# COUNTY

# May 2025

# Community Outreach & Destination Alignment

DDC is partnering with Friends of Peninsula State Park to conduct an economic impact survey of the mountain bike trails this summer, online and at the trailhead. This data will be used for the Office of Outdoor Recreation DIY study.

In partnership with the Tourism Zone Administrator, DDC met with seven (7) municipalities in May during their monthly board meetings as part of the municipal outreach program to provide tourism updates and information with all municipalities. Meetings included the City of Sturgeon Bay (5/6), Baileys Harbor (5/12), Village of Egg Harbor (5/14), Town of Union (5/14), Town of Forestville (5/19), Town of Egg Harbor (5/19), and Washington Island (5/21).

We distributed a <u>Tourism News & Insights publication</u> in the May 9, 2025 issue of the Peninsula Pulse newspaper as part of our National Travel & Tourism Week public relations efforts with residents and stakeholders. View the digital version <u>here</u>.

Door County Trails was nominated for two Wisconsin Governor Outdoor Industry Awards. A DDC team member will attend the awards ceremony on June 26<sup>th</sup> on behalf of Door County Trails.

Destination Door County's President & CEO presented the organization's Resident Sentiment Report as part of the Door County Stewardship Plan at the Destinations Wisconsin Spring Educational Session, highlighting the importance of community alignment in tourism strategy. She also attended the Destinations Wisconsin board meeting and participated in the Q2 Governor's Council on Workforce Investment as a council member representing the hospitality and travel sector.

# Sustainable Development

DDC participated in meetings with Travel Wisconsin Department of Outdoor Recreation providing tours and information on the Door County Trail Initiative, state park friends projects, and outdoor recreation businesses in Door County.

Along with Tim Kazmierczak from the Door County Parks Department, DDC presented on Door County Trails (DCT) to the Door County Towns Association meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup>. The presentation focused on the mission of DCT, the positive impacts on trail systems in communities for both residents and visitors, and how DCT can assist towns in finding resources to build trails.

#### **Community Investment Fund - Latest Round of Grant Awards Announced**

The ninth round of <u>Community Investment Fund</u> grant awards were <u>announced on May 12, 2025</u>, and included 3 impactful community projects which received a total of \$250,0000, including:

- Town of Washington received support to acquire a significant waterfront property that will increase availability and accessibility of public docking, public water access, and safety at the town's boat launch. Investment amount: \$100,000
- Friends of Whitefish Dunes State Park received support to repair and improve the much-used stairway and observation platform on Old Baldy, the tallest sand dune in Wisconsin and on Lake Michigan's western shore. Investment amount: \$100,000
- Friends of Peninsula State Park received support to help create an additional 11.3 miles of mountain bike trails that will add to the recently completed 7.5 miles of dedicated trails that have quickly become well-used and loved, challenging mountain bikers of all skill levels. Investment amount: \$50,000



#### **DDC Water Station Initiative**

Fine Arts Fair in Sturgeon Bay on Saturday, May 24: dispensed 120 cups of water; 11 water bottles for a total of 1,120 ounces of water. A cup return rate of 77%.

Maifest in Jacksonport on Saturday, May 24 and Sunday, May 25: dispensed 117 cups of water; 10 water bottles for a total of 1,080 ounces of water. A cup return rate of 44%.

A DDC composting site was opened at the corner of Third and Oregon St in Sturgeon Bay to closely track how long the compostable bamboo cups take to break down.

# Values Based Marketing

#### **PAID MEDIA**

Paid Search and Paid Social saw continued growth in May, with all Google and Meta tactics seeing increases in clicks and most seeing similar or better CTRs. SEM campaigns continue to perform significantly above benchmark at nearly double the average CTR. Recent boosts in Meta performance were maintained this month, with tactics like Meta Remarketing and Lead Gen seeing even better results. The last of our NFL Draft campaigns ended on a strong note, with new campaigns like Art In The Door and Corporate Retreats kicking off in May.

#### **EMAIL**

May's email metrics held strong, with the active audience maintaining a 48% open rate and seasonal content continuing to drive engagement, particularly articles tied to current experiences like cherries and patio dining. Audience suppression (not showing ads to people who've already taken an action) testing had no negative impact on total performance, and engagement with partner content more than doubled month over month.

#### **SEO**

Google Discover, a highly-personalized feed that users have been able to access on Google's desktop homepage, has now rolled out to mobile. Google ranks content in Google Discover based on user interest, so it's important to continue updating content to be fresh, relevant, and explore niche interests. Google encourages publishers to track engagement and signups for success metrics. After announcing future plans to dominate the AI space, Google expressed to publishers that tracking clicks and entrances into websites should no longer be the primary success metrics for performance, encouraging instead an increased focus on engagement, signups, or events.

## MAY TOTALS

6,931,539

128,943

SEM - National	SEM - Geo-targeted	Google Demand Gen	Google Pmax	Meta Prospecting - Leisure	Meta Video	Meta Lead Gen	Meta Remarketing	AZIRA Remarketing Banners
27,942	8,155	34,258	7,480	21,426	14,803	Leads 924	9,517	1,332
Impressions 159,200	Impressions 43,722	2,563,326	Impressions 74,283	1,121,245	385,137	2,471	1mpressions 342,303	Impressions 450,794
17.55%	18.65%	1.34%	10.07%	1.91%	9,083	Impressions 144,477	2.78%	0.30%
Avg. CPC \$0.38	Avg. CPC \$0.50	Avg. CPC \$0.10	Avg. CPC \$0.60	\$0.24	3.84%	1.71%	\$0.23	\$2.12
Budget Remaining 46%	Budget Remaining 64%	Avg. CPM \$1.28	Budget Remaining 67%	Budget Remaining 61%	2.36%	\$0.44	Budget Remaining 78%	Budget Remaining 72.03%
		Budget Remaining 67%			Budget Remaining 60%	Budget Remaining 69%		
KPI Clicks chrosks 9.59% CTR	Clicks 9.59% CTR	Clicks 1.81% CTR	Clicks 1.47% CTR	Clicks 1.78% CTR	Clicks 1.73% CTR	Clicks 1.39% CTR	Clicks 1.92% CTR	Impressions 0.44% CTR

# Values Based Marketing



#### **Community Business Associations Brainstorming Workshop**

As we continue to strengthen our commitment to collaborative destination development, we hosted a dedicated brainstorming session with the Community Business Associations (CBAs) on May 20 to accomplish the following:

- Deepen Collaboration
- Gather Authentic, Ground-Level Insights
- Inspire and Inform Our Creative Direction
- Strengthen a Unified Brand While Honoring Local Identity

The goal of this session was not just to generate ideas but to empower our community partners, inspire new collaborations, and set the stage for inclusive, innovative storytelling that reflects the best of Door County.

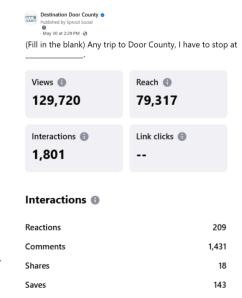
#### **Organic Social**

Facebook: This month, we experienced a year-over-year increase of 305% in engagement and 193% in impressions. While our "fill in the blank" post drove a notable spike in activity, event-focused content also generated strong engagement throughout the month.

In May, we gained a total of 909 new followers, and 467 page likes across both our organic and paid efforts.

Instagram: This month we saw a decrease in impressions, but saw a 14% increase YoY in engagement. We partnered with @agirlaboutchicago on a visit to Door County in May. Sarah has been a visitor for many years and has done many organic posts about the destination drawing large engagement. Posts resulting from her recent visit will be seen in June.

Starting Memorial Day weekend, we began sharing weekend event highlights on our Facebook and Instagram Stories, each including a link to our events page. On Instagram alone, these stories have generated over 200 clicks to our website in May.



# Values Based Marketing

#### **Door County Spring Press Trip**

We hosted a Door County Scandinavian Spring-themed press trip from May 15-18, welcoming 5 journalists to Door County. Some of the outlets they contribute to include: Associated Press News, AAA Living, MSN, The Atlanta-Journal-Constitution and The Jet Set. The itinerary included a tour of Bjorklunden, history lesson of Fyr Bal with Ephraim Historical Foundation and Ephraim Business Council, trip to Washington Island, a special opportunity to see the roof at Al Johnsons (see photo ⇒), plus lots more! Our next trip is a golf/outdoor recreation themed press trip, August 25-28.





## Door County Featured in Midwest Living's 2025 Road Rally

Door County proudly served as the final stop in Midwest Living's 2025 Road Rally—a five-day editorial journey that highlighted the beauty, culture, and local flavor of Wisconsin. In its ninth year, the Road Rally was an annual collaboration between Midwest Living and state tourism offices, designed to inspire travel through curated, 24-hour itineraries in key destinations.

The 2025 route, created in partnership with Travel Wisconsin, included Lake Geneva, Milwaukee, and Door County. During their visit, editors explored scenic shorelines, historic landmarks, art galleries, and local cuisine—capturing the essence of what made the region a must-visit.

The full feature is available at <u>midwestliving.com</u>, and the print version (⟨¬ see photo) hit newsstands on May 16.

#### Media Highlights from the work of the Destination Door County Team

<u>"How to Spend 24 Hours in Door County, Wisconsin"</u> Midwest Living, May 5, 2025

"Best Underrated Travel Destinations in the U.S."
U.S. News & World Report, May 23, 2025

"Explore The Natural Beauty of Wisconsin with Destination Door County" Local 5 Live (WFRV CBS 5), May 26, 2025

<u>"Despite travel season uncertainty, Door County official, business owner express optimism"</u> Wisconsin Public Radio, May 30, 2025





SAVE THE DATE

LEARN MORE & RSVP FOR THESE EVENTS AT <u>DOORCOUNTY.COM/RSVP</u>

JUNE 11 VIRTUAL SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION WORKSHOP - 10 AM

JUNE 12 SOCIAL SECURITY SIGN-UP DAY EVENT FOR J-1 EXCHANGE STUDENTS - EPHRAIM VILLAGE HALL

JUNE 16 HERITAGE TRAIL PASS LAUNCH DATE VISIT DOORCOUNTY.COM/HERITAGE-TRAIL TO LEARN MORE

JULY 17 SOCIAL SECURITY SIGN-UP DAY EVENT FOR J-1 EXCHANGE STUDENTS - EPHRAIM VILLAGE HALL

Stay in the know! Subscribe to DDC's partner newsletter.





# Media Tactic Deep Dive | May 2025

#### **Google Demand Gen (Prospecting + Remarketing)**

What is it?

Google Demand Gen is a powerful digital marketing strategy that uses paid advertisements across Google's vast network (including YouTube, Discover and Gmail) to boost visibility and engagement for Door County. By strategically leveraging Google Demand Gen, you can connect with potential visitors and cultivate interest in the region more effectively than ever.

Here's how Google Demand Gen can significantly enhance Door County's marketing efforts:

- Accelerated Engagement: Google Demand Gen campaigns can deliver rapid results, helping Door County businesses quickly expand their online presence and connect with prospective travelers actively searching and browse on Google's platforms.
- Precision Audience Targeting: Google's sophisticated targeting capabilities allow Door County to pinpoint specific
  demographics, interests, and behaviors. This ensures our ads reach the individuals most likely to be interested in
  visiting Door County.
- Boost Website Traffic and Engagement: Through compelling and strategically placed advertisements, Google Demand Gen campaigns can drive highly relevant traffic to Door County websites and encourage direct interaction with your content.
- Fortified Brand Presence and Community Building: Consistent engagement through Google Demand Gen helps elevate Door County's brand visibility across a broad audience, fostering a sense of community among potential and past visitors, which nurtures interest and loyalty.



#### MAY 2025 PARTNERSHIP & WELCOME CENTER DASHBOARD

#### **Partner Category Overview**

Our current partner list includes 1,157 businesses and organizations across a mid range of categories. The three most represented sectors are:

- Lodging: Vacation Rentals (255 partners) Hotels/Motels/Resorts: (104 Partners)
- Recreation & Entertainment (191 partners)
- Retail (175 partners)

Services

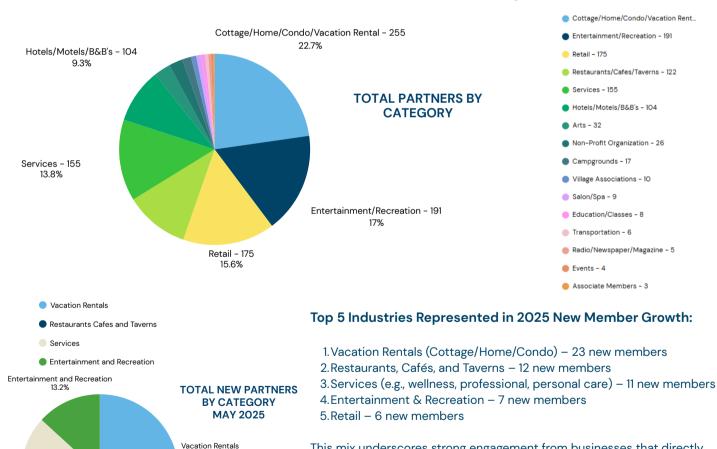
Restaurants Cafes and Taverns

These numbers reflect what our visitors consistently seek out, places to stay, things to do, and local shops to explore. It also shows where we have the strongest connections, which can help guide future outreach, programming, and promotion.

#### New Member Report: 2024 vs. 2025 Year-to-Date Comparison

43.4%

As of this reporting period, 84 new member partners have joined in 2025 compared to 66 during the same timeframe in 2024, representing a 27% increase in new member engagement year-over-year. While this upward trend is encouraging, it's important to note that growth in new member numbers is naturally constrained by the size of the local business community. Most eligible businesses are already enrolled as partners, and new business formation in the region remains limited. This makes any year-over-year increase particularly noteworthy and speaks to the value of continued outreach and onboarding efforts.



This mix underscores strong engagement from businesses that directly shape the visitor experience, especially in lodging and dining. The presence of service based and recreational businesses also suggests that our partnership benefits are resonating beyond traditional tourism sectors.

Overall, this increase in new member participation (despite a relatively stable and saturated market) demonstrates the continued relevance and reach of our programming.

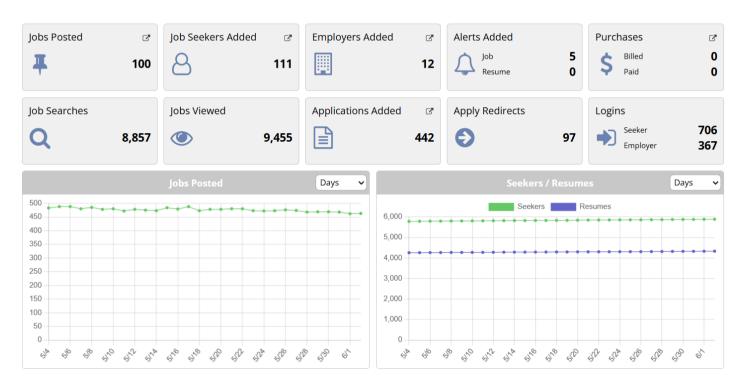
# MAY 2025 PARTNERSHIP & WELCOME CENTER DASHBOARD (CONTINUED)

#### JOBS IN DOOR COUNTY.COM

#### Job Search Activity - May 2025 Summary

The platform averaged over 100 unique users per day, with the highest activity on May 5 (181 users). Search volume remained steady throughout the month. "Housing" was one of the most common search filters, appearing nearly every day. The most searched job categories included hospitality, restaurant service (both front and back of house), cleaning, healthcare, and farm work. Sturgeon Bay had the highest number of location-based searches, followed by Fish Creek, Egg Harbor, and Sister Bay.

This data shows clear interest in jobs tied to tourism and service industries, with a strong focus on roles that offer housing.



#### **WELCOME CENTER**

#### Lobby Traffic Comparison - May 2024 vs. May 2025

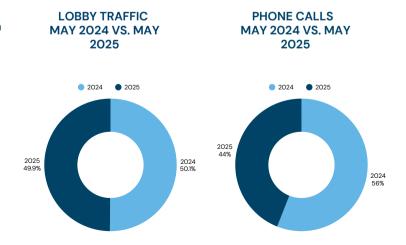
Visitor counts at the Welcome Center lobby remained steady in May 2025, with a total of 2,328 tracked entries, compared to 2,341 in May 2024. This represents a minor decrease of 13 visits, or about 0.6%.

Average daily traffic was nearly identical across both years (75 visitors per day in 2024 versus 75 in 2025). Daily fluctuations followed similar patterns, with Fridays drawing the highest volume of visitors and Sundays seeing the lowest.

Overall, lobby usage patterns remain consistent year over year, with no notable spikes or declines in visitor activity.

#### **PHONE CALLS**

In contrast, phone calls dropped from 688 in May 2024 to 541 in May 2025, a decline of roughly 21%. While in-person visits remained stable, this suggests a shift in how people are engaging with the Welcome Center, relying more on email and our social media platforms over phone support.





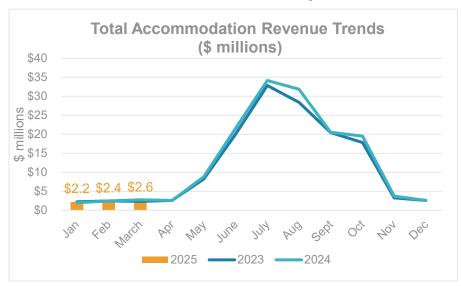


## Strong Start to 2025 with Momentum Heading into Summer Season

While the first quarter is typically low season for Door County, total lodging revenue remained strong, and revenue generated from short-term rentals was up 13% through April. Additionally, in-destination visitor spend, according to Visa, was up 6%, particularly within the restaurant and food and grocery categories.

Looking ahead, through August, forward-looking short-term rental bookings look strong with nights booked up 6% and rental revenue up 10% over the next 90 days.

## Total Accommodation: Q1 2025 Comparable to Q1 2024

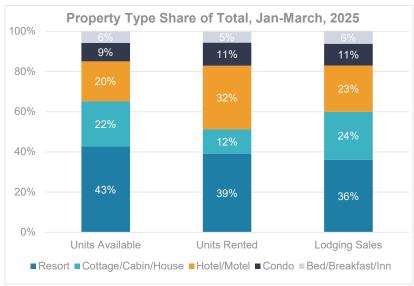


- Through the first three months of 2025, lodging performance in terms of revenue, rates and available rooms were flat while the number of occupied rooms as well as occupancy rate increased 3-4%.
- After increasing in January, lodging revenue declined some in February and March as compared to 2024, totaling \$7.2 million through the first quarter of 2025.
- · While resorts make up more than four

in 10 of total units available in the first two months of the year, cottage/cabins/houses make up a greater share of revenue generated compared to supply and demand, driven largely by higher rates.

Door County Total Lodging* YTD Jan - March							
Metric		2024		2025	YoY % Chg		
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$	7.2	\$	7.2	-0.3%		
Average Daily Rate	\$	146	\$	147	0.5%		
Available Rooms (000's)		85,565		86,375	0.9%		
Occupied Rooms (000's)		16,551		17,248	4.2%		
Percent Occupied		19.4%		20.0%	3.3%		

Source: \*Total lodging reported by Door County Tourism Zone Commission. Data reported monthly, latest data available is March 2025.







3,766

3,161

### **Short-Term Rental\*\* Snapshot:**

- Through April 2025, short-term rental revenue was up 13% compared to 2024—totaling \$7.3 million.
- While short-term rental occupancy is below overall lodging, at \$242 short-term rentals average daily rate is \$100 more than total lodging.
- Average booking window and length of stay were below 2024 levels for the first four months of the year but looking ahead, they are more aligned with the prior year.

Door County Short-Term Rentals** YTD Jan - April						
Metric		2024		2025	YoY % Chg	
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$	6.4	\$	7.3	13.4%	
Average Daily Rate	\$	226	\$	242	7.0%	
Percent Occupied		12.3%		11.8%	-4.1%	
Avg Active AirBNB Listings		1,159		1,223	5.5%	
Avg Booking Window		37.0		31.0	-16.0%	
Avg Length of Stay		3.3		3.1	-5.5%	

**Short-Term Rentals Nights Booked - Next 90** 

Days (as of May 29th)

### Short-Term Rental Outlook—Next 90 Days

- As of late May, compared to the same time frame in 2024, short-term rental bookings are trending postive and are up 6% across the next 90-days.
- Rates as well as demand are highest at the end of July / beginning of August.
- Booking windows and length of stay are fairly comparable to the same period of time in 2024, averaging 131 days for booking and an average stay of nearly 4 nights.
- Total revenue generated from short-term
   rentals is up 13% YTD and predicted to continue to increase, up 10% over the next 90 days.

7,000

6,000

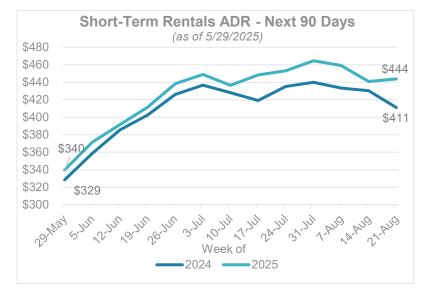
5,000

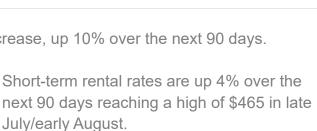
4,000

3,000

2,000

4,492





-2025

Week of

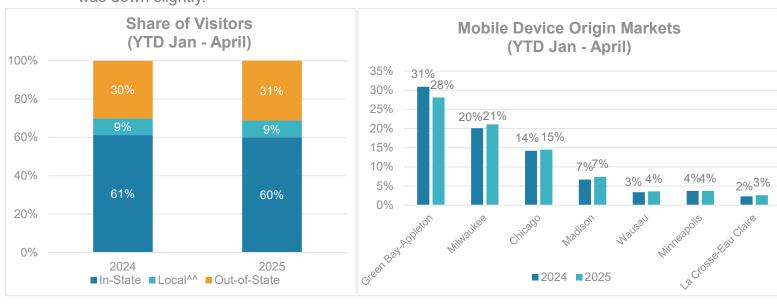
<sup>\*\*</sup>Short-term rentals sourced to KeyData. Data reported monthly, latest data available is April 2025.





#### Visitor Behavior via Mobile Location Data<sup>^</sup>

- Through the first four months of 2025, visitor segments remained fairly similar as 2024 with nearly **seven in 10 visitors to Door County** originating from within Wisconsin.
- Door County saw a slighty higher share of overnight visitors from Milwaukee and Chicago the first four months of 2025 as compared to 2024, while visitation from Green Bay was down slightly.



- Slightly lower than the same time period in 2024, **34% of all visitors** and nearly four-in-10 out-of-state travelers **stayed overnight**.
- Average length of stay was also slightly shorter over the first four months of 2025, averaging 13.7 hours down from 15.8 hours the same time period in 2024.



Overnight Share YTD (Jan - April)	2024	2025	YoY % Chg
In-State	37%	35%	-6%
Out-of-State	43%	39%	-9%

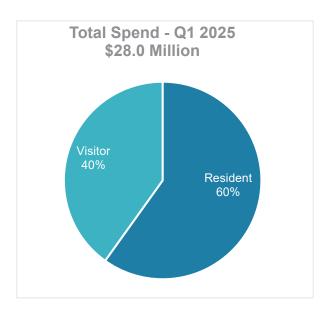
^Source: Azira mobile location data is collected through the usage of phone mobile apps. It is completely privacy compliant and allows tourism organizations to understand visitior behavior while in destination. Data reported monthly, latest data is April 2025. ^^Locals defined as Door County residents.

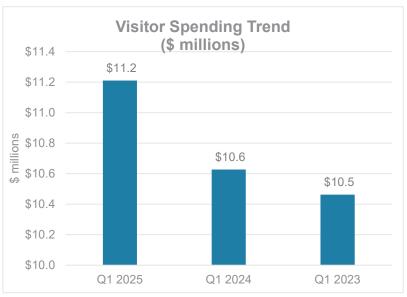




## Q1 2025 Spending Snapshot: Visa Spending

- According to Visa spending data, Door County residents and visitors spent \$28.0 million in Q1 2025—an increase of 5.8% compared to Q1 2024.
- Visitor spending increased 5.5%—totataling \$11.2 million.





Core Target Markets: Green Bay-Appleton, Milwaukee and Chicago Visitors Contributed to 60% of Visa Visitor Spending in Door County in Q1 2025

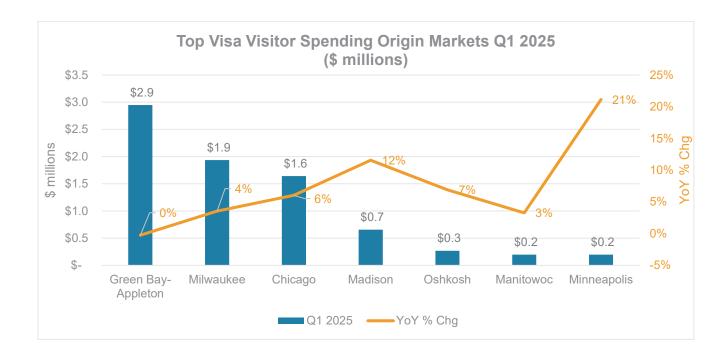
- In-state visitors contributed to twothirds of Visa spending in Q1 2025 up 3% from the prior year.
- Spending increased across most origin markets in Q1 2025 with the excepion of a slight decline from Green Bay visitors.

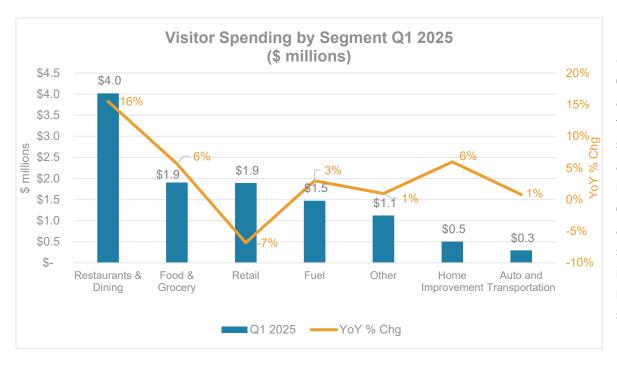
Origin State	Q1 2025 Visitor Visa Spend (\$ millions)	YoY % Chg	% of Total
Wisconsin	\$7.4	3%	67%
Illinois	\$1.6	6%	15%
Michigan	\$0.3	3%	2%
Minnesota	\$0.2	16%	2%
Texas	\$0.2	10%	2%

Source: Visa – spending includes residents and visitors, debit and credit card spend IN DESTINATION. Data is refreshed quarterly, latest data is Q1 2025.









Similar to 2024 overall, approximately one-third of Visa visitor spending was allocated to restaurants and dining. Restaurant and dining visitor spending increased in Q1 2025 while retail declined slightly.

Source: Visa – spending incudes residents and visitors, debit and credit card spend IN DESTINATION. Data is refreshed quarterly, latest data is Q1 2025.



2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT FACT SHEET

# the power of door county's visitor economy

1y

Door County's visitor economy generated **\$523.2 million** in direct spending in 2024. That breaks down into the following share by key business categories:

\$254.2M 48.6% → LODGING

\$110.5M 21.1%→ FOOD & BEVERAGE

\$73.3M 14.0% → RETAIL

\$55.7M 10.7% → RECREATION & ENTERTAINMENT

\$29.6M 5.7% → LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Source: Tourism Economics: 2024 Economic Impact of Visitors to Door County

# statewide impact

Tourism plays a significant role in Wisconsin's economy statewide and is a significant source of both employment and tax revenue.

\$25.8B → OVERALL TOURISM IMPACT ON STATEWIDE ECONOMY

\$16.3B → DIRECT VISITOR SPENDING

\$1.7B 

STATE & LOCAL TAX REVENUE GENERATED

181,898 → JOBS SUPPORTED IN WISCONSIN

Source: Tourism Economics: 2024 Economic Impact of Visitors to Wisconsin

WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM—

economic impact

\$651.2M IN OVERALL IMPACT

→ **\$31.4M** (+5.1%) OVER 2023

\$523.2M IN DIRECT SPENDING

→ **\$26.2M (+5.6%)** OVER 2023

**2024 SPENDING PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN, BY QUARTER:** 

19%

24%

30%

27%

tax revenue

\$53.3M IN STATE & LOCAL TAXES GENERATED

→ **\$2.3M (+4.4%)** OVER 2023

employment

3,524 JOBS SUPPORTED BY THE VISITOR ECONOMY

\$124.3M TOTAL LABOR INCOME FOR EMPLOYEES

→ **\$2.7M (+2.2%)** OVER 2023

▶ did you know

\$3,706 ADDITIONAL AMOUNT EACH DOOR COUNTY HOUSEHOLD WOULD NEED TO PAY TO REPLACE THE TAX REVENUE GENERATED BY THE VISITOR ECONOMY

\$523.2M \$1.4M IS GENERATED PER DAY, ON AVERAGE, BY THE DOOR COUNTY VISITOR ECONOMY

7th RANK OUT OF 72 COUNTIES, GENERATING 3.22% OF ALL VISITOR ECONOMY SPENDING IN WISCONSIN IN 2024

Source: Tourism Economics: 2024 Economic Impact of Visitors to Door County



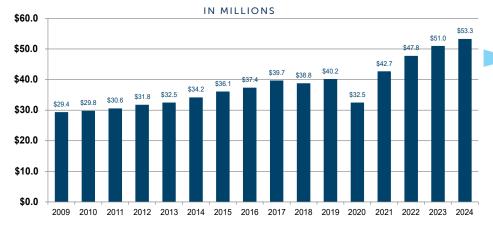
# visitor spending



In 2024, direct spending generated by the visitor economy in Door County totaled \$523.2 million, up 5.3%, an increase of \$26.2 million over 2023.

Source: Tourism Economics: 2024 Economic Impact of Visitors to Door County

# state & local taxes



In 2024, state and local tax revenue generated by the visitor economy in Door County totaled \$53.3 million, a 4.5% increase over 2023.

Source: Tourism Economics: 2024 Economic Impact of Visitors to Door County

# room tax collections



In 2024, room tax collections in Door County were up \$865,585, a 7.7% increase over 2023.

Note: the room tax rate from 2009-2021 was 5.5%. The room tax increased to 8% on January 1, 2022.

Source: Door County Tourism Zone Commission

View this <u>flow chart PDF</u> to see where room tax goes in Door County.