

TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page #:
Recommendations list by organization: Rendezvous Region Tourism Council	8
Recommendations list by organization: Red River Regional Council	10
Introduction and purpose of this plan	13
Five driving factors of this new economy	14
How these factors drive this plan	15
Significant challenges, fixes & expected results	21
The process	28
Input from local residents	30
Implementation outcome	39
How to use this plan	43
RECOMMENDATIONS	45
2022 - Getting everything in place year	
1. Redevelop the Rendezvous Region Board	48
2. Define the regional boundaries: Red River Regional Council Rendezvous Region Tourism	50
3. Begin outreach to all 41 communities: participation in this program	56
4. Each community: Create a Destination [our town] Team	58
5. Establish a Rendezvous Region funding source: \$300,000 a year	59
6. Create a Brand Style Guide	61
7. Trademark new Rendezvous Region Brand identities	63
8. Secure an office location for Rendezvous Region staff	67
9. Begin the hiring process: Three full-time staff	68
10. Create the first of six printed guides: "The RV & Camping Guide to North Dakota's Rendezvous Region"	70
11. Put in place a distribution program for the RV & Camping Guide	73
12. Work with local campgrounds: Signage, contact information, on-site amenities, check-in process	74
13. Work with RV parks on listings: Campendium, GoodSam, AllStays and other sites	76
14. Contract for the design, fabrication, installation of visitor information kiosks and wall-mounted displays	80

Recommendation:	Page #:
15. Find and contract with the "Face of Tourism" - the on-camera person who will promote the region in video content	85
16. Identifying the Rendezvous Region brand	87
17. Contract for professional photography, videography: Four seasons to build a photo/b-roll library of images	93
18. Contract for professional marketing services: Graphic design, copywriting, PR, media buys, etc	98
19. Reach out to RV and camping YouTube channels, blogs, vlogs for 2023 content	102
20. Begin populating the Rendezvous Region YouTube channel	105
21. Work with Frost Fire board on the creation of a Master Development, Management & Marketing Action Plan	107
22. Identify hashtags for each community, waterway, attraction so visitors can "share the experience"	110
23. Develop Instagram, Facebook and other social media channels for each hashtag	111
2023 - Brand recognition, initial marketing, product development	
24. Contract with signage vendor to add hashtags to place identifier signage and gateways	112
25. Begin developing the Top 3 and Top 5 "must do" lists for RVers, fishing, hunting, paddling, geocaching, historical sites	113
26. Work with historical attractions on common operating months, days and hours	117
27. Create the second rack brochure: The Rendezvous Region History Trail	120
28. Distribute the History Trail brochure along with the RV & Camping Guide to kiosks, wall-mounted displays, and other locations	122
29. Create the third rack brochure: The Rendezvous Region Golf Guide	123
30. Work with golf courses to create a "Ticket to Paradise" golf promotion	124
31. Begin working with communities on implementing the Assessment Findings & Suggestions	127
32. Establish a Regional Development Authority with the ability to purchase, revitalize or remove dilapidated structures	129
33. Develop a Homesteading Act: The ability to grant properties for new development	131
34. Begin a billboard marketing campaign along Interstate 29 and Highway 2 corridors	132
35. Tie the billboard campaign to a regional PR effort: local news programs, social media, etc	136
36. Make sure the URL, on the home page, will direct website visitors to the Best Of lists	137
37. Issue an RFP for the purchase of brick and "barnwood" from buildings being removed	138
38. Work with local fire departments for "practice burns" of dilapidated no-longer-habitable buildings	139
39. Work with waterway authorities on highest and best recreational use of each waterway	140

Recommendation:		
	40. Redesign the Rendezvous Region website to a "pick your season, pick your passion" type of format	143
	41. Work with golf influencers, YouTube channels, blogs, vlogs, and golf publications	144
	42. Establish a youth outreach program in all local school districts for a "did you know" program	146
	43. Begin working with ND DOT on a comprehensive region-wide wayfinding system including TOD signage	148
	44. Apply for federal transportation grants to help offset the cost of the wayfinding system	150
	45. Hire two full time staff members with urban planning, landscape architecture, land-use expertise	151
	46. Create "The Very Best of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region" rack brochure, including due-diligence selection process	152
	47. Reach out to selected participants for funding and content for the Best Of brochure	156
	48. Add the Best Of brochure to the distribution program	157
	49. Mail the Best Of brochure to every household & business in the region	157
	50. Contract for weekly distribution of all rack brochures	158
	51. Work with cities and counties on redeveloping websites	159
	52. Work with local businesses and organizations on how to claim their Google, TripAdvisor listings	160
	53. Create the "Paddling Guide to the Rendezvous Region" rack brochure	161
	54. Add the Paddling Guide to the distribution program	162
	2024 - Tourism promotion, economic development	
	55. Create the Birding Guide to the Rendezvous Region	162
	56. Develop a "2024 Community Profile" for each county	163
	57. Develop a 2024 "Opportunities Guide to the Rendezvous Region"	164
	58. Cavalier, Grafton, Park River to begin development of programmed downtown plazas	165
	59. Begin aggressive Rendezvous Region SEO program to boost searches by activity	181
	60. Distribute the Community Profile/Opportunities brochures to real estate offices, economic development organizations, etc	182
	61. Develop the sixth rack brochure: "The Fishing & Hunting Guide to the Rendezvous Region."	183
	62. Contract or begin the development of the next Three Year Action Plan	184
	63. Begin working on renewed funding sources for Rendezvous Region marketing initiative	185
	64. Reach out to hunting and fishing influencers, YouTube channels, and publications	186

65. Begin a full-fledged PR effort with a focus on RVers, fishing and hunting, recreational enthusiasts	187
66. Invite clubs and organizational events & gatherings into the region	189
67. Work with local museums, farms, businesses in joining the Harvest Host, Boondockers Welcome programs	192
68. Create video content on how to find local jobs geared to seasonal, harvest, and digital nomads	193
69 Create a small travel book: "The Hidden Gems of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region"	194
70. Work with historical sites and attractions on social media and cross-selling initiatives	195
71. Integrate the Arts Across the Prairie program into the region and into the marketing program	196
A word about permanent funding	197
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	199
ESRI demographic report: Pembina County	200
ESRI demographic report: Walsh County	202
ESRI demographic report: Nelson County	204
ESRI demographic report: Grand Forks County	
Notes	208
Contact information	212



RECOMMENDATIONS BY ORGANIZATION: RENDEZVOUS REGION TOURISM

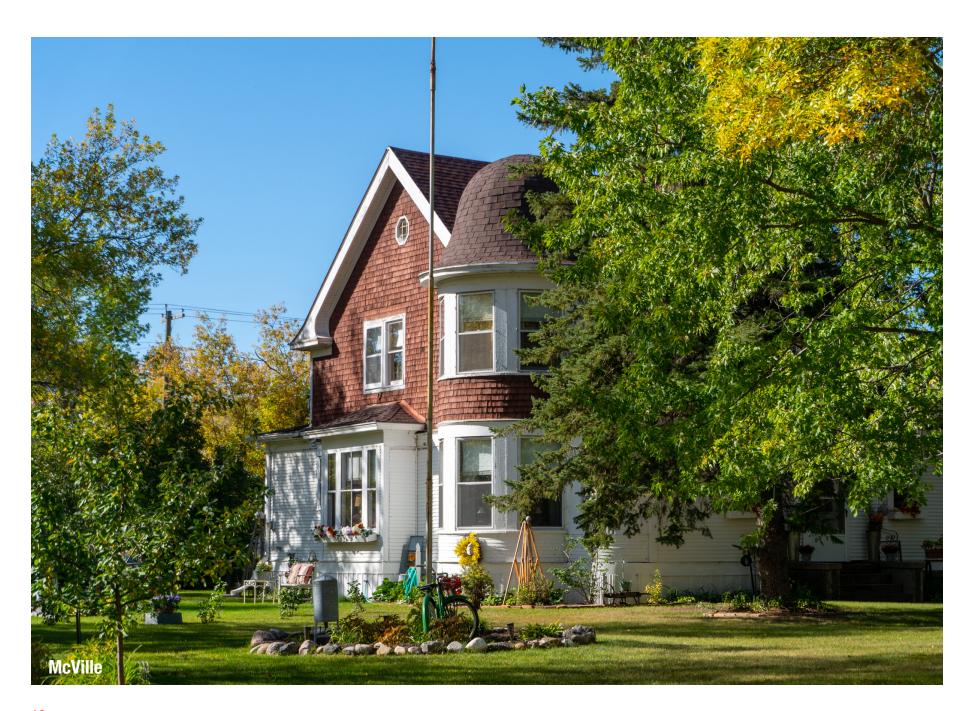
	1. Redevelop the Rendezvous Region board	48
Ī	2. Define the regional boundaries: Red River Regional Council Rendezvous Region Tourism	50
	3. Establish a Rendezvous Region funding source: \$300,000 a year	59
	4. Contract for the creation of a Brand Style Guide	61
	5. Trademark new Rendezvous Region Brand identities	63
	6. Secure an office location for Rendezvous Region staff	
Ē	7. Begin the hiring process: Three full-time staff	68
	8. Create the first of six printed guides: "The RV & Camping Guide to North Dakota's Rendezvous Region"	70
	9. Put in place a distribution program for the RV & Camping Guide	73
	10. Find and contract with the "Face of Tourism" - the on-camera person who will promote the region in video content	85
	11. Contract for professional photography, videography: Four seasons to build a photo/b-roll library of images	93
	12. Contract for professional marketing services: Graphic design, copywriting, PR, media buys, etc	98
	13. Reach out to RV and camping YouTube channels, blogs, vlogs for 2023 content	102
	14. Begin populating the Rendezvous Region YouTube channel	105
	15. Identify hashtags for each community, waterway, attraction so visitors can "share the experience"	110
	16. Develop Instagram, Facebook and other social media channels for each hashtag	111
	2023 - Brand recognition, initial marketing, product development	
	17. Begin developing the Top 3 and Top 5 "must do" lists for RVers, fishing, hunting, paddling, geocaching, historical sites	113
	18. Create the second rack brochure: The Rendezvous Region History Trail	120
	19. Distribute the History Trail brochure along with the RV & Camping Guide to kiosks, wall-mounted displays, and other locations	122
	20. Create the third rack brochure: The Rendezvous Region Golf Guide	123
	21. Work with golf courses to create a "Ticket to Paradise" golf promotion	124
	22. Begin a billboard marketing campaign along Interstate 29 and Highway 2 corridors	132
	23. Tie the billboard campaign to a regional PR effort: local news programs, social media, etc.	136
Г	24. Make sure the URL, on the home page, will direct website visitors to the Best Of lists	137

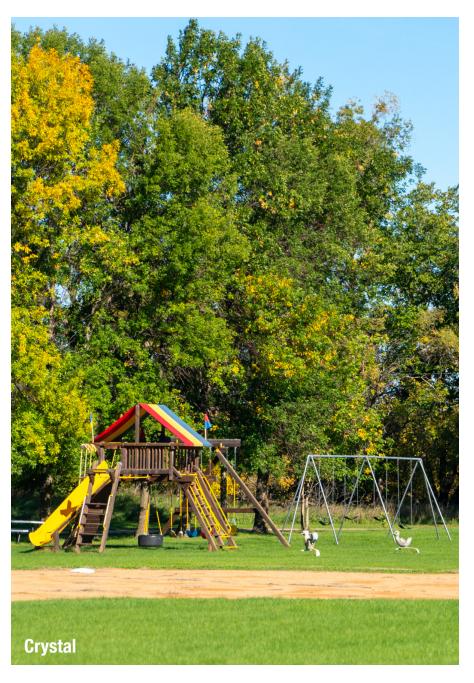
25. Work with waterway authorities on highest and best recreational use of each waterway	140
26. Redesign the Rendezvous Region website to a "pick your season, pick your passion" type of format	143
27. Work with golf influencers, YouTube channels, blogs, vlogs, and golf publications	144
28. Create "The Very Best of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region" rack brochure, including due-diligence selection process	152
29. Reach out to selected participants for funding and content for the Best Of brochure	156
30. Add the Best Of brochure to the distribution program	157
31. Mail the Best Of brochure to every household & business in the region	158
32. Contract for weekly distribution of all rack brochures	158
33. Create the "Paddling Guide to the Rendezvous Region" rack brochure	161
34. Add the Paddling Guide to the distribution program	162
35. Create the "Rendezvous Region Birding Guide"	162
2024 - Tourism promotion, economic development	
36. Begin aggressive Rendezvous Region SEO program to boost searches by activity	181
37. Develop the sixth rack brochure: "The Fishing & Hunting Guide to the Rendezvous Region."	183
38. Contract or begin the development of the next Three Year Action Plan	184
39. Begin working on renewed funding sources for Rendezvous Region marketing initiative	185
40. Reach out to hunting and fishing influencers, YouTube channels, and publications	186
41. Begin a full-fledged PR effort with a focus on RVers, fishing and hunting, recreational enthusiasts	187
42. Invite clubs & organizational events into the region	189
43. Work with local museums, farms, businesses in joining the Harvest Host, Boondockers Welcome programs	192
44. Create a small travel book: "The Hidden Gems of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region"	194
45. Work with historical sites and attractions on social media and cross-selling initiative	195
	26. Redesign the Rendezvous Region website to a "pick your season, pick your passion" type of format. 27. Work with golf influencers, YouTube channels, blogs, vlogs, and golf publications. 28. Create "The Very Best of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region" rack brochure, including due-diligence selection process. 29. Reach out to selected participants for funding and content for the Best Of brochure. 30. Add the Best Of brochure to the distribution program 31. Mail the Best Of brochure to every household & business in the region. 32. Contract for weekly distribution of all rack brochures. 33. Create the "Paddling Guide to the Rendezvous Region" rack brochure 34. Add the Paddling Guide to the distribution program 35. Create the "Rendezvous Region Birding Guide" 2024 - Tourism promotion, economic development 36. Begin aggressive Rendezvous Region SEO program to boost searches by activity 37. Develop the sixth rack brochure: "The Fishing & Hunting Guide to the Rendezvous Region." 38. Contract or begin the development of the next Three Year Action Plan 39. Begin working on renewed funding sources for Rendezvous Region marketing initiative. 40. Reach out to hunting and fishing influencers, YouTube channels, and publications. 41. Begin a full-fledged PR effort with a focus on RVers, fishing and hunting, recreational enthusiasts. 42. Invite clubs & organizational events into the region. 43. Work with local museums, farms, businesses in joining the Harvest Host, Boondockers Welcome programs. 44. Create a small travel book: "The Hidden Gems of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region".

RECOMMENDATIONS BY ORGANIZATION: RED RIVER REGIONAL COUNCIL

	Define the regional boundaries: Red River Regional Council Rendezvous Region Tourism	48
Ē	2. Begin outreach to all 41 communities: participation in this program	54
Ī	3. Each community: Create a Destination [our town] Team	56
	4. Work with local campgrounds: Signage, contact info, check-in information, on-site amenities, etc.	72
	5. Work with RV parks on listings: Campendium, GoodSam, AllStays and other sites	74
	6. Contract for the design, fabrication, installation of visitor information kiosks and wall-mounted displays	78
Ē	7. Work with Frost Fire board on the creation of a Master Development, Management & Marketing Action Plan	105
	2023 - Brand recognition, initial marketing, product development	
	8. Contract with signage vendor to add hashtags to place identifier signage and gateways	110
	9. Work with historical attractions on common operating months, days and hours	115
	10. Begin working with communities on implementing the Assessment Findings & Suggestions	125
	11. Establish a Regional Development Authority with the ability to purchase, revitalize or remove dilapidated structures	127
	12. Work with the state on creating a Homesteading Act	129
	12. Issue an RFP for the purchase of brick and "barnwood" from buildings being removed	135
	13. Work with local fire departments for "practice burns" of dilapidated no-longer-habitable buildings	137
	14. Establish a youth outreach program in all local school districts for a "did you know" program	144
	15. Begin working with ND DOT on a comprehensive region-wide wayfinding system including TOD signage	146
	16. Apply for federal transportation grants to help offset the cost of the wayfinding system	148
	17. Hire two full time staff members with urban planning, landscape architecture, land-use expertise	149
	18. Work with cities and counties on redeveloping websites	157
	19. Work with local businesses and organizations on how to claim their Google, TripAdvisor listings	158
	2024 - Tourism promotion, economic development	
	20. Develop a "2024 Community Profile" for each county	161
	21. Develop a 2024 "Opportunities Guide to the Rendezvous Region"	163
	22. Cavalier, Grafton, Park River to begin development of programmed downtown plazas	164
Г	23. Distribute the Community Profile/Opportunities brochures to real estate offices, economic development organizations, etc	180







INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

In June of 2021 the Red River Regional Council contracted with Roger Brooks International to develop a Region 4 Tourism/Destination/Community Development Action Plan that will increase visitor traffic and spending (tourism), attract new residents, and increase economic activity in the four most Northeastern counties of North Dakota: Pembina, Walsh, Nelson and Grand Forks counties.

This plan is the result of this year-long effort, the Destination Development & Marketing Action Plan.

To begin increasing the population in these counties

To put the Rendezvous Region "on the map" as a desirable place to live, visit, invest in, & raise a family.

To slow the leakage of locally earned money being spent elsewhere.



FIVE DRIVING FACTORS OF THE NEW ECONOMY

1. QUALITY OF LIFE. For the first time in U.S. history, quality of life is leading economic development. Jobs are going where the talent is - or wants to be. This means that community development (quality of life) is leading both economic and tourism development.

In other words, it is critical to this effort to make the 42 incorporated communities in these four counties more desirable places to live, work, invest in, and visit. Doing so will require both physical changes in most of these communities (product development) as well as a top-notch marketing effort.

2. TOURISM is the front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts. Nothing showcases the quality of life better than tourism, which focuses on your primary attractions, activities, and supporting amenities. This includes the dozens of lakes in the region: fishing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, stand-up-paddle boarding, etc.

Tourism also showcases your state and local parks, campgrounds, trail systems, golf courses, downtown shops and eateries, festivals and events, and other community assets.

Anyone looking to invest in a community will come first as a visitor. Is this a place a site selector's client would want to be? Their employees? Does it include the priorities (item #5 on this list) demanded by young families? What are the first impressions when visitors come into town? Does it seem welcoming? Proactive in making the community a better place to live?

3. THE RISE OF RURAL. The COVID pandemic, unprecedented inflation, and the degradation of urban core areas have created a major shift in where Americans are deciding to live.

The rural areas are perceived, and rightly so, as having cleaner air and water, less social distancing demands, lower costs of housing, abundant recreation, fewer negative social issues, and a stronger sense of community and belonging.

4. WORK FROM ANYWHERE. We are now in the "work from anywhere" movement, another major shift taking place during the pandemic. Remote workers have learned how to effectively work from virtually anywhere that

has strong Internet access. Many workers now realize that where they live does NOT mean their primary residence needs to be near their place of employment. And many employers are seeing improved productivity from their remote workers - no matter where they are located.

5. THE MILLENNIAL PRIORITY LIST. Since the early days of American history, people relocated to where the jobs were, which of course was necessary in an industrial-based economy. As we've entered a global economy, many of those jobs were sent overseas, leaving shrinking populations in much of rural America.

Millennials, the largest generation in American history, now in their late 20s, and 30s, have redefined the priorities they look for when relocating to a new area or town. Job availability is no longer the highest priority.

According to Forbes, USA Today, the U.S. Census Bureau, research organizations, and others, the following is the priority-list for Millennials, most of whom are just now starting to raise families:

- 1. A great place to raise a family: Good schools, safety, child care, and healthy environment and good health-care options
- 2. An engaged community, a sense of belonging (with cultural depth)
- 3. Recreation: Sports facilities, playgrounds, trail systems, waterways, etc.
- 4. Affordability
- 5. Jobs or entrepreneurial opportunities

This major shift, alone, is good news for rural areas and medium-sized cities, such as Grand Forks, and proves why the other four driving factors are shifting the way we live, where we live, and how.

HOW THESE FACTORS DRIVE THIS PLAN

This plan includes a first-rate tourism marketing plan that will pull people into the "Rendezvous Region," the tourism marketing effort for Northeastern North Dakota.

Once implementation of the marketing effort is underway, it's critically important that the communities present a good first impression, feel safe, and are welcoming. It's critical that businesses are inviting and have good curb appeal, and be open with consistent hours and operating days.

Marketing will bring people to you just once. The ONLY thing that brings them back is your product:

- The primary activity that attracted them to you
- Complimentary activities, such as local shops, eateries, parks, historical sites, etc.
- Your amenities: parking, public restrooms, visitor information
- The people they interact with

If hundreds of thousands of dollars are secured and spent marketing the Rendezvous Region, the primary and secondary tourism activities, local businesses (spending opportunities), and the people they meet MUST be good enough to close the sale. Otherwise this entire effort will be for naught.

In the end, you will be defined by your product – not your marketing.

Implementation of this plan will begin in mid-2022, and the first year and a half (through 2023) will be the "getting ready" period. This means this effort includes 18 months to get the communities ready for the major push that will attract new residents, business investment, and visitors.

There is a lot to do in just 18 short months.







For the first time in U.S. history quality of life is leading economic development. As noted above, jobs are now going where the talent is - or wants to be. This is part of the reason for the growth in the Grand Forks area.

Nothing showcases quality of life, or community development, like tourism, which focuses on your top recreational activities, local amenities such as playgrounds and sports facilities, and your local schools.



The Rendezvous Region has been hard at work developing additional photography (year round) and, through this plan, new video content, and a regional billboard advertising campaign.







Anyone coming into the area will come first as a visitor. Is this a place their client would want to establish a business? Will their employees want to live in the area? What are the communities like? Are the locals welcoming? Open to change or growth?

The Rendezvous Region marketing program will help answer these questions. Finally, tourism, on its own, is a great way to welcome new visitors.

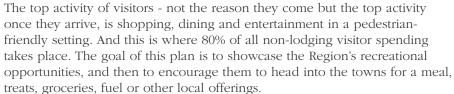


In fact, it's the purest form of economic development: Visitors come, spend money, then head back home. No need for social services, additional housing, increased policing, etc.



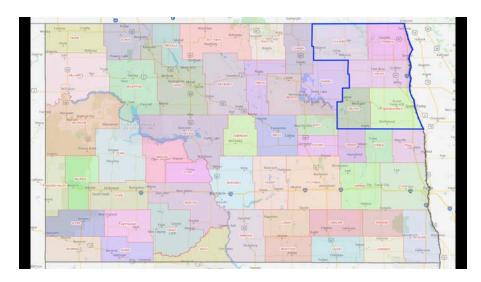








This is also why much of this plan concentrates on things local businesses can do to pull new customers into their saloons, shops and eateries. This includes beautification (curb appeal), better signage, posted operating days and hours, and other low-cost improvements designed to increase sales and better showcase what each community has to offer.



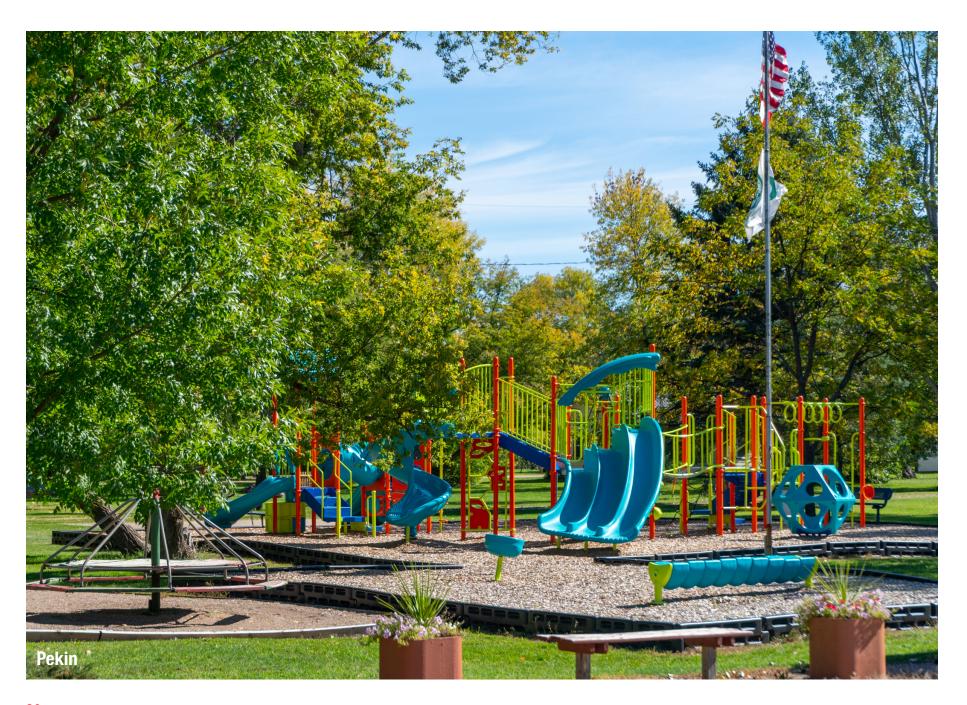




The most cost-effective marketing priority in this plan is a billboard campaign which will help local residents realize they are actually in the Rendezvous Region. This is important since the top reason for travel is to visit friends and relatives. Studies have shown that when people see the same message seven times, they will remember it. This is Top of Mind Awareness, and billboards are a great way to achieve this. The chart, top right, shows how many "impressions" (how many people will see the billboards) each year.



Another important element will be working with major market media in both Grand Forks and Fargo so that newscasters and weather teams will begin referring to this area of North Dakota as the "Rendezvous Region" much as they identify the "Devil's Lake" area during weather and other news events. This will help spread the word so that, over time, every resident and visitor is aware of where and what the Rendezvous Region includes.



SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES, FIXES & RESULTS

The following chapter outlines significant challenges facing the region along with major strategies that can be implemented to help alleviate those challenges.



IMAGE

North Dakota has an image problem. Other than long harsh winters, which can also be found in every Midwest state, it isn't that people have a negative image of North Dakota - they have little or no perception of North Dakota.

When you mention Alaska, people immediately imagine and are awed by its mountains and glaciers, grizzly bears and wildlife, the untamed wilderness, legendary fishing and hunting - all of which overshadow its long harsh winters.

The western side of South Dakota is known for Mt. Rushmore, Custer State Park, the Badlands, the Black Hills, Deadwood and Sturgis - and this focus puts the entire state "on the map" as a storied must-visit destination.

Sarah Otte-Coleman, North Dakota's Tourism Director, does an amazing job with one of the smallest tourism marketing budgets in the nation. But when the states around you are spending as much as ten times more to promote tourism, the state is simply overshadowed by them.

Generally speaking, the only time the American public hears about North Dakota is when a natural disaster, such as major flooding, puts the state on the national news.

THE FIX: A better-funded tourism marketing program, more investment in product development (the experiences visitors come to expect or make a special trip to do).

The state, and its legislative body, needs to understand that tourism marketing is NOT only about attracting visitors into the state. It's also the best way to showcase your quality of life, your history, your cultural offerings, your communities, your festivals and events.

Tourism is the fastest, cheapest, easiest way to get an economy moving again. AND it's an easy, affordable way to get outsiders singing your praises - selling the state for you. Finally, it's the best way to introduce North Dakota to first-time visitors. Many may realize that North Dakota is a fantastic state to

live and raise a family in, start or move a business to, or to come back to visit time and again.

There are several recommendations in this plan geared to improving the perceptions of North Dakota, beyond just better funding of your tourism marketing efforts.

Much has to start locally. In several communities, we were photographing the town, walking or driving while checking out neighborhoods, parks, schools, or local businesses only to have local residents asking us "What the heck are you doing here?" Or staring at us when we're trying to have lunch in a local eatery.

And finally, the western side of North Dakota is clearly part of "The West," where the eastern side of the state is clearly in the Midwest, leaving the state in a quandry as to where it fits in. Your neighbors to the south are so strong as part of the west, with its western culture (Deadwood, Custer State Park, etc.) that the entire state is easily seen as part of the west.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

As noted earlier, in the end you will be judged by your product, not your marketing. In what we've researched, North Dakota is near the bottom of all 50 states in percentage of public recreational lands. Recently, we read an article that noted that 90% of North Dakota's total lands are used for agriculture. This leaves just 10% for residential, commercial, urban and suburban development, and recreation. And most of the state's recreational lands are in the western side of the state, home to your national park and national grasslands.

Product development might include developing public-private partnerships for sharing some lands for public use: trails, wildlife viewing, hunting, etc.

THE FIX: There are numerous recommendations in this plan dedicated to product development. In fact, the majority of the implementation costs are focused solely on product development. An easy fix is to start marketing your lakes - not dams. Your dams are not like Grand Coulee or Hoover Dam, where the dam itself is the primary attraction. Locally your dams are not a primary benefit to attracting visitors. In driving nearly 2,000 miles in these

four counties, we encountered Larimore Dam, Homme Dam, Fordville and a couple dozen "dams."

Water-based activities are the top tourism draw in the world, be it on lakes, rivers, or oceans. Renaming these waterways "lakes" (even reservoirs are commonly referred to as lakes) will greatly enhance the Rendezvous Region's tourism efforts.

The primary benefit of tourism is getting people to spend money in your four counties. A big part of the marketing effort will be to promote eateries, local museums and historical sites, and local shops. If you can't monetize your tourism effort, then there's no local benefit to attracting people to your lakes and recreational offerings.

Here's an example: The marketing effort might include promoting Lake Larimore (rather than Larimore Dam) for its kayaking, canoeing and stand-up paddle-boarding, but also encouraging lake visitors to stop in for lunch at DB's The Station, a great restaurant that is themed for its first-responder fire departments. Or perhaps encouraging visitors to rent and try a stand-up-paddle board, perhaps a small business opportunity locally. Or to stop in a shop for fishing tackle and bait.

This means the businesses, which will be promoted specifically, must be enticing to visitors. Probably 19 out of every 20 businesses we saw in the rural communities (outside of the City of Grand Forks) did little or nothing to pull us, as visitors, in their doors. In most cases we weren't sure if the businesses were even still operating.

APATHY

It was disappointing to hear a local elected official tell me that the weather in North Dakota is horrible ten months of the year, and another telling me "We don't want damn tourists in our town." We got a LOT of comments by frontline workers along the line "Why North Dakota?" when we told them we were checking out the area. The "there's nothing here" attitude has festered for generations, leading the state's youth to commonly state that "I'm blowing this state the second I graduate." Exporting your educated youth is not a good way to grow the population.

There are recommendations in this plan that address this issue. Over a twomonth period, we ate and shopped in dozens of local establishments, and while the workers were friendly, they could not imagine why anyone would be looking at their community or even visiting the area. When asking "what is there to do around here?" the universal answer was typically "nothing."

THE FIX: Kids, in grade schools, need to be taught what's great about North Dakota and why it's a great place to live. There are recommendations in this plan that will help stem the tide of self-deprecation towards North Dakota.

Nearly a dozen of the communities in the region need to be unincorporated. They simply do not have the tax base to invest in making their communities more desirable places to live. Nearly all are supported, already, by county services. And those that would like to be unincorporated do not have the funding to do so. This is a service the state could provide to them.

When showcasing the communities during the Assessment process, we took time to show photography of each town: the fall color, playgrounds, homes decorated for fall, well-manicured landscapes, nice churches, etc. After each presentation locals would come up to us and say, "Wow! Our town isn't so bad after all."

And, of course, it's not all roses. In the online questionnaire nearly 600 local residents weighed in and a common thread was begging someone, somewhere, to help eliminate boarded up commercial buildings, falling down shacks, abandoned homes and vehicles. A lot of local residents are embarrassed to admit they live in a town that seems to be dying or where the eyesores bring the perception of the community down to a substandard level

This is where the state's Accelerate North Dakota program is so important to this effort.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As you read through these challenges, keep in mind that none of them are insurmountable. But they start with marketing: the ability to pull people from other areas into the region to "check it out." And then comes product development: delivering on the promise of a great experience once these folks

arrive – and being able to monetize the marketing by pulling visitors into towns, eateries, campgrounds, hotels, and local shops.

As you've heard a thousand times before, first impressions are lasting impressions. And new residents want to locate in communities where they see positive change. In visiting nearly half of the 42 communities in the region, our first impressions were positive: lots of trees, local parks in good condition, home owners that do a good job to look inviting with well-manicured landscapes, etc. But then on a closer look they might see a few, or in many cases, dozens of abandoned, boarded up or collapsing commercial buildings, homes and churches.

THE FIX: Funding the Accelerate ND program, which provides funding to purchase uninhabitable buildings and have them either removed or redeveloped. The outcome of this would open up these properties for homesteading - attracting new residents or small businesses.

In the midst of assessing the towns, we came into one small town where three formerly dilapidated homes had been used as practice burns for the local fire department. Our first reaction to this was "Wow! This town is working to clean up its mess. They are proactive, and this would be a great place to live. To be a part of this 'change."

JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

So, in this process, marketing brings people in to see what you have to offer. If you deliver on the promise (a good experience), many may decide that the area they are visiting would be a great place to live. Next on their list is to make sure they can make a living in or near the community. So the search for jobs or entrepreneurial opportunities begins.

Like much of the country, there is a shortage of workers in the region. In fact, recent statistics (March 2022) state that more than 11 million jobs are still open across the country.

When providing the keynote address at North Dakota's Main Street conference in 2019, Roger Brooks was told that the state has more than 60,000 job openings, with a good share of those paying \$100,000 or more a year.



The state's major employers don't seem to be using traditional job search websites like Indeed.com or Monster.com. So where do people go to learn about finding jobs - AND entrepreneurial opportunities in North Dakota? We looked at the Job Services North Dakota website (jobsnd.com), which is a very comprehensive website with a lot of great detail. However, if I decided to move to Pembina County, and I search for any job openings in that area, the site tells me there are 5,100 openings. But searching through them NONE are in Pembina County and are, in fact, scattered all over the state of North Dakota.

The challenge is that if we find a community we really would like to live in, and then search for jobs or business opportunities in the area, we're not sure where a person would start looking. This website, unfortunately, doesn't help.

THE FIX: The fix would be to help job-seekers find jobs using specific geographic criteria – a particular zip code, or county, or community and then look within a certain commute radius. AND secondly, to post job or business opportunities in that area.

HOMESTEADING

This is where you "close the sale." Implementation of this plan will provide an effective marketing program bringing new visitors into the state and into the Rendezvous Region. Then as the communities better develop ways to pull visitors into their towns, shops and restaurants, and create an inviting atmosphere, they will tell their friends and families about the great experience they are having, and that will dramatically improve the image and perceptions of the state - and the region.

The goal is to have a portion of these visitors wanting to relocate to the area. They will look for earning capabilities and then a place to call home or to establish a business.

Earlier we talked about the fact that 90% of all lands in the state are established for agriculture, leaving little available land for new residential development. But the focus should not be on new undeveloped land, but on



revitalization or redevelopment of existing properties - both residential and commercial.

Through the Accelerate ND program, the state, and its regional partners, would purchase properties, remove blight and public safety concerns, and then many of these now vacant lots can be given away as homesteading opportunities to new residents. In some cases, buildings can still be repurposed and revitalized, and then sold to private sector businesses, putting them (in both cases) back on the tax roles.

Cities all around the country have been incentivizing people to move to their communities. Tulsa, Oklahoma is offering \$15,000 and a plethora of incentives to get people to work remotely for two years from Tulsa. Dozens of other cities and towns have followed suit.

But this plan includes a better idea: What if you were to grant new residents (from out of state or from the urban areas) a piece of property - with strings attached. For instance, they would be required to build a home on the site: no mobile homes or RVs. It would need to be a "stick-built" home or a modular home.

Construction would need to begin within 18 months of acquiring the property, or it will revert back to the "Redevelopment Agency." And once construction begins, it would need to be completed within 18 months. Perhaps the home would need to be at least 1,100 square feet (sorry, no tiny homes).

The Homesteading Act would provide access to private-sector lenders, approved builders, with incentives to "buy local," with perhaps Marvin Windows providing wholesale discounts to new home owners in the area.

And if the new homeowner decided to then sell the house and build on another homesteading site, that would be great. The Homesteading Act would encourage this, creating more housing inventory, creating construction and supplier jobs, while revitalizing a town.

The same could apply to commercial districts. In the smaller towns, there's little chance - in this Amazon.com age - that retail will revive, meaning

the commercial buildings in their downtowns could be removed to make for room for residential, or could be converted to live/work space. Homesteading would work for both commercial and residential zoned or designated properties.

We have heard of young families who, as a group of friends, will come into a town, homestead three or four lots, and then work very hard to make the town an even better place to live and invest in.

MILLENNIALS

The largest generation in American history, this group of young families (for the most part) have a lot going for them:

- They are the most civically-minded generation in U.S. history. In fact, there are more mayors in their 20s and 30s today than at any other time in American history. They want to be involved. This means that the communities run by the "good 'ole boys" network needs to make way for future generations. Without change, communities are dying.
- Millennial fathers spend twice as much time with their kids as Boomers did.
- They are incredibly diverse and embrace it.
- They are the most educated generation in U.S. history
- They are extremely proactive rather than reactive

They are experts at attracting like-minded people. They have never known a time without the Internet, smart phones, and social media. They are your best means by which to attract young families back into a state with an aging population.

SUMMARY

This plan is geared to creating a North Dakota Pilot Program that we know, from first-hand experience in working with and studying other locations, will succeed and provide great results - the entire purpose of this plan.

North Dakota is home to eight regions, and we fully believe that each Regional Council could provide the vehicle for this effort. With a total population of less than a million people, working with regions is much more cost effective than working with 53 individual counties, or more than 400 cities and towns.

This program brings numerous state agencies, departments, and programs together - especially those under the wings of the Department of Commerce: Tourism, Economic Development, Finance, Main Street, Community Services, workforce development. And then add Recreation, State Parks, Dept. of Transportation, and programs such as Arts Across the Prairie.

This program brings all of these partners together, with a common goal and a tremendous amount of expertise, to repopulate the four counties of NE North Dakota, revitalize their communities, increase the tax base dramatically through commercial and residential redevelopment, increase job creation and retention, foster new investment, increase visitor spending, and increase the perceptions of North Dakota as the amazing state it really is.



THE PROCESS

It was extremely important that this be a boots-on-the-ground type of project with time spent in all 42 communities in the four counties to really obtain first-hand knowledge and a true reality-check as to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to any of the recommendations in this plan.

COUNTY TEAMS

To start the process, the Red River Regional Council assembled four County Teams that would represent the communities in each of the four counties.

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

Then Roger Brooks was introduced, and he provided a remote (during COVID) presentation "Shift Happens," which showcased the changes taking place across America and how those could affect the future of NE North Dakota.

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

At that presentation Roger introduced an online questionnaire allowing local residents and stakeholders an opportunity to weigh in on their communities' future. It began with several demographic questions followed by open-ended questions including the following:

- 1. What do you think the top three assets of your community are (besides its people)? Put them in order of priority.
- 2. What do you see as the three greatest challenges your community faces?
- 3. When friends and family visit, where do you take them (the top activities)?
- 4. What are your feelings regarding growth of your community?
- 5. If there are one, two or three things you'd like to see done locally, let us know what they are and why?
- 6. What else could, or should, be done locally to make your community even
- 7. Are you open to increasing tourism spending in your community?

Nearly 600 people weighed in, and the responses were very enlightening and helped shape much of this plan.

DESTINATION ASSESSMENTS

Then, over a five-week period, the Roger Brooks team performed a Destination Assessment of each community. They secretly-shopped each community wearing three hats: that of a potential resident, business interest or investor, and as a leisure visitor.

These photographic looks at each of the communities were presented in county-wide public "Assessment Findings & Suggestions Workshops," which were well attended in each of the four counties.

Each workshop showcased first impressions, overall appeal, neighborhoods, public facilities (parks, schools, medical facilities), downtown commercial buildings, and local businesses. For each shortcoming or challenge, a "suggestion" was included on how it could be addressed or corrected.

These were not recommendations, but ideas that locals could embrace to make their communities more welcoming and to build community pride.

This effort also included a Marketing Assessment - looking at local websites, social media channels, Internet searches pertaining to each community, Google Images, etc. as any potential resident or business interest would do. And it included reviewing state-wide marketing efforts as well.

REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANS AND STUDIES

The Brooks team then reviewed current plans and studies to see what efforts are already under way and to see how those could be dovetailed into this plan.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Over a two-day period Roger Brooks then met with numerous stakeholder groups, letting them offer ideas, opinions, plans they were working on, and challenges they face. This was very insightful.

RESEARCH AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

From months of meeting residents, business interests, local governments, and residents, this plan was developed and presented in May of 2022.





INPUT FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

Over a six-week period during the summer of 2021, an online questionnaire was developed and promoted to people in the four counties (Grand Forks, Walsh, Pembina and Nelson). More than 600 people provided input answering ten questions. The following is a summary of the key themes brought up by residents of the region.

The first questions focused on where people live, the age group they are in and other demographic information. If you'd like to see or review the full responses, contact the Red River Regional Council.

The following questions are of particular importance and would be a great resource, locally, to see what residents and business interests are thinking and have to say about the counties they live in.

Grand Forks County Online Questionnaire Response Summary

What do you think the three greatest assets are of the area you live in (besides local residents, friends, and neighbors)?

- 1. Good schools
- 2. Grand Forks downtown with its shops, restaurants, and the Greenway
- 3. Proximity to parks and nature
- 4. Feeling safe in the community

Comments include that there are strong inter-organizational partnerships, and there is low crime in the area.

What do you think the three greatest challenges are of the area you live in (besides residents, neighbors, or the weather)?

- 1. Lack of workforce
- 2. Lack of affordable housing
- 3. Lack of shopping and restaurants
- 4. Lack of things to do for all ages

Comments include:

- Rents are high, and affordable housing is hard to find. During the 1997 flood, much of the entry-level home supply was destroyed, and the housing market never recovered.

- There are plenty of bars in Grand Forks, but for those who want a different type of nightlife, it's hard to find.
- People don't know how to find out about events being held, so marketing of events could be improved.

When friends and family visit you, where do you take them?

- 1. Restaurants in Grand Forks
- 2. Shopping
- 3. Parks (including the Greenway, local parks, Icelandic, Turtle River, Devils Lake)
- 4. UND sporting events

What are your feelings for growth of the town or area you call home?

The majority (87.8%) say they would love to see it grow. 12.2% like it just the way it is now, and hope they maintain the current population.

Comments include:

- We need more people to meet the employment opportunities. People want more restaurants and to see the small, local businesses thrive.
- We don't have the community support to allow school growth and infrastructure to support more homes.
- Would love to see more small town businesses thrive.

If there are one, two, or three things you'd like to see happen locally, what would they be?

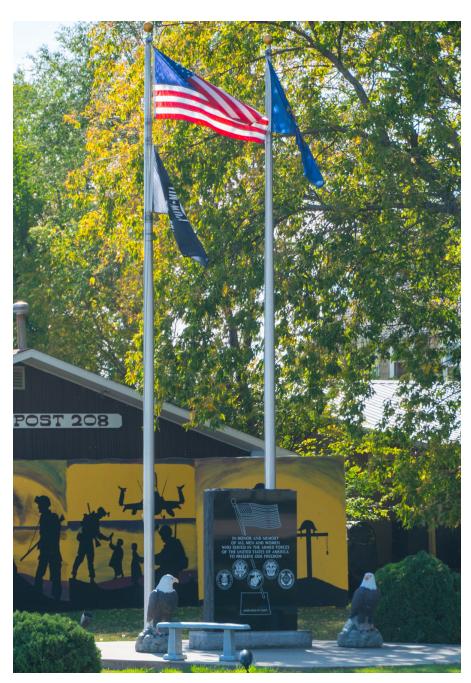
- 1. More activities and attractions for every age, including: an aquarium, children's museum, new park development, a water park, arts activities, community garden
- 2. More shopping and restaurants, including resurrecting Columbia Mall and expanding the farmers market
- 3. More affordable housing
- 4. More events, including historical
- 5. More childcare

What else could be done locally to make the area you call home an even better place to live and work in?

- 1. More activities and attractions for every age, including: a free community center, basketball court and pool tables at the mall, concerts, public library, a zoo, a Red River Valley museum, mini golf course
- 2. Promotions to help change attitudes to embrace the area and make it become more welcoming
- 3. High paying jobs
- 4. Fix the roads

Are you open to increasing tourism spending in your community?

The majority of respondents indicate that they are open to increasing tourism in the community – 87.8%. 9.8% are unsure.



Walsh County Online Questionnaire Response Summary

What do you think the three greatest assets are of the area you live in (besides local residents, friends, and neighbors)?

- 1. Small town atmosphere
- 2. Schools
- 3. Medical
- 4. Parks and outdoor recreation (especially the Grafton Parks Dept)
- 5. Safe community
- 6. Grocery store

What do you think the three greatest challenges are of the area you live in (besides residents, neighbors, or the weather)?

- 1. Lack of shopping and restaurants
- 2. Lack of activities for families, teens, children, and seniors
- 3. Lack of workforce
- 4. Lack of affordable housing
- 5. Lack of childcare

Comments include:

- There's not much for young people to do, and it's hard to meet others when you're new to the community, so why would young families move here?
- Leaders and many people are closed-minded to any change.
- Many buildings are run down and look bad.
- Need more shops and restaurants.

When friends and family visit you, where do you take them?

- 1. Out to a restaurant
- 2. City or local park (especially Leistikow Park)
- 3. Drive in the country or through the towns
- 4. Homme Dam
- 5. Events
- 6. Grand Forks

- 7. Theater/movies
- 8. Pembina Gorge

What are your feelings for growth of the town or area you call home?

89.6% of respondents would love to see their town or area grow. 10% say they would like it to stay the same.

Comments include: If it's not growing, it's dying.

- Would love to see downtown Grafton come alive and get cleaned up.
- We need more entertainment, restaurants, stores.
- We need more homes.

If there are one, two, or three things you'd like to see happen locally, what would they be?

- 1. More stores, including clothing, shoes, personal items, grocery
- 2. More restaurants
- 3. More community activities/events that are family friendly
- 4. Clean up downtown/make it vibrant/build a plaza downtown for activities, splash park
- 5. See more young families move into the community
- 6. More affordable housing
- 7. More activities/amenities for kids, such as a community center, arcade, indoor swimming pool, roller skating rink

What else could be done locally to make the area you call home an even better place to live and work in?

- 1. More community involvement, including young people, to create a stronger sense of unity. More coordination between private and public to get things done.
- 2. Clean up the downtown area and make it beautiful and welcoming.
- 3. More community activities and events, such as group kayak trips, pickleball lessons, band or choir, art classes, outdoor movie nights, etc.
- 4. More childcare
- 5. More affordable housing
- 6. More community leaders who are open to change

7. More marketing of events and activities

Are you open to increasing tourism spending in your community?

88.4% are open to increasing tourism spending in the community. 11.2% are unsure.

Comments included:

- We rely on visitors to keep our businesses, including eateries and bars, open.
- Bring more money to the area.
- There is already a shortage of employees for businesses; increased tourism may cause increased stress and staffing issues.
- We have a lot to offer and a vacation for someone might even result in people moving to this area.



Pembina County Online Questionnaire Response Summary

What do you think the three greatest assets are of the area you live in (besides local residents, friends, and neighbors)?

- 1. Pembina Gorge
- 2. Outdoor recreation (besides Pembina Gorge)
- 3. Quiet, safe, rural living
- 4. Frost Fire
- 5. Icelandic State Park
- 6. Schools

Comments include:

- Beautiful area with tremendous potential.
- We have good internet service, which is essential since we're so remote.
- Proximity to Canadian border is good—many Canadian visitors (when no COVID).

What do you think the three greatest challenges are of the area you live in (besides residents, neighbors, or the weather)?

- 1. Lack of shopping/too many businesses closing
- 2. Lack of restaurants
- 3. Lack of housing
- 4. Opposition to change
- 5. Lack of activities
- 6. Lack of workforce
- 7. Population loss
- 8. Lack of high paying jobs

Comments include:

- COVID has had a huge impact on the county because Canadians haven't been able to visit.
- Too many empty buildings. Too much negativity. Need childcare.

When friends and family visit you, where do you take them?

- 1. Restaurant or bar
- 2. Pembina Gorge
- 3. Icelandic State Park
- 4. Frost Fire
- 5. Scenic drives
- 6. Golf
- 7. Swimming pool
- 8. Museums and historical attractions

What are your feelings for growth of the town or area you call home?

93.9% of respondents say they would love to see their town or area grow. 6.1% just like it the way it is now.

Comments include:

- We need to grow; we need to bring young families into the community.
- Local businesses can't survive on just the local traffic. We need something to attract people back.

If there are one, two, or three things you'd like to see happen locally, what would they be?

- 1. More restaurants and shopping
- 2. More affordable housing
- 3. More community involvement and working together with a positive attitude
- 4. More community events and festivals
- 5. Clean up downtowns, storefronts, and people's homes so that the community looks good
- 6. Community center with fitness center
- 7. More young families moving here

What else could be done locally to make the area you call home an even better place to live and work in?

1. Improve the appearance of our towns with clean-up, demolishing old buildings, give buildings a face-lift

- 2. Bring in more shops, grocery stores
- 3. Stores need to be open on weekends and after 5:00
- 4. Improve people's attitudes—become welcoming and positive
- 5. More activities and events, such as farmers markets with music
- 6. Attract more young families to live in the area and become involved
- 7. Increase marketing to bring more tourists

Are you open to increasing tourism spending in your community?

94.9% of respondents are open to increasing tourism. 5.1% are unsure.

Comments include: Yes! Yes! Increasing tourism is very important to Pembina County. Tourism is essential.



Nelson County Online Questionnaire Response Summary

What do you think the three greatest assets are of the area you live in (besides local residents, friends, and neighbors)?

- 1. Small town, friendly atmosphere
- 2. Medical, hospital
- 3. Outdoor recreation, including McVille Dam, Stump Lake, parks, golf
- 4. Good schools
- 5. Grocery store

What do you think the three greatest challenges are of the area you live in (besides residents, neighbors, or the weather)?

- 1. Lack of basic shopping options and restaurants
- 2. Lack of jobs
- 3. Lack of housing
- 4. Distance to medical facilities and shopping
- 5. Lack of activities for all ages
- 6. Lack of workforce
- 7. Decreasing population
- 8. Road maintenance and public water problems

Comments include:

- One of the major concerns is housing.
- Many buildings are dilapidated, empty, and need to be torn down.
- Limited job opportunities.

When friends and family visit you, where do you take them?

- 1. Local restaurants or bars
- 2. Stump Lake Park
- 3. McVille Dam
- 4. Local park
- 5. Golf
- 6. Devils Lake
- 7. Grand Forks
- 8. Community events

What are your feelings for growth of the town or area you call home?

85.9% of respondents would love to see their community grow. 14.1% like it the way it is now and want to just maintain the current population.

Comments include:

- I would love to see the town grow and remodel parts of the town. But, I would also like to keep it a small town.
- I would like to see some growth especially a real grocery store.
- Need growth, but don't bring in the rif-raf.

If there are one, two, or three things you'd like to see happen locally, what would they be?

- 1. More housing
- 2. Grocery store
- 3. More shopping, businesses, restaurants
- 4. Indoor recreation
- 5. More social activities
- 6. Expand golf course
- 7. Indoor recreation/community center
- 8. More kids' activities
- 9. Small manufacturers for more jobs

What else could be done locally to make the area you call home an even better place to live and work in?

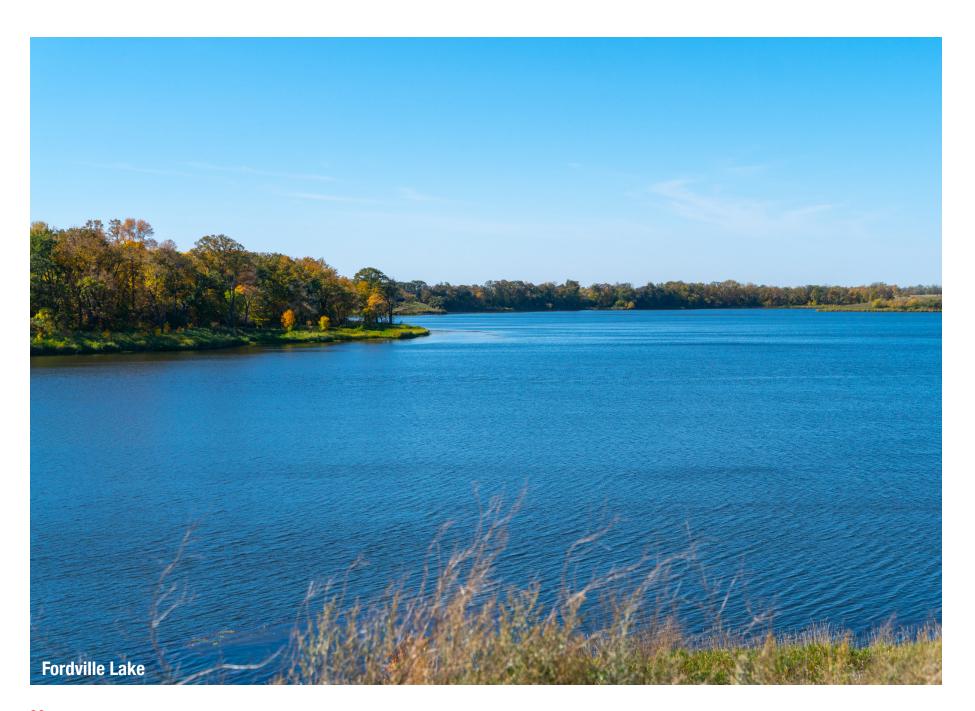
- 1. More community events and activities/entertainment
- 2. Clean up Main Street/get rid of falling-down buildings/increase curb appeal
- 3. More job opportunities
- 4. Fitness/recreation centers
- 5. More restaurants

Are you open to increasing tourism spending in your community?

90.2% of respondents are open to increasing tourism spending in the community. 6.5% are unsure, and 3.3% do not want to increase tourism spending in the community.

Comments include:

- I would love to see tourism increase but I feel the existing businesses already struggle finding workers so that issue would also need to be addressed.
- Would love more local shops.
- Currently there is no reason for anyone who lives outside of McVille to come here.
- We have amazing nature here.
- Safety concerns.
- Yes, I think a few people would have a hard time with any change, but anyone with common sense would know that without bringing in more people to spend money in the area, nothing is going to get any better.



IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOME

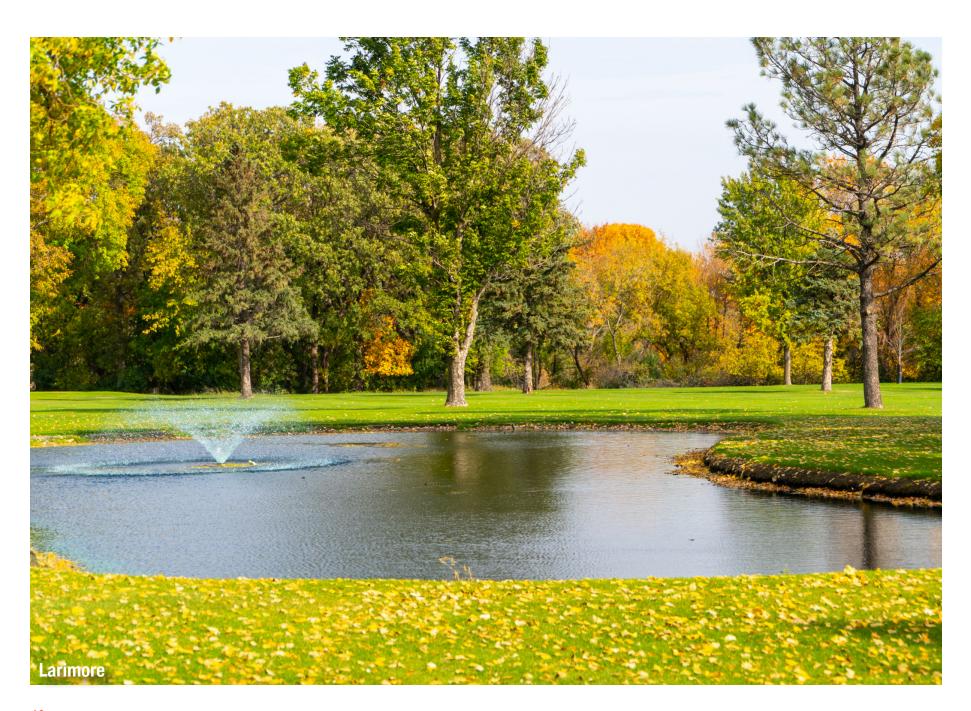
The ultimate goal of this plan is to begin increasing the population in these four counties, particularly in the rural areas that have seen population declines for the past several decades.

Tourism is the fastest, easiest way to convince consumers to visit the State of North Dakota. And once visitors are in the state, it will be key to convince them to visit the Northeastern most counties in the state. This is the first step.

But to succeed, the Rendezvous Region will need significant marketing dollars. To be successful, this will require an annual budget of at least \$250,000 a year. What would these funds be used for?

1. STAFFING. Three full-time marketing professionals would be hired to implement the marketing recommendations made in this plan. One would concentrate on public relations and social media—getting attention for this area. The second person would be charged with content development: This would include four seasons of photography, videography and B-roll footage, working with a "spokesperson" who would be the face of the campaign on camera in a series of two to seven-minute videos, which would be developed for a YouTube channel and other media and social media outlets.

The third staff member would manage the program as the Executive Director. This person would manage the budget, work with media influencers, work with the North Dakota Tourism office, and work with local attractions, activities and communities so that they are ready to welcome visitors into their cities and towns.



2. TOMA. About \$100,000 a year would be dedicated to advertising and public relations efforts. Often influencers require a stipend, or outright fee, in order to help promote the area.

Initially, a billboard program would be implemented so that local residents know what and where the Rendezvous Region is. While performing the Destination Assessment, we asked dozens of local front-line workers if they knew where the Rendezvous Region was. Other than local stakeholders (state parks, elected officials, chambers of commerce, tourism-based businesses) not a single person was aware of the Rendezvous Region.

This is certainly not the fault of the Rendezvous Region, but is due to lack of financial resources to make sure everyone IS, in fact, aware of the Region.

Leasing billboards along Interstate-29 and Highways 2, 17 and 5 (where and when available) that would include messaging along the lines of "Welcome to the Rendezvous Region" and a secondary message such as "Top 3 Must Do's: RendezvousRegion.com"

Other messages would include "Top 3 SUP lakes," or "Top 3 golf destinations," or "Top 5 camping spots" and other teasers designed to create a call to action.

This campaign is designed to accomplish several things:

- Let local commuters AND visitors know they are IN the Rendezvous Region
- To tease both locals and visitors to go to the website to satisfy their curiosity, "What are these top three or top five activities?"
- To create Top of Mind Awareness, or TOMA. When people see these messages at least seven times, they will know what, and where, the Rendezvous Region is, and they won't forget it.
- This will also create community pride. After all, we're promoting the very best of what the area has to offer.

This campaign would utilize billboards between leasing periods to save costs. These are typically vinyl wraps, meaning they can be re-used and re-positioned around the region.

While 2022 will be the "getting ready" year, the "Outdoor" or billboard campaign would run from April of 2023 through at least October (during harvest) - and then beyond, based on available funding.

3. CONTENT. The third key ingredient is making sure the Rendezvous Region website, social media pages, and YouTube channel include the content necessary to "close the sale."

This includes top-notch professional photography, videography, and an oncamera spokesperson "selling" the "Very Best of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region."

This includes creating "Top 3" and "Top 5" things to do in various categories such as fishing, boating, hunting, hiking, biking, ATVing, wildlife viewing and others.

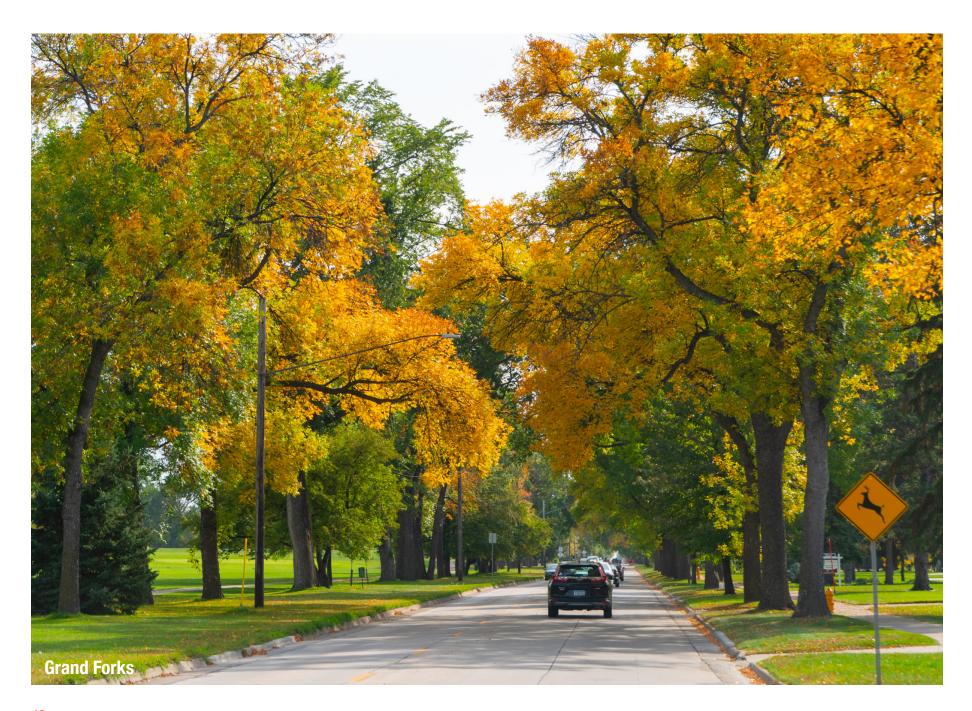
This would also include working with online influencers in these various categories so they are also spreading the word of what this area has to offer.

Any print or online advertising would be placed in niche markets such as Hunting and Fishing News, Bicycling Magazine and in various niche market publications that reach target audiences in the Midwest and West.

4. SPENDING. The fourth, and primary goal of this effort, is to pull visitors into the towns for groceries, gas, supplies, restaurants, and retail shops. The best of these would be promoted in a brochure "The Very Best of the Rendezvous Region." This would be available as a download, and would also be included in visitor information kiosks placed in each of the towns at key locations.

The Assessment Findings and Suggestions were presented to each county and provided in digital format under separate cover to the Red River Regional Council. Each town should begin implementing the suggestions offered. Addressing items such as curb appeal (beautification), blade signs, paint, operating days and hours is not so much for the locals (although it will help build community pride) but for visitors. The old saying "you can lead a horse to water but you can't make them drink" applies here. The tourism effort will bring visitors into the region's towns, but curb appeal is what will "close the sale,' convincing visitors to head on in to the various shops and eateries.

As visitors discover these Rendezvous Region towns, the goal is to get some of them to decide the town would be a great place to live, raise a family, or retire in. And perhaps many will open new businesses or relocate businesses into these towns.



HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

First of all, this is not a study nor a strategic plan; it is an Action Plan – a To Do List of specific actions to take. Instead of general strategies, goals and objectives, this is a plan in which every recommendation includes the following:

- A brief description or title of the recommendation
- When it would be implemented
- Who would take the lead
- Approximate cost
- Options for funding it (where the money would come from)
- The rationale for making the recommendation
- Detailed instructions and links to resources

If you noticed, the table of contents is the to-do list. Next to each recommendation is a check box. All recommendations are put in chronological order of implementation and can be checked off once those assignments have been completed or are under way.

Every partner in this effort should have a copy of the plan, and they can highlight the recommendations for which they are responsible. They should meet once a month to compare notes and to update other partners on progress. This plan is all about getting everyone on the same page, singing out of the same hymnal.

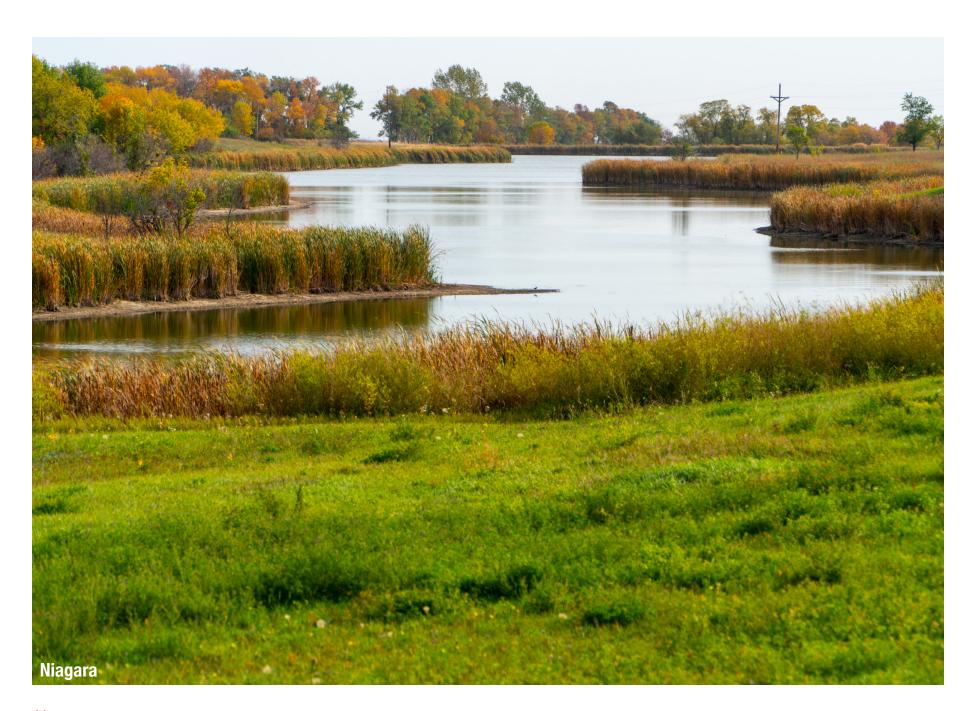
This is a plan that sits on your desk, not on a shelf gathering dust. It is a living, working document.

Finally, this is a three-year plan. There are numerous initiatives that will extend beyond just the three years of this plan, but times change as do personnel, organizations, and funding sources, and so typical plans can quickly become out of date or out of touch with current happenings.

In Month 30, or so, the Red River Regional Council will begin working on the next three-year action plan. This is where incomplete items in this plan can be readdressed, new recommendations added, and new stakeholders introduced into the effort.

In reality, this is an effort that will take approximately ten to 15 years to fully achieve: Seeing increasing populations in most of the 42 communities, dramatically increased tourism spending, improved community assets, activities, and facilities, and substantially increased economic activity in the Red River Region (Region #4).

This plan should be reviewed once a month at the Team meeting to keep people on track and pointed in the right direction.



THE PLAN

This plan is like a puzzle. You can't implement some of the recommendations and not others. Like a jigsaw puzzle, if you toss some of the pieces away, you end up with a worthless puzzle.

They are put in chronological order so that the implementation partners can simply work down the list.

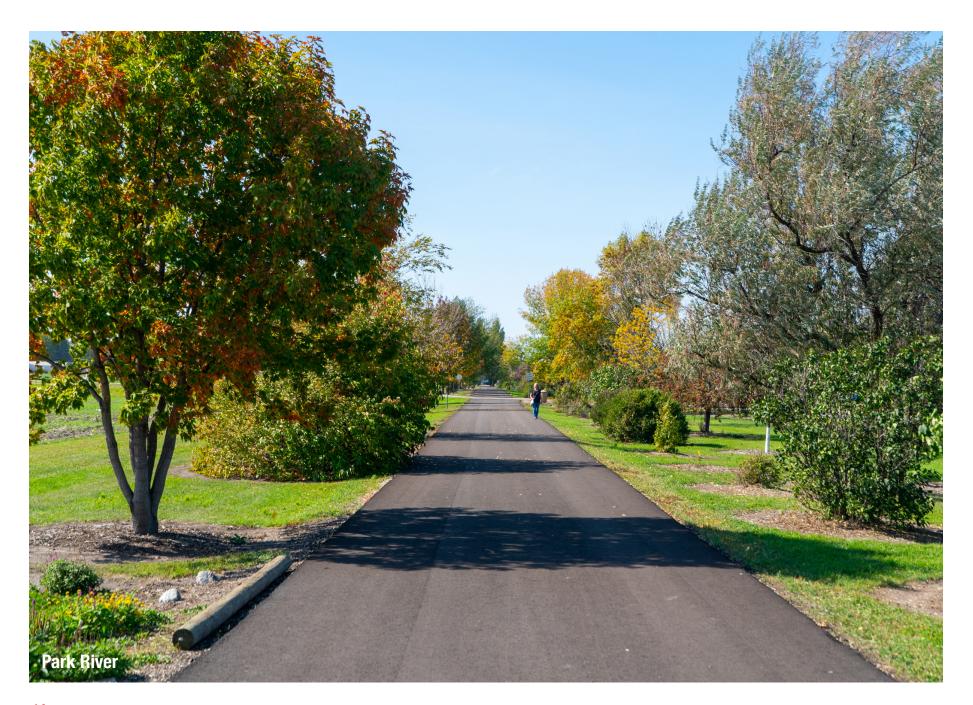
Please remember that 2022 is the "getting ready" year - getting things in place so that the local communities, attractions, activities, and supporting businesses are in place and ready to showcase what each has to offer.

The following plan is broken into three primary sections:

- Red River Regional Council
- Rendezvous Region Tourism
- And then the action items for each community, in each of the four counties

NOTE: The scope of work for this plan does not include Cavalier County outside of the Pembina Gorge. For this we're truly sorry, but since we didn't spend time in the county, it would be inappropriate for us to make recommendations to increase tourism within the county, but we believe it is important for Cavalier County to be involved.

By going through the "Assessment Findings & Suggestions" portion of this plan, we're quite sure initiatives will surface that the communities in Cavalier County can include in their community and tourism development efforts.



RED RIVER REGIONAL COUNCIL • RENDEZVOUS REGION TOURISM

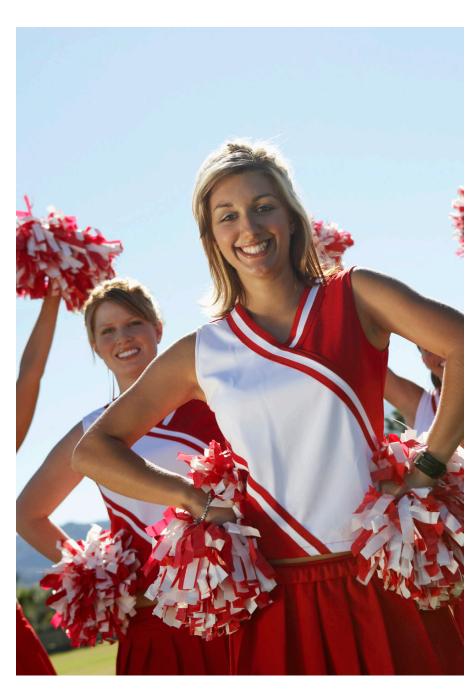
The two primary partners in this effort include the Red River Regional Council and the Rendezvous Region Tourism Council. You might think of it this way:

The Rendezvous Region is the advertising and public relations agency for the region. It is their charge to convince local residents to keep their visitors local, and to encourage visitors from outside the region—and in neighboring states—to spend time and money within the region.

It's the charge of the Red River Regional Council to concentrate on product development. This would include working with the counties, the communities, the waterway boards, local businesses, North Dakota Dept. of Transportation (wayfinding), state and federal agencies, and other partners on making sure the "product" and experiences will deliver on the marketing promise.

And, once again, keep in mind that marketing will only bring people into the region once. The only thing that brings them back are:

- The people they interact with (front-line employees)
- The primary activity that pulls them into the region
- The complementary activities ("What else do you have for us?")
- Your amenities: parking, restrooms, visitor information, wayfinding, etc.



Recommendation #1: Redevelop the Rendezvous Region Board

Description: This details the recommended makeup of the Rendezvous Region board.

Implementation timeline: August 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Nearly every destination marketing organization around the world has a board made up of industry-specific interests. These boards typically include between seven and 15 board members with the average being between seven and ten people.

We recommend that the Rendezvous Region Tourism Council include three people representing each of the five counties in this program. Including additional counties, this is detailed in the following recommendation.

This would be a board of 15 industry-specific individuals, plus a few ad-hoc members:

One person would represent the lodging industry. They can be a hotel (recommended), motel, or campground owner or general manager. These folks collect most of the lodging taxes used to promote tourism and should have a voice in how the area is promoted.

The second person would represent one of the county's largest, or most visited attractions. This could include a State Park Manager or superintendent, or a museum, a private-sector attraction, guide service, popular restaurant or retail shop.

The third person would represent the waterways in the county. The top recreational attractions in all five counties revolve around the small lakes (or dams), which are ideal for fishing, sightseeing, bird watching, and paddling.

This board would include those that are currently in positions as identified above and currently active in the tourism industry.

As ad-hoc members, Julie Rygg, representing Grand Forks offers a tremendous amount of expertise and experience and is a great addition in providing guidance along the way.

You could add an ad-hoc member from the North Dakota Tourism Office, or from the Red River Regional Council, which represents all of the five counties that are apart of this program.

This recommendation is NOT being made because there are any issues with the board which has already done so much for the tourism effort, but to really narrow the focus of this effort on TOURISM—pulling visitors into the region and getting them to spend money while visiting.

The board should include those, specifically, in the industry and representing your best, most popular destinations and the lodging industry.

We recommend revising the board ad the very first assignment in this plan.

About 80% of this plan is for, and relies on, the Rendezvous Region's efforts. After all, tourism is the front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts.

So this plan is a "fresh start" for the Rendezvous Region. Once again, prior boards have done an excellent job with their efforts and they should be commended.

In fact, we recommend hosting a banquet or "dinner" event for the current and past board members thanking them for their years of service.

This, in essence, is the creation of a new path forward, putting tourism on the front burner, rather than secondary to job and resident attraction efforts.

This board MUST be actively engaged, enthusiastic about the future, aggressive in making things happen locally, and would include one or two great spokespeople able to help secure funding, support from the state and federal resources, and knowledgable about tourism—they have a vested interest in the success of this and following programs.

They are the champions that will drive this plan forward, find great staff members, and will push the region forward as a desirable destination for visitors, new residents and investment.

These changes may require rewriting or changing current corporate bylaws, including length of time board members can serve and other factors.

We recommend that the current board work to develop the "new" board and then vote to adopt that board. This might require current board members to resign their positions, with the utmost thanks, for the time they served on the board.

Once the board is in place, it's important that they report, perhaps once or twice a year, to other organizations, such as the job boards and economic development agencies that also play a role and should be aware of how you are promoting the counties they represent.

Recommendation #2: Define the regional boundaries

Description: This is where we get the two primary organizations on the same page, working in and for the same geographic area of the state.

Implementation timeline: August 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council, Rendezvous Region

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: The two key organizations in this effort represent different geographic boundaries, and before you can really get started in a strong partnership you need to work together in identifying the area you serve.

It is the recommendation of this plan that both organizations represent Grand Forks County outside of Grand Forks, Walsh, Pembina, Nelson and Cavalier Counties.

Here's the rationale:

1. The city of Grand Forks already has a top-notch tourism development and marketing program that concentrates on Grand Forks, East Grand Forks and its bedroom communities. It only makes sense that they would concentrate their efforts on this urban area, which accounts for virtually all of their funding.

Additionally, they have very little in common with the rural areas of Grand Forks County and the other counties in this program.

While Julie Rygg and her staff have no issues helping to promote the rural areas, including sending their visitors out of Grand Forks for day trips, the Rendezvous Region's primary marketing effort is to pull residents (and their visitors) that live in the Grand Forks urban area into the outlying areas of these five counties. AND for overnight stays. After all, overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors.

2. The primary reason for including the remainder of Grand Forks County and Nelson Counties is two-fold.

First. access to the Highway 2 corridor is of vital importance, especially due to the high traffic counts, the fact that it's a primary route to Devil's Lake—already a major tourism draw—and the fact that you can promote the region easily with the billboard campaign.

Also, Larimore Dam and the town itself are home to spending opportunities, additional recreation, and campgrounds.

Lakota is situated as perhaps the first "stopping point" for people heading to or from the Devil's Lake region—providing an opportunity to capture additional tourism spending, and a chance to provide visitor information services and marketing materials showcasing Pembina, Walsh, and Cavalier Counties.

The Highway 2 corridor is a VERY important area in which to promote the region. It's also home to one of, if not the only, stand-alone visitor information centers and rest stops in the region.

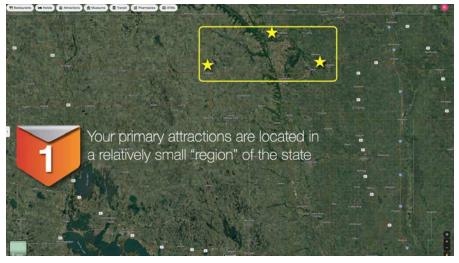
Nelson County features beautiful terrain and a number of lakes (or dams) that can enhance the tourism experience. In fact, Stump Lake and the historic village are one of the best and biggest tourism draws in this region of North Dakota.

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further people will travel to you, the longer they will stay, and the higher chance you have of getting them to come back time and again.

Also, you are far more powerful as one loud voice as opposed to numerous separate smaller voices.

Adding the rural areas of Grand Forks County and Nelson County could also open up additional funding opportunities. If each of these five counties pitched in \$60,000 a year, the Region would have a \$300,000 a year marketing budget.

Being able to define the region as the Highway 2 corridor and west of Interstate 29 makes the region easily identifiable.





The slides on this and the following pages are from a short video Roger Brooks created to, hopefully, convince the Rendezvous Region Tourism Council of the benefits of marketing these five counties over the previous three counties.

Feel free to watch this video again and follow along with these slides. Since this plan does include the five counties, should the Rendezvous Region decide against adding the other counties, it's recommended the other counties



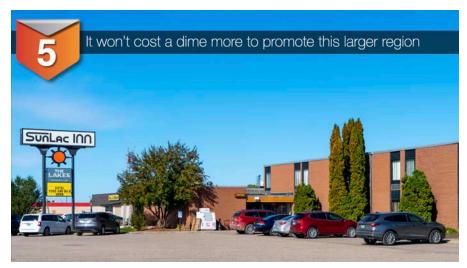


join forces with either the Devil's Lake area or with Griggs, Steele and Trail Counties. This would put them at a distinct advantage as they would be far closer to the two primary markets of Grand Forks and Fargo.





Some concern was voiced that adopting the two additional counties would step on toes of other organizations, such as the Grand Forks is Cooler campaign. In fact, this would bolster that, and other campaigns, by adding an additional marketing factor: The Rendezvous Region. This program in no way competes with any other efforts, but will actually benefit them.





As an example, anyone looking at the Grand Forks is Cooler Campaign can also look at the Rendezvous Region, which also promotes the best tourism assets in Grand Forks County beyond the City of Grand Forks.

And all, and every, campaign can simply note they are located in "The Beautiful Rendezvous Region of North Dakota," which will add additional marketing assets used to close the sale.







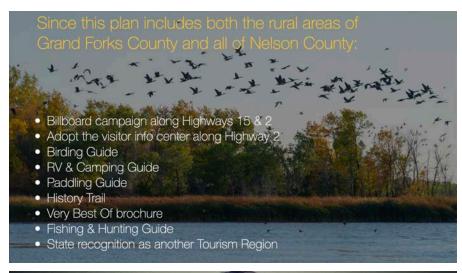
In fact, the Rendezvous Region website would be redeveloped to include the pull-down menu items (above) that can direct visitors to the Grand Forks is Cooler website, or to other Regional Job Development Authorities, economic development agencies, or to local municipal and/or county websites.

This program does not suggest any changes by any other organizations in the region at all. It simply adds a geographic identifier to the region, and additional marketing assets showcasing the quality of life the region offers.

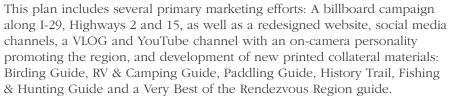














The campaign will provide access to the heaviest traveled roads in the region and will also intercept visitor traffic heading to the Devil's Lake area, already of the state's most popular destinations, letting them know there are also terrific destinations along the way and closer to home.





This entire plan revolves around marketing the region as a whole, leveraging it's waterways and historical attractions - the top two tourism assets found in this region of North Dakota.



Recommendation #3: Begin an outreach effort

Description: Spend time in each community and with each waterway authority to determine their needs and desires in participating in this program.

Implementation timeline: August 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council staff

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Once the boundaries have been set for both the Rendezvous Region and the Regional Council, the very next step is to visit every single community to find out what their primary challenges are, the assets they'd like to share with visitors, and to see if they want to be a part of this program.

During the Assessment process and in public meetings several local elected officials voiced their disdain for tourism, and others had no idea why we were there and really didn't seem to want to engage with "outside interference."

The Regional Council should meet with each city's elected officials either in a council meeting or council retreat, where this plan and the Assessment Findings & Suggestions can be shown and discussed. Then the community can let the Regional Council know whether or not they'd like to be a part of this effort.

- Do they want to see population increases in their community?
- Do they mind "sharing" local lakes and waterways with visitors?
- The same with local campgrounds?
- Are they willing to disseminate visitor information at various points in town?
- Are there local businesses that would like to tap into tourism?
- If so, they should have a "specialty" to help pull customers in the door. That might include bait, fishing license or supplies, or a special dish at a local eatery, or live entertainment on weekends.
- Would the city be willing to add directional signage to key attractions and amenities (where needed)?

- Would they like assistance, where appropriate, in implementing suggestions made in the Assessment process?

Included in this effort is also meeting with the various waterway boards or commissions, who control and manage all four county's best tourism-based assets, the lakes (or dams).

Questions to ask might include:

- What are your goals for the waterway?
- Do you mind sharing them with visitors?
- Do you stock the waterway? If so, with what kind of fish?
- Is it catch and eat or catch and release?
- Is a fishing license required? If so, where can it be purchased locally?
- What about seasonal considerations?
- Ice fishing?
- How best would you like to market the lake: For what types of activities? Perhaps for non-motorized boats such as stand-up paddle boards, canoes and kayaks. Or for any type of boat or watercraft.

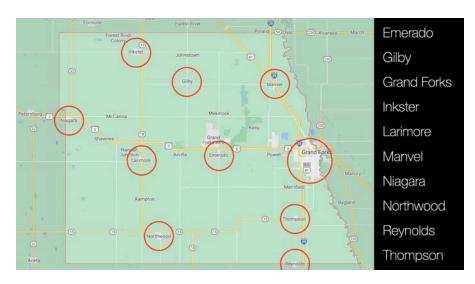
Some lakes may be better suited for sailing small boats like HobieCats. Some for bird hunting, or wildlife viewing. It would be very beneficial to have an activity-based focused for each waterway.

After all, you need to promote activities, not just the waterways. People are looking for things to do, not lakes to merely look at.

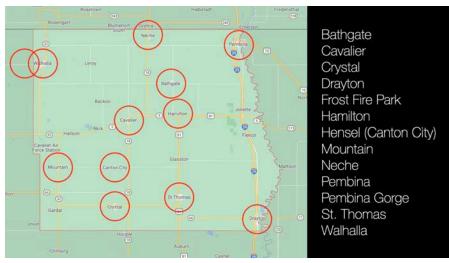
- Do you have plans for the lake? If so, what do they include?
- How about public access? Restrooms? Trash barrels? Boat launches? Picnic areas? Parking? Anything else we should know?
- What can the Red River Regional Council do to help you with your efforts?

This last question should be asked of all the communities and waterway boards. These retreats or meetings are extremely important. Without this information it will be difficult to figure out what the Rendezvous Region will be marketing, and how to best market each of the waterways, which are the region's best assets.

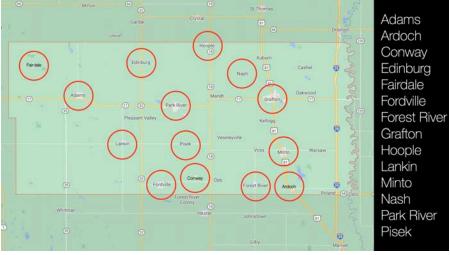
It will also be important to meet with local historical sites and attractions, to see what role they play: operating days and hours, key "sales points" that tell a great story, photography, etc.







These are the communities which were assessed and are part of this plan. An Assessment Findings & Suggestions Report has been created for each county with "suggestions" for the communities—low-cost ideas they can implement locally to help increase sales and to showcase each community as a desirable place to live, work and visit. These reports are available in digital format from the Red River Regional Council.



It will be important to visit each of these communities to gauge their interest in being apart of this program. This would start with attending local council or board meetings to determine interest in this program and willingness to be a part of it. For those that are interested, each would establish a team of local volunteers (next recommendation) that would begin working with the Red River Regional Council on implementation of the recommendations in this plan.

Recommendation #4: Create the Destination [our town] teams.

Description: Have each community create a Destination [Grafton] Team.

Implementation timeline: August 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: For the cities that decide to become a part of this program and are looking to increase their population base, commercial tax base, and tourism spending, next up is to help them assemble the Destination [our town] Team.

This is the team of local residents, elected officials, waterway board members, and local businesses whose charge is to attract new residents, businesses and visitor spending.

The word "Destination" is not solely for tourism, but each community should want to become a destination for new residents, a destination for increased or new investment, and a destination for leisure visitors.

This team would champion the implementation of the suggestions made and included in this plan, working with community leaders and businesses so you can maximize local spending.

This team is also charged with clean-up efforts, where needed, improved signage, and better curb appeal that will ultimately let visitors know that this is a great town in which to live, work and play.

The Destination [our town] team can also become the selection committee for projects that might include outside architectural, urban planning, signage, and other expertise.

This "Team" is generally made up of local community boosters—doers, not directors. This is the group of local citizens that give time and effort, beyond meetings, to improve their communities.

The teams should include those who represent the local tax base: local retail shops and eateries, major employer(s), chamber of commerce, lodging properties, and other private-sector stakeholders.

The teams would also include representation from local auxiliary organizations such as Kiwanis, Rotary, Elks, Eagles, etc., school district staff or superintendent, medical facility representatives, parks board or city parks department chairs, and/or county officials.

Each team would be given access to the Destination Development Association's "Video Vault," which includes videos on just about every topic having to do with improving the quality of life for your residents.

They would, typically, meet once a month, and would tackle three to five projects every few months. This creates an effective grassroots effort that will make their communities better places to live—and to love.

The Regional Council should attend a Destination [our town] meeting once a quarter offering advice, possible funding sources, and also keeping them enthused and excited about the future.



The Destination Development Association (DDA) includes a number of howto videos that can help locals create the team needed to really make a difference locally. Access to The Vault (video library) can be secured through the Red River Regional Council.

Recommendation #5: Establish funding sources for this program

Description: Without funding, this program and others cannot succeed. This is an investment, not just an overhead item.

Implementation timeline: August 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council, Rendezvous Region

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: There is simply no way to increase the population of the region without a significant product development and marketing effort. North Dakota, as a state, has one of the smallest tourism marketing budgets in the country, and it's nearly impossible to out-compete your surrounding states when they have three to twenty times the marketing budgets.

Roger Dow, the long time CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, based out of Washington, D.C., when about to retire, reached out to the folks in North Dakota because it was the only state in the country he had not yet visited.

And where North Dakota does show up on the radar of visitors is on the western side: home to national park and grasslands, fascinating terrain, and a myriad of outdoor adventures and great towns.

Even Medora, with a population of just 135 people, gets far more attention and publicity than all five counties making up the Rendezvous Region. Once again, this is not the fault of the Rendezvous Region's marketing efforts, but purely from lack of funding to put the region "on the map" as a desirable destination.

To effectively market ten percent of the state's counties will require a minimum budget of \$300,000 a year: half for salaries and overhead, and half to implement the strategies outlined in this plan.

If each county would contribute just \$40,000 a year (just \$3,300 a month), this would provide \$200,000 a year, which then could be leveraged to obtain the remaining \$100,000 a year from state and/or federal funding, from foundations and other funding sources.

No destination marketing organization should have paid memberships, including the Rendezvous Region. This brings us to a key point: The Rendezvous Region represents the visitors, not counties, cities or towns. Its sole purpose is to attract visitors to the region, spread them out, help them spend money, and encourage them to repeat the process.

Less than five percent of all DMO websites are ever used by visitors when planning a trip into the area. Why? Because typical DMO websites provide lists of things to do and places to stay, but what the visitor wants is help.

You cannot promote your Top 3 or Top 5 activities when you're a membership organization. This is often referred to as the "Chamber Conundrum." Chambers of Commerce can never be successful promoting your anchor tenants (best restaurants, retail shops, golf courses, etc.) because members would complain if they were not chosen to be on the list.

And for cities that have the ability, perhaps they would pitch in some funding as well. If Grafton, Cavalier, Park River and a couple other able communities (with tourism assets) would each pitch in just \$20,000 a year, then the Rendezvous Region would be able to reach its minimum goal of \$300,000 a year. This would enable the staff to spend 90% of its time and effort bringing people into the region rather than the other conundrum where they spend nearly half their time raising money and only half promoting the region once again, the Chamber conundrum.

Likewise, the Red River Regional Council, under this plan, would also need to hire two to three full-time people in order to fully implement the product development side of this plan. And, once again, remember that your success will be built on product, not marketing.

Their job is to make sure the product (the experiences and amenities) are in place and that visitors will have an outstanding experience and will share that with friends and family, thus spreading the word that North Dakota, especially the Rendezvous Region, delivers a top-notch experience and is, in fact, a great place to actually live, invest in, and visit time and again.

For the cities and counties, this team of the Rendezvous Region and the Red River Regional Council are the economic development and marketing arm of their economic development efforts. It's this team that will increase the tax

base locally so there are local funds to improve the quality of life for local citizens. This is an investment, not an overhead cost. The counties and cities MUST invest in their future and this is the vehicle to do just that.

An important point to remember in this effort is that outside of Grand Forks, you have no privately-held and marketed key attractions. No National Parks, Six Flags, water parks, Disney Parks, wineries, big-time breweries, Universities, Bass Pro Shop or Cabela's, or even major hotels that have their own marketing and sales budgets. In fact, this region of the country is light on tourism assets compared to other areas of the country (including neighboring states) so it will require an all-out, no holds barred, marketing effort to pull people into the region. Will the effort be effective given that? Of course—this region has an amazing quality of life and four distinct seasons to promote. But the bottom line: If the Rendezvous Region doesn't market the area, no one does.

And if you don't market the area, you will miss a golden opportunity to tap into the post-COVID "Work from anywhere" movement. Many cities are actually paying people between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per person to move to their cities for just two years, bringing remote work with them. And, of course, during those two years they are spending tens of thousands of dollars on groceries, pet care, home care, gas, professional services, and recreational pursuits.

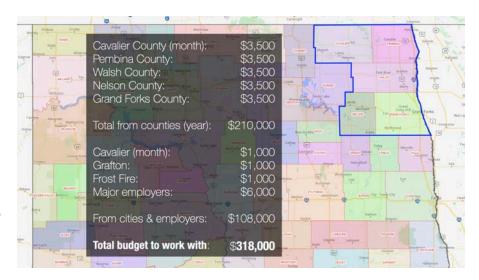
In this program we're casting a wider net. And paired with an upcoming recommendation—offering homesteading sites—this can be extremely effective in attracting new residents and a Zoom Town economy.

For more on this movement, watch the video in the Destination Development Association's Vault: Zoom Towns are Boom Towns.

Finally, the Rendezvous Region's primary charge is marketing tourism, but this effort will also market the homesteading and Zoom Town initiatives.

The chart, top right, is one idea showing how the program could be funded. Some of these amounts could be offset with marketing and other grant funds.

Key to this is being able to "sell" tourism as the "front door" to attracting new residents, investment, and leisure tourism. The two videos (right) are available in the Destination Development Association's video library to help walk





locals through the process of selling the key attributes of tourism—what's in it for them in terms of increased tax base. It's best to watch each of these (each is about an hour long) as a team, then assemble a presentation based on the key selling points.

Recommendation #6: Create a Brand Style Guide

Description: This is the "bible" in terms of continuity and the proper use of the Rendezvous Region's graphics standards.

Implementation timeline: September 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$15,000, a one-time expense

Funding source options: Current tourism marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Once you convince a prospective visitor (or local for that matter) to login to a regional website, be it tourism or economic development, the website MUST be good enough to close the sale.

There must be continuity between marketing efforts and subsequent marketing materials. To do this, the first priority is the development of a brand style guide or "Brand Standards and Practices Manual."

The Style Guide will be the "bible" that the Rendezvous Region will use to create continuity in its marketing efforts.

Right now you have a general look and feel of the brand, but it's time to get down to specifics and particulars. That's what a Brand Style Guide does.

The Brand Style Guide, or standards and practices manual, will contain graphic design standards for logo and tagline use, guidelines for website development, social media platforms, guidelines for the production of printed sales and marketing materials, as well as the proper use of key marketing, advertising and promotion messages. It will also identify photography styles and images needed to evoke emotion: a key marketing element.

Continuity and consistency are critical when developing a strong branding program that creates top of mind awareness of the brand. The logo and brand design should give the region an easily recognizable identity—a symbol and message that represents the region and the experiences it has to offer. Whenever the logo is used, it should bring to mind images of enjoying that area.

Repetition helps reinforce the viewer's perception, but consistency is the only way to ensure logo and brand recognition. That is why the Brand Style Guide is a highly detailed document, providing specific instructions on how to use the graphics - font sizes, colors, guidelines for reproduction, guidelines for web design, PowerPoint presentations, and advertisements. Examples of logo use should be provided for the region and local organizations that will utilize the marketing efforts, as well as for signage and wayfinding.

The Rendezvous Region Tourism Council will be responsible for overseeing proper use of the graphic identity and the look and feel of the brand. This Style Guide will provide the official direction on how to use the region's graphic identity.

As part of this scope of work, the RBI team created a new identity for the Rendezvous Region as well as sample brochure covers, showing how important continuity is to the branding and marketing efforts.

We mean no disrespect to the creation of the current Rendezvous Region logo, but it is important for the logo to convey a "feeling" more than a corporate identity. Rather than go through an arduous logo creation headache, our professionals went ahead and designed a logo for the Rendezvous Region that we firmly believe will help sell the brand of "Rendezvous" (the background compass) and with a rotating center image promoting one of the key activities found in the region. The text itself exudes a feeling of the outdoors and history—the two key attributes and activities found in the region.

We also created sample brochure covers using stock photos until they can be replaced with locally-shot cover photos, showing the importance of continuity in your marketing efforts.

The Brand Style Guide would be used by the Rendezvous Region, local museums and historical attractions, outdoor activities, and other tourism partners (public sector and non-profits) to build continuity and familiarity in your marketing efforts.

A note about logos or brand identities: This should NOT be a point of contention, nor does it even warrant a long conversation. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had a great logo? Have you ever said "I'm not going there because I think their logo sucks"?

On the other hand, it does need to convey a feeling, should look good in full color, in one color, reversed, and in two colors. It should be easy to read and make out when on a billboard, or shrunk to a 1/2" use, as on a label, or a little larger on a business card or letterhead.

Logos only make up 2% of a brand, yet they tend to get 98% of the attention locally, and can be very, very divisive. The logo designed as part of this process tested very well with our professional peers and fits the bill in terms of the marketing programs outlined in this plan.

Finally, in all forms of advertising, the logo should always be placed in the bottom right corner of all print ads. You ALWAYS sell the experience first and then where they will find the experience last.

Effective advertising works this way: 1) Get my attention. This is typically done (in print media) using a signature photograph and header (headline). You have less than two seconds to pull people into the ad. 2) Then, depending on the size of the ad, you can add up to 50 words of text with a call to action. Then, 3) you let them know who you are and where you're at: North Dakota's Rendezvous Region.

An advantage of this logo is that it includes a center graphic showcasing the key activities found in the Rendezvous Region: Camping & RVing, hunting and fishing, golf, and historical attractions.

The logo can be refined, a color palette created, along with other elements of the brand when you develop the Rendezvous Region Brand Style Guide.

There are several videos in the Destination Development Association's Video Vault (right) that can guide you through this process.







Recommendation #7: Trademark the brand mark

Description: As part of the branding process, logos (brand identities), tag lines and other marketing materials are developed. This recommendation makes sure these become trademarked through the U.S. Trademark Office.

Implementation timeline: September 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$6,000

Funding source options: Current funds—a one-time expense

Rationale and to-do steps: As part of this plan's development the logo was created, along with variations that include history, fishing, kayaking, golf, and camping—the five primary reasons people will come to discover the Rendezvous Region. Each of these should be trademarked.

Once the application has been submitted, each logo can add the "Registered" symbol, which would be replaced with the Trademark symbol once the trademark has been accepted and recorded. Trademarks, copyrights and patents require special expertise, so contract with an attorney that specializes in this type of work.

If you need a lead, we recommend attorney Thomas W. Galvani, who the RBI team has worked with many times. He is located in Phoenix, Arizona and the last time we used his services, his cost for applying for each trademark is just over \$1,000 including the federal filing fees. He is located at 3519 E Shea Boulevard, Suite 129 in Phoenix, AZ 85028. His contact phone number is 602.281.6481. He goes by Tom, and he is a registered U.S. Patent Attorney. His e-mail address is: Tom@GalvaniLegal.com. His website address is www.galvanilegal.com.

The \$6,000 budgeted for this allows for trademarking of five identities, shown to the right.



Rules for Brand Identities

- 1. It should look good in full color, one color, reversed
- 2.Be easy to read when small (business card or label)
- 3. Be easy to read when large (billboard)
- 4. Should "fit" the rest of the Brand Style Guide
- 5.lt should sell a feeling































A note about logos or brand identities: This should NOT be a point of contention. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had a great logo? Have you ever said "I'm not going there because I think their logo sucks"?

The logo does need to convey a feeling, should look good in full color, in one color, reversed, and in two colors. It should be easy to read and make out when on a billboard, or shrunk to a 1/2" use, as on a label, or a little larger on a business card or letterhead.

Logos only make up 2% of a brand, yet they tend to get 98% of the attention locally, and can be very divisive. The logo designed as part of this process tested very well with our professional peers and fits the bill in terms of the marketing programs outlined in this plan.

Finally, in all forms of advertising, the logo should always be placed in the bottom right corner of all print ads. You ALWAYS sell the experience first and then where they will find the experience last.

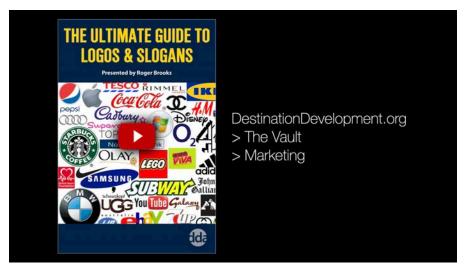
Your logo is simply an explanation point on your key marketing message. In print advertising, for instance, your logo will always be in the bottom right corner of the ad. You start with a signature photo or graphic that gets the reader's attention and showcases your primary activity—the reason they will visit the region. That coupled with a headline is meant to pull the reader into the ad. And that should get them to read your key marketing message. And finally, you let them know they will find it, and more, in North Dakota's Rendezvous Region.

The logo should exude a feeling without looking too corporate. Rather than get into a debate on the logo, with 40+ years of experience, we took the liberty of creating a brand identity for the region. We tested it among staff and other professionals and of the four logos we tested, this one tested the best.

It's important that the identity be easy to read when tiny, as in the corner of an ad or on a business card, and large as when placed on a billboard.

An advantage of this logo is that it includes a center graphic showcasing the key activities found in the Rendezvous Region: Camping & RVing, hunting and fishing, golf, and historical attractions.







This is the type of poster or print ad that could be used to promote camping in the Rendezvous Region. As you can see, you always want to use one signature photograph, a header (or headline) to pull people into the ad, then the body text (your key marketing message), and then "here's where you'll find it" - the Rendezvous Region. Always promote the activity first, then provide additional details, and close by telling the viewer or reader where they will find it. In this case you can see that the identity used is the camping icon.

Recommendation #8: Secure an office location for the Rendezvous Region staff

Implementation timeline: September 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: To be determined

Funding source options: Current funds

Rationale and to-do steps: In a perfect world, we'd recommend that the Red River Regional Council and the Rendezvous Region Tourism be co-located in the same office complex, which will save money on overhead with shared resources such as copy machine, laser printer, postage scale, phone system, Internet access, etc.

In this first three-year plan, there are more than 65 recommendations, fairly evenly split between the Regional Council and Rendezvous Region. While the Rendezvous Region is, in essence, the advertising and PR agency for these five counties, the Regional Council would be charged with product development.

Both are critically important to the success of this plan. But in the end, you will be judged by your product, not your marketing. As Roger Brooks has often repeated, "Marketing will bring people to you just once. The ONLY thing that brings them back was the primary activity that drew them in the first place, complementary activities ("What else do you have while we're here?"), your amenities such as public restrooms, visitor information or parking, and the people they interact with.

Rendezvous Region's mission is to bring people into the Region from other areas of the country and from Canada, and to entice them to spend more time (and money) while in the area.

The Regional Council's mission, in this regard, is to create such a good experience that your visitors will tell their friends and they will come back time and again. It's a lot less expensive to get people to come back, than to always get one-time visitors.

Because of this very tight relationship, it would be fantastic if the two organizations could co-share an office space.

Short of that, it would be good if both were in the same community so that they can easily meet (probably at least every other week) and can work together on implementing this plan.

This plan calls for hiring three full-time, year round marketing professionals, so the space would need three separate offices, and if in a retail location, could include a visitor information center staffed with volunteers or part-time worker or interns.

And it would be important to have a meeting room and high-speed broadband Internet access.

Typically, for an operation of this type, the office should be right around 1,100 square feet including the meeting room and common-area space, with access to a restroom or restroom facilities.

If the Rendezvous Region staff is separate from the Regional Council, then an additional \$30,000 should be allocated for office furnishings and equipment:

- VOIP phone system with two or three lines
- Modem, router and networking gear
- Laser printer/copier
- Laptop computers with dual 27" 4k monitors for video production, web design and social media work, production of e-newsletters, etc.
- File cabinets and storage for printed collateral materials, office supplies
- Desks | working spaces for each person | seating
- Meeting table and chairs, screen and in-room projector
- Networked backup system
- Lunchroom including small 4-place table, refrigerator, microwave, coffee maker, etc.
- Lobby or common area furnishings

This office space should be on a one-year lease unless commitments for extended funding are secured in advance. Most landlords will look for a three to five-year lease, which isn't really possible to commit to without extended funding commitments.

Recommendation #9: Begin the hiring process: Three full-time staff members

Implementation timeline: October 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$150,000 a year

Funding source options: Operational funds

Rationale and to-do steps: The three people that will run the Rendezvous Region tourism effort are key to the success of this entire program.

As you begin to hire the staff, here are the areas of expertise they should have between them:

- Heavy and demonstrated video editing experience (Final Cut Pro). The success of this program relies heavily on video content. This includes preproduction, script writing, directing photo/video shoots, editing both audio and video, post production and distribution of video assets.
- Public relations expertise. In fact, hiring someone from a PR firm would be ideal. This program is built on PR, which includes social media. Very little of the marketing budget, after billboards, is used on traditional or even online advertising. Studies have shown that for every dollar spent on PR, you will see a \$3 return in terms of earned media—what you would pay to purchase that space.

This person would craft, write, and submit stories to traditional print media, broadcast (television, streaming services, and radio), and digital media.

They will be charged with creating an online press room as part of the Rendezvous Region website, including numerous press releases and "quick facts" about the area.

They will manage all of the social media channels, including securing content, sharing content, managing conversations (posts), and dealing with crisis management (when a flood hits the area or other unforeseen challenges that will crop up from time to time).

This person could also be your "on-camera" face of the region. Because this effort is designed to attract young families to the region (if you are successful attracting Millennials, you'll also get the Boomers) this person should be young, full of contagious enthusiasm, alive with humor and fun.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson once stated, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." If this PR person chooses NOT to be the on-camera face representing the region, then one of the jobs of this position is to find and contract with that person for the creation of on-camera content.

- The third person of this trio is the Director, an experienced marketer more than someone with "executive director" experience. This person will fill in the gaps where needed between the other two, offering marketing advice and the direction of any marketing campaigns. In fact, one of the responsibilities of the Director is to develop campaigns for various niche markets.

There is no general tourism marketing in the program. One hundred percent of the marketing will be targeting niche markets: RVers, hikers, hunters, fishing enthusiasts, history buffs, and golfers—the primary niche groups where the Rendezvous Region can provide an excellent experience.

The Director will be the conduit between the Rendezvous Region board, and the Regional Council, and will be the voice of the Rendezvous Region when working with the counties and cities as part of this program.

The biggest challenge, and top priority, will be to secure ongoing funding for the program. This first three years of this program, as outlined in this plan, are geared to beefing up marketing assets (photography, b-roll video, video assets, content, specific information so the website is helpful, not just full of lists, and the development of printed collateral materials and their distribution.)

This person will manage all of these marketing assets, including the development of cooperative brochure creation.

Also, this person should be a top-notch writer, which will be needed in all aspects of this program from applying for grants, to writing copy for print and online publications, working with influencers, editing captions for social media posts, etc.

Of the \$360,000 annual budget allocated for this program (\$300,000 of new funding, plus the current \$60,000 budget), about \$175,000 a year would be dedicated to hiring this critical expertise.

The Director would probably be in the \$70,000 annual salary range, while each of the other positions would be in the \$55,000 range - to start. With taxes and benefits, the total cost of personnel will be right around \$200,000 a vear.

Then on top of this expense, hopefully, the overhead can be held to about \$25,000 a year, leaving \$135,000 a year for direct marketing: the first year a vast portion would be used for creative services and content generation and initial one-time expenses. The second year this would be used to develop a brand awareness campaign using outdoor advertising (billboards) over a seven month period, with ongoing posts at reduced prices when billboards are not under contract.

The third, and following years, the marketing will still be geared to PR, social media and niche market promotion, primarily through media influencers in targeted markets, such as fishing and hunting, RVing, or golf.

While this accounts for two thirds of the total budget, this crew will generate well over a million dollars a year in "earned media"—the cost of purchasing the kind of publicity they will generate.

If you can recruit talent from the primary markets you're hoping to attract, that would be an added benefit. A person who lives in Fargo, Minneapolis, Grand Forks, Winnipeg or other urban areas will know, instinctively, what it will take to attract visitors from these markets. This is especially true of the PR portion of this effort.

And do NOT be afraid to hire someone who has decades of experience, is looking to escape the urban nightmare for the rural areas, and is willing to work for less than they currently make because in a year, or two, or three, they might be looking to retire.

Perhaps one of these three people will fit the bill. But other than that, keep in mind that the Millennial generation can have the instincts to attract those in your target market.

All three:

Strong marketing, public relations, social media, video production expertise

- 1. **Executive Director**: Media buys | working with sub-contractors | work with funding sources | Excellent copy writer | Develop coop marketing pieces | budget management
- 2. Content Director: video pre-production, editing & postproduction | acquiring and leveraging content | photography |
- 3. PR Director: Public relations | PRSA

Pre-production

- Knowing what you're going to shoot
- The location | sun | shade | angles
- Subject matter
- Photo releases
- A script (or what you want to get across)
- The shot list

Production

- Shooting the segments
- Capturing B-Roll footage

Post-production

- Editing the footage
- Compiling the story
- Editing | adding audio Adding openings and credits



Recommendation #10: Create the RV & Camping Guide rack brochure to the Rendezvous Region

Implementation timeline: October 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region

Approximate cost to implement: \$5,000 - a co-op program

Funding source options: Current marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: There are three areas where the Rendezvous Region can out-compete its neighbors across the Red River in Minnesota, in other counties in Eastern North Dakota, and south into Eastern South Dakota. Those areas include:

- RVing and camping
- Historical attractions
- Golf

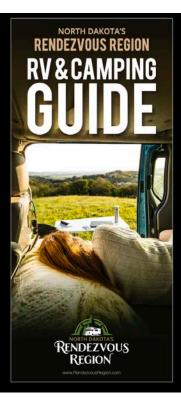
RVing is the fastest-growing segment in tourism with more than 500,000 new RV units (travel trailers, campers, camper-vans, fifth-wheel and Class A rigs or motorcoach RVs) being sold each year.

In fact, the pandemic has created an entirely different class of workers, of which two million (in the U.S. alone) are "Full-timers" working from their RVs in this "work from anywhere" economy. This has given rise to "Zoom Towns" and "Digital Nomads."

What perhaps is most surprising is that the average age of a person purchasing an RV is just 38—not just Boomers as you might expect.

They are actively looking for rural areas with good cell coverage (LTE) and/ or open skies. In May of 2022 Space X's Starlink (low orbiting satellites) was just approved for mobile use, really opening up rural areas for digital nomads, who can work from anywhere.

This is a fantastic market to secure, especially since the Rendezvous Region is short on quality overnight lodging outside of Grand Forks.



- RV parks & campgrounds
- Co-working spaces (WeWork)
- Propane tank fill sites
- Hardware stores w/RV supplies
- Grocery stores
- Drug stores
- Fueling stations | diesel
- RV sales, repair services
- Mobile RV repair services
- Post office
- Medical clinics (urgent care)
- Pet supplies & veterinary services
- Fishing supplies & bait
- Amazon locker locations
- Top hiking, biking trails
- Top paddling spots
- Top Historical sites & museums
- Dog parks

Additionally, one thing the Rendezvous Region seems to have a lot of, are RV parks and campgrounds. While most need some work, better signage, contact information, and on-site amenities, they are, for the most part, of very good quality.

And beyond the digital nomads who are still working, there are another growing class of RVers—young families and active retirees that leave the urban areas, driving typically two to three hours to camp in the rural areas.

These would be nearby Canadians from the Winnipeg market, Fargo, Grand Forks, Bismarck and visitors already coming into Western North Dakota for the National Park and National Grasslands areas.

Part of the PR and social media effort will be to convince RVers and campers visiting the western side of the state to trek across the state to Devil's

Lake, Pembina Gorge, and the wide open, uncrowded, yet scenic areas the Rendezvous Region has to offer.

Many of these travelers are active YouTubers, active on all social media platforms, and they DO spend money. The difference between RVers and hotel overnight stays is where they spend money. While hotel guests fill local restaurants and retail shops, RVers shop where the locals shop: Grocery stores, hardware stores, gas and service stations, medical services, pharmacies, etc.

But they also will frequent local restaurants and signature retail shops. They purchase hunting and fishing supplies, pet food and related services (nearly 70% of RVers travel with at least one pet).

While they tend to "follow the sun," as do most leisure travelers, this is an excellent market to pursue from April through October (a seven month season).

While RV parks, across the country, are in short supply and often overbooked, this creates both business opportunities for creating additional campgrounds AND an easy opportunity to attract RVers looking for uncrowded yet serene camping locations.

This recommendation is to create a multi-panel rack brochure that markets campgrounds, primary activities, and supplies. The Rendezvous Region would reach out to campgrounds, grocery stores, propane suppliers, RV repair services, hardware stores, etc., with each "purchasing" a panel in the Guide.

The authors of this plan are, in fact, RVers, and often run into the challenge of finding campgrounds and/or information about them (most of the camping destinations in the region are not even listed on the most basic of RV websites), and then trying to find where the locals go to eat, shop, where to fill propane tanks, or where to buy hardware and RV supplies.

The RV and Camping Guide would showcase a map of the region, with each of the counties identified, and then would showcase the campgrounds and services available in that county.

Included would be:

- One panel per campground with a photo, description and details
- Suppliers that fill propane tanks

- Grocery stores
- Hardware stores with RV supplies
- RV retailers, repair services
- Mobile RV repair services
- Amazon drop-box locations
- Dump services (where RVers can dump wastewater tanks)
- Dog parks and pet supply retailers
- Veterinary services
- Pharmacies and medical services (urgent care)
- Top five activities in the county (RVers love walking, hiking, biking, fishing and paddling)
- Where they can buy or rent gear (bikes, fishing licenses and supplies, etc.)
- Top five restaurants or eateries in the county
- Farmers markets
- Post office or UPS store locations
- Gas and diesel stations

This may end up being a 30-panel guide, which should be dated and updated every year with current information, It should also be downloadable in an 8.5"x11" printable format.

Plan on printing 10,000 for the 2022 fall season, or 20,000 for the 2023 season.

This is a co-op brochure. To determine costs, work with a printer that prints high-quantity materials, such as this to determine the printing and shipping cost of the brochure once you can "guesstimate" how many panels the guide will include, plus a front page panel, a welcome panel, and a panel (or two) with a map of the region, and a back panel,

Also determine the cost to have the rack brochure designed, proofed and edited.

Then determine the number of panels that will be sold (so you don't include public hiking trails where there's no revenue source) to determine the per panel cost, which you'll need when "selling" space to your RV and Campground partners.

Make sure to include about 10% for non-payment partners or for cost overruns.

One way to determine the quantity to print, is to take the number of available RV sites, and determine annual occupancy levels during the season. For instance, if a campground had 100 sites with the average stay of three nights, times a 180 day season, they would need 6,000 brochures if the campground has a 100% occupancy rate. (100 spaces x 180 nights, divided by three - the average length of stay then times the annual occupancy rate.) Most campgrounds will not be full every night of the season. In fact, in this example, if the annual occupancy rate is 50%, then they'd only need 3,000 brochures.

Many campgrounds in the region have seasonal, or even year round campers, thus reducing the need for as many brochures, giving them one each season.

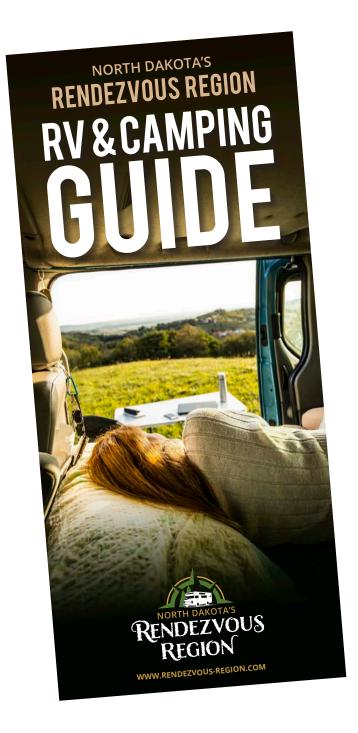
This should be a brochure that can be developed at no cost to the Rendezvous Region, other than time marketing it to partners throughout the region.

In many cases, the region will contract with a person to actually go out and secure the marketing partners. Rather than pass this additional cost on to the partner, we've budgeted \$5,000 for commissions and/or other costs. This should NOT be used as a fund-raising mechanism.

Each partner would include a photograph, their logo, a brief description of their offerings and/or services, address and location information, operating hours, and a URL or way to contact them.

IMPORTANT: As you select vendors (marketing partners) make sure they have at least 80% positive reviews on Google, Yelp and other review sites. And make sure their hours and services are consistent. One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch.

Don't try to market everyone: Market those that will create an excellent experience for the RVer to keep them coming back, and so they spread the word—a MUST for the success of this program.



Recommendation #11: Distribute the RV & Camping Guide throughout the region and place a printable copy on the Rendezvous Region website and on the state's tourism website.

Implementation timeline: October 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$1,500 for counter-top brochure holders and repayment of mileage for restocking the brochures weekly or bi-weekly

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Since this is the first of six rack brochures, distribution will be very important and will begin the distribution "network" of where these guides can be found.

Every camper, at every destination (including the State Parks) should be handed an RV & Camping Guide when they check in or register. This, alone, could use up two-thirds of all the brochures you have printed. This includes providing a brochure to each seasonal or year round camper, either by mail, or at the campground.

Additionally, purchase counter-top brochure holders (right) and provide every partner 100 brochures plus the holder so they can distribute the brochures at their place of business.

Please note that the brochure holder, right, holds four brochures. Temporarily, you'd place perhaps 20 or so brochures in each of the four slots. But as other brochures are developed (one every couple of months), the combination of brochures would each take up one of the slots.

The RV & Camping Guide should be available at:

- Chambers of commerce offices
- Offices for each campground
- Brochure distribution wall-mounted holders and stand-alone kiosks (coming up in another recommendation)
- Grocery stores | hardware stores | any place that supports RVers
- Rendezvous Region office
- City halls and other public venues

Develop a "route" so that a volunteer or staff member can replenish supplies once every two weeks, perhaps once a week during the peak summer months and during harvest. Do NOT expect calls from businesses letting you know they ran out of RV & Camping Guides.



Recommendation #12: Work with local communities with RV parks and campgrounds re: signage, contact info, amenities, etc.

Implementation timeline: October 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: One of the biggest challenges RVers and camping guests have when visiting the region is knowing who or where any campgrounds are even located. This we'll cover in the following recommendation.

But when we do locate these parks, in almost every case there is no signage or information of any kind. While these may be primarily used to house seasonal harvest workers, where the employers will let them know about local campgrounds, these should be leveraged for spring, summer and fall months.

This would provide additional revenues to the owners - be it private-sector or publicly owned, and would increase local spending.

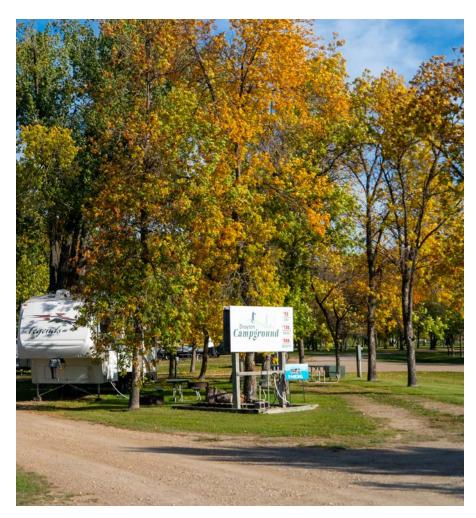
This program concentrates heavily on making the Rendezvous Region one of North Dakota's premier "Zoom Town," "Digital Nomad," "Work from anywhere" and RV leisure travel destination.

This is the fastest, easiest way to start really tapping into the tourism industry, using assets that already exist, and will result in increased local and regional spending, and will make the region a three-season destination.

This recommendation includes adding two outdoor, large signs at every campground. One would be a Welcome sign to the name of the campground. Then instructions: If you have a reservation, or if not, what to do first. It might be to call a number, check in with a camp host, or head to your pre-assigned site if you already have a reservation.

Some campgrounds may be first come, first served. If so, let the campers know this on the welcome sign. As they come into the campground there would be a second sign with more details that should include the following:

- Who owns and operates the campground
- Contact information
- When it's open (if seasonal)
- On-site amenities: Water, power (30A, 50A), sewer or dump station, etc.
- A campground map showing the campsites
- And a brochure holder (like a real estate brochure holder) with the Camping & RV Guide brochure in it.
- Encourage guests to post reviews on Google, Campendium, AllStays, GoodSam, TheDyrt and others.









Recommendation #13: Help RV parks and campgrounds get listed on AllStays, Campendium and other review sites. Include photography of each campground and park.

Implementation timeline: September 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Throughout the Rendezvous Region there are dozens of campgrounds, yet very few are even listed on RVing and Campground websites, where campers look for camping accommodations. There is no cost to be included on these websites, so the Regional Council, working with each campground, should spend some time with them listing their campground, adding photography and specific on-site amenities, fees, seasonal considerations, cell-signal strengths, etc.

The images you see in this and the following pages show the campgrounds in the region that are actually listed on Campendium, one of the most-used RV websites. More than half the campgrounds in the region are not even listed, and nearly all that are listed have no reviews and no information.

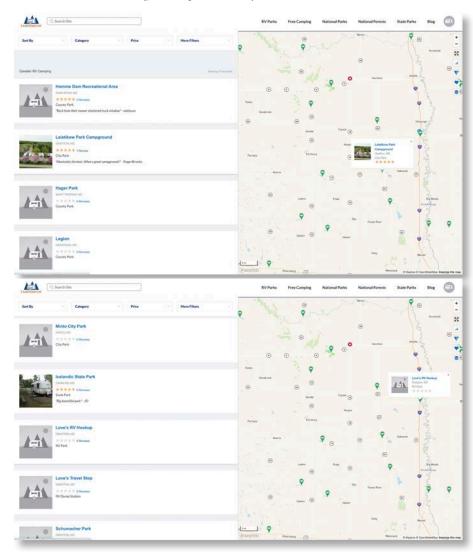
The first priority is to photograph each park so guests can see what they are getting. Also a couple of drone shots would offer a great view of the overall campground. For an example, head to Campendium.com and click on the listing for Leistikow Campground in Grafton and look at the photography, which does a great job of "selling" the campground.

Next, each campground needs to make sure they claim their Google listing. This is the top priority since Google commands nearly 90% of all Internet searches and accounts for the majority of user reviews.

Make sure you include the following information on your listings:

- Street address
- Cell signals by carrier (often campers can add to this)
- Number of sites you have
- Pull-through or back-in sites, or both

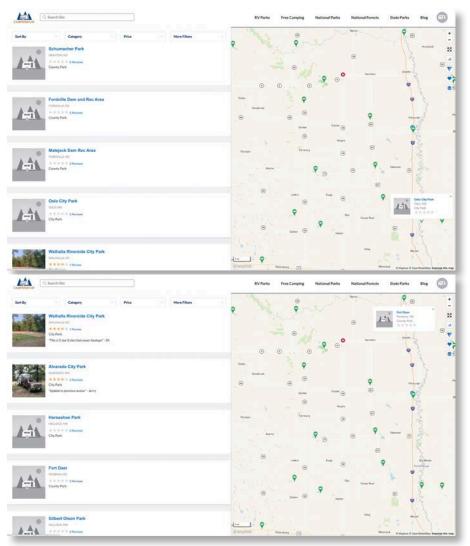
- On-site amenities (trails, pool, laundry facilities, clubhouse, dump station)
- Campsite amenities: water, power (30A, 50A), sewer, cable...
- Seasonal considerations (open months)
- Access notes getting to and into the campground
- Selling points (why we should chose this particular campground)
- Costs
- Time limits (how long a camper can stay)



- Reservations? First come first served?
- How and where to make reservations
- Community amenities (Groceries, gas, propane, etc.)

Once you've got the information and photography secured, then begin populating various websites. Here's a great beginner list:

- Google (claim your listing)



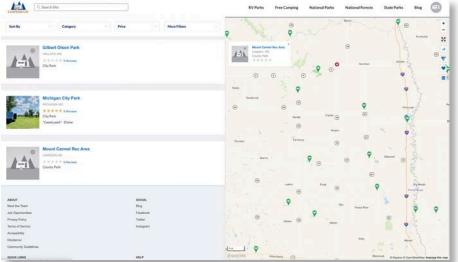
- Campendium.com
- TheDyrt.com
- campgrounds.rvlife.com
- AllStays.com
- TripAdvisor.com (yes, they include RV parks)
- GoodSam.com
- CampgroundReviews.com
- RVParky.com
- RVBuddy.com

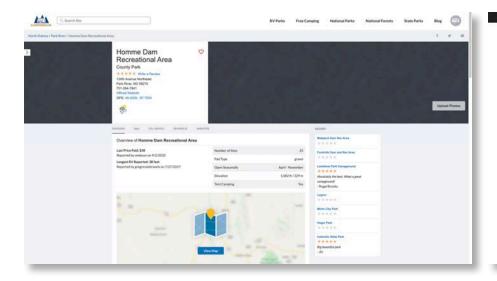
There is also the up and coming HipCamp - known as the Airbnb for camping.

Every RV park and campground could be listed in every one of these sites if a person would take just one-full day, and provide the information for each of these sites.

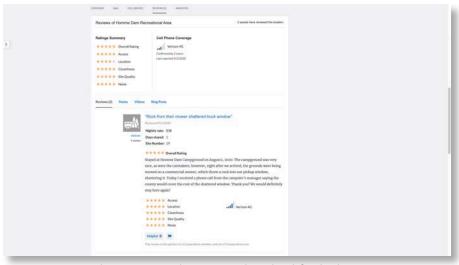
When Roger Brooks was coming into the region, via RV, he could find very little information on whether or not there was any camping available at all especially since a good portion of the stay was after Labor Day weekend.

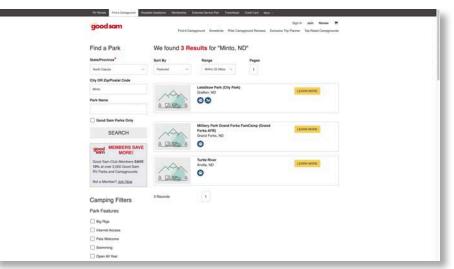
There was very little information to be found, anywhere, regarding camping in the area. And this could be easily remedied. We recommend that the Regional Council work with each campground to help them get listed on these sites. And then encourage them to seek camper reviews.





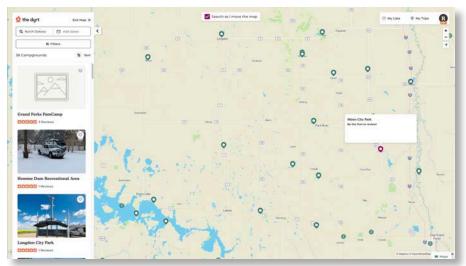


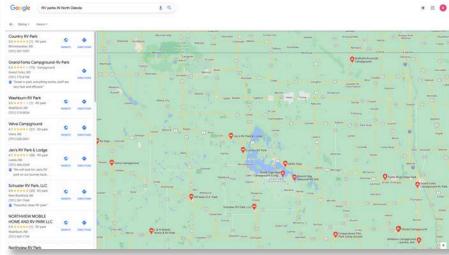




Review sites, such as Campendium, are a key (and free) element in promoting the region to campers. Overnight guests spend three times that of day visitors, so your campgrounds can be a viable way to attract new visitors and potential new residents or those looking to invest in a community.

Like Google and TripAdvisor reviews, peer review sites, like those shown on this page, are critical to your success.







Take time to watch the Marketing to RVers video in the Destination Development Association's Video Vault.

This will guide you through the process of using the resources campers use, trends in this segment of tourism, and the lingo used by campers that should be incorporated when you list your RV and campsites.

Recommendation #14: Contract with a local shop to design, build, and install wall mounted visitor information boxes or stand-alone kiosks throughout the region.

Implementation timeline: November 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$20,000

Funding source options: To be determined | Rendezvous Region funding?

Rationale and to-do steps: Butler University recently conducted a study regarding the use of printed tourism brochures (collateral materials). What they found was eye-opening.

Before heading out on a trip, for work or leisure, word of mouth from friends and family and Internet searches accounted for nearly 90% of all planning research efforts. Brochures and printed guides were used in less than 25% of the planning effort.

BUT once the visitor arrives at the destinations, printed guides jump to the top position, used by 81% of all travelers. Mobile devices were second, and conversing with locals was number three on the list.

The average visitor is active 14 hours a day. They spend four to six hours with the primary activity that drew them: playing a full 18-holes of golf, downhill skiing at Frost Fire, fishing, hunting, paddling, etc.

Then they spend eight to ten hours with "complementary" activities: "What else is there to do locally?"

Even visitors coming to work will typically spend nine hours (including lunchtime) at work, and then five hours with secondary activities.

So why brochures? First of all, brochures work when you don't have strong cell signals. You can look at them in the car, in a hotel room or RV, at a restaurant, without being as intrusive as a mobile device.

Brochures are easier to read, generally include photography, and specific information. They are much better at closing the sale than a website or social media channel.

This plan includes the creation of six separate "rack brochures," which are 4" wide by 8.5" tall and can contain anywhere from three to 30 panels (or more):

- RV & Camping Guide to the Rendezvous Region
- The Rendezvous Region History Trail
- The Rendezvous Region Golf Guide
- The Very Best of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region
- Waterways Guide to the Rendezvous Region
- The Fishing & Hunting Guide to the Rendezvous Region

These promote the top activities where the Rendezvous Region can easily compete with rural areas in Minnesota, South Dakota, the rest of North Dakota, Wisconsin and other states.

They will include useful, helpful information and would be updated and printed each year.

The trick is getting them into the hands of visitors when they arrive in the region. And visitors don't just travel from 8:00 to 5:00 each day. Visitor information should always be available 24/7, 365 days of the year.

This recommendation calls for the design, fabrication, and installation of both wall-mounted, weather resistent brochure holders and stand-alone kiosks.

When it comes to wall-mounted brochure holders, there are several options available. Displays2Go.com is a leading provider of these types of brochure holders (see photos next page), but perhaps this can become a local smallbusiness opportunity.

North Platte, Nebraska had a local craftsman make up several wall-mounted kiosks (see photos, opposite) that would accommodate the state Visitors Guide, the local Activities Guide and a rack brochure promoting their restaurants and retailers.

It would be ideal to have one fabricated that could accommodate the six brochures as part of this plan, plus a state map, a North Dakota Visitors Guide, and with space for a local brochure, perhaps promoting local events.

In this case, it would include 8 spaces for rack brochures and map, and one space for the 8.5" x 11" North Dakota Visitors Guide.

The plan is to have these in 100 locations throughout the region. This would include chambers of commerce, libraries, public venues such as civic centers, sports fields and indoor facilities (such as hockey rinks), fairgrounds, the state parks, at each historical site and attraction, RV parks and campgrounds, at each waterway, city hall, and in one or two locations in downtown areas.







These would typically cost anywhere from \$125 to \$450 each. At \$300 each, the total would be \$30,000 plus the cost of installing them. They are typically made of painted anodized aluminum and are mounted using masonry screws, depending on the surface they are being mounted to.

They can also be mounted on information panels at historic sites, local, county and regional parks, waterways, and at trail heads.

In this example, a distribution display could be placed on one of the readerboards, or on a new free-standing two-post panel, like the one to the right located in Icelandic State Park, which would be inexpensive and relatively easy to build.

On the opposite page are two locations where a wall-mounted rack would be ideal: At the library in Cavalier and at the concession stand in Icelandic State Park (bottom, opposite page).

The first order of business would be to identify locations that visitors to the area might frequent. At locations like Homme Dam, you might have two





locations. At state parks you'd also likely have two or three locations for these.

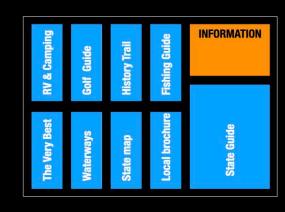
This will allow you to issue an RFP (request for proposal) for the design, fabrication, and installation of these wall-mounted racks in a specific number of locations, and likewise, where a two-post panel would be constructed to accommodate the brochure holder.







- 4x9: RV & Camping Guide to the Rendezvous Region
- 4x9: Rendezvous Region Golf Guide
- 4x9: Rendezvous Region History Trail
- 4x9: Waterways Guide to the Rendezvous Region
- 4x9: Rendezvous Region Fishing & Hunting Guide
- 4x9: The Very Best of the Rendezvous Region
- 4x9: North Dakota State Map
- 4x9: A local or community brochure
- 8.5x11: North Dakota State Visitor's Guide





DestinationDevelopment.org

> The Vault

> Tourism development

As you design your visitor information kiosks keep in mind that over the next year you'll have a number of rack brochures to distribute. The panel, above, provides an idea for the layout of the kiosk and brochure holders.

Also, please take time to watch the video (left), which provides you with a number of options and fresh ideas on how to get visitor information into the hands of your visitors.

Recommendation #15: Find and contract with your on-camera personality: The "Face of Rendezvous Region" tourism

Implementation timeline: November 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$40,000 including talent, pre-production, filming, post production, mixing, etc.

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Because of funding constraints, the marketing effort detailed in this plan is geared to building brand recognition so that everyone in and visiting the region will know that it's called "The Rendezvous Region" and where to find information (RendezvousRegion.com).

Second to that is selling visitors on actually coming TO the Rendezvous Region. And, once again, due to funding constraints, this will rely on word of mouth, social media, and a professional public relations effort.

Key to that will be a focus on video content. To that end, there needs to be a person who can become "the face of the Rendezvous Region," the on-camera personality that is young, attractive, and full of life with abundant enthusiasm. This person's entire focus is on convincing people to spend some time in the region.

The Rendezvous Region has very little in the way of tourist attractions that can out-compete most of Minnesota, the other areas of North Dakota, South Dakota and other mid-western and western states. Every surrounding state has hundreds (if not thousands) of lakes and waterways, all include far more developed trail systems, more public lands to be explored, and larger budgets than the Rendezvous Region or North Dakota tourism, for that matter.

The one area where the Rendezvous Region can out-compete neighboring states is with its historical sites and attractions which, for the most part, are outstanding. Yet historical attractions, generally speaking, are secondary activities to the primary draw. Eighty-five percent of the people who visit any of the Smithsonian Museums in Washington, DC are there for other reasons, but while they're in Washington, these outstanding museums are a "must-do"

activity. Without a national park or major tourist attraction, it will be paramount to spotlight each lake as a "specialty lake" for a certain sport or activity, be it stand-up paddle boarding, or walleye fishing.

In essence, we must position the activities in the Rendezvous Region as either different or better than what visitors can get closer to home.

To do this, the on-camera personality will need to be enthusiastic, fun-loving, and with expert video and editing skills, will make various activities in the Rendezvous Region worth a special trip and an extended stay.

This could be one of the Rendezvous Region staff, or could be contracted on a per-day or per-video project. Since the target market is the Millennial generation (in their late 20s, 30s and early 40s) this person should be in that age-range. And remember, if you cater to the Millennial generation, you'll also get the boomers.

This person needs to shine when on-camera and be able to ad-lib where needed so no video seems to be overly scripted or staged.

To support this person, there would also need to be a good camera operator (these can be shot with an iPhone, but with expert attention paid to lighting, sound capture, and movement) and an expert way to capture audio.

In the first year, the goal would be to produce between 30 and 70 two-to five-minute videos (the average would be about three minutes), each showcasing an activity that makes that particular spot worth a special trip.

This person also needs to be a good story-teller. Some of the historical attractions and sites have an amazing story to tell, and having this person be able to capture that as a teaser so that viewers take note and decide to make a trip to the region to see and hear the story in person.

Your on-camera personality would perhaps also speak at local, regional and state-wide events, such as the annual North Dakota's Governor's Conference on Tourism, to sell the rest of the state on visiting the Rendezvous Region.

After all, nearly 50% of all tourism spending in nearly every state comes from local residents discovering new areas of the state they call home.

This plan also calls for the creation of an outreach program and your oncamera personality will play a role in this as well.

The outreach program is designed to teach kids in elementary, middle, and high school that North Dakota is a fantastic place to live, grow up in, and to come back to after college.

In essence, it's to build community pride in all that North Dakota, and the Rendezvous Region in particular, has to offer.

This would be done by showcasing "Did you know" facts (also on film) and great places to play in their own front and back yards. This will also help combat the perception that there's "nothing to do here" as these young people become front-line employees that future visitors will interface with.

We're quite certain that this person already exists in the region, but finding them will be of critical importance.

To start, they would focus on why this is a great place to camp or RV in spring, summer and fall: no crowds, serene, a fantastic place to learn how to stand up paddle board, or fly fish—and these are the top three places to do each of these.

Additionally, it's important to promote the Rendezvous Region for team-building events, family reunions, and other gatherings, playing off the fact that this is The Rendezvous Region—the place to "Come Together."

We cannot overstate the importance of this on-camera personality in helping this program be successful.

Young: A Millennial Attractive: "The Face of the Rendezvous Region" Energetic: Fun | Enthusiastic | Cheerful | Always smiling Great on-camera: Even when unscripted





These three videos (each about 20-minutes long) will provide a great guide as to the type of equipment, software, and content to develop. These are available in the DDA's Video Vault in the Marketing category.





Recommendation #16: The Rendezvous Region "brand"—your unique selling proposition

Implementation timeline: November 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region, all regional and local organizations

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: There are thousands of locations, quite literally, that have nothing totally unique to their location. And in those instances, it's important to still find a way to make you the destination of choice. So rather than concentrate on a specific location or activity, it can be WHO you attract.

And coming back to the words "Rendezvous Region," Rendezvous literally means "a meeting at an arranged time and place, typically between two people." It also means "a placed used for a rendezvous i.e. "you're welcome to use this place for your rendezvous," or "a popular meeting place."

What if the Rendezvous Region became THE destination for get-togethers? This can include fishing tournaments, sporting tournaments, family reunions, camping trips with friends, fishing trips with friends, business retreats (you have great locations for this), or any type of gathering.

After all, the Rendezvous Region is safe, there are LOTS of places for gettogethers, from small uncrowded lakes to campgrounds, to community halls, to historic sites. It's easy to access the region, and inexpensive to boot.

Imagine three or four close-knit friends that could come into one of the towns, secure three or four residential lots (think homesteading) and then work together to build a home on each, and then work to bring the town to life, perhaps opening a business or two and really playing a major revitalization role.

This is where a brand like this can work for more than just tourism—as a gathering place for families and friends.

Imagine attracting bike clubs, fishing clubs, photography clubs, co-workers, digital nomads, each making the Rendezvous Region the place to do exactly that—rendezvous.

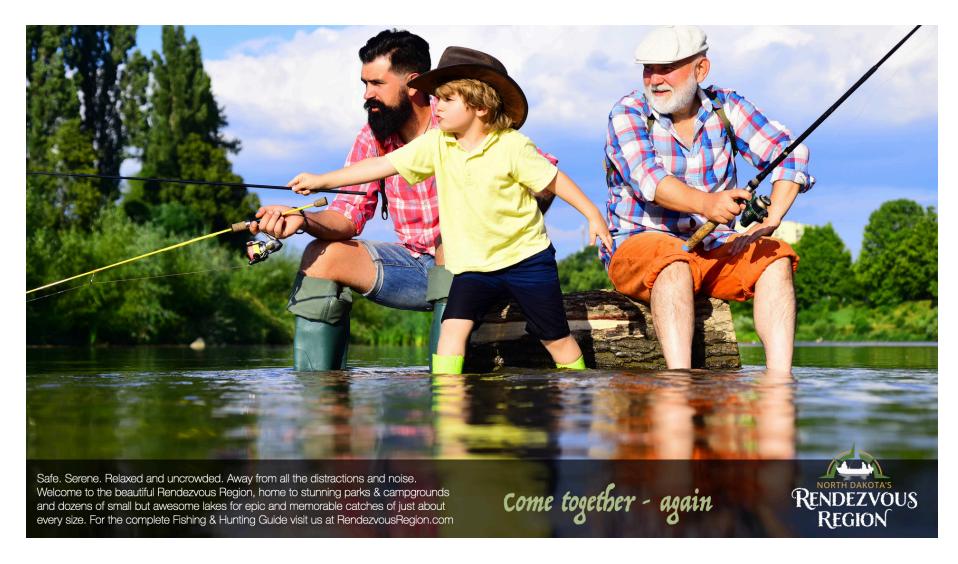
This could also include ATV groups, archery enthusiasts, horseback riding clubs, dragon boat teams, classic car and motorcycle clubs, artisans in action, quilters, etc.

This type of "brand" would be easy to promote and would offer something different than other destinations, particularly regions, are not using as a hook to differentiate themselves.

And it can be done using a simple tagline, "Come together." As a couple, with family, or friends, as co-workers, enthusiasts; a great place where people gather without all the noise of the urban environment and local distractions.



Where you can really come together—again—especially after two years of lock-downs and isolation. Can you think of a better place to "come together" than Icelandic State Park with a group of friends or family? This is a brand you can "own" and brands are all about ownership and then delivering on the promise.





What you are looking at here are simply examples of how you might want to market the Rendezvous Region. These concepts can be used as website pages, Instagram and other social media posts, in print ads and in posters, which would be printed, mounted and framed and distributed throughout the region selling locals on why they live in a great destination.

Please remember that these concepts utilize stock photography, which would be replaced with locally shot professional photography. A key point is to ALWAYS showcase people in the midst of an activity. Please, no scenic shots.

The next recommendation in this plan focuses on contracting with professional photographic expertise: both video and still photography.





Using the "come together" theme, sub-head (or sub-title) text can include "right here" or the other options shown in this example.

All of your marketing should show people, particularly young and multigenerational families, having a great time. Your greatest local assets include camping and RVing (family reunions), activities on water: Stand up paddle boarding, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, wildlife viewing, and your historical attractions.

Recommendation #17: Contract for professional photography and video content for all four seasons

Implementation timeline: November 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region

Approximate cost to implement: \$40,000 first year, \$10,000 subsequent years

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: In the modern marketing world, content is everything: Content will drive people to your website, your social media channels, is key to search engine optimization, and, ultimately, it's what closes the sale.

The four primary components of this include:

- The actual experience (making sure it was worth the special trip)
- Video and on-camera (helpful expertise with the sales pitch)
- Photography (evoking emotion—worth at least a thousand words)
- Key marketing messages (the details that will close the sale)

The old adage that a photograph is worth a thousand words is just as true today as it's always been. This recommendation is the beginning of the creation of both video footage and a professional still-photography library of images showcasing all four seasons.

Every photograph should evoke emotion. It should make the viewer take notice with a "Whoa!" or "Wow" or "Look at this!" thought or exclamation.

Every photo needs to include a person involved in a specific activity and look unposed. When a person sees someone smiling, it makes them smile as well. So including people in photos is absolutely critical.

Each photo should be specific to that one location. While the photo of the cute little girl getting face-painted at the local fair is darling (opposite), it won't set you apart, since that can be done at any fair just about anywhere.

The Rendezvous Region is chock full of quaint and beautiful towns that can easily expel misperceptions of the area in just one photograph. For instance, in the photo, bottom right, just adding a couple holding hands, walking



away from the camera, would say a lot about St. Thomas, making it look like a safe, beautiful town with tree-lined streets. A welcoming place to live or raise a family. This is the power of professional photography. Without people in this photo, it's just a snapshop of a tree-lined street. We always imagine ourselves in others' shoes. So including people is the key to your successful photo library.









Please remember that the photographer always owns the content—every photograph. This means you can't simply pull photos from the Internet. Any photo you use should include permission to use it—or, by contract, that you own the rights to it.

Likewise, you must obtain photo releases when the person or people in the photograph are identifiable.

Remember that you are NOT selling scenery, you are selling activities—things to do that make you worth a special trip. And to sell it, you need to have both still and moving images of a person, or people, enjoying that activity.

Since the brand is based on attracting groups of people, showing multiple people enjoying a great activity will always reinforce your brand positioning. In the concepts on the previous pages and to the right, we used stock photography—something you should avoid at all costs. These are simply to showcase the types of images—showing people having a great time—that you need to capture and add to your photo library.

One way to keep costs down is to create a marketing partnership with your photographer or photographers. In this case, all the photos are used to promote the public good—tourism. They would not be used to promote a particular business. And this is a great way to provide the photographer some exposure.





In exchange for favorable licensing costs, provide a photo credit every time you use one of their photographs, whether on a print ad, poster, website or social media post.

Secondly, when used online, make sure the photo credit is a link to a page on your website, showcasing the photographer: who they are, their









experience, and then a separate link to their website. Your photographer can tell a great story about the Rendezvous Region as well and can be included in your marketing efforts, creating a great partnership.

"team" of professionals, which is fine, considering the fact that this is a social media and public relations program being established to promote the region. But it's important that they know each other and may, in fact, work together on location shoots where you can capture both still and video photography.

Your photographer may or may not be the same person as the one who works with your on-camera personality, and so you may end up with a

Likewise, your photographer may be able to capture both still and b-roll video footage used to supplement the on-camera content. Quite often, still photos can be included in video content.

Over the first year of this program you should have perhaps 100 to 200 quality photographs showcasing people and activities in all four seasons.

These will be used on Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest (catering to various hobbies), on the primary website (a visual first experience), in print ads, on billboards, on posters promoting the region, etc.

The style of photography will be showcased in the Brand Style Guide, which your photographers will need to have a copy of and will need to adhere to.

There are three critical elements to the success of the marketing program outlined in this plan:

- 1. Your on-camera personality
- 2. Your photography and video content
- 3. Your written copy, headlines, key marketing messages

Recommendation #18: Contract for professional marketing services: Graphic design, copywriting, public relations

Implementation timeline: November 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: Per project cost

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: This is one of those recommendations that could easily be moved to the front of the list, once funding is in place. And this recommendation could include separate services:

- Copywriting (writing copy, headlines, and content)
- Public and media relations (now including social media)
- Graphic design

The firm contracted to develop the Brand Style Guide might be the same firm that offers other services. Some full-service firms have all these disciplines in-house, while others will team with outside expertise.

The priority list, however is:

- Your content creator—your writing expertise. Yes, this is #1.
- Then your on-camera personality, who has to deliver this messaging.
- Then your photography: still and video content, editing, audio, music.
- Then your public relations expert: niche-market media, travel media, etc.
- Your social media effort (managing what is being said).
- Then, finally, graphic design: this is the discipline which creates the overall "look and feel" of your marketing effort.

All too often the focus is on graphic design, and while it's important, content creation is, by far, THE most important aspect of the marketing effort.

Do not issue an RFP (request for proposal) for these services. Instead issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). You want the very best you can afford. Always look at the level of expertise they offer, including actual completed assignments for current or past clients, and as you look at their work, ask yourself "did they close the sale?" If yes, that's terrific.

In the end, you have one chance to get this right. Funding will disappear if you end up in a do-over situation.

Once you've found the best, with place-branding and place-marketing expertise (tourism), then work to negotiate a fee schedule with them.

If they are simply too expensive or you don't care for their methodology, then go to number two on the list.

Nearly every assignment they are given will be priced individually, meaning you would let them know what the assignment entails, and they would provide a cost to complete it.

These assignments may include:

- Media buys (such as outdoor: billboards, radio, print, etc.)
- Brochure design, copy writing, production and printing
- Poster design, copy writing, printing
- Writing and direction for on-camera appearances
- Direction for still and b-roll photography
- Post production editing, polishing, and delivery to various formats
- Obtaining editorial in niche publications (RVing, fishing, hunting, camping)
- Managing social media content (introducing new stories)

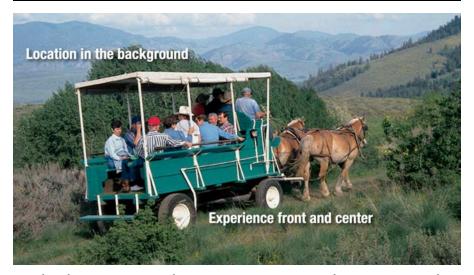
In a perfect world, the staff hired to manage and implement the Rendezvous Region marketing would, in essence, be an in-house ad agency with all these areas of expertise, so this recommendation is to get supporting services, where and when needed.

It's often advisable to contract with expertise in the markets you are trying to attract. Since they live there and know the area, they will know what it will take to convince other locals to head your way.

Lastly, this expertise will likely extend beyond just tourism marketing. The goal of this effort is to attract new residents and new investment, increasing the workforce, retaining the existing workforce, and increasing investment into the region. It's extremely important that every portion of this effort be coordinated with a similar look and feel so it all dovetails together.

Priority in order of importance

- 1. Concept development (creative direction)
- 2. The imagery
- 3. Copy writing
- 4. Public relations (getting it out there)
- 5. Media buys (when needed)
- 6. Graphic design (continuity)



Graphic designers are not always great copywriters, and so you may need multiple services. In fact, the copy you write is the most important element in any marketing effort along with great photography.

Here, and on the following pages, is an advertising primer showcasing the proper build for tourism-oriented marketing. Always promote the primary lure (the key experience) and location in the background.







Close the sale

Location last

In print advertising you have exactly two seconds to pull a reader into an ad. With a billboard you have less than four seconds.

On a home page you have four seconds.

Regardless, you MUST sell the key experience or activity first with a headline that will pull the reader into the ad.

Then you need to "close the sale" in as few words as possible and THEN, last, is letting the potential visitor know where they'll find it: In the Rendezvous Region of North Dakota.

Always follow these rules in your marketing and advertising and you will see a much stronger return on investment.



In one issue of Site Selector Magazine, which contained more than 110 print ads promoting economic development, nearly all promoted the same items: trained workforce, affordability, available commercial land and buildings, workforce education, etc. Only one ad really stood out, promoting quality of life first. In this particular issue, the Pure Michigan ads (above) pulled in more reader responses than the other 109 ads combined.

This proves the point that quality of life is now leading economic development. It also proves the point on how to create an effective marketing campaign: one signature photo, a well-written headline, short and to the point text, and then closing with where you'll find it: in Pure Michigan.

Recommendation #19: Reach out to RV and Camping YouTube Influencers, blogs, and vlogs, publications

Implementation timeline: December 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: As noted earlier, overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors: they spend money on lodging, dining, shopping, fuel, groceries and other local services.

The primary draw into the Rendezvous Region will promote camping since it's the type of accommodation the region has in spades. This certainly doesn't mean there will be no focus on filling hotel rooms, since these visitors spend even more than RVers, but the fastest, easiest way to tap into the tourism industry without competing directly with Grand Forks and other urban and suburban areas would be to tap into the RV industry.

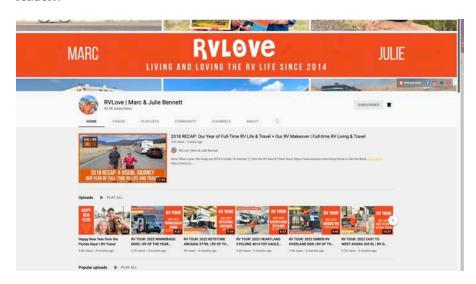
RVers, in particular, are extremely active on YouTube, very active on review sites, and belong to a host of camping clubs and organizations. They are social media savvy and subscribe to several industry-specific publications.

Many of the social media outlets are "how to" channels, while others provide travel inspiration: places to go, recommendations for certain RV parks, things to do, road conditions, best time of year to be there, etc.

Implementing this recommendation would mean contacting relevant influencers through their websites, blogs, vlogs, and YouTube channels. While, generally, North Dakota, east of Bismarck, is largely unknown to most RVers (except for those here for Harvest) it can be promoted as a new largely "unexplored" area of the country where there are ample quality RV parks, dozens of lakes for just about every type of recreation, first-rate historical attractions, and uncrowded, safe, and generally good weather conditions during the late spring months, summer and fall months.

Also, there are several RV-specific publications that are continually looking for new places for their audiences to discover and explore.

It would be good to get hard copies of RV publications, reach out to them and secure editorial calendars and to review current content so you can see how and where the Rendezvous Region can provide useful content for their readers.



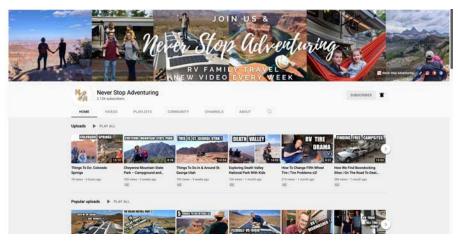
Here are a few YouTuber and RV influencers worth reaching out to:

There are a rew Touruber and RV initidencers worth reaching out to.	
- RV Love (Marc and Julie Bennett)	53,300 subscribers
- Less Junk, More Journey (Nathan & Marissa)	183,000
- RV Lifestyle (Mike & Jennifer Wendland)	155,000
- LivinRVision (Brian & Michelle)	36,000
- Changing Lanes (Chad & Tara)	228,000
- Live Amazing (Liz Amazing)	56,600
- Mortons on the Move (Tom & Cait Morton)	112,000
- Long Long Honeymoon (Sean & Kristi)	253,000
- You, Me & The RV (Phil & Stacy Farley)	152,000
- Never Stop Adventuring (The Skeltons)	2,120*
- Keep Your Daydream (Marc & Tricia Leach)	468,000
- Drivin' & Vibin' (Kyle & Olivia)	127,000
- Getaway Couple (Jason & Rae Miller	67,900
- Enjoy the Journey (Tom & Cheri Kenemore)	164,000
- Campendium (RV and camping reviews)	64,000
- Creativity RV (Robin)	243,000
- Embracing Detours	29,500*
- Endless RVing (Izzy & MJ)	64,200
- Fate Unbound (David & Roe)	131,000
- Finding Life's Adventures	1,850*
- Grand Adventure	70,800
- Irene Iron Travels	33,800*

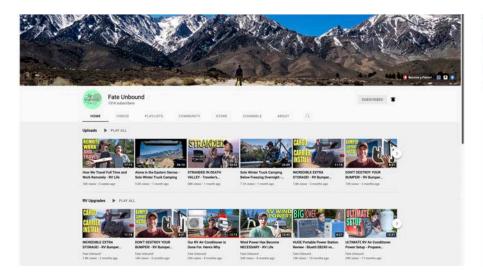
Less Junk, More Journey

* Newer and lower subscription influencers will be easier to convince to come into Northeastern North Dakota, but let them know you'll help them increase their subscribers by promoting their input into the region.

Be there to help them find the best campgrounds, and the best local experiences. You do not need to pay these folks, but you can find ways to help them "hook" new viewers. So, don't just invite them, actually reach out and be there for them.











Most RVers are familiar with Western North Dakota, but few have written or showcased the Eastern side of the state. In fact, we couldn't find any that have experienced anything north of Fargo. This creates a great opportunity to open up a less-visited (and more coveted) destination. RV bloggers and YouTubers are always looking for places everyone else isn't already covering. Reaching out to them and showcasing the campgrounds, the small lakes (dams), fishing, and your historical sites and attractions is a great way



to gain awareness among this group of visitors who are actively looking for new unexplored places to share with others. You should also reach out to RV magazines, which are also looking to showcase new destinations.

Partner with a local experienced RVer who can help you craft stories, photography, and can share with the people they most follow.

Recommendation #20: Begin loading the YouTube channel with "Best of" content videos geared to camping and RVing

Implementation timeline: December 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: As you establish the Rendezvous Region YouTube channel, create Playlists by type of activity:

- Best campgrounds & details
- Icelandic State Park
- Turtle River State Park
- Pembina Gorge & Frost Fire
- Top fishing spots & what to fish for
- Top paddling spots
- Must visit historic sites & museums
- Here for harvest? What to know and what's new
- Must attend festivals and events
- Top 10 Did You Know facts & teasers
- Great towns and hidden gems

This list will help define the type of photography, videography, and on-camera content you'll want to begin developing. While you may create a number of videos in a short period of time, post one each week.

What people enjoy is consistency without overloading them with content. And make sure your posts are seasonal. You can even create separate channels, one for each season of the year so that people can search your channel by season, or type of activity.

There are 11 playlists here, and if you posted four videos in each playlist, you'd be creating 44 posts. And if you uploaded one each week, you'd be well on your way to creating a YouTube following.

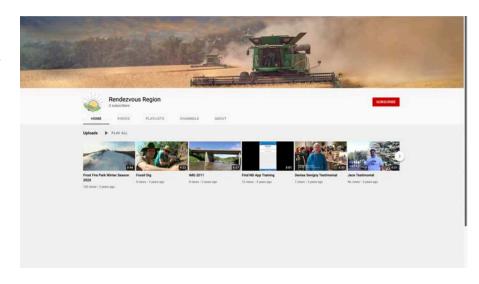
The key to success is to provide useful information, not just fluff or marketing jargon. People want help, not a sales pitch. Always keep that in the back of your mind when creating this type of content.

Let potential visitors know your personal "Top 5" or "Top 7" area parks and campgrounds, great little eateries with great pie or another specialty, and where they can go to fill a propane tank. Useful is the key word, while making it fun.

People want and need details, details, details. For fishing: what will I catch? Is it catch and release or catch and keep? Where do I get a fishing license? Is there a fishing season? What time of day is best for certain kinds of fish? Where can I get bait and tackle? And what's best for catching each type of fish? Are there catch limits? And is that per day, or per fishing license?

Above all, do NOT be afraid to promote private businesses that rent or sell gear, or bait, or offer guide services. Promote specific places to eat and tell them WHY it's one of your favorites. Let us know where to purchase groceries or treats locally. Promote great little retail shops. After all, this is about creating jobs, helping local businesses survive and grow.

Helpful means providing specifics and avoiding generalities like "then grab some lunch at a local diner." That's not helpful and will get people to hit the back button or next button within seconds.



Avoid the pitfall of posting video content just for the purpose of posting something each week. As the old saying goes, "If you have nothing to say, then say nothing."

We spent several weeks in the Rendezvous Region during the sugar beet harvest. While locals complained about the muddy roads and large trucks everywhere, we found it absolutely fascinating. Most Americans have likely never even seen a sugar beet. So creating video content explaining how the Harvest works will be fascinating, especially since the region is one of the top spots in the world for sugar production. In our observations, it was like watching an orchestra taking place and working around the weather. What may be boring to you, can be incredibly fascinating to others.

PLAYLISTS

Top things to do

- Camping and RVing
- Awesome State Parks
- Get-togethers
- Fantastic Paddling
- Wind sports!
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Amazing history
- Harvest Whoa!



Recommendation #21: Frost Fire - issue RFQ for the creation of a Master Development, Management & Marketing Action Plan

Implementation timeline: December 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$120,000

Funding source options: Grants | Planning grants

Rationale and to-do steps: The Pembina Gorge, next to Icelandic State Park, should be the region's best tourism asset. While millions of dollars have been secured and invested into creating a better experience for visitors to the Gorge and Frost Fire, its potential has not been fully developed or realized. A two-plus year pandemic certainly didn't help, but now's a great time to start planning for the future.

Quite frankly, most first-time visitors would have no clue what "Frost Fire" is or does. We certainly didn't. We thought it was either a dessert, a pub or eatery, or a distillery. One of the items coming out of this recommendation is to consider a renaming of the park. Even when we drove up to the locked gates there was nothing telling us what the place is or does.

In our opinion, it should become the "Pembina Gorge All Terrain Park" and that can include the state park next door, the golf course and perhaps even neighboring properties that could be developed to create a Ropes Course, zip line or other activities, such as floating or rafting the river in season.

Together this can be an amazing destination - as a single attraction - over separate attractions.

The top priority for Frost Fire is to sit down and determine what it wants to be over the next three years, five years, twenty years:

- A seasonal local ski and bike hill that can break even?
- A destination resort?
- Does it want to grow the theater aspect? Retail? Lodging" Housing for staff?

The very first question to ask is "How do you see Frost Fire ten years from now?" What's your vision for Frost Fire, long term? Once the board makes a decision on this, then the board should be reconfigured with champions that are all about achieving that vision. Many may drop off and they should be thanked for their service at a Board Dinner for keeping the dream alive, especially over the past two-plus years.

If the decision is to grow it into a money-making destination, then next up would be contracting with expertise to determine what's feasible considering demographic and geographic primary and secondary markets. Who will it draw? And is there enough population and desire to make it feasible?







When it comes to tourism, and places similar to Frost Fire, the day-trip market typically lives within a 45-minute drive (each way) of the destination. Visitors will come for the day, ski, bike or hike, then head home.

On the other hand, if you want to attract visitors from a two-hour drive, or further, then you will be attracting overnight visitors. This brings us to the Four Times Rule: People will travel a distance if you have activities that cater to them, four times longer than it took to get there. So, if someone drives two hours, do you have activities that will last eight hours (four times the twohour drive)?

Visitors typically spend four to six hours with the primary activity and then eight to ten hours with complementary activities. Those "complementary" activities might including dining, shopping, hiking, theater, visiting nearby historical attractions, sightseeing, or relaxing in nearby accommodations.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, since they are there for multiple meals and are also paying for overnight lodging.

And the more you have to offer (collectively) the further people will come, the longer they will stay, and the more likely they are to return time and again.



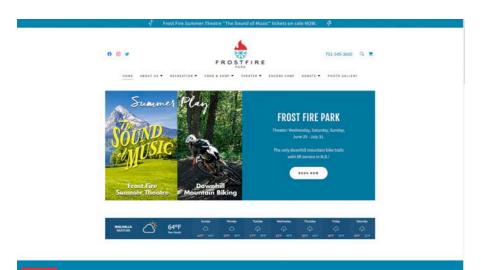
If the decision is to grow Frost Fire to more than a seasonal local ski hill, run by volunteers and a skeleton season staff, then the board will need to bite the bullet and create a Master Development, Management & Marketing Action Plan.

This is not a cheap undertaking, but it could be done in phases—the first of which would be feasibility: a look at any competition, the geographic and demographic audience it will attract, and what it would take to attract that audience in terms of capital and ongoing investment.

If it's simply not feasible for Frost Fire to grow beyond what it is now, then you might be out \$20,000 or so, but at least you'd have an answer.

With resort development, it's a different animal altogether. With resorts it's a process along the lines of "If you build it, they will come." In Roger Brooks's experience working in several major ski resort destinations (albeit a long time ago), Frost Fire did not have the potential to become a major destination development resort simply because there's not enough land or terrain to support multiple lifts, accommodations, retail and the other supporting infrastructure.

But it could be a very successful small-scale or "intimate" year round destination, the likes of Holiday Valley Resort (knows simply as Holiday Valley) based in Ellicottville, New York. Founded in 1957, it's always been a small



day-trip destination until 1995 when the Inn at Holiday Valley opened, making it a multi-day destination because of the lodging facility.

The town of Ellicottville is home to 1,100 people, and Catauragus County, New York is home to 77,000 residents. Buffalo, NY is an hour away and Erie, Pennsylvania is about a two-hour drive away.

While it has more ski lifts, that possibility could easily be accommodated at Frost Fire by developing a plan that might include the golf course and by working with the State Parks system on being a concessionaire and managing the Pembina Gorge State Park that currently has no dedicated staff to manage

It would be beneficial to have several board members travel to Ellicottville and talk to the folks in the town and at Holiday Valley to ask them the hard questions about growth, financing, the effects of COVID, what it takes to make it work, what they would do over if they had the chance, etc.

Detroit Mountain would be worthy of another fact-finding mission, although it's already a very popular tourist destination and has nearly a dozen hotels in Detroit Lakes, less than a ten-minute drive from the mountain, and it has a downtown that is far more tourism-ready than Walhalla currently is. That being said, Walhalla certainly has the potential of becoming a destination downtown, if it so desires, along the lines of Ellicottville, Detroit Lakes and others throughout the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic states.

- 1. Decide what you want Frost Fire to be ten years from now
- 2. Visit with the golf course, State Parks, Walhalla, neighboring land owners
- 3. Consider a name change
- 4. Visit other destinations: Ellicottville, NY and other small-towns
- 5. Visit with development interests: Gauge feasibility
- 6. Contract for a plan

Finally, consider contacting master developers with experience in this type of development and invite them out to take a look and get their first impressions.

Start by contacting the folks at East West Partners (ewpartners.com), Resort Development Partners (resortdevpartners.com). Let them know that you have a market of 1.2 million residents within a two-hour drive (please doublecheck these numbers to make sure they're accurate) and that you'd like them to come visit the area to see if it has any potential, in their eyes.

You might also contact the folks at Vail Resorts, formerly Vail Associates, that has developed and managed a number of resorts.

Over several months you could get a very good idea of what will work, what won't, and what it will take to go where the Frost Fire board wants it to go.

If you get a green light to proceed, then submit an RFQ for the creation of the Master Development, Management and Marketing Plan. Do NOT issue an RFP, but decide who you think is the best fit, and go with that firm.

This will likely include urban planning, architecture, landscape architecture, trail and ski hill expertise, hotel and retail design and operations, and other disciplines.

Your respondents will likely include disciplines from other companies, partnering to provide you with a complete plan. Make sure you include phases, starting with feasibility. If the project is simply NOT feasible, you can pull the plug before the entire cost of the plan is lost.

Recommendation #22: Identify hashtags for each historical site, community, state park, waterway, etc.

Implementation timeline: December 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: Locally funded

Rationale and to-do steps: Social media will be playing an important role in putting the Rendezvous Region communities "on the map" as desirable places for people to consider living, working and visiting.

Each community should add a banner to their gateway signs showcasing a specific hashtag for their location. This way both locals and visitors can share their experience using a common hashtag for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other common social media sites.

By placing the hashtag at community gateways, it will create consistency on where posts are placed: In the case of Lakota it could be #Lakota, or #LakotaND, or #LakotaNDakota, #ILuvLakota, etc.

Hashtag rules:

- Keep it short.
- Make sure it's easy to remember.
- Have fun with it.
- If possible preface the hashtag with "Share your experience:"
- Use lettering on your signs that's easy to read from a distance: At least 4" to 6" tall. Use Helvetica upper and lower case, which is easiest to read.
- For the dams, use the word "Lake" if possible.
- Make sure the banners are professionally done and match your gateway signs in terms of color and style.

Where possible add a second hashtag, which would be provided by the Rendezvous Region. It might be #RendezvousND, or #RendezvousRegion or something along that line. This recommendation is to come up with the actual hashtag for the region and for each community.





Recommendation #23: Develop landing pages on Instagram, Facebook and other social media channels for each hashtag

Implementation timeline: December 2022

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$3,500 (graphic design expertise)

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Each community should have an Instagram and a Facebook page that matches the hashtags placed at each entrance and throughout town (at local parks, ball fields, city hall, etc.)

This would be the responsibility of each community.

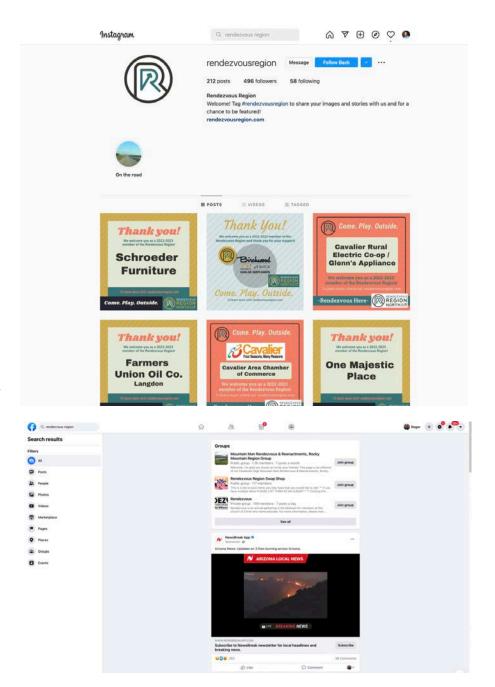
The Rendezvous Region should also have branded Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and other social media sites and a dedicated hashtag for those visiting the area: #RendezvousND or #RendezvousRegionND...

While the advertising is nice (upper right), it does nothing to encourage people to post photographs to the site, nor does it promote spending time in the region. These social media channels should be dedicated to posting high quality photography of what it's like to live in or visit the communities and local tourism assets.

A person (perhaps a volunteer) could be assigned to mine all of the community-based hashtags once a week and then re-post the best of those to the Rendezvous Region social media sites, particularly Instagram.

Your top tourism assets should all have their own hashtag, but should also include #RendezvousND (or whichever hashtag you use) so that photos are shared to both sites.

This would include the state parks, Frost Fire Park, each of the lakes (dams), campgrounds, and each of the historical attractions. Get high school students involved in showcasing the best of their home towns. It's a great way to showcase community pride, and what each community has to offer.



Recommendation #24: Contract with signage vendor to develop and add hashtag signage to existing place identifier and gateway signs

Implementation timeline: January 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$5,000 with co-op funding

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Now that each community, and the Rendezvous Region, have identified a social media hashtag, next up is to contract with a sign vendor or local craftsperson to create the actual hashtag banners, which would be placed at each entrance sign and other locations throughout town; The other locations might include:

- Community parks
- City or town hall
- Sports fields, facilities
- Campgrounds
- In downtown locations

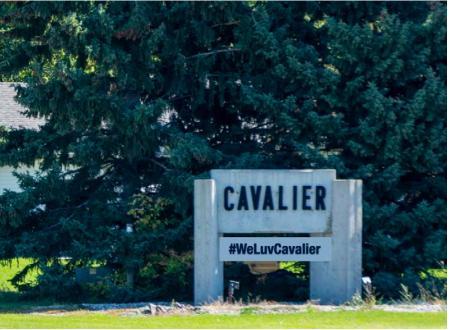
Lettering should always be at least 4" tall, with gateway signs having at least 6" tall lettering, so it's easy to read from a distance and easy to remember when seeing it for just a few seconds.

The hashtag banners should fit the design, look and feel of the existing gateway signs, as you can see in these two examples.

The budget for this project has been set at \$5,000 with some "co-op funding." Perhaps the Rendezvous Region would provide 50% of the cost in order to incentivize the communities to implement this recommendation. The guesstimate for each banner would be in the \$80 to \$100 range—depending, of course, on the placement, existing sign design, and other parameters.

The Rendezvous Region might cover 100% of the cost for hashtag banners at historical sites and attractions, each of the lakes (dams), state parks, trail heads, and campgrounds throughout the region.





Recommendation #25: Begin developing Top 3, Top 5 "must do" lists for RVers, fishing, hunting, paddling, geocaching, historical sites.

Implementation timeline: January 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

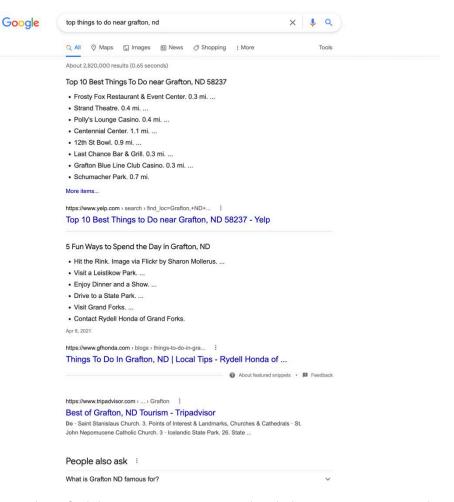
Rationale and to-do steps: Less than five percent of visitors (tourists) ever spend time on a destination marketing organization website during the decision-making process. Why? Because most DMO sites simply provide lists of all there is to see and do in the area, without providing details and recommendations. In the case of the Rendezvous Region, listing dozens of lakes, historical sites and attractions, trails, state parks, hunting and fishing locations, etc., is not helpful.

What they are looking for is help. The Rendezvous Region represents the visitor, not the counties, cities and towns. And by providing helpful, bottomline information, the Rendezvous Region can help the visitor have a better experience, and this will help close the sale.

Nearly every source out there, from Google, TripAdvisor, Yelp, USA Today, Travel+Leisure Magazine, Forbes, and dozens of influencers to YouTube channels promotes numbered lists of the best they can find: Top 3, 5 or 7 best fishing lakes, top paddling destinations, etc.

The Rendezvous Region needs to do the same thing. In order to be successful, this is a VERY top priority. Which three lakes would be the best for HobieCat and small sailing craft? The answer might be the larger lakes (more room for maneuvering sail boats) and those that have perhaps better winds. Stump Lake might be one of those candidates.

Which lakes would be best for stand-up paddle boarding? For this one you'd promote lakes that don't allow power boats (creating wakes), and they might be smaller, calmer, and have warmer waters since some of the time will actually be spent in the water.



Currently, to find these answers visitors simply ask these questions in Google searches and on peer review sites.

While a bit subjective, the Rendezvous Region must identify the top three lakes for stand-up paddle boarding, wildlife viewing, kayaking, small sailing craft, canoeing, water skiing, bass fishing, walleye fishing, perch fishing, ice fishing, swimming and picnicking, family reunions, etc.

Besides providing helpful, useful information to potential visitors, the Rendezvous Region will accomplish some additional benefits, including the following:

1. When people use the web to find destinations for particular activities, they will typically type in phrases along the lines of "Best hiking trails near..." or "Top ice fishing lakes near..." or "Best park near [location] for a family reunion," or "Top spots for bird watching near..."

When you provide this helpful information and post it to your website and Instagram channels, it will put YOU, not some other source, at the top of the search results. This is very important to your Search Engine Optimization (SEO) work.

2. Influencer marketing is a big part of this plan, and a great way to get those all-important third-party endorsements. Whether theses are bloggers, Vloggers, or YouTubers, they are also looking for those "Best of" and "top" locations for specific activities.

So, when YOU provide this information, you are actually feeding them information they can use to develop their own itineraries and will then share those with their viewers or readers.

- 3. Even major and niche publications in biking, hiking, boating, kayaking, SUP boarding, kite boarding, fishing, sailing, bird hunting, bird watching, American History, and others are always looking for places to send their viewers and readers. And they are searching for those same "top spots."
- 4. If you note the Google search on the previous page, we searched for the "Top things to do near Grafton, ND." Google searches the web for that answer. And if you have it on your website, that is where people will be directed. And that list will be yours, not someone else's.
- 5. This exercise will also be the foundation for the various printed collateral materials that are part of this effort. You will be promoting your top historical sites and attractions, your top birding destinations, top hunting and fishing spots, etc.

Here's what's needed:

- 1. You need to identify the "Top three" or "Top five" in the following categories:
- Stand up paddle boarding
- Kayaking and canoeing
- Fishing (by type of fish and by season)
- Hiking trails (family friendly, more challenging)
- Local lakes and parks for family reunions and get-togethers
- RV campgrounds
- Tent camping destinations
- Mountain biking
- Historical attractions, sites, museums
- Birding (by type of bird and season)
- River floating (inner tube and light rafts)
- Festivals and events
- Snowmobiling
- Cross country skiing
- Top activities by town or area

Do NOT let politics get in the way of this effort. When you promote your Top 3 or Top 5, you will also always promote "And if you enjoyed those, look here (URL link) for three more! And then three more.

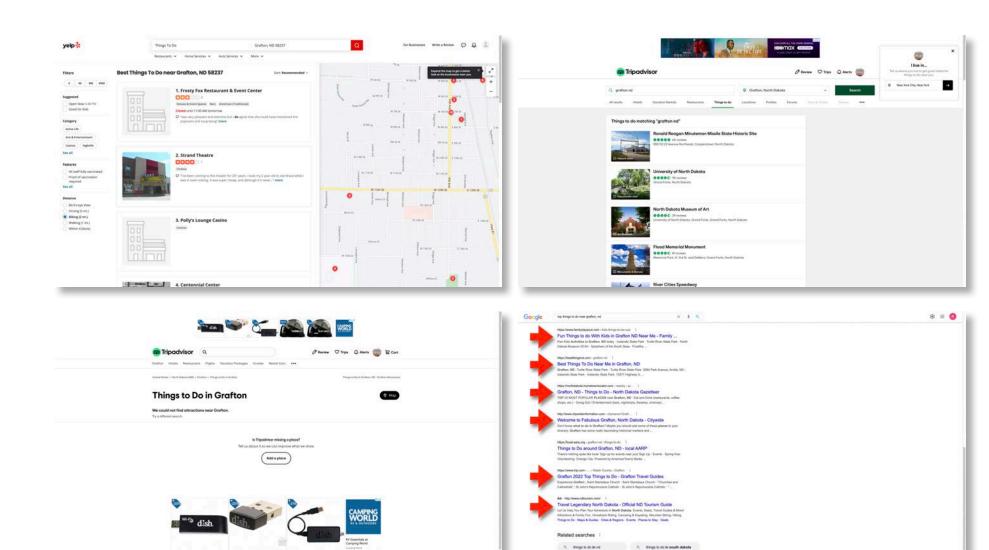
Always promote your best-ofs: Success breeds success.

Work with your waterway authorities, state parks, and others in developing this list.

For each you must also provide specific information:

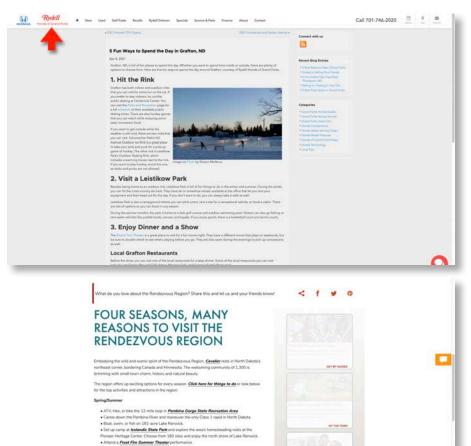
- Where to purchase a fishing license, bait, catch limits and other information
- Who to contact for reserving a place for a reunion at a local park
- Contact information for campgrounds
- Seasons, days, and hours for historical sites, museums, and attractions
- Nearby places for a meal, or treats, or supplies. A HUGE part of this effort is geared to promoting local businesses. That's economic development.

This is one of the biggest, most intimidating but perhaps the MOST important of all the projects in this plan. But it's the most necessary in getting the Rendezvous Region recognized as a top visitor destination.



As you can see from these slides, TripAdvisor had little to say about visiting Grafton. And like other sites, it will pick up items from your website. In the slide, bottom right, you can see popular search results when looking for "top things to do near Grafton, ND." You can see an influencer wrote about "Fun things to do with kids in Grafton." By you taking the lead, you can control what you market, how you market it, how to categorize it, when to

encourage people to visit, and you will also make sure that every visitor has a better experience in the Rendezvous Region.



As you go through this exercise, and it can change from year to year, make sure you use numbered lists. Not just "top things to do near..." Google will pick up numbered lists over just simple lists because people want help and guidance, not just a list. While we applaud the efforts of the Rendezvous Region in promoting "Four Seasons, Many Reasons..." this is not specific enough to be useful in actually planning an excursion into the Region this August, or October with specific activities in mind.

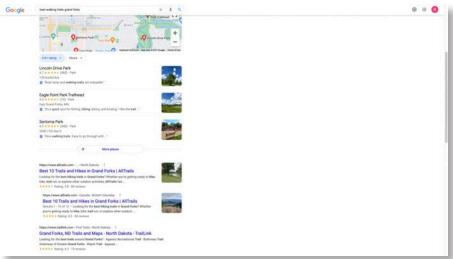
RELATED TOPICS

. Dance and worship at Off The Charts Music Festiva

. Enjoy recreation tourism on the Annual Svold ATV Fun Run that will take you on priva

Hike three miles of shaded forest trails in Gunlogson State Nature Preserve where you'll

Golf at the Cavalier Country Club & Walhalla Country Club: Both deliver nine holes with



As you also search for the top activities, you'll find a number of influencers (many of whom may be local with smaller followings). You should make a list of these and, over time, reach out to them, thank them for promoting the area and invite them back to verify the lists you've created.

As you develop your "best ofs," make sure to include details, details and more details. The more specifics you offer, the more likely you are to close the sale. And do NOT provide links to other sites for basic information. You want to keep them on your website right up until the sale has been closed. And THEN, if they need additional information, you can provide a link to another site—such as the State Parks website, or Frost Fire and others.

Here's an example for fishing:

- What will I catch?
- What time of day is best?
- What type of bait should I use and where can I get it?
- Where can I get a fishing license and cost?
- What are the catch limits?
- Motorized boats allowed?
- Seasonal considerations?
- Fish cleaning station or other amenities? (Restrooms? Picnic shelters?)
- Where's the best place to park?
- Where can we purchase fishing gear locally?

Recommendation #26: Work with historical sites and attractions on common operating months, days and hours

Implementation timeline: January 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: In May of 2022 Roger Brooks and the Red River Regional Council met with region-wide historical sites, museums and attractions asking to establish common seasons (months open to the public), days, and hours.

One of the Rendezvous Region's best assets are its historical villages, school houses, cemeteries, architecture, and the stories that surround those. With that in mind, the next recommendation in this plan is to create a History Trail brochure where people can visit a number of historical sites while on the History Trail.

In order to make this a viable activity, it will be VERY important to have some consistent operating days and hours. It is acknowledged that these are largely run by volunteers and that the volunteer base is diminishing over time.

It is hoped that each would be open perhaps on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, as these are the most popular leisure travel days.

And they should be open from Mid-May through October. The peak months for Baby Boomer travel includes April, May, September and October—and this is the largest audience that visits historical attractions. While the weather can make April a difficult month to open, work to make the season begin in Mid-May through the month of October, if not all year round.

With regards to hours, typically between 10:00 and 6:00 would be best, with perhaps evening hours during the summer months at popular destinations such as Stump Lake.



Realizing that this may be a tall order for some sites, we hope that every historical site, museum and attraction will work with the Rendezvous Region in incorporating TalkingTrail stories to help offset the lack of open hours and days.

Talking Trails is a smart-phone app that can provide visitors a self-guided excursion through historic sites, historic architecture, and museums 24/7, 365 days of the year.

Nelson County already has produced 20 of its sites as T and the Rendezvous Region is working on 60 additional sites, which will make the History Trail a great experience.

Here are a few notes on how to best craft the stories you want to tell:

- 1. Avoid words like "collections," "artifacts," and "displays."
- 2. Avoid too many historical facts: Name of the architect, who donated items and other "non-story-related" information.
- 3. Tell actual stories—even ghost stories have a place. You MUST be able to "evoke emotion:" whether making someone smile, laugh, cry, or getting the listener/viewer to exclaim "whoa!" "Evoke emotion" are the two key words in successfully promoting any historic site or "displays" in a museum.

Let people know what it was like. For instance, in Wamduska Square near Stump Lake, there is a collection of small historic school houses. What makes the story interesting, besides how old the schools are, was what it was like to attend school in one of these.

How early did the school teacher need to get there in order to get heat into the building during the winter months? Where did they get firewood? How many students would attend class there? And how did they get to school? How far did they walk, or ride a horse or any other way of getting there?

What kind of classes did they take in those days? Was it lit by candlelight or lantern? What types of books did they use?

Would they have a single teacher, teaching a variety of subjects throughout the day, or were there a couple of teachers? Did kids dress up or wear school uniforms? How many students would graduate each year?

There are so many stories that can evoke emotion, and it's critically important to share those stories. Even individual stories are important. If you watch news programs they will often single out a person who is struggling with fuel prices, inflation, or discrimination—whatever the topic is—to illustrate and put the story into a personal context.

You can do the same with historical sites and museums.

During the time spent in the Rendezvous Region, we saw hundreds of antique farm tractors, but with no context of how they were used, how much they cost (if put into a modern context), what they actually did, and what it was like to hitch them up, how many hours a day they were used, etc.

We saw thousands of "artifacts" and "displays" with little context of the stories behind them.

One of the best small local museums in the United States at telling great stories is the Orphan Train Museum in Concordia, Kansas. They enlarged early 20th century photographs and told the actual stories of orphaned kids being sent around the country to adoptive families—what it was like for these kids living on the streets of New York in the winter before being sent to distant places and people they never knew.



The museum even shares the results of many of these kids, how they grew up, what they did for a living and how they changed the world in many ways.

Using TalkingTrails, please be prepared to tell stories—not just facts and figures.

We also encourage volunteers and staff to watch the video in the Destination Development Associations' Video Vault, "Especially for Museums." This is a perfect guide for every historical attraction.

And also download the TalkingTrails app, listen to some of the stories: Does it make you want to go there? Does it evoke emotion? Listen to some of these and you'll quickly determine what to avoid and what to include as you showcase the history found throughout the Rendezvous Region.





Recommendation #27: Create the second rack brochure: "North Dakota's Rendezvous Region History Trail"

Implementation timeline: February 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$10,000 with additional co-op funding

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Most museums and historical attractions do not have the funds to develop websites and rack brochures. Yet, by working together, a "History Trail" brochure can be created where each can afford to be included.

For example, in the case of the historical attractions located in Thurston County, Washington (Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater) each museum pitched in \$200 dollars (some were given grants) with the resulting "South Sound Heritage Attractions" brochure shown on the opposite page.

In fact, the brochure was so successful that the number of visitors tripled, while they cut the collective marketing costs by nearly two-thirds. This included 11 historical sites and museums, plus the front cover, back cover with a map or "trail," and an introductory page talking about the history trail.

While this particular brochure was printed in just two colors (black and brown), full color brochures can now be created, on demand, at the same cost.

Each panel in the rack brochure would include a brief description of the attraction, its location, directions, a photograph, open days and hours or how to find it on the TalkingTrail app, and cost if there's an admissions charge.

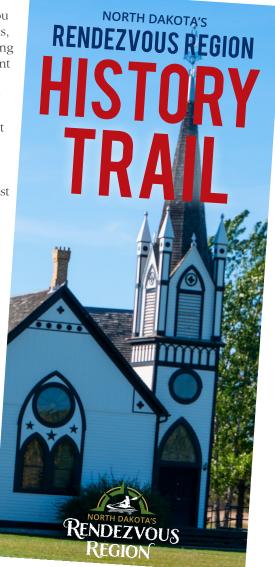
We recommend printing 10,000 of the Rendezvous Region History Trail and having them distributed at each of the history sites and along with the RV & Camping Guide at brochure distribution locations throughout the region.

A good way to determine the cost of the brochure is to first determine the number of historical sites and attractions will be included. Do not promote

more than 30 sites in a single brochure. If needed, you can produce a "North Rendezvous Region History Trail "brochure and then a separate South version. Then determine the cost to have it designed, and the cost to have it printed. Then divide the number of participants by the cost to determine a per-site cost.

However, it is VERY important you promote your very best attractions, and if they do not have the funding to contribute, provide them a grant through the Rendezvous Region to allow them to be included. We did include a \$10,000 budget for this Guide to make sure your best historical sites and attractions are included in the Trail Guide.

And remember, like the other "best of's," not everyone, everywhere will be included. You can always dedicate a panel to messaging along the lines of "If you enjoyed the historical attractions in this brochure, make sure vou visit us at (URL) to see the next ten not-to-be-missed historical sites here in the beautiful Rendezvous Region of North Dakota."





Recommendation #28: Distribute the History Trail brochure along with the RV & Camping Guide to wall-mounted racks, stand alone kiosks, etc.

Implementation timeline: February 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None: Staff time

Funding source options: \$3,500 for brochure counter-top holders

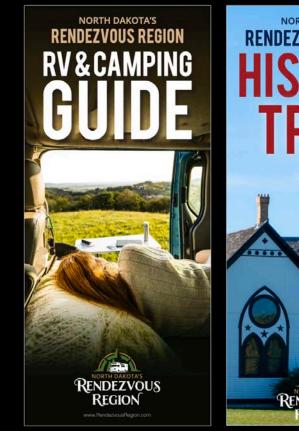
Rationale and to-do steps: At this point, you will have produced the RV and Camping Guide and the History Trail brochures. We recommend purchasing 100 quantity of the counter top brochure holders (sample shown, bottom right) that can hold up to four brochures. At this point two pockets would include the RV & Camping Guide and the other two would house the History Trail Guide.

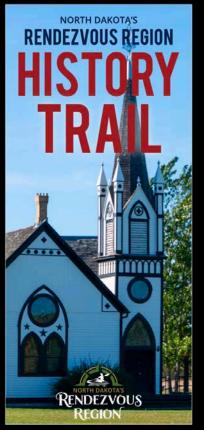
Each historical attraction, with interior space, would accommodate one of the brochure holders. For outside space-only locations, you can purchase inexpensive real estate flier holders and have each mounted to one of the structures or a stand-alone post.

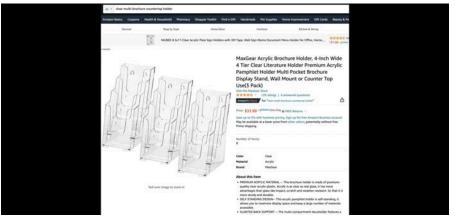
In some places, such as Stump Lake Village, you might have these in two or three different locations throughout the village.

Also distribute them to chambers of commerce, local lodging facilities including campgrounds, visitor information centers throughout the five-county area, and at state visitor information centers and rest stops.

Also make sure you send both to the state's tourism office for their review and distribution.







Recommendation #29: Create the third rack brochure: "Rendezvous Region Golf Guide"

Implementation timeline: March 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$5,000 plus co-op funding

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Next up is the Rendezvous Region Golf Guide. This is a cooperative effort that can include all of the golf courses open for public play throughout the region. It many not be necessary, in this case, to only promote the Top 3 or Top 5. You should be able to include up to 20 golf courses in this guide, which should incorporate all in the region.

Each should include a signature photograph, information about the course: Seasons open, number of holes, par, food services, pro-shop, lessons, club and cart rentals, event space, etc. It should also include a point of differentiation: why someone should play more than one of the courses. Also include

RENDEZVOUS

a two-panel spread that has a map of the region and where each course is located. Also include a URL and contact information.

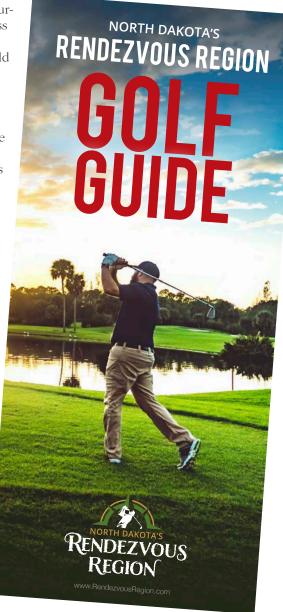
Some courses may be open during the winter months for cross country skiing or to host local events. That information should be included as well.

Photography is a key ingredient when it comes to promoting golf courses, so it might be a good idea to work with the courses on a cooperative basis to contract for professional photography.

There are photographers that specialize in golf course photography.

Golf courses can also become excellent locations for teambuilding events, corporate retreats, and reunions, so make sure that information is included.

And, of course, if any of the courses have been rated by the PGA and have other third-party reviews, those should be included.



Recommendation #30: Work with golf courses on creating a "Ticket to Paradise" cooperative marketing program

Implementation timeline: March 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Between Lake Tahoe, the areas south of Reno, and in the Carson Valley of Nevada, there are nine golf courses. Over the years they competed for memberships, the competed with green fees and competition was, for the most part, fierce and sometimes ugly.

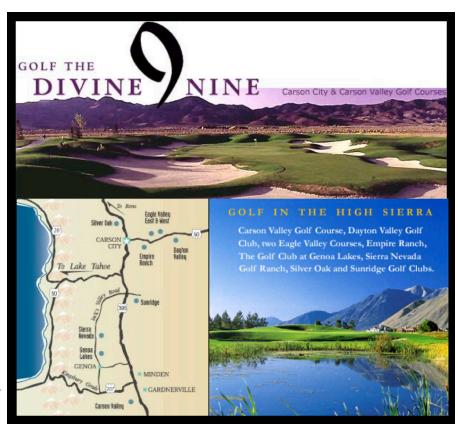
But that turned around when they agreed to market cooperatively. First of all, each course put \$1,000 into a collective marketing pot, creating a pool of \$10,000. With that they contracted with a marketing firm, which came up with the "Divine Nine" name, which is outstanding. The golf courses in the Rendezvous Region should also come up with a collective name.

Then, they contracted for professional golf course photography and developed a website, and a marketing campaign, "The Ticket to Paradise." With this, a person would pay \$395 and would have a year to play all nine courses.

Additionally, each course would create an "attraction" a floating green, or wild sand traps, or some other element that would set their course apart from the others, incentivizing golfers to play all nine courses.

This would be a cooperative effort where the Rendezvous Region Tourism Council would organize the courses, get them to meet, and together create a program along this line that would put this region of North Dakota on the map as a premier golf destination.

Prior to this effort in the Carson Valley area, golf was barely on anyone's radar as a tourist attraction, yet the hotels now promote the area as a premier golf destination. In fact, Golf Digest and other golf publications soon picked up on the effort and for the past couple of decades, since this effort began, this area of Nevada has been one of the top golf destinations in the country.







We recommend that the courses work together to create a cooperative marketing and development program with the following elements:

- 1. Each agree to contribute a set amount of money for photography, a website, a marketing campaign, and a package (name) for the collection of courses. The "Divine Nine" area of Nevada, known as brown and dusty, soon shook off that perception just through the photography alone, as you can see on this page.
- 2. They would then set out to develop a "ticket to paradise" type of program where people can pay a set fee and have a year to play all of the courses (or perhaps ten different courses they can choose from).
- 3. Each would develop a "lure" that would set themselves apart from everyone else. A water hazard, sand traps, elevated tee, floating green—something that would attract golfers to each course.
- 4. They would cross-promote each other as well.





This effort can really change the perception of the Rendezvous Region by showcasing a varied terrain, what the area has to offer in terms of recreational assets, and golf also attracts higher-end visitors, which should always be a primary goal.

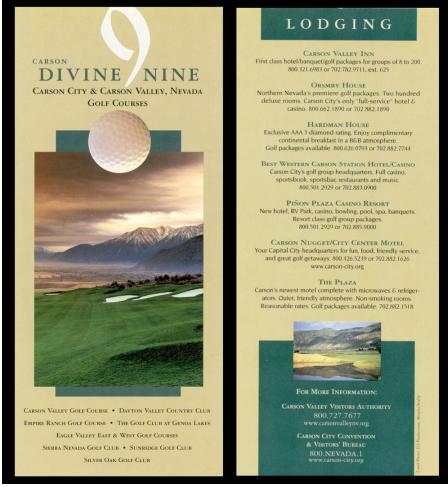
Within a few months of the Divine Nine marketing effort, the hotels cooperated on a rack card (right) promoting seven of the area's hotels.

A good way to market golf courses is to state-wide organizations and nonprofit agencies for "team building" and corporate retreats. For instance, United Way Agencies of North Dakota, or the North Dakota Automobile Dealers Association, and so many others that host quarterly or annual events in rural locations where they can host training seminars, networking events, and roll-out new products and offerings in a great setting.

Tied to this effort can be other golf-related events such as an annual Girl's Golf Weekend where friends come out to learn and play a round of golf (or two or three).

One other issue with local golf courses is that few, if any, bother to add signage that lets people know they are open for public play, how many holes they have, whether or not they have a pro-shop, cart and club rentals, and food services. Signage would certainly help increase the number of green fees collected during the golfing season.





Recommendation #31: Begin working with the individual communities on implementing the Assessment Findings and Suggestions

Implementation timeline: March 2023 and ongoing

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None: Staff time (grant funding if available)

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Nearly three quarters of the budget used to develop this plan was spent "Assessing" four of the five counties that make up the Rendezvous Region.

All 40+ communities were secretly-shopped through the eyes of a first-time visitor looking for a place to live, raise a family, retire, or to start or move a business to, and as a leisure visitor.

This photographic look at each community took place in September of 2021, and an Assessment Findings & Suggestions Workshop was held in each county detailing ideas that could be implemented to make the community more appealing to new residents, investors, and visitors.

There were no "recommendations" during this process since the communities were secretly-shopped without local input. But most, if not all, of the suggestions could easily become recommendations.

Perhaps the biggest challenge in virtually all of the cities outside of Grand Forks, was the inability to tell who is still in business and who isn't. With 50% or higher vacancy rates, it was nearly impossible to tell if a business was still operating (very poor curb appeal), what it sold or does, and find any type of signage noting operating days or hours. Most look so uninviting that even if they were promoted, it's likely that people would not venture in.

As a part of this assignment, each Assessment Findings & Suggestions Workshop was filmed and is available to view via the Red River Regional Council's website. In addition, digital Findings & Suggestions Reports were sent to the Red River Regional Council and are available through them.

We recommend that each Destination [Our Town] Team sit down every other week or perhaps once a month, watch perhaps a 20-minute portion of the workshop, and then take notes in the Report and create assignments.

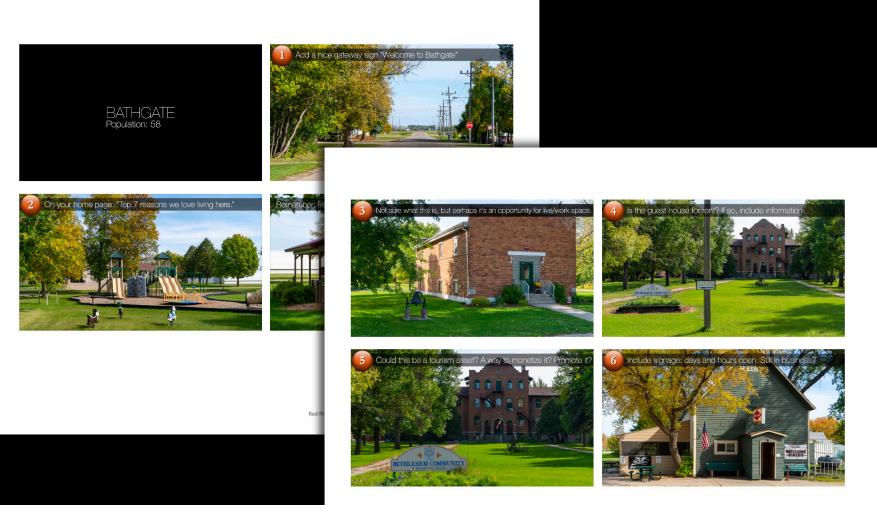
Every suggestion made during the assessment process offered a low-cost solution in order to rectify it. And most of those are geared towards specific businesses—what they can do to pull more customers into their doors.

It's important to watch what is said about the other communities in the county as well. Roger Brooks, who hosted these events, would make a suggestion in one community that could apply to EVERY community without having to repeat it over and over again.

Each of the Assessment presentations was about 2.5 hours long, so going through the presentation and making decisions on what to implement could be done in a series of meetings, each with assignments handed out and implemented over the course of the following weeks.

The following page showcases what you'll find in each of the county-wide Assessment Findings & Suggestions Reports. Finally, the Rendezvous Region will do everything it can to pull people into your communities, but they can't force them into businesses that do not look inviting or are impossible to tell whether or not are still operating. That's up to each business.





Every community in the Rendezvous Region has potential to become a vibrant, popular destination in which to live, raise a family or to visit. The Assessment process was a photographic look at each of the communities, without additional input, presenting ideas that can make the community an even better place to live, work and play.

Overall, the RBI team was impressed by the overall beauty of the area, the care most people take in their homes and landscapes and the pride they take in their community parks, playgrounds, and other public facilities. While the Assessment Findings & Suggestions Reports provide short snippets of information, most of it was spoken (what exactly to do), and thus it's important to use both the streaming video AND the Report to outline improvements that can be accomplished easily and inexpensively.

Recommendation #32: Establish a Regional Development Authority with funding and ability to purchase properties in need of demolishing or revitalization.

Implementation timeline: April 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$20,000 for legal funds, other work

Funding source options: Grant funding?

Rationale and to-do steps: One of the top priorities in terms of enticing new residents and investment into the area, is to get rid of old dilapidated and non-compliant properties: empty single family homes and commercial buildings that clutter a number of the smaller towns in the region.

Overall we counted nearly 200 of these buildings, and nearly all of them are far too dilapidated to facilitate any reasonable effort at revitalization. A regional "Redevelop Authority" should be commissioned, with state assistance, and provided seed funding to purchase these properties, demolish or revitalize them, and then sell them back for private-sector development or homesteading (the following recommendation).

One of the challenges facing the region is the fact that housing is in very short supply. Should a family decide to locate to one of the smaller towns, it's likely they will not be able to find available property (developed or undeveloped) to acquire or build on.

Additionally, any community will be hard pressed to attract new residents or small businesses when the town appears to be "falling down" and on the list of upcoming ghost towns.

In just about every case, the local municipality has little in the way of means to acquire these properties, revitalize or remove them, and then put them back on the tax roles.

In many cases, the properties actually pose a public safety risk in terms of fire, vermin, vandalism, lead or asbestos, utility degradation, etc. And in many

cases, property owners will let go of the property in lieu of owed back taxes and other liens against the property.

And in some cases they can be purchased for the assessed value, less the cost of demolition. Some of the properties may be put into an auction where people can bid on the 'barn wood" or other salvageable materials.

There are a number of very successful redevelopment authorities around the country that could be used as a guide for developing a Regional Red River Redevelopment Authority.

Recently, the RBI team had the privilege of working in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, a former steel-mill town with a previous population of more than 60,000, now down to under 20,000 residents today.

The Johnstown Redevelopment Authority, lead by go-getter Melissa Tomar, has done an excellent job obtaining commercial mill and other downtown properties, revitalizing them and then attracting new tenants and businesses into those spaces.

If there are no similar authorities already in North Dakota, it would be worth spending some time with Melissa to see what she and her team does, the trials and tribulations, and the outcomes of their efforts. Also look at their website (below and on the following page) for additional information and insight.



Welcome to Johnstown **Redevelopment Authority**

Most of the "downtown" properties in communities of less than 300 people will likely not come back to life in this Amazon.com age. These properties would be better suited as additional residential or live/work properties. In these cases, we recommend narrowing the primary thoroughfares to no wider than 26 feet (one lane each direction) creating "front yards" in front of these properties.

Some of the properties could be used as practice burns for local fire departments, another useful way of removing dilapidated structures, followed by a site clean-up crew.

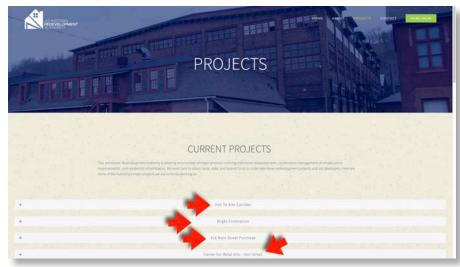
If zoning were to come into play, they could be zoned as mixed-use commercial and residential. No manufacturing would be allowed, but all types of service industries, or combination retail/live work or artist/live work spaces would be ideal.

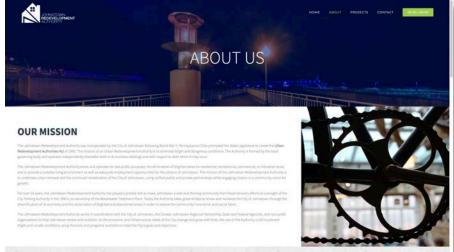
Residents will gravitate to communities where they see positive change, and many of the 40+ communities in the region will not turn the corner until this necessary change is facilitated. We could fill the following 20 or 30 pages of this plan with photographs of homes, commercial buildings, secondary structures, and abandoned churches just in these four counties.

Johnstown, PA Redevelopment Authority Melissa Komar, Director

It's important to note that this is not "taking" anyone's property from them. They would always be paid its assessed value, less the cost of demolition, back-taxes and other liens against the property.

This is the creation of "new beginnings" for many of these smaller towns that do hope to increase their local populations and improve the quality of life for its residents.





Recommendation #33: Create a Homesteading Act: The ability to gift properties for redevelopment, with obligations attached.

Implementation timeline: April 2023

Leadership: Redevelopment Authority

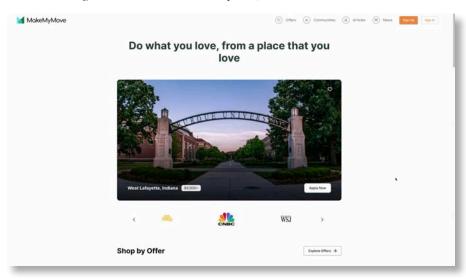
Approximate cost to implement: To be determined

Funding source options: Grant funding, redevelopment agency funds

Rationale and to-do steps: The next step in this process is to offer these properties, sometimes for free, to those who will build a new home or commercial enterprise on the property. This act of homesteading is gaining in popularity across the country as rural areas work to attract new residents and tax base.

The goal of the Redevelopment Authority is to become self-sustaining over time by reinvesting the proceeds from properties sold back to private-sector interests, into purchasing new properties in need of revitalization.

Many communities around the country are paying people anywhere from \$5,000 to \$15,000 to just work remotely from their communities. Homesteading would be a far better option, because it ensures that those



you attract have a vested interest in the community and you're not just using up existing housing stock, but creating new housing stock and an increased tax base.

For free properties, strings would be attached, with rules like those shown below. There are entire families or groups of friends that can work from anywhere, who will take two or three adjoining lots and together build homes on each, creating a new sense of community. This is an extremely popular idea with the Millennial generation who, for the most part, have been priced out of the home ownership market. This creates an exceptional opportunity for them.

Trends are showing that their parents (now grandparents) are following them, creating yet additional tax base without the necessity of job creation.

Many will build a home, and in two years, put it up for sale and then build a larger home on another lot, once again, providing housing stock, a growing population, and positive change.

It would be a valuable plan to work with the state to set up homesteading laws that can be used throughout the state in rural areas to help regrow the population and tax base, revitalizing and rebuilding the rural towns.

The combination of a Redevelopment Authority and a Homesteading Act can become a primary attractor to the region. One of the biggest complaints we heard while assessing the communities was the lack of housing stock or even building sites, reducing the chances of getting those folks to relocate to an otherwise desirable area of the state.

Homesteading

- Free residential or commercial property
- Financing assistance or referrals
- Must build on the site within 24 months
- Must be completed within 36 months
- Must be your primary residence (two years)
- No trailers, mobile homes must be stick built or modular

Recommendation #34: Begin a brand recognition billboard marketing campaign along the I-29, Hwy-2, Hwy-15 corridors.

Implementation timeline: April 2023 and ongoing for seven months

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$90,000

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: The number one reason for travel is to visit friends and family. Yet we estimate that 90% of the general population throughout the region has no idea they are in The Rendezvous Region, nor do they have any idea what the organization does. This is not the fault of the Tourism Council, which has had very limited funds and does a great job with what funding is available to them.

The best way to build brand awareness is to create TOMA or Top Of Mind Awareness. This means putting the "brand" and key messaging in front of them time and time again until it sticks. Typically, once a person hears or sees a message seven times, they remember it. The fastest, easiest and least expensive way to do this is through billboard advertising. In the region, this would mean utilizing billboards on Interstate 29 from the Canadian border



to Grand Forks (both directions), along Highway 2—a popular route to the Devil's Lake area, and on Highway 15—the most traveled routes in the region. Doing so will create tens of millions of "impressions" or views over a year. There are a host of primary purposes to this campaign:

1. Letting people—local residents, businesses, and passers-through—know that they are, in fact, in the Rendezvous Region of North Dakota.





- 2. Providing people with a simple teaser that will get them, once home or at work, to check out the RendezvousRegion.com website. We'd bet that locals would LOVE to know what the top three paddling lakes are, or the top three walleye fishing lakes are in the region. This gives them a great teaser and incentive to discover what they have in their own back yards.
- 3. It will let everyone know that you HAVE top golf courses, walleye fishing, and great paddling lakes. Things they might not otherwise even think you have available.
- 4. It will showcase the region as a great place for visitors rather than simply a number of agriculturally-based towns on the prairie.
- 5. When you educate your locals, chances are greater that when they host friends and family they might keep them within the region, sharing the assets you're promoting.
- 6. This type of campaign will get a lot of local and regional media coverage letting regional news outlets (TV, radio, newsprint) know where the Rendezvous Region is and what great attractions can be found there. We hope that television weather reporters will use the "Rendezvous Region" much like they use the Devil's Lake area when forecasting weather events.

lelcome to **Top 3 Walleye lakes** RendezvousRegion.com RENDEZVOUS REGION

All of this will build much needed brand awareness of the region. Once people gravitate to the website, which will be largely photographic with dozens of on-camera videos and a fully-populated YouTube channel, they will be drawn by the beauty of the area. Currently, the average perception of the entire region is based on what they see coming north and south on I-29 - flat farmland as far as you can see. This will change that nagging perception.





7. This will also prompt the visitors coming through the area to share what they have discovered in the region. RVers, in particular, are eager to share "new finds," and this campaign will give them plenty to work from.

There are three primary billboard companies in the region. While in the old days billboards were actually hand painted, today they develop vinyl "wraps" that can be used and re-used, often for years. To save on costs, work with the billboard companies to use "down time" between other campaigns to put





up the wraps, for pennies on the dollar of purchasing space at the rack or advertised rate.

While driving I-29 from Fargo to Pembina, we inventoried the billboards along the route and found several, like the one shown below, that were empty. These you can rent at a reduced rate. In fact, because you are promoting the public good, they might often be free. Especially since you are dedicating a good share of your entire budget to this campaign.

The idea is to have anywhere from six to 20 billboard wraps developed and up at any given time over a year's campaign. Most of the time the goal will be to have ten billboards up at any one time, and rotating throughout the region—primarily north of Grand Forks and west to the Devils Lake area.

A couple of billboard rules:

- Never use more than 14 words. Eight or fewer is ideal.
- Never use complicated graphics. You have four seconds of readership.
- Never include "too much" information. Short and sweet, to the point.
- Yellow on a dark background always pulls the eye.
- Billboard ads should NEVER look like print ads or brochure covers.

For billboards perhaps purchased in the Devil's Lake area or in Grand Forks, instead of "Welcome to" the Rendezvous Region, you can use wording along the lines of "Just ahead..." or "In 5 miles..."



Most outdoor advertising campaigns extend for a month or two, and so securing space between buys, is a great way to stretch your marketing dollars.

A critical element is making sure the website is good enough to close the sale once the travelers log on for more information. On the home page, it will be critical to have a link to each teaser: the "Top 3 walleye lakes," "Top campgrounds," etc.

For each teaser a two to three-minute on-camera video should be created showcasing the top activities and attractions, including drone footage and people enjoying the activities.

This campaign, combined with top-notch video content and website, will yield millions of dollars in "earned media"—what it would cost if you had to purchase the publicity and coverage at a regular business rate.

This campaign should run from April of 2023 through the summer and fall of 2024. During that period you will secure tens of millions of impressions and a tremendous amount of positive publicity.





Recommendation #35: Tie the billboard campaign to the regional PR effort: Local and regional news outlets, social media, publications, etc.

Implementation timeline: April 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Once the billboard campaign is about to begin, make sure the Rendezvous Region website has a press room. A great one to emulate can be found at ExploreAsheville.com, the website promoting Asheville. North Carolina.

It should include photographs of the actual billboards, a Quick Facts sheet about the region, including a map, and then Teaser Pages for each of the Top 3 or Top 5 attractions in the various categories. You should also have high resolution photography they can use, along with drone and other B-roll camera footage showcasing your top assets and activities.

Then you'll want to reach out to regional news outlets: newspapers, radio, television stations in Bismarck, Fargo/Moorehead, Grand Forks/East Grand Forks, and Winnipeg. This can be done through press releases announcing the campaign, but is best done through personal contacts. This is where having a seasoned PR professional on staff, or a contracted professional, will be an enormous benefit.

The idea is to get as much attention as possible. You'll want the state's tourism division and Dept. of Commerce to be alerted as they will get calls from the media asking about the campaign. They will need to be up to speed.

And their own PR departments can be of great benefit in helping you spread the word, promoting the region.

For social media posts, don't allow comments. The first you will get will be the snarky negative comments along the lines of "Their top three wouldn't make our bottom seven." We've seen this type of trolling in the past and by limiting comments, and carefully watching the conversation, you can limit



any negativity, which will always pop up no matter how great a destination you are promoting.

Remember that the art of public relations involves both social media AND traditional media. It is the art of managing the conversation, and steering it the best you can so there's a great positive outcome.

It's also the art of placement or "earned media." Leveraging your advertising dollars to maximize your return on investment.

Finally, invite news personnel out to SUP one of your small serene lakes, or to watch the waterfowl on one of the lakes. Chances are they will talk about it while on air, and that will give you a third-party endorsement—the gold standard of public relations.

In the future, using those quotes can do wonders for your marketing efforts. Having a newscaster state "That was the best stand-up paddle boarding lake I've ever been on" is valuable beyond measure. Never under estimate the power of a third-party endorsement, which is far more trusted than you tooting your own horn.

Recommendation #36: Rework the Rendezvous Region website so that the home page lists links to the Top 3, Top 5 activities being promoted during the billboard campaign.

Implementation timeline: April 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None unless contracted

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: A scrolling page should be created for each of the Top 3 and Top 5 lists. Each should be numbered from five to one (to keep them scrolling), include a signature photograph, 100 words or less of text promoting, specifically, the activity (not the lake, but the activity), and should include any details, plus a video showcasing it. In fact, the text can be a transcript or abbreviated version of what's in the video so search engines will pick up the content.

These pages MUST be good enough to close the sale. Do not leave any questions unanswered. Details, details, details. Be helpful. Make sure to avoid any text or descriptions that are generic and could fit anyone else anyplace else. This is absolutely critical to your success.











In Season Activities

Recommendation #37: Issue an RFP for the removal and sale of brick and "barn wood" from buildings being demolished

Implementation timeline: May 2023

Leadership: Regional Redevelopment Authority

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: This recommendation is part of the creation of a Redevelopment Authority and the Homesteading recommendation, in which this option was included.

There is currently high demand for "barn wood" and used woods of all types, as long as there is not too much rot. By creating an RFP for the sale of salvageable materials of many of these buildings (shown on this and the following pages), may create a way for the Redevelopment Authority to recapture some of its capital costs.

There are a number of demolition firms and builders who are actively looking for materials, such as this example in Argyle. They should be required to remove the entire structure—not just the elements they reclaim. The result



of the sale is to have the property returned to its natural state prior to any construction, or "build ready." They must show proof of insurance and given a permit to demolish the structure. And this is ONLY after its ownership has passed to the Redevelopment Authority.

If, by chance, a private property owner wants to sell the building for the reclaimed lumber or brick, they certainly should have the authority to do so, but that would be in lieu of the Redevelopment Authority purchasing the





property. When they are done selling the materials, the property must be in buildable condition, meaning there's no trace of the prior structure.

Not shown on these pages, but there are many cases, where buildings, particularly commercial buildings, can be surveyed by an engineering firm and deemed restorable, which is always a great option.

If this is the case, the Redevelopment Authority can go out to bid to have the building revitalized, and then it can be leased or sold to a prospective tenant, as a residence, commercial business, or as a live/work space, putting it back on the tax roles.

In some cases, you may want to list up a block of buildings for demolition, which will often attract out-of-state builders and supply companies that will take the time and effort to come great distances since there will be enough materials to recover, making it a good investment in time and money.

Every building should be surveyed before listed for sale to determine safety factors and the salvageability of the materials, whether brick, wood, or copper wire. However, once a sale is final, the responsibility for safety is strictly that of the buyer.

For buildings that are deemed too far gone to offer any value, those would be left for demolition crews or for fire department practice burns.









Recommendation #38: Work with local fire departments for "practice burns" where appropriate

Implementation timeline: May 2023

Leadership: Regional Redevelopment Authority

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: The final resolution for some of these properties could be to let local fire departments use them as practice burns—a great training exercise. But that effort should also include a final clean-up crew clearing any remaining debris and returning the site to a buildable condition.

Conway has done this on several beautiful home sites, opening them up for redevelopment. We hope other communities will follow suit.

Private property owners who want to redevelop their properties should be provided access to the fire departments and other resources to help them through the process and, in fact, incentivizing them to do so.



Recommendation #39: Work with waterways authorities to determine highest and best recreational use of each waterway

Implementation timeline: May 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: This particular recommendation could be combined with Recommendation #24 where you are identifying the Top 3 and Top 5 activities on each of the lakes and rivers.

A great way to determine the "highest and best use" of each is to actually work with and meet with the waterway authorities and determine how best to market them—doing this WITH them instead of separately.

It is quite likely that they will know, better than anyone else, what the best recreational uses are for each of these waterways under their control. And it may be deemed that some should not be promoted for any recreational use due to sensitive or environmental concerns.

They will be able to provide a LOT of detail about the type of fish, stocking levels, seasonal considerations, and other factors that can be included in the marketing effort.

In the end, the goal is to identify the Top 3 or Top 5 lakes for the following activities:

- Bass fishing
- Perch and crappie fishing
- Walleye fishing
- Catfish and other species
- Stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, canoeing
- Wildlife and waterfowl viewing
- Bird watching (specific species)
- Wind sports (HobieCat and small craft sailing, kite boarding)
- Water skiing and power boating, personal watercraft, pontoon boating
- Ice fishing (by species)

- Waterfowl hunting (if and when permitted)
- River rafting (tubing)

While nearly every lake can accommodate a multitude of uses, kayakers and SUP enthusiasts try to stay in lakes without power boats and in warmer waters with less wind loads. Many uses are not totally compatible with other uses, so identifying those uses will create a rewarding experience for both locals and visitors alike.





Does this mean that other uses would be prohibited? Not necessarily, but they could be discouraged because there might be better options for those particular uses. Some lakes should not allow power boats, or can restrict engine size to 5 horsepower, perfect for fishing boats and not incompatible with kayakers and other paddling enthusiasts.

The lakes and waterways that are shown on these pages are the best recreational tourism assets the region has, and each of them can be utilized on a year round basis, making the region a year round draw.

These lakes can out-compete major destinations such as Devil's Lake because they are much smaller, create a much more intimate experience, host an abundance of wildlife, and are far less crowded during the peak seasons.

And private businesses should be encouraged to rent equipment and offer classes from ice to fly fishing, to SUP boarding, kite boarding, sailing, and even yoga on SUP's, which is gaining in popularity.









Private businesses may be required to obtain a concessionaire's permit and if so, this should be streamlined and consistent among all of the region's waterways to make it easy to obtain and to allow small businesses to leverage these public waterways.

In fact, the Rendezvous Region website could offer instructions on how to obtain a permit should one be required and where to obtain insurance. The website could also promote those activities, creating new jobs in the region.

While this recommendation focuses on the waterways, the Rendezvous Region should also meet with State Parks to determine highest and best use of the trails and waterways under their control.

It would be great to identify trails by skill level, seasonality, ADA accessibility and other factors. And the same with other activities they offer.

As you promote these lakes to visitors, it will be very important to be a partner in maintaining them and making sure they do not get overrun. This means working with volunteer groups and local residents to make sure there are trash receptacles, that they are maintained, to manage public pit and other toilets, and to make sure parking areas are well maintained.

Through social media, you can refer visitors to less-visited lakes and trails, and can also alert people to severe weather conditions or overcrowding.

One thing to remember: You are not marketing the Rendezvous Region to the world, but to local residents and their visitors, to the major market areas of Fargo and Grand Forks, and primarily for camping and day trip visitation.

This will keep your waterways pristine and will create an exceptional experience.





Recommendation #40: Redesign the Rendezvous Region website to a "pick your season, pick your passion" type of format, add more detail to each type of recreation.

Implementation timeline: May 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$15,000 if contracted

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: To develop a sustainable tourism industry and the businesses that support it, the goal must be to make the Rendezvous Region an eight-month destination. So it will be important to showcase the Region as a year round destination.

The easiest way to do this is to format the website (beyond the home page) to a "pick your season, pick your passion" style of format. One of the dropdown menus would be titled "PLAN YOUR TRIP," which would take you to a page along the lines of the one shown below, which is just a quick example. Once the visitor picks the season, they would be taken to a page (top right) which lists the various activities available that time of year.

Pick your Season | Pick your Passion SUMMER WINTER NOVIDECIJANIFEB MARIAPRIMAY JUN I JUL I AUG

And when they choose the activity, it would take them to another page that would provide details on that particular activity, that time of year. And, per the recommendations made in this plan, you would promote the Top 3 or 5 in that category, and then from there you can add three more, and then another three.

Over time, you can add more categories such as if a visitor chose hiking, you could offer the type of hikes: family-friendly, ADA accessible, or challenging.



PICK YOUR PASSION

Ice fishing

Snowboarding

Downhill skiing

Holiday happenings

Fat tire biking

Snowmobiling

Festivals & events



This is a great way to let the world know you are open year round, there are available activities year round, and you are providing specific information that is helpful and useful in planning a trip.

The final design of the site would look far better than the rudimentary formats shown on the previous page, but it gives you an idea of how a person can plan a trip into the area.

Once they choose an activity, such as ice fishing, it would take them to the top 3 or 5 destinations, and when they select one, it would offer nearby amenities such as places to purchase bait and tackle, a fishing license, or coffee and breakfast in a nearby town, campsites or lodging options, cleaning stations, etc.

The second key element of the website will be to include widgets for both Google and TripAdvisor reviews for each activity. These can be easily added for a few dollars and would be updated live or on a daily basis.

This will keep people on the site, rather than leaving to check out the reviews on another site, where they will also see the competition—other choices.



Recommendation #41: Work with golf influencers, YouTube channels, blogs, vlogs, and golf publications

Implementation timeline: May 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Part of the public relations effort will include working with niche markets, such as golf, mountain biking, photography, bird watching and others.

Now that you have the Rendezvous Region Golf Guide in the marketing arsenal, and a section of the website dedicated to golfing in the Region, topnotch photography in place, it's time to begin a PR effort to gain publicity for the golf courses.

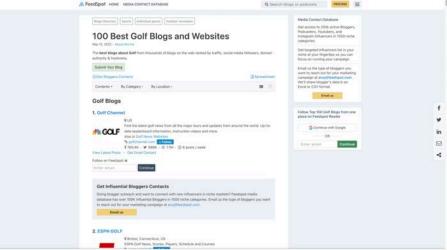
- 1. Make sure your top golf courses have video content, using your on-camera personality and drone footage of the course, clubhouse, and on-site amenities. You should have a Golfing channel as part of your YouTube presence.
- 2. Reach out to traditional golfing publications, which also offer online versions, and secure their editorial calendars for 2023. Using their editorial calendars, pitch story ideas about golfing in Eastern North Dakota.

Let them know you have photography they can use, and you can provide contact information for each of the courses.

- 3. Also reach out to golf blogs and websites (opposite, bottom left). These are easy to find and they are actively looking for new places to share with their readers and viewers.
- 4. Also look for video content featuring local golf courses and ask to embed them into your marketing efforts, providing them with additional views and links.

- 5. This would also be another great opportunity to work with the state tourism office in conjunction with any golf marketing they have in the works.
- 6. Work with the North Dakota Golf Association, perhaps joining a co-op marketing campaign with them featuring Rendezvous Region courses. This is a great resource to find the owners or general managers for each of the courses in the region including contact information.

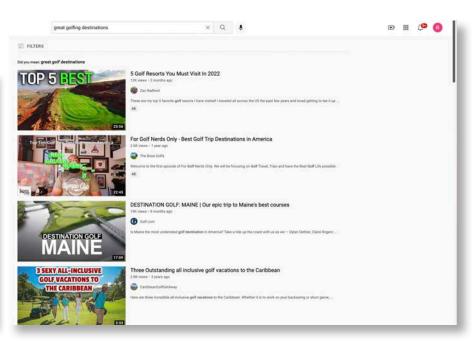




From this you can create a Rendezvous Region Marketing Co-op with them, including perhaps a budget to offset some of the marketing cost.

No budget was included with this recommendation, assuming the Rendezvous Region will already have a PR professional on staff or contracted. However, if the golf courses create a marketing consortium perhaps they could pitch in, collectively, each spring and summer, \$1,500 a month, which would be perhaps \$100 a month or so individually, to offset PR costs such as providing a stipend to influencers, or covering travel costs, in order to gain publicity.

Finally, work with local schools and golf courses to foster youth play, regional tournaments, making golf an optional for-credit physical education component in their education.



Recommendation #42: Establish a youth outreach program

Implementation timeline: May 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: One of North Dakota's most important assets—its youth—tends to leave the state after graduating from high school, and many do not return after college. This "Brain Drain" is one of the challenges the state needs to address. When you can't keep your existing population in the state, how do you expect to attract new residents?

We read in the online questionnaire and heard from other youth that they are often told, in school, to leave the state once they graduate. Others leave simply because they believe the grass is greener elsewhere, with more opportunity and a better lifestyle.

This program would have a spokesperson—perhaps the on-camera face of the Rendezvous Region—give presentations at school-wide assemblies

(elementary, middle and high schools) of a 30-minute program showcasing "Ten Things You Need to Know About the Rendezvous Region."

This would likely include video content and is meant to showcase how great living, working and discovering new places in the region is. This will teach kids (and their teachers, as well as administration) that they are IN the Rendezvous Region, and ten reasons WHY it's a great place to call home.

"Did you know..." facts are a great way to teach kids fascinating information about agriculture, area wildlife, things to do, places to go, in every season of the year. The presentation would come with a printed Rendezvous Region Guide kids can take home and share with their families as well as with friends and family when they come into town.

The "Guide" would be the Rendezvous Region Activities Guide—a tourismfocused visitors guide showcasing the four seasons and the top activities available in the area during each of the seasons.

It would illustrate the top five locations in the region for:

- Bird and waterfowl watching Top five festivals
- Bird hunting
- Fishing
- Downhill skiing
- ATV trails
- Hiking trails

- Signature retail shops
- Ice skating (outdoor rinks)
- Horseback riding
- Mountain biking
- Fat tire biking



- Stand up paddle boarding
- Kayaking and canoeing
- Water skiing and boating
- Golf courses
- Camping spots

- Geocaching
- Scenic drives
- Small craft sailing
- Historical attractions

The Guide and the school program would include top-notch photography, videography (including drone footage), all meant to shed a positive light on life in the Rendezvous Region.

Doing so once in the fall (showcasing fall and winter activities), and once in the spring (showcasing spring and summer activities) will help school kids become ambassadors for the area they call home.

These kids will soon, if not already, be up to speed on Tik Tok, Instagram, SnapChat and other social media platforms, and perhaps some of their posts will put a positive spotlight on living in the area. We're hoping they will repeat some of the "Fast Facts About North Dakota" and other content.

In essence, you are making them ambassadors for the region.

In addition to this, schools should lower the barrier to getting into local recreational activities by offering classes in fly fishing, stand-up paddle boarding,

Your on-camera person should present at your schools

HobieCat sailing, creating YouTube videos and Instagram stories, making the most of social media platforms, and environmental stewardship.

In Bozeman, Montana (and in many other places) kids get credit for downhill ski and snowboard classes—and this gets them hooked, leading to higher retention of kids once they graduate from school and college.

You MUST do what you can to retain the youth in the region, and by educating them about all the great things the area has to offer, you'll help them love the region and make them one of your best marketing tools.

Recommendation #43: Begin working with ND DOT on a comprehensive wayfinding system, including TOD signage

Implementation timeline: June 2022

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: To be determined

Funding source options: Federal transportation grants

Rationale and to-do steps: Navigation systems are NOT a replacement for developing effective wayfinding to your tourism attractions, activities and supporting amenities. Consumers use wayfinding to direct them to places they already know exist.

Wayfinding, or directional signage, let's new visitors know what you have to offer and where to find it.

First up on the list should be the use of Tourism Oriented Directional Signs, or TOD Signs. The two, shown here to the right, are common in nearly every state. These are paid for by the individual business, are very affordable.

1. Meet with North Dakota's Dept. of Transportation's District Engineer (or engineers) and set up a workshop that could be hosted in the Region, where businesses can be invited to learn how to tap into the TOD Sign program.

This could be filmed and available as a resource on the Rendezvous Region website. In fact, at the bottom of the Rendezvous Region's website, there should be a link to "Industry Resources" where local tourism-oriented business can tap into videos, applications, and other information that can help them.

2. Work with the state tourism department and Dept. of Commerce on developing gateway signs into the Rendezvous Region. The top photo, opposite, shows the gateway sign for Mahone Bay, located in Nova Scotia's Bluenose Coast area. These types of signs are becoming more and more popular across the county.

Rather than promote each city or town, it would be ideal to include signs like this at the entry points into the region. Other regions in the state would also be able to tap into this type of gateway signage.

These signs could be paid for through federal transportation grants, from a fund-raising effort, or from the Rendezvous Region's marketing budget.





The billboard campaign detailed in this plan will run for only a year, afterwhich these signs could be installed letting new visitors know they've arrived in the Rendezvous Region of the state.

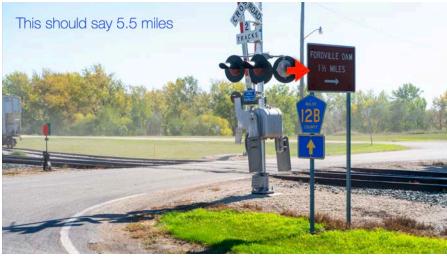
3. The third of these initiatives is to actually enhance existing highway signage throughout the region to your state parks, Pembina Gorge Recreation Area, and to your primary historical sites and museums.



For this, we recommend the Red River Regional Council set up a Wayfinding Team and have them watch the DDA video "Developing a Wayfinding System." This video will walk you through the process of creating a comprehensive wayfinding system, including costs and how to find expertise for this

This team would include your state DOT District Engineer, representatives from each county since the wayfinding system will include county thoroughfares, perhaps the state's tourism office, representation from the larger towns in the region (outside of Grand Forks), State Parks, Frost Fire board, and the Red River Regional Council, who would take the lead on the wayfinding effort.

Developing a region-wide wayfinding system can also include "fixing" some signage, such as the signage to the Fordville Dam, which should start with the distance to the dam instead of distance to the next turn on your way to the dam (see bottom photos).





Recommendation #44: Begin applying for federal transportation grants to implement a wayfinding system, TOD signage program

Implementation timeline: June 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Developing a region-wide wayfinding system is a major undertaking, but it is necessary to ensure a stable, sustainable tourism industry.

Key to this is being able to route visitors to area attractions, amenities (such as hotels and campgrounds, visitor information), local towns and emergency services (police, fire, medical) on preferred routes.

In our Assessment experience, we found that both Google and Apple Maps would send us down gravel roadways and "shortcuts," which were not desirable routes to these destinations.

There are three primary components to developing a comprehensive wayfinding system:

- 1. The Message Schedule and placement. This is where you determine what is included in the system and on each sign, and where those individual signs will be located along state, county and municipal roadways.
- 2. The actual design of the signage system. Many regional wayfinding systems can include "branded" signage that still complies with federal highway signage standards, but could include the Rendezvous Region logo. This part of the project includes actual fabrication drawings for the various sign types and sizes. This is the document where the entire system is designed and ready for fabrication and installation.
- 3. The last phase of the project is actually having the signs fabricated and installed.

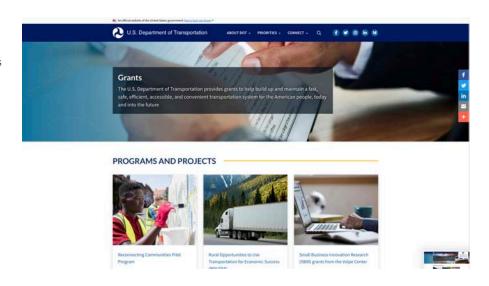
Wayfinding is a very specialized pursuit that should be contracted to Environmental Wayfinding expertise with knowledge of state and federal highway standards, viewing distances, font styles and sizes, set-backs and right of way usage, etc.

There are almost always federal grant programs (see below) available for this endeavor.

The cost to design a region-wide system would probably be in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range. This would provide you with a completely designed system including gateway signage, right down to fabrication drawings.

To fabricate and install the system would likely be in the \$1.2 million dollar range, of course depending on the number of signs in the system, placement, size and other factors.

Where there may be matching funds required, each county, city and participant in the effort may be required to fund their pro-rata share of the system design, fabrication and installation.



Recommendation #45: Secure funding and hire two product development specialists: Urban planning, Landscape architecture

Implementation timeline: June 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$150,000 annually

Funding source options: Operational funds

Rationale and to-do steps: This particular recommendation could be moved far forward into the plan for several reasons:

- 1. Nearly every community in the region can use product development assistance, which includes:
- Consulting with local small businesses on items such as curb appeal, facade improvements, signage, beautification and other elements to help pull new customers into their stores.
- 2. Nearly every business we looked up on Google (hundreds) had not even claimed their Google Profile or listing, which is free. This is where businesses can post their days and open hours, can respond to reviews, can add photos, menus or retail items they sell, can get listed in Google Maps, include website link, phone number, and other information.
- 3. At the end of the day, marketing will bring people to your attractions, activities, and into local businesses just once. What brings them back is the actual experience that drew them (did it meet or exceed expectations?), amenities such as parking, public restrooms and visitor information, the stores, shops and restaurants they visited, and the people they interact with.

In the end, you will be judged by your product, not the marketing.

These two job positions should have experience in urban planning and development, landscape architecture, downtown revitalization, and should be familiar with all aspects of community and economic development. They should have knowledge of zoning and mixed-use development with a focus on smaller downtown core areas.

They would work directly with the partnering towns, local businesses, the Redevelopment Authority and others to assist in helping these places become stronger, more sustainable places to live, work and play.

They would host local workshops, using many of the video tools, examples and case histories found in the DDA Video Vault, would help secure grant funding where appropriate, and would help implement the suggestions made during the Assessment process.

These are the "boots on the ground," "let's make something happen" folks. They are self-starters, energetic, and enthusiastic about their work.

Remember that this plan is built around the Red River Regional Council being charged with Product Development, while the Rendezvous Region Tourism Council is the "Ad Agency," in essence, bringing visitors and potential new residents into the region.

The cost noted here would include two salaried positions at between \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year plus taxes, insurance and benefits.

Another option is to contract with professionals for these services, although it's important they be IN these communities day in and day out.



Recommendation #46: Begin the selection process and design for the creation of "The Very Best of the Rendezvous Region" rack brochure

Implementation timeline: June 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$5,000 as portion of co-op program

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: A very top priority is marketing the very best of what you have to offer. Success breeds success. This is being done for the History Trail, the Golf Guide, and upcoming Birding Guide, and Paddling Guide.

This particular brochure is meant to promote your top restaurants, eateries, and pubs, your best retail shops, your top visitor attractions and top activities. No lodging would be included in this particular brochure.

This is meant to get visitors and locals alike into your communities to try something new—some place different.



The video (below left), located in the DDA Video Vault, provides step-bystep instructions on how to develop this important marketing piece, the criteria used to chose who's included (see below), how to fund it, and why it's so important.

The following pages show snapshops of the Best Of guides for Alpena, Michigan; Wausau, Wisconsin, and Bracebridge, Alberta, all of which have been successful marketing pieces.

The criteria can and would be adjusted to fit the area. For instance, if every shop included had to be open until 7:00pm, the brochure would most likely only include restaurants. and bars.

Sample criteria:

- Must be highly regarded (80%+ positive peer reviews, regional publications...)
- Must have good curb appeal
- Must be open year round
- Must be open until at least 7:00 pm
- Must be open six days a week
- Must be unique to you (no chains/franchises)





devoted to the exhibit of fine art b

artists. Each exhibit season offers i

for sale, including jewelry, paintir

Located on the t

rounded by shop

activities. Visitors

their lunch or a sr

view of Lake Hu

Art in the Loft he

of events worksh

SummerView Ext

WinterView Exh

including:

Young Artists Exhibit ~ a month lo

outhful creativity in April feature

artists from throughout Northeas

Workshops for all ages - ArtsCoo

National Artist Workshop Series

taught by nationally-

Building in downt

waters and large vie

During the 2 hour o

magnificently pres

scenic shorelines. L

egends and lore of

famous shipwreck

Departing from the

Alpena, the 65-foot

you on a comfortab

of Lake Huron's Shi

experience for pas

The Lady Michigan

Bay River just behi

of Shops

· Foucault Pendulu

· Lafarge Fossil Park

Native American

· Wildlife Gallery

American Burger made

your liking. Appetizers

with Perch's fresh ground chuck true char-grilled to

Our daily Happy Hour starts at 4

where the Guinness is always flo

as well as eight other Michigan an U.K. beers on tap. We also offer a

full bar and a wide variety of wine bottled beer, and the soon to be famous Black Sheep Bloody Mary.

The Black Sheep also offers 1 IVE

say we support local area bus

products as much as possible. B on Facebook at The Black Sheep

updated on our daily specials an

ocktails, or want a dinin

to none. The Cellar has it.

alli Our menu features a

full gamut of fresh salad

steaks, pasta, fresh wild

seafood homemade

desserts, and much mo

Northern Michigan exp

Wednesday - Saturday st

For reservations, please of

Voted Best

Overall Restauran

With an onsite garden

yn vegetables and

that provides home

fruits, the Court Yard

seasonal features are

often a popular choice

Visit the Courtyard

on facebook to get

information on

and daily features

participant, plan on printing 30,000 copies, determine the number of panels included (typically no more than 30), the cost of mailing one to every household in the region (coming up in Recommendation #48), including envelopes and a post card that will be included in the mailing.

This should give you the cost to develop the brochure as a selffunded marketing piece.



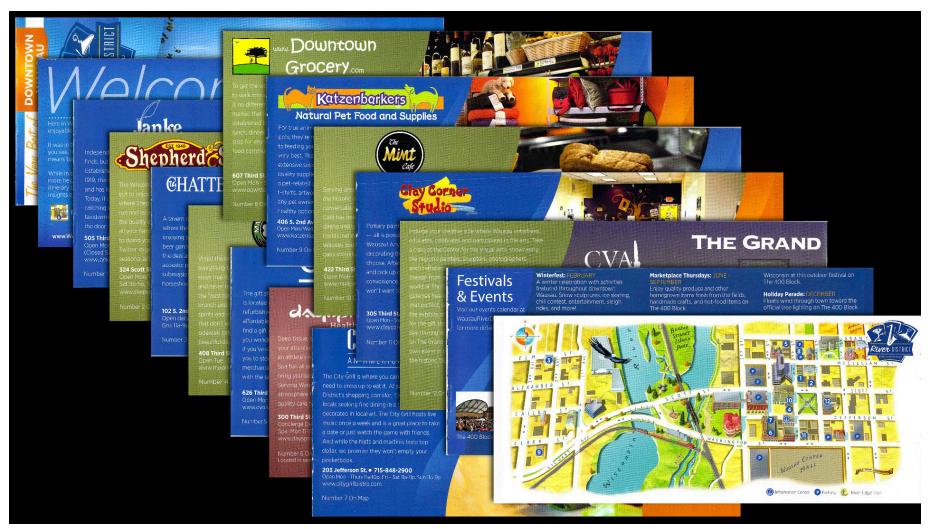
wine tasting of the many fruit wines including cherry

Typically, the cost has been around \$400 per selected participant. This sometimes allows for panels that have no funding—like a top hiking trail or a historical attraction that simply can't afford the co-op partnering cost.

This is a brochure that is printed every year, with the goal of adding new or improved businesses, with great customer reviews, to the Best Of guide. Every year every participant will be vetted to make sure they haven't slipped below the standards (criteria) that's been set.

As with all of the other printed marketing pieces, a variation should be developed that can be downloaded from the Rendezvous Region website and printed at home so incoming visitors have it available as they head out to explore the area.

If YOU don't promote "The Very Best of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region" consumer will do it for you by looking at Google, TripAdvisor, Yelp and









other review sites. By doing this you are taking the lead and providing a valuable customer service.

The reason lodging places are not included is that the most asked question at any front desk is "Where's a good place to eat?" This gives them the opportunity to hand a guest the Best of the Rendezvous Region guide, without any competition being included in the brochure.

In the end, you will feature perhaps six to eight restaurants, eateries and pubs; six signature retail shops; and perhaps 15 top activities in the region.

Grand Forks would not be included in this, although they should create their own "Very Best of Greater Grand Forks."

Recommendation #47: Reach out to selected Best of entities and begin the process of funding and design, copywriting of the Very Best of rack brochure.

Implementation timeline: June 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Now that the Best Of guide has become a reality, approximate costs developed, next up is to approach each selected entity and invite them to participate in the Best Of guide.

Here are a few reasons why they should want to be included and would invest their marketing dollars into it's development:

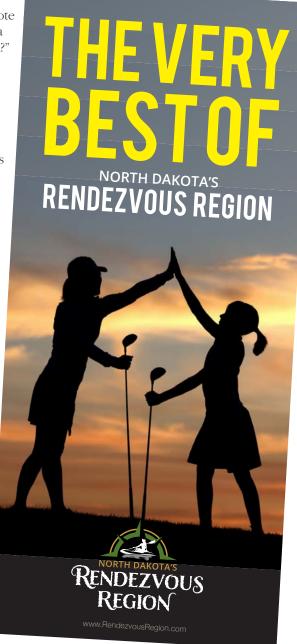
1. This will be the most widely distributed brochure of the entire series. It will be placed in every included business or attraction, will be mailed to every household in the region, will be included in the brochure distribution program throughout the region, and will be placed in all visitor information centers.

It will also be included as a PDF on the Rendezvous Region website and through social media channels. It would also be included in the website's Press Room.

- 2. You would be surprised at how little people are aware of businesses and activities in their own back yards. Without fail, every time one of these is mailed to local and area residents, someone will come into a shop, with the brochure, and exclaim "I got this in the mail and you're included. How long have you been here?" The merchant will then note, "Ten years!"
- 3. The Rendezvous Region will be doing everything it can to promote you. After all, successful tourism is built on convincing visitors to spend time and money in your local businesses and attractions.

Build in enough funds so that if an anchor tenant can't, for some reason, afford to be a part of this effort, there is enough from the other participants to help offset that loss of revenue. You MUST promote your best of's. This is not a pay-to-play "Who wants in?" piece.

This is a very important part of being a helpful, useful place for visitors to really enjoy the best of what you have to offer—as a region and as individual communities.



Recommendation #48: Add The Best Of brochure to the distribution program

Implementation timeline: June 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: In addition to adding this brochure to the other three already being distributed, it should also be distributed as a stand-alone single counter top brochure holder in all the Best Of locations promoted in this brochure and that aren't already distributing the others.

Recommendation #48: Mail the Best of Brochure to every household in the region.

Implementation timeline: July 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

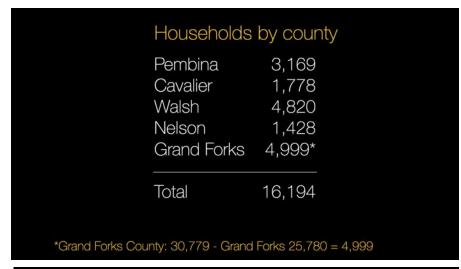
Approximate cost to implement: \$6,000 Bulk mail guesstimate, printing included card, cost of envelopes

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Take a moment and read the card, to the right. This will be mailed (USPS) to every household and business in the region with the Very Best Of brochure. After all, we really do want every dining room table to be a concierge desk when friends and family come to visit.

This is one of the very best things you can do to get regional residents to explore other towns, waterways, and historical attractions right in their own back and front yards. It also lets them know they are part of the tourism effort locally. And it educates them as to all the area has to offer. This is a fantastic way to get people "shopping local" without sounding like a broken record.

These should be mailed in a #10 envelope, that could be printed with a note on the envelope "Discover the best of NE North Dakota" under the Rendezvous Region logo. This mailing does not include every household in Grand Forks, but if the budget allows, we whole heartedly recommend including Grand Forks in the mailing.





Recommendation #49: Contract for weekly brochure distribution throughout the region: Best of, History Trail, Golf Guide, RV & Camping Guide

Implementation timeline: July 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$12,000 annually

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Now that there are four brochures to distribute with three additional on the list to be developed, it's time to move from a volunteer or staff distribution program to contracting with a person to personally take them around every two weeks during the shoulder seasons (see below) and weekly during the peak seasons.

Over the years we have found that asking people to stock pile them and fill the holders themselves meets with very mixed results. This is a much more effective option.

Before people travel, they obtain brochures only 32% of the time. But once people arrive at a destination, printed materials jumps to number one on their list of materials they obtain. But they do need to be convenient.

For this you should consider contracting with someone who is retired, or is looking to pick up a little extra spending money. You could break the counties into two routes, paying a person \$500 a month for each route, or paying a single person \$1,000 (or so) per month to distribute them throughout the region.

This would include all chambers of commerce, community libraries, wherever visitor information kiosks have been placed (campgrounds, state parks, sports facilities), and businesses who are assisting by hosting counter top brochure holders.

On each counter top brochure holder you could add a label with a phone number to call in case they run out of a particular brochure, thus ensuring that these materials are readily available.

Details

- \$1,000 a month
- or \$500 a month x two people (different set of counties)
- Perhaps a retiree?
- Volunteer?
- Staff will cover for vacation weeks | sickness | other
- Two routes would be established
- Seasonality: Nov-Mar: Every two weeks | Apr-Oct: Weekly

Recommendation #50: Work with cities on redeveloping outdated websites and social media channels

Implementation timeline: July 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Of the 40+ towns that were Assessed during this process, about a third of them had no website or online presence that we could find. About half had websites that were so old, they made the community look "tired" and very dated.

For every city and town that is looking to attract new residents, businesses, investment OR visitors, your website will, sooner or later, be one of the items on the checklist to check out before visitors make a final decision.

It the website is dated (looks like one from the 80s or 90s), lacking in photography or videography, and is not a "visual first" and mobile-ready website, chances are you will lose the sale.

COMMUNITY Info Grove Municip.

Every city website should look modern, be loaded with photography, and should be a welcome and key marketing piece to invite potential residents, visitors and small businesses.

Roger Brooks was recently working in the Fond du Lac area of Wisconsin, visiting the nearby town Waupun. This is a perfect, low cost, Wix, Weebly or WordPress template any city can emulate.

Your home page should be like theirs:

- Large rotating photographs
- The town's slogan, in this case "Naturally Fun, Competitive..."
- There is a welcome video produced by the Lake Winnebago Region's CEO, Craig Molitor. Watching that really made our team want to spend time in Waupun.
- The drop down top menu should include: VISITING | LIVING HERE | FOR BUSINESSES | LOCAL GOVERNMENT and each link provides—on their website, no off-linking to other sites—why you would want to live in Waupun, visit the town, or establish a business in the city. By the way, Waupun has a population of about 8,500 residents.

For less than \$100 and some time to secure good photography and copy writing, every website can be developed that will help attract people to the region and into each and every town.



Recommendation #51: Work with area businesses and organizations on how to claim and develop their Google and TripAdvisor listings

Implementation timeline: August 2023

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: This should be a very top priority for every business out there. It's free, can be done in less than an hour, and will let customers know when they are open (seasons, days, hours), contact information including website address, it allows them to respond to Google and TripAdvisor reviews, they can add photography, and so much more.

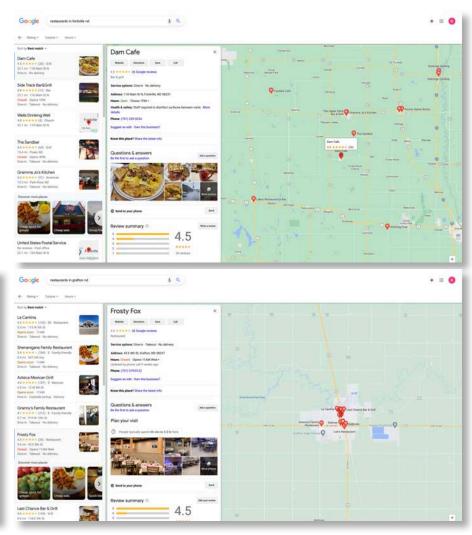
The Regional Council Product Development staff should host meetings throughout the region where a business or non-profit can bring a laptop and you can walk them through the process, right then and there, rather then just letting them know how to it, expecting them to do it when they have time.

This is especially important since there are so few businesses that make it obvious that they are actually in business.

Restaurants in Grafton

In the DDA Video Vault there is 20-minute video "Claiming Your Business on Google," which could be shown in each meeting as local businesses work to claim their listings.

There is no charge to claim your listing on Google, Yelp, or TripAdvisor and the process is pretty straight forward.



Recommendation #52: Develop the rack brochure "Paddling Guide to the Rendezvous Region" promoting the various lakes for specific activities.

Implementation timeline: August 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$10,000 including design, printing, copywriting

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: This brochure would feature your top rivers and lakes for various paddling activities: Stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, canoeing, tubing or rafting, and small craft sailing. It can also include panels promoting places that rent or sell paddling gear.

Also include available resources in the nearest town: sunscreen, drinks, to-go lunches, local eateries and other places where visitors can spend time and money while in the area.

Each panel should include information about each lake: location, size (acres), the type of activity it's best suited for, winds, water temperatures (peak season), whether or not motorized boats are allowed, at the lake amenities

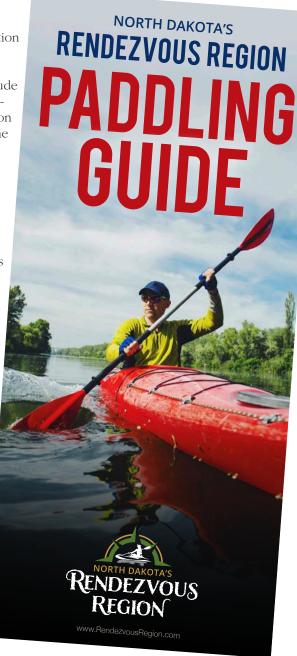
RENDEZVO RENDEZVOUS REGION RENDEZVOUS RENDEZVOUS REGION REGION REGION

(docks, restrooms, picnic tables, etc.) and any other pertinent information about the waterway.

For rivers it should include popular put-in and takeout spots and information about water flow by time of year.

A two-panel spread should be dedicated to a map of the region showing the location of each waterway and the nearest towns and roads leading to each.

If it's possible, add a point of differentiation for each waterway so that people are enticed to, over time, paddle them all.



Recommendation #53: Begin distribution of the Paddling Guide rack brochure

Implementation timeline: August 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

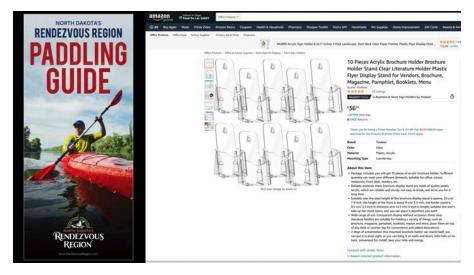
Approximate cost to implement: None: Included in the distribution program

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: At this point, there will be five brochures to be distributed:

- The RV & Camping Guide
- Rendezvous Region History Trail
- Rendezvous Region Golf Guide
- Rendezvous Region Paddling Guide
- The Very Best of the Rendezvous Region

For those with the counter top displays, you may need to supplement those with one additional two-brochure holder display, since there will be one additional brochure: The Rendezvous Region Birding Guide.



Recommendation #54: Create the Rendezvous Region Birding Guide

Implementation timeline: August 2023

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$10,000

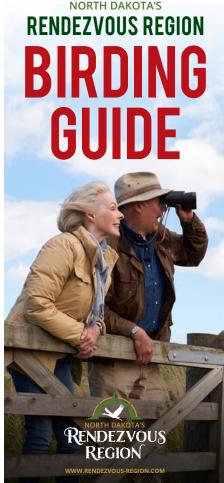
Funding source options: Tourism marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: This is the sixth of the seven niche-market brochures to be created as part of this plan. This particular brochure may not be site-specific, but might, instead, concentrate on the top places to see particular species of birds during specific seasons.

In fact, we recommend consulting with the Audubon Society and/or local chapters in how this particular brochure should be laid out and how it should focus its efforts in terms of what to see, what time of year, and where the best spots are for those birding experiences.

It could even be categorized by season, since birding is a year round activity. And, panels could be included to promote birding clubs, or retail outlets that sell binoculars and other birding "gear."

Since this brochure would have few funding partners, it would need to be funded through the marketing dollars available to the Rendezvous Region.



Recommendation #55: Develop five Community Profiles—one for each county and one for the region.

Implementation timeline: January 2024

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$9,500 including design, printing

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: This particular printed piece is for anyone new or looking to relocate to the area. It is an annual snapshot of the county and its communities. It is a tri-fold brochure that measures 8.5" x 11" when folded and it would be produced each year with updated information.

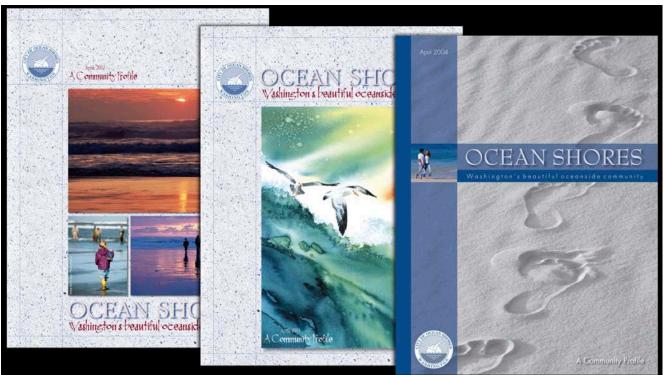
It is a perfect piece to be used by employers looking to attract new talent, by local and regional real estate offices and agents, economic development practitioners, and chambers of commerce.

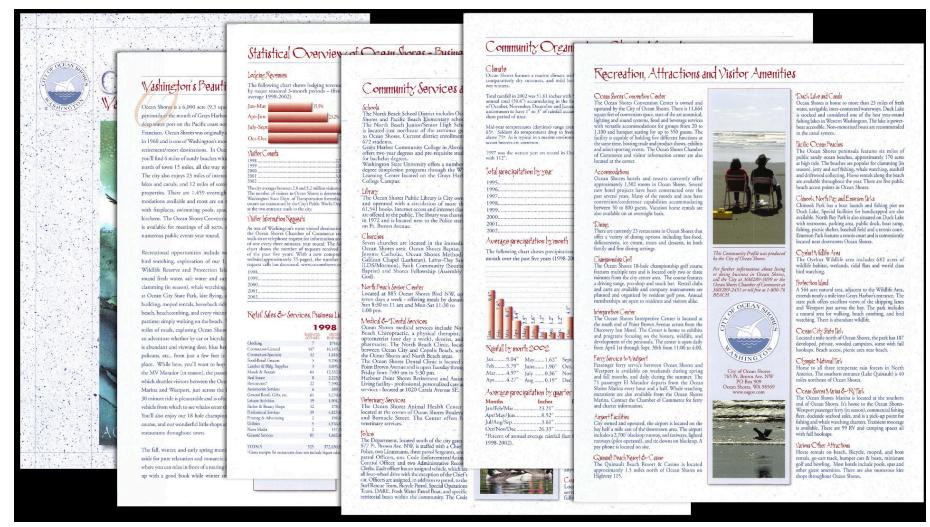
It would include, by county, the following information:

- An overview of North Dakota and the particular county
- Climate (average temps., precipitation, by month)
- Local organizations
- Local churches
- Schools & child care
- Medical facilities and services
- A brief overview of each city (town) in the county including population (Census information over ten year increments, past 30 years)
- Parks and recreational facilities
- Retail sales and services
- Lodging options and revenues
- Utilities (power, water, gas, Internet services, cable, etc.)
 - Local government information, URL, contact info
 - Distances to major cities
 - Police, Fire, emergency services
 - Business license information
 - Postal and delivery services
 - Real estate services
 - Banking, finance, accounting services
 - Local media (radio, newspaper, etc.)

And, of course, any other information someone coming into the area would want to know. Don't leave any questions unanswered!

Each year a new cover would be developed, and new versions would typically be released in April, after the previous year facts, figures, and numbers have been compiled.





If you would like physical copies to use as an example, please let the RBI team know, and they'd be happy to send a few you can use as a guide.

To start, print 5,000 copies, in full-color. Recommendation #59 details on where these should be distributed and how often.

Sometimes real estate offices will pitch in a few hundred dollars to have these printed and available to them, as will major employers. For the first year, we recommend just biting the bullet and creating the Community (or County Profile) at no cost, so that employers, cities, county government, and real estate offices can see the value in having this piece.

Then in following years, each could pitch in a couple hundred dollars to have it produced, printed and distributed each year.

Recommendation #56: Develop a "2024 Opportunities Guide to the Rendezvous Region"

Implementation timeline: January 2024

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$9,500 including design, printing

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: This is typically an 11" x 17" brochure folded in half to be 8.5" x 11". This is a great way to promote specific business

opportunities in the region. Start by promoting the Top 10 business opportunities available in the Rendezvous Region. That may include lodging, additional dining spots, outfitters, bait and tackle shops, first-class RV parks, or other needed opportunities where there is a demand for those services.

ESRI creates a retail profile, which details areas in terms of what's lacking in retail, and this is often a great place to help determine your needs.

Rather than traditional economic development marketing of "bring your business here," this brochure focuses on the Top 10 Needs or specific business opportunities already feasible in the region. They can often be site specific.

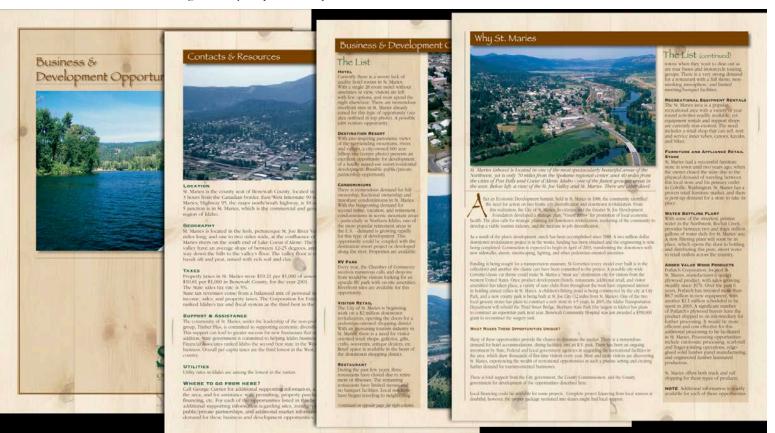
It also includes local, regional, and state resources, and contact informa-

tion for additional information.

The example shown here was developed for St. Maries, Idaho and proved to be an indispensable marketing tool.

Always promote your top 5, 7 or 10 business needs. Then simply update the brochure each year.

This should be distributed by cities, counties, economic development agencies, JDA's, and commercial real estate agents.



Recommendation #57: Cavalier, Park River, Grafton to begin development of a programmed plaza or "Community Living Room"

Implementation timeline: February 2024

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: The very top priority of every community should be the creation of a "community living room" or programmed plaza. If you hope to attract young families this is a key top attractor.

This does NOT have to be an expensive proposition: It can utilize an empty space in downtown, can be developed on a side street, or in an under-utilized parking lot—as long as it's in the heart of the downtown.

Plazas and year round public markets are the top two downtown revitalization strategies that have a proven success record. Your plaza is a simple open space with a paver-stone surface, perhaps ringed with raised planters or street trees, that can be programmed with a variety of activities, which change every few weeks.





Activities should always be free, and the plaza is always open to the public never reserved for private functions. When it comes to downtown revitalization, what comes first: the business mix or people? People. Where people hang out on a consistent basis, businesses follow. "Consistent basis" has been shown to be 250 days a year or more.

Keep in mind, these are activities, not events. A great example of a successful plaza with activities is Main Street Square in downtown Rapid City, South Dakota. Once a 65-space parking lot, it is now a programmed plaza that is programmed nearly 300 days a year with a variety of activities.

Details

- Change it up every two weeks (26 changes)
- 13 different "sets"
- Consider weather & seasons
- Mix and match activities
- Add security cameras
- Get volunteers to assist
- Keep it well lit 24/7 (soft lighting)

For instance, six months of the year, there is a 1,500 square foot splash pad, and for four months of the year, the plaza contains an 8,000 square foot ice rink. This provides activities, every day, for more than ten months of the year. In fact, Destination Rapid City sees more than \$150,000 a year just from ice skate rentals, and they have to dole them out to keep the rink from getting too crowded.

Look at getting sets. Always round tables: 28" to 36" (no larger) Budget to replace 10% each year. 9' umbrellas are just fine. Always go with red and yellow - mix them up. Make it colorful.

While Main Street Square has the splash pad and ice rink, they also provide many other activities: vendors and food trucks, musical entertainment on stage, large chess sets and other large-scale board games, and fire pits during the winter months.

We urge each city to create a Plaza Team that would include a council representative, city manager or clerk, downtown representative (business owner), public works or planning department head, chamber of commerce,









Six ECR4Kids 4-to-score giant game set @ \$200 each. Six Giant Jenga sets @ \$70 each.

Total investment: \$1,250





Four MegaChess w/25" tall King @ \$750 each.

Total investment: \$1,800

Option: 37" tall King \$1,100 each.

Total investment: \$3,500





Four Playcraft Extera Outdoor Foosball tables @ \$1,200 each And four Joola Nova Outdoor table tennis tables, paddles, and covers, bag of balls @ \$700 each.

Total investment: \$7,600

and two or three other local stakeholders. Sit down with them and watch the three videos shown on the top of page 166. You might show one each week over a three week period and conclude by watching the "How to Develop a Plaza On The Cheap" video. These can be found in the Vault of DestinationDevelopment.org in the Downtown Development section. Each is about an hour long, and they detail the importance of central gathering places and how to actually program them.

On these pages you can get an idea of the types of activities to include and the approximate cost for each. These could be sponsored by local businesses, employers, the city, local school districts, Kiwanis, Rotary or other auxiliary organizations, and private citizens.

Just create sandwich boards for each sponsor thanking them for sponsoring these activities so the sponsors get credit for their generosity and community spirit.







48 qty. US Games standard hula hoops, 36": \$164

48 qty. Hoop bundle pack 32": \$200

Three racks @ \$190 each: \$570

Total investment: \$950





Six Magis Spun Armchairs @ \$400 each Total investment: \$2,400







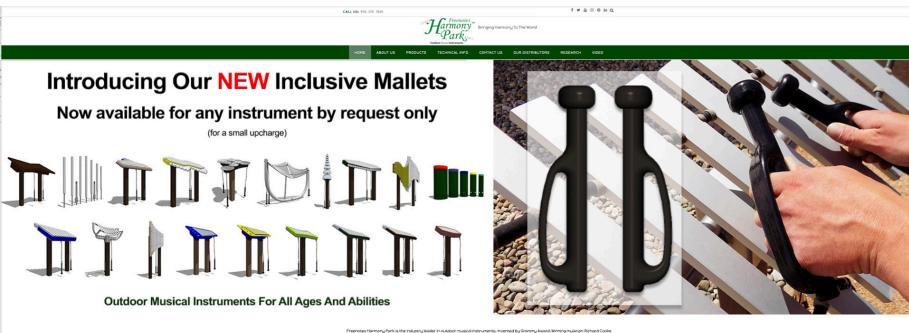
1 harp, 1 Pagoda bells, 1 Melody From Freenotes Harmony Park or Ensemble Collection (5 instruments) Total investment: \$7,000 to \$20,000

The key is to change these out every two weeks so it doesn't get stale. You want locals (and area residents) to think or say "I wonder what's happening in downtown Cavalier this week?" This creates incentive to head downtown.

Creation of public assembly spaces—or plazas—is FAR more important than the creation and development of city parks, ball fields and other amenities. Studies have shown that the creation and programming of downtown plazas is an investment: downtown property values increase dramatically, as do

retail sales and local services. And you will attract younger families. In the case of Rapid City, the average age of a person buying a home dropped 12 years within 24 months of Main Street Square opening.

There are now no downtown vacancies, the nearby Alex Johnson hotel has been totally refurbished and is a major draw in itself, and downtown has never been more successful than it is now.



















Perhaps best of all, the plaza is largely self-funded. Revenues come from periodic beer garden sales, ice skate rentals, a percentage of vendor and food truck sales, sponsorships and donations. This includes full-time staff positions, creating new jobs in the town.

There are now well over 100 programmed plazas in towns big and small. They attract young families, dramatically improve the local quality of life, and engage locals in their community.

It is critically important to locate the plaza in the heart of your spending district. The goal is to pull people into downtown shops and eateries, making them more successful and enticing businesses into currently empty retail spaces.

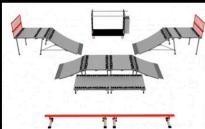
They also double as a space for weekly farmers markets, food truck weekends, and other local events.





8 qty. 10'x10' Ez Pop-up Canopy Tent with removable end side walls, roller bag, four sand bags with each: \$290 each Total investment: \$2,500





Park In A Cart Portable Skatepark w/cart Total investment: \$4,500 or \$9,000 for two







4 quantity Driveway Games all-weather corn hole set: \$120 each **Total investment: \$500**

As far as size goes, this can depend on the space you have available. We have seen them as small as 5,000 square feet, up to an acre or more. You just want to make sure you have room for a variety of activities, tables and chairs for plenty of seating surfaces.

You will also need a storage space to keep equipment and supplies stored when not in use. This might include a public works building, or another

warehouse building relatively close to downtown so that changing out activities doesn't become a burden or logistically difficult.

We urge you to watch the videos in the Destination Development's Vault. These showcase numerous case histories, ideas, examples and the costs involved. And because a lot of these are larger cities, simply remove a zero from the costs to fit your local population. In other words, if a city spends \$50,000 a year on its plaza, you might spend \$5,000 a year on yours. This is







8 qty. Tacklife Gas Fire Table, 28", 50,000 BTU Auto-ignition, propane tank, one fill: \$220 each Total investment: \$1,800







3 qty. (1 for parts) Zume Games portable badminton set w/freestanding base: \$40 Extra rackets, shuttlecocks **Total investment: \$150**





1 Stamina outdoor fitness multi-station: \$240 3 qty. Stamina outdoor fitness striders: \$440 **Total investment: \$1,600**

perhaps the best investment a city or town can make to improve the quality of life for its citizens. It is also be your best economic development tool to attract new businesses, investment, and residents.

This is a community-wide effort, and just about everyone can play a role. It can be as simple as just being a volunteer at the plaza to keep an eye on things, making sure everyone is having a good time. It can be as simple as setting up Jenga blocks, or resetting large chess sets.

Your plaza is the star of your downtown, and having a vibrant plaza proves you are a modern, attractive, and forward-thinking community.

There may be times when weather does not cooperate. In many cases cities will put out large tents or will actually create open-sided roofing structures for many of the activities, so whether rain or shine, the plaza is still a great place to hang out.







200 qty. Value Series gray rattan indoor-outdoor stack chairs @ \$26 each: \$5,200

50 qty. Round Coral steel patio table 32.5" @ \$60 ea: \$3.000

50 qty. Jordan Mfg. 9' Market umbrella @ \$52 ea: \$2,600

Total investment: \$10,800





4 qty. MegaChess Giant Checkers Set - 10" @ \$200 This uses the same mats as the chess sets.

Four separate mats @ \$65 each.

Total investment: \$1,060



4 full Imagination Playground 105-piece sets \$4,975 ea.

4 storage carts @ \$1,200 ea.

Total investment: \$24,700

In the case of Grafton, the Armory AND adjoining parking lot could easily be converted into a year round public market and plaza area with activities indoors and outdoors—so weather never becomes a reason to avoid heading downtown.

Recommendation #65 in this plan talks about recruiting regional clubs and organizations into your town, and the plaza makes it easier to attract them without shutting down streets during the event. This would include classic car shows, motorcycle shows, quilt guilds, pottery and other artisans in action organizations, home and garden shows, etc.

The primary hours for the plaza are from 4:00 pm to about 9:00 pm or even 10:00 during the summer months. This is THE place locals, and their visitors, head after school, after work and on weekends. Studies have shown that nearly 70% of all retail sales take place after 6:00 pm.

Having people downtown during these hours will encourage local businesses to be open while visitors are in front of or next to their stores.

Over the last several pages you've seen a variety of activities, including costs, that could be programmed into your plaza. If you were to add all of those activities up, it would total just over \$76,000 (see below). While it's not necessary to have ALL of these, it just goes to show that this does not have to be an ultra-expensive proposition.

Approximate cost:

6 4-to-score, 6 giant Jenga sets, 4 MegaChess sets, 4 MegaCheckers sets, 4 foosball tables, 4 ping pong tables, 96 hula hoops, 6 Spun Chairs, 5 musical instruments, 8 vendor tents, 2 portable skatepark kits, 4 corn hole sets, 8 fire pits, 3 badminton sets, 4 exercise machines, 4 105-piece Imagination Playground sets, 4 storage bins, 50 tables, 50 umbrellas, 200 stackable chairs.

Consider:

For everything shown here: \$76,110

Sponsor sandwich boards or plagues: \$2,000

NOTE:

When you contract for the

Design, Programming and Management Plan

they will answer all of these questions, and will create an annual budget, operations plan, funding plan, storage, etc.

When you get ready to develop your plaza, contract with an expert to create a "Plaza Location, Design, Programming and Management Plan." They will design the plaza and put together a programming plan that includes costs, revenues and other elements including insurance, utilities and all aspects of this undertaking. There are many grant opportunities for projects like these including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and others.



The heart of soul of every community, besides its people, is its downtown. And for downtowns like Grafton, Park River, Cavalier, Lakota and others, this should be a very top priority.

Just remember, what comes first? People downtown on a consistent basis. That's what the development of a plaza is all about: creating a reason for people to spend time downtown.

We have seen countless communities spend millions of dollars on seasonal ball fields, sports facilities, and local parks while downtown, which should be a serious player in your tax base, declines.

When it comes to managing a plaza, we recommend that the city contract with a local non-profit (or create one) to manage the plaza with the stipulation that they will have at least 250 days of activity on the plaza each year.

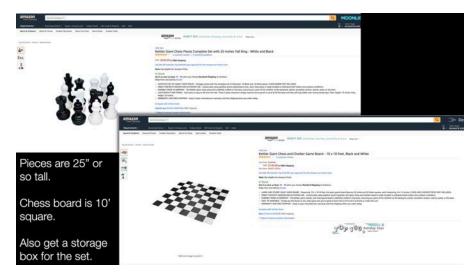
This can include a local chamber of commerce, a downtown association (the typical operator), Main Street organization, or an auxiliary organization. The plaza itself would be owned by the city, then contracted out for programming and management.

This way the city doesn't get into the business of operating beer gardens, renting ice skates and collecting sponsorship and vendor sales proceeds. The typical plaza will have anywhere from two to six full-time employees, who are paid from the receipts of these activities and sponsorships.









On the previous pages, you saw there are photographs of musicians, all playing non-amplified music. These "buskers" should be encouraged and promoted, adding cultural depth to the community. These can include high school students, local musicians, local artisans and other "street vendors" during the peak summer months to add life to your downtown.

Typically they are provided several sites downtown where they can play. There are no permits required, although if they get more than three complaints against them, they may be asked to avoid playing downtown.

No panhandling would be allowed at all. They can always put out a guitar case accepting tips, but they should never ask for money.

One of our favorite plaza activities is called "Imagination Playground" and is shown in the photographs on the opposite page. These are foam-based "Lincoln Logs," which can be assembled into amazing shapes. They are a favorite activity and should be put out during spring break, and during the

summer months two or three times.

Once again, you want to change things up every two weeks or so, encouraging people to come downtown to see what's new, what's happening.













During the year you can also bring in activity vendors that rent and manage climbing walls (left, in Whistler, BC), or as you secure sponsors you can actually purchase them. This includes portable zip lines, ropes courses, bocce ball courts and other activities.



Your plaza can also be the frontrunner in helping locals live healthier lives. Imagine yoga, Zumba, or Tai Chi classes every Wednesday and Saturday mornings on "The Square." These are typically led by local instructors, at no charge. However, it's a great way for them to attract local residents into their studios, and they can sell yoga mats and other gear so doing this helps them with their businesses.

In downtown New York City you'll see ping pong tables (bottom right), foosball tables and chess sets just about everywhere. They have had no issues with vandalism: locals protect things they take ownership of.









If there was just one recommendation in this plan that can attract new residents, new investment in their downtowns, new businesses and increased tourism, this would be THE recommendation.

Even with tourism, it starts with local residents. After all, if you don't hang out in your downtown, neither will visitors. They go where you go.





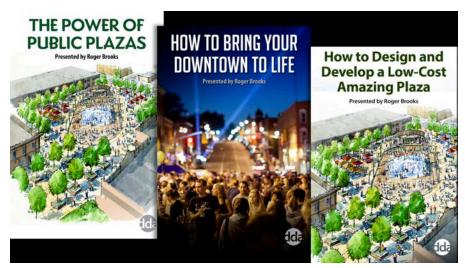
If this seems overwhelming, start small. A portion of a parking lot. A wide sidewalk area, a side street. Start during the peak late spring, summer and early fall months. And start with programming your space on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through the early afternoon.

Start with 100 days, then let it grow from there. But just start. Once you have a storage space, locals may even donate ping pong tables, foosball tables, and other elements, making your downtown the place to hang out and have a good time.

Encourage local restaurants and eateries to include outdoor dining areas. You'll find videos in the DDA's Vault specific to outdoor cafe dining.

And, finally, downtowns are about people, not cars. Make your downtown a community living room—the place where locals, with friends and family, come to hang out. Make downtown beautiful and welcoming, then add activities and change them up.

The three videos (below) are key to your plaza development.



Recommendation #58: Begin an aggressive Rendezvous Region SEO program to boost searches by type of activity

Implementation timeline: February 2024

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: If you Google your city's name, and it shows up on the first page of search results, that's great. But you are one of just a few people that would ever do that.

Most people are looking for specific activities in a general location. For instance, someone might look for "Best walleye fishing in Eastern North Dakota," or "Top SUP lake near Grand Forks."

We always look for activities first, then the general location. So, if you happen to be near one of the best SUP (stand-up paddle boarding) lakes in the Rendezvous Region, do you show up on the first page of search results?

Search Engine Optimization by activity with a focus on:

- RVing | Digital nomads | Work from Anywhere
- Family reunions
- Event locations for clubs
- Paddling: SUP | kayak | canoe
- History | Museums | Historical sites | Genealogy
- Reciprocal links
- Google analytics (follow your reach)

Key to Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is making sure you show up by type of activity, not location.

The very best tourism attractions available in the Rendezvous Regions, and where you should concentrate your SEO efforts include:

- 1. RVing | Digital Nomads | Work from Anywhere | RV parks. You have great RV parks, most of them very nice, and these are great assets beyond just the harvest and planting seasons. Promote them—and WHY someone should stay there.
- 2. Get-togethers: Post COVID, this is more important than ever. Family reunions, class reunions, company picnics, team building events. Showcase great locations for these, playing up the "Come Together" theme.
- 3. Paddling: Stand-up-paddle boarding is not so fun on large lakes (like Devils Lake) with a lot of power boats and other activities going on compared to a serene lake, with smooth and warmer waters, in a secluded noncrowded waterway.

You want your destinations to be on the first page of search results when looking for SUP, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, bird watching, and wildlife viewing.

4. Your historical attractions and sites are among the best in the country. They really are exceptional. But rather than the name of the museum being prominent, make sure each museum has a focus that people may search for: "A collection of classic cars," "Farm machinery," "How sugar is made from beets," or specifics along that line.

Every museum should have something specific—a teaser—that will pull people in the door or to the site. Those need to be developed in your SEO efforts.

Just remember than more than 82% of people using search engines, never go past the first page of search results. SEO will be a critical element in putting the Rendezvous Region and its assets "on the map" and making the region a premier visitor destination.

Recommendation #59: Distribute Community Profile and Opportunities brochures to real estate offices, economic development practitioners, county and city offices, libraries, etc.

Implementation timeline: March 2024

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Once the County Profiles and Opportunities brochures have been printed, they should be distributed to:

- All real estate offices throughout the region (commercial & residential)
- Local libraries
- City hall offices
- All employers looking for help (personnel and human services)
- County offices
- Chambers of Commerce
- Economic development practitioners

We recommend providing each office with perhaps 100 each of these. You can also purchase 8.5" x 11" counter top display holders for these so they don't end up hidden in a cabinet somewhere.

Additionally, we recommend attending the North Dakota Association of Realtors annual conference (combined with South Dakota) and bring copies of the County Profiles and Opportunities brochure, providing them to real estate professionals who work in the Rendezvous Region area. Include with these copies of The Very Best of the Rendezvous Region.

This is a great way to gain some marketing momentum, letting the world know that this area of North Dakota is on the rise and not to be forgotten. It

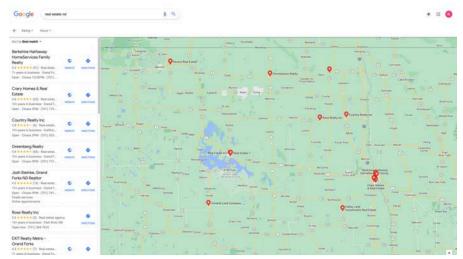


will showcase a modern, vibrant, active community that provides a high quality of life and exceptional opportunities for new residents.

Community Profile | Opportunities distribution

- · Real Estate offices, brokers & agents
- CCIM members (Certified Commercial Investment Members)
- Economic Development practitioners & associations
- City halls | County offices | Libraries

These should be available on every public-sector website in the region



Recommendation #60: Develop the sixth rack brochure: The Fishing & Hunting Guide to the Rendezvous Region

Implementation timeline: March 2024

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$6,000 plus co-op funding

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: This particular brochure could either be focused solely on fishing, or could include hunting if there are, in fact, public hunting areas in the region that could or should be promoted in this campaign.

While the fishing is a primary draw, it was difficult to determine whether or not hunting is a visitor attraction in the area.

Concentrating on fishing, each panel should focus on the rivers and lakes in the region and then provide specific information about fishing in each:

- Type of fish it's known for
- How often it's stocked
- Where to purchase a fishing license
- Catch limits

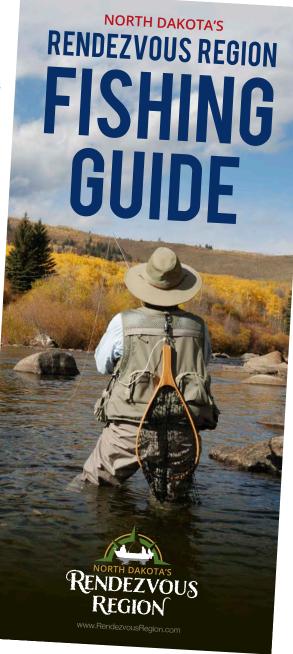


- Panels can include local businesses that offer bait. supplies, and other goods.
- Seasonal considerations
- Ice fishing information (perhaps a panel dedicated to this including links to area ice information)
- Best time of day
- Types of bait to use
- On-site amenities such as parking, pit-toilets, cleaning stations, etc.

If there are fishing guide services in the area, they should also have a panel dedicated to their services.

Work with the waterway authorities to obtain the best, most current, information.

For this, it's not necessary to promote EVERY lake, river and stream, but perhaps the top ten or so throughout the region that can be promoted to visitors without being fished out.



Recommendation #61: Contract or begin development of the next three year plan to follow this plan.

Implementation timeline: April 2024

Leadership: Red River Regional Council | Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$60,000

Funding source options: Planning grants, other sources

Rationale and to-do steps: Typically, the life of a any strategic or action plan is about three years. Plans that extend out five, ten, even twenty years end up losing steam after just a year or so. Times change, the economy shifts, as do local demographics, priorities, and circumstances.

The entire idea behind this and other Action Plans is to have a plan that sits open and working on your desk, not on a shelf gathering dust.

At this point, you'll be two years into implementing the recommendations in this plan. This is the point where you go through each one of these, identify those which have been fully implemented, and then those that still need to be implemented. This is where you assess the work done to this point and create the next set of recommendations for the following three years.

This is a plan that sits on your desk, not on a shelf

Review each recommendation in this plan:

- -Which ones were implemented?
- -Which do we want to continue with?
- -Which do we want to carry over to the next plan?
- -What worked, what didn't?
- -What will give us the best bang for our buck?
- -What product has been developed that we can now leverage?
- -How do we start getting new residents? Businesses?

This keeps the plan up to date and fresh.

While the creation of this plan had a \$100,000 budget, much of that included the Assessment process—the baseline from which this plan was developed.

Now that the groundwork has been laid and initial recommendations implemented, this is where you start building a new solid base to work from during the next three years.

Contract with a person or firm that is steeped in the following disciplines:

- Urban planning with a focus on rural communities
- Downtown revitalization and development
- Business recruitment
- Tourism development & planning
- Tourism and economic development marketing
- 1. Visit with each of the communities and determine whether or not they want or need further assistance through this program.
- 2. Gauge the results of the early marketing efforts: Local knowledge of the Rendezvous Region and your greatest tourism assets.
- 3. Visit the creation of the various niche brochures: Which were most successful, which need updates, and also look at the distribution of these, then update them accordingly and address any distribution issues.
- 4. Develop a "new" list of recommendations for the following three years and keep it to an Action Plan format, with implementation details for each recommendation.

While this plan was a year-plus effort, creation of the next three-year plan should take about 90-days to develop and complete.

Recommendation #62: Begin working on renewed funding for the Rendezvous Region marketing effort

Implementation timeline: April 2024

Leadership: Red River Regional Council | Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Across the country, most tourism efforts and destination marketing organizations are largely funded by lodging taxes. Yet in these counties, outside of Grand Forks, there are few lodging rooms, and thus, a small amount of lodging taxes to rely on for promotion of tourism.

Make sure Airbnb, VRBO, and your campgrounds are all collecting lodging taxes. If you need to work through the state to include these (especially campgrounds—including publicly-owned campgrounds), then work with local legislative representatives to put this in place.

Other funding options might include:

- Restaurant taxes (typically a 1% additional sales tax)
- Admissions taxes (paid on park or museum entrance fees, events, etc.)

Remember

This is a three-year program

- First year is the getting ready year (content and marketing assets)
- · Second year is brand-building, awareness, initial marketing
- Third year: Full-out marketing, public relations, social media effort

- A T-BID or Tourism Business Improvement District, which would cover all of the region outside of Grand Forks. This can be as simple as \$1 per booked night in local lodging establishments.

Because the updated plan will concentrate a LOT on marketing the region to attract visitor spending, this would typically come from the lodging establishment and not charged to the customer. Many lodging establishments may simply add \$1 per night to the cost of a room rather than show it as an additional tax.

The funds are then paid to a local taxing authority and from there distributed to the Rendezvous Region for tourism marketing and promotion.

- We also believe that these general fund revenues should also be secured from each of the counties: perhaps as little as \$10,000 a year, less than \$1,000 a month. After all, this effort is meant to go far beyond just attracting visitors, but also attracting new residents, new businesses, increasing sales at existing businesses.
- Finally, we have seen an increase in the general sales taxes—perhaps 1/2 of one percent, dedicated to promoting the region. This is typically a last option since everyone locally would be paying into the fund, not just visitors.

This is an investment designed to increase the tax base locally.

The goal is to develop a permanent funding base so that the efforts of the Rendezvous Region can concentrate on growing the tax base, rather than constantly looking for funding.

Recommendation #63: Reach out to hunting and fishing influencers: YouTube channels, blogs, vlogs, cable shows, publications

Implementation timeline: April 2024

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$10,000 for co-op influencer familiarization tours, etc.

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Fishing and hunting (especially fishing) channels are abundant, especially on YouTube, and dozens already feature lakes and rivers in North Dakota.

This is an excellent opportunity to reach out to them, showcasing top small lakes for bass, perch, walleye and sturgeon fishing, including ice fishing over the winter months.

Put them in touch with local enthusiasts who can show them the hot spots, seasons, and bait for each species of fish.

While \$10,000 has been budgeted for this effort, you may not need this full amount. BUT it would provide funding to help cover lodging and travel costs, perhaps meals at a local eatery or pub and other incidentals.

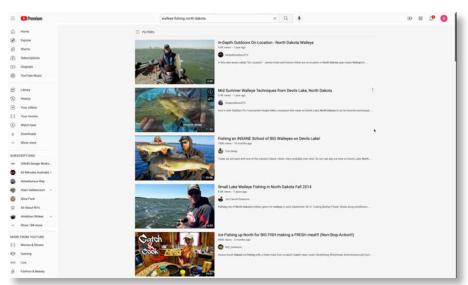
This is a niche where YouTube would be your primary channel on which to find these influencers.

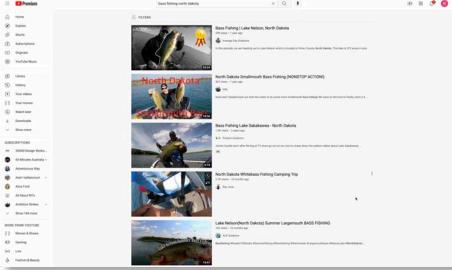
There are also dozens of streaming and cable shows dedicated to fishing and hunting, many with large followings.

Be ready to provide details:

- Fishing licensing, catch limits
- Stocking patterns
- Species by lake
- Seasonal considerations
- Nearby amenities: lodging, dining, bait, tackle, etc.

Your on-camera personality should greet them and create video teasers promoting them and even following them for part of a day, giving them additional exposure while promoting the area and individual lakes as great fishing spots or other areas for hunting.





Recommendation #64: Begin a full-fledged PR effort with a focus on RVers, fishing and hunting, recreational enthusiasts

Implementation timeline: May 2024

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$10,000 for co-op influencer visits

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Hopefully, your public relations expert will be on staff and already working on the PR effort. If not, consider contracting with a PR professional.

A few notes about the public relations effort:

- This includes social media, print and online publications, as well as broadcast marketing (radio and television).
- You build your brand through public relations. Advertising is used to maintain your "ownership" of the brand.



- For every dollar you spend on a PR effort, you will see a three to four dollar return on investment in terms of earned media (what you would pay if you had to purchase the advertising space).
- Articles are read four times that of print ads.
- PR provides third-party endorsements, which are three times more effective than self-promotion.



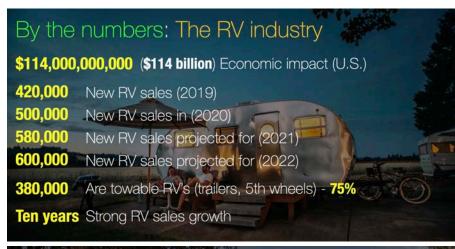


Included in the PR effort would be:

- Obtaining editorial calendars from both print and online niche publications, reaching out to editors, and assisting in crafting articles promoting local RV and camping destinations, top things to do while in the area, and to fishing and hunting enthusiasts.

These niches are the fastest and easiest to get into the area, and would showcase the region's best existing assets and amenities.

- Reaching out to television and streaming show producers.
- Connecting with popular YouTube channels in various niche markets including stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking and canoeing influencers.





As part of this effort, make sure to create detailed half-day, full-day itineraries for various niche travelers: those on motorcycles, RVers, history-buffs and recreational enthusiasts, those traveling with young kids, etc.

They should include:

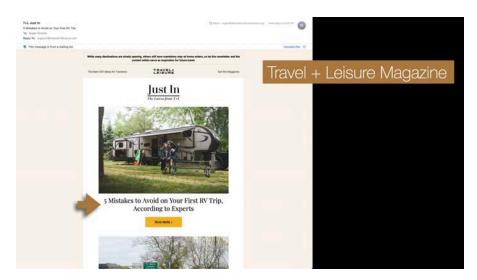
- By mode of travel (car, RV, motorcycle, tour bus...)
- Party type (families, multi-generational, girls weekend out...)
- Activity level (extreme, relaxed, ADA accessible...)
- Season
- By type of activity: (On the water, historical sites, hiking, biking...)

Most importantly of all:

Provide specifics, not generalities.

- Specific dishes and specific eateries, for instance.
- How much time to allow at each destination or activity
- Where to start and end each day (or itinerary)
- Any costs they should know about
- Not to be missed hidden gems along the way
- Any other tidbits or helpful information

We cannot overstate the importance of a professional public relations effort. It is, by far, the top priority of all marketing initiatives.



Recommendation #65: Invite clubs and organizations into the Rendezvous Region to hold their events.

Implementation timeline: May 2024 and each spring thereafter

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

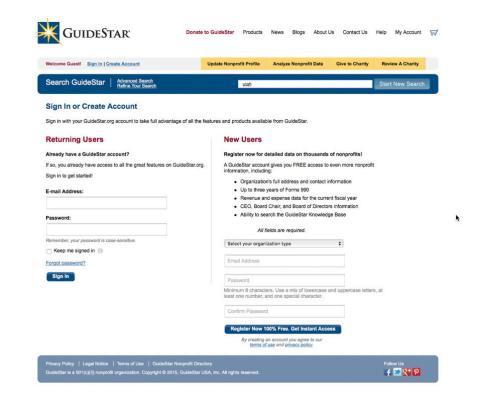
Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Tied to your PR efforts is the opportunity to reach out to regional clubs and organizations, letting them know you would LOVE to host one of their events.

So, rather than YOU producing events, you invite classic car clubs, motorcycle clubs, quilt guilds, glass blowers, and other clubs and organizations to your community.

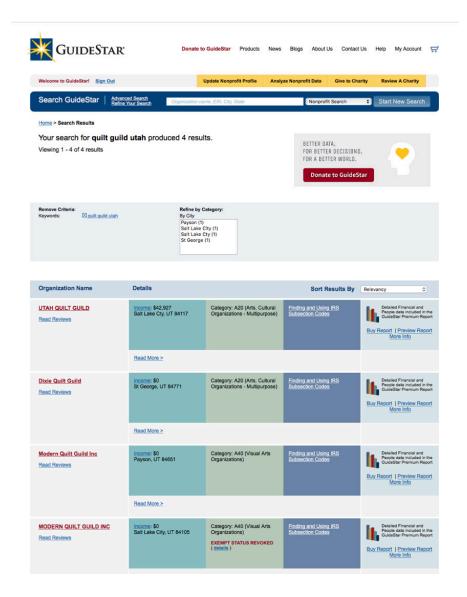
Roger Brooks was visiting a town in the Central California coastal area where there was a classic car show in progress. Roger found the show organizer and asked why they picked this particular town for this event. The answer? "They invited us." He went on to explain that their club got a half-page letter from the local chamber of commerce inviting them to host one of their







shows on their Main Street. They didn't offer any money, but said they would post welcome signs and would close off three blocks of Main Street for the show.



The show organizers and vendors started arriving on Thursday afternoon, filling local hotel rooms and campgrounds, and the show ran on Friday, all day Saturday, and Sunday until about 2:00 in the afternoon.

The show producers brought in all the vendors, brought in porta-potties, did all of the marketing, and even contracted with off-duty police officers to manage traffic and to keep an eye on things.





The result? About 10,000 car enthusiasts with friends and family attended the show. It was a huge success.

Roger then asked if they would be doing the show in future years. "You bet," was the reply, "we've booked this weekend for the next ten years."

The cost to produce this campaign: \$200 for direct-mail letters, welcome signs, and postage.

Clubs and organizations are LOOKING for places to host retreats, shows, exhibitions. BMW Magazine goes to all BMW owners around the world. Thenb Roundel, is the publication for BMW owners in North America. In the Seattle area, Zundfolge is the local club newsletter (opposite page).

Notice each month they showcased a different destination: "Reasons to Visit Your Canadian Club Neighbors in August," "Cannon Beach [Oregon] Driving Event Recap," and "Mountain Twisties Drive Recap."

There are clubs for BMW, Mercedes, Subarus, Volkwagens, and just about every type of classic car. There are Harley-Davidson clubs (HOGS), Honda

Pumpkin and Poker Run

Goldwings (motorcycle), quilt and pottery guilds, photography and fishing clubs and dozens of others.

At little cost, you can go online to Guidestar.org (opposite, left) and you can search for every type of non-profit, club and organization you can imagine. You can search by state, area, or by the type of club.

Guidestar provides contact information as well as club specifics.

Also reach out to local residents at chamber of commerce meetings, Kiwanis, Rotary and other auxiliary organizations to see who, locally, belongs to any of these clubs. They can be your way to attract local and regional clubs. They can provide you with copies of club newsletters, contact information, and in many cases, will pitch your community to club leaders and event organizers.

Towns including Cavalier, Langdon, Walhalla and Lakota all have great opportunities of attracting clubs and organizations due to access to primary highways and metro areas, or due to abundant other attractions such as the Pembina County Museum, Golf Club, Icelandic State Park, Pembina Gorge and Frost Fire.

The best time to reach out to these folks would be in October, November, and January when they begin planning the upcoming year's activities and locations.

Wouldn't it be great to host thirty or forty clubs and organizations in the Rendezvous Region each year? They do the work, they produce the event, market it, and each is open to the public. All you have to do is invite them and be a great, welcoming host.

This is an excellent way to get new visitors into the region so they can see what all you have to offer.

Recommendation #66: Work with local museums, farms, businesses in joining the Harvest Host, Boondockers Welcome programs

Implementation timeline: May 2024

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: Harvest Host and Boondockers Welcome is an organization that RVers pay to join, and in exchange, they get a network of places they can stay one night (sometimes longer at Boondockers Welcome locations) as long as they have self-contained RVs (no tent camping).

This includes more than 6,000 golf courses, wineries, farms, museums, public markets and private properties that have space where they can accommodate anywhere from three to perhaps a dozen RVs.

There is NO COST to be a part of the program, and RVers are encouraged to purchase products or goods from the hosts. They are also encouraged to share their experiences and promote the hosts for accommodating them.

Locations can easily register to be a part of the program, and anyone wishing to spend the night at a particular location must call (or email) in advance to see if space is available.

Once again, there is no cost to be a part of the program, and you can dictate how many RVs to allow, the days available, and seasons. All is up to your discretion.

This is a fantastic way to increase tourism spending locally. Studies have shown that overnight visitors spend nearly three times that of day visitors. And overnight visitors are more likely to check out your retail shops, eateries, grocery stores, fuel stops, and activities, which they often share with friends and families.

We suggest hosting a series of workshops throughout the region where people can sign up, on the spot, and can see both websites, how they work and can hear from destinations that are already a part of the program.





Recommendation #67: Create video content on how to find local jobs geared to seasonal visitors, harvest season, digital nomads

Implementation timeline: May 2024

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

Approximate cost to implement: \$5,000

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: When we were secret-shopping the area, we decided to look for jobs in particular towns in the region. We, of course, used the state's Job Service website for this exercise.

Unfortunately, it was difficult to find jobs in a specific community. As you can see from the e-mail May Houdek sent to Roger Brooks, there are a few extra steps involved in digging down to a very specific community.

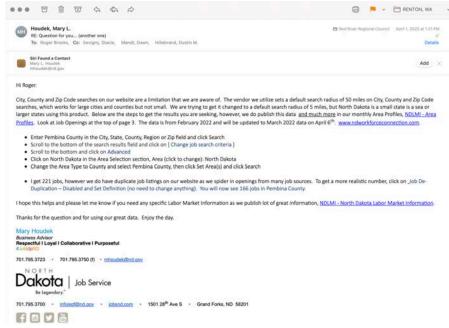
A two to three minute video should be created to help newcomers find job opportunities in a specific community, such as Pembina, which is the community we used in our research.



The job listings and website are great when searching by county or general area, but if a visitor falls in love with St. Thomas, for example, it takes a few more steps to actually find jobs IN St. Thomas.

One of the goals of this effort is to get visitors to see the various communities in the region and perhaps they would find one they'd like to live in, work in, or invest in. And if they find a particular community, it should be easy to find available jobs in that specific community and THEN to see what's available within a 10-minute or 15-minute drive outside the community.

The easier you make things, the more likely you are to close the sale.



Recommendation #68: Create a small travel book "The Hidden Gems of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region"

Implementation timeline: June 2024

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: None: A private-sector opportunity

Funding source options: None required

Rationale and to-do steps: This is a great opportunity for a top-notch local writer to create a special book, marketing the "hidden gems"—those great finds that, typically, only the locals would know about.

Richard Rusnack, a builder by trade, was always hosting friends and family in Door County, Wisconsin—a peninsula that jets out into Lake Michigan northeast of Green Bay and a popular destination area. As he was often working in other locations, he decided to put together a little book, "101 Things to Do in Door County"—in essence, the hidden gems from a local's point of view.

The little book did so well, he began selling it to visitor information centers, CVBs, chambers of commerce and even Wisconsin State Parks. It cost approximately \$5 to print, he wholesaled them for \$10, and they retailed for \$14.95.

At one point the state park system decided to do a study of the people who purchased the book, following up with visitors living at least 50 miles from the county to see if it changed how often they'd visit.

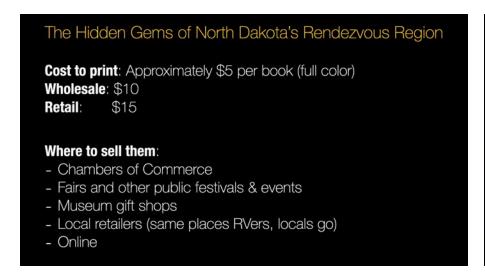
It turns out that 90% of the surveyed visitors said they came back (or would be coming back) multiple times as they worked through the book.

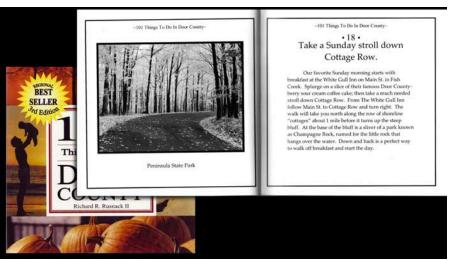
In fact, this little book, and the 40,000 copies sold, was the top tourism marketing piece of all the marketing ever done in the county.

Visitors love finding the Hidden Gems, which will keep them coming back, and it lets them really discover—beyond the obvious—those gems that make the Rendezvous Region special.

These days, for the same cost, you can have a similar book printed in fullcolor for the same price as Richard did with this one (below). This would be a great private-sector initiative and a money-maker for both the author and the retail outlet.

Do not worry about finding "101" or any set number. Just market "The Hidden Gems of North Dakota's Rendezvous Region."





Recommendation #69: Work with historical sites and attractions on cross-selling and social media "share your experience" ideas

Implementation timeline: June 2024

Leadership: Rendezvous Region Tourism

Approximate cost to implement: \$2,500 for social media table tents/cards

Funding source options: Marketing funds

Rationale and to-do steps: Most historical sites and museums are operated by volunteers who are doing what they can to preserve the community or area's history. With little in the way of time and funds, little is done to cross-sell other area historical attractions, and to encourage visitors to share their experience via social media channels.

For this recommendation, we'd like the Rendezvous Region to actually create countertop (see below) and entrance signage, asking visitors to share their experiences. Make sure you include a hashtag as well so they are posting their experiences to common social media sites.



Additionally, every museum and historical site should have an easel and board (indoor locations) or interpretive panel (outdoor locations) featuring one or two (no more) sites just up or down the road.

Cross-selling to other historical attractions is easy, inexpensive, and will keep people coming back or staying longer. But on these boards, only promote one and no more than two locations. You want people to think or say "While we're here, we should go check that place out!" This is why you want to refrain from marketing a list of attractions.

Finally, this is a great opportunity for distribution of the History Trail brochure.



Rather then rely on museum volunteers to do this work, please do it for them. Purchase the easels (below), and design, print and mount on foam core board, the teaser for the next museum along the History Trail.

You can even mount a brochure holder to the panel, which could hold the History Trail rack brochures.

The photos on the previous page are of the Orphan Train Museum in Concordia, Kansas—a small, but exceptionally well-done museum that does an excellent job of telling stories, versus displaying artifacts and collections.

Notice the large photographs that really illustrate the story. This would be a great museum to visit and emulate.

Display Easel for Floor or Counter, 34 to 64" Adjustable Height, Portable - Black SKU: EASEL336-IN STOCK \$46.99 Collapsible Display Easel for Artwork with Height Adjustable Legs appible display easel includes all of these features, and more. Each unit ships fully assembled, and is ready for use right out of the box, making it choice to prepare for your next art gallery or trade show presentation! Unlike an artist tripod, for painting or art display purposes, this ght aluminum, collapsible display easel features a very basic design. When set up, the center portion can simply be lifted to collapse the

Recommendation #70: Integrate the Arts Across the Prairie program into local and regional initiatives

Implementation timeline: June 2024

Leadership: Red River Regional Council

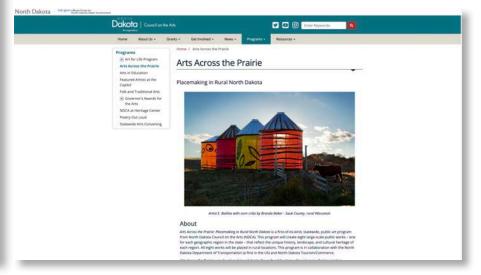
Approximate cost to implement: To be determined

Funding source options: To be determined

Rationale and to-do steps: In order to attract visitors you need to have something that is truly unique, will get a lot of attention, and will get people to stop, photograph, and share what they saw. They can be weird, wacky, colorful, or just plain artistic but add dimension, humor, and cultural depth to an area.

Think The Jolly Green Giant in Blue Earth, MN; The Enchanted Highway between Regent and Gladstone, started by a retired school teacher. And there's Carhenge, the Corn Palace, Fridgehenge, and many others. In fact, look for Casey, Illinois in YouTube "Casey, Ill - a small town home to giant things."

This is something that could REALLY help put the Rendezvous Region "on the map" in a big way. What can you dream of?



A word about permanent funding

One important goal of this plan is to prove to the state, each county, each community, and each business that plays a role in attracting or servicing visitors (lodging, dining, attractions) that tourism is an indispensable part of the regional and local economy. When you can prove value, funding will follow.

Traditionally, destination marketing efforts are funded from lodging taxes, and in some larger metropolitan areas may include rental car taxes, admissions taxes, and other means that are not available in this region.

One change, that would need legislative approval, would be requiring ALL lodging properties which house visitors less than 30 days, should be paying a 2% to 4% lodging tax—in addition to state taxes.

This would include every RV park and campground, regardless of whether it's publicly or privately-owned. After all, anyone staying in a campground or Airbnb, or VRBO is using all of the same amenities as someone staying in a local hotel.

All visitors receive the benefit of the brochures, marketing, and websites created by the Rendezvous Region. They get the benefit of wayfinding signage and other amenities being improved or added through the development and implementation of this plan.

In some metro areas, visitors will pay nearly 25% in just add-on taxes, so an RVer paying \$40 a night is not going to go somewhere else because of the extra \$1 they might pay each night. And by providing a helpful, robust website and on-site amenities, that additional \$1 is well worth it.

Given the fact that there are twice the camping sites as hotel rooms in the region, this could nearly double the lodging tax receipts in the region.

Another option is to develop a T-BID or Tourism Business Improvement District. This is an add-on fee, where a local hotel pays, typically, \$1 or \$2 per booked night to help advance the marketing effort.

This is not charged to the customer and is only levied on booked nights. Sometimes hotels will raise their rates by that \$1 to cover their cost, but typically they absorb it, if they feel there is a good return on that investment.

In both of these cases, locals are not paying anything for the tourism marketing effort. Visitors are carrying 100% of the load.

That being said, some cities and many states also allow municipalities to collect a restaurant tax: Often about 1/2 of 1%, which is paid to the state as part of the sales tax then would be rebated back to the Rendezvous Region.

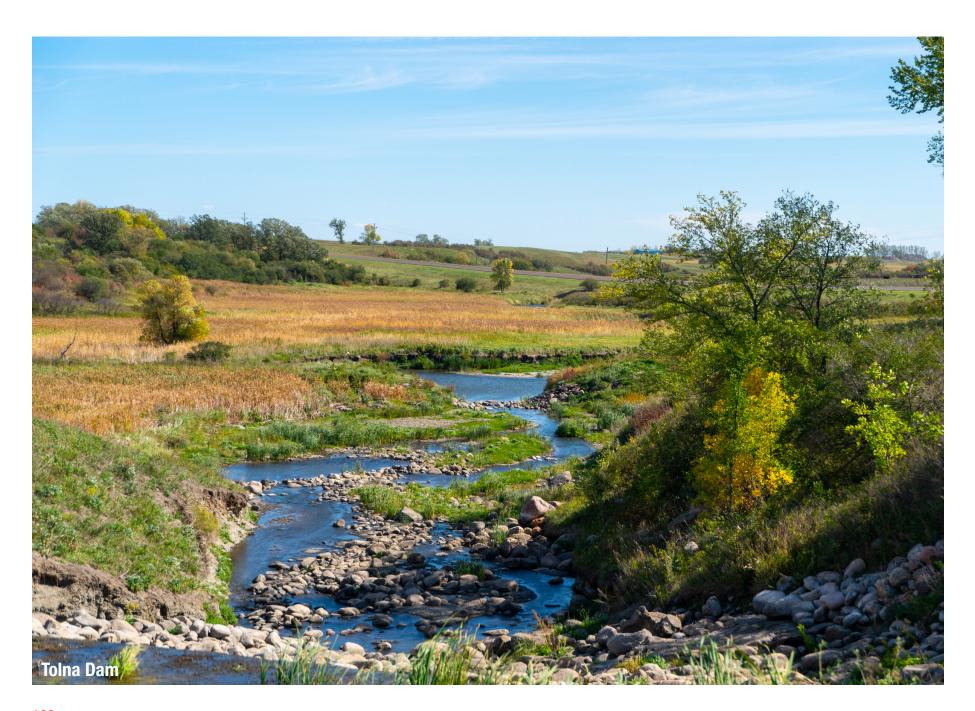
Another option is to create an admissions tax: a fifty cent to a dollar "admission tax" added on to admissions to museums, state and county parks, fishing and hunting licenses, and admissions to events, such as county fairs, concerts, trade shows, etc.

Yes, every attendee pays this, but typically with little, if any, push back. After all, the funds do help promote these places and some is invested in product development, making the experience better for all attendees.

And each county SHOULD include perhaps \$10,000 a year (or more) from general fund revenues to support a program like this where every dollar is being used to increase local property values, sales tax revenues, and to further improve the local economy.

But first: This initial program is designed to prove the benefit of having a full-fledged and effective tourism marketing effort. And once it becomes an indispensable part of the local economy, it will be supported financially.







ESRI demographic profile - Pembina County



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Pembina County Pembina County, ND Geography: County

deagraphy. county		
	Pem	ibina Count
Census 2010 Summary		
Population		7,413
Households		3,257
Families		2,069
Average Household Size		2.23
Owner Occupied Housing Units		2,532
		725
Renter Occupied Housing Units		
Median Age		46.5
2021 Summary		
Population		7,059
Households		3,157
Families		1,944
Average Household Size		2.19
Owner Occupied Housing Units		2,409
Renter Occupied Housing Units		748
Median Age		48.4
Median Household Income		\$63,099
Average Household Income		\$82,302
2026 Summary		
Population		6,709
Households		3,013
Families		1,839
Average Household Size		2.18
Owner Occupied Housing Units		2,338
Renter Occupied Housing Units		675
Median Age		48.8
Median Household Income		\$65,382
Average Household Income		\$87,174
•		
Trends: 2021-2026 Annual Rate		
Population		-1.01%
Households		-0.93%
Families		-1.10%
Owner Households		-0.60%
Median Household Income		0.71%
2021 Households by Income	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	287	9.1%
	285	9.0%
\$15,000 - \$24,999		
\$25,000 - \$34,999	278	8.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	325	10.3%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	649	20.6%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	400	12.7%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	605	19.2%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	172	5.4%
\$200,000+	156	4.9%
\$200,000 i	130	4.570
Madien Harristal Transport	+62.000	
Median Household Income	\$63,099	
Average Household Income	\$82,302	
Per Capita Income	\$36,826	
2026 Households by Income	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	259	8.6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	259	8.6%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	251	8.3%
	305	10.1%
\$35,000 - \$49,999		
\$50,000 - \$74,999	615	20.4%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	396	13.1%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	603	20.0%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	175	5.8%
\$200,000+	150	5.0%
Median Household Income	\$65,382	
Average Household Income	\$87,174	
Per Capita Income	\$39,169	



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Pembina County Pembina County, ND Geography: County

	Pembina Count	
2010 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	416	5.6%
Age 5 - 9	431	5.8%
Age 10 - 14	451	6.1%
Age 15 - 19	438	5.9%
Age 20 - 24	312	4.2%
Age 25 - 34	730	9.8%
Age 35 - 44	761	10.3%
Age 45 - 54	1,217	16.4%
Age 55 - 64	1,168	15.8%
Age 65 - 74	659	8.9%
Age 75 - 84	550	7.4%
Age 85+	280	3.8%
2021 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	360	5.1%
Age 5 - 9	382	5.4%
Age 10 - 14	379	5.4%
Age 15 - 19	362	5.1%
Age 20 - 24	280	4.0%
Age 25 - 34	768	10.9%
Age 35 - 44	746	10.6%
Age 45 - 54	794	11.2%
Age 55 - 64	1,203	17.0%
Age 65 - 74	998	14.1%
Age 75 - 84	503	7.1%
Age 85+	284	4.0%
2026 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	332	4.9%
Age 5 - 9	367	5.5%
Age 10 - 14	407	6.1%
Age 15 - 19	344	5.1%
Age 20 - 24	234	3.5%
Age 25 - 34	626	9.3%
Age 35 - 44	761	11.3%
Age 45 - 54	723	10.8%
Age 55 - 64	948	14.1%
Age 65 - 74	1,105	16.5%
Age 75 - 84	596	8.9%
Age 85+	266	4.0%
Age 85+	266	4.09

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026.

March 29, 2022

Page 3 of 5



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

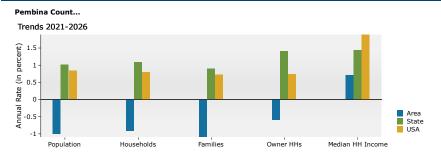
Pembina County Pembina County, ND Geography: County

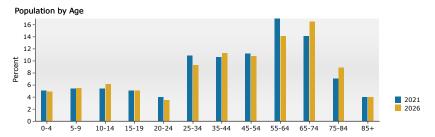
	Pembina Co	unt
2010 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	7,077	95.5%
Black Alone	21	0.3%
American Indian Alone	144	1.9%
Asian Alone	11	0.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	2	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	58	0.8%
Two or More Races	100	1.3%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	190	2.6%
2021 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	6,545	92.7%
Black Alone	58	0.8%
American Indian Alone	130	1.8%
Asian Alone	25	0.4%
Pacific Islander Alone	2	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	88	1.2%
Two or More Races	211	3.0%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	277	3.9%
2026 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	6,171	92.0%
Black Alone	64	1.0%
American Indian Alone	123	1.8%
Asian Alone	28	0.4%
Pacific Islander Alone	2	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	89	1.3%
Two or More Races	232	3.5%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	283	4.2%

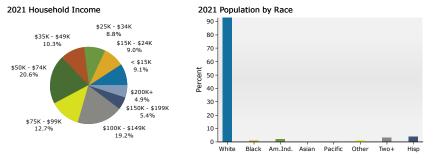


Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Pembina County Pembina County, ND Geography: County







Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026

March 29, 2022

©2022 Esri Page 4 of 5 ©2022 Esri Page 5 of 5

ESRI demographic profile - Walsh County



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Walsh County Walsh County, ND Geography: County

 Geography. County		
Census 2010 Summary	Wals	sh County,
Population		11,119
Households		4,746
Families		3,021
Average Household Size		2.27
Owner Occupied Housing Units		3,588
Renter Occupied Housing Units		1,158
Median Age		45.7
·		
2021 Summary Population		10,858
Households		4,705
Families		2,902
Average Household Size		2.24
Owner Occupied Housing Units		3,734
Renter Occupied Housing Units		971
Median Age		48.2
Median Household Income		\$55,230
Average Household Income		\$78,462
2026 Summary		
Population		10,461
Households		4,548
Families		2,782
Average Household Size		2.23
Owner Occupied Housing Units		3,666
Renter Occupied Housing Units		882
Median Age		48.6
Median Household Income		\$57,044
Average Household Income		\$83,044
Trends: 2021-2026 Annual Rate		0.740/
Population		-0.74%
Households Families		-0.68% -0.84%
Owner Households		-0.84%
Median Household Income		0.65%
rieulan nousenolu monie		0.0370
2021 Households by Income	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	499	10.6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	382	8.1%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	439	9.3%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	805	17.1%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	809	17.2%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	582	12.4%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	752	16.0%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	177	3.8%
\$200,000+	260	5.5%
Median Household Income	\$55,230	
Average Household Income	\$78,462	
Per Capita Income	\$34,037	
2026 Households by Income	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	457	10.0%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	354	7.8%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	402	8.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	777	17.1%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	777	17.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	582	12.8%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	764	16.8%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	181	4.0%
\$200,000+	254	5.6%
Median Household Income	\$57,044	
Average Household Income	\$83,044	



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Walsh County Walsh County, ND Geography: County

Geography: County		
	Walsh Cour	ity,
2010 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	681	6.1%
Age 5 - 9	620	5.6%
Age 10 - 14	731	6.6%
Age 15 - 19	674	6.1%
Age 20 - 24	486	4.4%
Age 25 - 34	1,099	9.9%
Age 35 - 44	1,147	10.3%
Age 45 - 54	1,840	16.5%
Age 55 - 64	1,604	14.4%
Age 65 - 74	1,064	9.6%
Age 75 - 84	763	6.9%
Age 85+	410	3.7%
2021 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	587	5.4%
Age 5 - 9	616	5.7%
Age 10 - 14	609	5.6%
Age 15 - 19	499	4.6%
Age 20 - 24	473	4.4%
Age 25 - 34	1,220	11.2%
Age 35 - 44	1,052	9.7%
Age 45 - 54	1,295	11.9%
Age 55 - 64	1,747	16.1%
Age 65 - 74	1,484	13.7%
Age 75 - 84	826	7.6%
Age 85+	450	4.1%
2026 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	559	5.3%
Age 5 - 9	592	5.7%
Age 10 - 14	639	6.1%
Age 15 - 19	507	4.8%
Age 20 - 24	360	3.4%
Age 25 - 34	1,083	10.4%
Age 35 - 44	1,108	10.6%
Age 45 - 54	1,122	10.7%
Age 55 - 64	1,491	14.3%
Age 65 - 74	1,576	15.1%
Age 75 - 84	964	9.2%
Age 85+	460	4.4%
-		

March 29, 2022

Per Capita Income



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Walsh County Walsh County, ND Geography: County

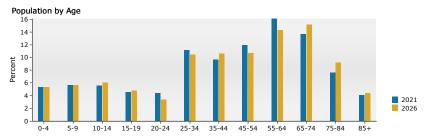
	Walsh Coun	Walsh County,	
2010 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent	
White Alone	10,391	93.5%	
Black Alone	25	0.2%	
American Indian Alone	168	1.5%	
Asian Alone	36	0.3%	
Pacific Islander Alone	4	0.0%	
Some Other Race Alone	345	3.1%	
Two or More Races	150	1.3%	
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	969	8.7%	
2021 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent	
White Alone	9,698	89.3%	
Black Alone	84	0.8%	
American Indian Alone	213	2.0%	
Asian Alone	99	0.9%	
Pacific Islander Alone	4	0.0%	
Some Other Race Alone	526	4.8%	
Two or More Races	234	2.2%	
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	1,493	13.8%	
2026 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent	
White Alone	9,238	88.3%	
Black Alone	95	0.9%	
American Indian Alone	216	2.1%	
Asian Alone	109	1.0%	
Pacific Islander Alone	4	0.0%	
Some Other Race Alone	553	5.3%	
Two or More Races	246	2.4%	
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	1,593	15.2%	

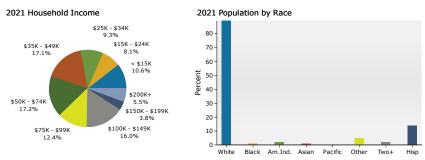


Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Walsh County Walsh County, ND Geography: County







Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 202

©2022 Esri Page 5 of 5

March 29, 2022
Page 4 of 5

ESRI demographic profile - Nelson County



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Nelson County Nelson County, ND Geography: County

	Nelson County
Census 2010 Summary	2.126
Population Households	3,126 1,474
Families	905
Average Household Size	2.07
Owner Occupied Housing Units	1,172
Renter Occupied Housing Units	302
Median Age	51.6
redaininge	52.0
2021 Summary	
Population	3,085
Households	1,479
Families	878
Average Household Size	2.03
Owner Occupied Housing Units	1,078
Renter Occupied Housing Units	401
Median Age	53.6
Median Household Income Average Household Income	\$51,370 \$72,190
Average Household Income	\$72,150
2026 Summary	
Population	2,947
Households	1,418
Families	834
Average Household Size	2.02
Owner Occupied Housing Units	1,053
Renter Occupied Housing Units	365
Median Age	53.7
Median Household Income	\$53,039
Average Household Income	\$77,031
Trends: 2021-2026 Annual Rate	
Population	-0.91%
Households	-0.84%
Families	-1.02%
Owner Households	-0.47%
Median Household Income	0.64%
2021 Households by Income	Number Percent
<\$15,000	151 10.2%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	177 12.0%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	182 12.3%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	207 14.0%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	276 18.7%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	172 11.6%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	202 13.7%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	42 2.8%
\$200,000+	70 4.7%
Madiso Harrishald Torring	AF1 270
Median Household Income	\$51,370
Average Household Income Per Capita Income	\$72,190 \$34,626
rei capita income	\$54,020
2026 Households by Income	Number Percent
<\$15,000	138 9.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	164 11.6%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	166 11.7%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	196 13.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	260 18.3%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	172 12.1%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	209 14.7%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	44 3.1%
\$200,000+	69 4.9%
Median Hausahald Tasama	¢E2 020
Median Household Income Average Household Income	\$53,039 \$77,031
Per Capita Income	\$37,082



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Nelson County Nelson County, ND Geography: County

Geography: County		
	Nelson Cou	nty
2010 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	134	4.3%
Age 5 - 9	156	5.0%
Age 10 - 14	152	4.9%
Age 15 - 19	166	5.3%
Age 20 - 24	113	3.6%
Age 25 - 34	246	7.9%
Age 35 - 44	267	8.5%
Age 45 - 54	520	16.6%
Age 55 - 64	514	16.4%
Age 65 - 74	395	12.6%
Age 75 - 84	306	9.8%
Age 85+	157	5.0%
2021 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	124	4.0%
Age 5 - 9	131	4.2%
Age 10 - 14	154	5.0%
Age 15 - 19	143	4.6%
Age 20 - 24	110	3.6%
Age 25 - 34	310	10.0%
Age 35 - 44	309	10.0%
Age 45 - 54	308	10.0%
Age 55 - 64	537	17.4%
Age 65 - 74	498	16.1%
Age 75 - 84	296	9.6%
Age 85+	165	5.3%
2026 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	117	4.0%
Age 5 - 9	135	4.6%
Age 10 - 14	144	4.9%
Age 15 - 19	142	4.8%
Age 20 - 24	90	3.1%
Age 25 - 34	259	8.8%
Age 35 - 44	328	11.1%
Age 45 - 54	294	10.0%
Age 55 - 64	413	14.0%
Age 65 - 74	520	17.6%
Age 75 - 84	338	11.5%
Age 85+	167	5.7%



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

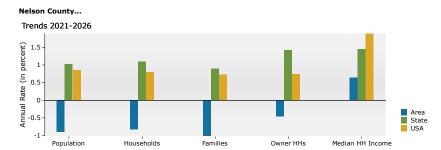
Nelson County Nelson County, ND Geography: County

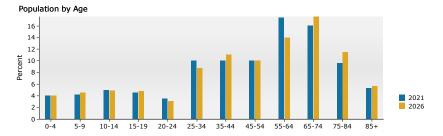
	Nelson Cou	nty
2010 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	3,037	97.2%
Black Alone	8	0.3%
American Indian Alone	30	1.0%
Asian Alone	3	0.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	1	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	1	0.0%
Two or More Races	46	1.5%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	33	1.1%
2021 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	2,949	95.6%
Black Alone	11	0.4%
American Indian Alone	51	1.7%
Asian Alone	4	0.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	1	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	1	0.0%
Two or More Races	68	2.2%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	46	1.5%
2026 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	2,803	95.1%
Black Alone	12	0.4%
American Indian Alone	53	1.8%
Asian Alone	4	0.1%
Pacific Islander Alone	1	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	1	0.0%
Two or More Races	73	2.5%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	49	1.7%

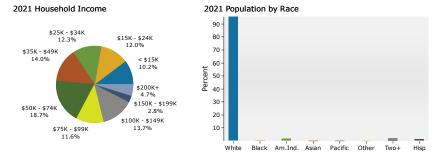


Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Nelson County Nelson County, ND Geography: County







Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026

2022 Esri Page 4 of 5 © 2022 Esri Page 5 of 5

March 29, 2022

ESRI demographic profile - Grand Forks County



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Grand Forks County Grand Forks County, ND Geography: County

	Grand F	orks C
Census 2010 Summary Population		66,861
Households		27,417
Families		15,215
Average Household Size		2.28
Owner Occupied Housing Units		14,344
Renter Occupied Housing Units		13,073
Median Age		29.8
2021 Summary		71,988
Population Households		30,729
Families		16,412
Average Household Size		2.24
Owner Occupied Housing Units		14,313
Renter Occupied Housing Units		16,416
Median Age		33.1
Median Household Income		\$55,308
Average Household Income		\$72,892
2026 Summary Population		74,113
Households		31,837
Families		16,833
Average Household Size		2.23
Owner Occupied Housing Units		15,346
Renter Occupied Housing Units		16,491
Median Age		34.4
Median Household Income		\$59,543
Average Household Income		\$80,698
Trends: 2021-2026 Annual Rate Population		0.58%
Households		0.71%
Families		0.51%
Owner Households		1.40%
Median Household Income		1.49%
2021 Households by Income	Number P	ercent
<\$15,000	3,553	11.6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	3,621	11.8%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	4,104	13.4%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	2,251	7.3%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	6,271	20.4%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	3,919	12.8%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	4,402	14.3%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	1,206	3.9%
\$200,000+	1,402	4.6%
Madien Herrehald Tearne	AFF 200	
Median Household Income	\$55,308	
Average Household Income	\$72,892 \$31,364	
Per Capita Income	\$31,264	
2026 Households by Income	Number P	ercent
<\$15,000	3,388	10.6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	3,412	10.7%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	3,969	12.5%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	2,010	6.3%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	6,509	20.4%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	4,067	12.8%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	5,346	16.8%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	1,560	4.9%
	1 570	
\$200,000+	1,576	5.0%
		5.0%
\$200,000+ Median Household Income Average Household Income	1,576 \$59,543 \$80,698	5.0%



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Grand Forks County Grand Forks County, ND Geography: County

Geography. County		
	Grand Fork	
2010 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	4,336	6.5%
Age 5 - 9	3,489	5.2%
Age 10 - 14	3,411	5.1%
Age 15 - 19	5,944	8.9%
Age 20 - 24	10,666	16.0%
Age 25 - 34	9,845	14.7%
Age 35 - 44	6,901	10.3%
Age 45 - 54	8,407	12.6%
Age 55 - 64	6,959	10.4%
Age 65 - 74	3,490	5.2%
Age 75 - 84	2,284	3.4%
Age 85+	1,129	1.7%
2021 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	4,214	5.9%
Age 5 - 9	3,850	5.3%
Age 10 - 14	3,735	5.2%
Age 15 - 19	4,944	6.9%
Age 20 - 24	8,835	12.3%
Age 25 - 34	12,614	17.5%
Age 35 - 44	7,858	10.9%
Age 45 - 54	6,979	9.7%
Age 55 - 64	8,255	11.5%
Age 65 - 74	6,288	8.7%
Age 75 - 84	3,065	4.3%
Age 85+	1,351	1.9%
	•	
2026 Population by Age	Number	Percent
Age 0 - 4	4,396	5.9%
Age 5 - 9	3,883	5.2%
Age 10 - 14	3,777	5.1%
Age 15 - 19	5,216	7.0%
Age 20 - 24	8,850	11.9%
Age 25 - 34	11,533	15.6%
Age 35 - 44	9,323	12.6%
Age 45 - 54	7,009	9.5%
Age 55 - 64	7,500	10.1%
Age 65 - 74	7,111	9.6%
Age 75 - 84	4,056	5.5%
Age 85+	1,459	2.0%
3	_,	



Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Grand Forks County Grand Forks County, ND Geography: County

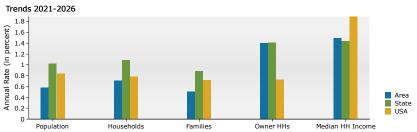
	Grand Fork	s C
2010 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	60,358	90.3%
Black Alone	1,361	2.0%
American Indian Alone	1,657	2.5%
Asian Alone	1,292	1.9%
Pacific Islander Alone	40	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	553	0.8%
Two or More Races	1,600	2.4%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	1,951	2.9%
2021 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	61,040	84.8%
Black Alone	3,799	5.3%
American Indian Alone	1,821	2.5%
Asian Alone	2,078	2.9%
Pacific Islander Alone	70	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	1,081	1.5%
Two or More Races	2,099	2.9%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	3,918	5.4%
2026 Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White Alone	61,875	83.5%
Black Alone	4,385	5.9%
American Indian Alone	1,887	2.5%
Asian Alone	2,372	3.2%
Pacific Islander Alone	78	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	1,246	1.7%
Two or More Races	2,270	3.1%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	4,445	6.0%

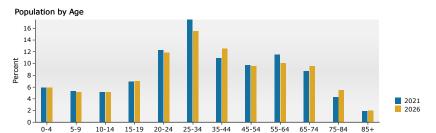


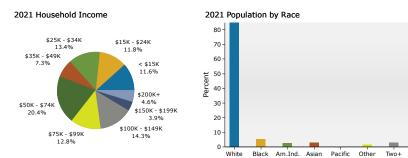
Demographic and Income Comparison Profile

Grand Forks County Grand Forks County, ND Geography: County

Grand Forks C...







Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2021 and 2026

March 29, 2022

©2022 Esri Page 4 of 5 ©2022 Esri Page 5 of 5

Notes	



