

# Door County Tourism Zone 2021 Annual Meeting Report June 16th, 2022





**THE TOURISM ZONE...** In May of 2007, 10 Communities formed a Tourism Zone according to **WI State Statute 66.0615**. By the end of 2008, all 19 communities were a part of the Door County Tourism Zone.

**WHY AND WHEN...** In 2007 the Door County Tourism Zone Commission was established via grass roots efforts by a group of concerned citizens called "Door County Peninsula Strategic Marketing Coalition". They fundraised and volunteered their time to raise money for a market study. This idea didn't originate with local government officials; it began with the very people who make their livelihood in the tourism and hospitality industry in Door County.

**WHAT DID THE MARKET STUDY SHOW?** Door County needed new revenue sources to create and implement effective marketing to stop losing tourism market share. Membership dues simply weren't enough to effectuate a modern marketing program. For Door County to remain a sought-after destination, the only option was to generate money for a broad and unified marketing campaign.

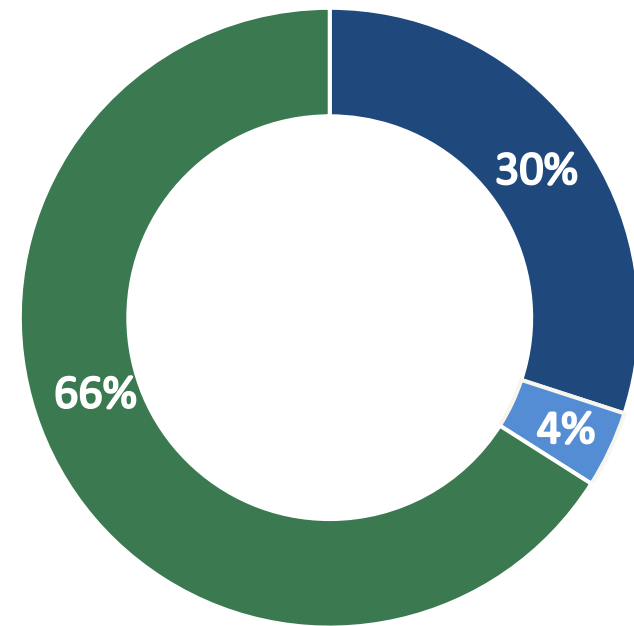
**TOURISM WORKS FOR US: HOW IS MARKETING PAID FOR?** ROOM TAX revenue provides the mechanism that ensures the ongoing funding for the marketing of Door County. In the competitive marketplace where travelers have many options, Destination Marketing Funds allow Door County to be marketed and represented. Prior to 2007, Door County's marketing entity, DDC, had marketed Door County with a marketing budget of less than \$200,000.

## Municipal Room Tax Distribution at 5.5% Tax Rate

### ROOM TAX IN 2021 WAS DIVIDED THREE WAYS:

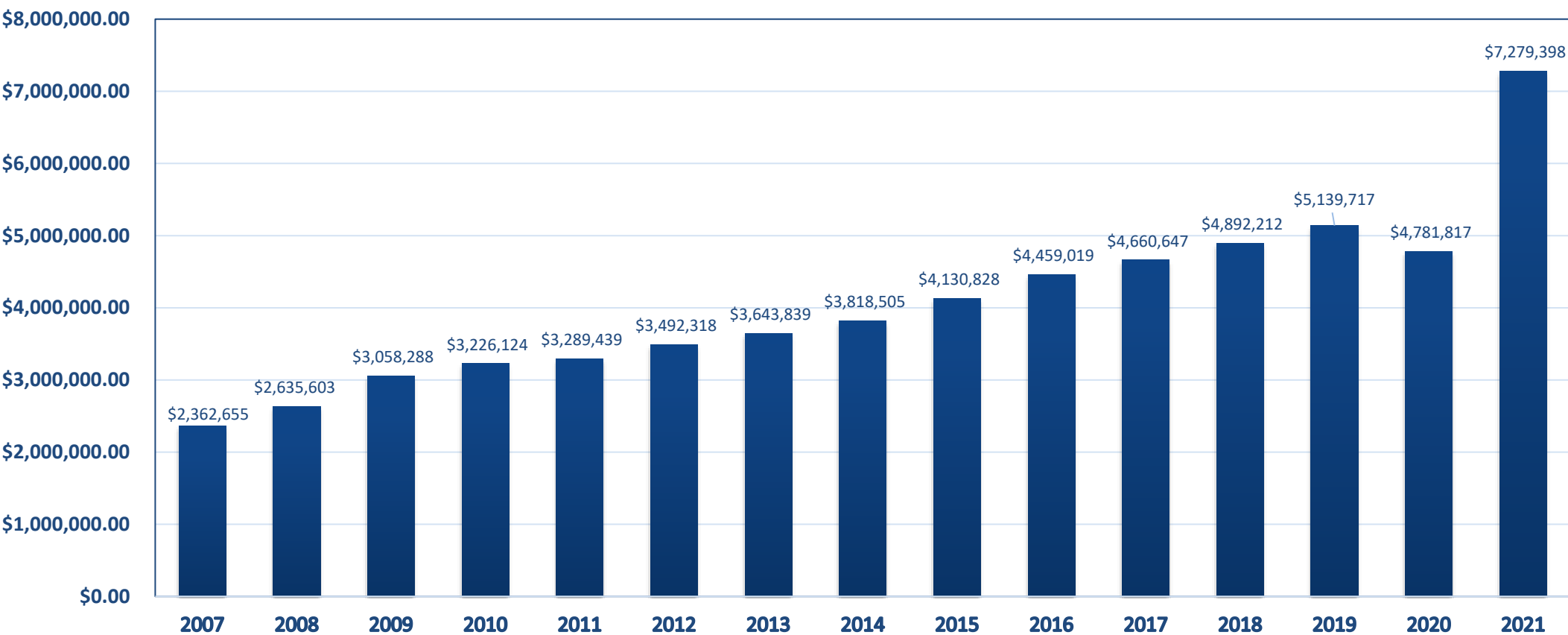
- **30%** of Room Tax Collections were distributed back to the municipality in which they were collected. These funds can be spent for any use deemed necessary by that community's municipal body.
- **66%** of Room Tax Collections were distributed to Destination Door County for marketing. These funds were spent on items which qualify as tourism and marketing expenses under state statute, such as marketing, promotion, and staff expenses.
- **4%** was retained by the Door County Tourism Zone for expenses for the cost of tax collection, distribution and enforcement. All Commissioners are volunteers. The Tourism Zone has expanded from one full-time employee to one full-time and one part-time employee.

## 2021 Tax Distribution



- Door County Member Municipalities
- Door County Tourism Zone Commission
- Destination Door County

# Room Tax Revenue 2007-21

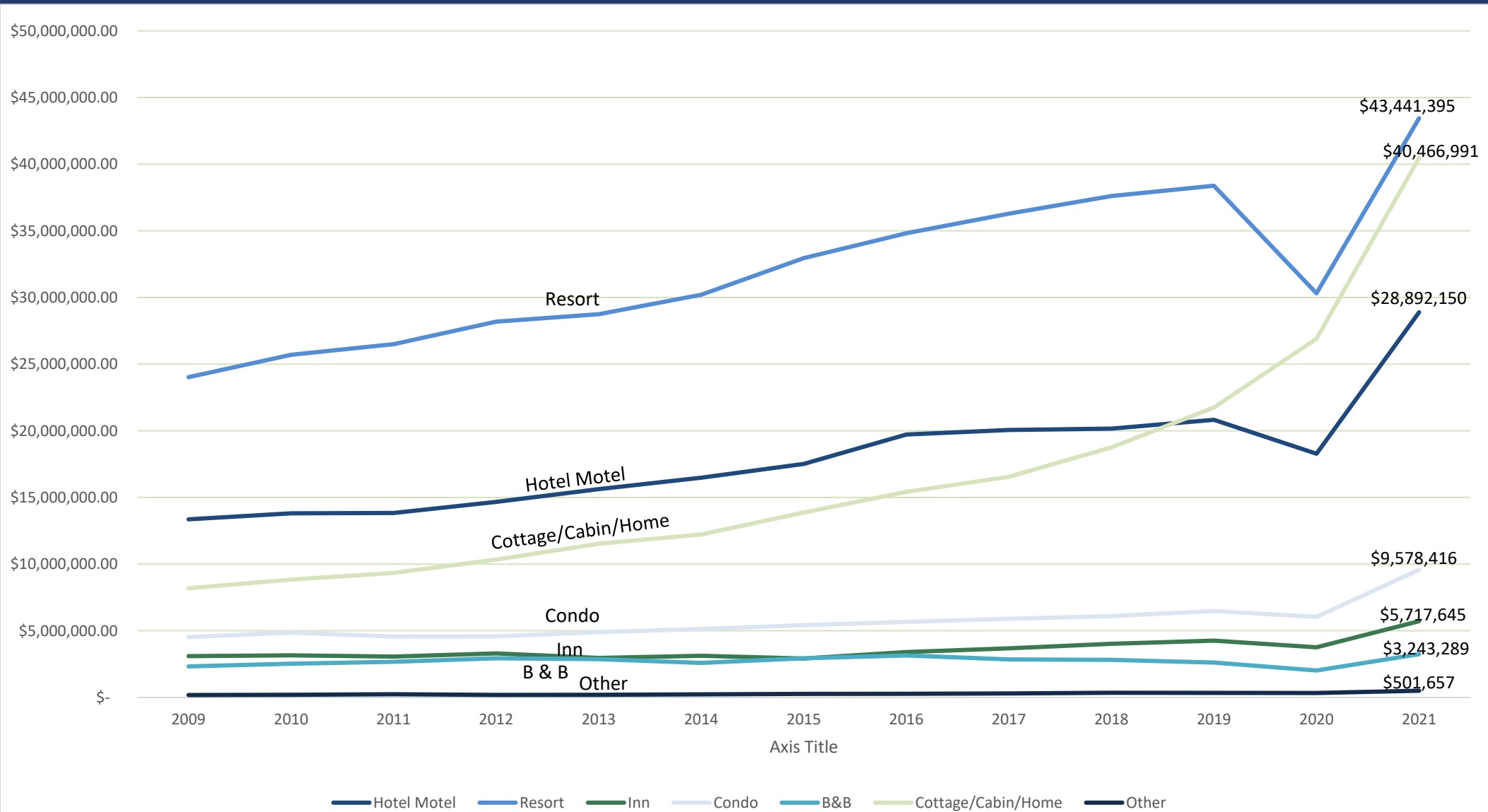


At year-end 2021, for the period of 2007-2021 the Tourism Zone has collected \$60.8 million in room tax.

For the same period, the Tourism Zone distributed:

- \$40.1 million to Destination Door County.
- \$18.2 million to member municipalities.

# Revenue By Property Type

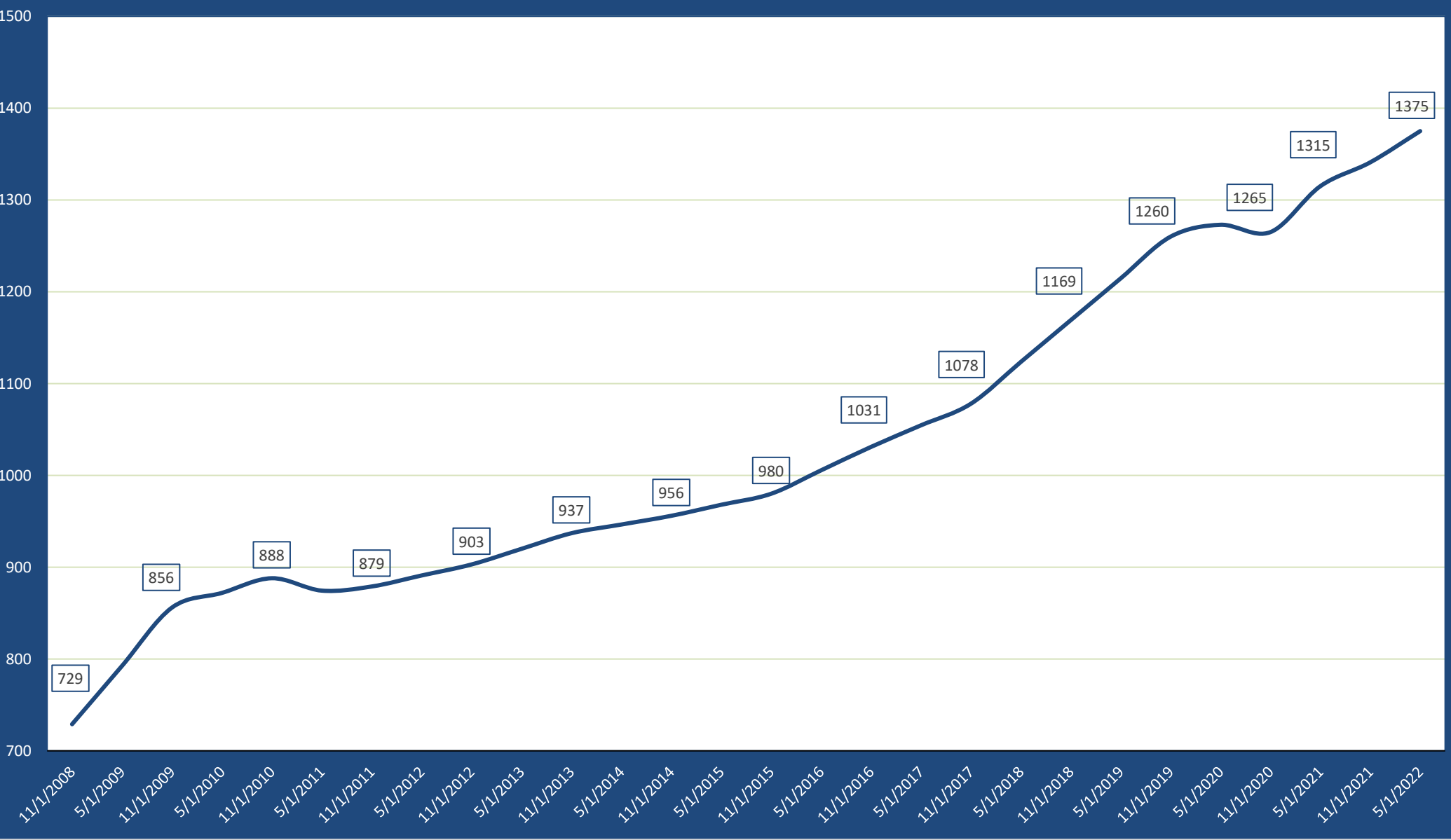


2021 Total Room Revenues: \$131,841,546

# HISTORICAL REVIEW: Growth of Permits 2008-2022

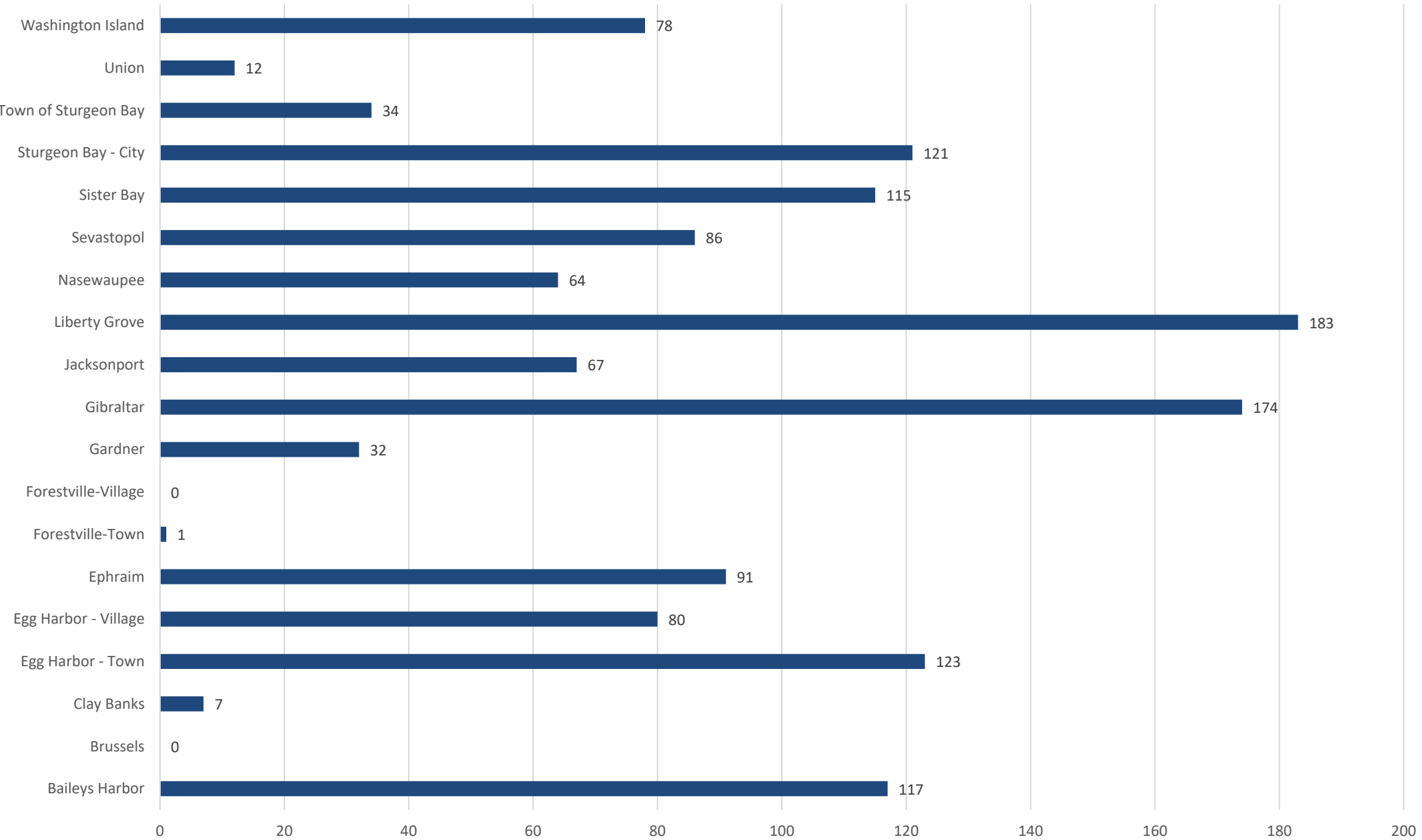


Number of Active Permits 2008-2022



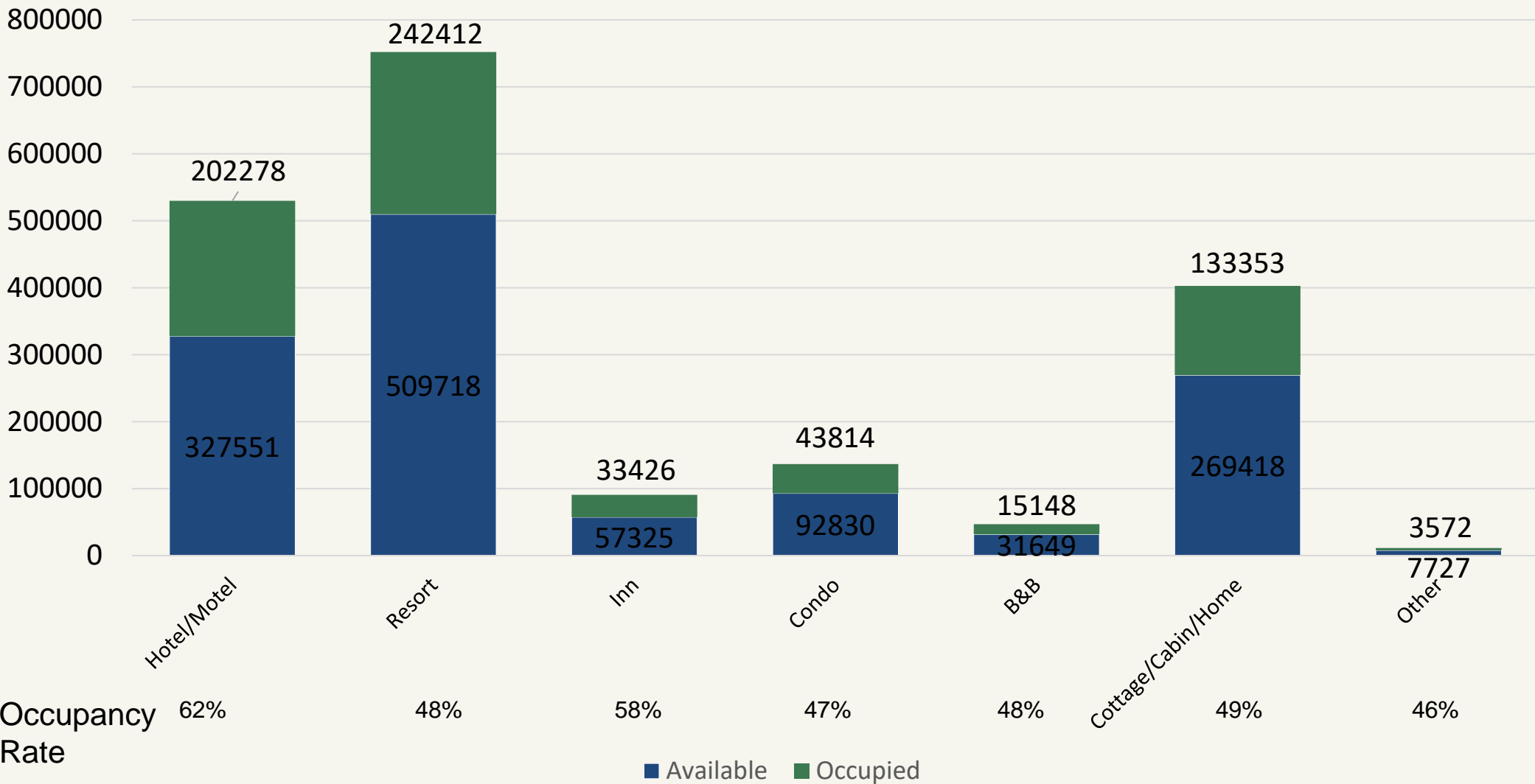


# PERMIT STATISTICS- Number of Permits By Municipality



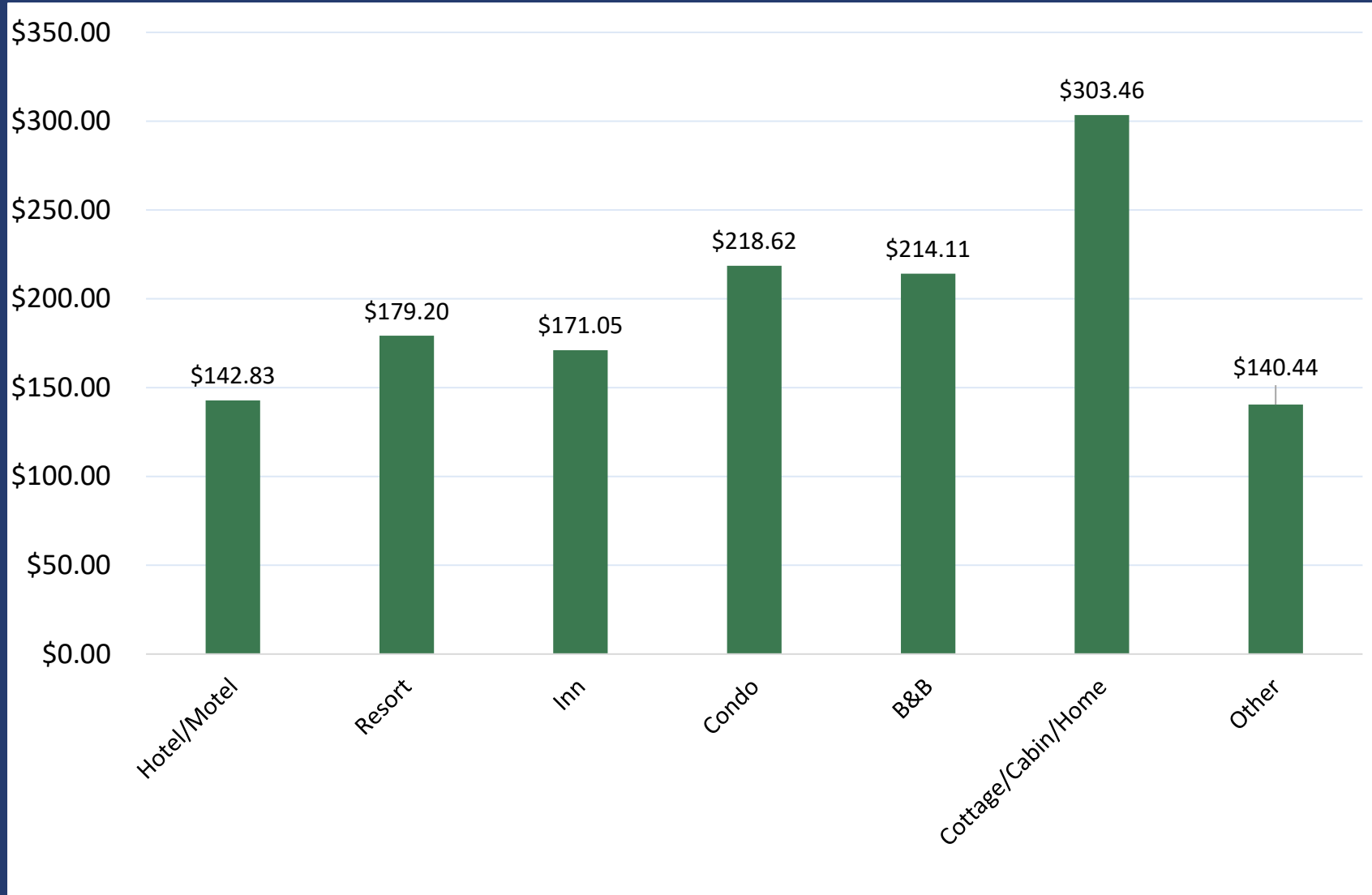
1,385 permit as of 5/26/2022

## 2021 Available Units Vs. Occupied Units





# 2021 METRICS- AVERAGE DAILY RATE BY PROPERTY TYPE



2021 Average Daily Rate \$195

## **2021 YEAR IN REVIEW: Room Tax Ordinance Education and Implementation**

- In July of 2021, the new Room Tax ordinance and Intergovernmental Agreement was completed and distributed to Door County's member municipalities. The ordinance included an increase in municipal room tax from 5.5% to 8.0%. All 19 municipalities approved the ordinance and agreement.
- With the passage of the ordinance, the Tourism Zone embarked on several efforts to assist our permit holders in preparing for the January 1, 2022, change.
  - On October 21<sup>st</sup>, following the passage of the ordinance, a notification was sent to all permit holders with a list of frequently asked questions regarding the tax change, including required reporting and advertising adjustments.
  - On December 30<sup>th</sup>, new filing instructions were sent to all permit holders. This communication included links to three Zoom meetings set up by the Tourism Zone office to walk through filing procedure.
  - Following the sessions, a recording was posted on the Door County Tourism Zone website, YouTube channel, and linked to permit holders' monthly filing reminders.
  - The Tourism Zone worked with marketplace providers to adjust online profiles, provide copies of signed ordinances, and pursue incorrectly taxed profiles. As a result, profiles were adjusted automatically on January 1, 2022, and 22 profiles that had been incorrectly taxed since 2020 were corrected.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Senate Bill 198- put into effect July 1, 2021.

This Bill is a step forward in requiring accountability for Marketplace Providers, allowing communities to exchange information regarding marketplace audits and specifying penalties for noncompliance.

Another change included in the Bill is the requirement for marketplace providers, such as Airbnb, Expedia, and VRBO, to file and submit room tax on a quarterly basis. Previously, marketplace providers were required to report and remit taxes monthly. The Tourism Zone's reporting and disbursement procedures have been adjusted to reflect this change, but it has created a lag in the release of room tax disbursement to our member municipalities.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATES (CONT.)



We are still experiencing many issues with Marketplace Provider action and accountability:

- Marketplace Providers have been inconsistent when communicating with hosts, often requiring several contact attempts and providing conflicting information when asked about transactions, tax obligations, and site usage.
- The Tourism Zone continues to find and report **incorrectly** taxed profiles
- They have demonstrated that they have formidable lobbying abilities.
- They continue to struggle to correctly identify a property's local municipality.
- We continue to find that they are unable to apply tax code programming correctly, consistently, and uniformly.
- These companies continue to duck responsibility and hide behind confidential information claims

**The Tourism Zone will continue its work to document current shortcomings and work with Wisconsin municipalities and representatives to produce new legislation. Requiring Marketplace Providers to include property-specific reporting, accurate municipal identification, and stricter reporting requirements are our top priority. Transparency and accountability are of the utmost importance.**

# Tourism Zone Operations

## **Audit**

The Tourism Zone delivered another clean audit for the report year of 2021.

## **Compliance**

Out of 238 permits issued between the dates of January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021, there were 51 permits issued through Tourism Zone office compliance efforts. We are continuing to monitor 12 Marketplace Provider websites regularly, in addition to individual rental sites throughout Door County. We will continue to monitor reporting and ensure it is reported in a timely manner for tax distribution.

## **Report Review**

In 2021 there were 1,214 room tax reports submitted late over 2020's total of 1,184. The Tourism Zone works to ensure that missing room taxes are paid on time and correctly, providing monthly reminders about upcoming deadlines, missing reports, and inaccurate payments. Training sessions are available to all permit holders.

## **Data**

The Tourism Zone continues to collect and compile data on a monthly basis to track trends in tourism.

- Transition all permit holders to our online filing system by 2023. This change will reduce errors in reporting and ensure that permit holders have constant access to their reporting history.
- Ongoing dedication to compliance and enforcement with the overall goal of making sure the playing field is level for those in the lodging industry who partner with the Tourism Zone by collecting and remitting room tax.
- Re-introduce correcting legislation to deal with the bulk payments from marketplace providers. Currently, there is an undue burden placed on hosts that needs to be removed.
- Encourage permit holders to file room tax reports on time.
- Build relationships with other Wisconsin municipalities collecting and utilizing room tax and assist with requests, education and partnership to follow the Door County model. This is particularly essential for addressing legislation dealing with marketplace provider bulk payment issues. This will also allow us to share our success with other areas of Wisconsin.
- Streamline reporting processes to keep up with new data and reporting demands
- Pursue database and service updates to ensure the office runs efficiently and allows ...

**THANK YOU** *for your partnership and efforts to make Door County a destination that is truly loved by both visitors and those who chose to live and work here.*

DESTINATION  
**DOOR COUNTY**

Julie Gilbert, President/CEO



## Room Tax Accomplishments

- Room tax continues to provide Door County a deeper reach into our regional markets and the ability to work with media contacts and other influencers to receive regional & national coverage.
- Media placement and PR took a multi-dimensional approach through a combination of advertising mediums and public relations outreach which solidified our brand promise that “Those who visit Door County will find a breathtakingly scenic, water-centric landscape that is perfectly conducive to their pursuit of relaxation and rejuvenation.”
- Messaging was adjusted strategically throughout the year speaking directly to visitors and residents.
- In 2021 we were able to build off our Care for Door County initiatives to promote sustainable tourism practices through our 7 Leave No Trace principles, Door County pledge and voluntourism.
- DoorCounty.com had almost 2 million visits (*Google Analytics*).
- We’ve hosted 1,082 travel journalists from 2007 through 2021, which has resulted in 2,442 published articles and stories about Door County and reached an audience of more than 4.4 billion readers/listeners/viewers.





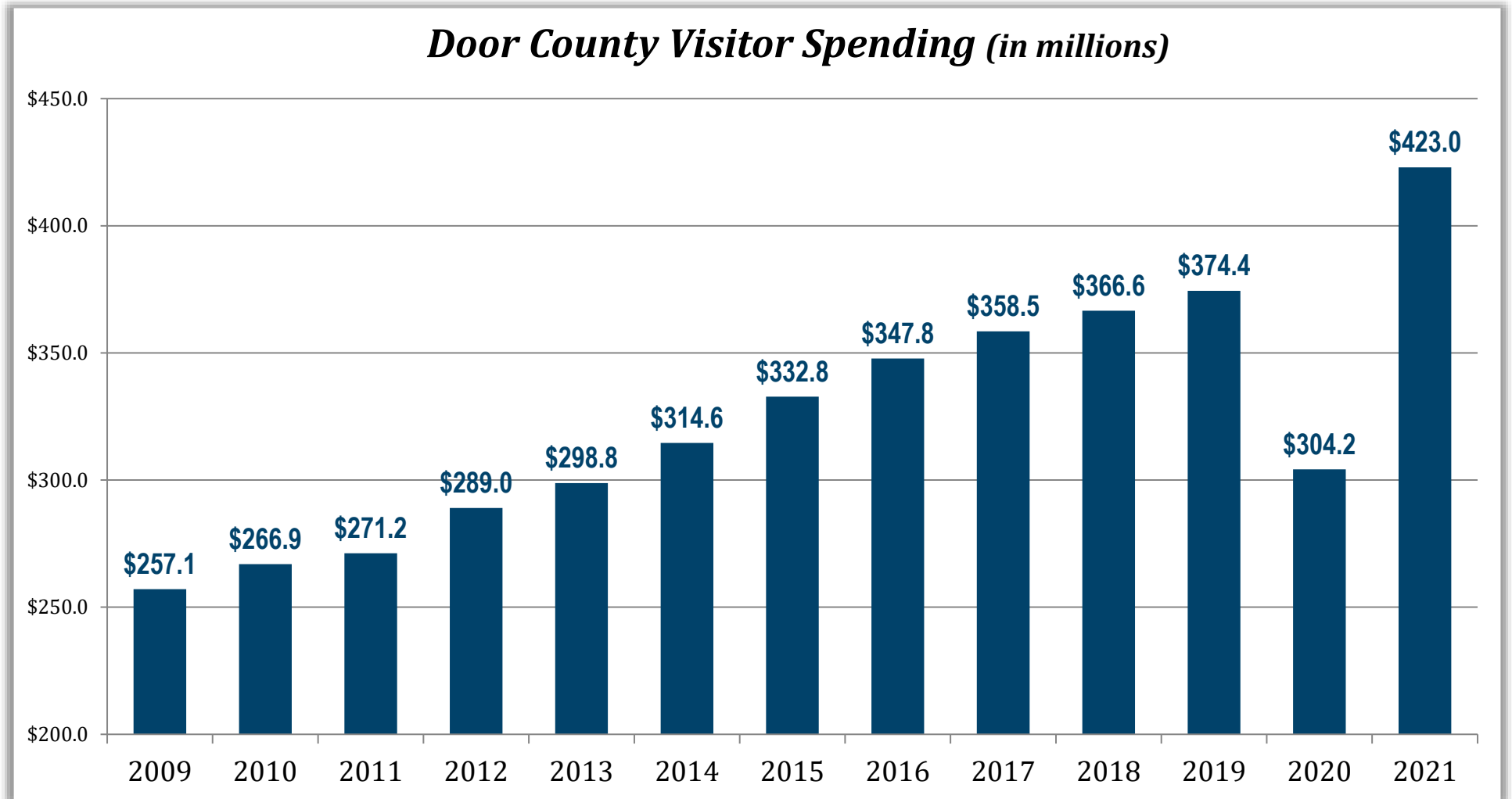
## Primary Results

	2021	2020	2019
Door County Traveler Expenditures	\$423 million	\$304.2 million	\$374.4 million
Wisconsin Traveler Expenditures	\$12.9 billion	\$9.8 billion	\$13.7 billion
Wisconsin Tourism Market Share (Door County)	3.3%	3.1%	2.74%
Door County Overall Impact of Tourism (includes direct, indirect and induced impact)	\$531 million	\$397 million	\$478 million
Wisconsin Overall Impact of Tourism (includes direct, indirect and induced impact)	\$20.9 billion	\$17.3 billion	\$22.2 billion

- Door County ranked 7th out of 72 Wisconsin counties in 2021 for total direct visitor spending, behind Milwaukee, Sauk, Dane, Waukesha, Brown, & Walworth Counties.

# Results

*Since all 19 of Door County's municipalities became part of the Tourism Zone in 2009*





## The Economic Impact of Tourism in Door County - 2021

- \$423 million in direct visitor spending
- \$42.7 million in local and state taxes
- 3,323 full-time equivalent jobs
- \$102.5 million in total labor income
- \$531 million total impact (*direct + indirect + induced*)
- Support to local lodging, restaurants, retail and attractions....enhancing the quality of life for residents

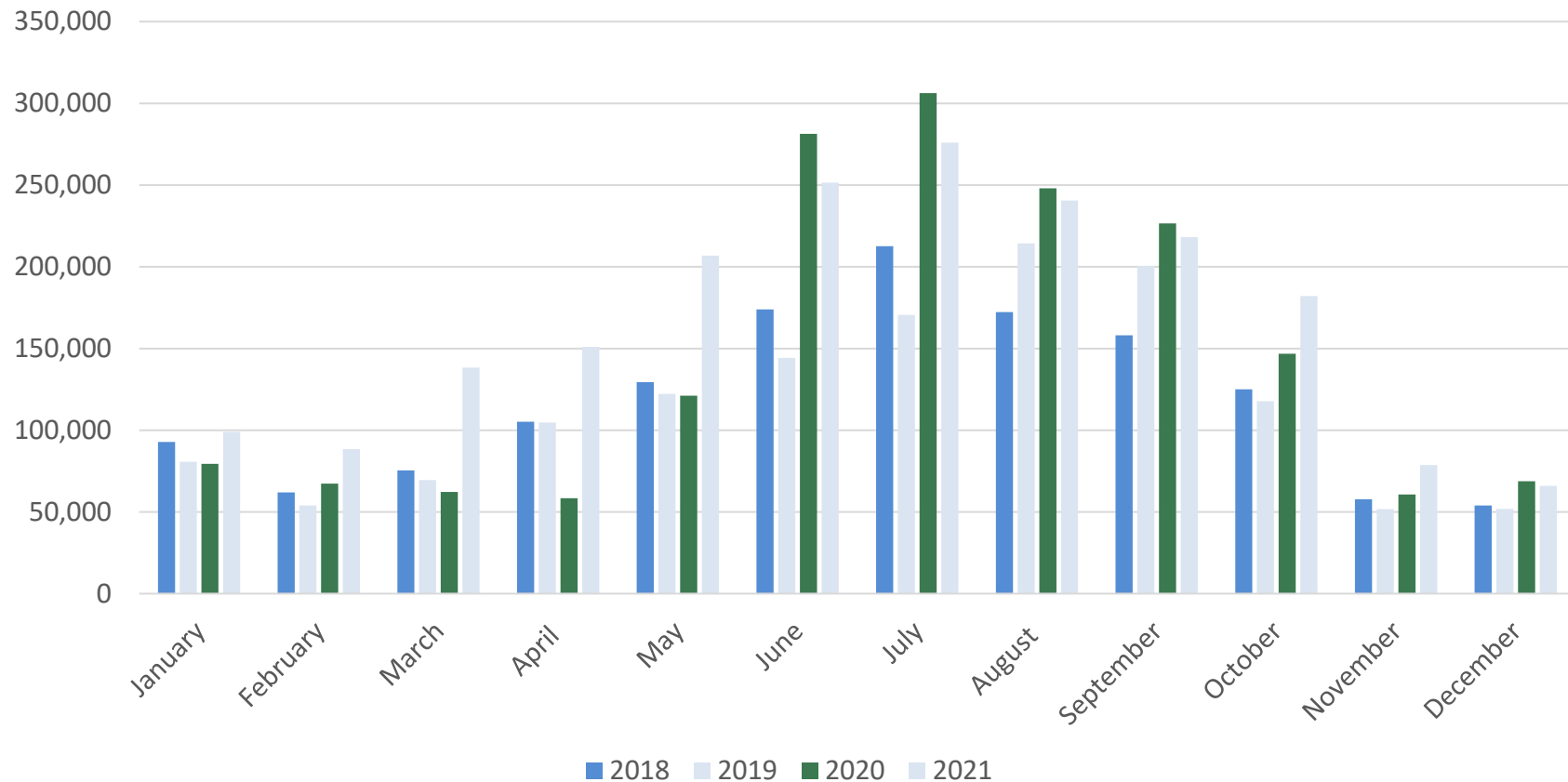
**Source: Tourism Economics - Economic Impact of Tourism in Door County 2021**  
[View the report online](#)



## Marketing and Sales

Owned Media			
	2021	2020	2019
DoorCounty.com site visits	1,996,799	1,727,230	1,526,804
DoorCounty.com unique visits	1,434,845	1,255,020	1,106,111
E-newsletter Subscribers	229,176	231,570	237,757
Facebook Engagement	577,609	623,070	623,522

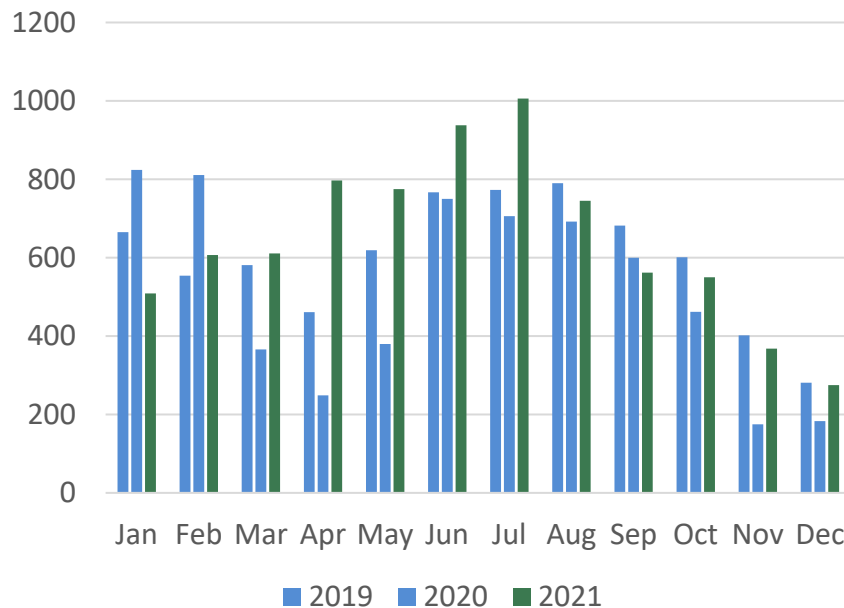
## DoorCounty.com Site Visits



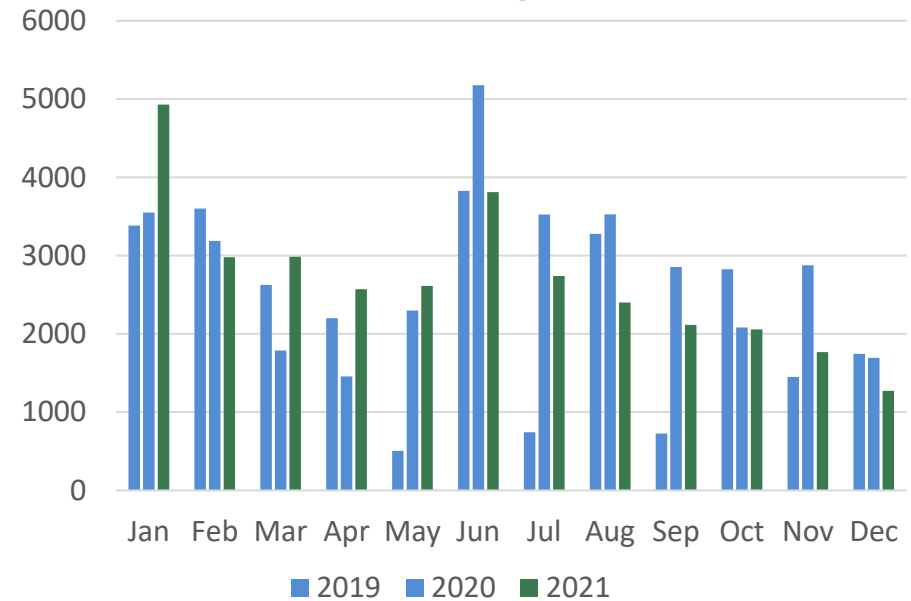
## Group Sales

	2021	2020	2019
Group Tour & Meeting Site Visit	7,743	6,198	7,176
Wedding Web Visits	32,244	34,015	32,909

Group & Meeting



Wedding

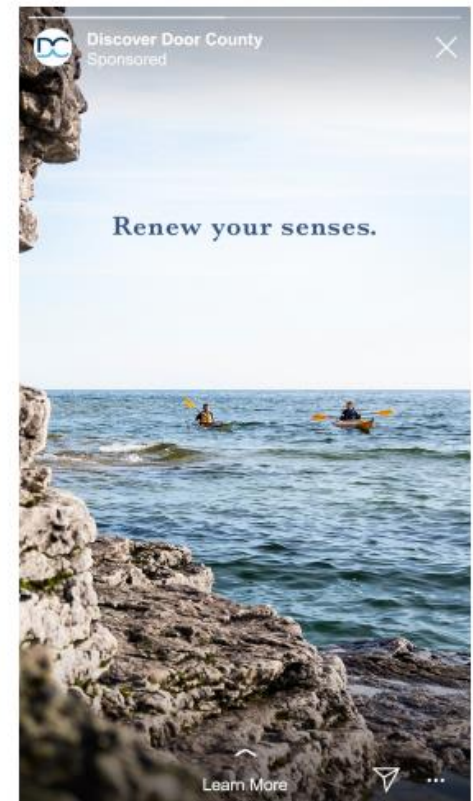




## Advertising Highlights

*A small sampling of what was placed*

- Media planning was strategic, and research based. A multi-dimensional approach delivered a combination of mediums, ad sizes and formats, which allowed us to showcase the visual aspects of Door County, particularly outdoor opportunities, through print, television, digital, mobile and outdoor in our key target markets. We also continued to reach an online audience through video on Hulu, YouTube and apps on connected devices.





## Advertising Highlights

- Key partnerships were formed and maintained to ensure the best possible outcome for an evolving 2021. Targeted marketing and public relations efforts provided up-to-date information on what was happening in Door County while focusing on outdoor opportunities in the county. New photo and video initiatives featured wide open spaces and highlighted the eco-tourism side of the county while also supporting our new Leave No Trace initiative.



DOOR COUNTY

Leave No Trace 7 Principles

Door County's principles provide an easily understood framework of minimum impact practices for anyone visiting the outdoors.

Do your part to protect and preserve Door County.



**Know Before You Go**

Check weather, pack proper equipment, know your limits and take precaution.



**Stick to the Trails**

Wonder at all of the natural beauty without wandering off the designated trails.



**Trash Your Trash**

Do not leave garbage or pet waste behind and recycle whenever possible.



**Leave It As You Find It**

Do not remove or interfere with anything you find in parks and brush off your shoes and tires to prevent spreading invasive species.



**Be Careful With Fire**

Always burn fire safely, extinguish it fully and only use firewood sourced within 15 miles.



**Keep Wildlife Wild**

Do not feed wildlife, give them plenty of space and learn about hunting seasons and local fishing regulations.



**Share Our Trails, Roads and Natural Resources**

We're all here to enjoy Door County, be courteous and respectful on the trails, roads and in the outdoors.

Learn More





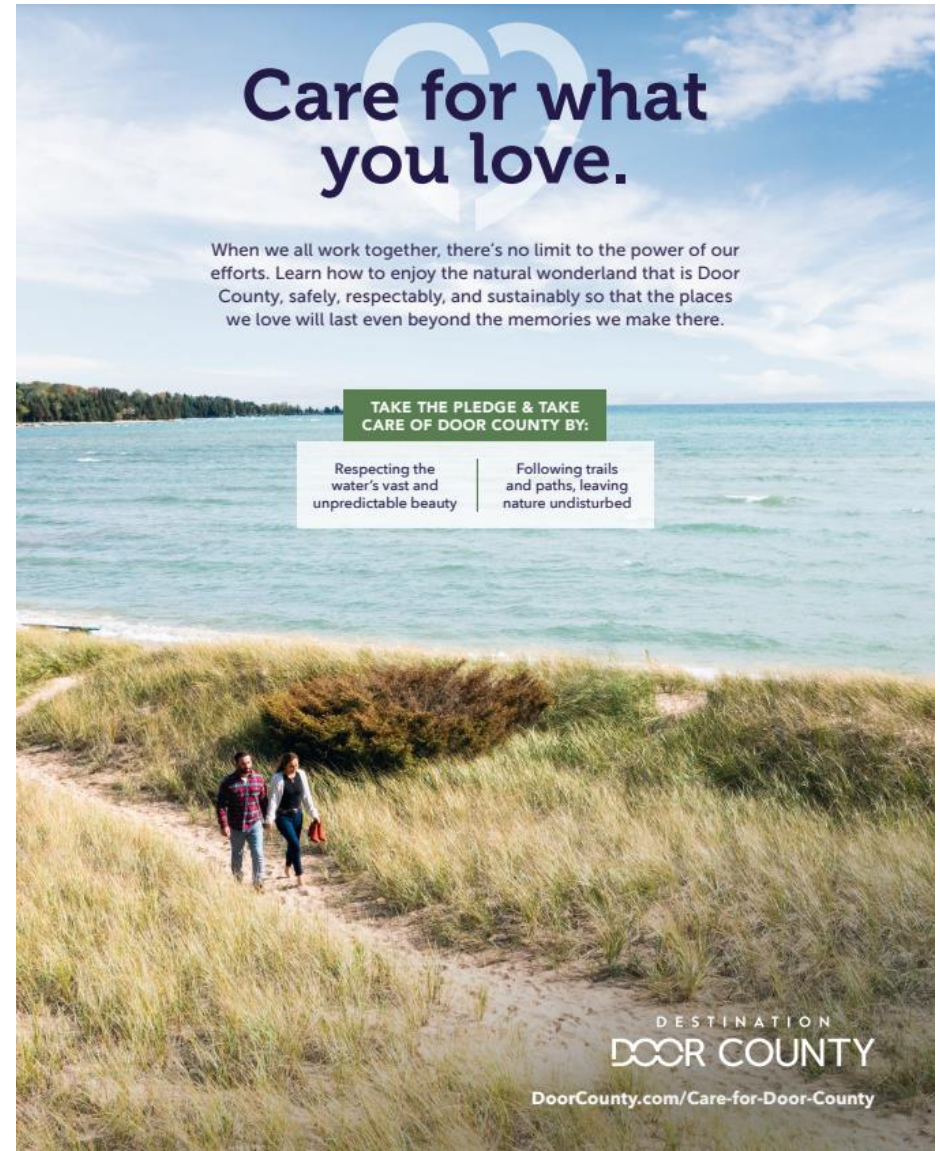
DoorCounty.com/Care-For-Door-County/Leave-No-Trace

© Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics



## Advertising Highlights

- A new creative campaign was all about educating visitors while planning a visit, and while they are here, on how to Care for Door County.





## Communications & Public Relations

Media Marketing Program			
	2021	2020	2019
Ad Value Equivalency (AVE)	\$3,417,366	\$3,019,571	\$2,682,843
Impressions	1,379,650,783	376,426,758	381,702,171
Visiting Journalists	72	60	72

- Hosted 8 seasonally themed group press tours in 2021 between February and December.
- 86 articles placed in print, radio, or online media from media marketing efforts in 2021.
- Through the end of 2021, the return on investment for DDC's media marketing program was greater than 12:1. For every dollar spent, Door County generated \$12.07 in media coverage.



## Earned Media Highlights

February 14, 2021

May 23, 2021

# TRAVEL+LEISURE

Home + Trip Ideas

## 10 of the Best Small Towns in the Midwest

Move over, Chicago – the Midwest is also home to some stellar small towns.

BY KATY SPRATTE JOYCE | JULY 07, 2021

### Fish Creek, Wisconsin



CREDIT: HALBERGMAN/GETTY IMAGES

It's hard to pick just one small town in Door County, Wisconsin (a.k.a. "The Cape Cod of the Midwest"), but Fish Creek is a charming option. Highlights include wine tasting at [Lautenbach's Orchard Country Winery & Market](#), dinner and a nightcap at the [Whistling Swan](#), and shopping at [Sister Golden](#). For those who want to experience a traditional fish boil or the famous cherry-stuffed French toast – both Door County delicacies – [White Gull Inn](#) is a must. As for outdoor recreation, look no further than nearby [Peninsula State Park](#), home to trails, a lighthouse, and swimming and kayaking galore. Rest your head at [Thorp House Inn & Cottages](#), a quaint choice for accommodations.

# Chicago Tribune





# DESTINATION DOOR COUNTY

## Earned Media Highlights

### Forbes

#### It's Official: These Are The Most Beautiful Road Trips In America



**Laura Begley Bloom** Senior Contributor @  
ForbesWomen  
*Transformative Travel: I look at how travel can change lives.*

There's nothing more American than the great American road trip. As the writer Paul Theroux once explained, "It is in our nature as Americans to want to drive everywhere, even into the wilderness." And in the past year, road trips have become more appealing than ever, given that there's no better way to experience what's in our own backyard while safely socially distancing.

So the announcement of the Federal Highway Administration's newest National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads couldn't be better timed. For the first time since 2009, the agency has added 49 spots to its list of the most beautiful roads in America—the America's Byways collection—and we couldn't be more excited to get in the car and explore.

"Through their many unique qualities, each of these new additions to the National Scenic Byways program helps America's roads tell our national story," says Federal Highway Administration's executive director Tom Everett. "These special routes offer travelers exciting new opportunities to explore the nation, from coast to coast or close to home."



Wisconsin's scenic, long, winding Door County Coastal Byway (a.k.a. Highway 42) at its northernmost end. [-] GETTY

#### Door County Coastal Byway - Wisconsin

Wisconsin's Door County—which juts out into Lake Michigan—has been called the Cape Cod of the Midwest. When you see the quaint villages, lush forests and scenic vistas along the 55-mile-long Door County Coastal Byway, there's no wonder it made the list.

## Beyond the Door

So much to see and do while you stay and play with Fido in Door County.

by SUSAN SIMS, PUBLISHER

Meet the New Hosts of Lucky Dog: **Tom Wang and Susan Sims**

Travel, Lifestyle, Health, Wellness, Recipes

42 Spring 2022

IT'S NOT JUST the scenic views and the fresh air that make Door County a perfect destination for a road trip. It's the fact that you can bring your dog along for the ride. Door County is a pet-friendly destination, and there are many ways to enjoy the outdoors with your furry friend.

One of the best ways to enjoy Door County is by taking a scenic drive. The Door County Coastal Byway is a 55-mile-long route that winds through the most beautiful scenery in the state. You can see the rugged coastline, the lush forests, and the quaint villages. And you can bring your dog along for the ride.

Another great way to enjoy Door County is by taking a hike. There are many trails in Door County, and many of them are dog-friendly. You can hike through the forests, along the coast, or through the fields. And you can bring your dog along for the ride.

So, if you're looking for a perfect destination for a road trip, look no further than Door County. It's a beautiful place to stay and play with your dog.

and be sure to try the local favorite "green and gold" pizza – an homage to Wisconsin cheese curds and the Packers!

With a full belly rub, an belly, set off to explore Whitefish Dunes State Park where your leashed Fido is allowed on the trails. The park is home to eight significant Native American villages from 100 BC to the late 1800s and is set on 863 acres of forest and dunes on rugged Lake Michigan shores. AND wait for it... there is a doggy beach nearby! The Fido-friendly trails

Leave no dog behind: [FIDOfriendly.com](#)

Spring 2022 43

Green Bay Press-Gazette | SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 2021 | 10

USA TODAY LIFE

## SUNDAYLIFE

Mix some unfamiliar with the familiar this summer in Door County

### NEW ON THE PENINSULA

Chatter Lovers' new outdoor theater in Door County is a must-see.

One of the most beautiful things about Door County is the fact that it's a mix of the familiar and the unfamiliar. You can see the rugged coastline, the lush forests, and the quaint villages. And you can bring your dog along for the ride.

Another great way to enjoy Door County is by taking a hike. There are many trails in Door County, and many of them are dog-friendly. You can hike through the forests, along the coast, or through the fields. And you can bring your dog along for the ride.

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## Door

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[loopnorth.com](#)

LOOP NORTH NEWS

**Pamela Dittmer McKuen**  
CHICAGO TRAVELER

Cozy up to Door County this winter the Scandinavian way.

[Editor's Note: Any reference to Cape Point Park, Photo by David Parks. Click on images to view larger versions.]

As the calendar turns to nearly a year of lockdown, yet another malady has swept into our lives: Cabin Fever. Scandinavians have a remedy they call *friluftsliv* (pronounced free-loof-tis-liv), which translates to 'open air living.' It's all about immersing yourself in nature – even in winter – to energize, inspire, and de-stress.

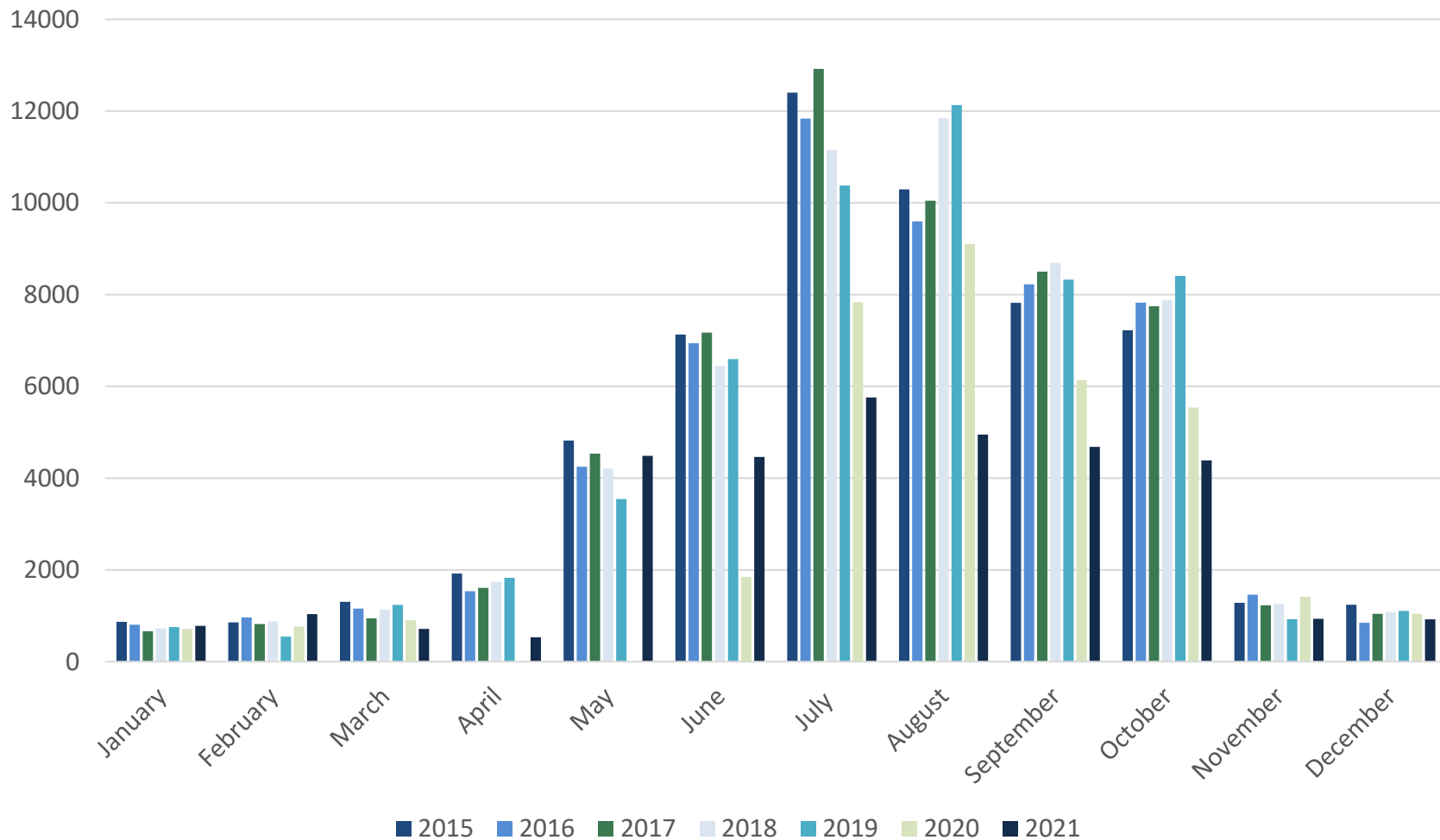
By Pamela Dittmer McKuen

25-Jan-21 – Wisconsin's Door Peninsula is a grand gateway to experience the lifestyle traditions of *friluftsliv* and *hygge*.

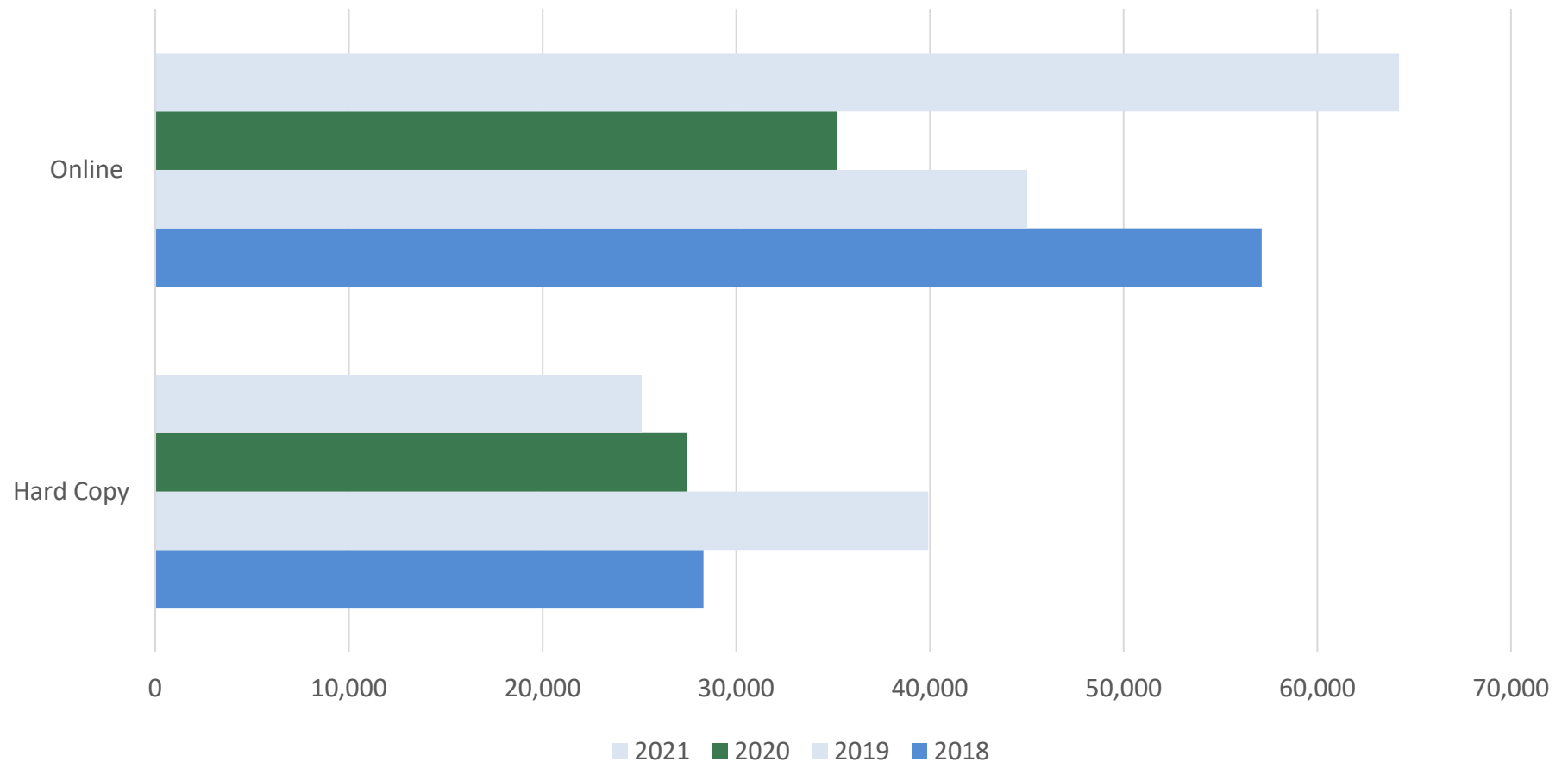
Wisconsin's Door County exudes its own sense of living for the outdoors, especially in the quieter winter months. Then, when you're ready to come in from the refreshing cold and puffy snow, *hygge* (pronounced hoo-gah) is another Scandinavian tradition. It's the concept of coziness that evokes feelings of comfort and serenity. Fuzzy socks are optional.



## Welcome Center Visitor Traffic



## Visitor Guide Requests





## Looking Ahead

- Evolution to Destination Marketing **and** Management
- Membership to Partnership Change
- Tourism Investment Fund
- Municipal Reimbursement Fund
- Strategic Community Partnership Program
- Community Shared Values
  - Destination Alignment
  - Sustainability
  - Values Based Marketing
- Strategic Planning Committee
- Tourism Master Plan
- Collaboration