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EXPERIENCE GRAND RAPIDS ANNOUNCES ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BEER TOURISM HAS TRIPLED

The economic impact grew from \$12.23 million to \$38.5 million since 2015

Grand Rapids, Mich. – Experience Grand Rapids (EXGR), the area's official destination marketing organization, has released an updated study, *The Economic Impact of Beer Tourism in Kent County* (2019) which says that the economic impact more than tripled from \$12.23 million to \$38.5 million since 2015.

In 2015, EXGR commissioned the first *Economic Impact of Beer Tourism in Kent County, Michigan*. This year, EXGR hired Anderson Economic Group to conduct the study. The methodology remained similar to the 2015 study to provide comparable results such as the same questionnaire and random survey sampling. Beer tourists were defined as those respondents who said that craft beer was the primary reason for their visit and who either live outside of West Michigan or live in West Michigan but were choosing to stay at a local hotel/motel for the night.

"In 2015, we discovered a measurable outcome of beer tourism in our region," explained Kate Lieto, Director of Marketing at EXGR. "We have since invested in promotions like the Beer City Brewsader® Passport and mobile app as well as Beer Month GR. We are thrilled that the recent study's results have proven these efforts are attracting tourists."

Key outcomes from *The Economic Impact of Beer Tourism in Kent County* include:

- Economic impact tripled from \$12.23 million to \$38.5 million
- The numerous breweries in Grand Rapids and Kent County are popular tourist attractions, attracting over 94,000 beer tourists in the study year.
- During the study year, beer tourists spent \$23.9 million in Kent County on craft beer, accommodations, food, transportation, and other spending.
- This spending by beer tourists generated a net new economic impact of \$38.5 million in Kent County during the study year.
- 25.3% of beer tourists came from outside of Michigan.
- 40% of beer tourists stayed in a hotel/motel in the Grand Rapids area.
- Beer tourists supported 378 jobs and \$9.9 million in earnings in the county, which is an increase from 2015 study that showed 171 jobs and \$3.3 million in earnings were supported in the county.

Breweries consider EXGR to be a key driver of beer tourism in Kent County.



“The idea of ‘Beer City USA’ didn’t happen overnight,” said Max Trierweiler, C-Owner of The Mitten Brewing Co. “Experience Grand Rapids realized that we have great beer being brewed in GR and thought that we should celebrate it. They helped push for the ‘Beer City’ recognition through Examiner.com and then created promotions like the Beer City Ale Trail, Beer Month GR, and the Brewsader Passport program.”

Alongside marketing efforts, Experience Grand Rapids has utilized its brewery partners to help with convention promotion.

“It’s been a pleasure exhibiting with the EXGR sales team at the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) over the years,” said Dave Engbers, Co-Founder of Founders Brewing Co. “I’ve watched firsthand how the association executives from all over the US have positively responded to Grand Rapids as a craft beer destination. The way EXGR has embraced ‘Beer City’ in all aspects of their work, from leisure travel to convention business, is definitely something we commend and will continue to be a part of in the future.”

Additionally, hotels have embraced the moniker of ‘Beer City’.

“We’re excited to greet visitors to the Country Inn & Suites East Beltline that are here to explore the beer scene,” said Ed Wilson, General Manager of the Country Inn & Suites East Beltline. “We applaud the efforts Experience Grand Rapids has put towards ‘Beer City’, and we do our best to align with them such as selling Beer City merchandise at the front desk and offering a Beer City Ale Trail to guests.”

Overall, this study reinforces the idea that craft beer is an economic driver as well as a reason people view Grand Rapids as a destination they want to visit.

For more information on how to plan your craft beer adventure in Grand Rapids, visit:

<https://www.experiencegr.com/things-to-do/beer-city/>

More information on *The Economic Impact of Beer Tourism in Kent County, Michigan* study visit:

www.experiencegr.com/beer-report

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About Experience Grand Rapids

Established in 1927, Experience Grand Rapids (EXGR), the areas’ official destination marketing organization, strengthens the region’s economic vitality and quality of life by marketing Grand Rapids/Kent County as a preferred visitor destination.