Grand Haven AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

2025-2026 Annual Report

Presented by:

Grand Haven Area CVB team
Marci Cisneros
Natalie Korpi
Stephanie Salah

Date:

November 19, 2026





Mission Statment

It is the mission of the Grand Haven Area Convention & Visitors Bureau to promote and market the Grand Haven Area — year-round overnight stays, meetings, events and tourism — supported by services and resources for local businesses.

Vision Statment

The Grand Haven Area will be a leader in tourism and the most desirable four-season destination in Michigan where you can unwind, relax and enjoy the great outdoors.

CVB Current Board Members

Chair
Ms. Sheila McNally, Owner
Serendipity Resort & Suites
100 Franklin Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.2761

Vice Chair
Ms. Karla Constantine
Member At Large
16451 124th Street
Nunica, MI 49448
616.402.0625

Treasurer
Ms. Linda Weavers, Co-Owner
Blue Water Inn & Suites
1030 South Harbor Drive
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.846.7431

Secretary
Mr. Tony Ciccantelli, Co-Owner
Washington Street Inn
608 Washington Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.1075

Ms. Autumn Kumzi
General Manager
Best Western Beacon Inn
1525 South Beacon Blvd.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.4720

Mr. Eric Scott
General Manager
Baymont Inn & Suites
940 W. Savidge
Spring Lake, MI 49456
616.846.1000

Ms. Jami Osterman
Director of Operations
Jaqua Vacation Rentals
218 S. Beacon Blvd.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.772.5007

Ms. Jessica VanGinhoven
Coordinator of Community Engagement
Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission
8115 West Olive Rd.
West Olive, MI 49460
616.738.4810

CVB Board Members: 8

CVB STAFF
Marci Cisneros
Executive Director
mcisneros@visitgrandhaven.com

Natalie Korpi
Sales & Marketing Specialist
nkorpi@visitgrandhaven.com

Stephanie Salah
Visitors Center & Office Coordinator
ssalah@visitgrandhaven.com

www.visitgrandhaven.com
visitorinfo@visitgrandhaven.com
512 Washington Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.4499

Grand Haven AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Current Assessment Payers/District Members

Baymont Inn & Suites/Grand Harbor Apts. 100 Rooms/12 Units
1500 S. Beacon Blvd.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.1999
baymontinns.com

Best Western Beacon Inn **104 Rooms**
1525 S. Beacon Blvd.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.4720
bestwestern.com/beaconinn

Blue Water Inn & Suites/Downtown **14 Rooms/4 Units**
1030 Harbor Drive
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.846.7431
bluewaterinngrandhaven.com

Boyden House B&B/Captain's Cottage **8 Rooms/3 Units**
301 S. Fifth Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.846.3538
boydenhouse.com

Harbor House Inn **19 Rooms**
114 S. Harbor Drive
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.846.0610
harborhousegh.com

Evolve Vacation Rental Network, Inc. **14 Units**
717 17th St Suite 2100
Denver, CO 80202
877.818.1014
evolve.com

Holiday Inn-Waterfront **123 Rooms**
940 Savidge Street
Spring Lake, MI 49456
616.846.1000
higrandhaven.com

Jaqua Vacation Rentals **27 Units**
Lake Michigan Cottages
218 S. Beacon Boulevard
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.772.5007
lakeM.com

Looking Glass Beachfront Inn **5 Rooms**
1100 S. Harbor Drive
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.7150
lookingglassinnmi.com

Rodeway Inn-Coopersville **58 Rooms**
1040 O'Malley Drive
Coopersville, MI 49404
616.837.8100
choicehotels.com

Rodeway Inn-Grand Haven **47 Rooms**
1010 S. Beacon Blvd.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.846.1800
rodewayinn.com

Idema Explorers Camp **8 Units**
Ottawa County Parks
18280 North Shore Drive
Ferrysburg, MI
616.738.4810

Serendipity Resort **3 Units**
200 Franklin Ave.
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.2761
serendipityresorts.com

Sleep Inn & Suites **60 Rooms**
4869 Becker Drive
Allendale, MI 49401
616.892.8000
choicehotels.com/michigan/allendale/sleep-inn-hotels

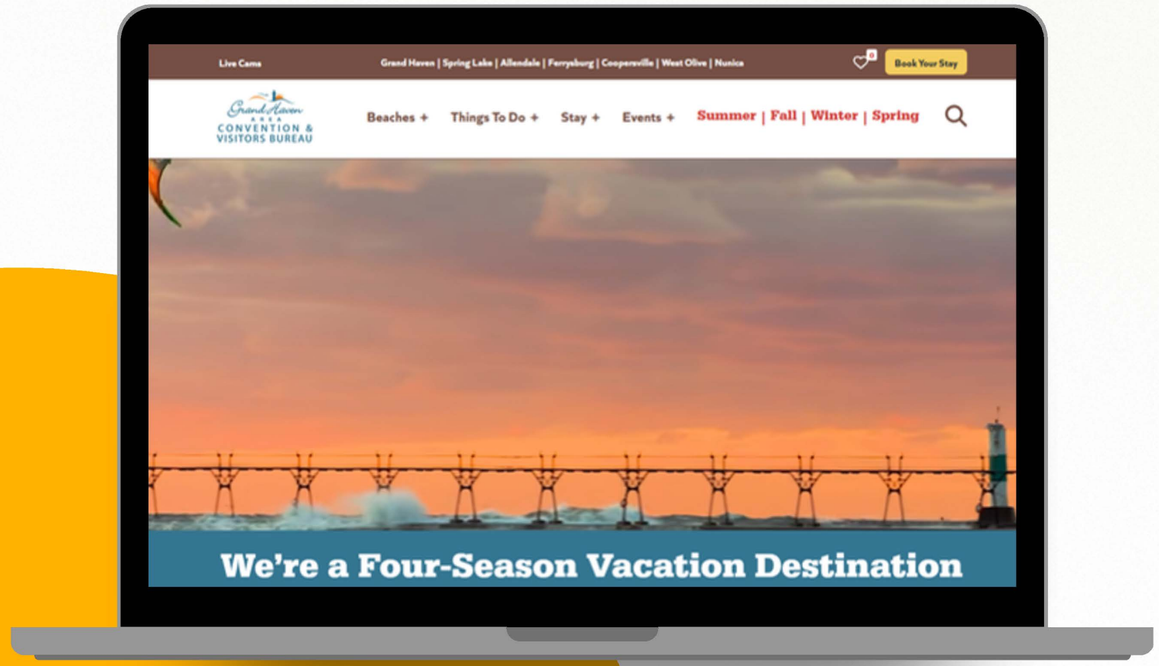
Washington Street Inn/Haven on 3rd **5 Rooms/1 Unit**
608 Washington Avenue
Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.1075
washingtonstreetinngh.com

BVW Unsalted Vacations **56 Homes**
332 E. Lakewood Blvd., #400
Holland, MI 49424
616.224.0005
unsaltedvacations.com

Total Assessment District Members: 16
Total Rooms/Units in District: 671

Grand Haven AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Website, Advertising & Social Media Report.



- Top States | Top MI Cities | Top International
- Top Content | Top Traffic Source | Top Referral
- Lodging Highlights

Top States - website

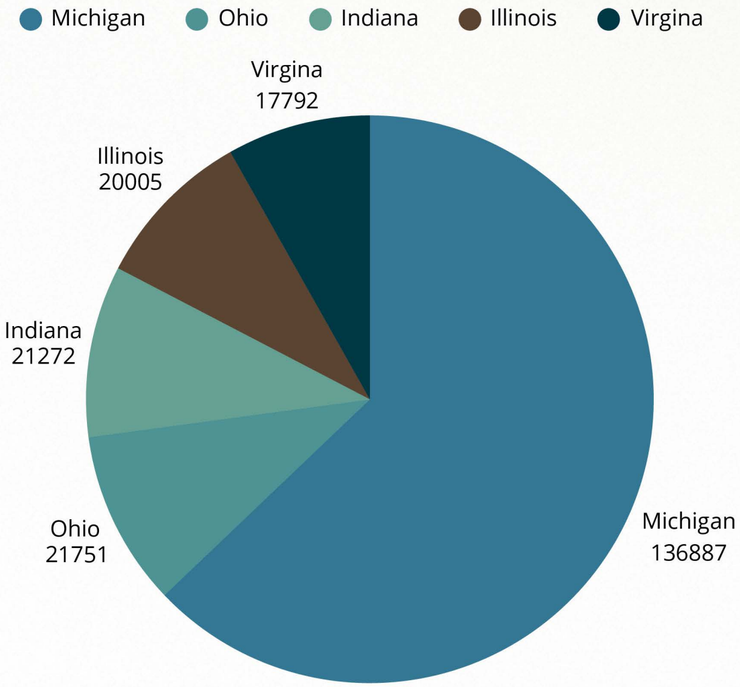
Visitors interested in traveling to the Grand Haven Area are from the following states.

The chart below covers January 1 through December 31, 2025; and January 1 through November 17, 2026 (YTD)

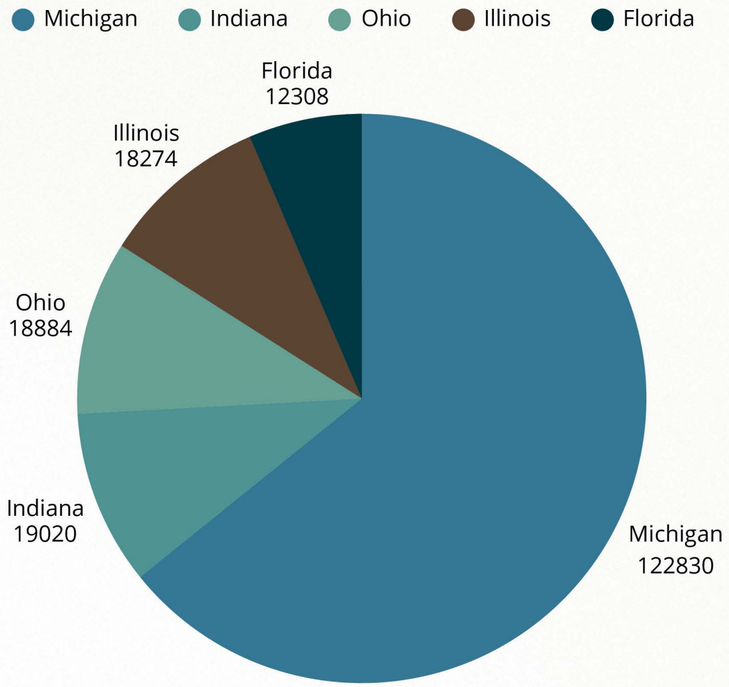
Totals for all States 2025: Active Users 343,700; New Users 339,217; Engaged Sessions 261,228 (includes some bot traffic)

Totals for all States 2026: Active Users 364,866; New Users 363,542; Engaged Sessions 267,957 (includes some bot traffic)

2025



2026



The top four states are consistently in the top five. Michigan will surely always be the top state. The others may change order, but their proximity to our destination is, in part, what draws them to Michigan.

The fifth state is typically more likely to change from year to year. For 2025, that was Virginia, and for 2026 it was Florida. For 2026, Georgia, New York and North Carolina also had strong numbers.

Top Michigan Cities - website

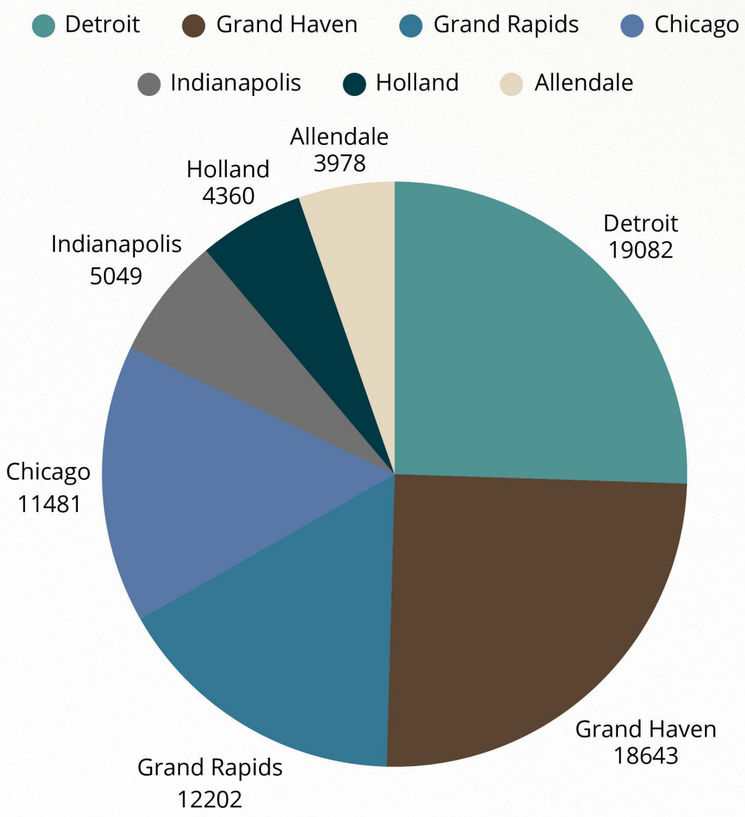
Visitors interested in traveling to the Grand Haven Area are from the following cities.

The chart below covers January 1 through December 31, 2025; and January 1 through November 17, 2026 (YTD)

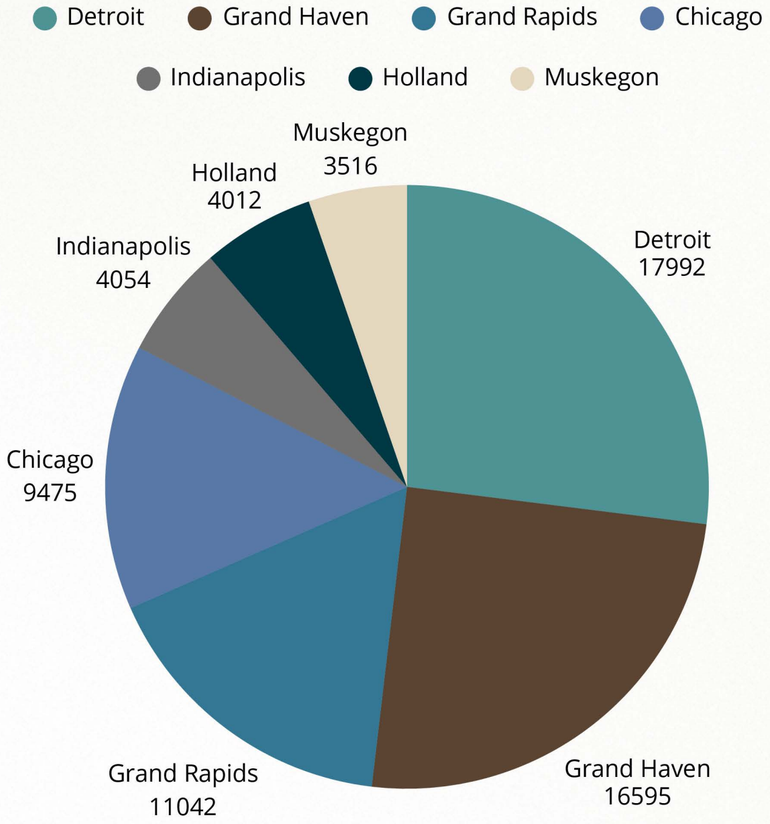
Totals for all Cities 2025: Active Users 343,700; New Users 339,217; Engaged Sessions 261,228 (includes some bot traffic)

Totals for all Cities 2026: Active Users 364,866; New Users 363,542; Engaged Sessions 267,957 (includes some bot traffic)

2025



2026



The top cities in Michigan are a bit mixed. For example, when we review the data, we recognize that Grand Haven, Holland, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids are not geographic areas where we spend marketing dollars. We only spend marketing dollars in markets that are “overnight” markets. Research shows that, generally, most visitors do not stay overnight unless they are farther than 3 hours from home.

*It is interesting how strong of a following we have, with visits from those within our own community and surrounding communities. We attribute much of this “local” traffic to our strong SEO and comprehensive calendar of events.

Top International - website

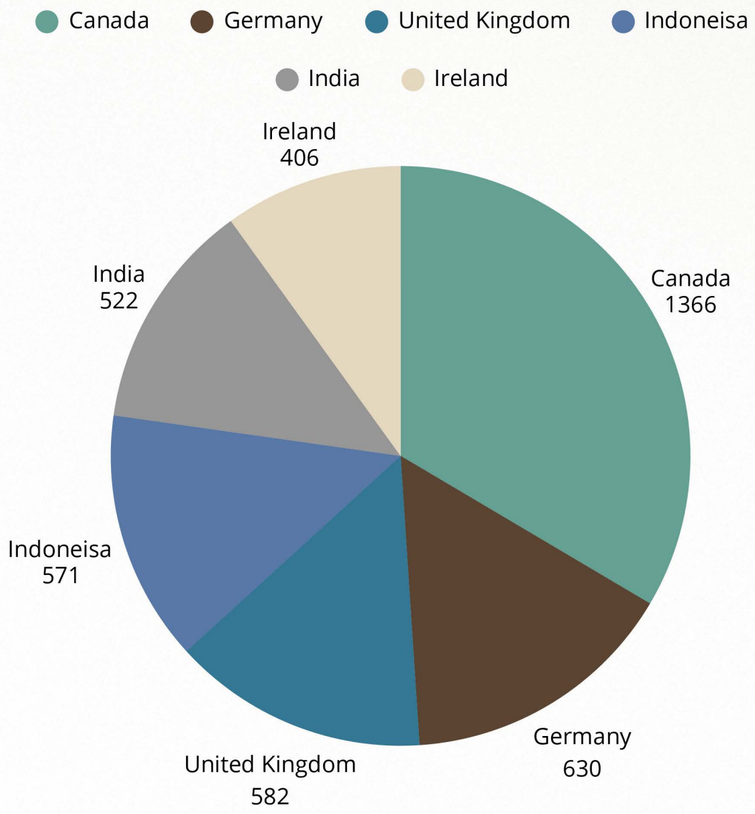
Visitors interested in traveling to the Grand Haven Area are from the following countries.

The chart below covers January 1 through December 31, 2025; and January 1 through November 17, 2026 (YTD)

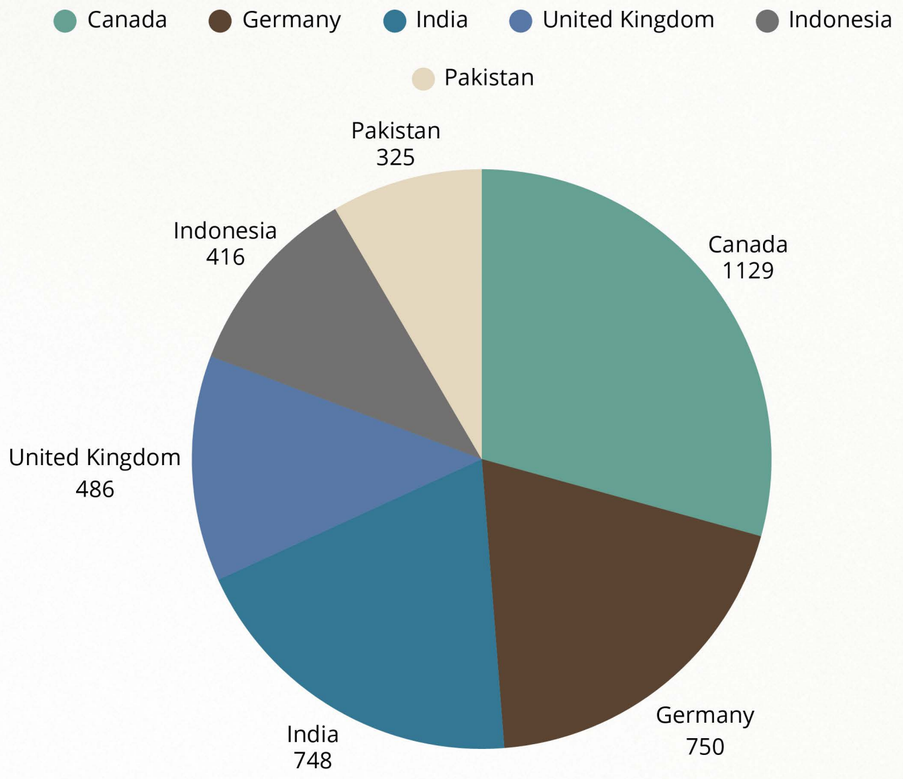
Totals for all Countries 2025: Active Users 343,700; New Users 339,217; Engaged Sessions 261,228 (includes some bot traffic)

Totals for all Countries 2026: Active Users 364,866; New Users 363,542; Engaged Sessions 267,957 (includes some bot traffic)

2025



2026



The number of international visitors to our website is relatively low. We have not spent any marketing dollars on international marketing in the last couple of years.

Canada has been our only international paid advertising. We do work closing with international travel agents from China, Germany, and the UK, as well as receptives and travel writers from abroad. This allows us to host travel professionals in our community(ies). They are all vetted prior to their visit to ensure we are only hosting top-performing agents/reps.

Top Content Pages - website

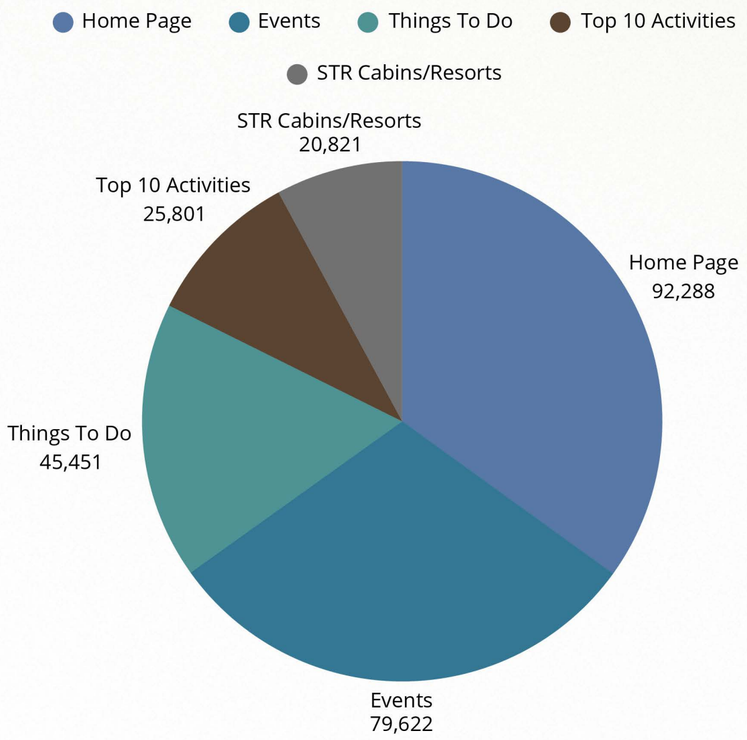
Visitors interested in traveling to the Grand Haven Area are most interested in the following pages.

The chart below covers January 1 through December 31, 2025; and January 1 through November 17, 2026 (YTD)

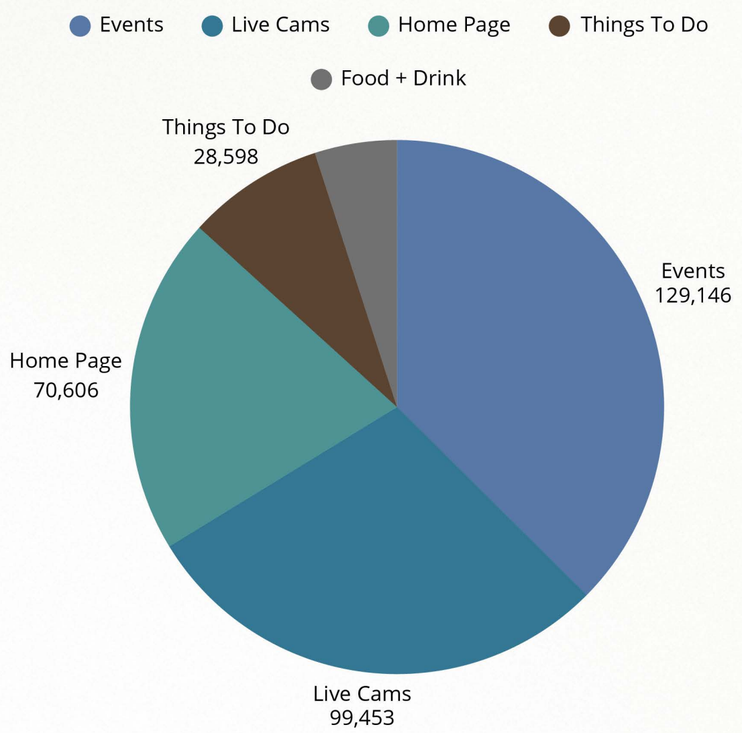
Totals for all Pages 2025: Views 982,344; Active Users 343,700; All Events|Activity 3,290,526 (includes some bot traffic)

Totals for all Pages 2026: Views 936,781; Active Users 364,866; All Events|Activity 3,012,894 (includes some bot traffic)

2025



2026



Page visits are one of the more informative aspects of research because it tells you where within the website the visitors are spending the most time and what they are most interested in out of hundreds of pages to choose from.

While the pie charts to the left show the bulk of visitor interest, a few additional top content pages for 2026 are also included: Coast Guard Festival 15k, Shops + Gifts 14k, City Beach 14k, Attractions 12k, Lighthouse 12k, Outdoor Activities 10k.

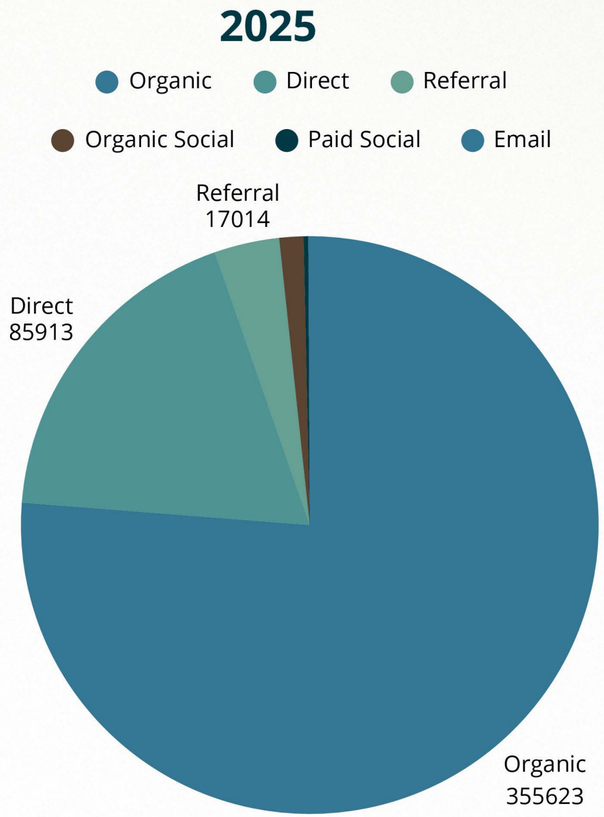
Top Traffic Sources - website

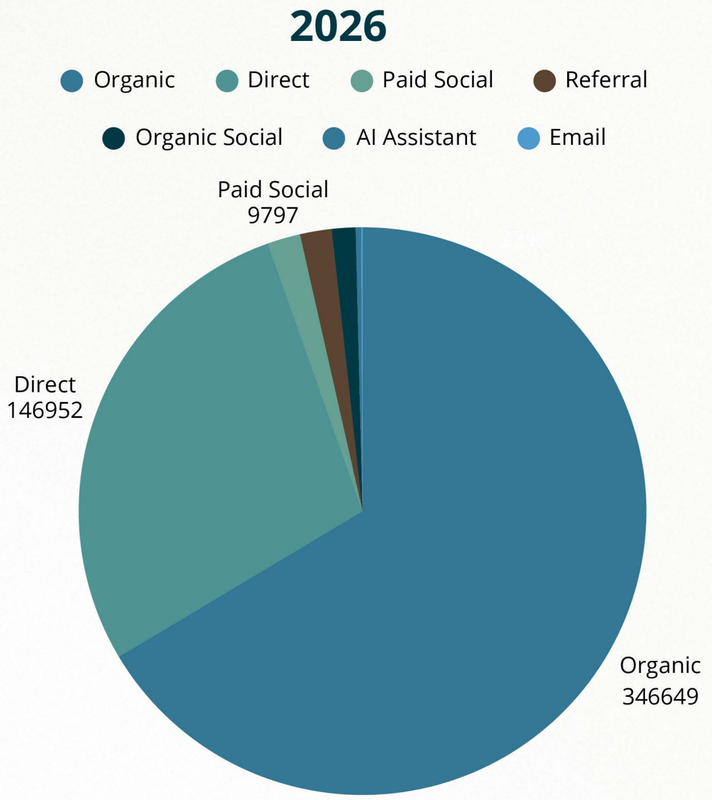
Visitors interested in traveling to the Grand Haven Area are from the following sources.

The chart below covers January 1 through December 31, 2025; and January 1 through November 17, 2026 (YTD)

Totals for all Traffic 2025: Sessions 424,647; Engaged Sessions 247,450; Engagement Rate 58.27% (includes some bot traffic)

Totals for all Traffic 2026: Sessions 522,838; Engaged Sessions 267,957; Engagement Rate 51.25% (includes some bot traffic)





Traffic sources refer to how visitors find our website.

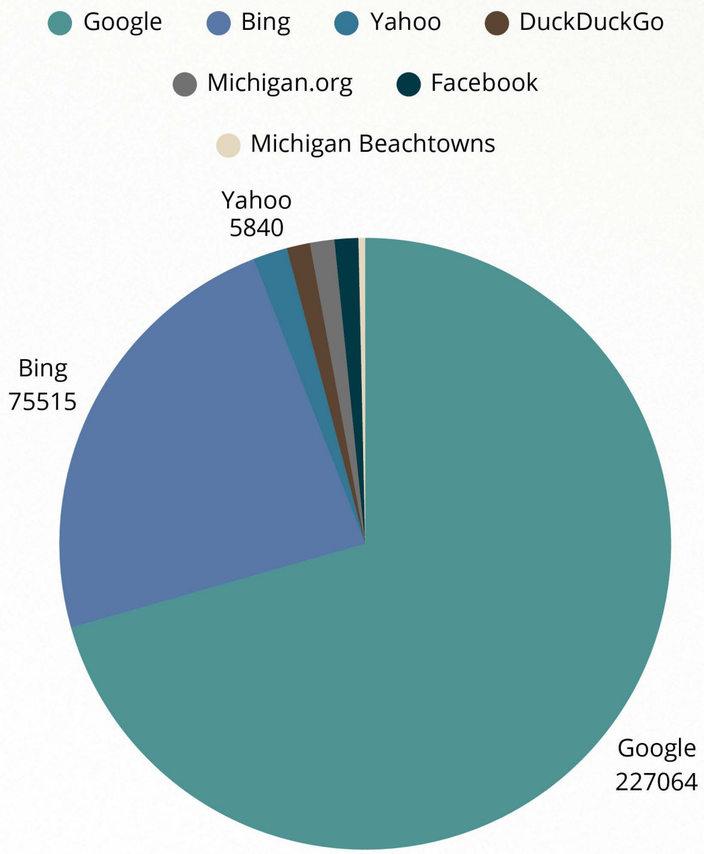
For example, it is no surprise that Google (aka Organic) on the charts to the left is the top source of traffic to our website; however, it is always good to see Direct, which means visitors are actually typing in VisitGrandHaven.com to find the information they need.

Paid social did really well for us in 2025 and even better in 2026. Organic social refers to non-paid social, and new for this year is the AI Assistant. This is a collective of all AI: ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.

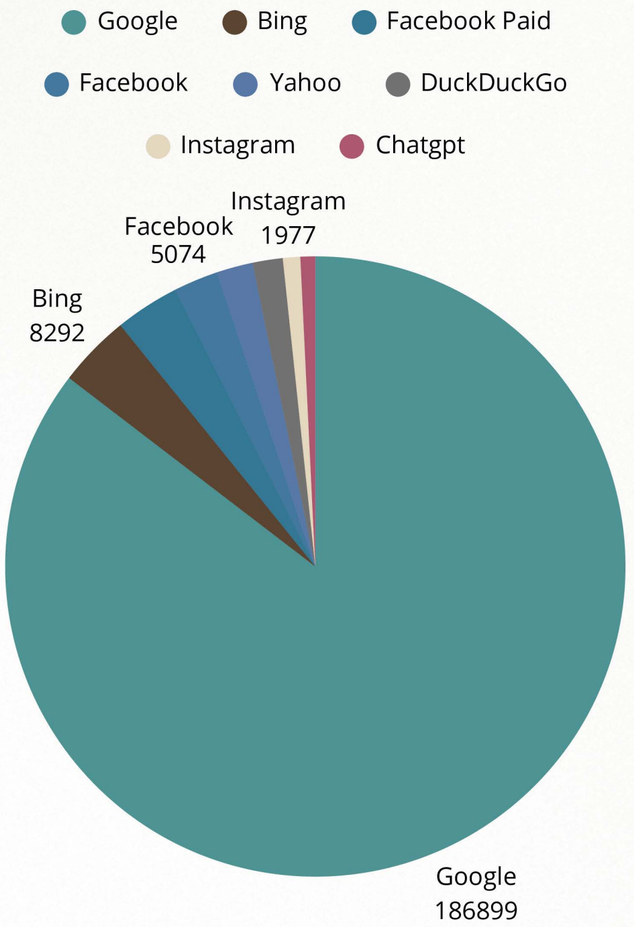
Top Referral Pages - website

Visitors interested in traveling to the Grand Haven Area are from the following referrals.
The chart below covers January 1 through December 31, 2025; and January 1 through November 17, 2026 (YTD)
Totals for all Traffic 2025: Active Users 312,559; Sessions 424,647; Engaged Sessions 247,450 (includes some bot traffic)
Totals for all Traffic 2026: Active Users 364,866; Sessions 522,838; Engaged Sessions 267,957 (includes some bot traffic)

2025



2026



The information provided gives insight into where our “referral” visitors come from.

When a visitor leaves a search engine page or another website because they were redirected, that is what is being reported here.

A standout for this year is Paid Social, with Facebook and Instagram, as well as ChatGPT. DuckDuckGo is a search engine just like Google, Yahoo and Bing and has been on our referral list for over a decade.

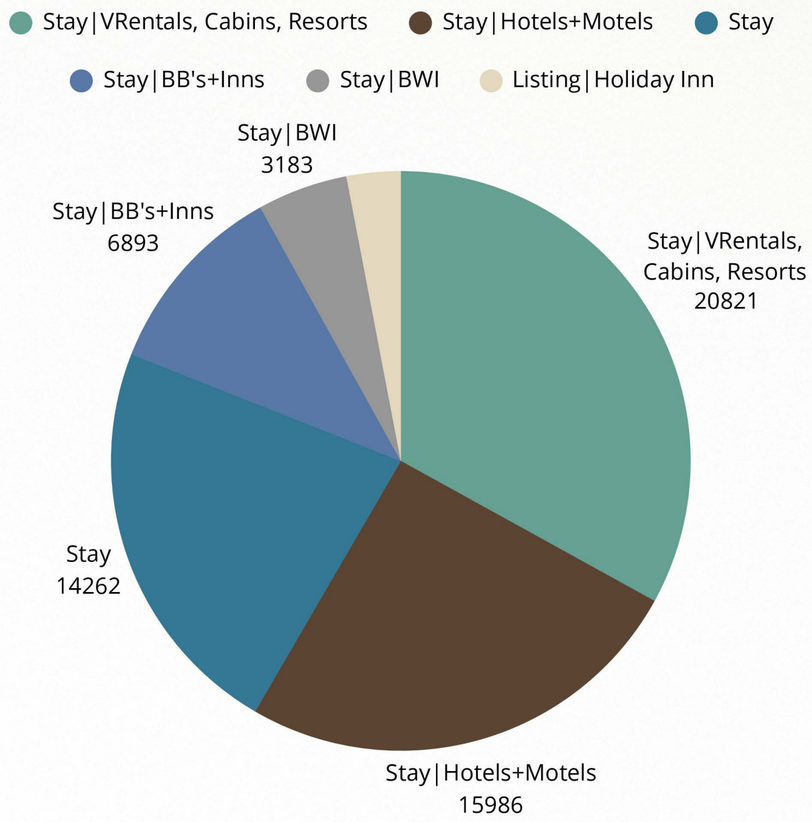
*Having strong SEO built into our website, listings, content, etc. means search engines will be great referral sources...like the numbers you see here.

Lodging Highlights - website

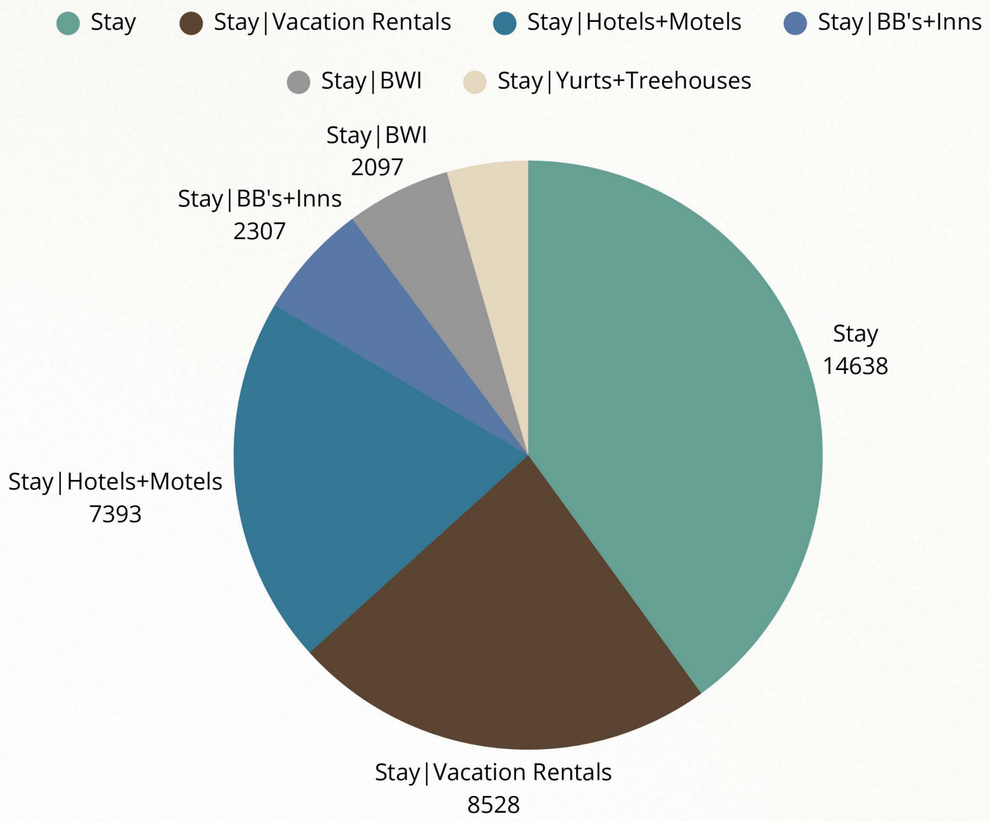
Visitors interested in the Grand Haven Area visit these lodging pages prior to booking.

The chart below covers January 1 through December 31, 2025; and January 1 through November 17, 2026 (YTD)

2025



2026



We report lodging information to ensure our assessment paying members knows how much traffic moves into each segment of our lodging community via our website.

For example, last year Vacation Rentals, Cabins and Resorts was the highest-performing lodging section; this year, after our new website launch and rearranging some listings and webpage titles, the “Stay” section is the top spot.

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2025 + 2026 Ad Samples

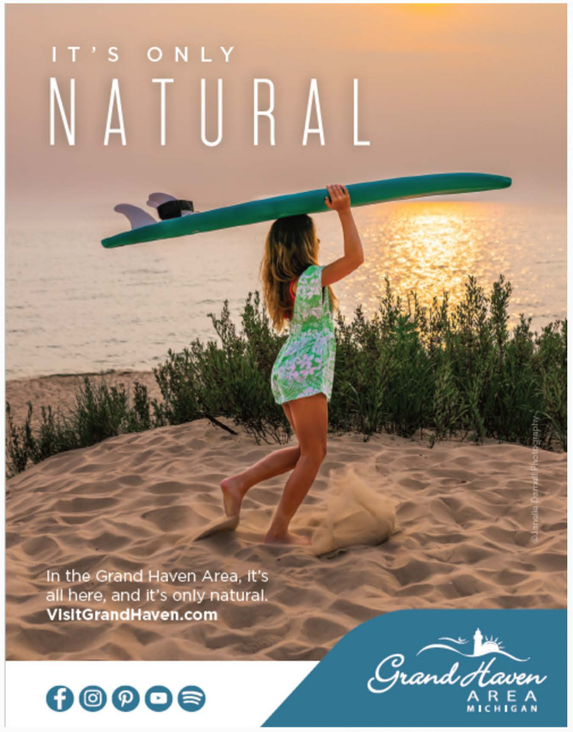




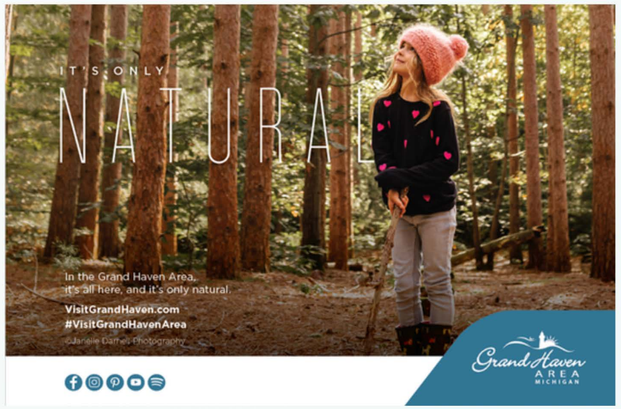








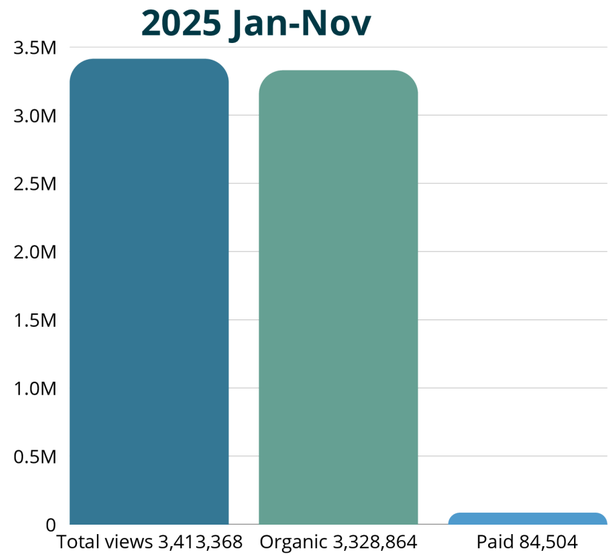


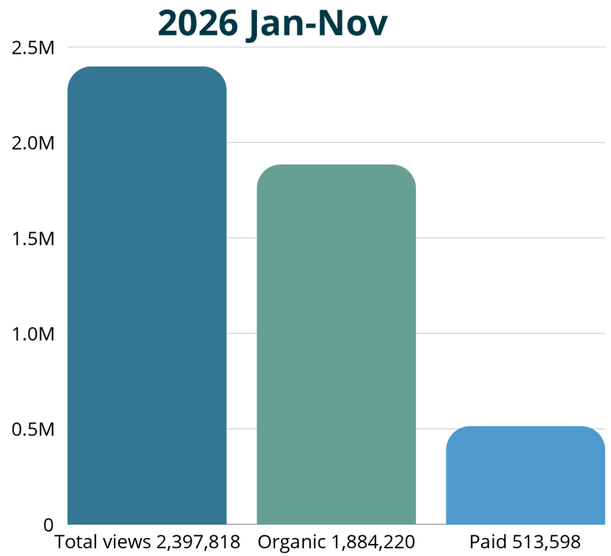


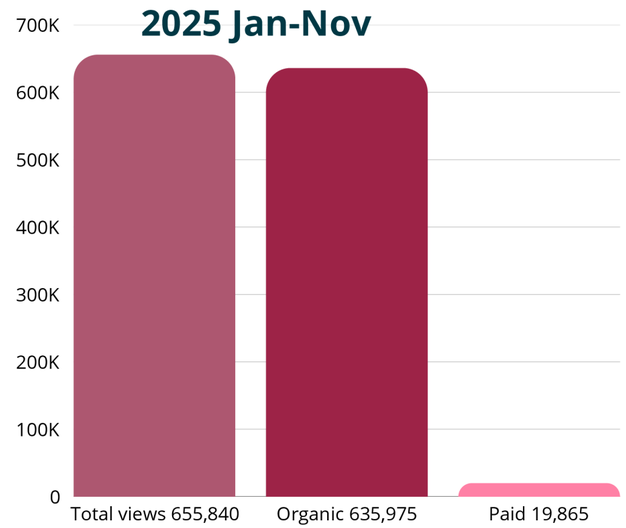
Notes:

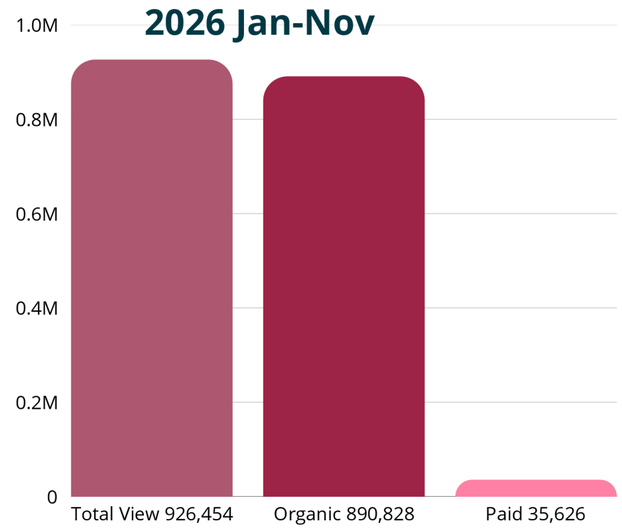
GHACVB Social Media Content

Views 2025 & 2026









***To achieve a year over year comparison, date range for data is January - November.**

Facebook Paid Advertising 2026

513,598 +507.8%

Facebook paid distribution expanded significantly in 2026, generating more than 513k in content views - a 508% increase over the 2025

GHACVB's social media performance reflected differing trends across platforms in 2026. Instagram recorded strong growth, generating 926,454 content views between January and November, a 41.3% increase over the same period in 2025. Organic content remained the primary driver of Instagram visibility.

Facebook generated nearly 2.4 million content views in 2026. However, a significant increase in paid distribution offset a decline in organic views, highlighting the growing importance of paid promotion in maintaining visibility on the platform.

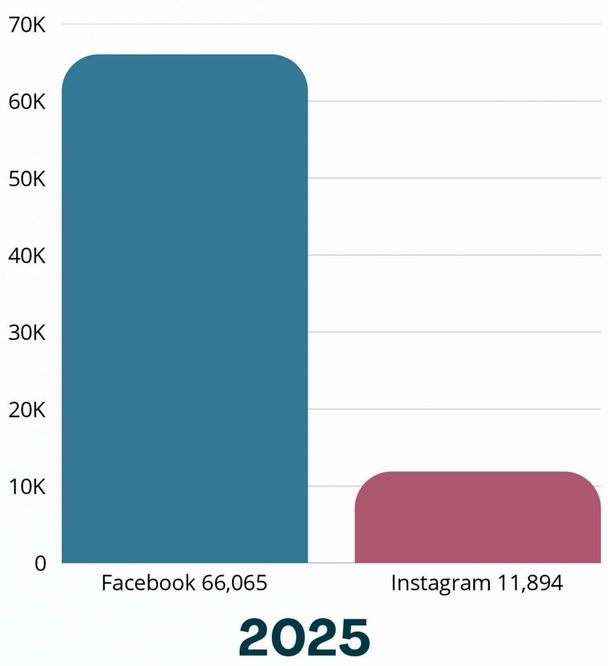
Organic content remained the primary driver of Instagram visibility, accounting for the overwhelming majority of views.

Instagram Growth 2026

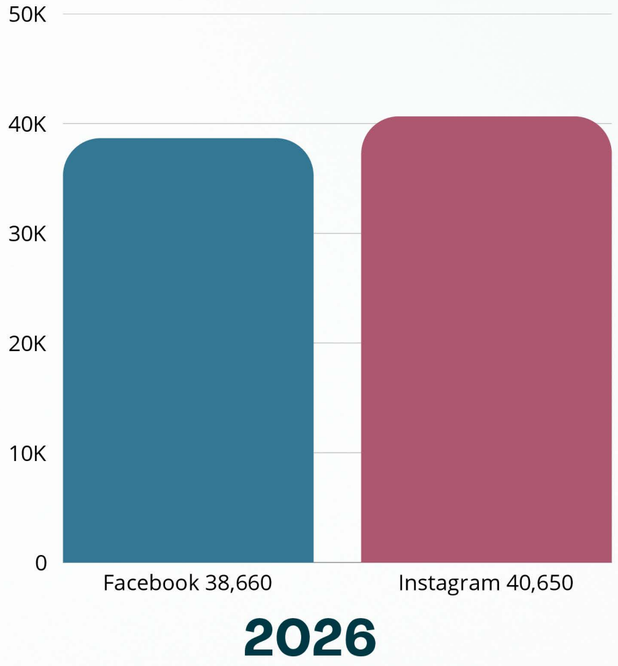
926,454 +41.3%

Instagram generated more than 926,000 content views in 2026, representing 41.3% growth over 2025.

GHACVB Social Media Content Interactions



2025



2026

+241.8%

Instagram interactions increased 241.8% rising from 11,894 to 40,650

-41.5%

Facebook interactions declined 41.5% from 66,065 to 38,660

+1.7%

Combined interactions across both platforms increased 1.7% despite differing platform trends.

GHACVB recorded 79,310 combined content interactions across Facebook and Instagram in 2026, up 1.7% from 2025. Instagram emerged as the strongest growth platform, with interactions increasing by 241.8%. This growth helped offset declining Facebook interactions, resulting in a slight overall increase in audience activity across both platforms.

Audience activity is shifting between platforms, highlighting the importance of a diversified social media strategy.

Social Media Audience Growth

Building and expanding GHACVB's social audience 2025-2026

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

38,546

+1878

NET FOLLOWER GROWTH DURING REPORTING PERIOD

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

77,155

+3722

NET FOLLOWER GROWTH DURING REPORTING PERIOD

Expanding our digital audience: Across the two reporting periods, Facebook and Instagram generated 5,600 net new followers combined. Facebook accounted for the largest share of growth, while Instagram continued to build its established audience. Together, our social channels remain important tools for increasing destination awareness and connecting with prospective visitors.

- *Reporting periods: January 2025 - November 2026. Historical growth figures sourced from platform analytics and later reporting.*

Understanding Social Media Trends

Algorithm changes

Meta’s evolving algorithms and AI-driven recommendations influence how content is distributed and discovered.

Changing Audience Behavior

Audiences are increasingly engaging with diverse content formats and platforms, changing where and how they discover destination experiences.

Organic vs. Paid Reach

Changes in advertising investment and organic distribution can affect visibility and engagement differently across platforms.

Looking Ahead/What this means for our social strategy

Facebook: Declining interactions may reflect changes in organic content distribution, evolving algorithms, and increased competition for visibility in users’ feeds. This reinforces the importance of strategic paid promotion to maintain reach.

Instagram: Significant growth suggests an opportunity to build on the platform’s organic momentum, particularly through engaging visual content, Reels, and destination storytelling.

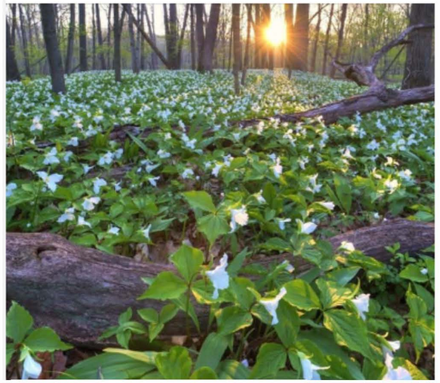
Overall strategy: As platform algorithms and audience behaviors continue to evolve, a balanced approach combining organic content, targeted advertising and platform-specific strategies will be increasingly important.



2025 Top Performing Posts

Visit Grand Haven Area, MI
Published by Later · March 26, 2025 ·

This incredible hidden gem called Aman Park is just outside Allendale, about 25 miles from Grand Haven. It's a massive 331 acres where you can wander along many natural... See more



Overview

Views	Reach	Interactions
409.4K	--	4.2K

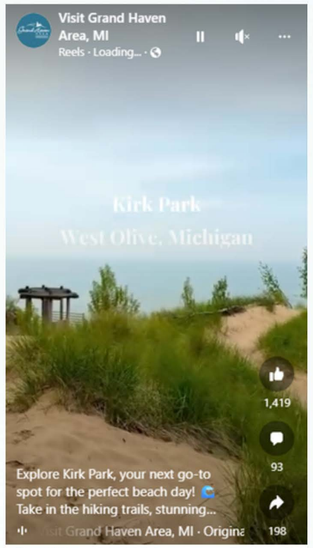
Visit Grand Haven Area, MI
Published by Later · October 7, 2025 ·

Supermoon over the Grand Haven Lighthouse ✨ Captured in the quiet hours before dawn by David Behrens — a moment of pure lakeshore magic. ... See more



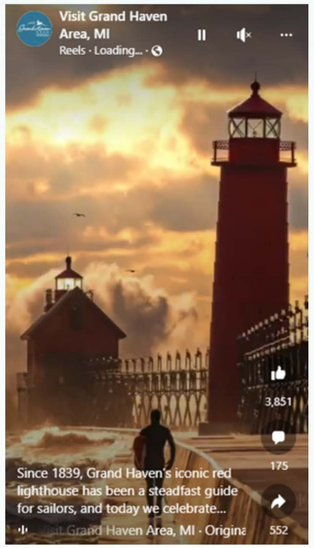
Overview

Views	Viewers	Interactions
205.3K	152.4K	2.8K



Overview

Views	Reach	Interactions
167.9K	--	1.7K



Overview

Views	Viewers	Interactions
131.7K	112.3K	3.5K

Visit Grand Haven Area, MI
Published by Later · July 29, 2025 ·

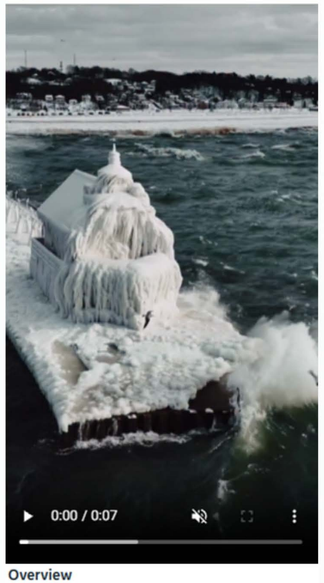
Tall ships are coming to Grand Haven! ⛵✨
Two historic schooners — the When And If, built for General George S. Patton, and the Liberty Clipper, with home ports in Key ... See more



Overview

Views	Reach	Interactions
121.6K	--	868

lexiedoehner



Overview

Views	Viewers	Interactions
190.5K	520	7.6K

Visit Grand Haven Area, MI
Published by Later · June 11 ·

On Saturday, June 20, City Beach in Grand Haven becomes an open-air art gallery unlike any other.... See more



Overview

Views	Viewers	Interactions
149.5K	104.3K	1.2K

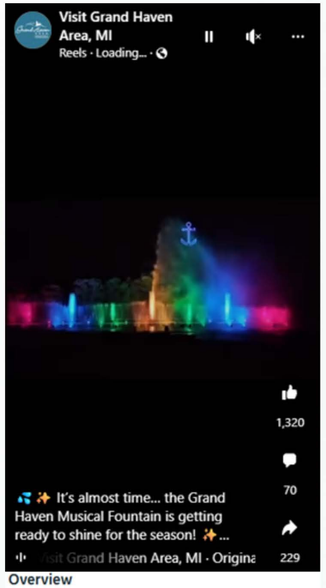
Visit Grand Haven Area, MI is with Spri...
Published by Later · March 5 ·

Have you spotted the pair of bald eagles near the Community Center in Spring Lake Township? If you're interested in observing them, the township has just revealed that ... See more



Overview

Views	Viewers	Interactions
129.7K	82.2K	1.5K



Overview

Views	Viewers	Interactions
82.1K	70.7K	1.6K

Visit Grand Haven Area, MI
Published by Later · February 1 ·

When frozen water meets a sky on fire at the Grand Haven pier. 🌅

📷 : SG Captures
📍 : Grand Haven, MI
🔗 : See our website for travel info and events!

#GrandHavenMI #LakeMichigan #GrandHavenPier #PureMichigan #SunsetChasers See less



Overview

Views	Viewers	Interactions
82.1K	58.3K	2.2K

2026 Top Performing Posts



Visitor Center Report

Visitor Center Guest Insights

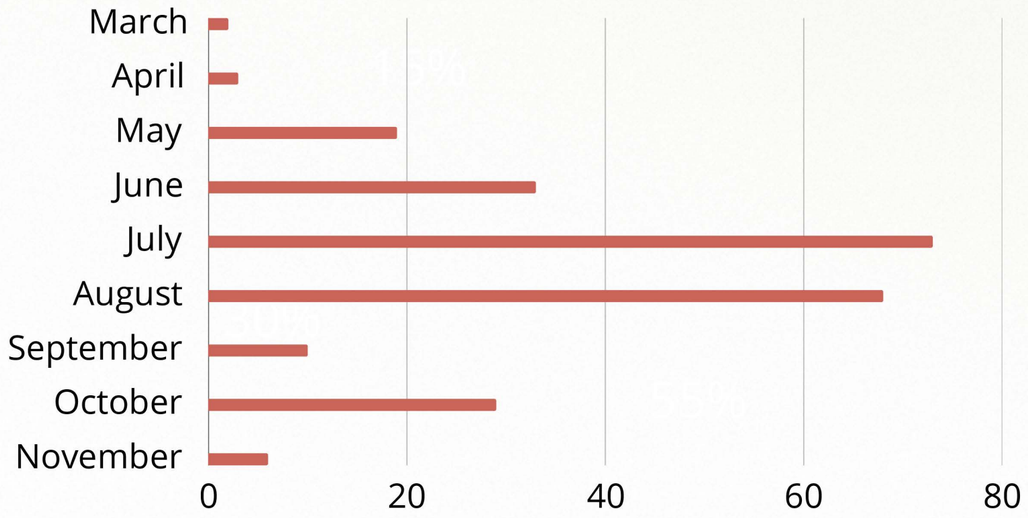
The next two slides present our Visitor Center guest insights for 2025 and 2026. Whenever visitors step inside the Visitor Center, we try to learn a little more about them: where they are coming from, how long they plan to stay in the area, and whether this is their first visit to the Grand Haven Area.

We encourage visitors to sign our guest book so we can collect this information and better understand who is visiting our community. However, not everyone chooses to sign, and sometimes, when things get busy, we simply forget to ask.

The graphs show how many visitors stopped by the Visitor Center for information, the map shows where they came from, and the seasonal breakdown highlights how visitor traffic varied throughout the year.

Please keep in mind that these figures reflect recorded visitor interactions and may not represent everyone who visited the Visitor Center.

Visitors Center 2025 Guest Book



Entries in Visitor Log

*Not an exact measure of the # of people who visited, only the # of people who signed in and typically only one entry per group.

Spring	Summer	Fall
March-2	June-33	September-10
April-3	July-73	October-29
May-19	August-68	November-6

Countries & States Represented

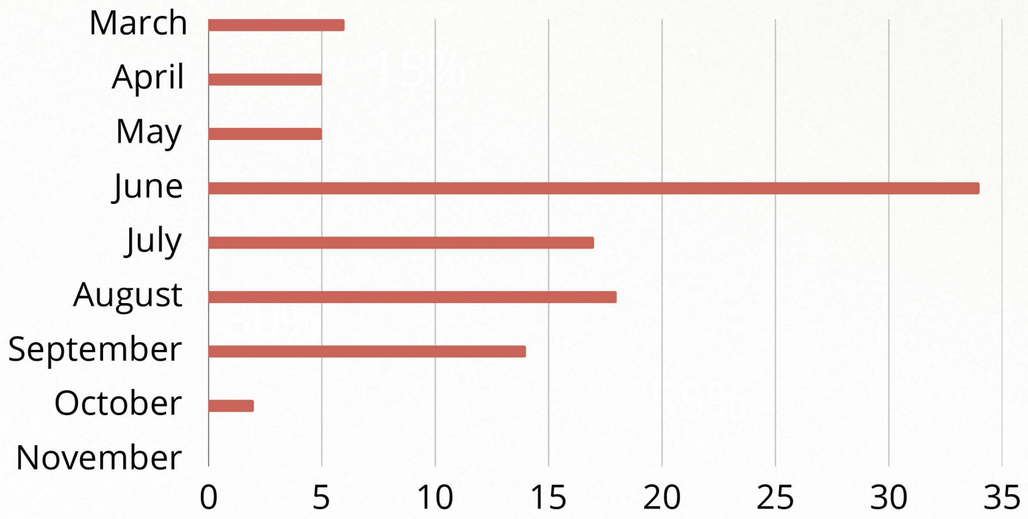


Countries:

- Canada
- Denmark
- France
- Netherlands
- United Arab Emirates

- Alabama
- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wisconsin

Visitors Center 2026 Guest Book



Entries in Visitor Log

*Not an exact measure of the # of people who visited, only the # of people who signed in and typically only one entry per group.

Spring	Summer	Fall
March-6	June-34	September-14
April-5	July-17	October-14
May-5	August-18	November-0

Countries & States Represented



Countries:

- Finland
- England

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Florida
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Montana
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Tennesse
- Texas
- Virginia
- Wisconsin

Leads Analysis

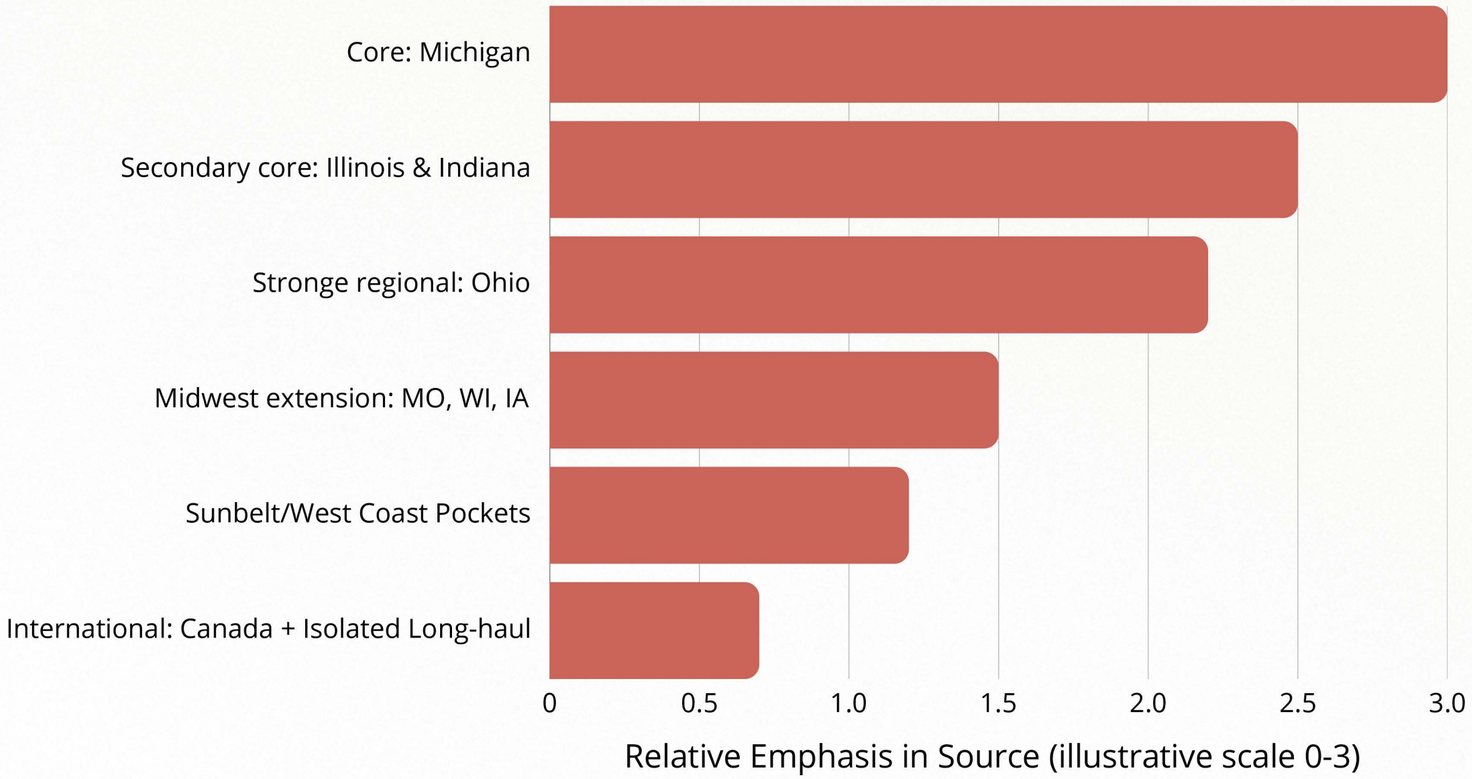
The next four slides present findings from an analysis of website leads collected between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2025.

Each time someone requested a visitor guide through our website, they were asked to provide personal information. This information allows us to better understand who is interested in visiting the Grand Haven Area and identify visitor trends.





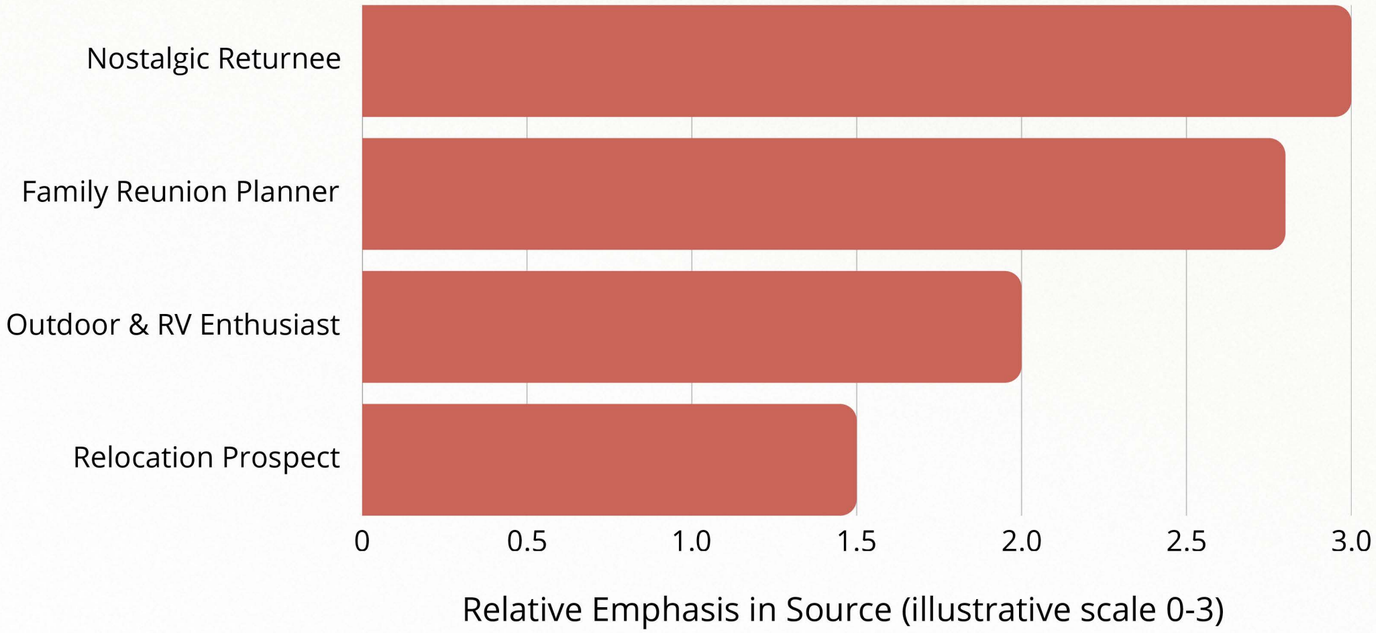
Geographic Dispersion & Location



Website leads are primarily concentrated in the Midwest. Michigan leads with visitor interest, followed by Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio. Additional interest comes from other U.S. states, particularly Florida, Arizona, and California, as well as a small number of international inquiries, mainly from Canada.

Key takeaway: the Grand Haven Area's strongest market is the Great Lakes region, with some national and international reach.

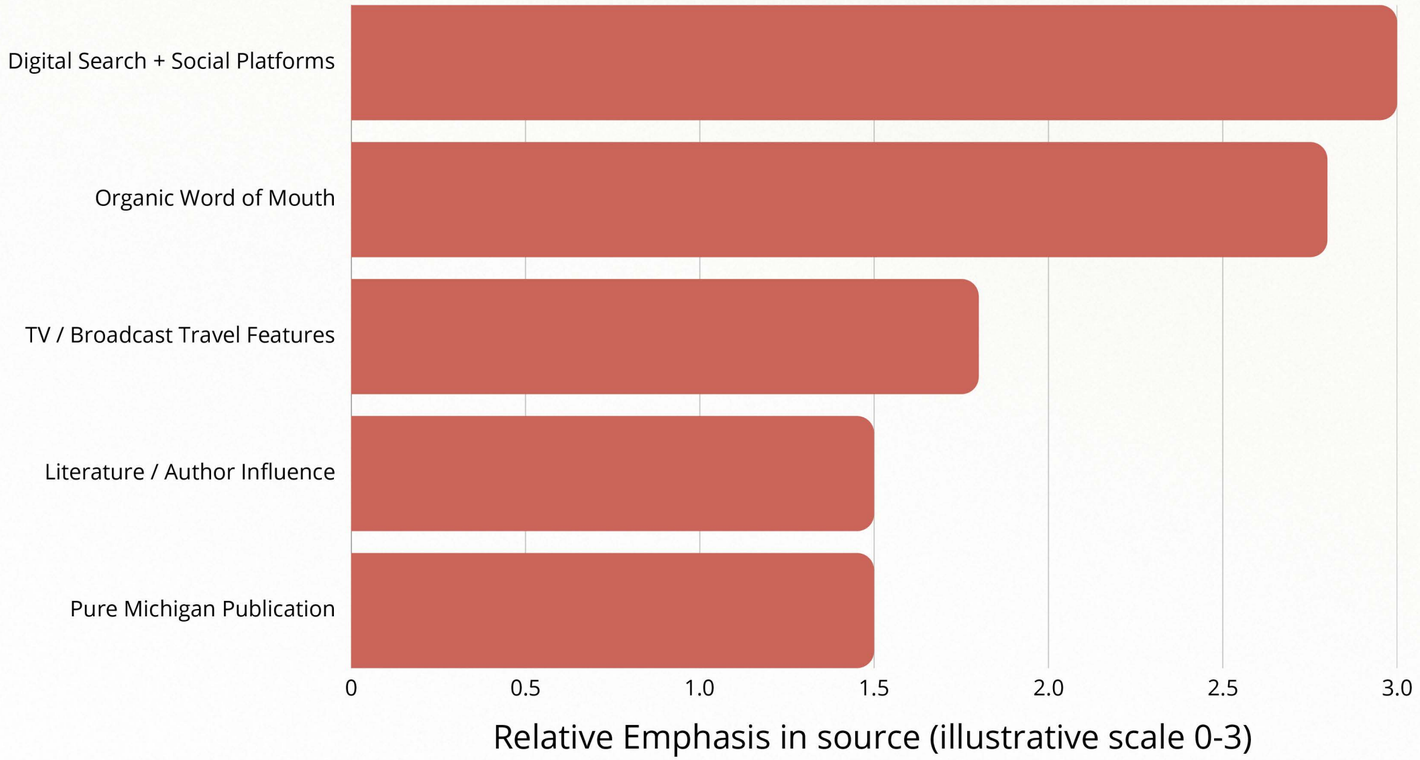
Demographic & Behavioral Segments



Four main visitor profiles emerge: nostalgic returnees, family reunion planners, outdoor enthusiasts, and potential relocation prospects.

Key takeaway: Visitors are drawn to the Grand Haven Area for the memories they make, family connections, outdoor activities, and lifestyle opportunities.

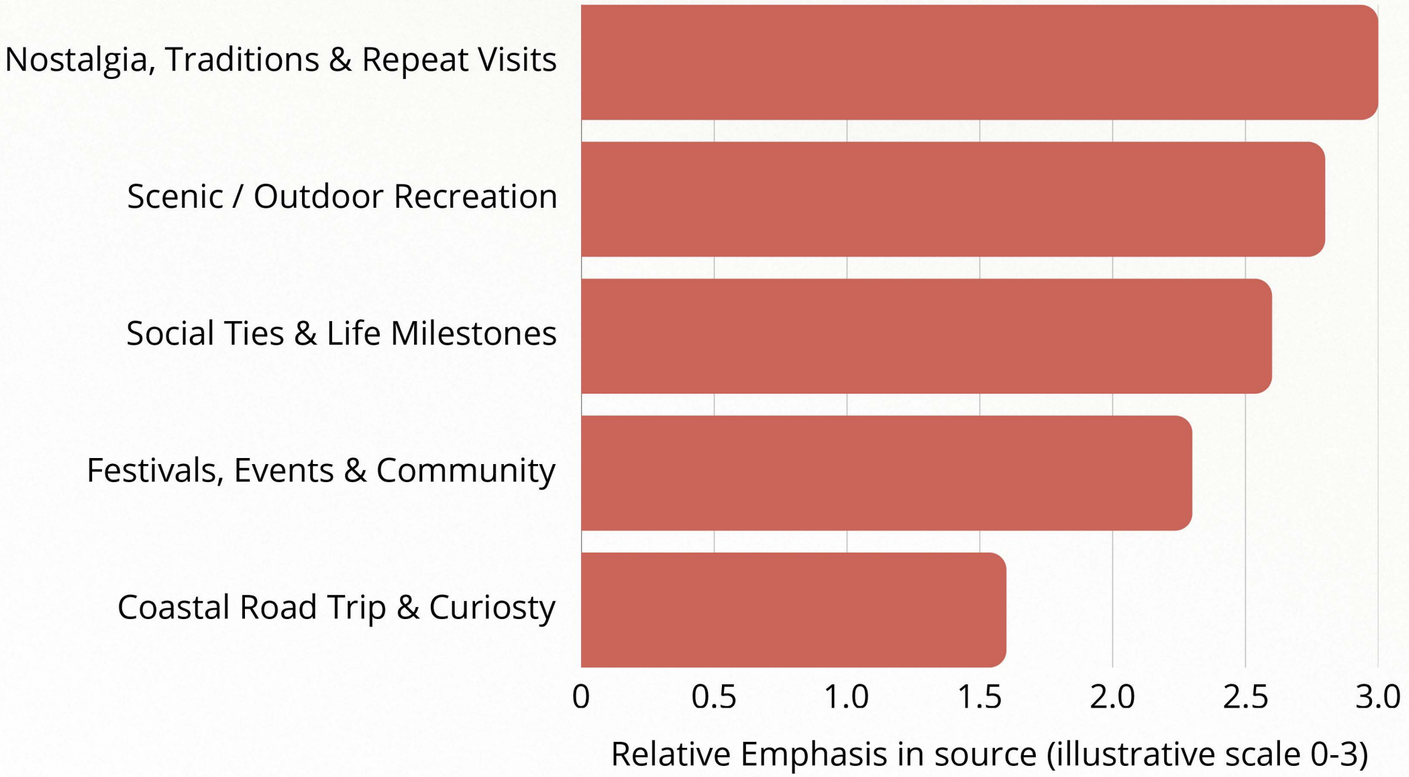
Key Lead-Generation Channels & Information Sources



Visitors discover and research the Grand Haven Area through Google, Facebook, Instagram, word-of-mouth, official tourism websites, travel platforms, magazines, TV, and books.

Key takeaway: Digital marketing and personal recommendations are the strongest recurring channels, supported by traditional media and travel publications.

Primary Motivations for Visiting



Visitors come to the Grand Haven Area for family traditions and nostalgia, Lake Michigan beaches, outdoor recreation, festivals and events, and visiting friends and family. Other reasons include weddings, weekend getaways, coastal road trips, and exploring the area as a potential place to retire or relocate.

Key takeaway: the Grand Haven Area attracts visitors through its strong emotional connections, lakeshore appeal, family experiences, and year-round activities.

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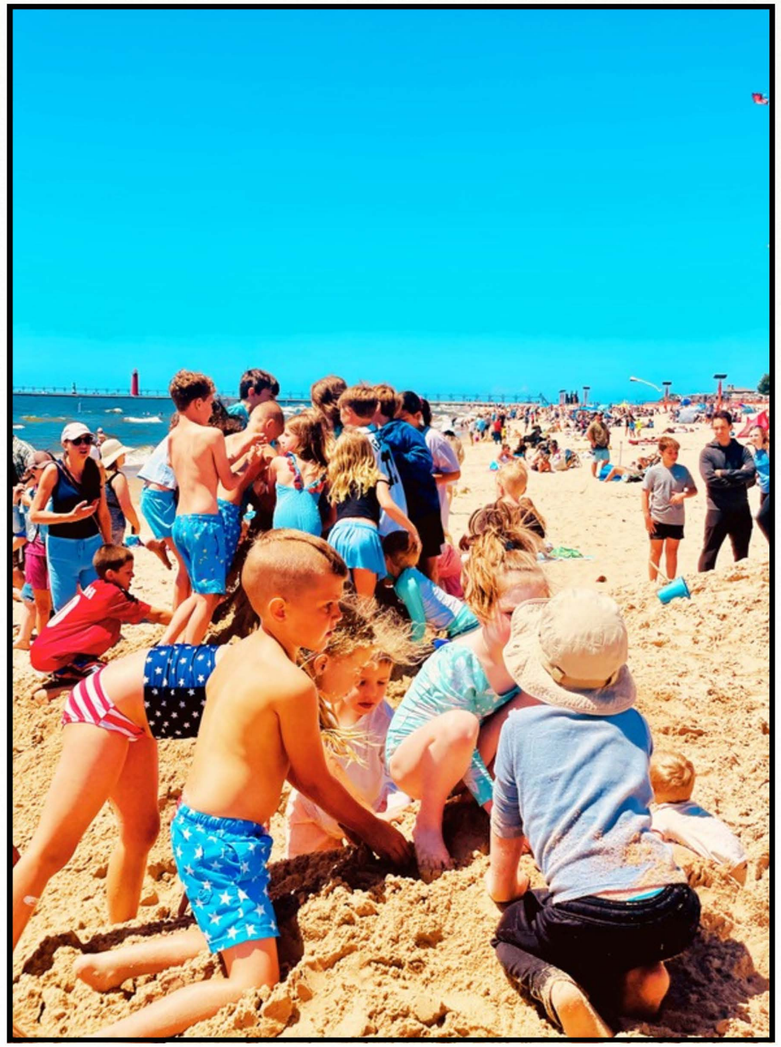
Economic Impact I Tourism Spending I Sand Sculpture I Staff





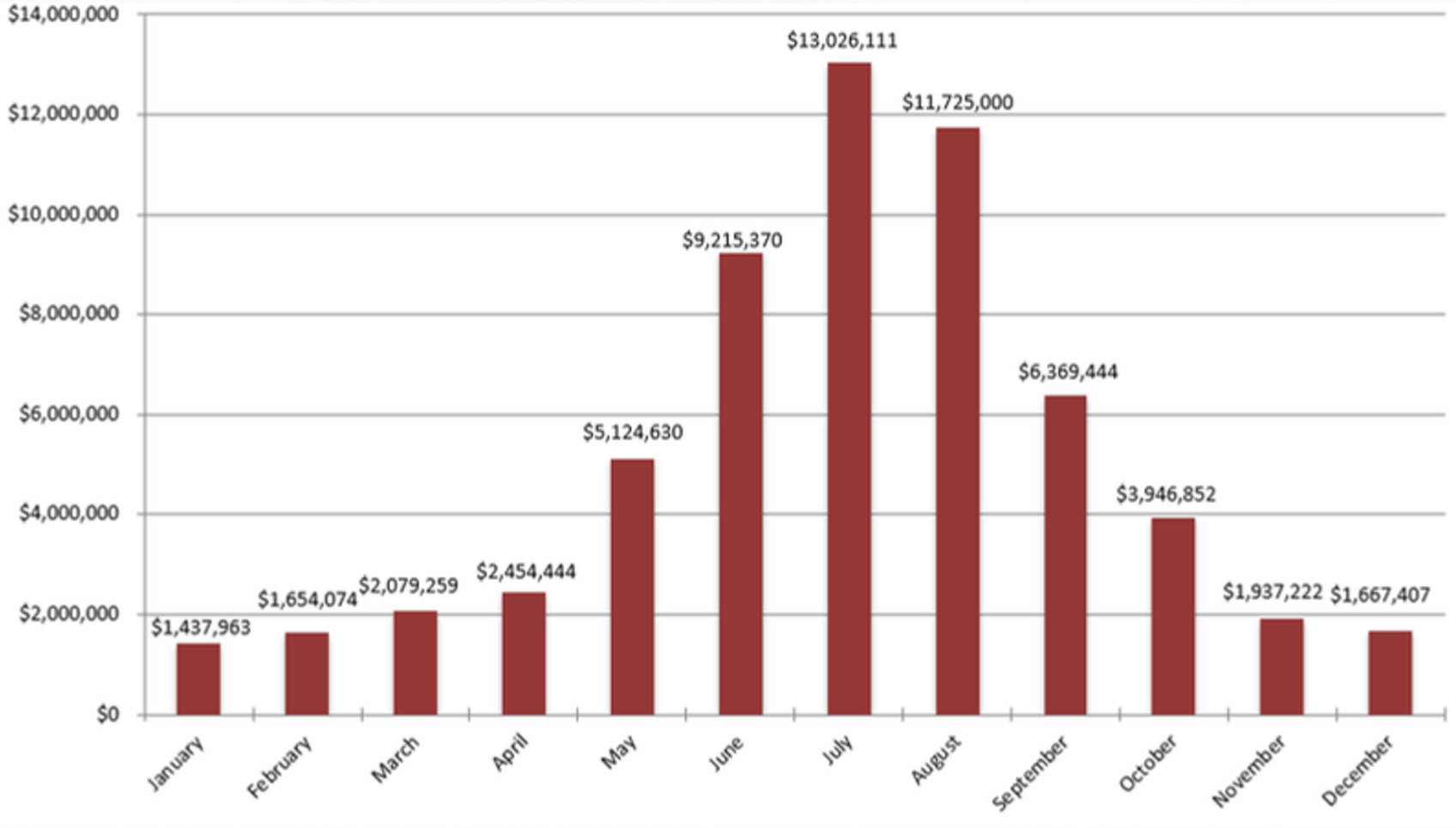


Total Travel Expenditures/Visitors Spending 2025

Total Travel Expenditures $60.6m

(Estimated Impact by Month| Based on Lodging Assessments Collected in 2025)

Actual Assessments: January 1 - December 31, 2025



This slide and the next slide show the projected travel expenditures and economic impact of overnight stays in our assessment district.

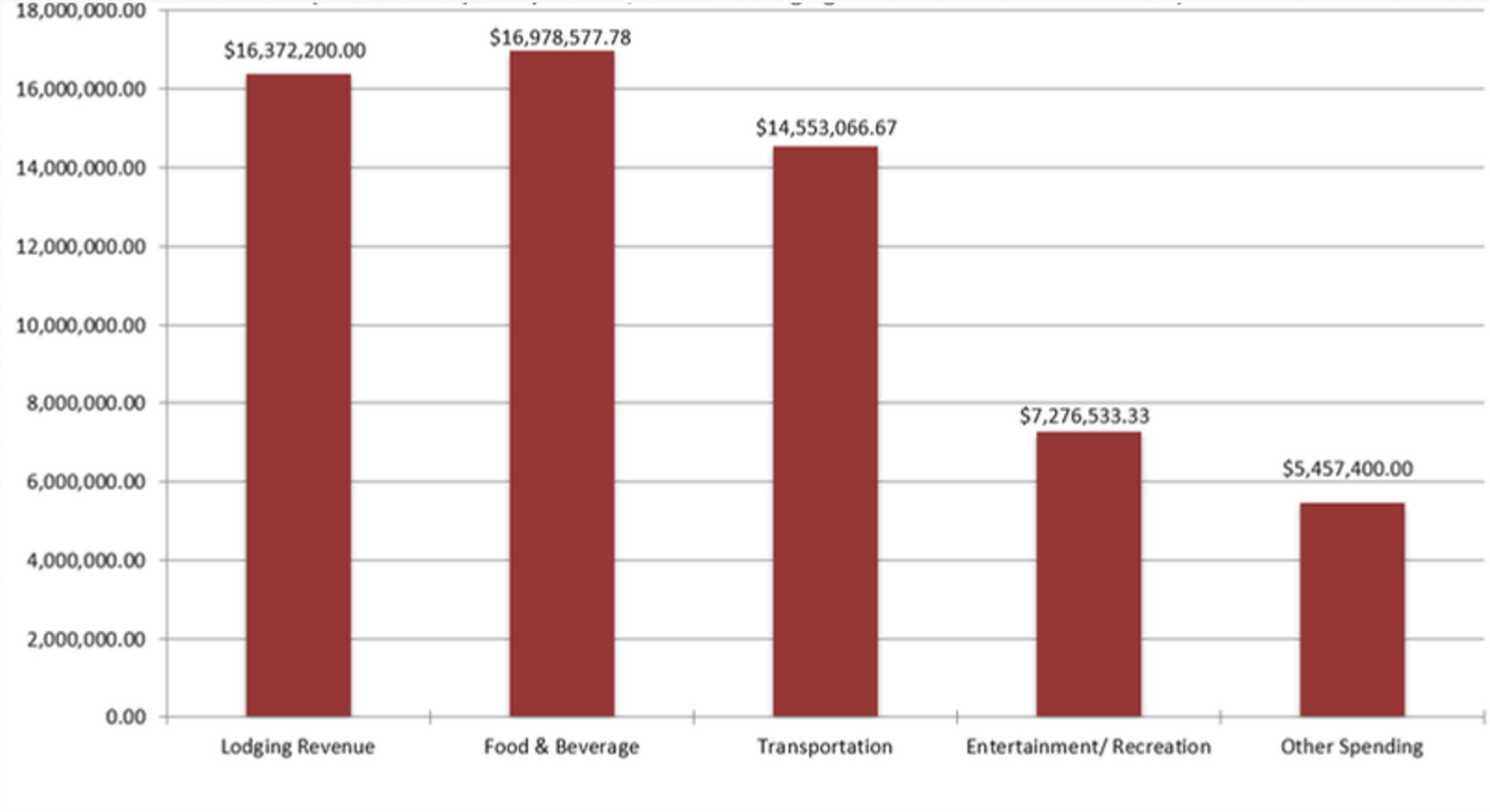
The driver for this formula is the GHACVB assessments. The formula takes that real number and projects the impact. This slide shows monthly impact based on monthly assessment collections, and the next slide shows projected impact divided into segments of the travel industry.

Visitor Spending by Sector 2025

Total Travel Expenditures $60.6m

(Estimated Impact by Month| Based on Lodging Assessments Collected in 2025)

Actual Assessments: January 1 - December 31, 2025

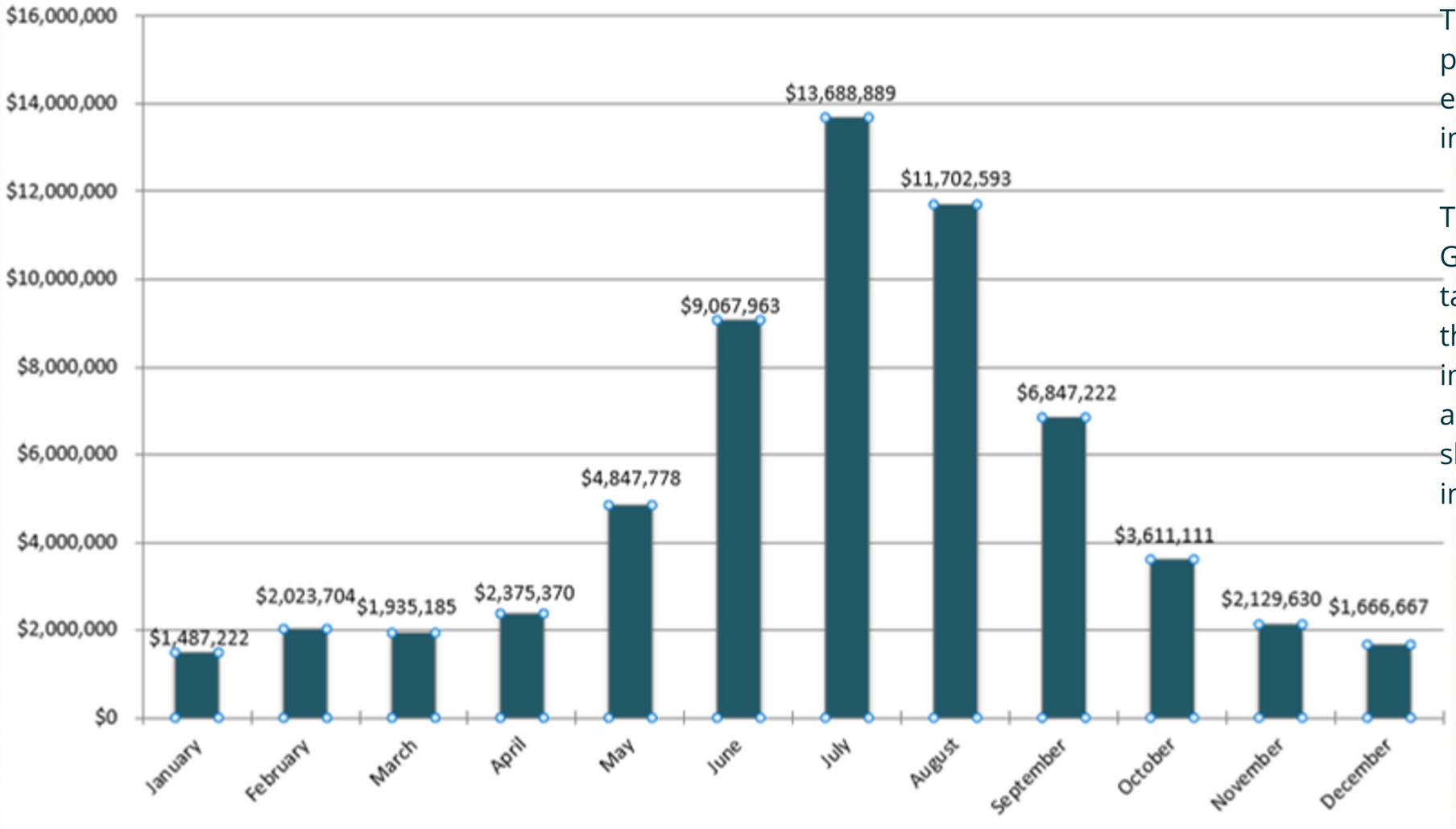


Total Travel Expenditure + Visitors Spending 2026

Total Travel Expenditures $61.3m

(Estimated Impact by Month| Based on Lodging Assessments Collected in 2026)

Actual Assessments: January 1, 2026 - September + October - December 31, 2026 Projected Assessments



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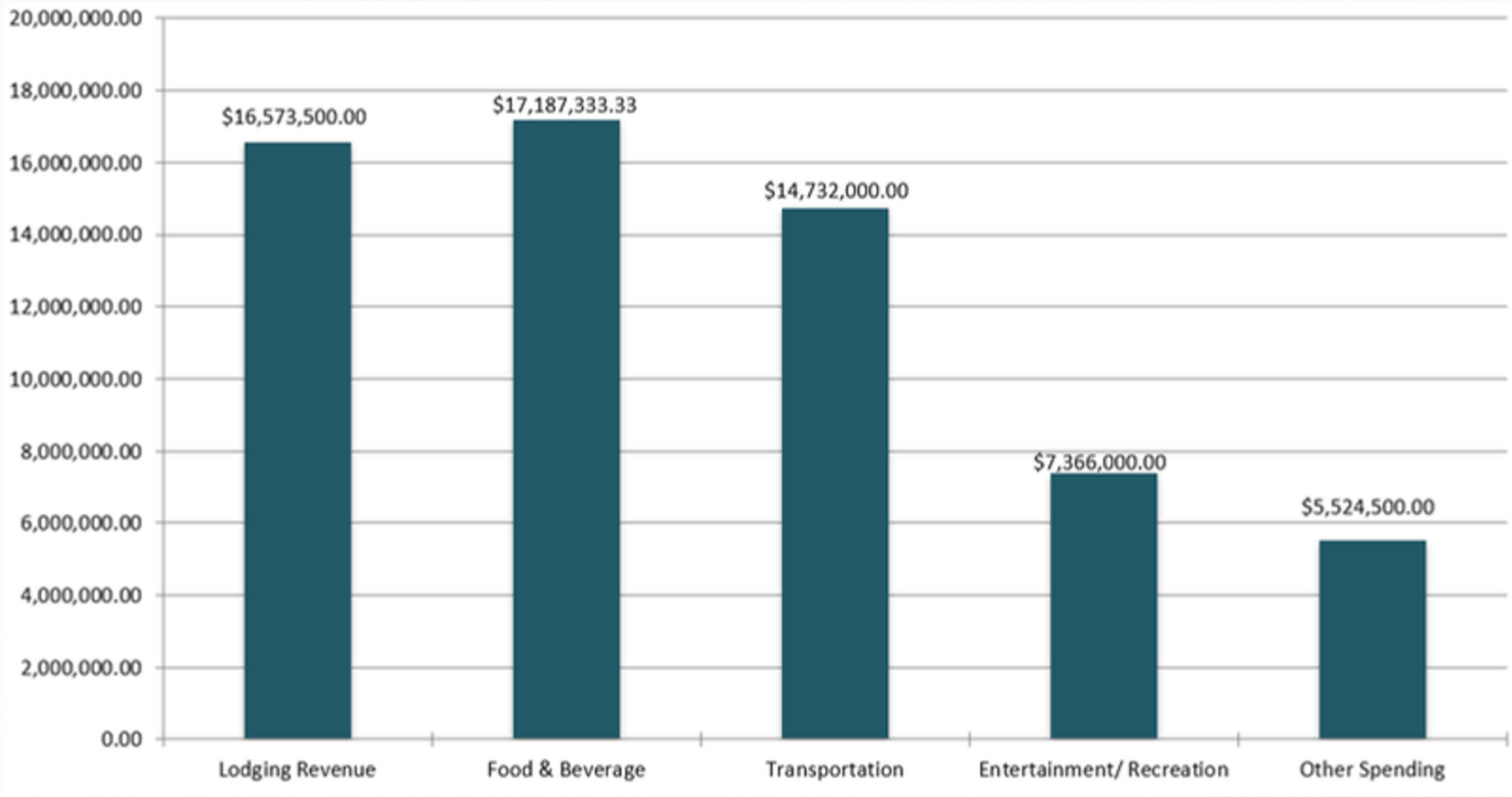
Visitor Spending by Sector 2026

Total Travel Expenditures $61.3m

(Estimated Impact by Month| Based on Lodging Assessments Collected in 2026)

Actual Assessments: January 1, 2026 - September + October - December 31, 2026 Projected Assessments



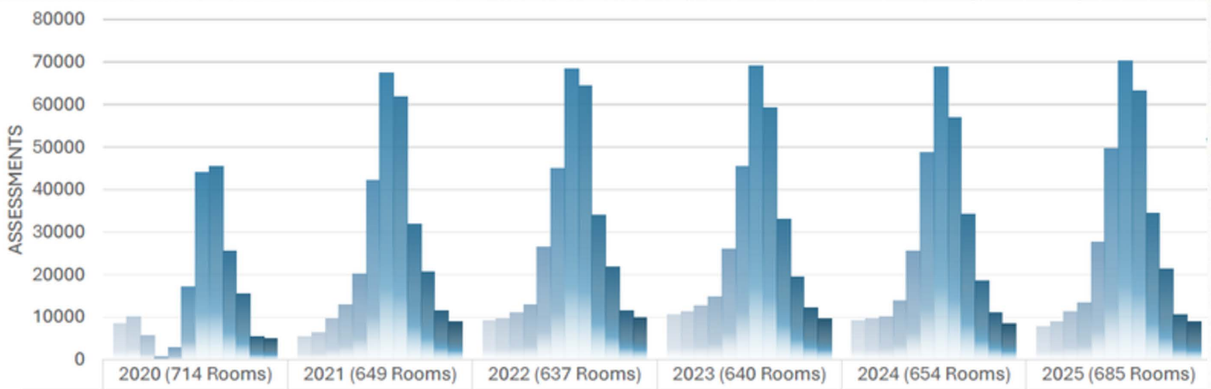
Assessment Collection Report 2025 + 2026

Below are the monthly assessment collections for 2025 and 2026. While we have seen some growth for 2026, it has been limited. In fact, we struggled in 2025 and ended the year flat. The annual budget of the Grand Haven Area CVB has remained the same for the last 4 years ($325k). We find it difficult to compete with other beach towns in Michigan when our assessment collection is ⅓ of what they have to promote their destination.

We will continue to work toward an assessment increase.

2025

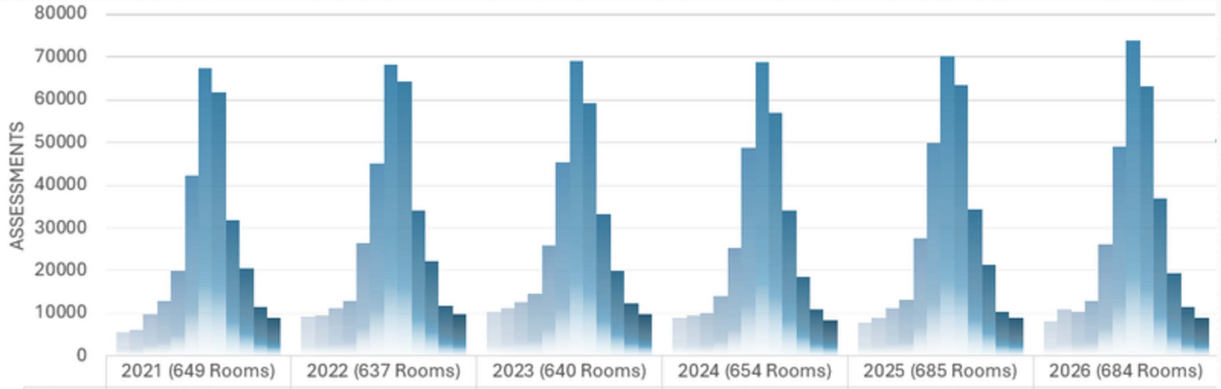
Full Report Year Jan - Dec



	2020 (714 Rooms)	2021 (649 Rooms)	2022 (637 Rooms)	2023 (640 Rooms)	2024 (654 Rooms)	2025 (685 Rooms)
Jan	8346	5512	9260	10454	9051	7765
Feb	10099	6282	9662	11229	9539	8932
March	5608	9720	11124	12716	10130	11228
April	817	13010	12795	14752	13926	13254
May	2864	20041	26371	26027	25425	27673
June	17170	42158	45020	45440	48724	49763
July	44119	67449	68341	69099	68748	70341
Aug	45469	61718	64356	59125	56884	63315
Sept	25499	31890	33998	33108	34183	34395
Oct	15380	20687	21829	19445	18471	21313
Nov	5383	11588	11519	12114	11050	10461
Dec	5038	9018	9906	9726	8416	9004
Total	185,792	299,073	324,181	323,235	314,547	327,444

2026

Assessments Jan - September +
Estimated assessments for Oct-Dec.



	2021 (649 Rooms)	2022 (637 Rooms)	2023 (640 Rooms)	2024 (654 Rooms)	2025 (685 Rooms)	2026 (684 Rooms)
Jan	5512	9260	10454	9051	7765	8031
Feb	6282	9662	11229	9539	8932	10928
March	9720	11124	12716	10130	11228	10450
April	13010	12795	14752	13926	13254	12827
May	20041	26371	26027	25425	27673	26178
June	42158	45020	45440	48724	49763	48967
July	67449	68341	69099	68748	70341	73920
Aug	61718	64356	59125	56884	63315	63194
Sept	31890	33998	33108	34183	34395	36975
Oct	20687	22133	19891	18471	21313	19500
Nov	11588	11710	12271	11050	10461	11500
Dec	9018	9906	9803	8416	9004	9000
Total	299,073	324,743	323,915	314,547	327,444	331,470

43rd Annual Grand Haven Sand Sculpture Contest

The 43rd Annual Sand Sculpture Contest brought an estimated 1,000 or more spectators to Grand Haven's beach, despite challenging weather conditions at the start of the day and a slightly lower-than-average number of participating teams.

Event participation and attendance
Ten teams participated, with most registering in advance and three additional teams joining on the day.
While team participation was somewhat below expectations, spectator attendance was strong, with more than 1,000 people gathering on the beach (an estimate, as exact attendance was difficult to measure). The morning began with particularly cold and windy conditions, likely deterring some potential participants and visitors. Fortunately, the weather improved throughout the day, becoming sunny and creating a much more enjoyable event atmosphere.

Transportation and visitor accessibility
A highly successful collaboration with Harbor Transit provided a Park-N-Ride shuttle service from Dunseide Discovery Center to City Beach, improving access to the event and helping alleviate parking pressures. Demand exceeded initial expectations, requiring Harbor Transit to deploy a second bus. Both buses were consistently full, transporting visitors to and from the beach from approximately 10 a.m. until 4 p.m with Harbor Transit reporting 442 riders. The partnership was a significant success and demonstrated the value of practical transportation solutions in supporting large community events.

Activities and event experience
The presence of Sand Pro Janet Schrader, offering lessons, has become a mainstay of the Sand Sculpture Contest and was a highlight for many. The City of Grand Haven provided valuable assistance with a front loader to prepare large piles of sand two evenings before the event, which provided a platform for the large-scale exhibition expertly sculpted by Paul Speu

Financial Sustainability & Three-Year Transition Plan
Through careful financial planning, community sponsorships and strategic partnerships, the Sand Sculpture Contest achieved a key milestone in its three-year transition plan: becoming a self-sustaining event. The anticipated revenue and sponsorship model proved successful, allowing the event to be delivered without requiring a direct monetary contribution from the CVB. This represents a significant achievement in establishing a sustainable model for the event's future.

Key takeaways and opportunities for next year
Overall, the event was a success, with strong spectator attendance, positive engagement from families, and an overwhelmingly successful transportation partnership, as well as a sand-preparation partnership with the City. The Storm the Castle activity proved particularly popular. While team participation was slightly below average, the challenging morning weather likely contributed. A few minor adjustments to sand preparation and setup will be considered for next year to further improve the participant experience and event logistics. The success of the Harbor Transit collaboration also provides a strong foundation for continuing and potentially expanding the partnership in future years.

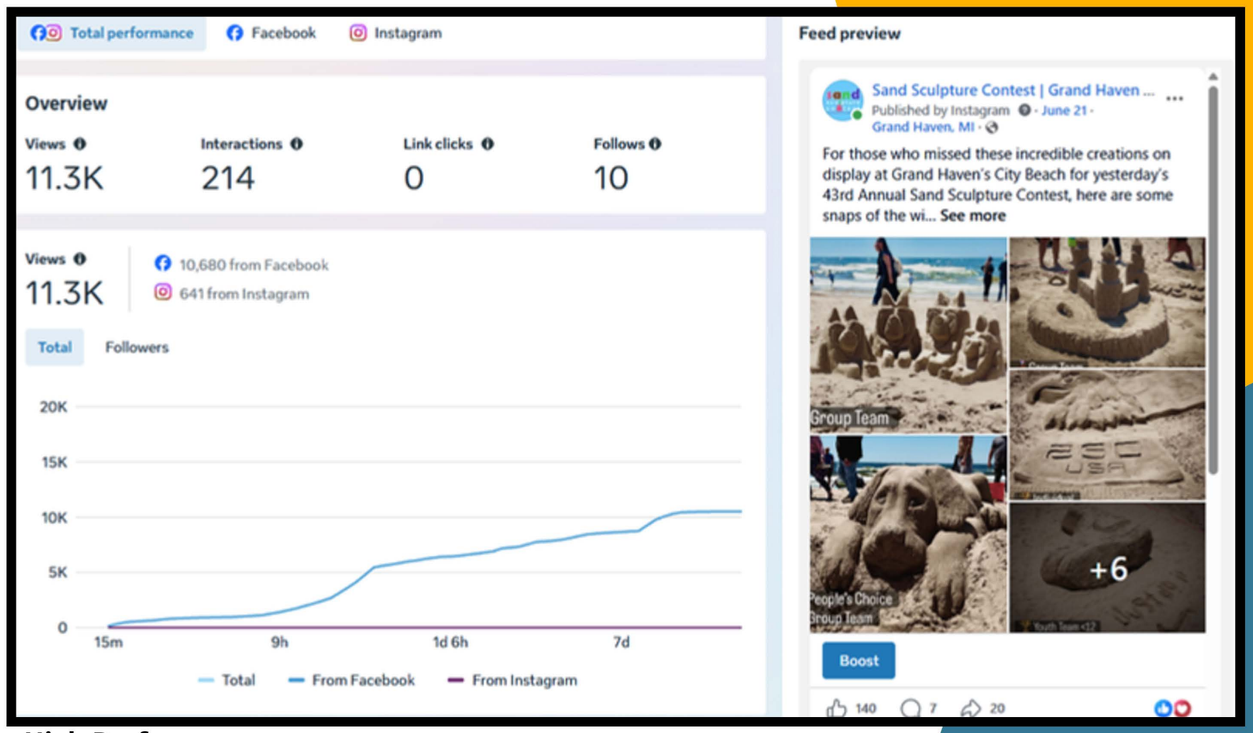


43rd Annual Grand Haven Sand Sculpture Contest - Social Media

The Sand Sculpture Contest's dedicated Facebook and Instagram accounts generated a combined 53,273 views and 780 content interactions in 2026.

42,796 total views
15,982 unique viewers
574 content interactions
39,219 organic views and 3,577 paid views

10,477 total views
3,519 unique viewers
206 content interactions
10,453 organic views and 24 paid views



High Performer

The contest's dedicated social media channels continued to generate strong organic visibility, with Facebook providing the largest share of overall views and audience engagement. Organic content played a particularly significant role in maintaining awareness and visibility for the event.

Behind the Scenes

•Concierge-style service (phone calls/walk-ins/emails)
•Visitor questions receive a response within 24 hours
•Create & distribute Monthly Events Newsletter
•Create & distribute Constant Contact E-Blast (19k)
•Summer Occupancy Report
•Website Updates
•Bulk Mailings
•Content creation, such as social media & blog posts, where we highlight area businesses and attractions.
•Local, State, National, and International Media Leads (photos, movies, interviews, fact-checking, location scouting, custom-built itineraries, local contacts, etc.).
• Tourism-related legislative oversight
•Identify and assess risks that may jeopardize the image and/or brand of the Grand Haven Area as a tourism destination. Work with local leaders to resolve current and prospective issues.

