



Grand County Colorado Tourism Board

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION STATEMENT

We inspire a sustainable, year-round tourism economy in Grand County with an emphasis on strengthening the vitality of our communities, celebrating our local culture and traditions and respecting our environment and resources.

Tourism Matters

Visitor spending in Grand County plays a pivotal role in generating essential tax revenue for the funding of crucial services like our police and firefighters while also aiding in the maintenance and improvement of our infrastructure, including road paving. Additionally, property taxes stemming from second homes, short-term vacation rentals and tourism businesses are vital in supporting our educational institutions financially.

- Sales Tax: 70% of Grand County's sales tax is attributed to tourism, marking a 50% increase from 2021.
- Local Tax: Thanks to our thriving tourism economy, each household in Grand County is spared from an additional annual tax burden of \$7,111.
- Support: Visitors contribute an average of \$1,576,986 every day, benefitting and enriching our local community.
- Jobs: 42% of jobs in Grand County are tourism related

Data Source: Dean Runyan Associates Annual Economic Impact

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Tourism Board Structure

Grand County Colorado Tourism Board is part of the Grand County Government with representatives appointed by the Grand County Colorado Board of County Commissioners.

Organization structure | 12-member volunteer Board of Directors

- Four member from the 3-Lakes District
- Four members from the Mainstem District
- Four members from the Fraser Valley District

Executive Director (Contractor)

Marketing (Contractor)

Public Relations (Contractor)

The board operates through funds generated by the Lodging Tax of 1.8%, paid by visitors staying in lodging properties, excluding the “Town of Winter Park”. Grand County taxpayers do not pay for tourism board expenditures.

Grand County Colorado Tourism Board Members

- Rebecca Bierden - Vicious Cycle Brewery
- Jennifer Brown - Mountain Gal Boutique
- Elizabeth Brumm - Devil’s Thumb Ranch
- Nancy Dulac - Nancy Dulac Grand County Real Estate
- Ron Ellis - Upstream Design (Vice President)
- Ken Fosha - Drowsy Water Ranch
- Dave Huber - Granby Ranch
- Cheryl Spezia - Winter Park Resort
- Kristen Spronz - YMCA of the Rockies (President)
- Joanna Whitemarsh - Grand River Aviation (Secretary/Treasurer)

Contractors

- ☐ Gaylene Ore - Executive Director
Paula Isakson - Administrative Assistance
- ☐ Advertising/Media - Miles Partnership
- ☐ Public Relations - Ore Communications, Inc.
- ☐ Social Media - Megan Dryden

Letter from the Executive Director

2024 was a year of transformation and progress for the Grand County Colorado Tourism Board (GCCTB). Change is never easy, but it allowed our board to come together, adapt, and position Grand County as a leader in marketing responsible travel for visitors and our local community.

One of the most significant transitions of the year was our search for a new marketing agency. In October, we received over 20 proposals from agencies across the country. After a thorough and rigorous selection process, the board chose Madden Media to lead our marketing efforts. We extend our deepest gratitude to Miles Partnership for their years of dedication and service in promoting tourism throughout the county.

This year also brought bittersweet moments. We were deeply saddened by the passing of Ken Fosha, one of our founding board members whose commitment spanned an incredible 31 years. His legacy will continue to inspire us. Additionally, we bid farewell to our Vice President, Ron Ellis, who stepped down at the end of the year to be closer to family. Ron's knowledge, leadership, and passion for our mission will be greatly missed.

In July, the board convened for its annual retreat, focusing on strategic planning and navigating financial challenges, particularly those posed by Ballot Issue 1A. Despite these constraints, we remain committed to ensuring tourism continues to thrive, while also respecting the needs of our residents.

A key highlight of the year was our work with RRC Associates to develop Grand County's first-ever tourism impact study. This research reinforced the vital role tourism and marketing play in our local economy. Additionally, we were honored to be awarded the Colorado Tourism Destination Blueprint grant in October, which facilitated a resident survey to shape our 2025 strategies.

By year's end, the board had proudly awarded nearly \$800,000 in grants to local nonprofit organizations, all dedicated to promoting responsible tourism and enriching our community.

Looking back on another year of milestones and achievements, I sincerely thank our board members, contractors, the Colorado Tourism Office, our valued partners, and, most importantly, the people of Grand County. Your support and collaboration are what make our work possible.

Here's to another year of growth, innovation, and community-driven success.

Thank you for your support.

Gaylene Ore

Sincerely,
Gaylene Ore
Executive Director of the
Grand County Colorado
Tourism Board

Visitation Numbers/Data

**Based on Datafy in-county reporting (reference graph on next page)*

Data shows that Grand County, CO, experienced a significant increase in trips compared to earlier periods. While the average length of stay declined slightly, the total number of visitor days rose, indicating that although visitors are spending less time here, overall visitation has increased. This trend may suggest a shift toward more frequent yet shorter visits.

Analysis of historical data reveals that the peak visitation months for Grand County, CO, are June, July, and August. These summer months consistently see the highest visitor days, likely due to favorable weather, school vacations, and the abundance of outdoor recreational activities available.

Regarding visitor origin, in-state visitation increased by 0.12%, while out-of-state visitation decreased by the same margin. This suggests a modest shift toward more regional travel, with a more significant proportion of visitors coming from within Colorado.

The top three visitor markets for Grand County are Denver, Littleton, and Aurora, CO, indicating strong regional ties and consistent travel demand from these areas. Additionally, the top five spending markets include Denver, Littleton, Aurora, Fort Collins, and Englewood, CO. While visitor spending from Denver, Littleton, and Aurora showed a slight decline, spending from Englewood and Fort Collins increased, signaling a potential shift in visitor behavior and economic contributions.

The most visited points of interest in Grand County include the Fraser Valley Recreation District, the Town of Granby, Rocky Mountain National Park, and the Town of Winter Park. This highlights a strong preference for outdoor recreation, national park experiences, and town exploration within the county.

Destination Summary for Grand County CO

Main Dates: 1/1/24 - 12/31/24

Compare Dates: 1/1/23 - 12/31/23

In-State

Out-of-State

Distance: 50 mi - 3,350 mi

Clusters: All Included

POIs: All Included

Locals: 0 - 50 miles

Spend Locations: All Included

Visitor Volume Estimates

for Jan 1, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024

% ↑/↓ vs 1/01/23 - 12/31/23



TOTAL TRIPS

10,122,374 Trips

↑ 26.2%



VISITOR DAYS

18,034,754 Days

↑ 3.1%

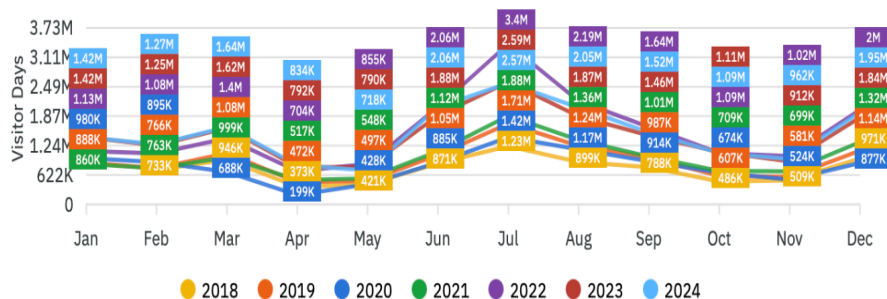


AVERAGE LENGTH OF
STAY

1.8 Days

↓ 0.4 Days

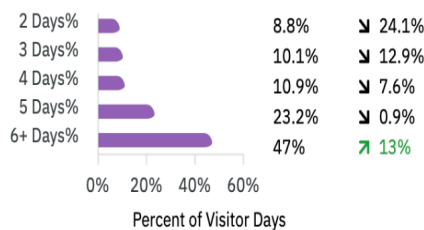
Annual Volume by Visitor Days*



Overnight Visitation % Share**

for Jan 1, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024

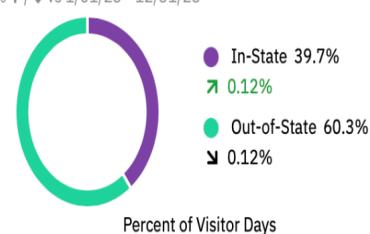
% ↑/↓ vs 1/01/23 - 12/31/23



In-State vs Out-of-State % Share

for Jan 1, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024

% ↑/↓ vs 1/01/23 - 12/31/23



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*Only full months of complete data are displayed | **1 day visitors are removed

Geolocation estimates are generated from a statistical model which has been trained using historical behavior. The specific results are based on an observed sample of devices that meet the specified filter settings.

DATAFY

*Datafy Graph Detailing Grand County Colorado Visitation Numbers

Media Relations

Our public relations endeavors secured significant visibility across premier media platforms, including the Matador Network, New Zealand Herald, Outside Magazine, Travel and Leisure, and Afar Magazine.

Media Engagements

Throughout the year, GCCTB extended warm welcomes to media representatives, providing them with immersive experiences to craft compelling articles about our destination and stakeholders. Notable media hosted in 2024 include:

- Melinda Schnyder - Wichita Eagle, APOA, AAA World
- Nataliya Zasadko - Little Rad Adventures
- Nelson Holland - Fat Black and Gettin It
- Mary Beth - Bond Freelance
- Aaron Theisen - Bike Magazine (CTO)
- Teresa Bitler - Freelance
- Sherry Spitznaugle - Freelance

Impressions | Add Value | Article Placements

- 2024 Impressions - 81 million
- Ad Value - \$751,000
- Total Article Placements - 29

970 Grand County Podcast

Our engaging 10-15 minute weekly podcast featured visiting journalists, event organizers, local specialists and more, offering a captivating glimpse into our destination to entice visitors and locals alike.

Organic Social Media

In 2024, the board added a social media contractor responsible for organic social media campaigns, to support our paid social media managed by our advertising agency.

2024 Instagram:

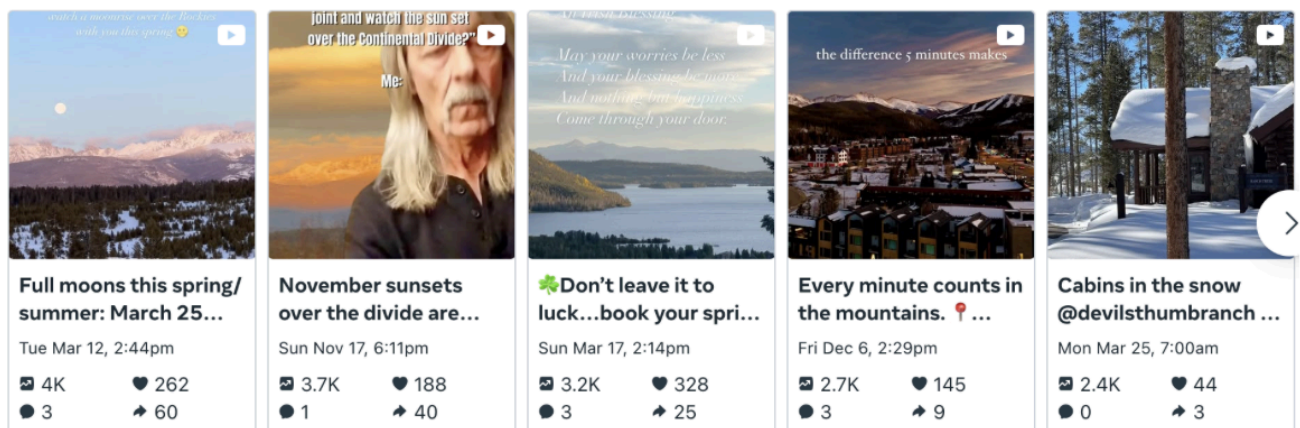
Views: 81,827 total, 77% from organic - new data point in 2024

Reach: 65,361 total, 55% from organic (35, 844 +100% YoY growth

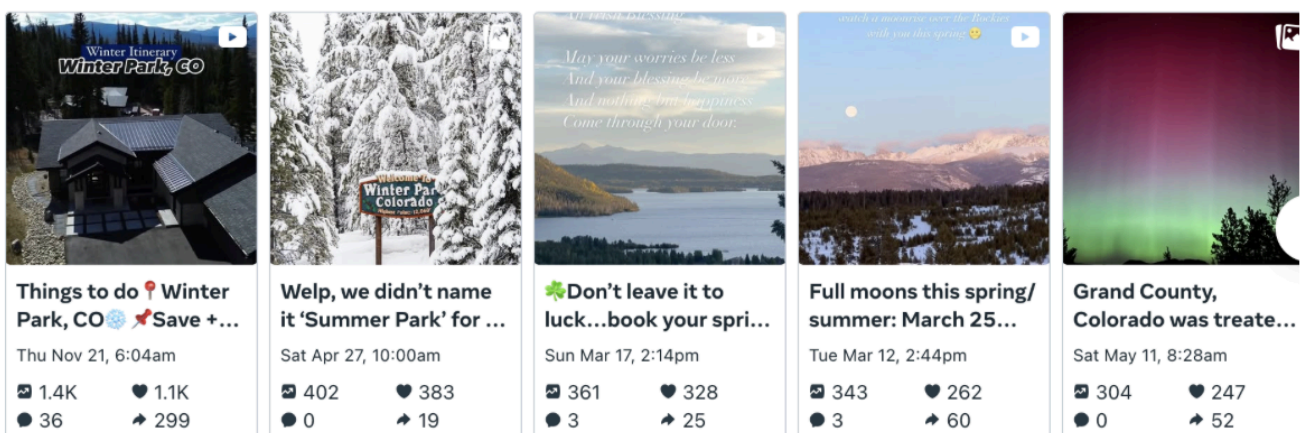
Engagement: 3,300 +100%

Followers: +382 new follows

Top Performing based on Reach



Top Performing based on interactions:



2024 Facebook:

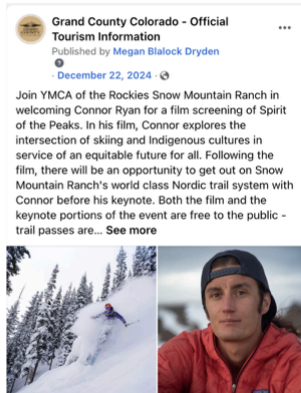
Views: 699,761, 3% from organic

Reach: 1.6M total, 10,946 from organic -10%

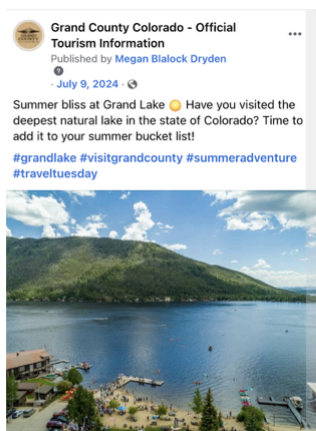
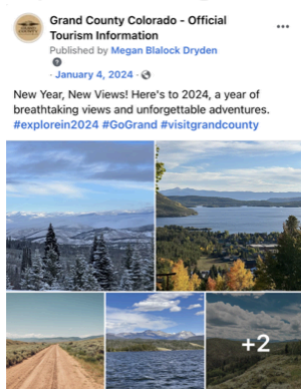
Engagement: 6,304 total +9.6%

-5,193 interactions from non-followers +14%

Top Performing based on views:



Top Performing based on interactions:



Marketing

Advertising Summary

In 2024, VisitGrandCounty.com experienced significant growth across several key digital metrics. Total pageviews reached 857,145, a 9.7% year-over-year (YoY) increase, while the total number of users surged to 409,843, marking a 23.7% YoY growth.

The top-performing location, Denver, contributed 56,168 sessions (+27.7% YoY), with notable out-of-state growth in cities like Chicago (+84.6%) and Kansas City (+66.9%). Mobile devices dominated access, accounting for 71.5% of total sessions, emphasizing the importance of mobile-first strategies.

Seasonal trends were apparent, with traffic peaking in the summer months, underscoring the opportunity to increase off-season engagement. International growth in Singapore was particularly striking, with 34,881.4% YoY growth in sessions, warranting further investigation into this unexpected audience.

Analysis of Digital Metrics for Visit Grand County (Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2024)

Overall Performance:

- **Pageviews:** 857,145 (+9.7% YoY). This growth indicates increased interest or improved reach in digital campaigns and SEO efforts.
- **Total Users:** 409,843 (+23.7% YoY). The significant rise in users suggests effective user acquisition strategies or broader visibility across platforms.
- **Engagement Rate:** 52.99% (-14.0% YoY). A decline here suggests a potential decrease in session quality, which could stem from less targeted content, slower load times, or shifts in audience behavior.

Traffic Types:

- Organic traffic appears strong, reflecting effective SEO.
- Referral and paid social channels should be analyzed further to understand their performance trends.

Top Locations:

- Denver leads with 56,168 sessions (+27.7% YoY), demonstrating continued interest from a key regional audience.
- Out-of-state growth is notable, especially in cities like Chicago (+84.6% YoY) and Kansas City (+66.9% YoY). These could be potential focus areas for future campaigns.
- The international surge in Singapore (+34,881.4% YoY) is striking and worth exploring to understand the source of this growth.

Device Usage:

- Mobile remains the dominant access method (71.5%). Optimizing the mobile user experience should remain a top priority.

Sessions Over Time:

- Traffic peaks in the summer months (June to August), aligning with seasonal tourism trends.
- Opportunities may exist to drive higher off-season engagement, particularly in spring and fall.

Paid Social Metrics

Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Landing Page Views	CPC
3,886,654	82,519	2.2%	69,411	\$0.23

SEM Performance

Impressions	Clicks	CTR	CPC	Cost
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717,116	53,910	7.52%	\$0.46	24,767.50
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Website Performance (GA4)

Sessions	Total Users	Pageviews	Avg Engagement Time	Engagement Rate	Pages/Session
222,798	174,342	396,209	1:02	71.66%	1.78

Digital Ads

The 2024 media plan included a variety of digital media tactics to drive awareness for Grand County in high interest target markets. These media buys included:

- The National Park Journal drives awareness for Grand County through a paid social post, newsletter, targeted online leads, custom content integration and custom e-blast.
- CTV and Programmatic Display Ads targeted travelers from May to December, based on geographic and demographics that fit the ideal traveler for Grand County, CO.
- Digital presence on colorado.com included: native ads, retargeting banners, e-mail opt-in and a custom sponsored article to drive visitation through the multitude of visitors colorado.com receives.

Traditional Media

Local Media (KFFR, Sky Hi)

Throughout 2024, Miles Partnership provided in-house written content for monthly KFFR radio spots to promote exciting events, activities and opportunities for locals and visitors to attend and participate throughout the county.

Ski-Hi Newspaper Ads

Miles Partnership provides custom designed ads for Sky-Hi News to promote Grand County, CO. There are two ad spots each month and they generally promote events happening throughout the county.



E-newsletter Performance

Emails Sent	Delivered	Open Rate	Clicks	CTR
278,544	277,773	26.20%	2,021	0.94%

Event Photography Project

The 2024 photography budget was focused on capturing the spirit of Grand County events. Locally-based photographer, Greg Hoover was hired to cover the wide range of events across the county that represent the myriad of things to do and see. The asset collection effort included the following locations and dates.

- June - Spirit Polar Plunge (Grand Lake)
- July - Flying Heels Rodeo (Granby)
- July - Kow Town in Kremmling (Kremmling)

- July - Trail Building activity with the Mountain Bike Association (Fraser)
- July - Granby Music & Market (Granby)
- Aug - Fraser Mountain Mural Festival (Fraser)
- Sept - Grand Lake Troublesome Fest (Grand Lake)
- Oct - Grand Lake Pumpkin Patch

Stand Grand

In 2024, The Grand County Colorado Tourism Board assumed oversight for the Stand Grand campaign from the Headwaters Trails Alliance. This included moving the main web platform onto the visitgrandcounty.com infrastructure via custom development. Production efforts involved posters, brochures and stickers.



GRANTS

In 2024, the Grand County Colorado Tourism Board allocated a total of \$798,147 in grants dedicated to events and marketing for local Chamber of Commerce and nonprofit organizations. Notable recipients of these grants included:

- Winter Park and Fraser Chamber
- Destination Granby
- Hot Sulphur Springs Chamber
- Kremmling Chamber
- Grand Lake Chamber
- Headwaters Event Center
- KFFR
- Grand Nordic
- Shining Stars
- Moffat Railroad Museum
- High Country Stampede Rodeo
- Grand Kids Learning Center
- Grand County Historical Association
- Grand County Blues Society
- Town of Fraser
- Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre
- Grand Lake Trail Grooming
- Middle Park Fair and Rodeo

- Fire on the Mountain
- The NW Grand County Chamber of Commerce
- Colorado Mesa University Cross-Country Skiing and Biathlon event

Destination Blueprint

The Grand County Colorado Tourism Board (GCCTB) was approved to join the Destination Blueprint Program by the Colorado Tourism Office in July 2024. The program aims to foster collaboration among tourism stakeholders, assess sentiment toward tourism, and develop sustainable growth strategies.

Key Findings & Initiatives:

- **Destination Assessment:** Included research, visitor profiles, resident sentiment, and stakeholder surveys. Priorities identified:
 - Increase off-peak tourism.
 - Champion tourism's value.
 - Promote responsible tourism.
 - Support local businesses.
- **Visitor Profile:**
 - Out-of-state visitors stay longer and spend more.
 - Top markets: Colorado, Texas, Midwest cities (Dallas, Chicago, Kansas City).
 - Summer peak: July sees 4x more visitors than May.
 - Saturdays see 2x the visitors than Wednesdays.
- **Resident Sentiment:**
 - Majority view tourism positively but worry about overcrowding and costs.
 - Concerns: rising costs, workforce shortages, housing affordability.
 - Support for additional off-peak season events.
 - **Tourism Stakeholder Survey:**
 - Majority report increased visitation and revenue in 2024.
 - Concerns: staffing, housing, supply costs.
 - Priorities: promoting local businesses, responsible tourism, and off-season growth.

Community Visioning & Action Planning Workshop (Nov. 2024)

- 19 tourism stakeholders gathered to discuss future strategies.
- Key themes: workforce resilience, sustainable tourism, small business growth, transportation improvements, and balancing tourism with livability.
- Action:
 - Lead (GCCTB takes full responsibility)
 - Partner (GCCTB collaborates with others)
 - Advocate (GCCTB supports external initiatives)
- Timeframes Assigned:
 - Short-term (6-12 months)
 - Medium-term (1-5 years)
 - Long-term (6-10 years)

Grand County Colorado Tourism Board worked with **Mission2Market** consultant **Dave Santucci** and a core team of stakeholders to implement these strategies, ensuring sustainable tourism growth in Grand County.

2024 Impact Study Summary

At the request of the Board of County Commissioners, the GCCTB retained RRC Associates to evaluate the potential impacts of Ballot Issue 1A. In the November 2024 election, voters approved Ballot Issue 1A, resulting in an increase in the county lodging tax, excluding the Town of Winter Park, to 2%. . Under the approved measure, the Tourism Board will retain 50% of the revenue generated from the increased tax starting in 2025.

Lodging Tax Increase (Ballot Issue 1A)

Shall Grand County lodging taxes be increased by two-tenths of one percent or approximately \$266,000 annually commencing January 1, 2025 and by whatever additional amounts are raised annually in each subsequent year, to allow a total two percent (2%) lodging tax on the rental fee, price, or other consideration paid or charged for the leasing, rental, sale or furnishing of a room or accommodation for a short-term period [a period of less than thirty (30) consecutive days] in Grand County, to be used for any Grand County purpose authorized by law, including without limitation, advertising and marketing local tourism, housing and childcare for the Grand County workforce, and facilitating and enhancing the visitor experience in Grand County, and shall the first year revenues, and whatever additional amounts are raised annually thereafter, be collected and spent as a voter approved revenue change notwithstanding any limitation or condition under Article X, section 20 of the Colorado Constitution or any other law?

Executive Brief

Report

- \$575.6M Annual Visitor Spending
Supports 3,400 jobs, contributes \$148.3M in labor earnings, and generates \$41.6M in tax revenue.
- High Return on Investment:
Current GCCTB efforts deliver an 85:1 return on investment (Destinations International 2024).
- Efficient Operations:
 - Operates with 60% of average Destination Marketing budget (\$3.2M average).
 - Administration costs at 10%, far below industry averages (20-30%).
 - Recognized grant program increases economic impact by 30%+

Risks & Trends

- Economic Damage from Cuts:
 - 30% Cut (Year 1):
 - \$20M lost in the local economy.
 - \$5M lost in local income.
 - 10:1 negative ROI for local workers, 33:1 loss for the economy.
 - 50% Cut (10 Years):
 - \$425M cumulative economic loss.
 - \$109M lost in wages.
 - Hundreds of jobs, businesses lost; long-term community decline.
- Reduced Marketing = shorter visitor stays and less spending.
- Loss of Talent & Investment:
 - Branded communities retain talent and attract investment; cuts reverse this trend.

1. Preserve & Protect GCCTB Funding:
 - Avoid cuts to maintain economic stability, job growth, and tax revenue.
2. Raise Lodging Tax to 2%:
 - Increases funds by 11.1%.
 - Allocate 20% (~\$500K/year) to housing/daycare support, addressing workforce needs.
3. Use GCCTB Reserves Strategically:
 - Bridge short-term funding gaps while new lodging tax revenue builds.
4. Safeguard Marketing & Branding:
 - Sustains visitor spending, off-season growth, and community pride.
5. Continue Model Grant Program:
 - Ongoing community investment with proven high returns.

Tourism is a cornerstone of Grand County's economy. Funding cuts will result in significant long-term economic decline, job losses, and reduced quality of life. Strategic investment increases—particularly via modest lodging tax adjustments—will protect and strengthen the community's future.

Prepared by:

RRC Associated

Community Engagement Initiatives:

- **Social Media Strategy Enhancement:** Engaged a dedicated social media contractor to develop and implement organic content strategies aimed at driving last-minute bookings and bolstering off-season visitation. This partnership has strengthened our online presence, allowing us to reach both new and returning visitors with timely, engaging content.
- **Cross-Promotional Marketing Materials:** Designed, produced, and distributed monthly promotional posters to highlight and cross-promote key events throughout Grand County. These posters are placed in high-traffic areas, supporting not only event attendance, but also create stronger community ties and local business support.
- **"Stand Grand" Visitor Education Campaign:** Printed and distributed "Stand Grand" (Leave No Trace) posters and brochures at various touch points across the county. This effort reinforces our local branding while educating visitors on responsible recreation practices, ensuring the long-term preservation of our natural assets.
- **Destination Blueprint Program Participation:** Actively participated in the Destination Blueprint Program offered through the Colorado Tourism Office, collaborating with local partners on strategic tourism development, product diversification, and sustainability efforts to align with Grand County's long-term tourism goals.
- **Grand Places Monthly Meetings:** Maintained regular attendance at Grand Places monthly meetings.
- **Collaboration with Local Partners:** Continued to meet regularly with Grand County Chamber Directors and Headwaters Trail Alliance leadership to increase collaboration, identify partnership opportunities, and ensure alignment with the Grand County Colorado Tourism Board's overarching strategic goals.
- **Tourism Impact Study:** Partnered with RRC Associates to conduct a comprehensive impact study validating tourism's significant contribution to the county's economy, providing data-driven support for strategic

decision-making and future funding initiatives.

- **National Public Lands Day Participation:** Participated in National Public Lands Day activities, underscoring our commitment to land stewardship, volunteerism, and the preservation of the county's public lands for future generations.
- **Economic Tourism Summit Co-Op Sponsorship:** Proud co-op sponsor of the Economic Tourism Summit, supporting vital conversations and education on the economic impact of tourism and generating stronger connections between industry stakeholders.

Financials Snapshot

The Grand County Lodging Tax fund closed December 2024 with the lodging tax total revenue falling an estimated 2% below the budgeted goal, year-to-date expenditures came in 13% under budget due to disciplined spending, particularly in operational expenses.

Summary

The Grand County Tourism Board's 2024 Annual Report showcases significant achievements in tourism impact, marketing, website enhancement, community engagement and destination stewardship. The commitment to sustainability and community well-being is evident, promising continued success in the coming years.