



**Education Summit
June 4-5, 2026
Kryzko Commons, Winona State University, Winona**

AGENDA*

Thursday, June 4, 2026 | 10 AM – 4 PM

9:45 AM Welcome

10:00 AM Opening Keynote: The Map Has Changed: Navigating Travel in the Age of AI
Eric Hultgren, Advance Travel & Tourism

What's actually changing in marketing right now, and how should you respond? Eric breaks down the forces reshaping visibility, trust, and content performance, from AI-powered answer engines to shifting audience behavior. This session delivers practical frameworks you can apply immediately to create work that gets surfaced, remembered, and trusted.

10:45 AM Session: Effective Communication: Dialing in High Level Conversations
Anna Tanski, Fired Up! Culture

Effective one on one communication is essential for all professionals. Learn how to have effective conversations with board members, stakeholders, legislators, and employees. Real-life examples of tough conversations.

11:30 AM Session: Lodging Tax in the Modern Era
Rachel Thompson, Visit Greater St. Cloud

There is plenty of grey area in lodging tax expenditures. This facilitated discussion dives into Minnesota's lodging tax statute and best practices for ensuring your expenditures comply with the spirit of the law.

12:00 PM Networking Lunch

- 1:15 PM** **Session: Trails to Tourism: Turning Outdoor Assets into Economic Growth**
Eric Barnard, Winona State University
Outdoor recreation is a lucrative segment of Minnesota’s tourism pie. Eric Barnard, director of the Outdoor Education and Recreation Center at Winona State University, joins us to share national, state and local outdoor recreation data and why and how to capitalize on outdoor recreational opportunities in your community.
- 2:15 PM** **BREAK**
- 2:30 PM** **Session: Video Strategies You Can Do**
Brian Matson, Two-Six Digital
We are living in a video-driven world! Gather fresh ideas to help bring video into your marketing mix. We’ll review best practices for getting usable content from your smartphone and explore some tools that you can use to create impactful content on the fly. Once you’ve created a piece of content we’ll dive into YouTube strategies to help jumpstart your DMO’s efforts on the world’s second-largest social media channel.
- 3:15 PM** **Session: Legislative Wrap-Up**
Todd Hill, Tony Kwilas
How did MNTA’s policy priorities fare in 2026? Todd and Tony join us to provide a wrap-up to the 2026 Minnesota Legislative Session and a preview to the upcoming election season.
- 4:00 PM** **Adjourn**
- 5:00 PM** **Minnesota Marine Museum Gallery Tour & Reception**
- 6:30 PM** **Dinner – Signatures**
- 8:30 PM** **Evening activities continue on your own.**

Transportation for Thursday group activities will be provided by Rochester City Lines

- 4:45 PM Pick Up at AmericInn / Pick Up at Hotel 44 North
5:00 PM Drop Off at Minnesota Marine Art Museum (MMAM)
6:15 PM Pick Up at MMAM
6:30 PM Drop Off at Signatures Restaurant
8:30 PM Pick Up at Signatures Restaurant
9:00 PM Drop Off at Hotel 44 North / Drop Off at AmericInn



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Friday, June 5, 2026 | 9 AM – 11:30 AM

8:50 AM **Welcome Back**

Quick Hits for Tourism Professionals

Buckle Up! Tourism quick hits are designed to give you a lot of information in a quick 20-minute session. You don't want to miss these information-packed sessions.

9:00 AM **Award Winning Marketing Campaigns**

Ashlee White, Visit Mankato and Kelly Nygaard, Discover Stillwater

Recognized at the Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference for their marketing campaigns, Ashlee and Kelly share their strategy for creating marketing that demands attention.

9:20 AM **Tech Gadgets to Produce Quality In-House Video Fast**

Brian Matson, TwoSix Digital

Brian will show a "perfect setup" for capturing high-quality video and audio for use on social media channels to promote your destination on a shoestring budget. You don't have to break the bank to ensure that you get a quality result.

9:40 AM **Destination Swag: An Alternate Revenue Source**

Kate Carlson, Visit Winona

Looking for an alternative revenue source that doesn't have the restrictions of lodging tax dollars? Kate shares her secrets and best practices for creating an alternate revenue stream by selling branded apparel and souvenirs.

- 10:00 AM** **You're Not Behind: Getting Started with AI in Travel**
Eric Hultgren, Advance Travel & Tourism
You don't need a full AI strategy to start, you need a few small moves that create signal. This session breaks down practical, real-world tactics travel teams can use right now to create content more efficiently, show up more consistently, and build trust in an AI-shaped landscape.
- 10:20 AM** **Break**
- 10:30 AM** **Session: TBA**
- 11:00 AM** **Closing Keynote: Optimizing Your YouTube Channel: A Guide to Discovery and Growth**
Brian Matson, Two-Six Digital
Are you ready to transform your YouTube channel from overlooked to outstanding? Whether you're just starting, aiming to grow your existing audience, or looking to revive a dormant channel, this is your comprehensive guide to YouTube success.
- 11:45 AM** **Conference Round-Up**
What was the most valuable thing you learned? What was the most impactful conversation you had at the conference? We want to know what you found most helpful!
- Closing Remarks/Prize Drawing**
- 12:00 Noon** **Adjourn**

**This agenda is a work in progress. Sessions may be changed or moved prior to finalizing the schedule and speaker availability.*