

VISIT DULUTH 

OFFICIAL DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION

*Bridging
the past*



and the
Future

A N N U A L R E P O R T 2 0 0 5

Driving economic success. Enhancing quality of life.

SUSTAINED GROWTH ON TAP FOR 2005

Depending on who you talk with, or what measurements you're comparing, 2004 Duluth tourism was, if anything, a mixed bag. While there's no single turnstile through which each visitor passes each year, we do have several different ways of accurately measuring industry results and return on investment.

Final, adjusted data for Duluth tourism tax receipts will show a 3.5 to 4 percent increase from 2003 to 2004. Although we have produced bigger growth years in this important measurement of overall performance, it's also important to recognize this was the 16th consecutive year of sustained revenue growth for the city of Duluth.

Most Duluth tourist attractions, however, followed a nationwide trend of struggling with the effects of a lagging economy, the war in Iraq and a presidential election. Voters keep a tight grip on their pocketbooks during times of uncertainty and national elections invariably reduce consumer confidence. It was a tough year for the amusement industry everywhere.

The weather, more precisely the weather in places where Duluth visitors live, put a damper on travel throughout Midwest markets. Smith Travel Research, a Tennessee-based expert, measured hotel occupancy specific to the Duluth market up only a fraction of a percent in 2004, indicating a flat year for overnight stays here.

Another vital piece of information to examine is the fact that while Duluthians are benefiting from more than a decade and a half of continuous growth, tourism in most American cities is just getting back to 2001 numbers. Duluth was far better-off just maintaining its momentum than a city which might have been up 10 percent in 2004 but down 20 percent a year earlier, for example. The pattern of success here in Duluth is a major anomaly—while 2004 wasn't a great year, most wouldn't classify it as a disaster either.

The recent commitments to major expansions in our tourism base are a testament to the confidence in tourism's future here. The private construction of a \$20 million water park, The Edge, at the Best Western Edgewater along with the proposed \$36

million hotel/condo project downtown are both healthy indications of where we're headed. Make no mistake, however, developers assume major risk because there is no guarantee of profit or even occupancy for that matter.

Adding rooms alone is no more an assurance sales will increase than it is that automakers will sell more cars or make money simply by churning out additional inventory. We are all, however, fortunate and enthusiastic about facing the greater challenges and opportunities which lie ahead.

Looking farther into 2005, the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) predicts a nearly 2 percent increase for domestic leisure travel. Business travel is expected to increase 3 percent, while the amusement industry expects a 4-6 percent increase in revenues nationwide.

Our efforts in growing leisure travel and conventions are more important than ever.

Locally, our efforts in growing leisure travel and conventions are more important than ever. Keep in mind, these two segments are clearly the bread and butter for Duluth's hospitality community because different from most cities our size, business (corporate) travel here is minuscule at best.

While there were likely less folks visiting Duluth during peak summer months last year and they likely had less discretionary income to spend on entertainment, rest assured we're doing everything possible to improve results for 2005. Latest comparative sales tax receipts for late 2004 and early 2005 indicate hotel tax collections up as much as 9 percent. The trend is headed in the proper direction while the need for aggressive sales and marketing efforts is being relied upon like never before. As the bar rises, we continue opening new doors for the local economy while enhancing the quality of life in Duluth.

— by Terry Mattson, President
Visit Duluth
February 20, 2005

Reprinted from the Duluth Budgeteer

OUR MISSION AND OBJECTIVE

In 1935, the Duluth Publicity Bureau, Inc. was founded as an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to attracting visitors and infusing tourism dollars into the local economy. Thirty-five years later, the organization became part of a nationwide trend and began doing business as the Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau. Today, it is simply referred to as Visit Duluth. In keeping with the original mission, Visit Duluth also establishes new initiatives to increase tourism, visitors and conventions, and continuously works to further enhance the awareness of the visitor industry.

Visit Duluth is the official destination marketing organization of Duluth, Minnesota. The organization also serves as the primary custodian of our destination's image.

To be effective, Visit Duluth operates with a dominant private sector philosophy. Visit Duluth exists to increase interest and awareness in discretionary (i.e., marketable) travel to and throughout the Duluth area. We are considered to be one of the best role models for destination marketing in America.

Representing more than 450 members and governed by a 25-member board of directors, Visit Duluth is not a private entrepreneur, neither is it a government agency. We are proud to be described as having the ability to "turn on a dime," responding proactively to ever-changing market conditions, and interacting with our stakeholders in the style of a corporation. We also have a public trust and are totally transparent. While Visit Duluth represents the community in an official capacity, it does not have some of the constraints endemic to official bureaucracies.

Visit Duluth is a revenue generator for the city of Duluth and its

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residents. Our job is to create and capitalize on opportunities to support, promote and expand tourism within our city in an environmentally conscious manner. By doing this, Visit Duluth helps ensure the city's financial base by creating jobs, bringing outside customers to local businesses and increasing our community's quality of life. These investments are funded by tax revenues from hotel/motel accommodations and food & beverage transactions, as well as by private fund-raising efforts, membership dues and cooperative programs with Explore Minnesota Tourism and other entities. Clearly, it's visitors paying to attract more visitors.

Duluth tourism is used as a model of success in countless examples. The most recent being from the tourism experts at the Knight Foundation's Preservation Development Initiative. According to its report "The DCVB (Visit Duluth) can claim the remarkable accomplishments of being the driving force behind 14 (16) years of growth in tourism revenues... These results are even more surprising when considering the disadvantages the DCVB (Visit Duluth) operates in regards to budget ... There are several areas of concern related to budget that should be addressed by the Duluth city government and the tourism industry ... The amount is not guaranteed on an ongoing basis, reflecting a lack of commitment to tourism ... The \$1.1 (\$1.2) million from tourism tax revenues and an additional \$400,000 raised by the Bureau (Visit Duluth) is unquestionably inadequate for Duluth to

aggressively compete and successfully grow in the competitive world of tourism."

The Economic Summit Report says significantly increasing the amount of dedicated tourism tax for promotion is the number one way to jump-start the economy.

Visit Duluth operates through an internal line of leisure travel marketing, convention sales, packaged travel, consumer services, special events, visitor information and member services. Most importantly, Visit Duluth's ten full-time employees work in cross-functional teams to get the job done by strategically promoting the city regionally, nationally and throughout the world. Additionally, seasonal and part-time staff members work with conventions, events, city tours and at our two information centers—one at 21 West Superior Street, Suite 100 and the other on Harbor Drive.

Visit Duluth drives economic success as tourism is responsible for \$400 million in annual economic impact, 3.5 million annual visitors and more than 8,000 local jobs.* We are dedicated to promoting the area as one of America's great vacation and meeting destinations—providing comprehensive, unbiased information to all travelers.

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* 1998 MN Sea Grant/DTED research

GIVING OURSELVES AN EXTREME MAKEOVER

Brand Identity Enhancement

To increase interest in Duluth tourism and enhance awareness of Duluth's official destination marketing organization, in 2005 the Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau is changing its name to Visit Duluth.

Visit Duluth is the new operating name of the 450-member association and is how it will be known to consumers and stakeholders. "The new name is a more contemporary reflection of what we represent," according to president, Terry Mattson. It characterizes forward thinking with a simple translation of the core mission.

The change to Visit Duluth resonates a call to action...

The change to Visit Duluth resonates a call to action in the organization's efforts; and was partially driven by national research revealing "convention bureau" is not familiar with many people. "Our advertising will stand out better and that's how we attract visitors," said Mattson. In addition to a new name, new logo and new look, the makeover is in conjunction with a move of headquarters from Endion Station in Canal Park to Lake Superior Place, 21 West Superior Street, Suite 100.

When most people think of branding, they think of products, not destinations, according to Mattson who says the changes will enhance Duluth's destination brand equity. These brand identity enhancements are more in tune with Duluth's customers and the times. The organization's legal corporate name will continue to be Duluth Publicity Bureau, Inc. as originally established in 1935, however, it will be doing business as Visit Duluth instead of the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Visit Duluth, visitduluth.com and 1-800-4-duluth are iconic, however, there's no desire for the consumer to think in terms of Duluth Publicity Bureau, Inc.

The enhancements also help address another challenge facing the hospitality industry, which is conveying to government and residents why the association's members are important to the community and how they contribute positively to the

local bottom line and quality of life. Another mission of the "new and enhanced" association is to become the most valued and respected organization in the local community.

Duluth tourism is one of America's great success stories, however, many experts including representatives from the Knight Foundation's Preservation Development Initiative say the success is surprising considering the disproportionately small budget dedicated to Visit Duluth. The hospitality industry applauds government for exploring "outside of the box" ways to cover its shortfalls, however, wisdom suggests taking more of the tourism tax is not a justifiable option. While tourism taxes are sometimes misunderstood, we are thankful for the cooperative efforts in progress to help avoid dangerous temptations to kill the golden goose.

Furthermore, the Economic Summit Report says significantly increasing the amount of dedicated tourism tax for promotion is the number one way to jump-start the economy.

"Visit Duluth is the tourism industry's trusted partner—the heart, soul and energy of the destination. It drives economic success and enhances quality of life. The city of Duluth and its citizens appreciate tourism's contribution: the better the destination marketing organization, the more valuable the visitor experience," added Mattson.



VISIT DULUTH

100TH ANNIVERSARY

AERIAL LIFT BRIDGE



Visit Duluth is proud to be part of the summer 2005 effort highlighting the 100th anniversary of the Aerial Lift Bridge.

The event is similar to other successful statue events that have taken place around the country: the Cows in Chicago, the PEANUTS characters in St. Paul, Donkeys and Elephants in Washington, DC and the Guitars in Cleveland. The Duluth promotion celebrates the 100th anniversary of our landmark Aerial Lift Bridge, by creating a limited number of Aerial Lift Bridge statues to be painted and placed throughout Duluth, in an extravaganza we're calling:

“Bridging the Decades ... with Art”

Visit Duluth is working in collaboration with the Greater Downtown Council and the Duluth Public Arts Commission on this exciting venture. Bridging the Decades starts with an artists paint-off at the DECC, an

opportunity for talented area artists to get creative with the bridge during a four-day painting session, sure to be a media draw.

Statues go on public display the week of May 16 at various venues throughout the city. Selected statues will be placed on display during Fourth Fest and the Bridge Centennial Celebration at Bayfront Festival Park.

The event will culminate with an auction of the statues in October.

Visit Duluth staff is cultivating regional and national media attention surrounding the promotion. This effort in generating “free” publicity will benefit Duluth for years to come. All information will be featured on the visitduluth.com Web site and further promoted by local media sponsors and specially designed maps, ensuring visitors can work their way around the city to enjoy the statues.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Duluth Legacy Fund and a portion will be directed to the Greater Downtown Council for downtown beautification and to Visit Duluth for promoting Cultural and Heritage Tourism projects.



Aerial Lift Bridge History

Getting from Duluth to Park Point before 1905 was not always convenient or easy. The problem of access to Park Point started in 1871 when the Duluth Ship Canal was cut through to Lake Superior. Duluth's Aerial Transfer Bridge was completed in 1905 and carried automobiles, horses and wagons and pedestrian traffic across the canal. It cost 5 cents and took about one minute to cross the 300-foot wide canal and a round-trip was made about every 10 minutes. Around 1925, it became apparent the Transfer Bridge was not keeping up with demand.

After several designs were examined, rejected and reexamined, a final Aerial Lift Bridge plan was selected. The vertical lift span was built new with two lanes for vehicles, including streetcars, and two walkways for pedestrians and was completed in 1930. The first lift for a vessel was on March 29, 1930 for the tug ESSAYONS to test the bridge's readiness for the shipping season. Some 5,321 lifts were made that first year.

The bridge is owned and operated by the city of Duluth. Operators keep the bridge in repair and make the lifts either full or partial as required by each vessel. An average of about 5,500 lifts is made each season with a high of 7,583 lifts in 1978 and a low of 2,764 in 1932. The bridge will have made nearly 400,000 lifts during the 70 years since the first one back in 1930.

Duluth's Aerial Lift Bridge is listed on the National Historic list and continues to be one of Duluth's most popular tourist attractions.

LEISURE TRAVEL MARKETING

Delivering Unparalleled ROI

Visit Duluth continues performing extensive research in identifying both Duluth's target tourism market, and the specific interests of visitors. The purpose of this is to target our ideal consumer and most closely match their interests to the inherent characteristics of the Duluth experience. Research-based marketing yields increased tourism traffic, increased spending, longer stays and a higher return on investment.

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Selling Duluth is about selling an experience. It's about developing a brand to which consumers feel an emotional attachment and yearn to visit again and again. We have determined that Twin Cities residents are Duluth's largest recurring target audience. As such, we analytically perform media buys that most cost-effectively target this audience. Through research-based decision making,

We've made Duluth the top destination for Minnesotans.

creative advertising and both private and public investment, we've made Duluth the top destination for Minnesotans. Even in a climate of economic uncertainty, sustained revenue growth continues at 3 times the rate of state and national averages.

Visit Duluth's marketing mission is simply to bring the maximum number of visitor dollars into Duluth's economy. Many would call our results extraordinary. Like any business, our customers don't just walk through the front door. Visitors need to be lured, and that's been the job of this organization since 1935.

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines 'momentum' as the strength or force by

Specially designated tourism tax collections in the city of Duluth alone raise some \$5 million for the community. Visitors also impact additional tens of millions of dollars in general sales and property tax collections.

motion or through the development of events. Duluth's tourism industry shares its momentum with the region's entire economy. To keep this growth alive, Visit Duluth must continue aggressive marketing to attract visitors year-round. Tourism now accounts for more than \$400 million in annual local impact.

Specially designated tourism tax collections in the city of Duluth alone raise some \$5 million for the community. Visitors also impact additional tens of millions of dollars in general sales and property tax collections. Everyone benefits from tourism, whether they are in the hospitality industry or not. For example, every Duluth homeowner saves \$400 a year in property taxes alone just because of tourism.

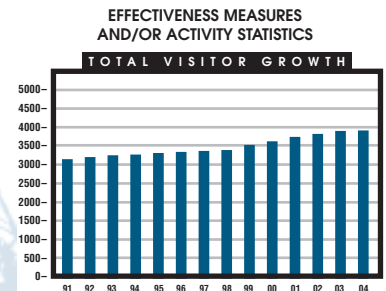
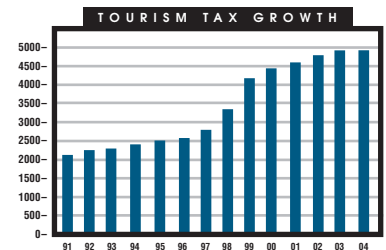
Six out of ten Duluth visitors use Duluth advertising as a source for their visits. Approximately 70 percent of Duluth's visitors are cultivated from the Twin Cities and 70 percent of that market has been here at least once in the last three years.

These are astonishing figures and more resounding proof that our marketing strategies are working. Tourism's positive impact on Duluth's economy has more than doubled over the last decade, and tourism-related infrastructure developments have undeniably made Duluth a better place to live. Ultimately, it is for its residents that Duluth is in the tourism business. In 2005, our marketing platform calls for extensive media in

the Twin Cities market, including print and radio advertising. Similar plans have worked well in the past, and we anticipate a 5 percent growth in revenue impact.

While Visit Duluth is the official destination marketing organization of Duluth, partnerships with Explore Minnesota Tourism and related industries in northeastern Minnesota strengthen Duluth and the region as a vacation destination. Visit Duluth's input into Tourism Growth Sessions and northeastern Minnesota associations continue to develop cooperative marketing for the region.

Lake Superior, romantic history and wilderness adventure help define Visit Duluth's brand strategies. These clear images based on indigenous qualities captivate our consumers. With knowledge of our core audience and support of stakeholders, Visit Duluth will continue serving our community by delivering visitors to Duluth.



TOURISM. IT'S WORKING.

CONSUMER SERVICES

Seller Meets Buyers

Visitor Guide

Anyone, anywhere, who requests information about Duluth will get the *Duluth Visitor Guide*—and you can be a part of it. The Guide is an 88-page color brochure that is published every January, and over the course of the year, nearly 300,000 copies are



distributed to people attracted to visiting Duluth. In addition to the leisure traveler, the Guide is distributed

to: tour operators, travel agents, meeting and convention delegates, information centers throughout the state of Minnesota, Mall of America Tourism Store, tradeshows, festivals and events. Members receive reduced advertising rates and, in effect, can reach a few hundred thousand people for a few hundred dollars.

Web Site Marketing

Everybody has a Web page, but not everybody averages over 457,000 meaningful page views and over 36,000 unique users throughout a given month. Join Visit Duluth, and you'll get your name out in front of these site surfers with a full membership listing. You can post your events on the site calendar, get reduced rates on banner advertising, and if applicable, update your lodging availability twice a week. You can also tie into monthly event promotions and other marketing opportunities by partnering with Visit Duluth and its media connections.

Brochures and Reference Materials

As a Visit Duluth member, your business brochures will be displayed in our visitor office at 21 West Superior

Street, Suite 100 and our Waterfront Information Center on Harbor Drive. You'll also receive copies of the *Duluth Visitor Guide*, plus maps, fact sheets, etc. for you to offer your patrons.

Phone, Fax and E-mail Referrals

This is what the Visit Duluth membership is all about. We bring people to Duluth and we send them to you. When a potential visitor calls, we have a full-time staff to answer their questions, as well as a customized information on-hold program, which offers a recorded calendar of events and seasonal promotions for businesses like yours. We continuously refer business to our members, and we offer solutions—like hotel availability and restaurant suggestions—to our visitors. (We contact our members' lodging properties every Monday and Friday to update availability.)

Online Membership Directory

Listing of more than 450 businesses and organizations contributing to the enhancement of the tourism industry.

Advertising Opportunities

Online

Visitduluth.com is extremely popular with people planning trips not only to Duluth, but into Wisconsin and as far up the North Shore as Canada. We continue growing traffic to the site every year. The site averages over 457,000 page views per month and has a monthly average of 36,000 unique visitors.

Hot Deals

Self-publishing coupons. This program allows advertisers to maintain their own online coupon. They can change the image and text to keep the offers current for Web-site surfers.

Fixed Box ads

These ads are highly effective for the advertiser in bringing users to its Web site and ultimately to its business. Through the use of animation, the ads tell a story about each business. These ads are available throughout the site in various sections including: the front page pop-up window, main Attractions page, main Lodging page, main Dining page, main Shopping page, and within select areas of the Lodging section.

Rotating Banner Ads

These ads are highly effective in branding your business name by rotating throughout an entire section including: the front page, as well as the Lodging, Dining, Attractions, Shopping and Services sections.

Additional Publications

Group Tour Planner

Visit Duluth members who can accommodate motorcoach groups have the opportunity to participate in the Duluth Group Tour Planner. For a nominal fee, you will receive a listing in the planner and on visitduluth.com's Group Tour page. Showcase your business to hundreds of tour operators, group leaders and travel agents who are making plans for future tours.

Duluth School/Youth Guide

Members of Visit Duluth can reach school and youth groups with a listing in the *Duluth School/Youth Guide* for a nominal fee. This publication is mailed out to schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as various other states. Schools, community education directors, scout leaders, churches and youth groups rely on this publication.

Sales & Services

CONVENTION SALES & SERVICES

Building Relationships

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total Confirmed Bookings	85	87	92	78	93
Delegate Spending	\$18,425,000	\$28,982,870	\$21,454,910	\$22,295,510	\$24,292,300

Visit Duluth is responsible for convention sales within the city resulting in some \$36 million in total annual economic impact.

Our staff works with the Duluth hospitality industry to maximize partnership opportunities—partnerships which enable us to cooperatively market the city through direct sales blitzes, familiarization tours, special promotions and direct mail.

We aggressively sell Duluth and its meeting facilities to our clients. Our forceful combination of sales appointments and e-mail and newsletter updates has resulted in a number of multi-year bookings, as well as confirmation from groups that have never met outside the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area.

Convention sales represent 25% of our total tourism market, with regional, national and international conventions representing one-third of our annual convention business.

We continue, therefore, to target a broader market base through sales efforts in those markets, especially in Washington DC and Chicago. In addition, we continue to expand our government, religious, corporate and association markets.

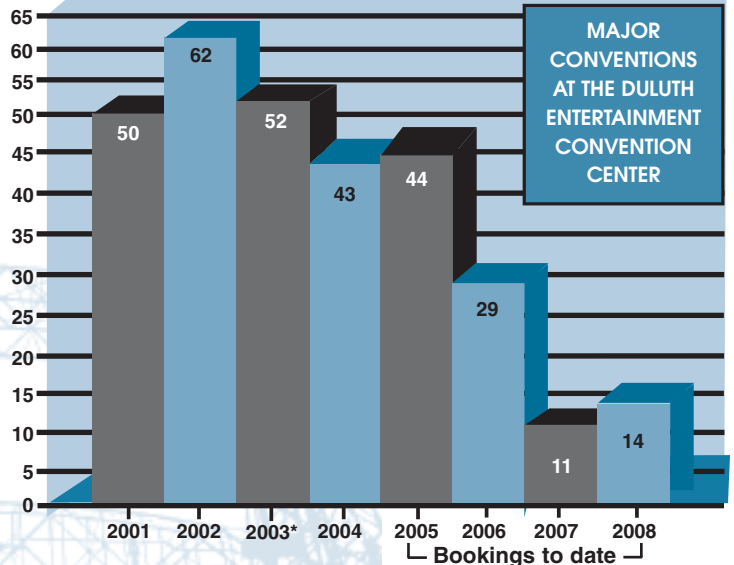
Once we confirm a meeting, our Convention Services department offers a wide variety of special services to meeting planners, including attraction information, referrals to local suppliers, community resource information and virtually everything else a planner needs.

2004 STATS & FACTS

In 2004, the Visit Duluth Convention Sales department attended 10 industry trade shows, hosted two association Board of Directors meetings, conducted 30 site inspections, prepared 96 bid proposals, spearheaded one sales mission and completed two major industry mailings. In addition, the sales office developed 218 new convention and meeting contacts which will be followed up with as potential new business for Duluth and our industry partners.

2004 AT A GLANCE

Definite Bookings	93
Total Number of Delegates	58,366
Total Number of Room Nights	46,830
Delegate Spending	\$24,292,300



* This number includes 16 weekends of the Minnesota State Women's Bowling Tournament. Duluth hosts 800 women per weekend, 12,000 participants total, and while not held at the DECC, it is a significant convention.

GROUP TOURS / PACKAGED TRAVEL

Meeting the Challenge

Packaged Travel continues to be an important component of Duluth's successful tourism industry. This market includes tour operators, travel agents and group leaders who utilize motor coaches as their mode of transport.

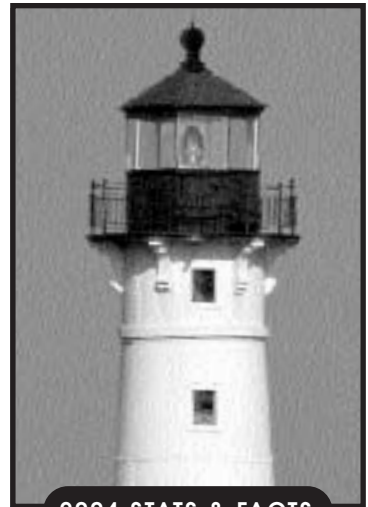
The sales and marketing strategies employed include direct sales, tradeshow, familiarization tours and annual mailings, as well as unsurpassed commitment to service and hospitality. These focused efforts produce results, in spite of the difficult times this market segment has been facing for the past several years. A soft economy and concerns about personal safety have caused a devastating downturn of packaged travel in many areas of the country.

Duluth has not escaped these challenges either.

Duluth continues as a port of call for the cruise ship industry and hosted the Grande Mariner in 2004, as well as the German cruise ship, Columbus. The latter will be here twice in September and the Mariner's sister ship, the Grande Caribe, will be here in July. Duluth will be an embarkation/debarkation point for the July visits.

Our future plans are dedicated to continued growth in the group travel market by pursuing active, progressive sales efforts—in partnership with our members—and we believe this market will continue to make significant contributions to Duluth's tourism economy.

Year	DIRECT Motorcoach Tours	Economic Impact
1996	828	\$2,886,720
1997	1,131	\$3,023,730
1998	1,152	\$3,130,200
1999	1,235	\$3,355,575
2000	1,352	\$3,663,100
2001	1,383	\$3,690,250
2002	1,118	\$2,667,800
2003	981	\$2,336,550
2004	1,167	\$2,400,250



2004 STATS & FACTS

Total Number of Group Tours **1,167**

Direct Spending Impact **\$2,400,250**

GREAT LAKES CRUISING

Visit Duluth, in partnership with the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, continues to actively promote Duluth as a top Great Lakes cruise destination. The German cruise ship, Columbus, a frequent visitor to our port, will make three visits to Duluth in 2005. In addition, the American Canadian Caribbean Cruise Line's 100-passenger ship Grand Caribe will be here for its third year, utilizing Duluth as an embarkation/debarkation port.

Attendance at cruise-related trade shows, active contact with potential cruise companies and operators, as well as membership in the Great Lakes Cruise Coalition, are key initiatives in Visit Duluth's marketing plans.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Stretching Our Dollars

Duluth has an amazing story to tell, and Visit Duluth Public Relations department actively delivers those messages to national, regional and state media. Feature articles, press releases, event press releases and Web monthly listings are just a few of the resources used to attract attention to Duluth and area events. In September 2004, Visit Duluth hosted the Fall Midwest Travel Writers Association Convention whose members are those actively engaged in travel writing for a newspaper, magazine or news service. Visit Duluth has generated numerous stories in regional and national publications from this group's stay in Duluth.

In addition, we actively promote our members through new initiatives in our toll-free and Web-site marketing programs. The PR department solicits media coverage, hosts media (television, radio, print, book and film) on familiarization tours, creates an annual press kit and maintains an active database of over 600 media contacts.

As a result of our efforts, Duluth receives "free" press in a number of publications, including:

- *AAA Home and Away*
- *Minneapolis/St. Paul Magazine*
- *Minnesota Monthly*
- *Midwest Living*
- *Midwest Travel Writers Assn.*
- *St. Paul Pioneer Press*
- *Minneapolis Star Tribune*
- Articles in *MN Snowmobiling*, *Supertrax*, *Today Magazine* and numerous other magazines.

When media representatives are in Duluth, we create itineraries, offer tours and provide story ideas. A complete Duluth press kit is also

available, which includes business contact information. In addition, our PR department manages a reference library and an active database of over 500 events. Visit Duluth members are encouraged to utilize this resource.

In 2004, the Visit Duluth Public Relations department generated over \$4,000,000 in editorial coverage in print, television, radio and book coverage. Here is how Visit Duluth benefits you:

Media

- Active solicitation of media
- Hosting all media (TV, print, radio, book and film)
- Newswire and E-mail news releases sent to media-specific contacts with information about member events and specials
- Creation of annual press kit and press information

1-800-Marketing

- Update of monthly festivals on Music on Hold
- Update of monthly calendar of events on Music on Hold

Web Marketing

- Update calendar of events
- Monthly and weekly updates and specials
- E-News—an online newsletter of lodging, event and attraction news and specials

Member Benefits

- Active list of over 500 events and contacts
- Active list of over 600 media contacts
- Event consultation
- Public Relations consultation for members including

assistance with press releases and other marketing

- Electronic distribution of member press releases

2004 STATS & FACTS

We've Got Everyone Talking About Duluth ...

- *New York Times*
- *New York Post*
- *USA Today*
- *ESPN*
- *NBC Nightly News*
- *Fox Sports Network*
- *CBS This Morning*
- *Chicago Tribune*
- *Miami Herald*
- *Kansas City Star*
- *Lake Superior Magazine*
- *St. Louis Times*
- *Outside Magazine*
- *Association News*
- *Bus Tour Magazine*
- *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*
- *Minneapolis Star Tribune*
- *Des Moines Register*
- *Home & Garden TV*
- *Comedy Central*
- *Minnesota Monthly*
- *AAA Home & Away*
- *Midwest Living*
- *St. Paul Pioneer Press*
- *Discover Magazine*
- *Good Morning America*
- *Chicago Daily Herald*
- *National Geographic Traveler*
- *Group Travel Leader*
- *Travel America and many, many more ...*

Outside
MAGAZINE



EVENTS

No Other City Offers More or Better

Each year Duluth is host to over 500 exciting festivals and events that attract thousands of visitors to Duluth. The Public Relations department at Visit Duluth consults with existing and new member festivals and events with PR and marketing services to develop a broad base of exposure for success. These services include press release distribution, media contact for interviews and story ideas. Visit Duluth also offers member festivals

and events a graphic link to the visitduluth.com Web site, which averages over 457,000 meaningful page views each month.

Duluth has many events that garner national exposure including Grandma's Marathon, Bayfront Blues Festival, NorthShore Inline Marathon and AMSOIL Duluth National Snocross. Add to this list the John Beargrease Sled Dog Marathon, Fourth Fest, Green Man Festival and

Adventure Duluth and it's easy to see that all these events bring significant economic impact to Duluth. The Public Relations office continues to seek new events for the "off-peak times" to promote tourism with festivals and events for the entire family.

With a special festival or event for every interest, Duluth is a great place to visit or live.



CULTURAL AND HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing a Niche Market

Working to establish a Cultural and Heritage Tourism program, as recommended by the Preservation Development Initiative, is a priority at Visit Duluth.

An active volunteer committee is working with staff to develop three key components for the launch of the program.

- Audio Walking/Driving Tours
- Kiosk Featuring Heritage Sites and Web Links
- Maps, Special Signage and Support Materials

The first audio tour, part of the “Boom Bust Boom” series will be unveiled at the Annual Statewide

Historic Preservation Conference in September. These initiatives were part of the recommendations in the final PDI Assessment Report which suggested Duluth has great potential for capturing the growing Cultural and Heritage tourism market.

Future plans include special events, medallions featuring the historic site chosen for focus that year and additional audio tours. The committee is enthusiastic and made up of a broad cross section of the community; not all necessarily involved in the tourism industry. The commonality is their individual interest in Heritage/Cultural tourism.

Our work continues in earnest with Carolyn Brackett, an expert in Heritage Tourism at the National

Trust for Historic Preservation. With funding from the Preservation Development Initiative and matching dollars from Visit Duluth, Carolyn is writing the first tour and will assist the committee in achieving the goals set forth by the group.

As the PDI report noted, “The city is already benefiting from tourism, drawing some 3.5 million visitors annually.” Heritage travelers spend more per trip compared to other travelers and are more likely to extend their trip because of historic/cultural activity. This market segment can augment the successful track record Duluth has as a thriving visitor destination.



MEDIA PLAN

Major Print, Radio, Outdoor

Every year, Visit Duluth analyzes media opportunities to determine the best ways to reach its consumers. The media year is separated into three parts. In spring, Visit Duluth uses regional media targeting Midwest travelers making their summer plans. In summer, Visit Duluth hones in on its target market—Minneapolis & St. Paul. And in fall/winter, Visit Duluth also focuses on the Twin Cities market to help promote winter getaways to Spirit Mountain.

This summer, Visit Duluth will once again focus on the Twin Cities' market to spur getaways to Duluth. With a limited budget, it remains important for Visit Duluth to

maximize its presence in this core target market.

Since most visitors plan their trip just a few days or weeks in advance, the media plan focuses on the peak travel months of July and August. The multimedia campaign will utilize three media to reach consumers: newspaper, radio and outdoor.

Newspaper print ads will appear in the two largest Twin Cities' newspapers, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. The ads will alternate weekly between the Main News section and the Sunday Travel Section. With a combined Sunday household distribution of 933,000, total

potential readership will exceed 2.1 million every Sunday.

Radio advertising will continue to be an important media for Visit Duluth's message especially since its format allows for flexibility in the message. By utilizing the Twin Cities' highest-rated radio stations, the radio spots are expected to reach almost 1 million listeners approximately 15 times over the course of the summer.

Finally, Visit Duluth will use outdoor advertising in July. Outdoor advertising has proven to be a great support media, complementing the other two choices. With consistent daily messaging, Visit Duluth's outdoor plan will reach over 2.3 million drivers in July.



SIGN UP FOR THE **20-Day Getaway Giveaway**
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AERIAL LIFT BRIDGE

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THE OUTDOORS. THE HISTORY. THE ROMANCE. THE LAKE.



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VISIT DULUTH 

IN THE MIDDLE. 

GATE TRAIL

ENGER TOWER

NORTH SHORE

INTERNET MARKETING

For the past decade, Duluth's official tourism Web site, visitduluth.com, has been an increasingly successful marketing tool luring visitors to our city and our region. Since its inception in 1994, visitduluth.com has been heralded by other tourism organizations around the country as a model for successful online marketing. In the mid 1990s, while other tourism markets were just dipping their toes into the Internet pool, Duluth was leading the industry by developing an online experience that both captivated visitors and provided easy access to local businesses.

Over the course of its history, visitduluth.com has gone through several evolutions, each time enhancing visitors' experiences by providing richer content and driving more people to our stakeholders. New designs have been implemented to provide more user-friendly navigation, featuring current events more prominently and online movies where visitors can gain a better glimpse of several typical Duluth getaways. The results of these evolutions have led to better results for our community. For example, our lodging members report that nearly 90 percent of their online reservations come from people referred by visitduluth.com.

Like Duluth's tourism industry, visitduluth.com has required strategic multimedia promotion to make it successful. In the late 1990s, visitduluth.com was a consistent part of Duluth's advertising promotion. However, over the past three years, visitduluth.com has actually become the focal point of Duluth's summer campaign. With more and more visitors coming to visitduluth.com each year, our experiences are mirroring national travel trends. Ultimately, that has meant continued growth for Duluth's tourism-related businesses.

SWEEPSTAKES

For the past three years, Visit Duluth's advertising promotion has included an online sweepstakes where people who came to visitduluth.com could enter to win one of four trips to Duluth. The "Summer Getaway Sweepstakes" offered winners the opportunity to "do what they wanted to do" by customizing their own vacation. By selecting from four exciting packages, travelers can picture themselves in a Duluth adventure, family vacation, romantic bed and breakfast getaway or a Lake Superior leisure vacation.

The real value of the sweepstakes is driving people to visitduluth.com. Our Web site is an important resource for visitors planning their Duluth getaway. That trend mirrors what is happening nationally as more and more people plan their vacations online. It has never been more important for a destination marketing organization to use many media channels—including online—to deliver visitors. As page views in July and August of 2004 skyrocketed to almost one million per month (up from an average of almost 400,000 in prior months), Visit Duluth's promotional approach is working.



21 WEST SUPERIOR STREET, SUITE 100
DULUTH, MINNESOTA 55802-3025
218-722-4011 • F 218-722-1322

Official Destination Marketing Organization

e-CITY

Duluth has long been known for natural beauty, rich history, hard workers and kind people. Along with these times, Duluth is evolving.

"e-City" is the catch phrase for long-term efforts to enhance the "Duluth experience," help folks stay connected, and make information about the area's resources easily available. As you explore Duluth, it's extremely easy to stay in close contact with the world.

Look for free wireless broadband starting in our most populated visitor district, Canal Park. In addition to these efforts, many of our members help visitors stay connected by providing wireless Internet access.

NEW FOR 2005

The Internet has forever changed destination marketing. Much of Duluth's tourism success can be traced to Visit Duluth's development of the destination's official Web site, visitduluth.com.

Developing online efforts require very focused energy and resources to accomplish the mission. Our members and the city of Duluth receive unparalleled return on investment through visitduluth.com as the site pays for itself while infusing additional resources into promotional efforts each year.

From Search Engine Optimization to pay-per-click strategies, Google and Yahoo reinforce the effectiveness and popularity of visitduluth.com. While traditional mediums still comprise the majority of the travel consumer's decision-influencing media diet, the Internet has become a prolific travel-planning tool. Our Web site is a very important element of a comprehensive destination marketing program.

In addition to providing everything from up to the minute changes, lodging updates, itineraries to increase attraction attendance and special database marketing, our software tools provide critical statistical measure of the strategically branded, professionally marketed and heavily visited site.

We are constantly developing updates and refinements, such as the new and improved calendar of events and recently released membership directory. Other elements just added include links to the 100th Anniversary of the Aerial Lift Bridge, which includes a special sign-up component "Come Home to Duluth." Others in the community can draw upon this component as a resource for recruiting and retaining corporate residents. We are also assisting in developing a site for the new Great Lakes Aquarium exhibit, "The Abyss."

Whenever tourism can lend itself to assisting other forms of economic development for Duluth, we want to make it happen.