



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

ABOUT VISIT MANKATO

Visit Mankato leads the development of the visitor economy in Greater Mankato by actively promoting Greater Mankato as a premier destination for conventions, tournaments, and tourism. These activities bring a steady flow of visitors and business activity to Greater Mankato that benefits local residents and future visitors. The work of Visit Mankato helps strengthen the hospitality industry which provides jobs, a diverse tax base and amenities for everyone to enjoy.

MISSION: Lead development of the visitor economy in Greater Mankato.

VISION: Greater Mankato will be an exceptional destination for conventions, tournaments and tourism.

STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

- 1. Economic development:** Visit Mankato helps to build and protect the economy through the following:
 - **Visitor attraction:** Visit Mankato promotes the destination to attraction potential visitors for conventions, sports, events, and general leisure experiences.
 - **Business support & services:** Visit Mankato points visitors to our local businesses. We do this through listings, advocacy on behalf of the industry, special promotions like Kato Local, and other promotional pieces.
 - **Event support & services:** Visit Mankato provides consultation through the RFP process, connections to other partners, hotel room blocks, grants, equipment (i.e., fencing, tents, charging station), and visitor information.
 - **Provide Intelligence:** Visit Mankato subscribes to several tools that provide data on the status of travel and tourism to the community, economic impact of events, and tourism trends allowing staff and partners to be more strategic in their work.
- 2. Enhance the visitor experience:** Visit Mankato works to ensure a positive visitor experience that will keep visitors coming back and turning them into ambassadors for the community. Examples include maps, supporting mobile tours such as Greater Mankato on the Move, and providing on demand visitor information.
- 3. Destination development:** Visit Mankato is interested in all products that can drive significant tourism and enhance a visit to our most prominent attractors. This means advocacy and working with public or private partners who are developing facilities, venues, or assets that can help grow the visitor economy.

CONNECTION TO GREATER MANKATO GROWTH INC.

Visit Mankato, LLC, the local convention and visitor's bureau, is a business unit of Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. (GMG), which also includes the regional chamber of commerce and economic development organization, Greater Mankato Growth, the downtown development organization, City Center Partnership, and GreenSeam, which utilizes agriculture to build on the region's extensive agribusiness assets to develop the ag economy.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SALES & SUPPORT for SPORTS & SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Marathon** (October 15-16) – The Mankato Marathon brought in \$1.85M in economic impact with 3,100+ registered runners representing 32 states for both the virtual and in person races.
- **Senior Games** (August 12-15) – The MN Senior Games hosted 527 participants over the course of the event in 20 different sports, with over 120 in Track and Field and over 135 in Pickleball. This year we utilized over 130 volunteers and worked with 10 volunteer coordinators that oversaw different events. Estimated economic impact from this event was \$478,589.
- **Event Support** – Visit Mankato provides a full menu of support for events including \$22,550 in grants, equipment, consultation, visitor information and more. In 2021, Visit Mankato supported 9 leisure events, 15 conferences and 56 sporting events. The sporting events brought in \$10.8M in economic impact. Highlights From Events Visit Mankato Supported:
 - **MN Association of CVB's Summer Education Summit** (June 1 – 2) – Visit Mankato hosted colleagues from across the state with 50 in-person attendees with 15 virtual attendees. Visit Mankato sponsored the dinner at Pub 500 and Anna Thill served as emcee.
 - **Mankato River Ramble** (October 10) – Visit Mankato provided a \$2,500 grant to support direct marketing. The event had 1,800 runners, which is one of their highest attended years. The campaign resulted in 8,892 link clicks to the River Ramble website and generated 495,872 impressions, nearly 20K total engagements including an incredible 302 post shares.
 - **Day of the Dead Celebration** (October 30) – Visit Mankato provided a \$3,000 grant which was split with \$1,500 going toward social media promotion and \$1,500 for photography/videography and other logistical support. Promotions resulted in 293,506 impressions, 5,510 link clicks, 2,011 engagements and 296 post shares.

LEISURE MARKETING

- **SHRPAs** – Visit Mankato contracted with Shrpa, a company that engages content creators/influencers who create itineraries (themed adventures). The content supported campaigns around specific seasons and experiences (i.e. outdoor adventure, family getaways, biking, etc.). Visit Mankato hosted 13 SHRPA's to create 37 adventures featuring 77 Greater Mankato businesses, attractions, historical markers and parks. Our SHRPA's took 836 photos which spurred an impressive 580K impressions and 2.5K interactions. Each business was contacted and given the link to share on their social media to further the already impressive reach.
- **Google DMO** status has allowed us to fix 26 Google listings with 16 of them being business listings including information ranging from updated website addresses, physical addresses, phone numbers, hours, photos, etc. Some examples include Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center, GSR Fine Arts Festival, Landline, Mount Kato, etc.
- **Kato Local Holiday Experience** (Nov 19 - 28) – The Shop Small campaign transitioned to Kato Local with a much more localized approach rather than being confined to the American Express model. This decision came after much research and internal discussions. After last year's event, a small task force was established to look at the criteria used for the Shop Small campaign and to look at American Express' criteria for involvement. It was determined that the model developed by American Express was prohibitive to the participation and promotion of locally owned businesses including some franchises and very small businesses who may not accept American

Express as a form of payment. A total of 71 businesses signed up with 19 purchasing the add-on media package compared to 15 in 2020. Ads were placed with local radio, television, newspaper, and publications in addition to social media. The business listing webpage received 7,336 pageviews. The paid social media campaign resulted in 171,884 impressions; a reach of 61,929; and 71,57 link clicks.

- **Paid social media campaigns** – Visit Mankato invested heavily in social and digital marketing for seasonal campaigns throughout the year using Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest and display advertising. Campaigns focused on outdoor recreation (e.g., biking, fishing, fall color tours, etc.), arts & culture (e.g., wine & beer), family getaways, and events & festivals.

2021 Leisure Marketing Overall Results	Total	% Change vs 2019
Inquiries Total from all sources including website sessions, email, phone	209,789	↑106%
Subscribers Followers of the Visit Mankato eNewsletters	8,639	↑116%
Facebook Likes	10,489	↑43%
Instagram Followers	2,436	↑24%
<i>*Note: reflects 2021 year-to-date data over 2019 year-to-date data</i>		

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- **Greater Mankato on the Move** (OnCell Mobile Tours) – Visit Mankato led the revival of the Coalition comprised of Visit Mankato, GMG, CCP, TRCA (CityArt), City of Mankato, Blue Earth County, and the Blue Earth County Historical Society. OnCell is an online platform providing rich media for art & cultural assets in the community. These assets are organized into tours that help educate, engage and move people throughout the community. Tours include CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour, poetry on the trail signage, and Williams Nature Center plaques. The Coalition developed an agreement for all paying partners, new content for tours and more. To see how OnCell has been used by many different businesses, communities, attractions and more, check out www.oncell.com.
- **Greater Mankato Bike Task Force** – Visit Mankato brought together the Greater Mankato Biking Task Force with representatives from Mankato and North Mankato, Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties, Greater Mankato Bike & Walk Advocates and other local biking enthusiast. Their focus is on biking infrastructure, wayfinding, promotion and event support. In 2021 they developed a unified brand for the regional trail system giving all trail users a sense of place and wayfinding. Visit Mankato received a grant from the State Health Improvement Program to cover the cost of the branding and updated map of the trail system.



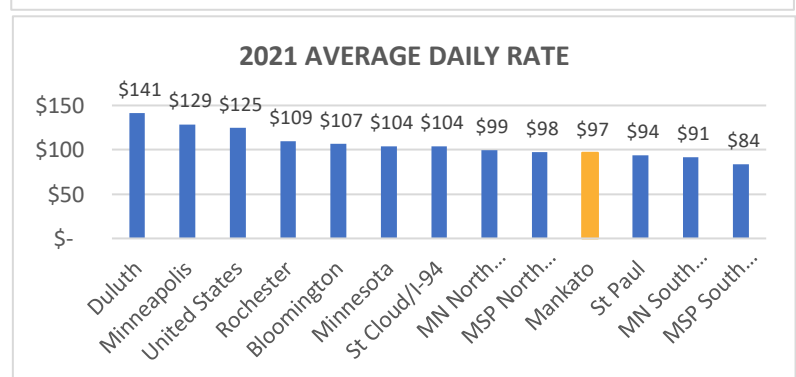
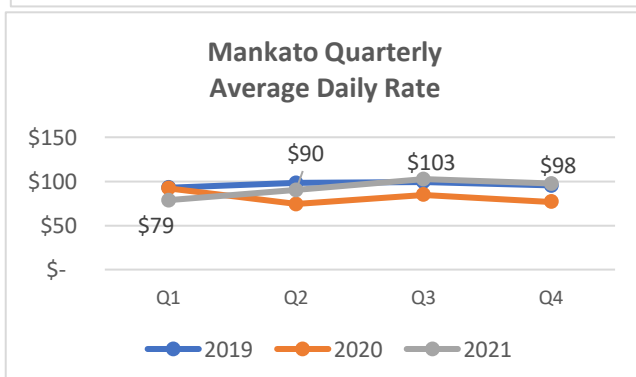
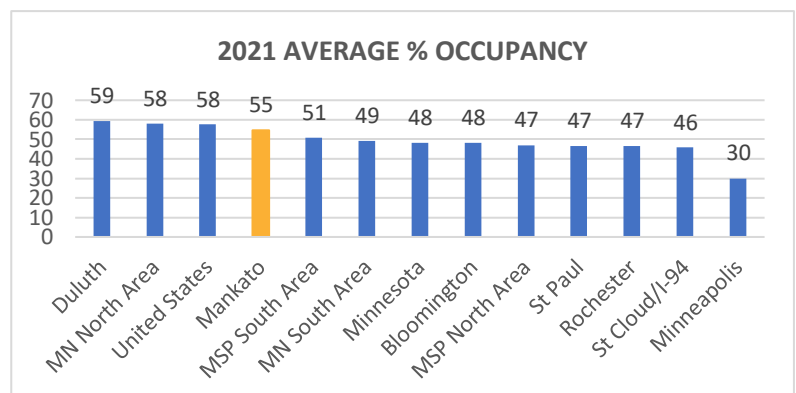
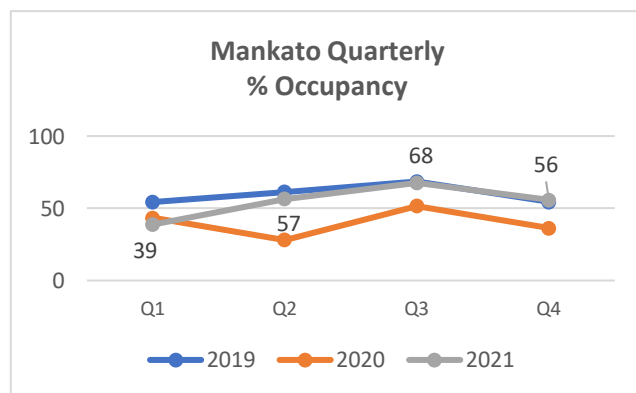
ADVOCACY

- **Tourism Economic Relief Legislation** – Visit Mankato sent a letter of support for a new bill, for SF2387 “The Resort and Tourism Economic Relief Program”, being led by Senator Rosen. This legislation included support for significant financial support for tourism related businesses including destination management organizations, Explore MN Tourism and individual businesses.
- **EMT Funding Support** – Anna testified in support of Explore MN Tourism’s request for \$2M for Meetings & Conventions Marketing Grants as part of their overall \$6M in requests for funding to help with tourism recovery programs.

- **National Travel & Tourism Week** was promoted May 2 – 8 through social media and interviews with [KTOE](#) (5/4) & [KEYC](#) (5/7). Key talking points included:
 - National Travel and Tourism Week 2021 recognizes the POWER OF TRAVEL and the industry's role in bringing back our vibrant communities, restoring the U.S. economy, rebuilding our workforce and reconnecting America. Travel & Tourism is another important sector of Greater Mankato's diverse economy. In 2019, prior to the pandemic, the tourism industry in the Mankato/North Mankato MSA:
 - supported nearly 5,400 full and part-time jobs;
 - accounted for \$257M in sales with;
 - \$16.8M in sales tax generated (20% of total taxes collected);
 - One out of ten private sector jobs in MN was tied to travel and tourism;
 - Small businesses comprise 83% of all travel businesses and organizations. These small businesses including retailers, restaurants, attractions and those that support them, are what makes our community truly special and different from the next town down the road.
 - Did you know travel & tourism has a halo effect in a community? This means effective promotion combined with an actual visit has a significant impact on one's opinion of that community as a place to relocate as a new resident, start a new business, go to college and retire. A moment in our community can transition into a lifetime. Explore MN Tourism worked with Longwoods International in 2017 to study the Halo Effect on visitors to Minnesota. They found if someone visits Minnesota they are:
 - 54% more likely to think of Minnesota as a good place to start a business
 - 76% more likely to consider it a good place to live
 - 106% more likely to think it's a good place to start a career

HOTEL INDUSTRY

The hotel industry started to see some recovery after the first quarter with June – December outperforming 2019 metrics. By the end of 2021, hotel room demand was 1% above and revenue just 1% less than 2019, which is remarkable compared to the anticipated 20% decrease from 2019 collections.



EARLY WINTER (JAN – FEB)

**Visit Mankato**

Published by TwoSix Digital [?] · January 8 [🌐]

Mankato is home to one of Southern Minnesota's most valued treasures. This winter, venture out to the 'Frozen Falls' in the Minneopa State Park. 🌐

Learn more here: <http://bit.ly/38ej5J4>

 Picture Perfect by May

 Explore Minnesota Tourism #OnlyinMN



2,138

People Reached

236

Engagements


Boost Unavailable



Scheels, Zaklyah Johnson and 73 others

5 Comments


14 Shares




Visit Mankato
in 4 days · 🌐


There's no better way to spend a snow-day than tubing down Mount Kato!
Grab your inner tube and head to www.mountkato.com for more information 🌊


👤 @alexispeterson
📌 Explore Minnesota Tourism #OnlyInMN





Boost Post

 Like

 Comment

 Share





**Visit Mankato**


Published by **TwoSix Digital** [?] · January 15 · 🌐

Have you spotted the bison that roam the 331 acres of Minneopa State Park yet? 🐾?

Visit <https://bit.ly/3s4Nn97> to learn bison viewing tips!

 Corissa Nelson Art


 Explore Minnesota Tourism #OnlyInMN



2,170
People Reached

187
Engagements


Boost Unavailable



New!

Relaxing Girls' Trip to Mankato


Mankato Half Day



New!

Eat and Drink Your Way Through Mankato


Mankato Few Hours



New!

The Must-See Spots in Mankato for Those Who Only Have a Few Hours

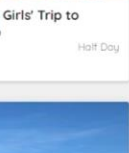
Mankato Few Hours



New!

Day Trip to Mankato, Minnesota


Mankato Half Day



New!

Get Your Fill of Fresh Air By Visiting Mankato's Beautiful Parks

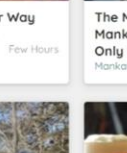
Mankato Half Day



New!

One Jam Packed Fun, Full Day to Experience The Best of Mankato

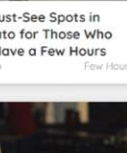
Mankato Full Day



New!

Date Day in New Ulm - COVID-approved-activities

New Ulm Full Day








Add your own!

Share your own adventure with others!

Winter Things to Do in Mankato, Minnesota

February 22, 2021 / 0 Comments

    0 SHARES



KRISTEN GLAZERS SHRPA ADVENTURES:

SPRING & SUMMER CAMPAIGNS

**Visit Mankato** with Explore Minnesota Tourism.
Sponsored ·

Kayak exhilarating rapids, cool off in a spring-fed pond, or just enjoy a beach day with more river shore than anywhere else in Minnesota 🌊🌳🌞



VISITGREATERMANKATO.COM


Top 11 Ways to Enjoy the Waters of Mankato, MN

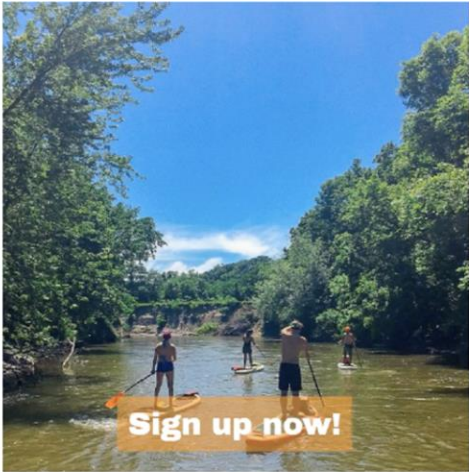
Learn More

 262





15 Comments 13 Shares

Instagram

**visitmankatomn**
Sponsored




Learn More




Paid partnership with [exploreminnesota](#)

visitmankatomn The convergence of trails & rivers in Minnesota is home to pristine wilderness, bike-friendly trails and fantastic museums. Stay up-to-date on activities, events, and more 🌲🚴🌊

**Visit Mankato** with Explore Minnesota Tourism.
Sponsored ·

Mankato is home to waterfalls, spectacular overlooks of the river valley, and awe-inspiring man-made attractions 🏞️



VISITGREATERMANKATO.COM

The 11 Most Insta-Worthy Spots in Mankato, MN

Learn More



Adventures for the Whole Family: Minnesota River Valley

From paddling & peddling to playgrounds & picnics, you'll sure to find R&R for the whole family in Mankato.

Sponsored By [Visit Mankato](#)




Top Things to Do Outdoors in Mankato, MN

Explore a hidden gem nestled along the Minnesota River - that sports & nature enthusiasts have kept to themselves.

Sponsored By [Visit Mankato](#)

Wine, S'mores, and Open Patios:
Wineries in Mankato

ONLY 25MNE



[Visit Mankato](#)

Craft
Breweries in Mankato

Find your new favorite brew

ONLY 25MNE



[Visit Mankato](#)

The Most Instagrammable Spots of

The Minnesota River Valley



[Explore Minnesota](#)

[Visit Mankato](#)

FALL & EVENT CAMPAIGNS

Visit Mankato with Explore Minnesota Tourism.
Paid Partnership

From goofy goats & pumpkin patches to apple orchards & a Pizza Farm, start planning how to make the most out of the season 🍂🎃👻



VISITGREATERMANKATO.COM

The Best Fall Festivities in Southern Minnesota
Safely experience fall activities, events, & Halloween!

Learn More

6,818
People reached

902
Engagements


Boost Unavailable

👍👍👍 Yoli Nava, Marlys Blanchette and 311 others

13 Comments 92 Shares

Visit Mankato
5d

Come to Old Town Mankato for a Dia De Los Muertos celebration with face painting, piñata market, mariachi bands & more! #DayoftheDead #OnlyinMN #VisitMankato #OldTownMankato



VISITGREATERMANKATO.COM

FREE Family Friendly Event
Celebrate the Day of the Dead with plenty of activities fo...

Learn More

5,271
People reached

1,646
Engagements

Boost Unavailable

👍👍👍 Bridget Buskey, Delores Stead and 856 others

83 Comments 261 Shares

Visit Mankato
Favorites · November 11 ·

Find unique offerings from locally owned businesses and experience what makes this community special. #OnlyinMN Explore Minnesota Tourism




KATOLocal.COM

Kato Local Holiday Experience | Nov. 19 - 28
Kato Local is our community, banding together for on...

Learn More

Visit Mankato
Favorites · 5d ·

Find unique offerings from locally owned businesses and experience what makes this community special. #OnlyinMN Explore Minnesota Tourism



KATOLocal.COM

Kato Local Holiday Experience | Nov. 19 - 28
Kato Local is our community, banding together for one...

Learn More

3,423
People reached

534
Engagements

Boost post

👍👍👍 Paula Thiede, Kathy Busby and 505 others

8 Comments 11 Shares

Visit Mankato with Explore Minnesota Tourism.

On October 10, pedal your way to some delicious pie and fruit at our rest stops on the way! Make it a day to remember for the whole family. Register today for sweet treats, fall colors, and a day of fun! 🍂🎃👻



BIKEMIN.ORG

A Day of Fall Colors, Treats & Biking in Southern MN
Sweet treats, fall colors, and a day of fun!

Learn More

125,706
People reached

9,705
Engagements

-
Distribution Score

Boost Post

👍 603

60 Comments 175 Shares

WINTER FESTIVITIES & EXTRA MEDIA

m EXPLORE MINNESOTA

Mankato
Now Playing



Credit: Zach Bechman

we don't hibernate

SCAN CODE TO SEE "WHAT'S HOT" THIS WINTER




visitmankatomn.com



m EXPLORE MINNESOTA

f i t o



SCENIC BWAY
MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY

www.mnrivervalley.com
MRSB_Spot 1_PREROLL_V2

Iowa Wild @IAWild

We've put together the perfect winter vacation in partnership with @exploreminn!

Enter for a chance to win a @VisitMankato prize pack, valued at over \$2,400, filled with everything you need for an amazing trip! #OnlyinMN

Learn more and enter ➔ bit.ly/2ZEgy9

m EXPLORE MINNESOTA
SWEEPSTAKES
ENTER TO WIN A VISIT MANKATO GETAWAY!

#ONLYINMNE



1:00 PM - Nov 1, 2021 - Sprout Social

HOCKEY DAY MINNESOTA
January 16th - 23rd

BUY TICKETS!

FAMILY FUN // FESTIVALS & EVENTS // LIST

12 WAYS TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS IN MINNESOTA

By Caitlin Hannah

SEE PLACES ON A MAP



With fresh snow, towering pines, light displays, seasonal treats and festive activities, the holidays are a magical time in Minnesota. Make the most of all that the season offers with these spirited events.

1 | HOLIDAY LIGHT DISPLAYS



How to See Kiwanis Holiday Lights in Mankato, MN



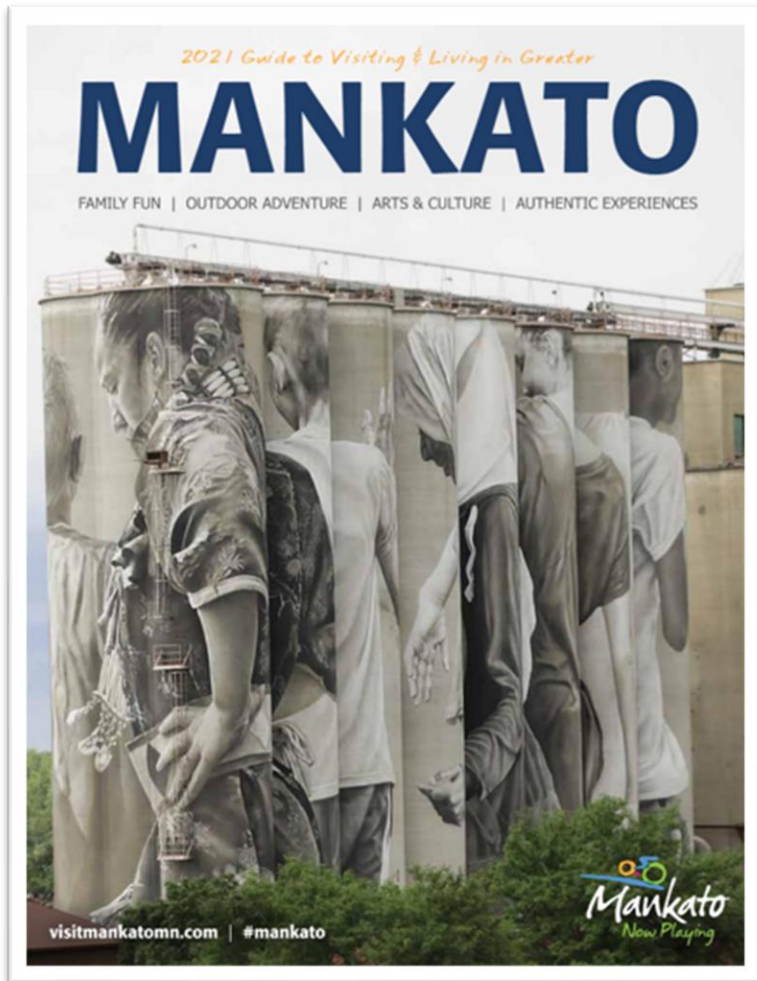
The Best Winter Events & Festivities



The Top Winter Events of 2021



A FEW ANNUAL PIECES



“One of my favorite things about Mankato is...”

Hear more from biking enthusiast
Brandon Knudsen

SCAN ME

it's all so close!

Check out reasons why Greater Mankato is at the top of a biker's bucket list!

- Year round experiences
- Established scenic routes
- Extensive trail systems
- Vibrant urban experiences
- Skills parks for mountain bikers

bikemankatomn.com

Mankato Now Playing

BIKE TRAILS IN MINNESOTA

FIND YOUR TRUE NORTH

GO FOR A RIDE.

From the nation's best urban trails in the Twin Cities to rural trails through lush forest or wild prairie, Minnesota's 40,000+ miles of paved trails are a cyclist's dream. Many bike trails are along former railroad beds, offering secluded, scenic biking.

- 1. Alexandria**
The Alexandria Trail is a 10-mile paved trail that runs through the city of Alexandria. It is a great place for families to enjoy a bike ride. [alexandriatrails.com](#)
- 2. Annetowne Lodge at Brainerd Lakes**
Annetowne Lodge is a beautiful resort located on the shore of Lake Umbagog. It offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [annetownelodge.com](#)
- 3. Burnsville**
Burnsville is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [burnsvilletrails.com](#)
- 4. Cook County**
Cook County is a county in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [cookcountytia.com](#)
- 5. Detroit Lakes**
Detroit Lakes is a city in northern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [detroitlaketrails.com](#)
- 6. Fergus Falls**
Fergus Falls is a city in northern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [fergusfallstrails.com](#)
- 7. Hastings**
Hastings is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [hastingsmn.org](#)
- 8. Lakeville**
Lakeville is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [lakevillemn.org](#)
- 9. Leavenworth**
Leavenworth is a city in northern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [leavenworthmn.com](#)
- 10. Leech Lake**
Leech Lake is a city in northern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [leechlakemn.com](#)
- 11. Lenoire**
Lenoire is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [lenoiremn.com](#)
- 12. Mankato**
Mankato is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [mankatomn.com](#)
- 13. Marshall**
Marshall is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [marshallmn.com](#)
- 14. Red Wing**
Red Wing is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [redwingmn.com](#)
- 15. Roseville**
Roseville is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [rosevillemn.com](#)
- 16. Stillwater**
Stillwater is a city in southern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [stillwatermn.com](#)
- 17. Two Harbors**
Two Harbors is a city in northern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [twoharborsmn.com](#)
- 18. Wilmar Lake Area**
Wilmar Lake Area is a city in northern Minnesota that offers a variety of recreational activities, including biking. [wilmarlakemn.com](#)