

Good evening. Thank you, Mayor.

I'm glad to be back here in Duluth and to be talking about one of my favorite things:  
MINNESOTA TOURISM.

I am Jesse "the tourism Governor." In fact, I feel like Jesse "the tourist Governor." I've had the opportunity as Governor to get out and see all the things that make this state a Mecca for tourism.

Grand Rapids and Crane Lake for the Governor's Fishing Openers are worthy of special mention.

In case you didn't hear, I ended that drought on Walleyes. Four of them and one was this big.

I'm glad to be here tonight and report to you, the Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau, that tourism in Minnesota is strong and is going to continue to get my support.

I look at myself not only as Governor, but also as the state's top salesman—A job I am glad to take on.

Recently, I was in Chicago explaining to them the virtues of visiting Minnesota. I told them they have no excuse not to visit Minnesota. I told them of the direct flight service from Chicago to the international port of Duluth on American Airlines.

I pitched Duluth on its family attractions: The Transportation Museum, the gardens and restaurants along Lakewalk and the harbor, the Vista Fleet, and I told them about the new Great Lakes Aquarium, the world's only fresh water aquarium, opening in July.

Duluth continues to be one of Minnesota's Tourism success stories:

The investment in tourism has helped turn your economy around in the past ten years. Duluth has had to expand the number of hotel rooms to accommodate the increase of visitors—many of Minnesota cities would love to have that problem.

My office notices that kind of success.

The Duluth area continues to get tremendous support from the state, especially from the Minnesota Office of Tourism and the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

The Lake Superior and Mississippi Scenic Railroad received \$50,000 in state funds to improve the railway.

The state is launching a new scenic byways promotion. Duluth is the hub of the four byways which includes Skyline Parkway along the ridge in the city, the North Shore, Rushing Rapids, and the Veterans Memorial Drive. And they all start on the outskirts of the city. The state's investment in the byways will help drive new visitors to Duluth.

The return on investment in Tourism is a no-brainer. For every one dollar we spend, we see a nine dollar return. That is why I am here tonight.

I am here because of the good work that the Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau is doing. They understand the need to invest in tourism.

Tourism brings 3.5 million visitors and 400 million dollars to Duluth. 8,000 jobs are related to tourism.

I went online earlier today and went to (visit duluth dot com).

The website was packed full of things to do in Duluth this summer:

Grandma's marathon and the Bayfront Blues Festival—I think everyone knows I like rock-n-roll, but I also love the blues.

And I learned that Duluth is welcoming the Navy Ship USS Defender this weekend.

And if you don't know what to get Dad, I recommend the Father's Day brunch cruise that the Vista Fleet is offering.

These events, along with others, help contribute to Duluth's overall economy.

The other speakers here tonight are going to expand on the future plans the CVB has for the city of Duluth and the partnerships it's involved in, including the importance of the tourism awareness campaign of the Twin Ports Tourism Alliance.

I wanted to be here tonight to support the CVB's efforts.

My Big Plan is full of initiatives designed to help create Healthy, Vital Communities. With state leadership and the CVB's investments in tourism, we will enhance Duluth's vitality.

You are doing an outstanding job. Thank you for your continued efforts to promote Minnesota as a tourist destination. Keep up the good work.

Governor Jesse Ventura  
Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Duluth  
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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Thank you.