

# DESTINATION DOOR COUNTY

August 2025

## Community Outreach & Destination Alignment

In partnership with the Tourism Zone Administrator, DDC met with two (2) municipalities in August during their monthly board meetings as part of the municipal outreach program to provide tourism updates and information to all municipalities. Meetings included the Town of Gibraltar (8/6) and the Village of Ephraim (8/12). We have now met with all 19 municipalities this year.

The DIY Economic Impact Study on Mountain Bike Trails with DDC and Peninsula State Park is wrapping up. Data analysis will begin at the end of September. Review the study at <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/564efc03446b4f7bb025c06390e2a885>

Staff successfully obtained grant funding for Door County Trails to create a strategic master plan for the proposed trail network in Door County from the Door County Community Foundation. The strategic master plan will be the basis for municipal trail development and funding moving forward.

DDC staff met and are working with DCEDC and the United Way to collaborate on a community resident survey that will deploy later this fall. Questions will range from shared community resident sentiment to tourism related questions. More to come.

## Sustainable Development

### Accessibility Assessment

There are currently 12 sites committed to the Accessibility Assessment. Staff continues outreach to sites to recruit all 70 sites. More information can be found at [DoorCounty.com/accessibility](https://DoorCounty.com/accessibility).

### DDC Water Station Impact Report

During eight August event days across four communities, our water stations dispensed a total of 24,487 ounces of water using 2,439 bamboo cups and 335 reusable water bottles. Of the bamboo cups distributed, 69% were returned for composting—just short of our 75% goal. These efforts helped prevent an estimated 2,774 single-use plastic bottles from entering the landfill! While these may be small steps, they're part of a bigger picture for a better Door County. *Photo At Right ⇨ A couple returns their compostable bamboo water cups to the compost bucket during Carlsville Day on July 26.*



DESTINATION  
DOOR COUNTY

COMMUNITY  
INVESTMENT FUND

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

The tenth round of [Community Investment Fund](#) grant awards were [announced August 15, 2025](#) and included 6 impactful community projects which received a total of \$400,000, including:

- Village of Ephraim received \$100,000 to help restore the Anderson Dock Historic Site.
- Bradley Jordan Foundation received \$100,000 to help build the first-ever gym at Washington Island School, featuring public pickleball courts and a walking track for residents, school children and visitors.
- Sister Bay Historical Society received \$50,000 to help enhance infrastructure and accessibility at the Corner of the Past museum property.
- The Ridges Sanctuary received \$50,000 to help construct all-season restrooms on its North Campus, supporting year-round trail use for winter hiking, snowshoeing, and nature immersion.
- Town of Washington received \$50,000 to help ensure the Washington Island Recreation Center swimming pool continues to serve current and future Washington Island visitors and residents for recreation and wellness.
- Village of Sister Bay received \$50,000 to help transform the Teresa K. Hilander Community Ice Rink into a winter hub open more than 110 days each season.

## Values Based Marketing

### PAID MEDIA

Paid Search performance continues to exceed expectations, with both SEM campaigns seeing CTR increases again this month at more than double the average benchmark. Paid Social had a very strong month, with all tactics at or above benchmark and Meta Prospecting seeing a significant 95% CTR increase, climbing to 172% above benchmark. All third-party vendor tactics also performed at or above benchmark, with Azira CTV (streaming ads) and Interstitials (digital full screen ads) seeing notable increases in CTR month-over-month.

### EMAIL

In August, main content outperformed July with standout interest in signature traditions: Fish Boils (1,087 total clicks), Ice Cream Shops (930 total clicks), and the "Experience Door County" landing page (1,234 total clicks) all surpassing July's top draws like cherries and beaches. Partner total clicks, however, dipped from 37% in July to 32% of all email clicks in August, contributing to a slight month-over-month decrease in overall CTR. Even with this dip, the campaign still achieved a 14% YoY increase in open rate and a 0.5% YoY lift in CTR, highlighting stronger overall engagement compared to last year while underscoring the impact of partner performance on total results.

### SEO

In August, Organic Sessions were up 2.0% Year-over-Year. This was mostly led by a 39% increase in entrances from Bing, with 5.8k users entering from the world's second largest search engine, followed by Yahoo which saw a 21% increase at 2.9k users! Google saw a 0.1% decrease of 0.1%, bringing in 95k users in August.

Impressions were also up 22.4%, led by the homepage which saw a 170% increase in impressions, and then the /stay page, which was up 33% year-over-year.

This increase was led by branded terms. Events & Festivals continue to be a major driver of traffic, with a 32.9% increase in clicks year-over-year and a 6.2% increase in impressions. The top event was for Door County Fall Fest, followed by Tall Ship Sturgeon Bay.

### AUGUST TOTALS

Impressions  
6,539,360

Clicks  
169,533

SEM - National	SEM - Geo-targeted	Google Demand Gen	Google Pmax	Meta Prospecting - Leisure	Meta Video	Meta Lead Gen	Meta Remarketing	AZIRA Remarketing Banners
Clicks 36,854	Clicks 12,751	Clicks 34,811	Clicks 8,263	Clicks 40,193	Views 56,014	Leads 1,055	Clicks 11,974	Clicks 1,607
Impressions 172,514	Impressions 61,664	Impressions 2,536,604	Impressions 71,749	Impressions 843,422	Impressions 292,903	Clicks 2,508	Impressions 560,962	Impressions 429,381
CTR 21.36%	CTR 20.68%	CTR 1.37%	CTR 11.52%	CTR 4.77%	Clicks 6,118	Impressions 149,598	CTR 2.13%	CTR 0.37%
Avg. CPC \$0.29	Avg. CPC \$0.32	Avg. CPC \$0.09	Avg. CPC \$0.56	CPC \$0.13	View Rate 19.12%	CTR 1.68%	CPC \$0.31	CPC \$1.67
Budget Remaining 10%	Budget Remaining 37%	Avg. CPM \$1.29	Budget Remaining 38%	Budget Remaining 30%	CTR 2.09%	CPC \$0.47	Budget Remaining 36%	Budget Remaining 39.87%
		Budget Remaining 39%			Budget Remaining 29%	Budget Remaining 40%		
KPI Clicks Benchmarks 9.39% CTR	Clicks 9.39% CTR	Clicks 1.65% CTR	Clicks 2.97% CTR	Clicks 1.75% CTR	Clicks 1.57% CTR	Clicks 1.33% CTR	Clicks 2.22% CTR	Impressions 0.39% CTR

\*please see additional stats below \*

## Values Based Marketing

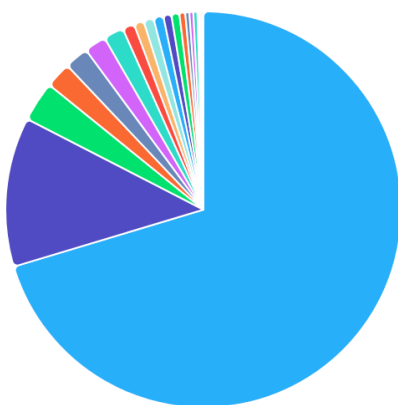
AZIRA - CTV	AZIRA - INTERSTITIAL	Tiki	Epsilon
Clicks 251	Clicks 7,842	Clicks 5,395	Clicks 966
Impressions 123,018	Impressions 227,456	Impressions 59,297	Impressions 1,010,792
CTR 0.20%	CTR 3.45%	CTR 9.10%	CTR 0.10%
CPM \$37.47	CPM \$16.25	CPC \$1.43	CPM \$13.09
Budget Remaining 37.53%	Budget Remaining -2.53%	Budget Remaining 0.00%	Messaged Visits 169
			Budget Remaining 20.85%
Impressions 0.11% CTR	Impressions 1.72% CTR	Clicks 8% CTR	Impressions 0.10% CTR

### Heritage Trail Pass

Launched on June 16, the Heritage Trail is a free, self-guided experience that invites residents and visitors to explore 29 historic and cultural sites across Door County. Using a mobile pass, participants check in at locations like lighthouses, museums, and preserved homes to unlock local stories and earn prizes.

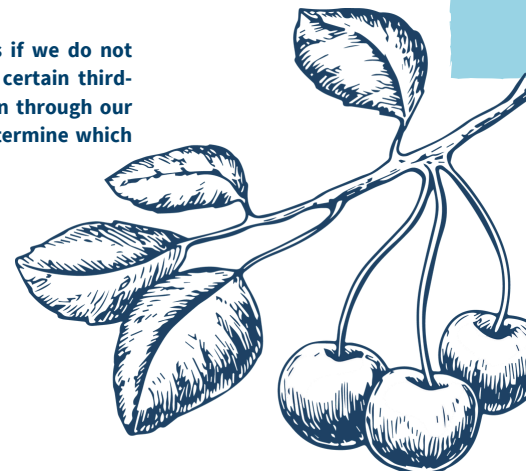
The trail has seen strong engagement with 715 signups, and an additional 155 active users, and 40 prizes redeemed. Passholders come from 32 states, with Wisconsin leading, followed by Illinois and Minnesota. Early results show strong local and regional interest, with growing national awareness of Door County's history. Continued marketing is expected to drive even more participation.

For More information on the Pass, visit [doorcounty.com/heritage-trail](https://doorcounty.com/heritage-trail)



- Wisconsin
- 
- Kansas
- Indiana
- Arkansas
- Illinois
- Iowa
- Virginia
- Colorado
- Nebraska
- Minnesota
- Florida
- Michigan
- Ohio
- Kentucky
- Texas
- Missouri
- California
- North Carolina
- Georgia

\*The sections of this report may show "--". This occurs if we do not receive a zip code during the order process. There are certain third-party channels where we do not receive this information through our API integration. We still count the passes but cannot determine which city and state they are coming from.\*



## Values Based Marketing



Above: During DDC's August 2025 press trip, two journalists took part in a deep dive into Horseshoe Bay Cave with Door County Parks

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

AFAR, Summer 2025 issue, "Where the Lake Meets the Sky" [digital version](#).

[Unpacked](#) podcast, AFAR, August 22, 2025.

["Great Campgrounds to Stay in Near Iconic Scenic Drives"](#) AARP, August 19, 2025.

We hosted 3 golf journalists and 7 travel journalists for a press trip, August 25 - 28. Journalists played at multiple golf courses, biked at Peninsula State Park, took two scenic boat tours, and ate at various restaurants. Our final group press trip for 2025 is October 21-24.

### Organic Social

Facebook continues to do extremely well with impressions up YoY 151% and engagement up 419%. We saw a large increase in followers with 1,185 new followers in August. With this boost, we are nearing 150k followers on Facebook.

X saw a 35% YoY increase in engagement.

Instagram saw a 40% YoY decrease in engagement.

#### Impressions

3,351,759 ↗ 6.1%

#### Organic Engagement Rate (per Impression)

7.4% ↗ 106.7%

#### Organic Impressions

896,119 ↗ 151.3%

#### Paid Engagement Rate (per Impression)

0% → 0%

#### Engagements

66,020 ↗ 419.4%

#### Paid Impressions

2,455,640 ↘ 12.4%

#### Post Link Clicks

6,279 ↗ 1,592.5%

#### Organic Engagements

66,020 ↗ 419.4%

Facebook report snapshot



["A Cherry Pie Christmas" Movie Trailer](#) (YouTube link)

### A Cherry Pie Christmas

The trailer for "A Cherry Pie Christmas" was unveiled on our social on August 6. Many local news station picked up the trailer from our post for news stories:

- ["Door County Shines in the Festive Trailer for A Cherry Pie Christmas"](#) Green Bay Press Gazette
- ["Watch trailer for 'A Cherry Pie Christmas', a new movie filmed and set in Door County"](#) WLUK Fox 11
- ["Trailer Released for Door County Christmas Movie"](#) Door County Daily News

The movie is set to debut in November.

SAVE THE DATE

LEARN MORE & RSVP FOR THESE EVENTS AT [DOORCOUNTY.COM/RSVP](https://doorcounty.com/rsvp)

OCTOBER 28 DDC'S 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GATHERING - MAXWELTON BRAES LODGE

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





## Media Tactic Deep Dive | August 2025

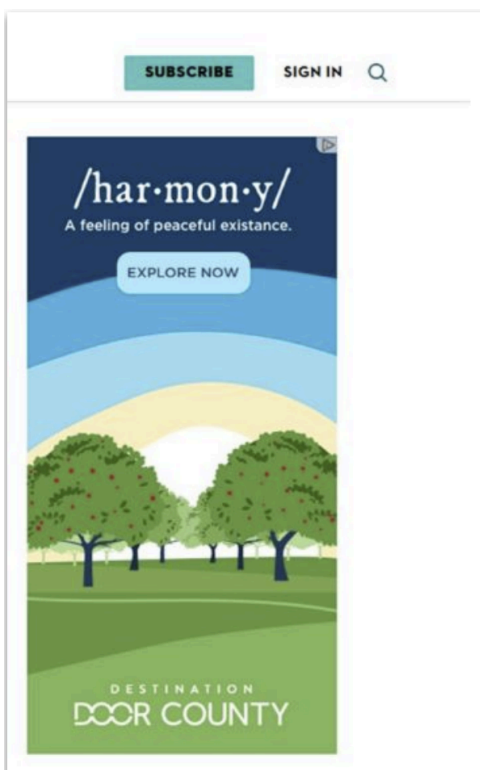
### Epsilon

What is it?

As a leader in outcome-based marketing, **Epsilon** can significantly enhance marketing efforts for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) by providing a comprehensive, person-first view of potential travelers and their spend and economic impact in market. Their data-driven technology acts as a strategic partner, engaging potential visitors and driving high-quality leads.

Here's how Epsilon's platform helps elevate Door County's marketing:

- **Accelerated Engagement & Results:** Epsilon's platform is built for speed and efficiency, helping businesses rapidly expand their online presence and connect with prospective travelers. Epsilon's campaigns are powered by identity-based data, optimized for conversions, and deliver quick results.
- **Precision Audience Targeting:** Leveraging Epsilon's unrivaled data intelligence, they pinpoint specific demographics, interests, and travel behaviors. This ensures Door County campaigns reach the individuals most likely to be interested in visiting our destination, driving high-quality leads and bookings.
- **Boost Website Traffic and Engagement:** Through a suite of digital services, Epsilon helps us attract visitors by orchestrating a single, consistent voice across channels. By providing personalized, relevant interactions, Epsilon drives direct engagement with our content, leading to increased inquiries and bookings.
- **Fortified Brand Presence and Community Building:** Consistent, personalized engagement across their vast network helps elevate Door County's brand visibility. Epsilon's focus on creating meaningful, human experiences fosters a sense of community among potential and past visitors, nurturing interest and loyalty for future visits.



### WELCOME CENTER TRAFFIC COMPARISON – AUGUST 2024 VS. AUGUST 2025

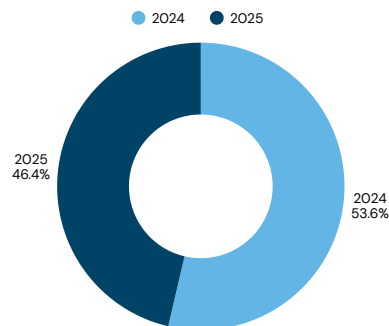
Visitor counts at the Welcome Center lobby totaled 3,183 in August 2025, compared to 3,681 in August 2024, a decrease of 500 visits, or approximately 13.6%. On average, about 103 people visited per day, with Fridays drawing the highest traffic (202 visitors on August 1) and Sundays the lowest (just 46 visitors on August 10).

This decline mirrors what many visitor centers and tourism organizations are reporting nationwide: travelers increasingly rely on digital tools (apps, websites, and social media) for trip planning and real time information, leading to fewer in person stops. That said, the lobby still reflects consistent weekly patterns, suggesting its value lies less in broad visitor reach and more in serving highly intentional guests who prefer personal, face to face interaction. This is especially true for day trippers or those who traveled on whim with no plans.

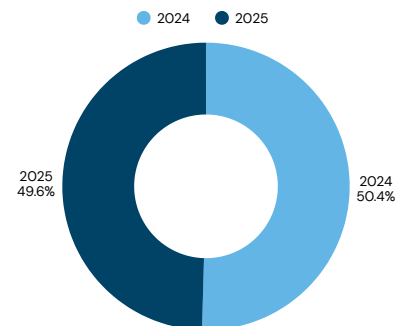
### PHONE CALLS

Phone calls decreased slightly from 742 in August 2024 to 729 in August 2025, a reduction of approximately 1.7%. While modest, this ongoing decline reflects a larger trend seen across many industries (customers are increasingly moving away from traditional phone support). Today, travelers (like consumers more broadly) often prefer to reach out through email, direct messages on social media, or face to face at visitor centers, which they view as more convenient and immediate than waiting on hold. In fact, many hospitality and tourism organizations nationwide are reporting similar decreases, as digital channels continue to shape how people seek information and assistance.

LOBBY TRAFFIC  
JULY 2024 VS. JULY  
2025



PHONE CALLS  
AUGUST 2024 VS.  
AUGUST 2025



### GIFT CERTIFICATE SALES & REDEMPTIONS – AUGUST 2025

Redemptions are currently outpacing sales, which is expected for this time of year. Many visitors are now redeeming gift certificates purchased earlier in the year as they travel to the county during the busy summer months. Looking ahead, we typically see sales rise again in the holiday season, when certificates are popular as gifts and for planning future visits.

#### Gift Certificate Redemptions

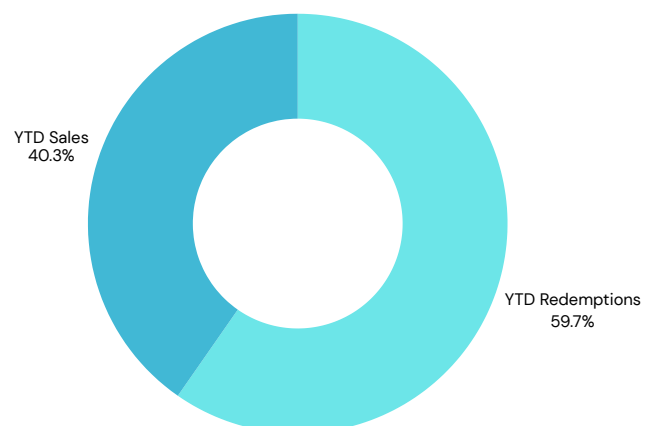
January \$55,165  
 February \$31,465  
 March \$30,890  
 April \$31,860  
 May \$21,600  
 June \$31,275  
 July \$36,460  
 August \$57,680

**YTD TOTAL \$259,935**

#### Gift Certificate Sales

January \$23,870  
 February \$13,255  
 March \$18,130  
 April \$22,435  
 May \$34,435  
 June \$34,905  
 July \$29,395  
 August \$28,575

**YTD TOTAL \$175,605**



### New Partner Report: AUGUST 2024 vs. AUGUST 2025 Comparison

As of this reporting period, 5 new partners have joined in 2025, compared to 18 in the same timeframe in 2024, a decrease of approximately 72%. While new partnership sign up's have slowed, this reflects both limited new business formation and already high enrollment levels among existing businesses. Each new partner remains valuable and underscores the importance of ongoing outreach. Anecdotally, new partnerships have tended to rise in tandem with the release of Destination Guide contracts, as many businesses wished to participate and joining was part of that process.

### Partner Category Overview

Our current partner list includes 1,178 businesses and organizations across a mid range of categories. The three most represented sectors are:

- Lodging: Vacation Rentals (262 partners)  
Hotels/Motels/Resorts: (104 Partners)
- Recreation & Entertainment (196 partners)
- Retail (178 partners)

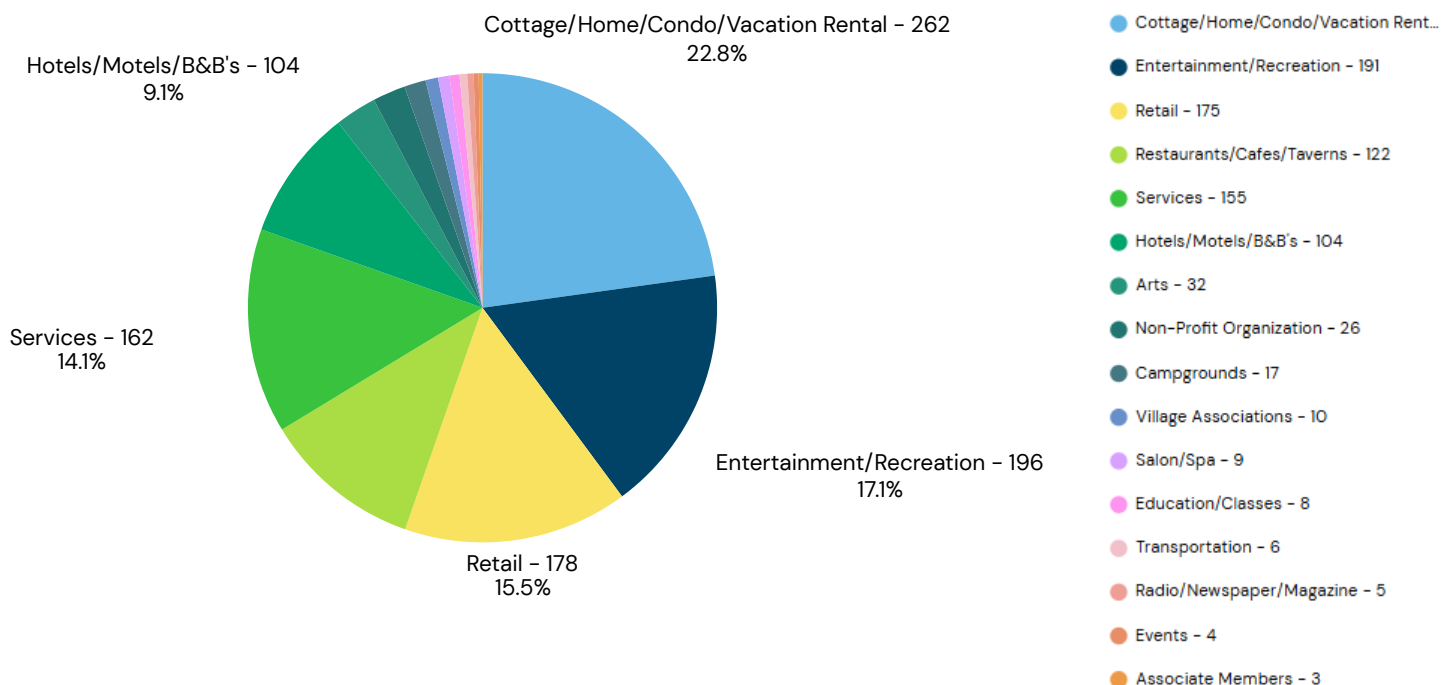
These numbers reflect what our visitors consistently seek out, places to stay, things to do, and local shops to explore. It also shows where we have the strongest connections, which can help guide future outreach, programming, and promotion.

### Top 5 Industries Represented in 2025 New Member Growth:

1. Vacation Rentals (Cottage/Home/Condo) – 30 new members
2. Restaurants, Cafés, and Taverns – 16 new members
3. Services (e.g., wellness, professional, personal care) – 18 new members
4. Entertainment & Recreation – 2 new members
5. Retail – 12 new members

Given the size of the county, the steady addition of new partners meaningfully enhances our representation across all communities. Eliminating membership dues has removed a key financial barrier, which in turn has virtually eliminated partner attrition. As a result, our website continues to present a comprehensive view of Door County's travel and tourism landscape, while also showcasing a growing number of businesses beyond the traditional tourism sector.

### TOTAL PARTNERS BY CATEGORY\* 2025 (TO DATE)



**Disclaimer:** Partner categories are determined by each partner's primary category listing. While some partners may fall under multiple categories, these counts reflect only their main category designation.

## PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY – AUGUST 2025

Partner interactions spanned a wide range this month from resolving employee concerns and Social Security issues for local businesses, to clarifying fraudulent offers for partnership lists, partnership inquiries, and questions surrounding the gift certificate program. The team also provided organizational guidance to groups like Open Door Bird Sanctuary, supported employer recruitment tools for The Clearing, and offered data and insights for local media coverage on workforce issues. Notably, workforce challenges remained a recurring theme underscoring the value of having a responsive partner resource.

Consistent communication continued to be a cornerstone of outreach, with thousands of emails sent to partners through newsletters, surveys, fraud prevention notices, and Destination Guide advertising reminders. These efforts kept partners informed while also promoting upcoming webinars and opportunities for engagement.

The team also prioritized community visibility and relationship building. Water stations once again served as a strong point of engagement, sparking meaningful conversations not only with partners but also with residents. These interactions often opened the door to broader collaborations: from a knitting group donating hats and mittens for the winter gear drive, to multiple Washington Island organizations requesting water stations at future events, to local Lions Clubs and small businesses exploring ways to adopt compostable products in place of plastic.

Several new partnerships and connections emerged through this outreach. For example, introductions were made between A Door Life and the Southern Door Business Association, the Island Popcorn Barn and the Sister Bay Advancement Association, and between businesses and nonprofits pursuing sustainability initiatives. The team also fielded inquiries from organizations such as the Washington Island Music Festival, Write On Door County, and Alliance for the Great Lakes, all seeking to expand collaboration around water stations and sustainable practices.

In addition, the team actively supported partners by sharing grant opportunities, such as resources for “quiet trails” and negotiated with suppliers like Good Start Packaging to explore reduced costs for bamboo compostable cups in 2026. These efforts are helping position local businesses to adapt to shifting consumer expectations around sustainability while building momentum for county wide initiatives.

Looking ahead, the team is also focused on planning for the Annual Meeting and preparing ongoing communications. Partnership is always on the move, balancing day to day support with forward looking initiatives to strengthen relationships and deliver value across Door County.

## JOBS IN DOOR COUNTY.COM

### Job Search Activity – August 2025 Summary

Job search activity on JobsInDoorCounty.com remained steady in August, averaging between 63 and 145 unique users per day and generating 72 to 176 searches daily. The platform continues to serve as a reliable resource for both seasonal and year round job seekers, with housing appearing frequently as a search filter (reinforcing the ongoing challenges workers face in securing accommodations, particularly during peak tourism months). Part time and seasonal opportunities drew strong interest in communities such as Sister Bay, Ephraim, and Egg Harbor, while Sturgeon Bay saw consistent demand for full time positions across sectors ranging from hospitality and housekeeping to healthcare, retail, and government roles.

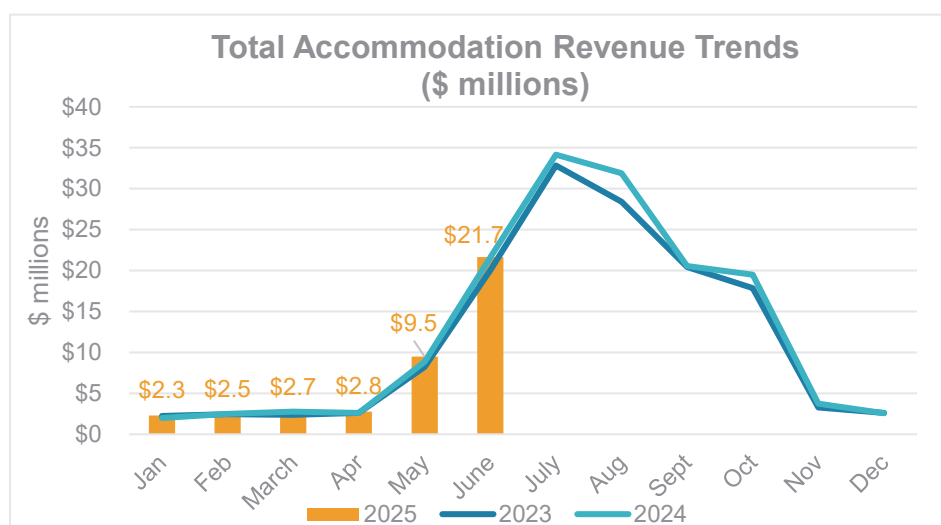


## Door County Accommodation Growth Slows, Although Short-Term Rental Performance Remains Strong

Through June, total accommodation performance in Door County remained positive but preliminary data started to show growth slowing down at the end of Q2. YTD, total lodging revenue was up 3%, driven largely by a 3% increase in rates, while occupied rooms and occupancy were essentially flat compared to 2024. Revenue generated from short-term rentals was up 12% through July, although short-term rental booking windows are slightly shorter than in 2024, indicating some measure of caution from consumers before committing to travel plans.

Forward-looking short-term rental bookings through November remain robust, with nights booked up 12% and rental revenue up 32% over the next 90 days (as of August 28<sup>th</sup>).

### Total Accommodation: January - June 2025 Comparable to 2024

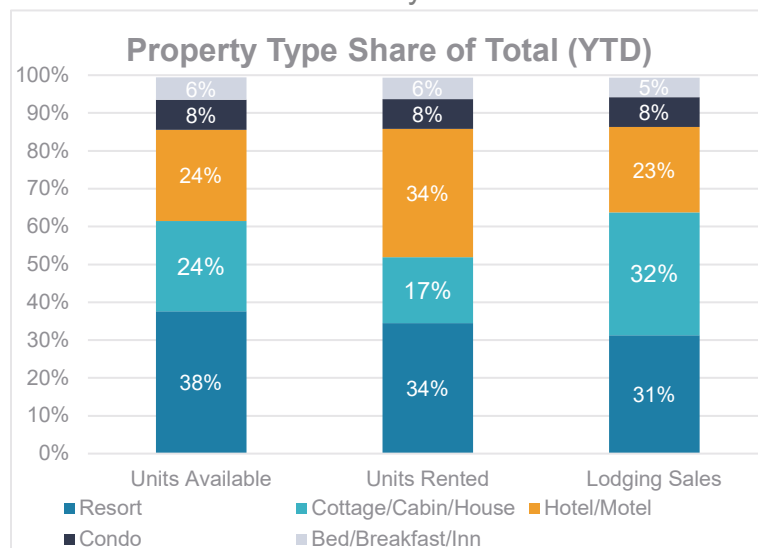


Through the first six months of the year, lodging performance showed incremental growth compared to the prior year with revenue up 3%, yet occupied rooms and occupancy rate were essentially flat compared to the same time frame in 2024.

April and May lodging revenue was up 7% year-over-year, while June revenue was flat compared to June of last year.

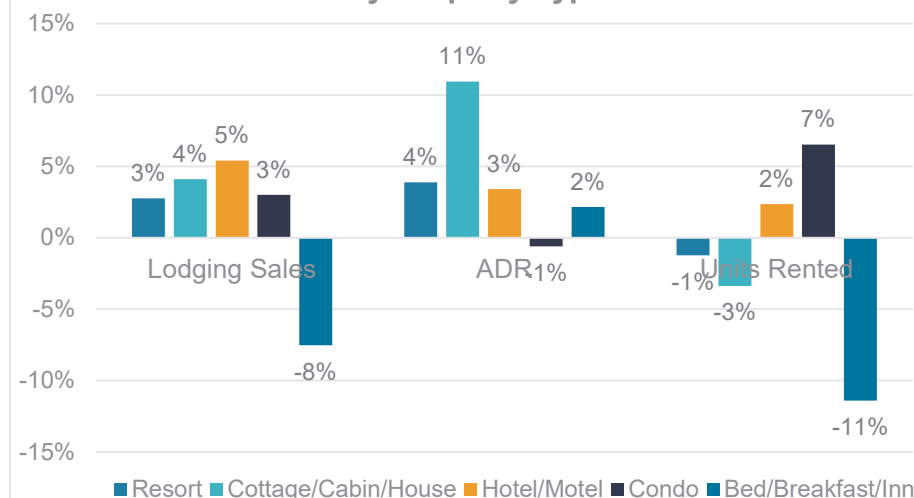
Door County Total Lodging* YTD Jan - June				
Metric	2024	2025	YoY % Chg	
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$ 40.3	\$ 41.5	3.0%	
Average Daily Rate	\$ 172	\$ 177	3.1%	
Available Rooms (000's)	104,089	105,283	1.1%	
Occupied Rooms (000's)	32,827	32,753	-0.2%	
Percent Occupied	28.5%	28.6%	0.4%	

While cottages/cabins and houses make up less than one-quarter of units available they contributed to nearly one-third of total lodging revenue generated through June 2025. Additionally, their share of revenue contribution has increased since last year, up 5%, while hotels and resorts share of revenue declined 2%.



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

### Q2 Lodging Financial Performance YoY Change by Property Type



YTD, lodging sales were positive for all lodging categories except for bed & breakfast and inns. ADR increased the most for cottage/cabins/houses—driving their increased share of revenue although in terms of demand and units rented, cottages and cabins were down compared to last year while condos increased 7%.

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

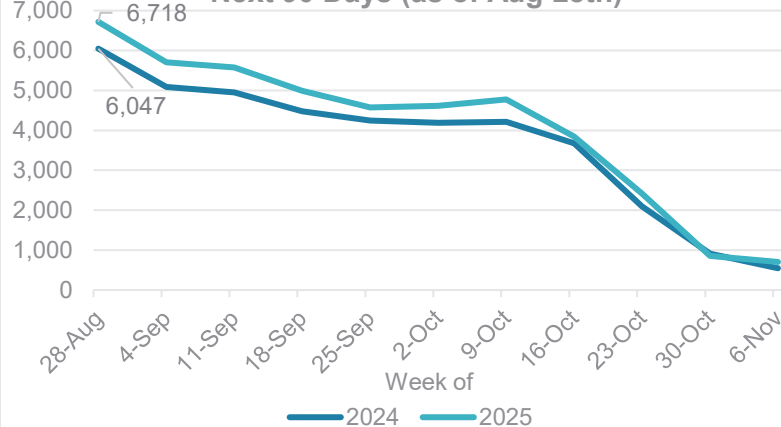
- Through July 2025, short-term rental revenue was up 12% compared to 2024—**totaling nearly \$40 million.**
- Short-term rental ADR continues to surpass other types of lodging and YTD increased 7%, versus 3% for all lodging ADR.
- While revenue and ADR were positive for the first six months of the year, the occupancy rate for short-term rentals was down 5% and the booking window shortened, likely a result of many consumers feeling uncertain about the economic environment and their finances.

Door County Short-Term Rentals** YTD Jan - July				
Metric	2024	2025	YoY % Chg	
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$ 35.5	\$ 39.9	12.3%	
Average Daily Rate	\$ 334	\$ 356	6.8%	
Percent Occupied	25.8%	24.6%	-4.7%	
Avg Active AirBNB Listings	1,213	1,236	1.9%	
Avg Booking Window	73.3	69.8	-4.7%	
Avg Length of Stay	3.4	3.3	-3.5%	

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

- As of late August, compared to the same time frame in 2024, short-term rental bookings are trending positive and are up 12% across the next 90-days.

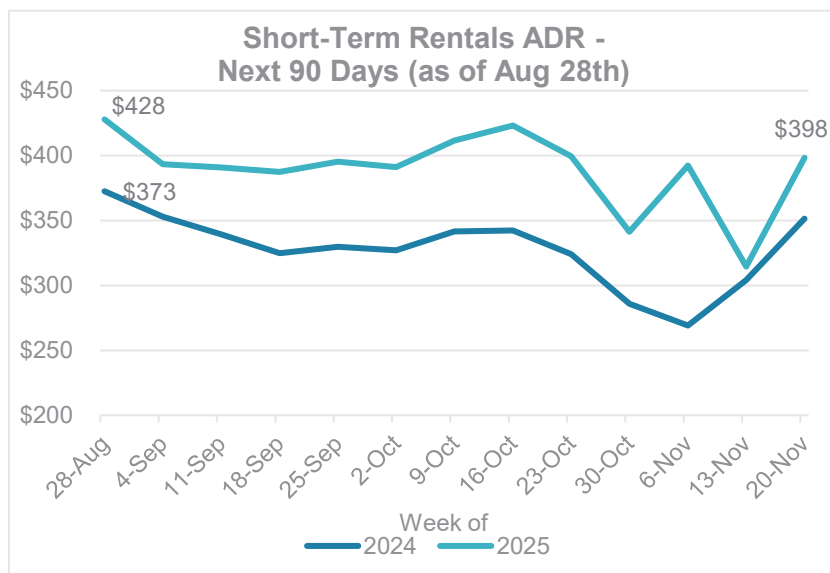
### Short-Term Rentals Nights Booked - Next 90 Days (as of Aug 28th)



\*\*Short-term rentals sourced to KeyData. Data reported monthly, latest data available is July 2025.

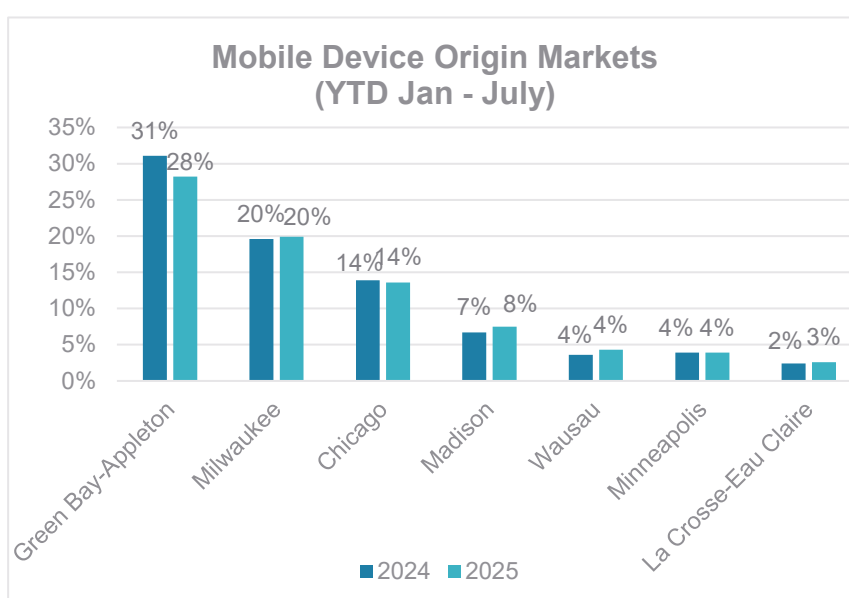
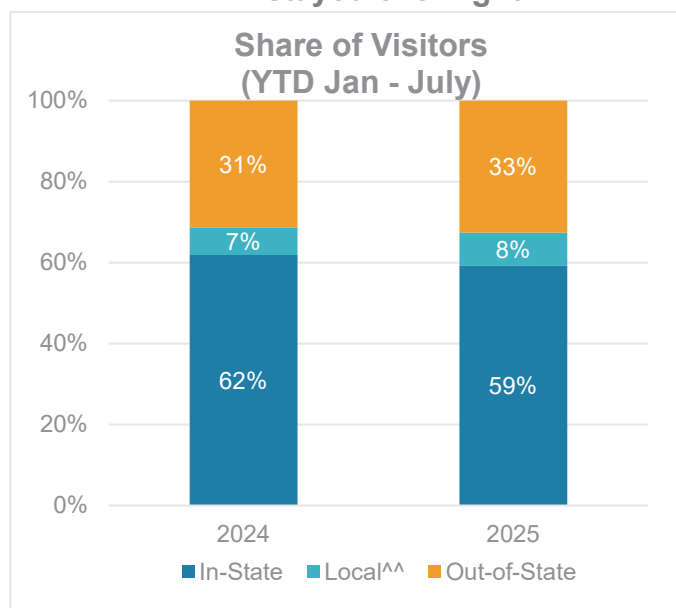
- Total revenue generated from short-term rentals is up 12% YTD and predicted to continue to increase, up 32% over the next 90 days.
- Short-term rental rates also continue to increase and are up 18% over the next 90 days, hovering around a \$400 average rate into November.

\*\*Short-term rentals sourced to KeyData. Data reported monthly, latest data available is July 2025.



## Visitor Behavior via Mobile Location Data^

- The share of out-of-state visitors to Door County continued to increase and represented 33% of visitors through July 2025.
- Overnight visitor origin markets were largely consistent with the prior year although the share of visitors from Green Bay continues to be lower compared to last year.
- Slightly lower than the same time period in 2024, **43% of all visitors** and 48% of out-of-state travelers **stayed overnight**.



^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 visitor behavior while in destination. Data reported monthly, latest data is July 2025. ^^Locals defined as Door County residents.