

DESTINATION DOOR COUNTY

January 2026

COMMUNITY & WORKFORCE

Tourism Advocacy Day in Madison - In collaboration with Destinations Wisconsin, we advocated for key issues impacting the tourism industry in Door County, and across Wisconsin, during Tourism Advocacy Day at the Capital in Madison on January 28. Jon met with Senator Jacque and Representative Kitchens to discuss key issues while also networking with other state tourism professionals during a legislative update session with the Destinations Wisconsin lobbying firm.

Community Survey - We wrapped up a community survey we conducted in partnership with the United Way of Door County and the Door County Economic Development Corporation. The survey collected input from 576 respondents. The results reinforced that Door County remains a highly valued place to live, with residents rating quality of life near 4 out of 5. At the same time, housing pressures, tourism balance, and affordability concerns were brought up as critical issues for the county's future. Residents are asking for proactive planning to ensure Door County stays livable, sustainable, and community-focused in the years ahead. We will share more on this as we continue to analyze the results.

STEWARDSHIP & REGENERATION

Peninsula State Park Mountain Bike Trails Economic Impact Report - As part of a statewide initiative, Destination Door County, the Friends of Peninsula State Park and park staff collaborated on an economic impact study to evaluate the impact of the new mountain bike trails at Peninsula State Park. The results were released in mid-January, and showed that visitors who used the new mountain bike trails spent an estimated \$1.3 million in Door County. Find the full study [results here](#).

Community Investment Fund - The DDC team was able to present ceremonial big checks to five Community Investment Fund grant recipients in January. Find all grant awards at DoorCounty.com/CIF. The first grant application deadline of the year is Monday March 23, 2026.

DESTINATION
DOOR COUNTY
COMMUNITY
INVESTMENT FUND



ECONOMIC VITALITY

PAID MEDIA

Paid Search started the new year on a very strong note, continuing to outperform industry benchmarks (SEM by 102% and 'Near Me' by 65%). Paid Social saw naturally lower CTRs due to our shift toward conversion-focused optimization, but our recent separation of Meta platforms revealed that Facebook is driving the most volume (4.9k+ combined sessions) while Instagram is seeing double the engagement rate. All of the current Co-Ops performed very well, with both Landmark Resort Display campaigns continuing strong and the new Spruce & Shore Performance Max campaign off to a great start.

EMAIL

January's email performance showed a clear post-holiday rebound, with stronger engagement across all audience segments as subscribers shifted from passive browsing into more intentional planning. The Active Audience again led performance, posting a 50.1% open rate and a 3.1% click-through rate, signaling renewed responsiveness from subscribers already familiar with the destination and actively considering winter experiences.

Lead Generation audiences also performed well, with a 37.9% open rate and a 2.1% click-through rate, Bandwango Leads stood out as a high-intent cohort, delivering a 51.3% open rate and a 6.6% click-through rate.

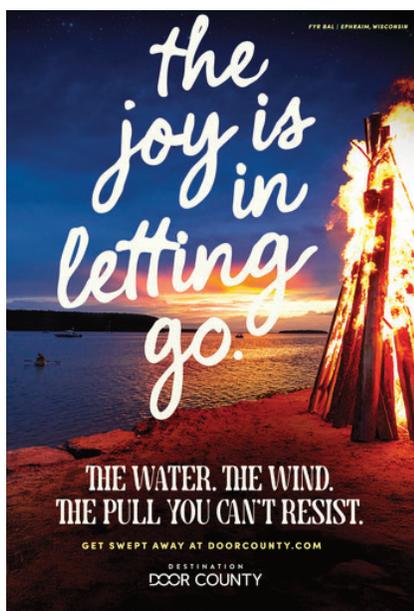
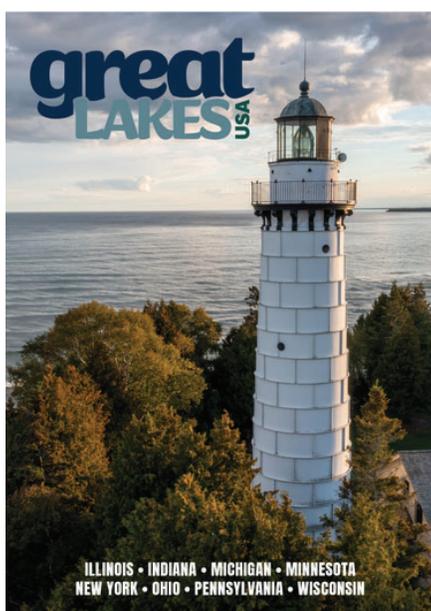
SEO

January was a month of volatility, with disruptions to Google Search Console data collection hitting in the latter half of the month as Google prepares to emphasize AI Mode more. Despite this volatility, overall site impressions were up 26% year-over-year, with many users entering for the homepage, the /stay page, and the /events page.

It is worth noting that overall URL impressions were flat year-over-year, indicating Door County is showing up for more searches, while the number of pages that show up are consolidating. Outside of traditional organic, Google continues to nudge YouTube citations further along, with some reports claiming YouTube makes up 30% of all AI Overview citations.

2026 Great Lakes USA Guide

Door County is proud that Cana Island is featured on the cover of the 2026 Great Lakes USA Guide, giving the destination prominent exposure in key international markets. Printed copies total 100,000, included in Essentially America and Mein Amerika magazines in the UK and Germany, reaching repeat travelers who visit the USA about twice a year. An additional 10,000 stand-alone copies are distributed by GLUSA, their overseas offices, and tour operators. The first page includes a photo credit in the upper right, and our ad for the new Swept Away campaign is also featured.



Images above show, from left to right: the GLUSA 2026 Guide cover featuring Cana Island, our ad with the new Swept Away messaging, and the German version.

Organic Social

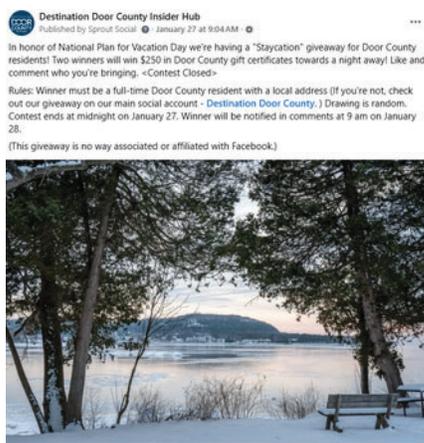
Facebook started the year strong with over 1.1M organic views.

Our organic engagement was also up 104% over last year. With both of these increases we saw 437 new followers.

Instagram saw a 15% decrease in impressions over last year. But saw 175 new followers.

Partner Social

We saw a large increase on our partner Facebook this month with a “staycation” giveaway for National Plan for Vacation Day. The contest was only open to Door County residents and we gave away (2) \$250 Door County Gift Certificates. The page had over 171k views in January and our engagement went up 209% over last year. This also brought us 116 new followers.



PARTNERSHIP & WELCOME CENTER

Partnership – January 2026

- Conducted direct partner outreach and follow-up with businesses, municipalities, nonprofits, and internal teams while supporting planning for 2026 initiatives and community service projects
- Assisted partners with invitations, business listings, website updates, job postings, and coordinated one-on-one meetings to gather feedback and plan 2026 outreach
- Coordinated media responses, workforce and employer outreach planning, and supported internal operations including board and committee scheduling, materials, and reporting
- Added 10 new partners as of January 2026 (6 in December); 1,469 active partners overall, with attrition remaining within normal range and consistent with recent years

Welcome Center – January 2026 (Stats)

- Visitors: 729 (January 2026) vs. 895 (January 2025) → -19%
- Average daily visitors: 23–24
- Busiest day: Friday
- Lowest traffic day: Sunday
- Phone calls: 403 vs. 514 → -22%
- Kiosk sessions: 79
- Average screens per session: 3
- Average session time: 1:49
- Gift certificate sales: \$18,575 (-\$5,295 / -22.2%)
- Gift certificate redemptions: \$55,165 (-\$5,500 / -8.2%)

SAVE THE DATE

FEBRUARY 11 DDC 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN / MARKETING OVERVIEW PRESENTATION VIA ZOOM, 10:30 AM

APRIL 14 DDC BOARD RETREAT AT WRITE ON, DOOR COUNTY (JUDDVILLE)

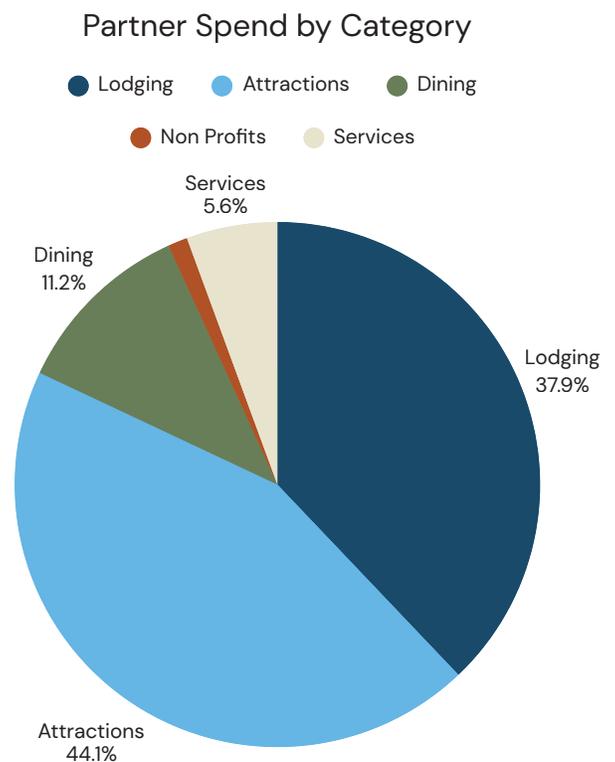
SPECIAL REPORT - PARTNERSHIP & WELCOME CENTER

2025 Partnership Model Snapshot – Category Participation & Spend Analysis

At the Board’s request, staff reviewed 2025 partner participation and spending following the shift from a paid membership model to a partnership based, pay-to-play structure. The purpose of this review was to understand participation patterns, average investment levels, and whether the model is aligning spend with demonstrated value.

Key Findings

- Partner investment remains strong without membership dues.
- The removal of mandatory fees did not reduce engagement. Partner spending is now voluntary, program-specific, and driven by demonstrated value and results.
- Visitor facing categories drive the majority of spend.
 - **Attractions:** 433 partners; ~\$399 average spend; ~\$172,600 total
 - **Lodging:** 374 partners; ~\$397 average spend; ~\$148,450 total
 - Together, these categories represent the largest share of partner driven revenue and reflect the direct link between marketing visibility and visitor decision making
- Dining participation is solid but more variable.
 - **Dining:** 122 partners; ~\$359 average spend; ~\$43,800 total
 - Variability reflects differences in seasonality, business models, and reliance on visitor versus local traffic.
- Other categories engage at appropriate levels.
 - **Services:** 189 partners; ~\$115 average spend; ~\$21,750 total
 - **Non-Profits:** 25 partners; ~\$187 average spend; ~\$4,675 total
 - Participation levels align with these categories’ indirect relationship to overnight visitation.



Takeaway

The partnership model is functioning as intended. Investment is concentrated in categories most directly connected to visitor impact, while flexibility across other segments supports equitable participation. This snapshot establishes a baseline to inform program design, pricing, and partner outreach as planning for 2026 continues.

MEDIA TACTIC DEEP DIVE | January 2026

Meta Advertising (Prospecting + Remarketing - Paid Social) - What is it?

Meta Advertising, encompassing platforms like Facebook and Instagram, is a digital marketing strategy that utilizes paid advertisements to enhance visibility and engagement on these social media networks. For Door County, strategically employing Meta Advertising offers a valuable avenue to connect with potential visitors and cultivate interest in the region.

Here's how Meta Advertising can bolster Door County's marketing endeavors:

- **Rapid Engagement:** Meta Advertising campaigns can yield swift results, enabling Door County businesses to quickly expand their online presence and connect with prospective travelers actively using these platforms.
- **Granular Audience Targeting:** Meta's robust targeting capabilities allow Door County organizations to pinpoint specific demographics, interests, and behaviors, ensuring their ads reach individuals most likely to be interested in visiting.
- **Increased Website Referrals and Engagement:** By strategically placing visually appealing and engaging advertisements, Meta Advertising campaigns can drive relevant traffic to Door County websites and encourage direct interaction with content.
- **Strengthened Brand Presence and Community Building:** Consistent engagement through Meta Advertising helps elevate Door County's brand visibility and fosters a sense of community among potential and past visitors, nurturing interest and loyalty.



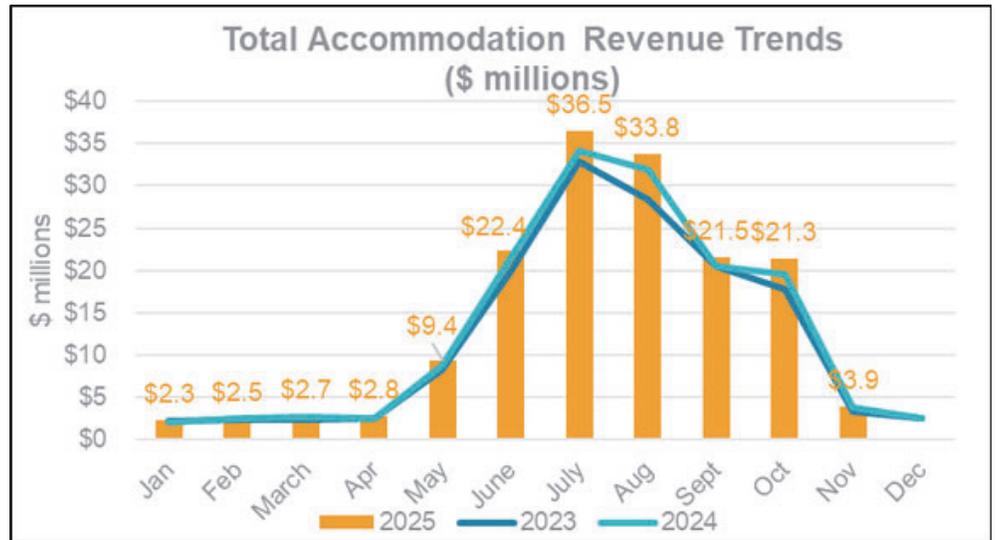
RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - COUNTY-WIDE LODGING

Strong 2025 Growth: Cautious 2026 Outlook

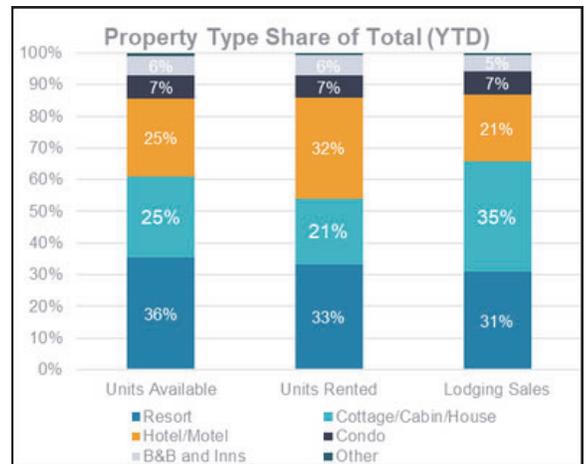
Door County’s lodging sector delivered a solid performance year-to-date in 2025. Through November, lodging tax collections reached \$12.5 million, marking a 6% year-over-year increase that aligns with overall accommodation revenue gains. While the number of available rooms were nearly level with 2024, occupied rooms rose by about 6%, driving a 4% boost in occupancy rates for October and November. Room rates climbed 5% in October but, for the first time since March, dipped below 2024 levels in November.

Looking toward early 2026, initial indicators point to a slower start. Short-term rental bookings and revenue through the end of March are pacing behind last year’s figures. Booking windows have expanded to nearly 70 days for the next two months—up 26% compared to 2025—potentially making immediate demand appear softer than it may actually be.

From January to November 2025, overall lodging revenue grew 6% year-to-date. Both available and occupied rooms increased slightly—just over 1%—resulting in stable occupancy rates. Consistent with trends throughout the year, November’s accommodation revenue growth was largely driven by cottage, cabin, home, and condo rentals, while B&Bs and inns saw the largest declines in both sales and demand.



Door County Total Lodging* YTD Jan - Nov			
Metric	2024	2025	YoY % Chg
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$ 150.1	\$ 159.2	6.1%
Average Daily Rate	\$ 209	\$ 217	3.8%
Available Rooms (000's)	118,547	120,492	1.6%
Occupied Rooms (000's)	54,690	55,272	1.1%
Percent Occupied	41.3%	41.4%	0.2%



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

RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - SHORT TERM RENTALS

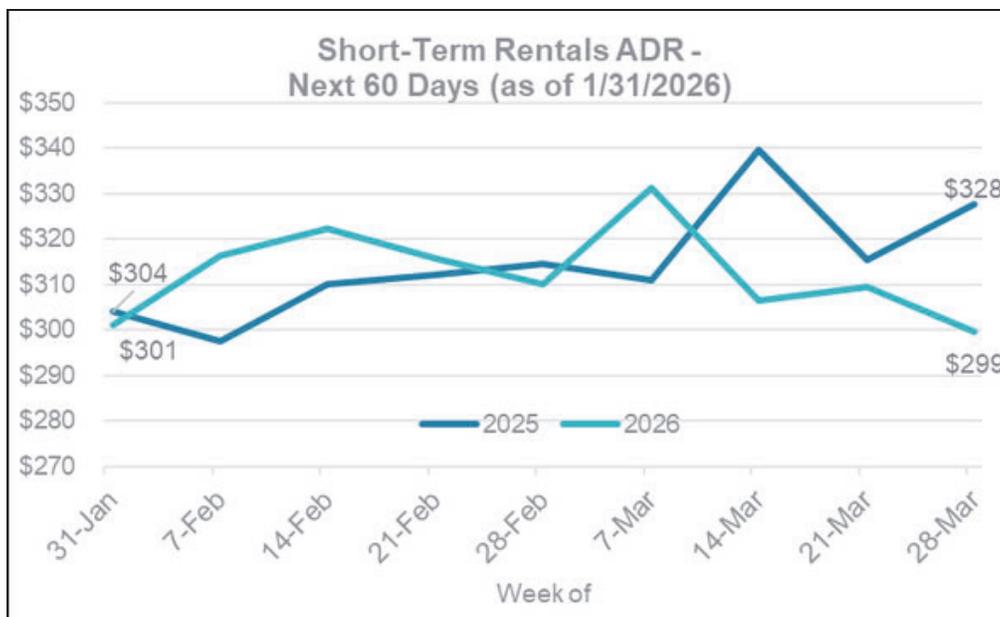
DOOR COUNTY SHORT-TERM RENTAL RECAP - 2025

- Through the end of 2025, short-term rental revenue was up 15% compared to 2024—totaling \$81 million.
- Short-term rental ADR continues to surpass other types of lodging and YTD increased 11%, versus 5% for all lodging ADR.
- While revenue and ADR remained positive in 2025, the occupancy rate for short-term rentals was down 3.5%, even with diminished supply.

Door County Short-Term Rentals** YTD Jan - Dec				
Metric	2024	2025	YoY % Chg	
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$ 70.2	\$ 80.5	14.7%	
Average Daily Rate	\$ 339	\$ 376	11.0%	
Percent Occupied	28.4%	27.4%	-3.5%	
Avg Active AirBNB Listings	1,246	1,222	-1.9%	
Avg Booking Window	73.9	72.7	-1.6%	
Avg Length of Stay	3.3	3.2	-1.2%	

Short-Term Rental Outlook—Next 60 Days

- As of late January, compared to the same time frame in 2025, short-term rental bookings in Q1 2026 showed some signs of weakness and were down 7% across the next 60 days.
- Short-term rental revenue was also soft in Q1 2026. While expected short-term rental revenue over the next 60 days was down 7%, rates and occupancy were flat compared to the same time period in 2025.

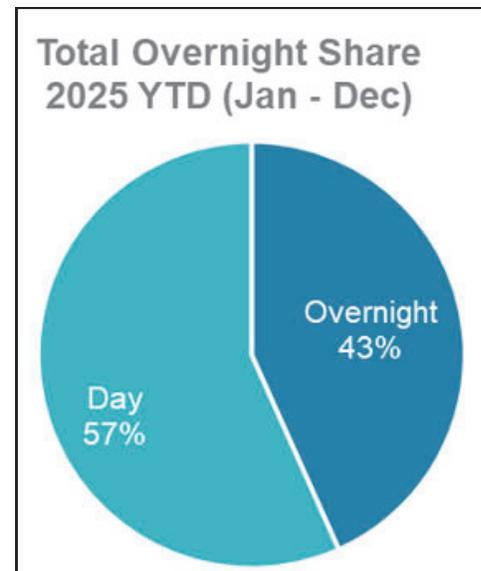
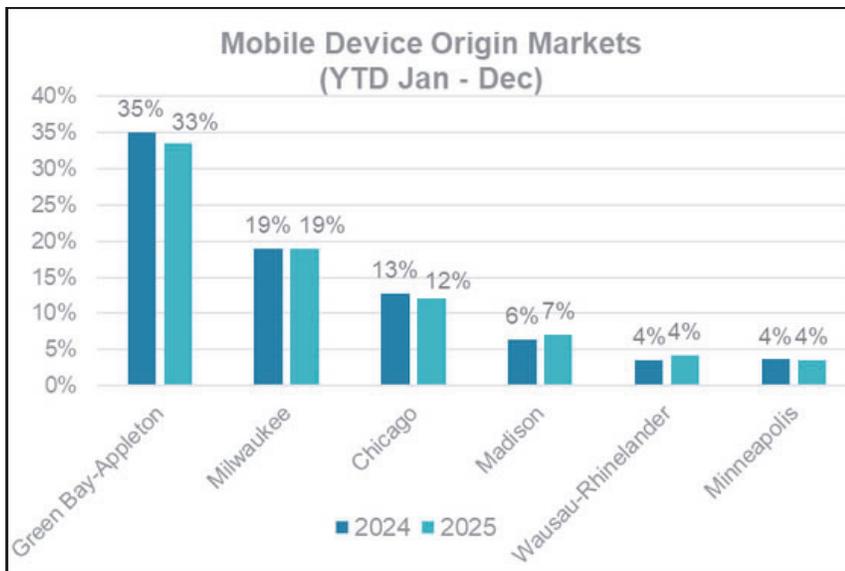
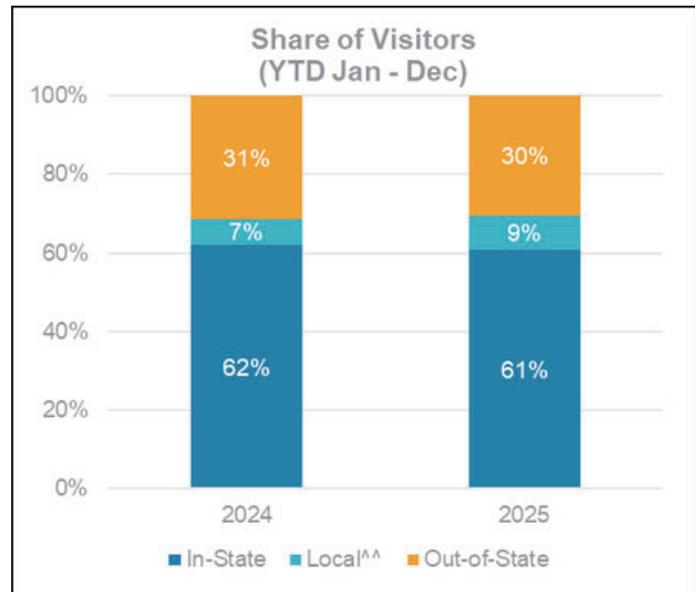


**Short-term rentals sourced to KeyData. Data reported monthly, latest data available is January 2026.

RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - VISITOR BEHAVIOR

Visitor Behavior via Mobile Location Data[^]

- For the full year 2025, the share of out-of-state visitors to Door County was on-par with 2024, representing 30% of visitors.
- The share of local visitors has increased some year-to-date and now represent 9% of total visitors in Door County.
- Overnight visitor origin markets were largely consistent with the prior year although the share of visitors from Green Bay continues to be lower, while the share of visitors originating in Madison is higher compared to last year.
- Slightly lower than 2024, 43% of all visitors and 47% of out-of-state travelers stayed overnight.



Overnight Share YTD (Jan - Dec)	2024	2025	YoY % Chg
In-State	43%	42%	-3%
Out-of-State	49%	47%	-4%

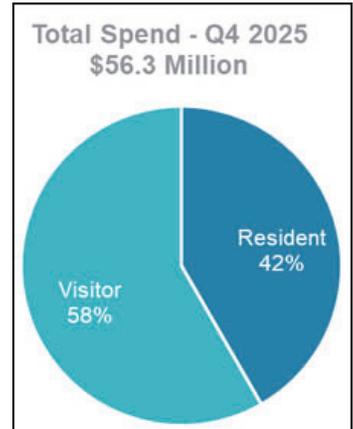
[^]Source: Azira mobile location data is collected through the usage of phone mobile apps. It is completely privacy compliant and allows tourism organizations to understand visitor behavior while in destination. Data reported monthly, latest data is December 2025. ^{^^}Locals defined as Door County residents.



RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - SPENDING

Q4 2025 VISA Spending

- Sales tax collections totalled \$6.8 million in 2025, up 6.5% compared to 2024.
- According to Visa spending data, Door County residents and visitors spent \$56.3 million in Q4 2025—an increase of 5% compared to Q4 2024.
- Visitor spending also increased 4% in Q4—totalling \$32.8 million.



Source: VISA – spending includes residents and tourists, debit and credit card spend IN DESTINATION. Data is refreshed quarterly, latest data is from Q4 2025.

HIGHLIGHTS

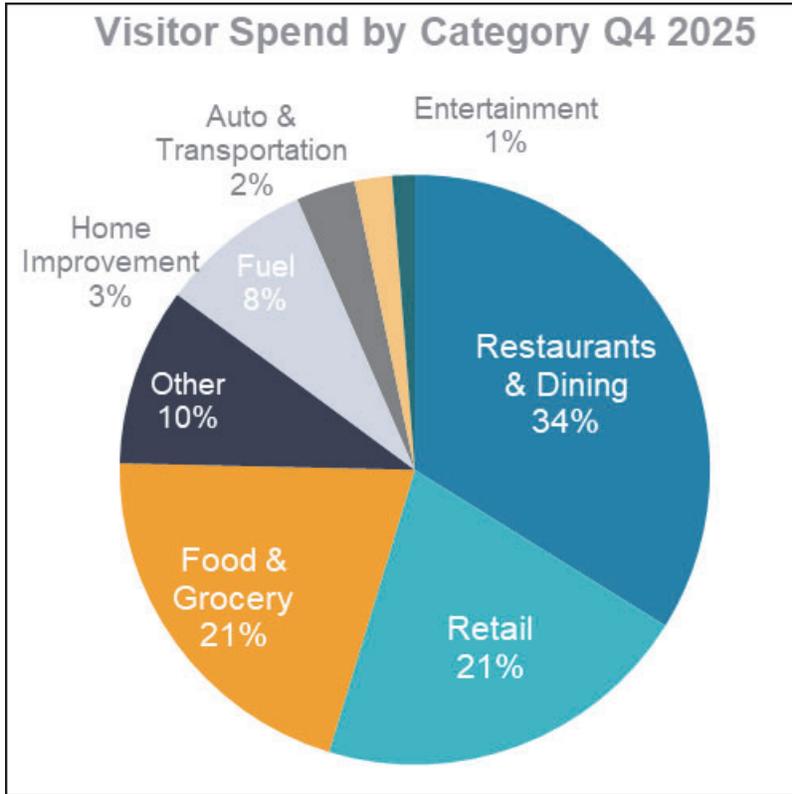
- Core Target Markets: Chicago, Milwaukee and Green Bay-Appleton Visitors Contributed to Half of Visa Visitor Spending in Door County in Q4 2025
- Spending increased across nearly all origin markets in Q4 2025 with the exception of St. Louis.
- Spending increased 6% from visitors originating in Milwaukee and Wausau-Weston visitor spending was up 8% from Q4 2024.



RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - SPENDING

Q4 2025 VISA Spending

- More than one-third (34%) of total visitor spending was allocated to restaurants and dining which increased 8% to \$11.1 million in Q4 2025.
- Spending at bars/taverns increased 32% from Q4 2024.
- Food & grocery, retail, fuel and auto/transportation spending also increased while entertainment spending was down 12%.
- Spending at tourist attractions fell the most this quarter, while recreation spending services and public golf course spending increased.



Source: Visa – spending includes residents and tourists, debit and credit card spend IN DESTINATION. Data is refreshed quarterly, latest data is Q4 2025.