIAL MEDIA & E-MAIL MARKETING

The goal of Devils Lake Tourism’s social media channels is to strengthen positive awareness of Devils Lake as both a destination to visit and a place to live.

We approach this through three strategic priorities:

Expand our reach to new audiences by generating high-quality engagement that introduces Devils Lake to out-of-market travelers.

Strengthen connections with our existing audience by delivering consistent, intentional content and maintaining active, responsive engagement.

Drive traffic to our website and partner resources to support trip planning, event participation, and deeper exploration of the Devils Lake experience.

Impressions

Facebook: 3.9M
Instagram: 91.9K

Engagement

Facebook: 13K
Instagram: 1.2K

Reach

Instagram: 29.7K

Followers

Facebook: 50,576
Instagram: 2,487

YouTube

Views: 308,531
Up from 57,395 in 2024
Subscribers: 1,692
Impressions: 694.6K
In 2025, YouTube had a growth of 440%

E-mail Campaign

Total email subscribers - 2,679
General News - 1,475 subscribers
Outdoor News - 918 subscribers

Combined performance:
Open Rate 32.1%, CTO 12.8%

General only:
Open Rate avg. 28.5%, CTO 9.1%

Outdoor only:
Open Rate avg. 35.6%, CTO 16.5%

*DMO Benchmark -
Open Rate 34.8%, CTO 4.7%*


FOLLOW US

 @ devislakend.com

 @ devislake

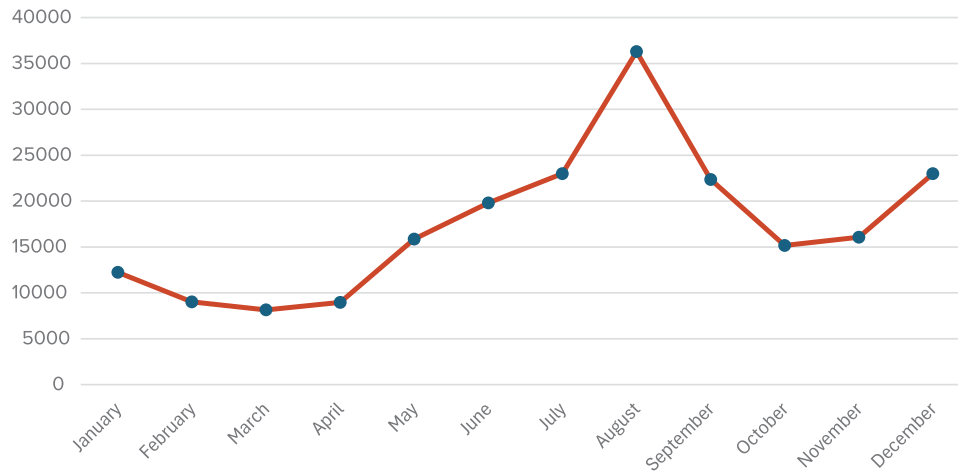
 @ devislakend

 @ NDdevislake

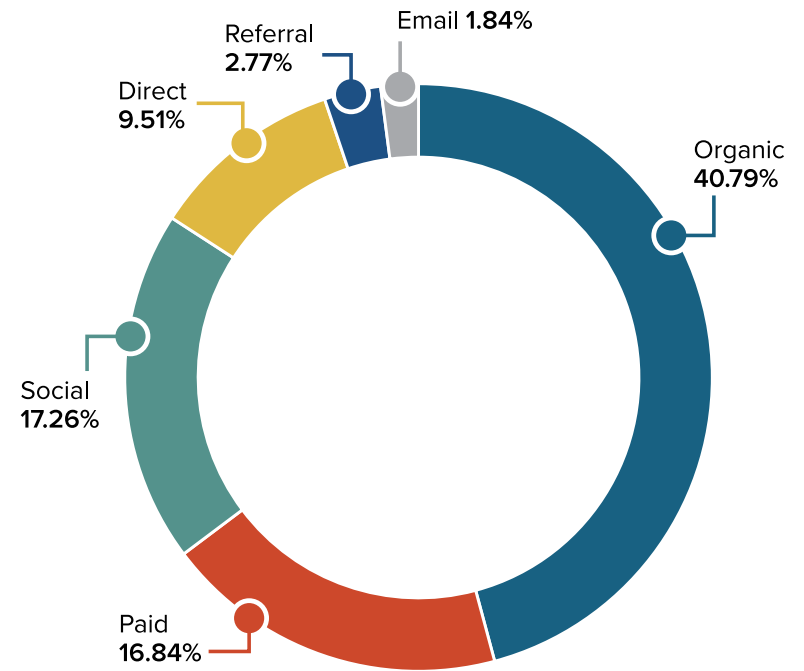
 #devislakend
#hellodevislake

WEBSITE TRAFFIC

Total Web Sessions by Month



Origin of Site Traffic



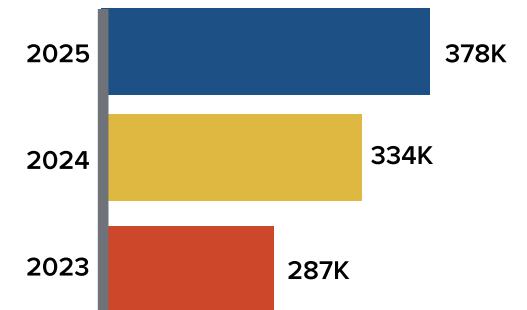
Top Locations for Website Traffic

RANK	LOCATION
1	Minneapolis
2	Devils Lake
3	Chicago
4	Fargo
5	Dallas
6	Grand Forks
7	St. Cloud
8	Bismarck
9	St. Paul
10	Ashburn

Top Locations for Inquiries

RANK	LOCATION
1	Minnesota
2	Wisconsin
3	North Dakota
4	Iowa
5	Michigan
6	Kansas
7	Illinois
8	Nebraska
9	Florida
10	Arizona

Total Web Sessions by Year

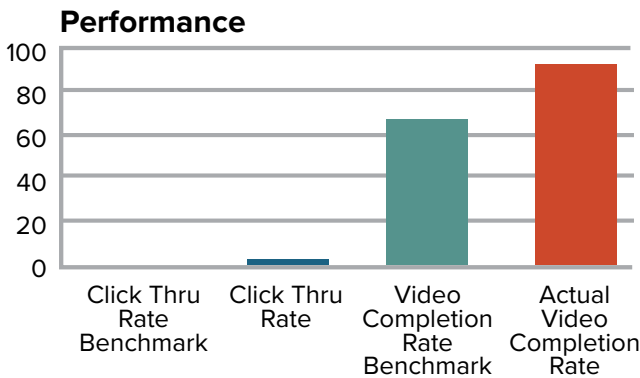
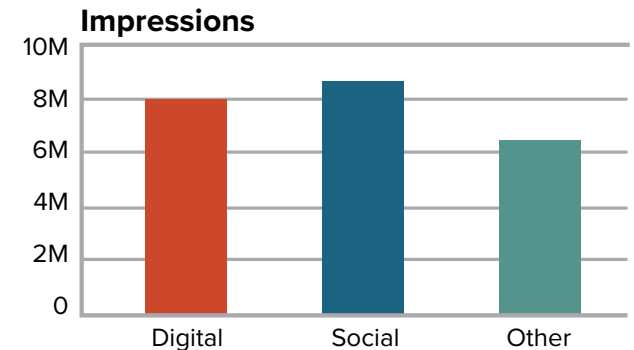


RWIP GRANT RESULTS

The **Regional Workforce Impact Program (RWIP) grant** funded a strategic talent attraction initiative to address critical workforce shortages in the Lake Region. The project focused on marketing Devils Lake as a place to live, work, and thrive through targeted campaigns, enhanced relocation tools, and community-driven engagement.

22.2M Impressions

\$180K Investment | +86% Website Traffic



What worked: Strong performance across all channels
Retargeting drove highest engagement
Young families responded best



RWIP Talent Attraction Grant – Key Outcomes

Campaign Impact

Successfully repositioned Devils Lake as a place to live, work, and thrive—not just visit
Launched a multi-channel talent attraction campaign (digital, social, billboards, email)
Introduced unified messaging: “The Good Life is in Our Nature”

New Tools & Infrastructure

Built a fully redesigned “Live” relocation website experience
Launched Community Captains program (local ambassadors for relocation support)
Created job board, housing resources, and relocation pathways in one place
Developed evergreen marketing assets (video + digital content)

Content & Engagement Wins

Produced 8-part YouTube series featuring real community stories
Early results: 12,000+ video views with strong engagement
Email campaigns significantly outperformed benchmarks (28% open / 6.3% CTR)

Measurable Growth

+23% increase in traffic to relocation (“Live”) website
+1,000 Instagram followers + growth across platforms
17 relocation inquiries, with active prospects exploring moves

Regional Collaboration

Strong partnerships with LRSC, City, Tourism, and local employers
Broad community and board engagement across sectors
Established foundation for ongoing regional workforce strategy

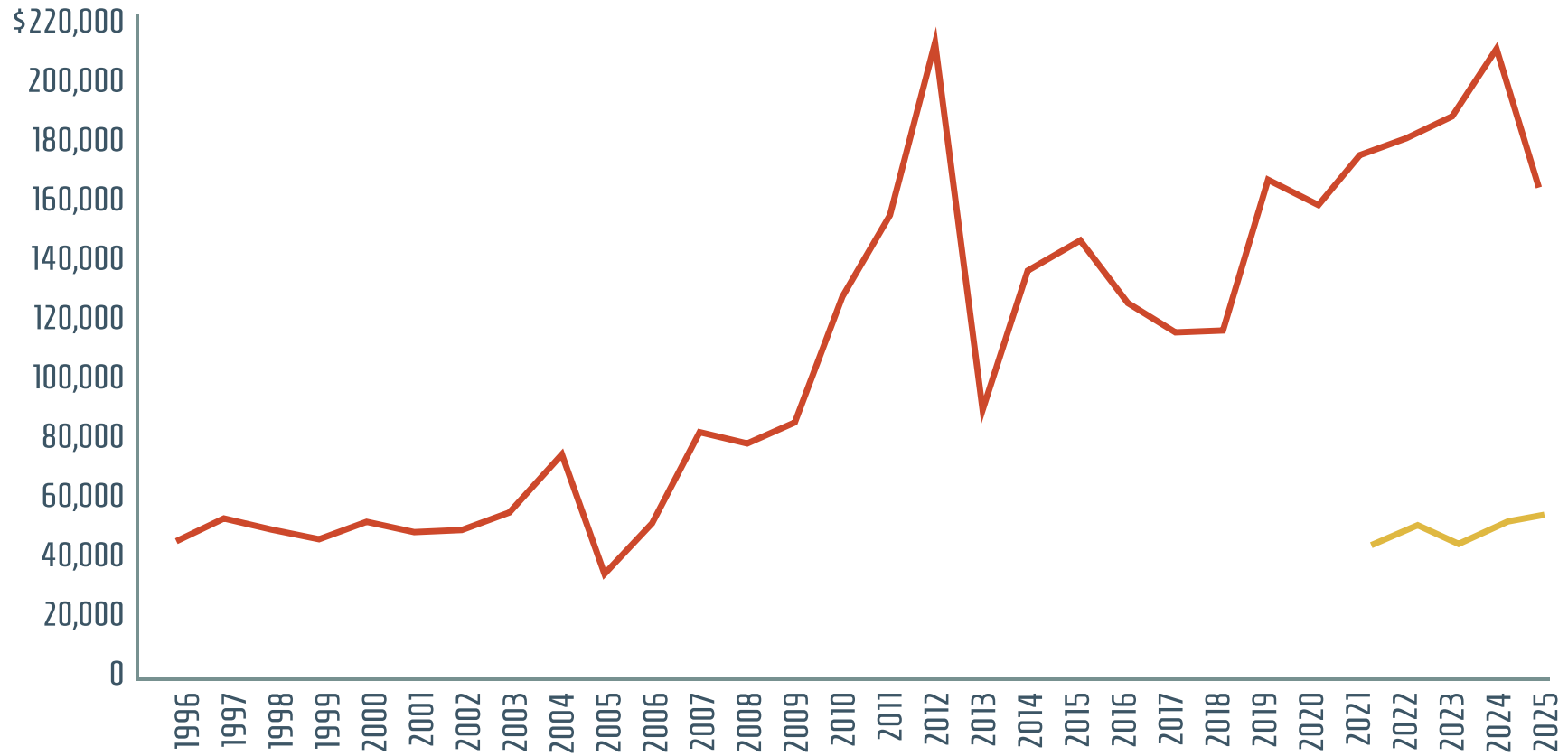
What We Proved

Lifestyle-first messaging drives talent interest
Video storytelling outperforms traditional ads
Personal connections (Community Captains) increase conversion potential
Talent attraction requires ongoing, multi-channel investment

Built for Long-Term Sustainability

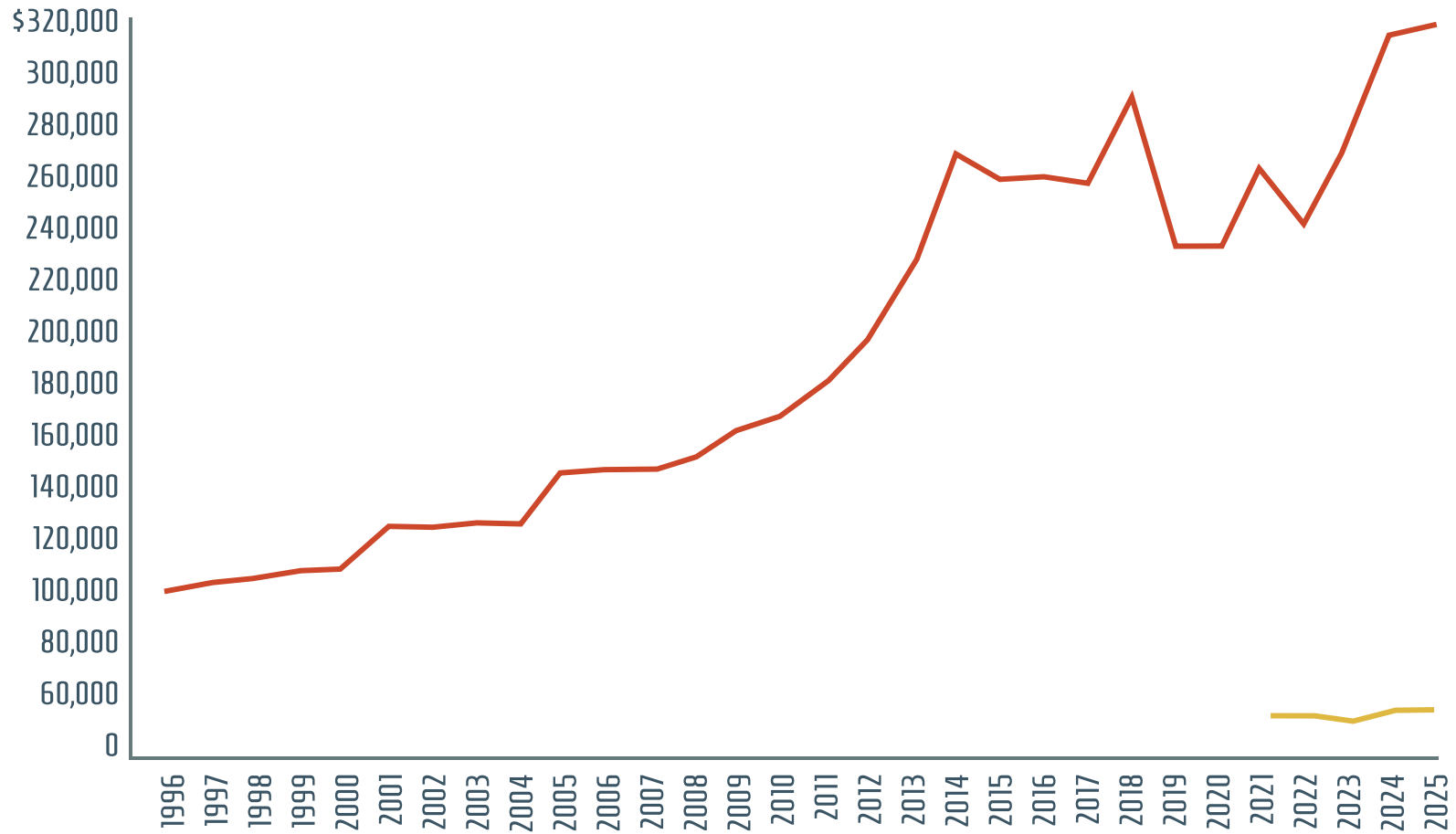
Platforms and campaigns maintained in-house
Content designed for multi-year use
Strategy continues beyond grant with local funding + partnerships

TAX COLLECTIONS



City Devils Lake Lodging Tax

1989.....	\$24,927	2000.....	52,977	2011.....	155,111	2022.....	178,787
1990.....	28,038	2001.....	49,548	2012.....	210,256	2023.....	184,559
1991.....	20,132	2002.....	53,232	2013.....	89,807	2024.....	213,027
1992.....	25,023	2003.....	55,373	2014.....	137,921	2025.....	161,376
1993.....	33,370	2004.....	75,123	2015.....	142,449	Ramsey County Lodging Tax	
1994.....	27,465	2005.....	58,641	2016.....	122,387	2021.....	\$41,315
1995.....	43,449	2006.....	52,578	2017.....	109,693	2022.....	50,127
1996.....	43,683	2007.....	80,363	2018.....	112,841	2023.....	45,512
1997.....	55,342	2008.....	77,856	2019.....	161,812	2024.....	47,345
1998.....	46,323	2009.....	83,606	2020.....	156,866	2025.....	55,567
1999.....	50,781	2010.....	124,437	2021.....	169,636		



City Devils Lake Restaurant Tax

1996.....	\$105,478	2006.....	150,929
1997.....	116,207	2007.....	148,111
1998.....	114,424	2008.....	155,251
1999.....	113,192	2009.....	164,572
2000.....	116,962	2010.....	168,208
2001.....	126,089	2011.....	182,911
2002.....	125,712	2012.....	196,925
2003.....	129,962	2013.....	229,906
2004.....	129,644	2014.....	269,855
2005.....	148,833	2015.....	261,795

2016.....	263,826
2017.....	259,890
2018.....	292,415
2019.....	233,554
2020.....	234,163
2021.....	263,877
2022.....	252,524
2023.....	277,679
2024.....	316,629
2025.....	319,818

Ramsey County Restaurant Tax

2021.....	\$47,190
2022.....	47,110
2023.....	44,095
2024.....	56,067
2025.....	56,125

2024-2025 EVENT CALENDAR

FALL		WINTER			
OCTOBER 2024	NOVEMBER 2024	DECEMBER 2024	JANUARY 2025	FEBRUARY 2025	MARCH 2025
DLHS CAREER FAIR	MILITARY FAMILY APPRECIATION NIGHT	ST PAUL ICE FISHING SHOW	LEGISLATIVE MEET AND GREET	SHIVERFEST	4 OUTDOORS RADIO EVENT IN DEVILS LAKE
DUCKS UNLIMITED MEDIA EVENT	HOMETOWN HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING	WISCONSIN ICE FISHING EXPO	DEVILS LAKE VOLUNTEER ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT	MADISON FISHING EXPO	SUMMER JOB FAIR
AMTRAK RIBBON CUTTING	HOLIDAY SHOWCASE				
CHAMBER ANNUAL MEETING					

MAJOR EVENTS	CHAMBER EVENTS	MEDIA EVENTS	SPORT & TRAVEL SHOWS	DESTINATION TRAINING	PROJECTS
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SPRING		SUMMER			FALL
APRIL 2025	MAY 2025	JUNE 2025	JULY 2025	AUGUST 2025	SEPTEMBER 2025
NORTH DAKOTA TRAVEL INDUSTRY CONFERENCE	MILITARY FAMILY APPRECIATION NIGHT	IPW	JUMBO YELLOW PERCH STOCKING	FILMED TRAVELS WITH DARLEY	WINE WALK
	AGLOW MEDIA EVENT	CHAMBER WALLEYE TOURNAMENT		CHAMBER GOLF TOURNAMENT	ACCE MARKETING SUMMIT
	DEVILS RUN	RAMSEY COUNTY EVENT CENTER RIBBON CUTTING		THE SHORES RIBBON CUTTING	LAKE REGION RODEO
	BEER CRAWL	PROFESSIONAL OUTDOOR MEDIA CONFERENCE		COMMUNITY FISH FRY & CORN FEED	ASSOCIATION OF GREAT LAKES OUTDOOR MEDIA CONFERENCE
	INTERNATIONAL ROUND UP	WHEELCHAIRS AND WALLEYES DEDICATION			DOWNTOWN FALL FESTIVAL

