

**CVB survey shows visitors find there's**

## **More to Mankato**

**Information will be used as CVB works to freshen brand identity, focus marketing efforts**

By Tim Krohn

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Visitors to Mankato mostly like country music and auto racing, most often come to shop or visit family and friends and many often find they underrated the city prior to coming.

More than a third of first time visitors said their impression of the Mankato- North Mankato area was more favorable after they visited.

“ The top perceptions visitors listed were ‘growing town’ and ‘welcoming,’ and the second most common phrases were “ fun place to come;” said Anna Thill, president of the Greater Mankato Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. “ So it’s good people see us that way.”

Thill said the first- of- its- kind in- depth survey of visitors and potential visitors who didn’t come to Mankato is a way for the CVB and local businesses to better target their marketing approach.

“ People are thinking of what they can do to act on these findings. How do we hone in on particular types of visitors and what they want to see when they come here.”

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INITIAL PERCEPTIONS: CVB task will be to find ways to reach, attract more potential visitors



Visitors to the Mankato area say the area provides a wealth of activities, from shopping to parks, trail systems and the rivers.

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Many first-time visitors to Mankato say they were surprised by the natural beauty of the river valley. A recent study from the Greater Mankato Area Convention and Visitors Bureau study found that more than 38 percent of the people who had never been here said their perception of the Mankato area grew more favorable after they visited.

Photos by John Cross

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### **SURVEY: CVB to rename itself Visit Greater Mankato**

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The study found that more than 38 percent of the people who had never been here said their perception of the Mankato area grew more favorable after they visited. Before coming, many viewed the city as a small town with a mall and university, surrounded by farms. After visiting, they had comments such as: "Finding out that there is much more to Mankato than a place to shop," and, "I had no idea how beautiful the area was and how much there was to do."

Thill said one task will be to find ways to reach more potential visitors to let them know what there is to do and see in the area. "We need to do some up-front work about the initial perception of the community."

One finding in the survey was a surprise: “ There are a lot of people that come here to run. And it’s not all the marathon, there are other running events and the great trail systems. That’s something the researchers hadn’t seen a lot in other communities.” There was also curiosities in where visitors come from. That most visitors come from the Twin Cities’ fringe, northern Iowa and southern Minnesota was no surprise. “ Then there are pockets like eastern Wisconsin and the Chicago area. And there’s this pocket of folks from Texas.”

Thill said the survey information will be used as the CVB works to freshen its brand identity and focus its marketing efforts.

The CVB plans to soon rename itself by shortening its name to Visit Greater Mankato. It will still be part of Greater Mankato Growth and its structure won’t otherwise change.

The findings are from a survey commissioned by the CVB. A firm contacted everyone who in the past three years had requested a visitor guide or other information about Mankato.

Both those who had visited and those who never did were surveyed.