



TRAVEL  
MARQUETTE

Susan Estler  
CEO

The Gift That  
Keeps Giving







## A little about me

I grew up in **NJ**.

I attended **Parsons School of Design** in NYC and became a **graphic designer**.

I have lived in **South Carolina; Bradenton, FL** where I became **Marketing Director** for the **Bradenton Area CVB; Panama City Beach, FL** as **VP of Marketing; Lackawanna County CVB** (Scranton, PA) as **Executive Director** and I interviewed in January of 2018 and began as **Executive Director of Travel Marquette** in March.

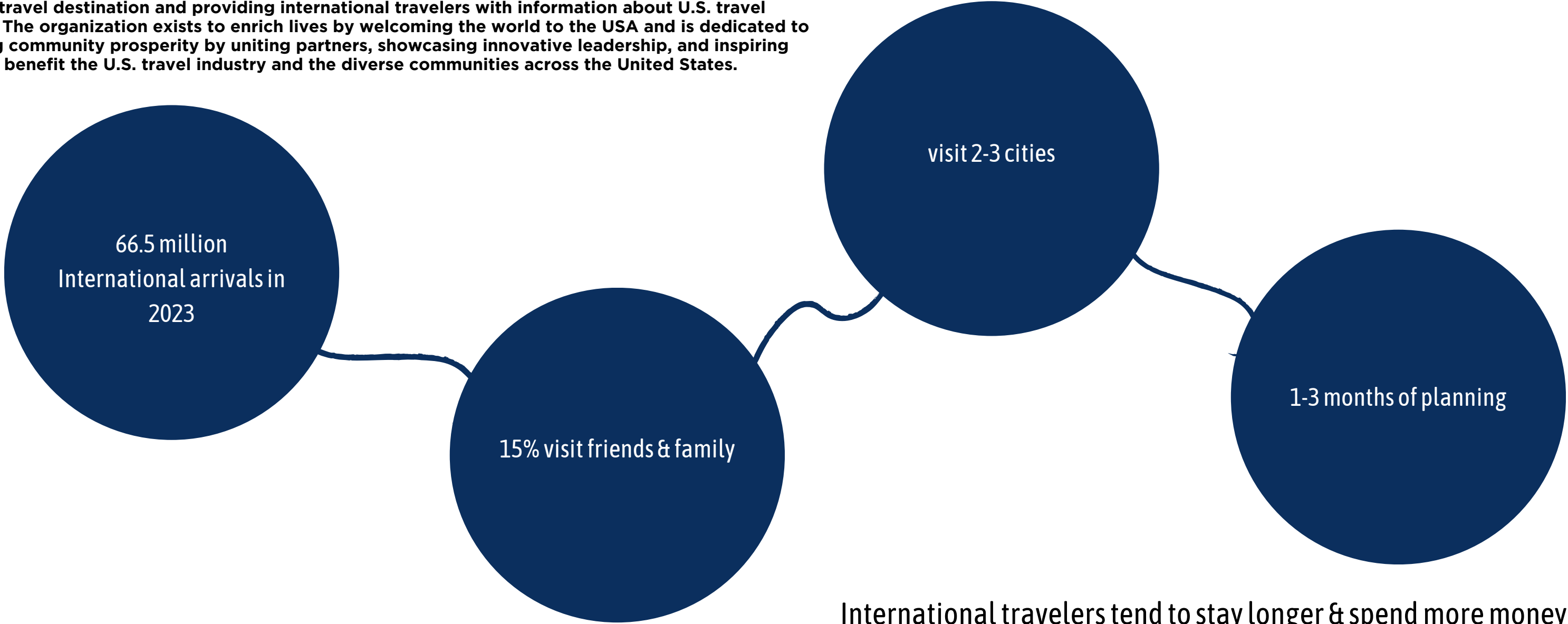
I currently am on the **Travel Commission** for Michigan, the President of **MACVB** (MI Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus), on the Board for **LSCP** and am a **Marquette Ambassador**.

**I am a Michigander by choice!**



# Brand USA

The nation's destination marketing organization, is committed to promoting the United States as a premier travel destination and providing international travelers with information about U.S. travel policies. The organization exists to enrich lives by welcoming the world to the USA and is dedicated to fostering community prosperity by uniting partners, showcasing innovative leadership, and inspiring travel to benefit the U.S. travel industry and the diverse communities across the United States.



International travelers tend to stay longer & spend more money





# Travel Michigan

the official state agency that promotes Michigan's tourism and travel:

- Travel Michigan's goal is to promote travel and tourism to create jobs and economic development.

# Pure Michigan

A travel and tourism marketing campaign and website for the state of Michigan

# 2023 Domestic Travel

131.7 million to the state of Michigan

- 77.2 million are visiting for the day (59%)
- 55.4 million stayed overnight

89% of overnight stays are repeat visitors & of those, 68% visited in the past 12 months

# Trip Planning

16% advice from friends & family

15% decide from the hotels

9-6% use OTAs/Social/Visitors Bureau website/travel agents





# Michigan's Overnight Trip Characteristics

Base: 2023 Overnight Person-Trips

## Main Purpose of Trip

	<b>46%</b> Visiting friends/ relatives		<b>2%</b> Conference/ Convention
	<b>11%</b> Outdoors		
	<b>10%</b> Touring		
	<b>8%</b> Special event		
	<b>6%</b> Casino		
	<b>5%</b> City trip		
	<b>2%</b> Resort		
	<b>1%</b> Theme park		<b>3%</b> Business-Leisure

## Main Purpose of Leisure Trip

	2023	2022
Visiting friends/ relatives	<b>46%</b>	<b>45%</b>
Outdoors	<b>11%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Touring	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Special event	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Casino	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>
City trip	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Resort	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Theme park	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

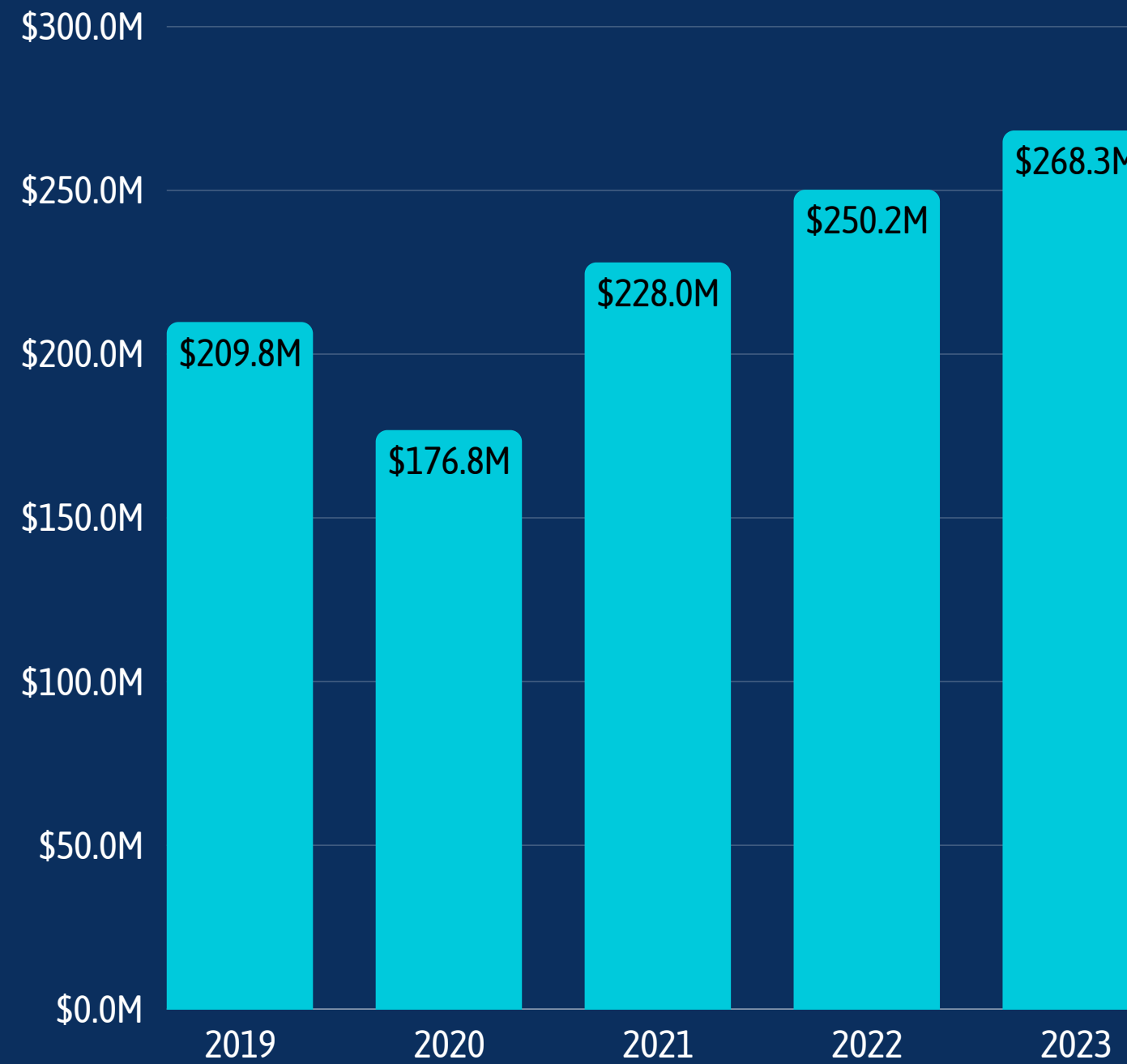


# Just the Numbers

**Visitor Spend, millions for Marquette County**

**We are 16.6% share of the region**

**We are .9% share of the State**





# Just the Numbers

Visitor Spend via  
Travel Michigan/Tourism Economics for 2023

Total Visitor Spend in Marquette County

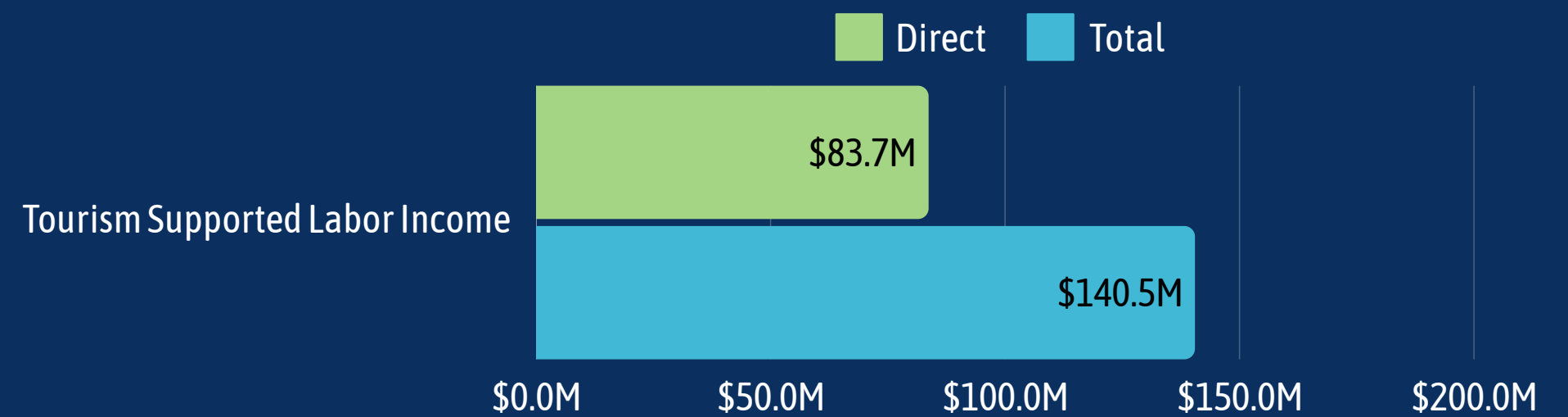
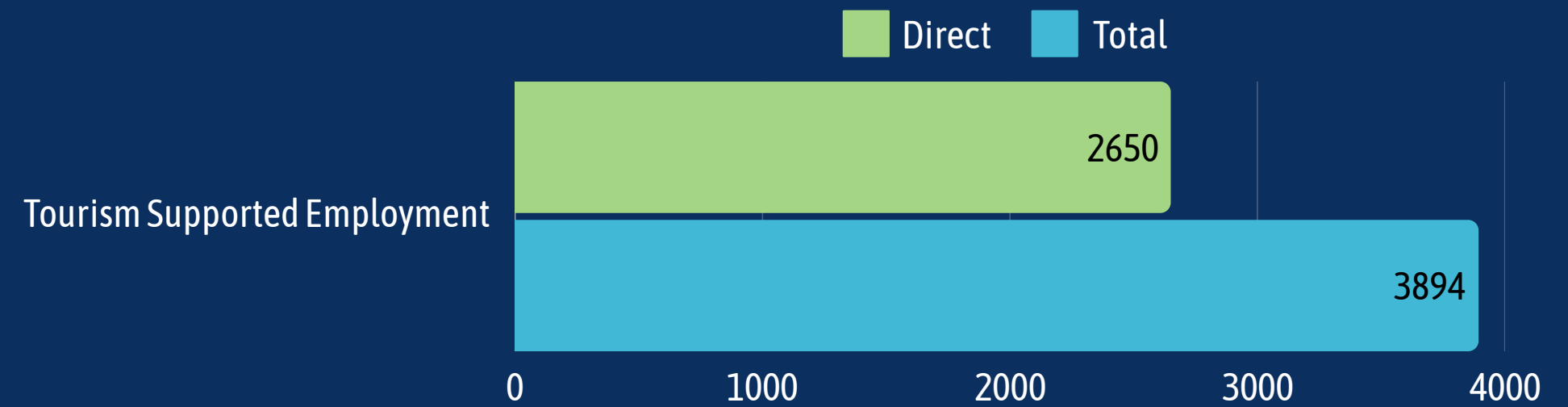
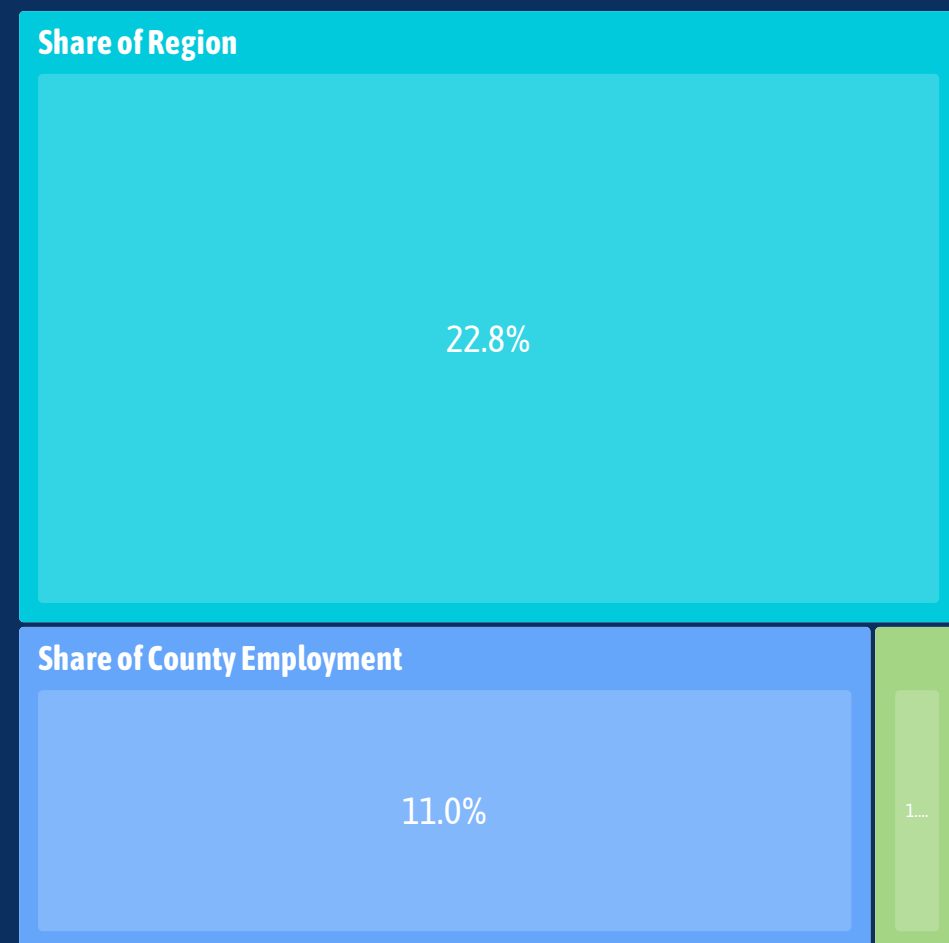
**\$268.3M**





# Just the Numbers

Employment Data from Travel Michigan/  
Tourism Economic for 2023





# Just the Numbers

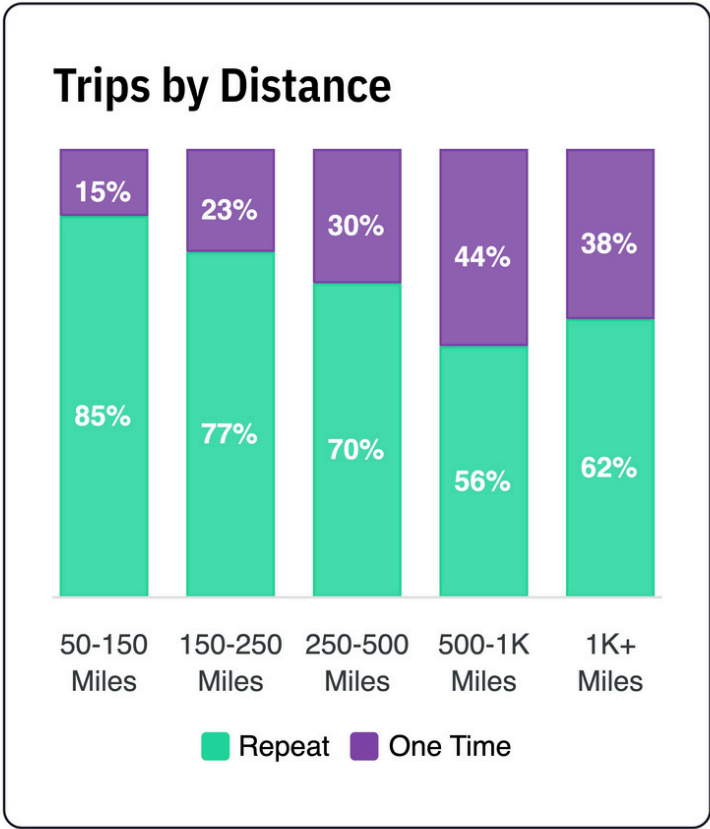
Visitation numbers from Datafy





# Just the Numbers

## Repeat VS One Time Visitation numbers from Datafy



**Global Filters**

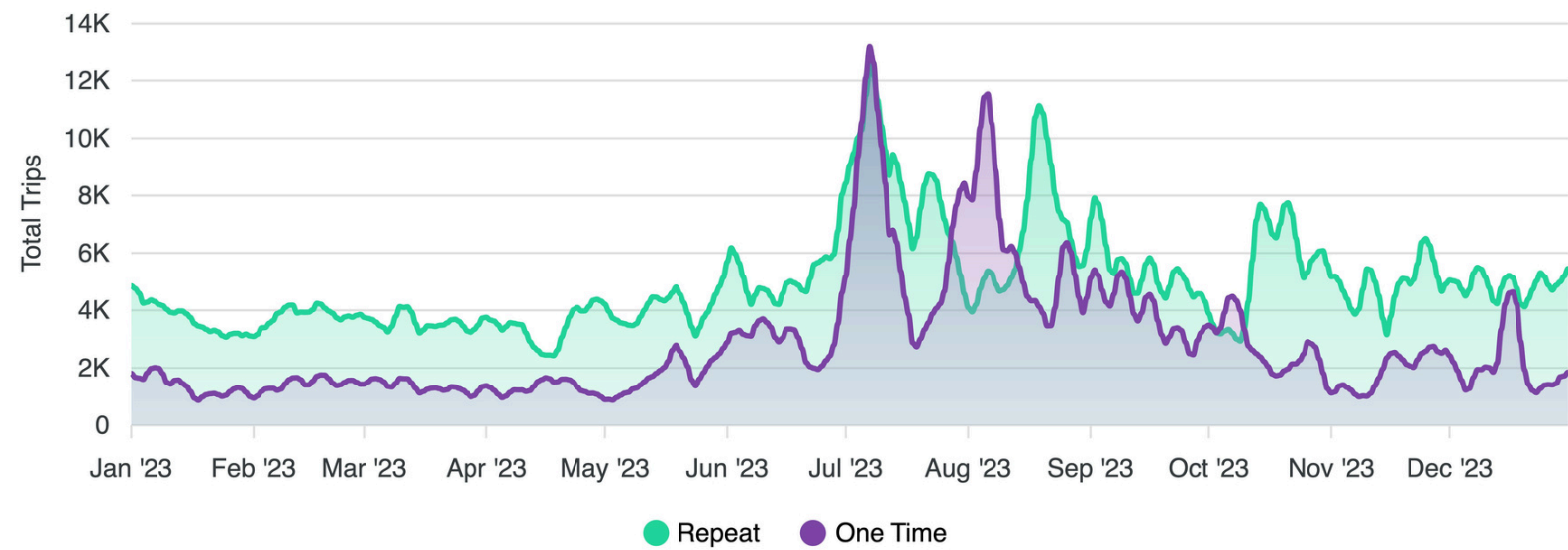
- In-State Out-of-State
- Distance: 75 mi - 4,299 mi
- Dates: 1/1/23 - 12/31/23
- Cluster: Marquette County Included
- POIs: All Included

**Advanced Filters**

*Galicia Model* |© Datafy - All Rights Reserved  
Geolocation estimates are generated from a statistical model which has been trained using historical behavior. The specific results are based on an observed sample of devices that meet the specified filter settings.



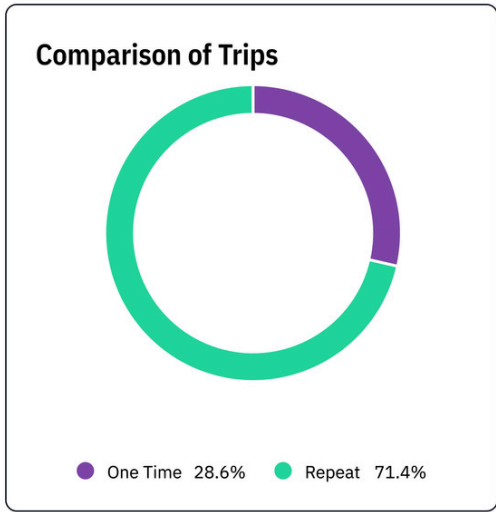
### Repeat Vs One Time Trends



- Global Filters**
- In-State Out-of-State
  - Distance: 75 mi - 4,299 mi
  - Dates: 1/1/23 - 12/31/23
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**Advanced Filters**

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This data represents a statistical model based on a sample size of devices.







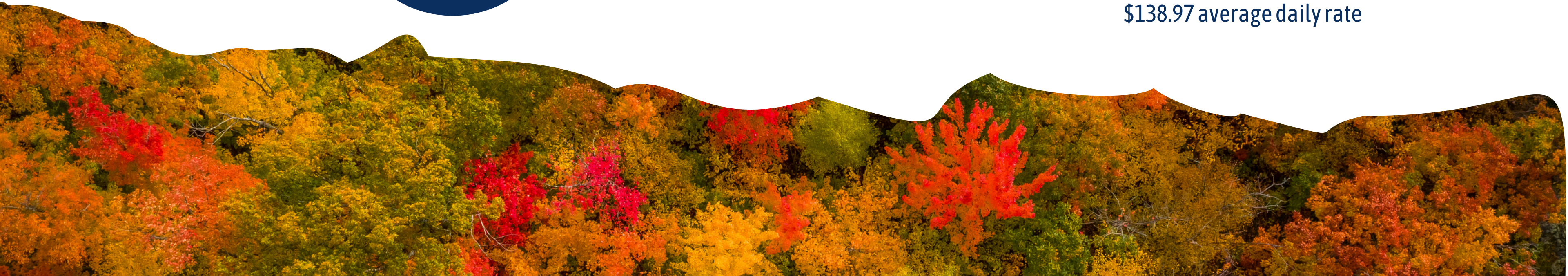
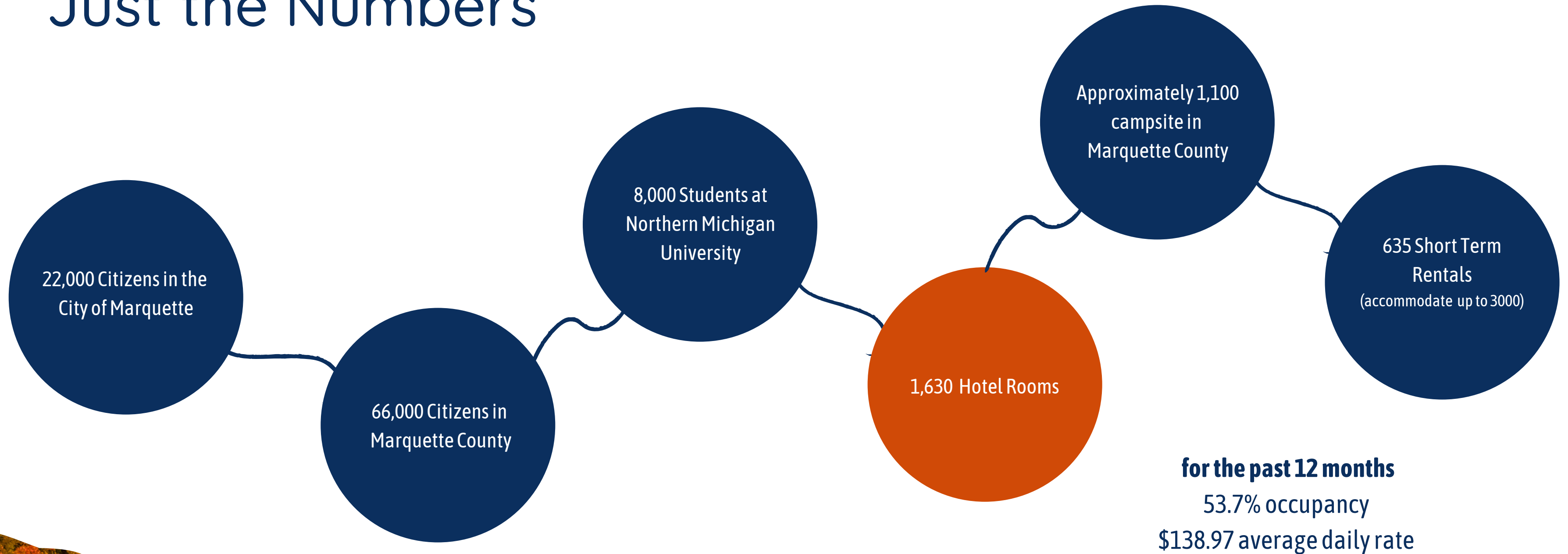
TRAVEL  
MARQUETTE

## How are we funded?

**We are a 501(c)(6) fully funded by a 5% hotel assessment according to Michigan's Public Act 59.**



# Just the Numbers









# Marquette County Hotels

HOTEL	# OF ROOMS		
Americas Best Value	39		
Birchy	29		
Blueberry Ridge B&B	3		
Brentwood Motor Inn	41		
Cedar Motor Inn	87		
Comfort Suites	83		
Days Inn	65		
EconoLodge	49		
Fairfield Inn & Suites	92	NEW	
Hampton Inn	84		
Holiday Inn	187		
Landmark Inn	66		
Holiday Inn Express	84		
My Place Hotel	64		
North Coast Place	12		
Quality Inn	78		
Ramada By Wyndham	112		
Rippling River	26		
Staybridge Suites	102		
Superior Stay	39		
Value Host		CLOSED	52
Model Towne Inn	18		
Tower Vacation Homes	15		
Big Bay Motel	12		
Thunder Bay Inn	14		
Tall Pines	16		
Jasper Ridge Inn	26		
Magnuson Hotel Country Inn	59		
Triangle Motel	28		
Best Western Plus	87	To open 2/25	
Explore Marquette	13	To open 2/25	
	1630		

1630 hotel rooms in Marquette County  
by the first quarter of 2025







# Who makes up our Board of Directors?

Randy Larson, President **Hampton Inn Marquette/Waterfront**

Julie Swanson, Vice President **Holiday Inn Express & Suites**

Linda Stabile, Treasurer **Days Inn of Marquette**

Ann Armstrong, Secretary **Holiday Inn of Marquette**

Beth Meyer **Comfort Suites of Marquette**

Neeco Belanger **Base Hospitality Group**

Lynne Stiebe **Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott**

AJ Patel **Superior Stay**

Kelli Doyen **Model Towne Inn**



# What do we do?

Some of the work we do you may never see or we might be helping you with your guests in Marquette County

- Advertising (both digital and traditional)
- Website
- Printed brochures
- Social media
- Group services



**TravelMarquette.com**



# What do we do?

Some of the work we do you may or may not see in Marquette County

- Public Relations

10

TAMPA BAY

April 24, 2023  
UMV: 970,067

Travel this big blue planet in a green way

Travelling in an eco-friendly way means respecting the culture, as well as the earth. Travel writer Terry Ward shared with GDL amazing eco-friendly destinations.



EARTH DAY 2023

BEING AN ECO-FRIENDLY TRAVELER


GREAT DAY LIVE

V6 FOX

July 6, 2022  
UVM: 374,606

Respect Marquette promotes “Leave No Trace” in nature

By Cameron Chinn



MARQUETTE, Mich. (WLUC) - Travel Marquette has partnered with the “Leave No Trace” program to create the “Respect Marquette” coalition.

Respect Marquette is a county-wide partnership between Travel Marquette, trail organizations and Leave No Trace. The Executive Director of Travel Marquette, Susan Estler said the goal of the coalition is to help teach locals and visitors about the nature and culture of the county.

“People just don’t know best practices they might be new to going out on the trails or doing biking or something like that. Just giving everyone an opportunity and giving them some information,” Estler said.

Estler says Leave No Trace will provide resources on how to properly protect the outdoors. Education is also key as the coalition created the “Seven Principles” like sticking to trails and proper fire handling. Leave No Trace has done programs here in Marquette teaching children proper conservation techniques.

“The biggest thing is just getting the message out and having a unified message. We’ve worked with Leave No Trace to kind of Marquette-ify the Seven Principles and those are the underpinnings of the program,” she said.

Estler said the core message is about sustainability and respecting nature in Marquette County. Social media posts and even a newspaper ad were used to get the message out about Respect Marquette.

“So we’re working on some social media posts for the summertime and just getting the messaging out and we’ll continue to with our messaging from now on and working with Leave No Trace,” she said.


m

LIVE

June 28, 2024  
UMV: 23,200,000

Laser shows to light up Marquette’s historic ore dock during Fourth of July celebrations

Published: Jun. 28, 2024, 12:13 p.m.



By Justine Lofton | [jlofton@mlive.com](mailto:jlofton@mlive.com)

MARQUETTE, MI – Laser light shows will again illuminate Marquette’s historic ore dock during the Upper Peninsula city’s Fourth of July celebrations.

The iconic Lower Harbor Ore Dock will be lit up on Wednesday, July 3, during the fireworks display, and again on Thursday, July 4, during a laser-only show.

“Travel Marquette is thrilled to announce the return of the Independence Day Laser Light Show, offering a sensory-friendly visual spectacle ... with one of the largest architectural laser shows in North America,” the local convention and visitors bureau said in a news release.

[Michigan Live](#)


[Tampa Bay](#)

upword

August 7, 2024  
UMV: 58,600

Marquette Rising: Outdoor recreation and intentional development fuel growth

JENNIFER DONOVAN | WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2024



Marquette stands out from other small cities in one important way. It has been growing even as many small cities shrink. A lot of the credit goes to Marquette’s outdoor recreation opportunities.

Marquette is an anomaly in the Midwest, where the majority of cities face shrinking population. Across the country, the cities growing the most tend to be in states experiencing strong job expansion – in the West and South, according to TheStreet, a business news and marketing data website.

Cities with populations of 50,000 or less saw significant population declines during the pandemic. Losses have slowed to pre-pandemic levels, but in 2023, the populations of many small cities trended downward, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

[UPWord](#)

Smartmeetings

The Heart and Mind of Hospitality

July 8, 2022  
UVM: 19,753


Plan a Disability-friendly Event with this Local Accessibility Guide

By Maddie Franz

Many event planners look for destinations with good food, local culture and plenty of leisure activities for attendees. However, accessibility for wheelchair users isn’t always factored into the equation. To encourage the inclusion of disabled travelers in the event agenda, Marquette County in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula has put together an [accessibility guide](#).

Travel Marquette worked together with the [Superior Alliance for Independent Living](#) (SAIL), a local disability network, to assess the facilities of parks, restaurants and hotels. With the [firsthand experience](#) of accessible travel blogger Cory Lee, the accessibility guide recommends a wide variety of facilities that anyone can enjoy.

Where to Meet in Marquette County



The City of Marquette is home to [Northern Center & Event Services](#), part of Northern Michigan University. Two ballrooms, five breakout rooms and two conference rooms total to 25,000 sq. ft., enough to accommodate over 1,000 attendees at the event center.

A dedicated events team helps groups operate the venue’s built-in presentation technology. Northern Center has catering services available with ingredients sourced from local farms and kitchens. They offer a range of meal options and have staff trained to follow dietary restrictions closely.

Read More: [Michigan Dive In!](#)

[Smart Meetings](#)



# What do we do?

Some of the work we do you will see in Marquette County

## Community Programs

### Beacon House Transition

Travel Marquette and the hotels partnered with Beacon House to provide lodging vouchers while they were building the new property. Many hotels continue to offer rooms if they are available.





# What do we do?

Some of the work we do you will see in Marquette County

## Community Programs

## Hospitality for Heroes

Travel Marquette created a program for health workers in the early days of the COVID pandemic offering 5 nights free of charge in our participating hotels. This provided a safe place for those workers that may have had vulnerable family members. Grants were provided by the Community Foundation, the Marquette Breakfast Rotary and the West End Rotary.





# What do we do?

Some of the work we do you will see in Marquette County

## Community Programs

### Accessible Program

Travel Marquette has partnered with SAIL (Superior Alliance for Independent Living) by securing a grant from MDARD for the first Accessible Guide.

We now have over 175 different businesses and recreation areas reviewed and on our website.

We have also received grants from Pure Michigan for videos of different location with 360 views produced by Superior Hospitality—a local family owned business.





# What do we do?

Some of the work we do you will see in Marquette County

## Community Programs

### Respect Marquette County

Travel Marquette created this program in response to tourism levels in 2020 and 2021 during the COVID pandemic. Visitation went up in Marquette County as numbers were down in the urban areas of Michigan.

We conducted a charette with Better Destinations from Colorado in March 2022 and started the program—Respect Marquette County, partnering with Leave No Trace and following their 7 principles.

We now have approximately 30 active members as part of the coalition. Educating visitors and locals on the better ways to recreate and provide better, less visited options throughout the county. We have also asked Pure Michigan and UPTRA to NOT promote Dead River Falls.

For more info, go to [RespectMarquette.com](https://RespectMarquette.com) and take the pledge— we currently have had over 1000 people sign the pledge!





# THINK X COLLECTIVE

## What do we do?

Some of the work we do you will see globally

### Global Programs

#### Destination Think

We are a founding member of this global organization. We are in the company of destinations like Bend, OR; Copenhagen, Denmark; and Queensland, Australia. Destination Think knows the challenges we face are growing at an accelerating pace. But all over the world, people, communities and businesses are actively working toward making their homes a better place. We believe tangible solutions to our toughest issues are out there, and that the travel industry holds the key to accelerating their progress on a global scale.



# Event funding/partnership & lasers

Each year Travel Marquette spends over \$100,000 a year for events and partnerships, as well as lasers on the Ore Dock—a giveback to the community.

## EVENT FUNDING

2022	51 total events	\$146,300
2023	59 total events	\$128,548
2024	75 total events	\$171,400

## NTN FUNDING

other than events

2023	\$11,250
2024	\$11,716

## IRON ORE HERITAGE TRAILS FUNDING

other than events

2023	\$1274
2024	\$1260

## FRESH COAST LIGHT LAB

lasers for 2022, 2023 & 2024  
\$40,000



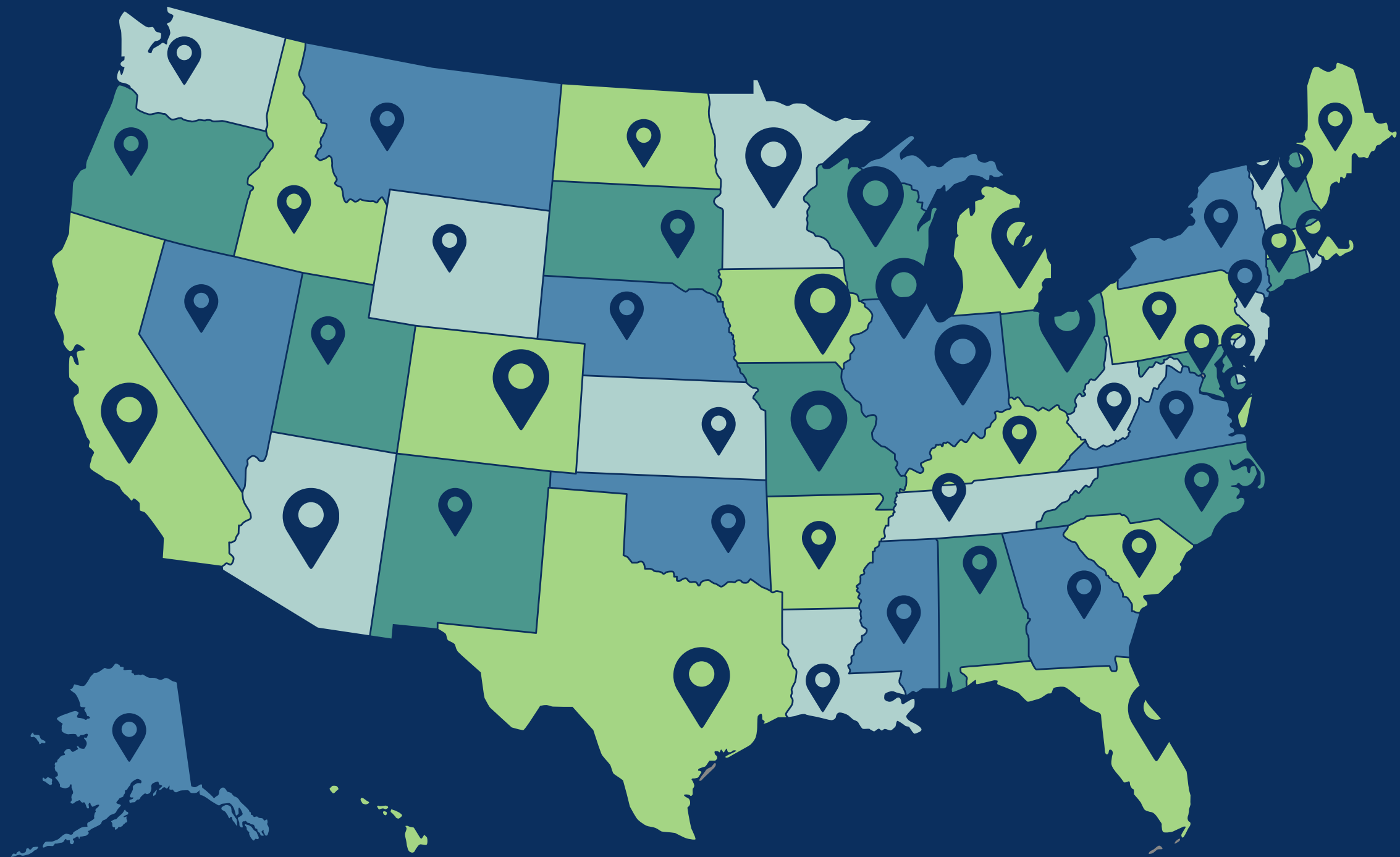


# What do we do?

## Research

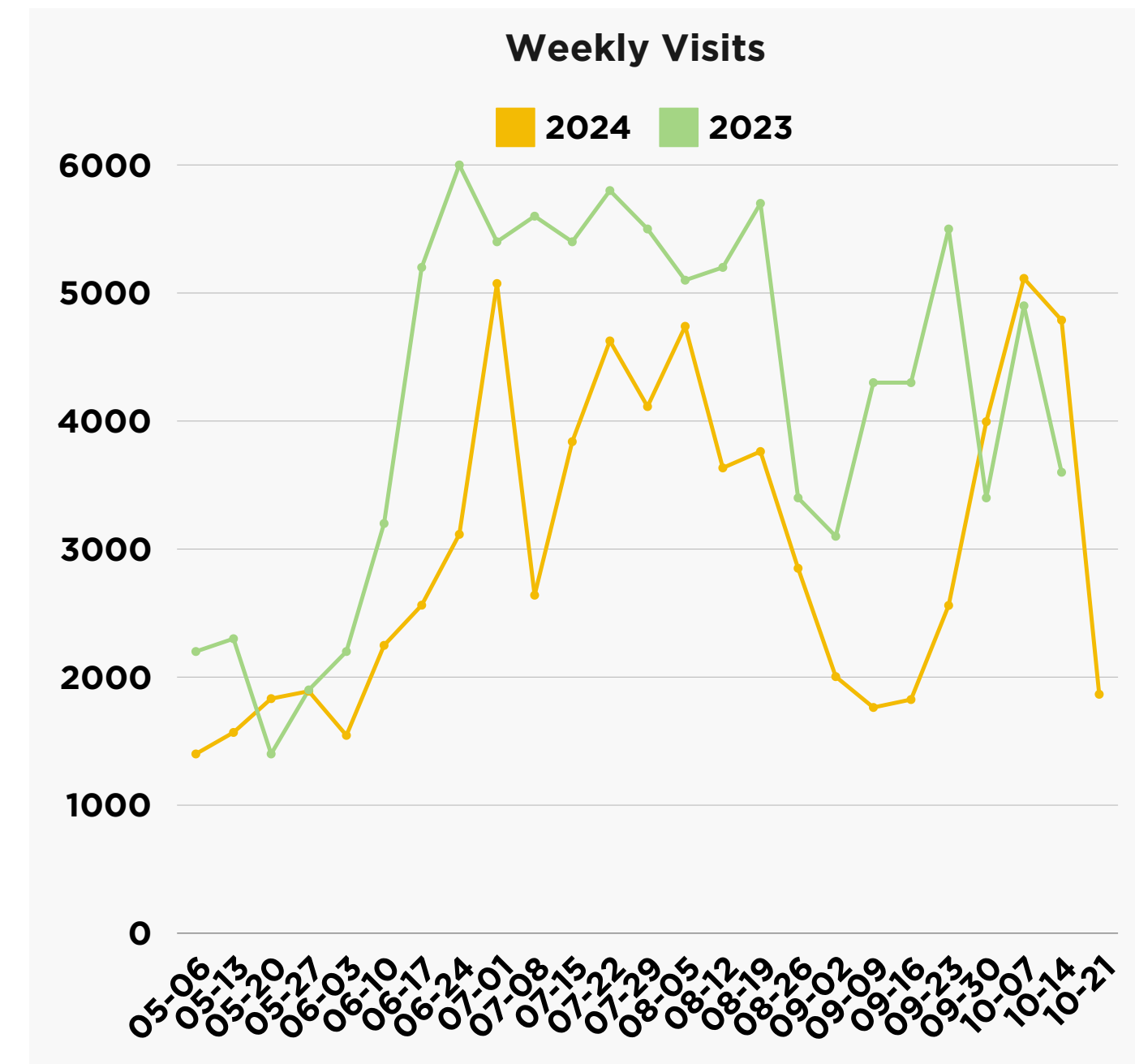
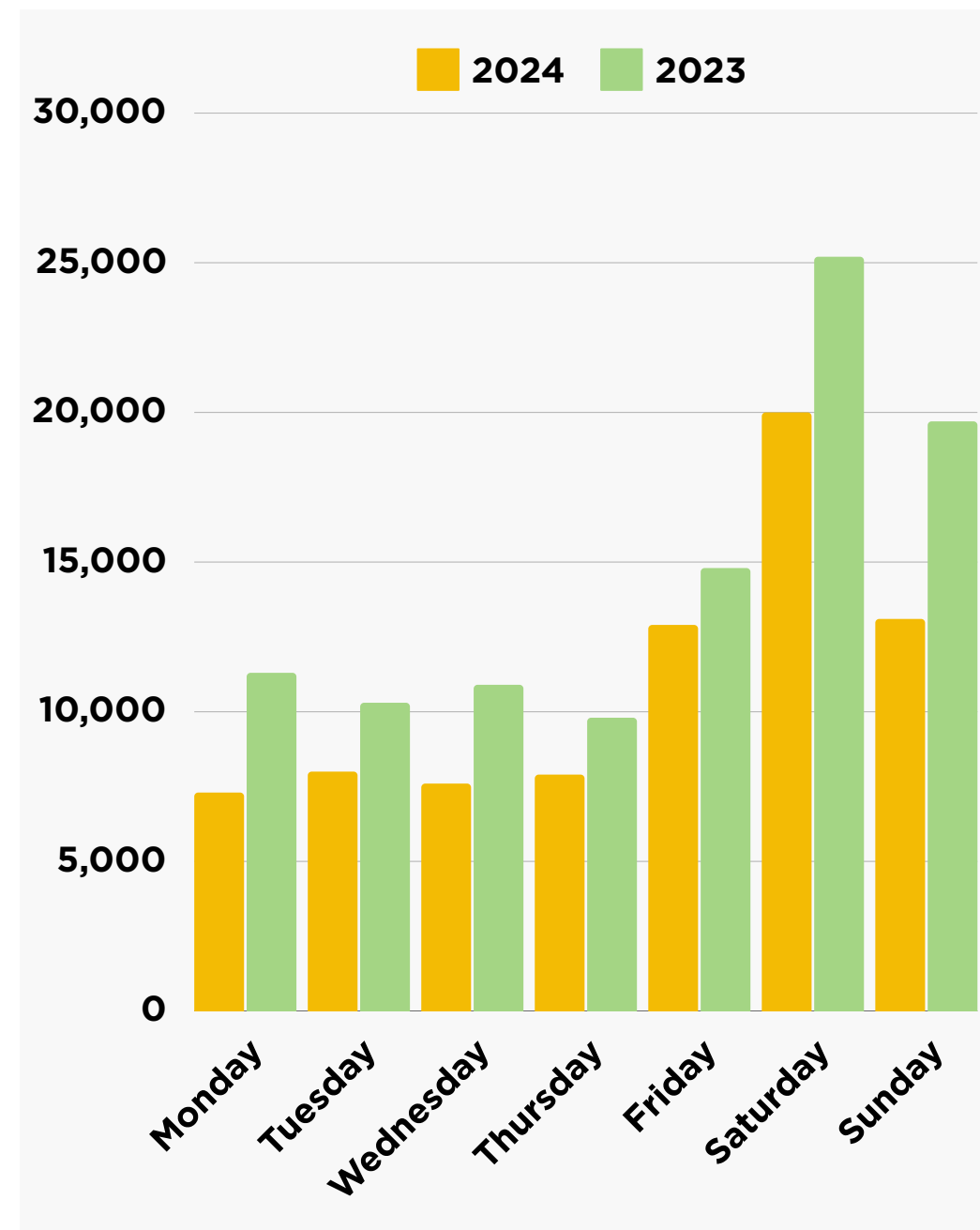
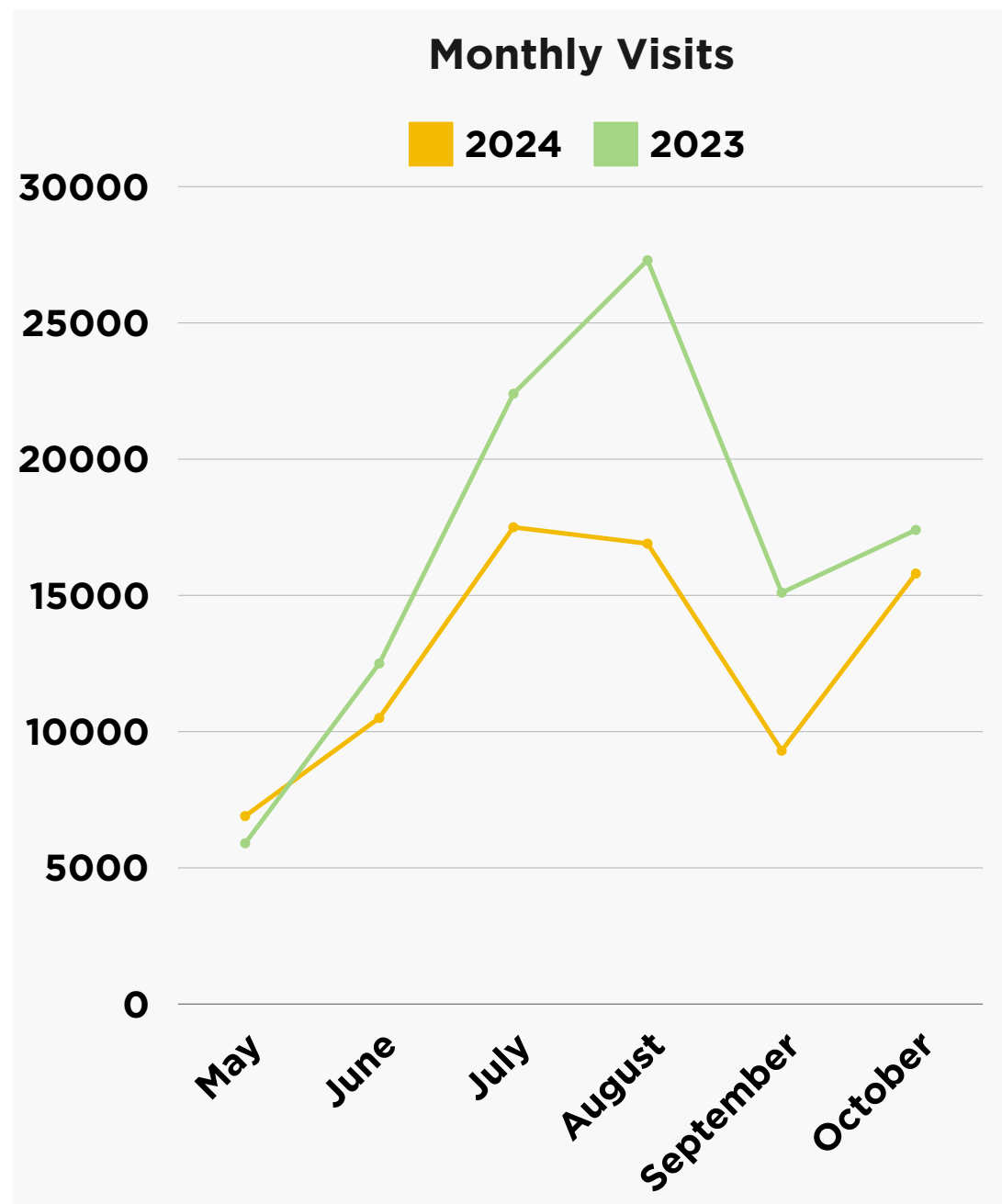
We have invested in many different resources to provide accurate data to our community partners as well as use it to inform marketing decisions.

- Placer.AI
- Datafy
- Lighthouse
- STR/Costar
- Google Analytics/digital advertising analytics





# SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN



**76,900**

Visits - Foot Traffic  
1.13 Frequency

**67,965**

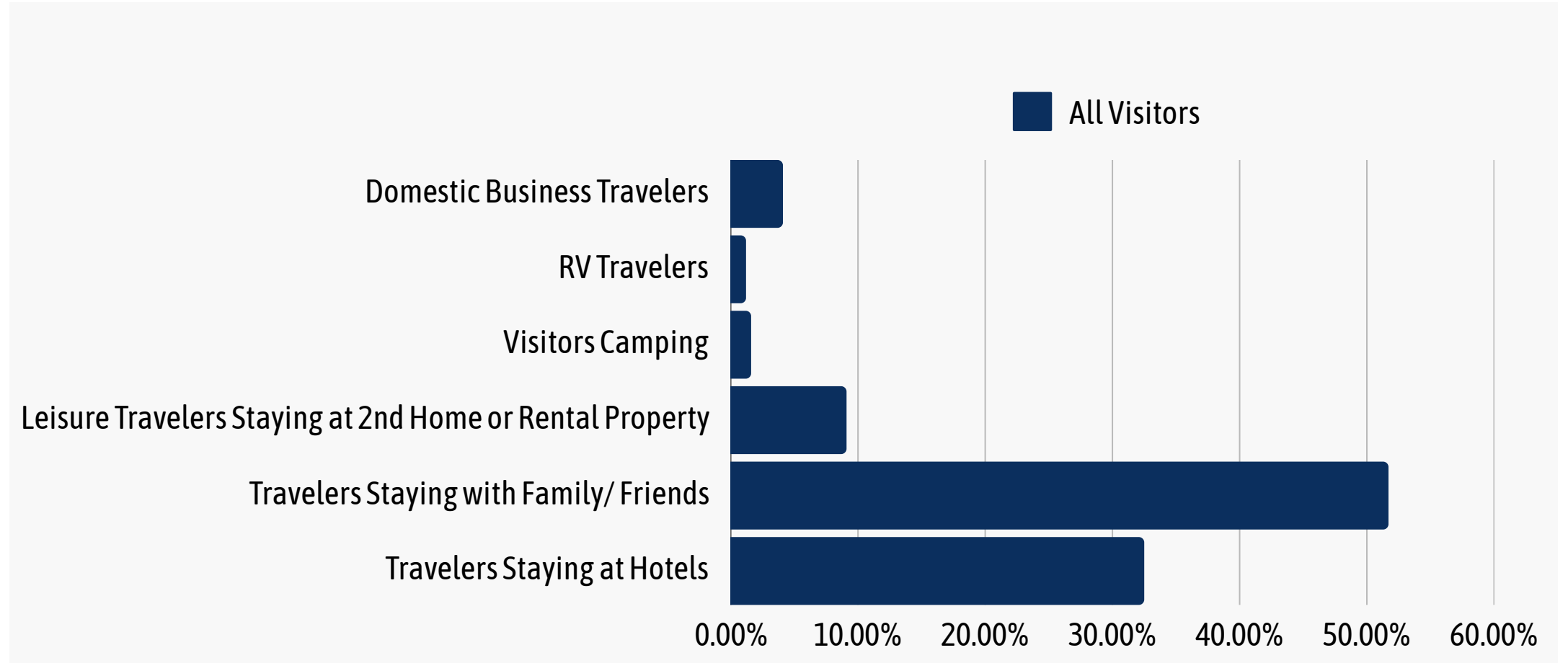
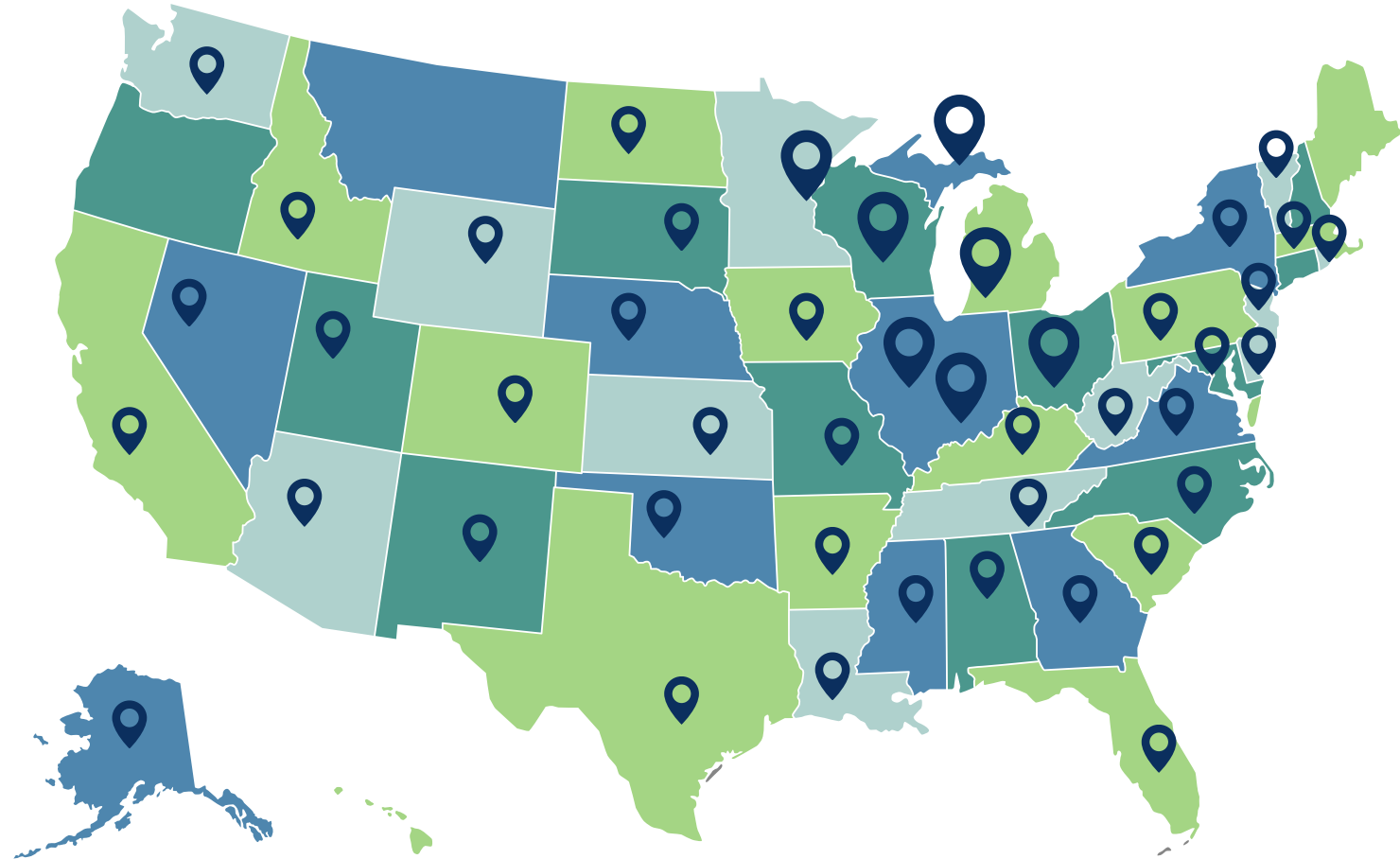
Visitors -  
Estimated  
Number of  
People

**-24.24%**

Visitor Decrease  
Y.o.Y.



# SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN

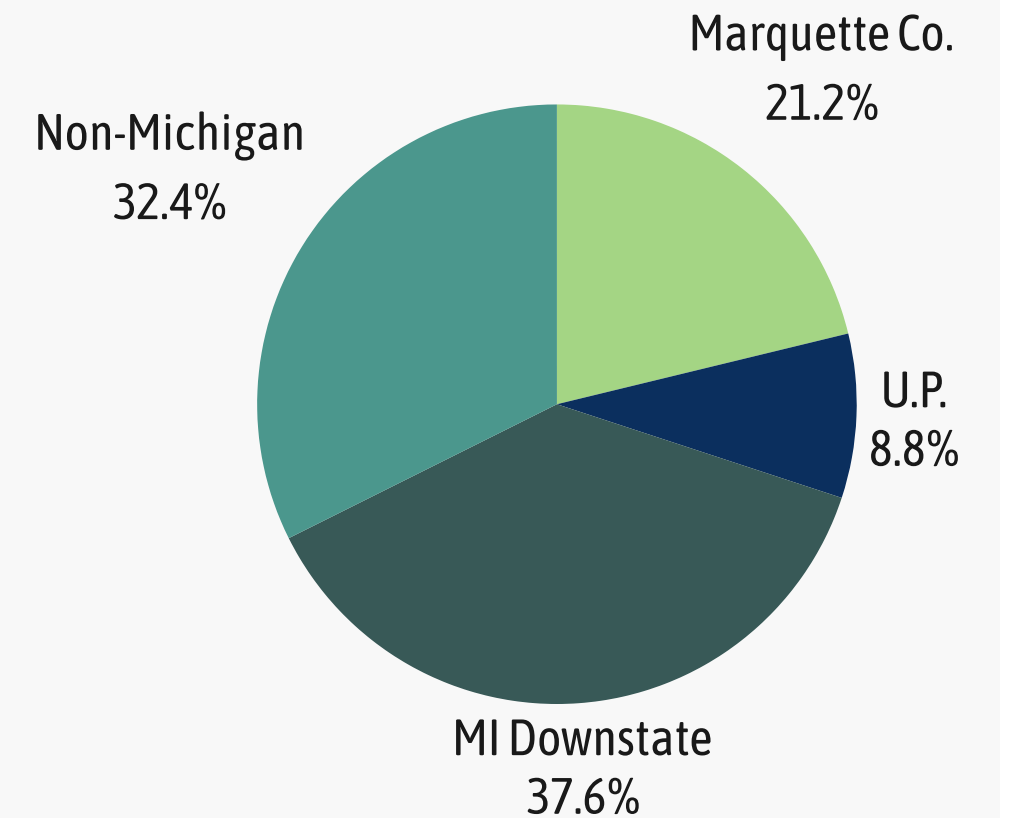


Average Time Spent  
27 Minutes

**Top Visiting Locations**  
 Michigan Downstate - 25,497  
 Wisconsin - 7,473  
 Upper Peninsula - 6,005  
 Illinois - 3,386  
 Minnesota - 2,563  
 Ohio - 1,673  
 Indiana - 1,037  
 Florida - 519  
 California - 504  
 Iowa - 503

**Top Visiting Locations**  
 Marquette County - 14,393  
 Grand Rapids, MI - 1,300  
 Escanaba, MI - 1,128  
 Twin Cities, MN - 679  
 Ann Arbor, MI - 643  
 Milwaukee, WI - 554  
 Green Bay, WI - 551  
 Kalamazoo, MI - 541  
 Gladstone, MI - 531  
 Traverse City, MI - 514

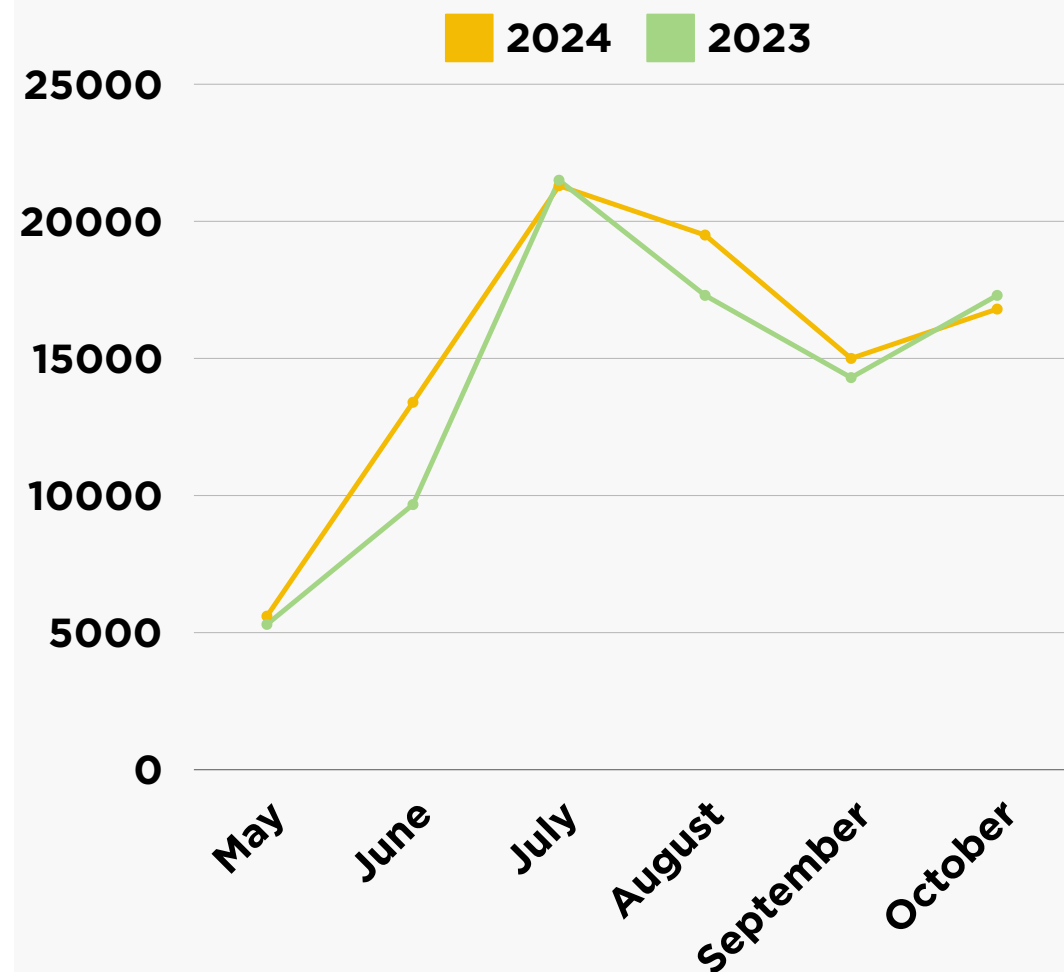
Estimated Number of People



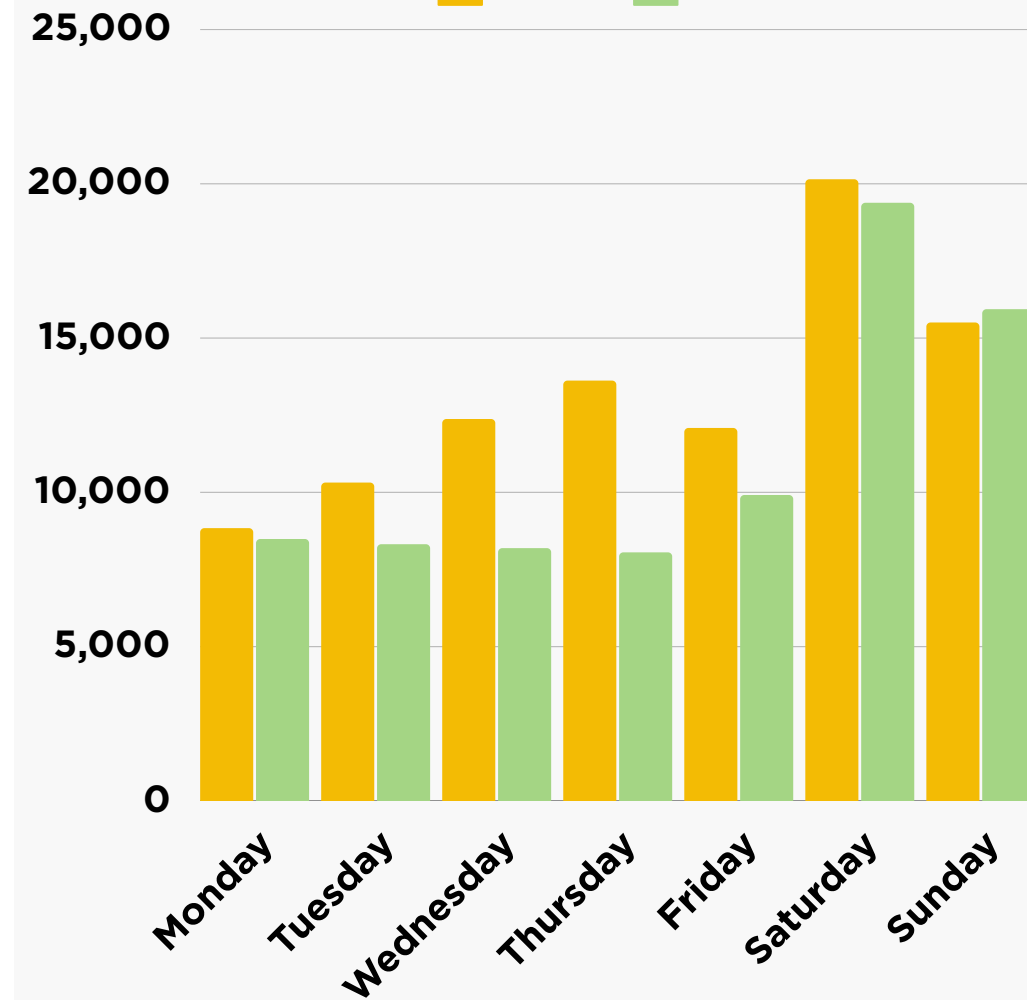


# SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN

Monthly Visits



2024 2023



Top Visiting Locations (DMA)

Marquette - 26,225	Flint, Saginaw, Bay City - 4,606
Detroit - 13,761	Chicago - 3,094
Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek - 8,875	Minneapolis, St. Paul - 2,103
Green Bay, Appleton - 5,113	Lansing - 1,579
Traverse City, Cadillac - 4,654	Milwaukee - 1,463

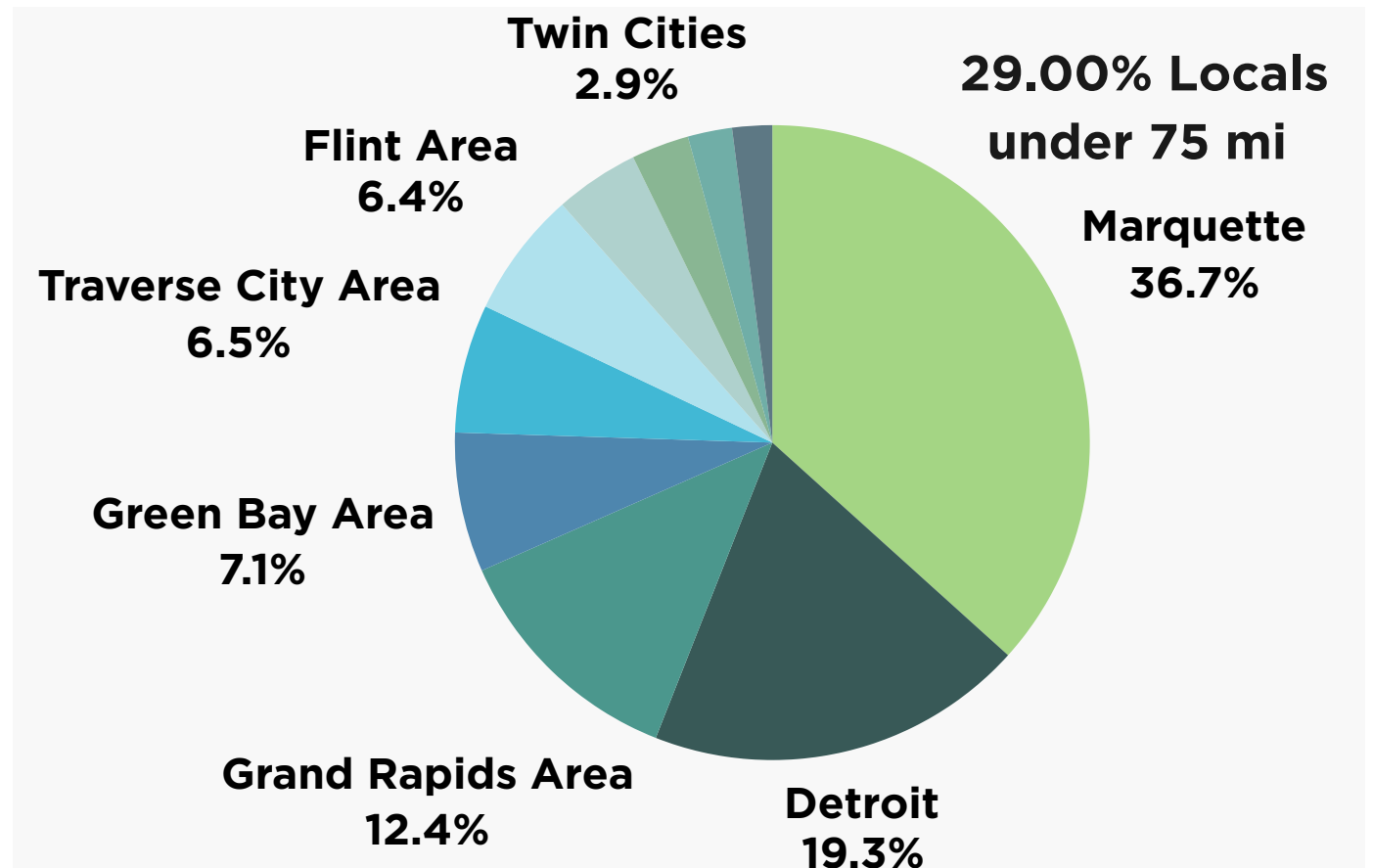
Datafy  
87,892 Trips

48,314 Trips Over 50 miles  
54.97%

39,578 Trips Under 50 Miles  
45.03%

Top Visiting Locations (States)

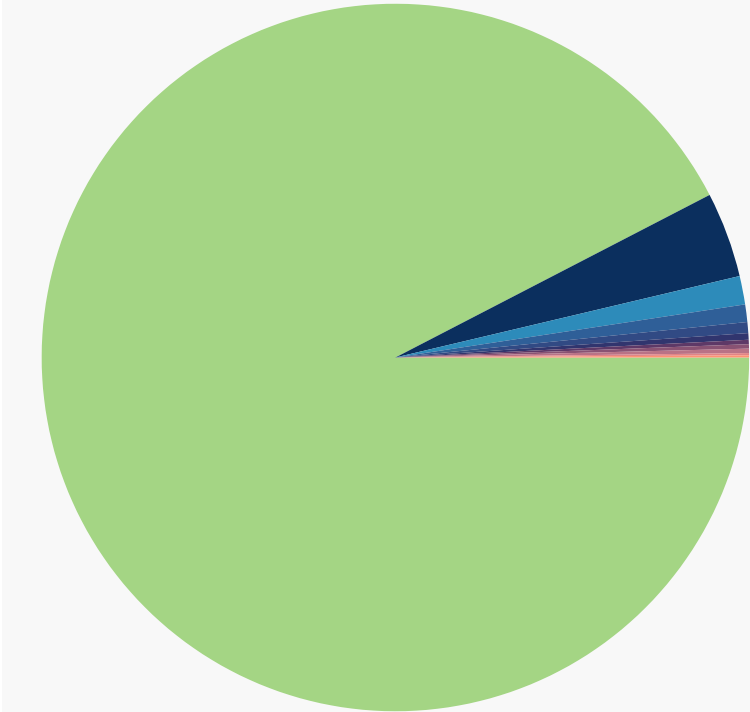
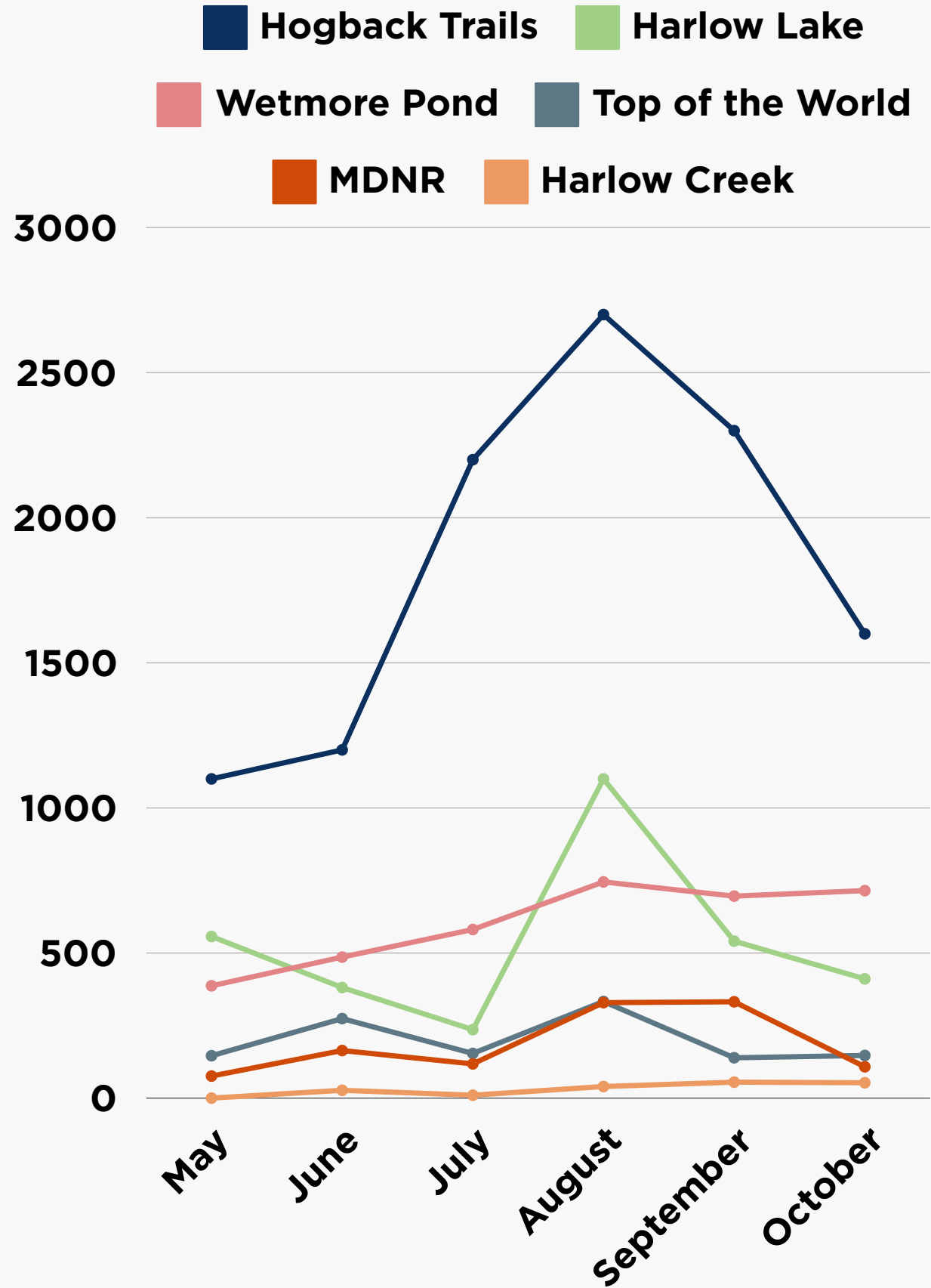
Michigan 76.1% 62,179	Ohio 1.9% 1,532
Wisconsin 10.6% 8,649	Indiana 0.9% 731
Illinois 4.4% 3,621	Missouri 0.6% 485
Minnesota 2.3% 1,911	Iowa 0.5% 380
	Florida 0.3% 277



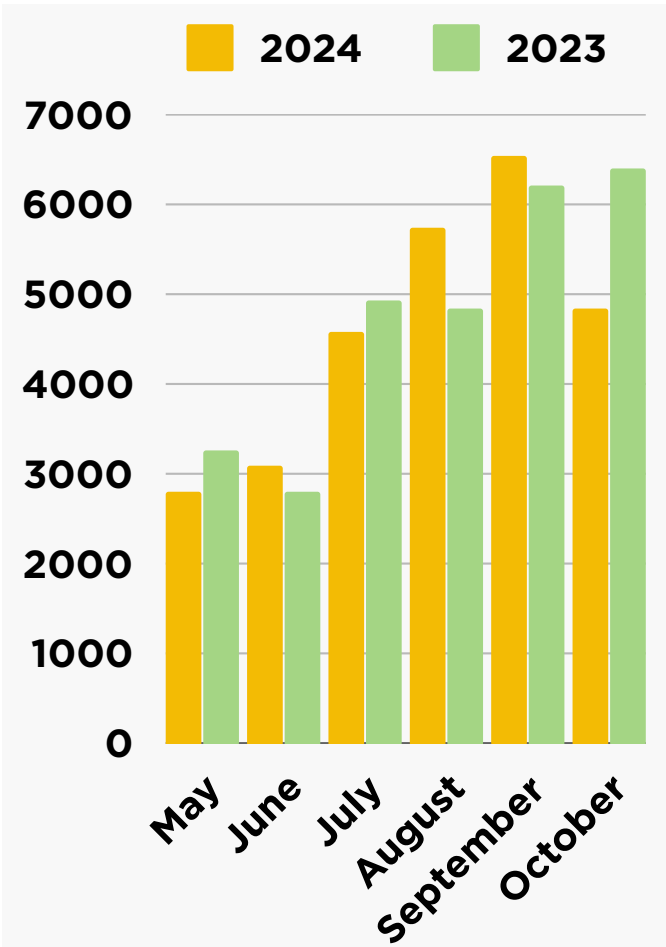


## Top Visiting Locations (DMA)

Marquette 78.4%	Chicago 1.30%
15,610	251
Detroit 5.40%	Green Bay, Appleton 1.20%
1,072	234
Flint, Saginaw, Bay City 3.90%	Madison 0.70%
786	145
Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek 3.40%	Milwaukee 0.60%
687	126
Traverse City, Cadillac 1.90%	Cleveland, Akron, Canton 0.30%
384	64



Michigan 92.40%  
 Wisconsin 3.90%  
 Illinois 1.30%  
 Ohio 0.80%  
 Other 0.50%  
 Indiana 0.30%  
 Minnesota 0.20%  
 Utah 0.20%  
 Georgia 0.20%  
 Texas 0.10%  
 Kentucky 0.10%



27,677 Trips (Visitors)  
 +5.95%  
 27,916 Visitor Days (Visits)  
 +3.00%  
  
 4,291 Trips Over 50 miles  
 15.50%  
 23,386 Trips Under 50 Miles  
 84.50%

Locals 56.9%



**Marquette is a favorite destination of mine. Just returned home and am flipping through the Travel Marquette guide. THANK YOU for including the wheelchair accessible guide both in print and digitally on your website. As the wife of a wheelchair user, this means so much. Please continue to remember the many people who have mobility issues and continue to be a leader in promoting accessibility.**

**Another reason to love Marquette. Thanks again.**

**--Christine, Grosse Pointe Park**

**Great food, great shopping and outstanding friendliness.**

**--Janet from  
Arkansas**

**Marquette has been my favorite place to travel for years.**

**I look forward to every winter trek and summer trip. The city is always growing and kept so beautiful.**

**--Sophia from Grand Rapids**



# In Conclusion

**Please remember that approximately 50% of people visiting Marquette County are visiting friends & family.**

**You might not know them but be kind.**



## Why Travel?

- **Decreases stress and Pure Michigan is encouraging “slow travel”**
- **Boosts happiness & creativity**
- **Builds experiences & broadens perspective**
- **Helps with mental wellbeing**







Questions?

**Susan Estler**

Travel Marquette

[susan@travelmarquette.com](mailto:susan@travelmarquette.com)