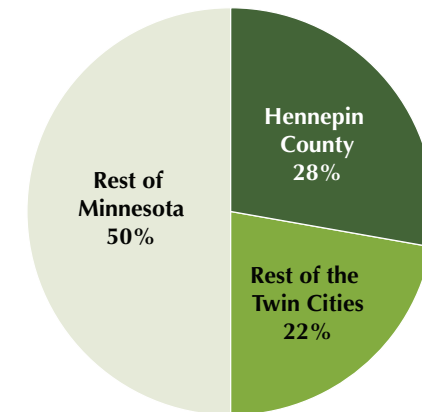


Rural Reality: tourism

What's the economic impact on communities?

Tourism dollars go immediately into the local economy via hotel stays, eating out, shopping, transportation, fuel, and recreational activities. The funds paid to businesses go to wages, to income for the business owners, and to pay suppliers of goods and services both inside and outside the community. These people in turn go out and spend on further goods and services, an indirect impact.

Dollars also go to local and state sales taxes. Unlike other industries, nearly all tourism-related purchases collect sales tax.



Tourism dollars spent in the Twin Cities dominate statewide statistics.

Explore Minnesota, *The Economic Impact of Expenditures by Travelers on Minnesota, June 2007-May 2008.*

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Rural Reality: tourism

A few examples:

Lakes Bluegrass Festival

Pine River, pop. 929
This year's 3,000-4,000 guests stayed at nearby resorts and campgrounds for the four-day event.

Art Leap

Park Rapids, pop. 3,700
Local artists sold an est. \$90,000 in artwork in 2013.

Meander Art Crawl
Granite Falls to Ortonville
45 artists in 7 towns along the upper Minnesota River Valley.

Wilder Pageant

Walnut Grove, pop. 850
7,650 visitors over three weekends in 2014.

Mahnomen County
Highest ave. weekly wage in Leisure & Hospitality sector (2013), largely thanks to casino.

Mesabi Trail
Grand Rapids to Ely
One of many scenic trails around the state.

Blueberry Arts Festival
Ely, pop. 3,460
This July festival draws 40,000 visitors over three days.

Duluth's growing brewery trail
Duluth, pop. 86,128
A change in law has allowed small craft breweries to spring up around the state, especially along the North Shore.

McGregor, pop. 391
The chamber reports 5,000 people come through the tourism info center each year.

Sauerkraut Days
Henderson, pop. 886
Celebrating sauerkraut and local heritage for 80 years.

Lanesboro, pop. 754
The city developed and carried out a plan to make itself a destination for arts lovers.

Economic impact, Quality of life impact

In Greater Minnesota, tourism is about quality of life impact, not just economic impact. Tourism brings in money and creates jobs, but it also keeps small towns alive and interesting. Communities developing their tourism sector believe they have something of value to celebrate, for themselves, visitors, and people who may want to live there.

Even very small communities have the potential to do big things.

What's less well known: How tourism impacts Greater Minnesota

There are few studies on tourism in Greater Minnesota, including how tourism impacts sites located in some of the state's most vulnerable natural settings. Tourists use much of the same infrastructure as residents, including roads, water and wastewater systems, and hospitals. **Crow Wing County** officials, for example, estimate that the 62,500-resident county welcomes **250,000 visitors** each summer, roughly the population of St. Paul.

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