

COMMITTEE MEETING

MLC MIDWEST-CANADA RELATIONS

*Trends in Cross-Border
Trade and Tourism*



★ 80TH ANNUAL MEETING ★
MIDWESTERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
AUG 30-SEP 2, 2026



International Falls, Minnesota/Fort Frances, Ontario, border crossings,
January-June only, 2024-2026

Type	2024	2025	Percent change, 2024-25	2026	Percent change, 2025-26
Trucks	8,893	7,579	-14.8%	7,105	-6.3%
Personal vehicles	123,095	94,063	-23.6%	95,873	+1.9%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Pembina, North Dakota/Emerson, Manitoba, border crossings,
January-June only, 2024-2026

Type	2024	2025	Percent change, 2024-25	2026	Percent change, 2025-26
Trucks	122,347	123,430	+0.9%	117,619	-4.7%
Personal vehicles	105,709	74,250	-29.8%	72,378	-2.5%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Detroit, Michigan/Windsor, Ontario, border crossings,
January-June only, 2024-2026

Type	2024	2025	Percent change, 2024-25	2026	Percent change, 2025-26
Trucks	756,128	582,531	-23.0%	621,266	+6.6%
Personal vehicles	1,744,239	1,646,176	-5.6%	1,709,320	+3.8%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Port Huron, Michigan/Sarnia, Ontario, border crossings,
January-June only, 2024-2026

Type	2024	2025	Percent change, 2024-25	2026	Percent change, 2025-26
Trucks	366,653	536,471	+45.8%	467,848	-12.5%
Personal vehicles	474,371	371,863	-21.6%	376,708	+1.3%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan/Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, border crossings,
January-June only, 2024-2026

Type	2024	2025	Percent change, 2024-25	2026	Percent change, 2025-26
Trucks	16,610	15,529	-6.5%	13,004	-16.3%
Personal vehicles	231,114	176,623	-23.6%	179,639	+1.7%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Statistics

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minnesota / canada cross-border tourism

Lauren Bennett McGinty
Executive Director, Explore Minnesota

August 30, 2026



★ three questions to answer...

1

where are
we now?

2

what has
worked?

3

what comes
next?



second in arrivals for U.S.

Canada lost the # 1 spot to Mexico and fell 21% in 20 25

2

U.S. inbound
rank in 20 25

16 M

Canadian
visitors

~4x

the size of the
3 market

The decline hit drive hardest —flipping the mix

- 30 % vs - 11%

land travel fell faster than air travel

share of arrivals by mode

20 24

Land 52% (10 .5M)

Air 48% (9.7M)

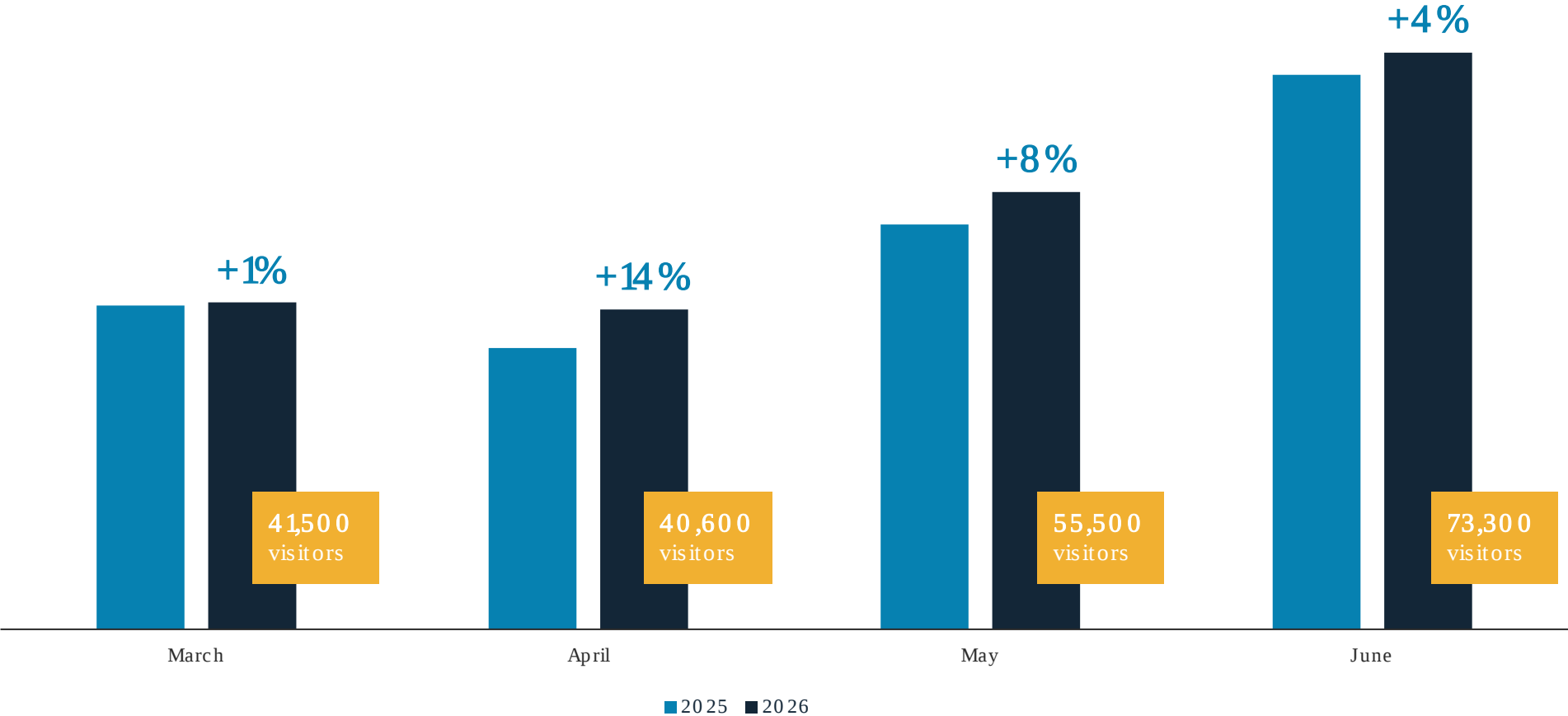
20 25

Land 46% (7.4M)

Air 54% (8.6M)

four consecutive months of border-crossing growth

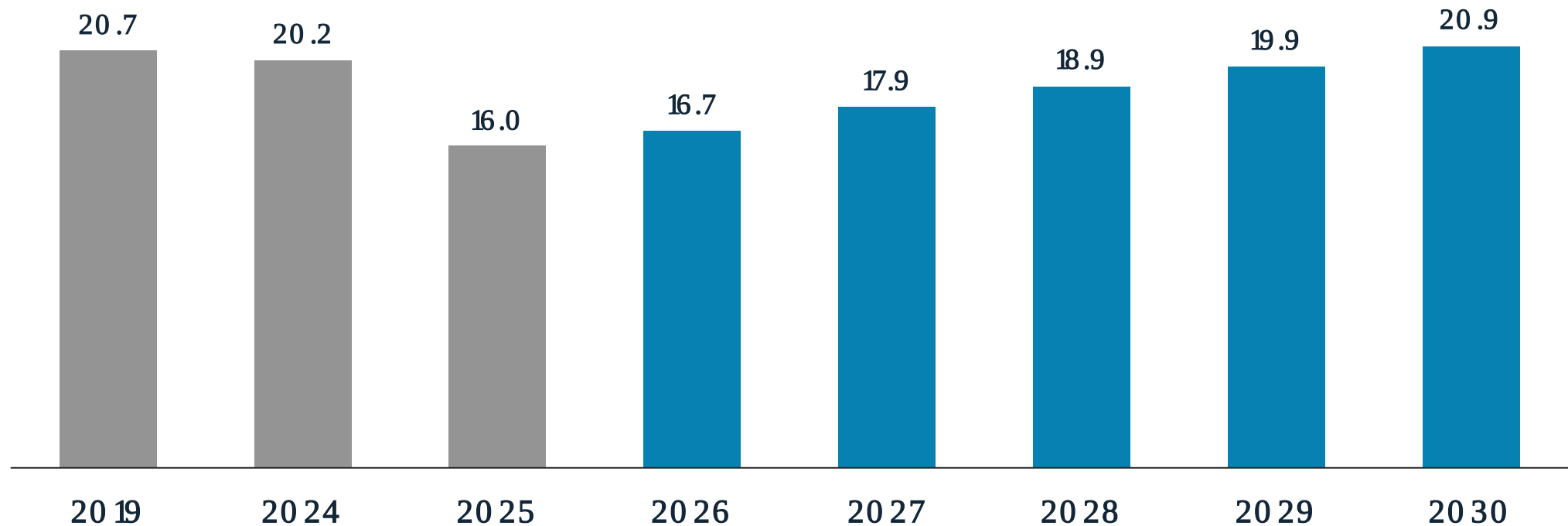
Canadian visitation to Minnesota, year-over-year change



the outlook: steady growth through 2030

Arrivals are forecast to recover steadily and surpass the 2019 pre-pandemic peak by 2030 —roughly +6% a year.

2019 – 2030 Canadian Arrivals (in millions)





2026 KPMG Women's
PGA Championship



WWE SummerSlam



World Junior Hockey
Championships

neighborism (noun)

a commitment to protecting the people
around you, no matter who they are or
where they came from



canadians want to visit people, communities and individual destinations

Core tension

Complex, conflicted relationship with the U.S., pulled between attraction and unease

Desire to visit

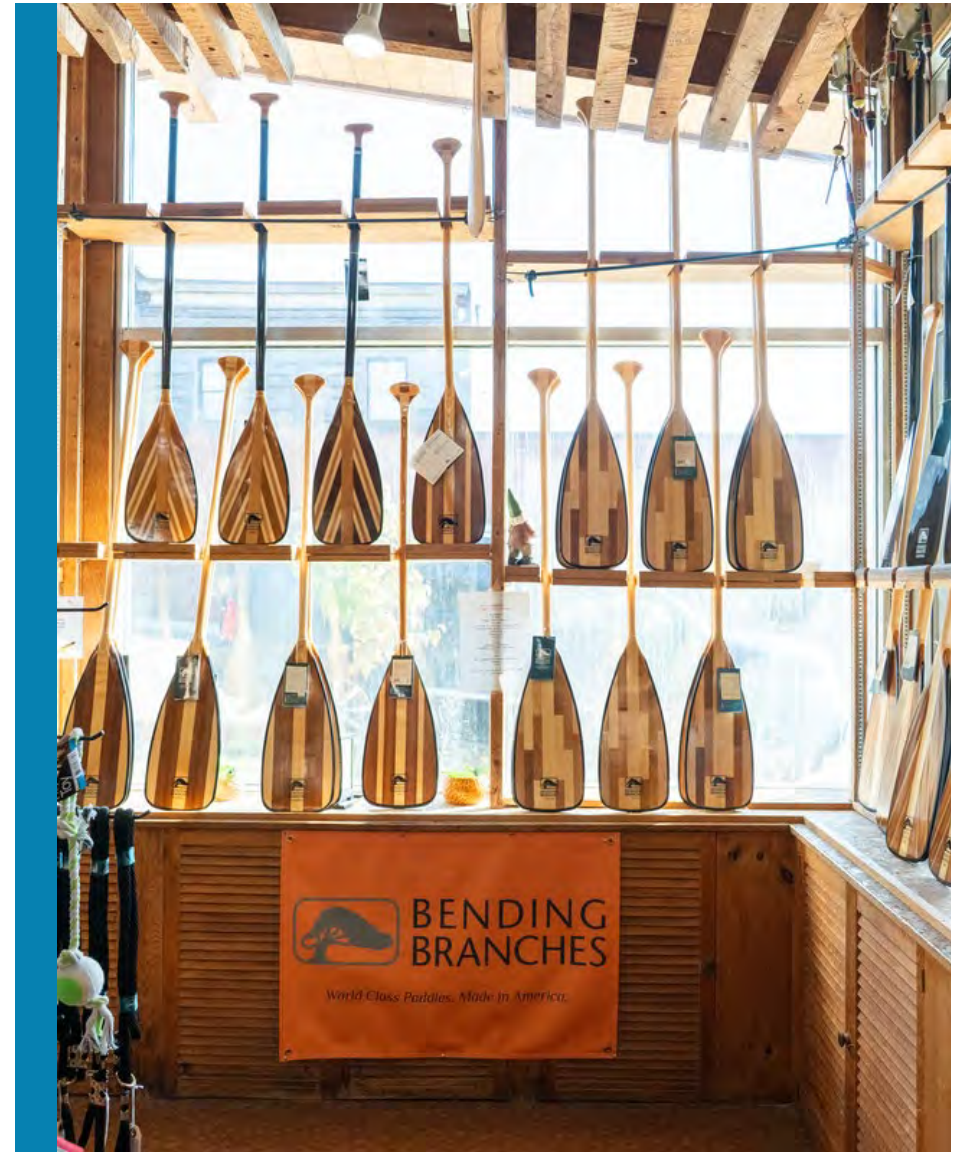
Recognize the value of U.S. travel and cited culture, attractions, natural beauty, etc., as reasons to go

Reason for pause

Political tension, tariffs/trade, anti-Canada rhetoric, border anxiety, reception concerns, exchange rate/cost pressure

Destination first

Still view people, communities, and destinations positively; destination-level messaging outperforms national messaging.



“come visit your neighbors in minnesota”

campaign launched in March 2026



we took that
message to our
canadian
neighbors

Instagram

\$15,000

June 22 – July 31





\$15,000
reached...



509,780
reached

161M
impressions

19,478
landing page views

+675%
increase in Canadian
web traffic



more than
half a million
canadian
neighbors

canadian website traffic up 675%



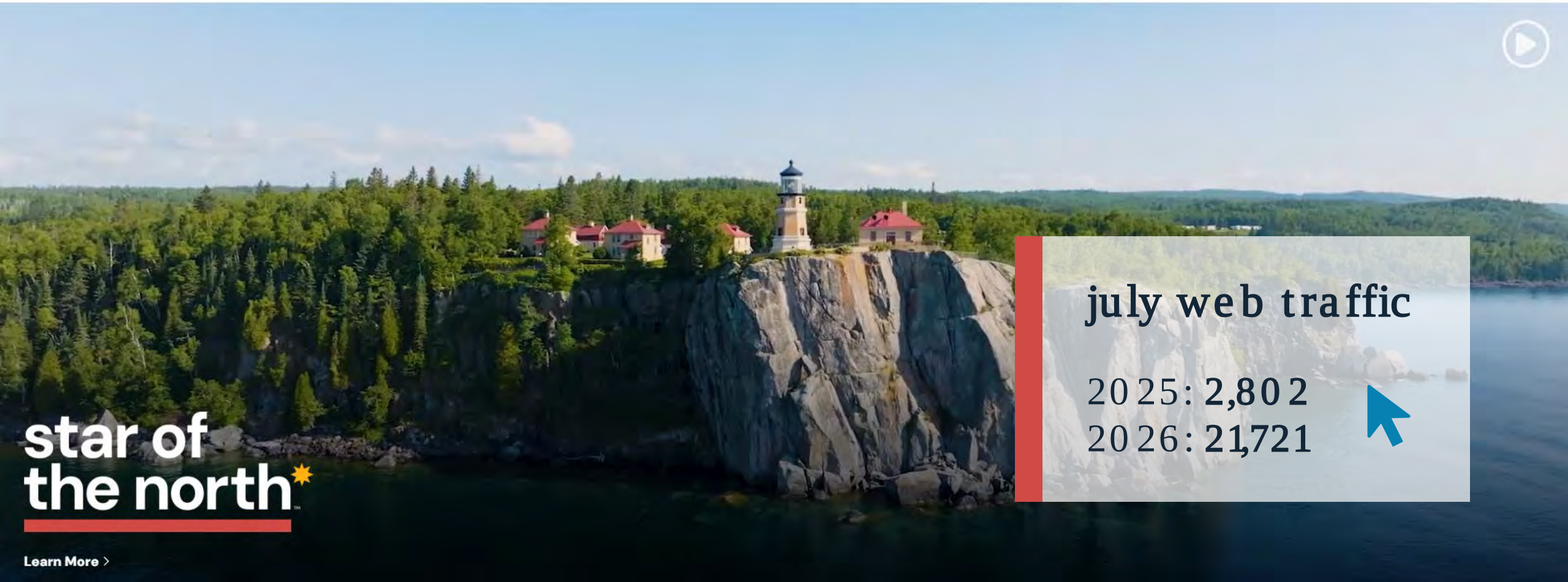
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july web traffic

2025: 2,802

2026: 21,721



star of
the north[™]

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what's next

September 2026:

August border-crossing data

March – July 2027:

Canadian social media marketing campaign:

- Thunder Bay
- Winnipeg

the border is a line on a map.
the neighborhood
is the real thing.



thank you!



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