

DESTINATION DOOR COUNTY

July 2026

COMMUNITY & WORKFORCE PILLAR

New President/CEO Selected - the DDC board announced on July 27 the selection of Jon Jarosh as the organization's next President and CEO following a national executive search. Jarosh, who has served as interim CEO since February 2026, will officially assume the role beginning August 3. The organization is hosting a special community meet-n-greet event with the new CEO on Thursday, August 20 from 5-7 PM at Door Peninsula Winery's outdoor patio in Carlsville. The public is invited.

Social Security Sign-Up Day - the second of two social security card sign-up days we facilitated this summer was held July 16 at the Ephraim Village Hall and helped 48 BridgeUSA Summer Work Travel Exchange Visitors apply for their Social Security cards, plus two U.S. citizens who needed help getting new or updated social security cards. The event assisted 24 DDC Partners, helping their seasonal international employees complete this important step quickly and efficiently without having to make the trip to the nearest office in Green Bay.

DDC's Social Security Sign-Up Days By The Numbers

DDC began facilitating these event days in Door County back in 2015:

- Number of Social Security Sign-up Days held: **22**
- **Exchange Visitors** helped: **1,982+**
- Round trip miles from Ephraim to SSA office in Green Bay: 152
- Total number of driving miles eliminated: **301,264**
 - The equivalent of **12 times** around the Earth
 - **108.6** coast-to-coast road trips between NYC and Los Angeles
- **12,051 gallons of gas saved** @ 25mpg
- **~107 metric tons** of CO₂ avoided
- Number of participant hours saved from the drive: **5,946 hours**
 - That's **5.7 years** at 40 hrs/week!
- **11,892 hours** if a Host Employer had to drive each EV to Green Bay
 - That's **11 years and 5 months** at 40hrs/week!



STEWARDSHIP & REGENERATION PILLAR

Community Investment Fund - We presented a ceremonial big check ⇨ in July to the Town of Egg Harbor to help with accessibility enhancements in their community park next to the town hall and fire station. The next round of grant awards should be announced in mid-August, and the next application deadline is Monday September 28. Find details on the more than \$3.7 million dollars DDC has invested in over 70 local projects through this program since it began in 2023 at DoorCounty.com/CIFF



⇨ **Water Stations** - Our water station initiative helps residents and visitors stay hydrated at community events while reducing reliance on single-use plastic water bottles. Instead, water is dispensed in compostable bamboo cups or reusable bottles. In July, the water stations were featured at two community events, dispensing 41 gallons of water into 546 bamboo cups and 44 reusable water bottles. 71% of the bamboo cups were returned, helping complete the regenerative cycle. Returned cups are collected and composted, returning nutrients to the soil rather than becoming waste. The initiative also continues to engage community volunteers. Thank you to the 3 volunteers who supported the 5 water stations at Belgian Days in Brussels, helping make the event both welcoming and more sustainable.

ECONOMIC VITALITY PILLAR

Paid Media

Paid Search reached new highs again this month, with SEM surging 20% to a 26.26% CTR and Near Me jumping 28% to 23.09%. Cross Network performance was particularly strong, as Demand Gen CTR spiked 63% to 3.37%, while PMax maintained a dominant 15%+ CTR. Across Paid Social, we traded some click volume for massive site quality improvements, highlighted by Facebook Prospecting session durations increasing 78% and widespread engagement rate growth across all five Meta campaigns. Additional wins include Expedia delivering a 30% increase in CTR, Azira CTV maintaining a perfect 100% VTR despite serving 16% more impressions, and Tiki driving a 56% boost in session duration. The State Parks campaigns saw a mix of improvements in CTR and site engagement across tactics.

Email

July email performance held solid engagement, posting a 45.1% open rate and 2.5% click rate. Both are down slightly from June, but click rate and click-to-open rate are both up versus July 2025.

Lead Gen audiences posted a 31.9% open rate and 2.7% click-through rate, a step back from June's numbers. Bandwango Leads remained the standout segment again this month, holding a 41.8% open rate and 4.5% click-through rate, still the highest engagement of any segment despite a slight dip from June.

SMS

July SMS shifted from broad summer inspiration into seasonal cherry content, with Cherry Picking (sent to Drive Markets) and Cherry Recipes (sent to All Subscribers). Cherry Recipes was the stronger performer at a 32.9% click-through rate, while Cherry Picking landed at 29.1%.

SEO

Door County saw 382K generative AI impressions for the month of July, for a 32.6% month-over-month increase. The terms with the highest visibility were for the homepage, cherries, Washington Island, and beaches as more and more visitors looked to enjoy the outdoors.

While the website continues to regain momentum after the website migration, we are continuing to see an increase in engagement rate (+10.7%) and average session duration (+9.8%) for the website, indicating that more users are feeling inspired on the website, even after AI answers many of their early-funnel questions.

Summer Photoshoot

From July 28–30, Destination Door County conducted a three-day summer photoshoot with its agency of record, KHM (formerly Madden Media), across 15 locations in Baileys Harbor, Fish Creek, Ephraim, Jacksonport, Sturgeon Bay, and Southern Door. Eight volunteer Door County residents served as models, helping capture authentic experiences for future Destination Door County marketing and promotional materials.



July Press Trip

We welcomed six journalists on a culinary press trip July 28–31. During their visit, they explored cherry orchards, lavender fields, restaurants, and learned about the ledge blanc wine project started by local wineries. Our next press trip takes place in October.

International Press Visits

We welcomed Dr. Heinz Klausmann from Germany to Door County as part of a motorcycle tour through Wisconsin. He was working on a feature for a German motorcycle magazine.

We welcomed Dan Hanbridge and Lauren Saddington from the UK to Door County as part of a broader Wisconsin visit. Dan was the 2023 International Fan of the Year for the Packers, and both Dan and Lauren produced a lot of content on their social pages during their visit with Dan's "let's move to Door County" video garnering 192k views on Instagram.

Christmas in July Promotion

During our Christmas in July promotion, held July 20–27, we received 491 entries from visitors and residents who submitted receipts from purchases at local Door County businesses. Those entries represented more than \$35,000 in local spending. Throughout the week, participants enjoyed Scaturio's Christmas cookies and Door County Coffee's Jingle Bell Java while visiting the Welcome Center. The grand prize winner, Kaitlyn Murphy, received a two-night stay at Hillside Waterfront Hotel, \$500 in Door County Gift Certificates, and an autographed *A Cherry Pie Christmas* movie poster.

Organic Social

Instagram continued to have another great month with a 46% YoY increase in impressions and a 30% increase YoY in engagement. We had an increase of 854 followers, taking our follower count to just under 95k. We are working hard to increase our followers to 100k to be eligible for an official Google search profile. Once achieved we can then unlock a profile that whenever anyone searches "Door County" in Google they will be shown our Instagram posts, social profiles, photos, and links that we can customize.

Facebook experienced a slight YoY dip in impressions this month but still had more than 1M views. Engagement was up 48% and that brought our engagement rate up 86%.

Media Highlights from the work of the Destination Door County Team

["6 Ways to Explore Door County via the Water"](#) *Milwaukee Magazine*, July 2026 issue

["This Wisconsin Destination Is the Cape Cod of the Midwest—And It Was My Favorite Stop On a 3,400-Mile Road Trip"](#) *Midwest Living Online*, July, 2026

PARTNERSHIP & WELCOME CENTER

Partnership – July 2026

- Several partner and business visits were conducted throughout Door County. Overall, many businesses reported stronger traffic and sales than in 2025. Bluefront Café reported increases of approximately 25% in May, 20% in June and more than 20% through July. Hill House Home reported being up 60%, while Dovetail, Sip, Kick Ash, Evy's, Jacksonport Cottage and other businesses also reported increases.
- Visitor patterns varied by area and business. Businesses in Gills Rock and on the eastern side of the peninsula reported noticeably higher traffic, with some noting that the area is no longer considered the "quiet side." The Door County North Welcome Center, however, reported very limited walk-in traffic except during community events.
- Additional outreach included meeting with Visit Keweenaw's executive director to discuss sustainable business practices and shared challenges. This conversation resulted in an invitation to potentially present at Visit Keweenaw's 2027 conference.

Welcome Center Visitors: 3,308 vs. 3,770 (2025) -12.3%

- Average daily visitors: 106.7
- Busiest day: Monday, July 27 (172 visitors)
- Lowest traffic day: Wednesday, July 1 (49 visitors)

Phone Calls: 683 vs. 784 (2025) -12.9%

Kiosk Usage: Sessions: 140

- **Average session duration: 6:28**
- **Most Viewed Categories:**
 - Things to Do (45)
 - Food & Drink (29)
 - Where to Stay (13)
- **Time of Day Usage:**
 - **164 total**
 - 6–9 am (15) | 9 am–12 pm (49) | 12–3 pm (59)
 - 3–6 pm (27) | 6–10 pm (14)

Gift Certificates

Sales: \$29,305 vs. \$29,395 (2025) -0.3%

Redemptions: \$33,865 vs. \$36,460 (2025) -7.1%

SAVE THE DATE

AUGUST 20 GET TO KNOW THE CEO EVENT AT DOOR PENINSULA WINERY IN CARLSVILLE, 5-7 PM
JULY 9-SEPTEMBER 18 2027 DESTINATION GUIDE ADVERTISING OPEN

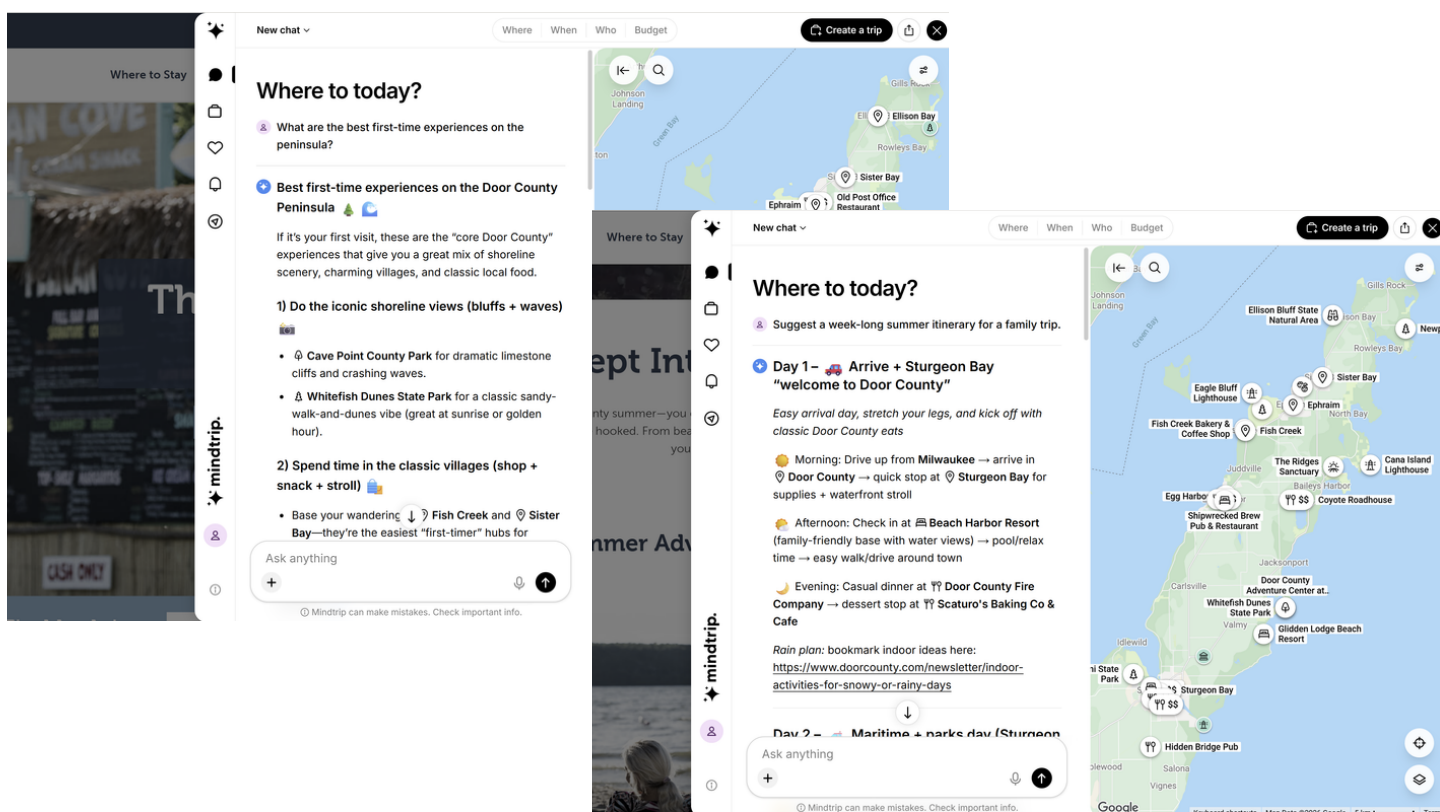
MONTHLY DEEP DIVE | JULY 2026

MindTrip Features on DoorCounty.com

Mindtrip is an AI-powered travel assistant platform designed for DMOs and tourism boards to convert high-volume inspirational content into direct, bookable action. It turns static web content, social media, and digital marketing assets into personalized, interactive itineraries so destinations can capture traveler intent, increase visitor engagement, and direct high-value leads straight to local business partners.

- **Personalized AI Discovery:** Uses advanced AI to guide travelers through inspiration, trip planning, and booking, tailoring recommendations directly to individual visitor interests.
- **Content & Partner Prioritization:** Indexes destination website content, local partners, and custom business rules to maintain control over the narrative and highlight local businesses.
- **Local Data Integration:** Ingests official content covering Door County's 19 communities, 35 islands, 5 state parks, and signature experiences (e.g., fish boils, cherry picking, lighthouse tours).
- **Lead Capture & Data Insights:** Generates marketing list growth by capturing email sign-ups during user interactions and provides real-time reporting on partner handoffs, user engagement, and chat history.
- **Omnichannel AI Units:** Embedded directly across site footers and landing pages (events, dining, seasonal pages), enabling visitors to query the AI or add spots to an itinerary from any page.

Note: Mindtrip was successfully implemented on the Door County destination website in early May (2026).



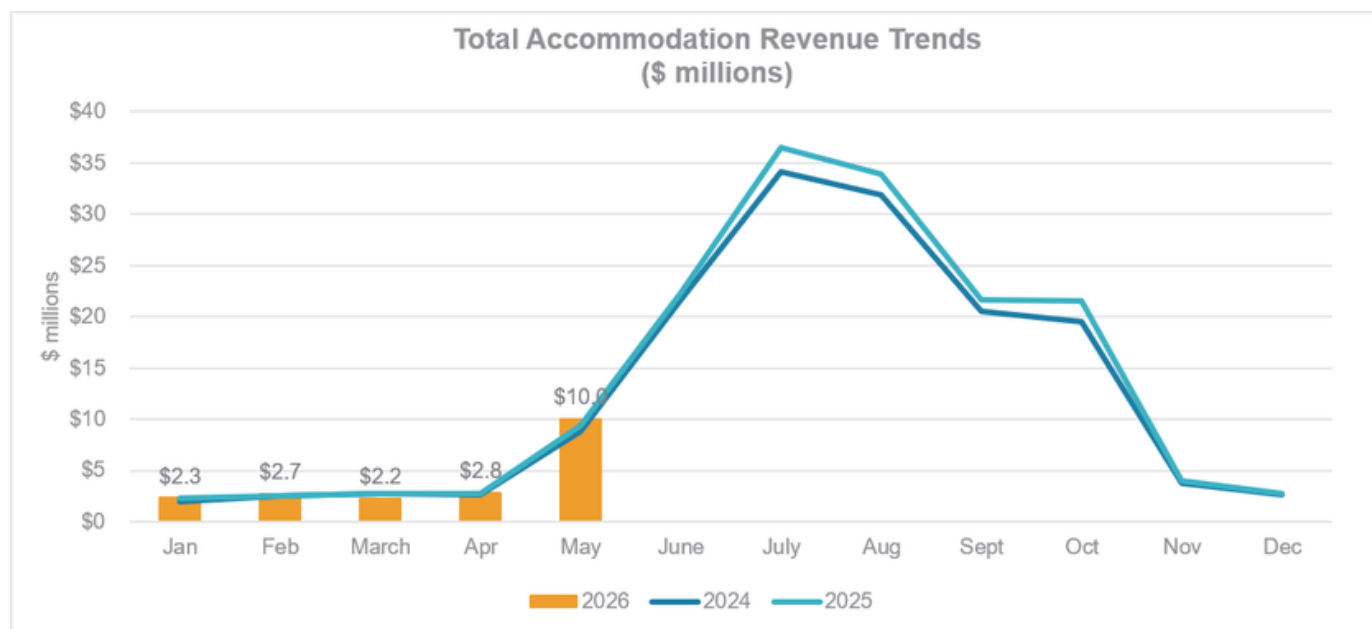
Next Month's Deep Dive: DDC Board Financials

RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - COUNTY-WIDE LODGING

After a sluggish start in 2026, room revenue increased and was up 6% in May alone. May occupancy was up 3% driven by a 1% increase in occupied rooms and 3% decline in supply. Still, year-to-date, occupied rooms remained down 4% with supply up 1%, resulting in negative occupancy. Rates continued to increase and were up 5% year-to-date, ensuing positive revenue despite declining occupancy. Through May, accommodation revenue was up slightly at just under 1% and room tax collections totaled \$1.5 million, up 1.3% compared to 2025.

Forward looking short-term rental bookings into early fall remain positive and were up 19% over the next 90-days compared to the same time frame last year. Short-term rental occupancy has also increased, averaging 16% through late October, despite an 11% increase in rates. Short-term rental booking windows are averaging 114 days for the next 90-days—similar to last year.

Door County Total Lodging* Jan - May					
Metric	2025		2026		YoY % Chg
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$	19.7	\$	19.9	0.9%
Average Daily Rate	\$	166	\$	174	4.8%
Available Rooms (000's)		494.7		499.3	0.9%
Occupied Rooms (000's)		119.0		114.6	-3.7%
Percent Occupied		24.1%		23.0%	-4.6%



Sources

*Total lodging reported by Door County Tourism Zone Commission. Data reported monthly, latest data available is May 2026.

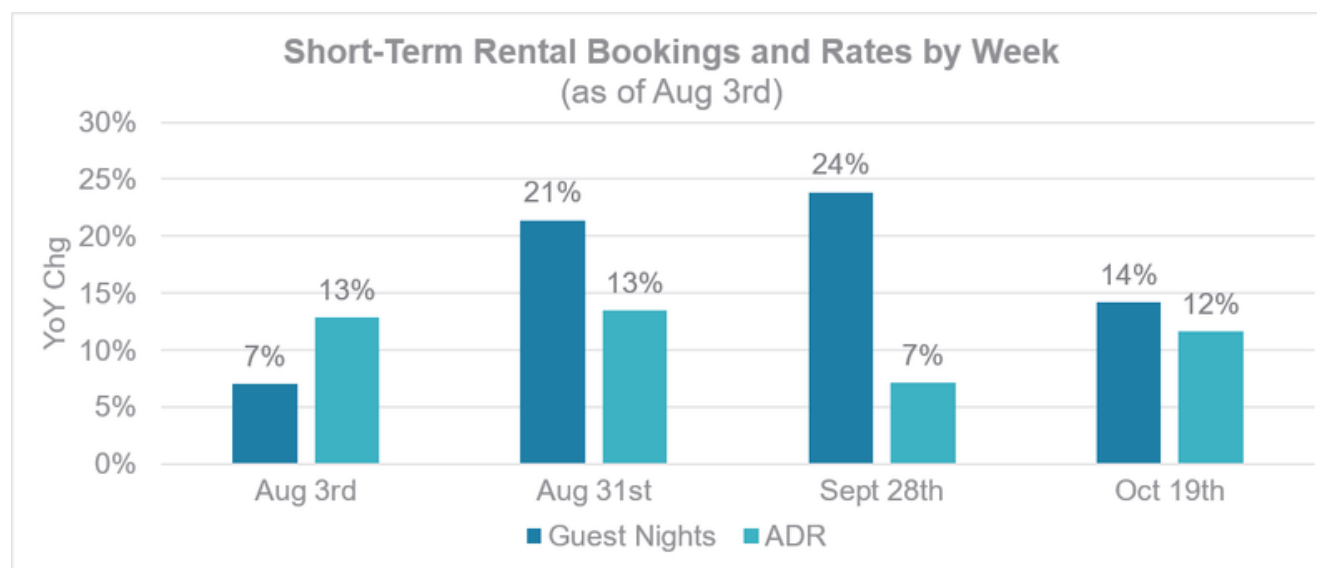
RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - SHORT TERM RENTALS**

- Through June, short-term rental revenue turned positive and is now up 8% year-to-date compared to 2025.
- Revenue increases were largely driven by an 8.5% increase in rates while occupancy was up just 2%.
- While the booking window is comparable to 2025, the average length of stay has declined some through the first half of the year.

Door County Short-Term Rentals** Jan - June					
Metric	2025		2026		YoY % Chg
Revenue (\$ millions)	\$	40.0	\$	43.3	8.2%
Average Daily Rate	\$	402	\$	437	8.5%
Percent Occupied		23.9%		24.5%	2.3%
Avg Active AirBNB Listings		1,147		1,173	2.3%
Avg Booking Window		66.3		67.1	1.2%
Avg Length of Stay		3.3		3.2	-2.1%

Short-Term Rental Outlook - Next 90 Days

- As of early August, short-term rental bookings for the next 90-days were up 19% compared to the same time frame in 2025.
- Heading into the early fall, short-term rental bookings are outpacing rate increases.
- With occupancy projected to increase 16% and an 11% increase in rates, revenue is projected to increase 33%.



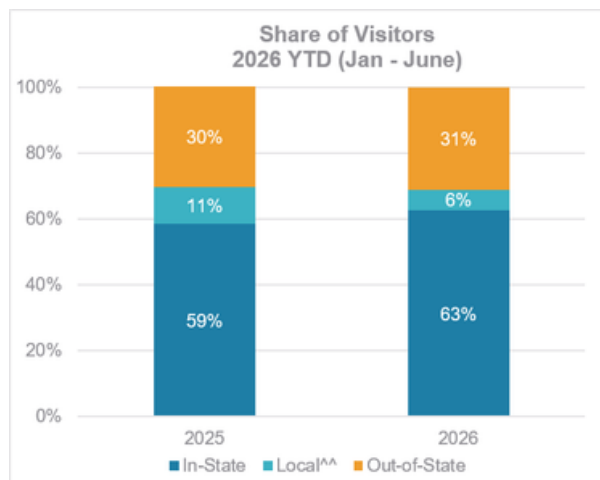
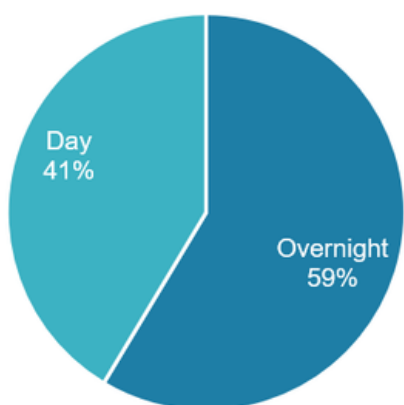
**Short-term rentals sourced to KeyData. Data reported monthly, latest data available is June 2026.

RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - VISITOR BEHAVIOR

Visitor Behavior via Mobile Location Data^

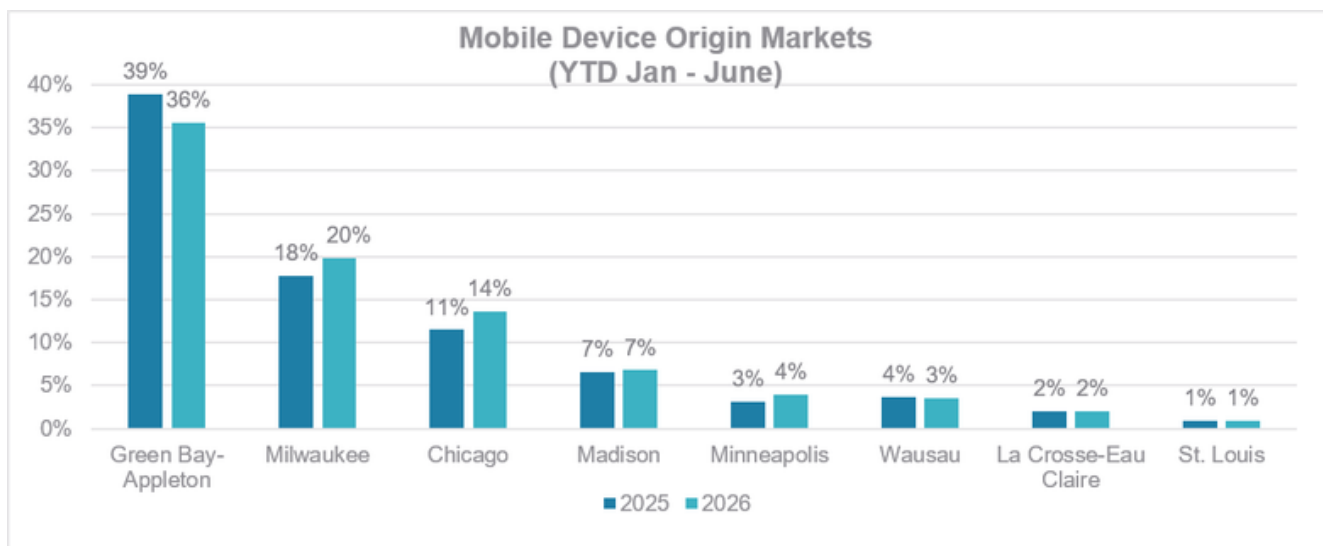
- Compared to the first half of 2025, the share of in-state visitors increased while the share of locals declined. ➡
- Year-to-date, 57% of all visitors stayed overnight —increasing from 42% the same time frame last year. ↓

Total Overnight Share
2026 YTD (Jan - June)



Mobile Device Origin Markets

- Through June 2026, the share of visitors originating in Green Bay-Appleton is now lower than the same time period last year while the share of visitors originating in Milwaukee, Chicago and Minneapolis have increased.



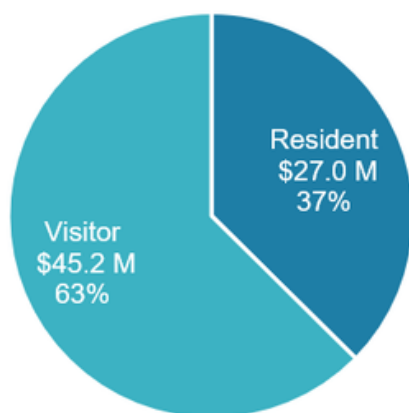
^Source: Azira mobile location data is collected through the usage of phone mobile apps. It is completely privacy compliant and allows tourism organizations to understand visitor behavior while in destination. Data reported monthly, latest data is from June 2026.

^^Locals defined as Door County residents.

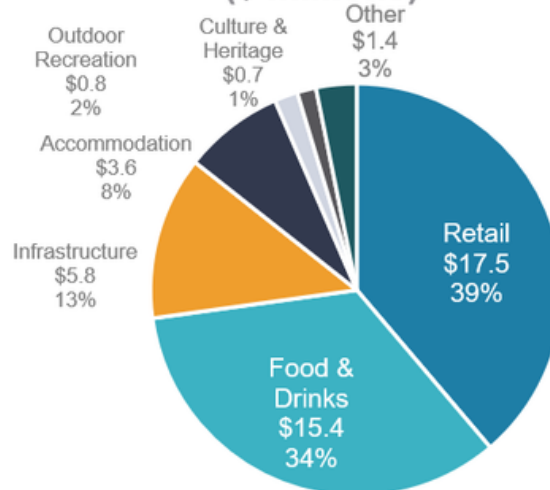
RESEARCH DATA SNAPSHOT - Q2 2026 VISA SPENDING

- Sales tax collections through June were up 3% for the year with June alone up 16% compared to June 2025.
- According to Visa spending data, visitors to Door County spent \$45.2 million in Q2 2026—up 7.8% from Q2 2025.
- Nearly four in 10 visitor Visa dollars were spent on shopping and retail followed by 34% on food and drink merchants.
 - Services and infrastructure as well as accommodation Visa visitor spending increased the most compared to Q2 2025.

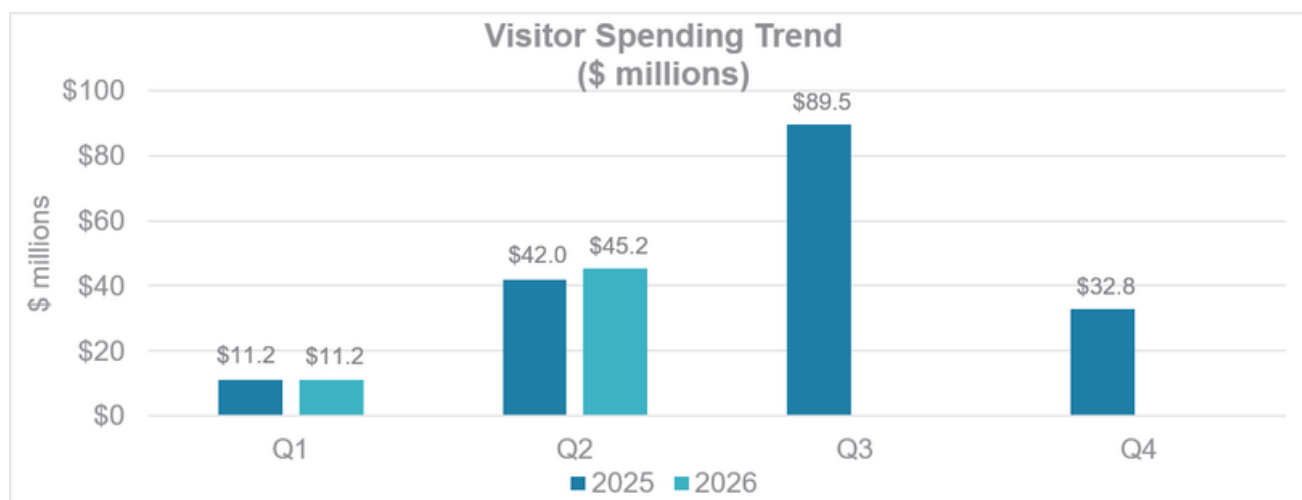
Total Spend - Q2 2026 \$72.2 Million



Q2 2026 Visa Spending Categories (\$ millions)



Visitor Spending Trend (\$ millions)



Source: Visa – spending includes residents and tourists, debit and credit card spend IN DESTINATION.
Data is refreshed quarterly, latest data is Q2 2026.

Destination Door County Accessibility Initiative

Project snapshot | Mapping, training, visibility and next steps



73 PROPERTIES & ATTRACTIONS Mapped across Door County	26 INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATIONS Completed through the Academy	3 ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS Local partners leading the way	\$73,508 ESTIMATED MEDIA VALUE 10 earned-media mentions
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MAPPING STATUS Approximately 73 Door County properties and attractions are included in the project. Most listings marked “ongoing” are complete; the portal status is still being cleaned up. Northern Haus is the only property genuinely still in progress. Mapping is complete, and Wheel the World is waiting for a few additional photos before publishing the listing. PARTNER PORTAL - Completed mappings, property reports and accessibility scores - Improvement recommendations and Academy participation - Marketing materials, website integrations and media coverage - Website engagement and booking data	TRAINING & ACCREDITATION Destination Door County can become accredited once at least five employees complete the Wheel the World Academy. Accredited Door County organizations: - The Ridges Sanctuary - Bridgeport Waterfront Resort - Frank E. Murphy County Park Organizations making progress: - Northern Sky Theater: 3 of 5 completed - Door County Maritime Museum: 2 of 5 completed A recorded partner webinar will explain portal access, reports, Academy participation and ways businesses can use their accessibility information.	MARKETING & WEBSITE TOOLS - Media kit with logos, verified graphics, social posts and website banners - Dedicated Door County landing page and refreshed Wheel the World blog post - Property widgets and carousels for lodging, attractions and activities - Dynamic accessibility banner for key dates and observances - Door County-trained chatbot to answer accessibility questions ACCESSIBLE ITINERARIES Wheel the World is asking Destination Door County to develop a three night, four day accessible itinerary. Potential versions include a family friendly itinerary and an adult/couples itinerary featuring hotels, restaurants, attractions, activities and transportation considerations.
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1 Complete staff Academy training

2 Finalize Northern Haus photos

3 Launch the Door County landing page

4 Build and promote accessible itineraries

Media value methodology: press EMV = AVE x 3; digital impressions = \$10 per 1,000 impressions. Values are preliminary.