



**MNTA Annual Meeting
October 5-7, 2026
Cragun's Resort | Brainerd, MN**

AGENDA

Monday, October 5, 2026

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|-----------------|--|
| 11:00 AM | First Time Attendee/New Executive Orientation |
| 12:00 PM | Registration Open; Vendor Showcase |
| 12:45 PM | Welcome & Introductions |
| 1:00 PM | Vendor Showcase
Learn first-hand about the services available from the industry partners sponsoring the conference. This speed-dating format will provide a brief introduction to all the conference sponsors. |
| 2:00 PM | Break |
| 2:15 PM | Before You Do More: Small Moves, Meaningful Impact
Josh Woolery, Drift North Marketing
Tourism marketers are juggling more channels, expectations, and pressures than ever—you have permission to pause before adding anything new. Attendees will leave with 3–5 simple, high-value actions that strengthen existing work without needing more staff, budget, or big initiatives. |
| 3:15 PM | Break Out Session by DMO Size/Vendors – 50 minutes
Join your peers from across Minnesota for a facilitated conversation designed by those in the room. Bring your questions, challenges, and best practices to share. |
| 4:15 PM | Wrap Up and Adjourn |
| 6:00 PM | Evening Activities |



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Tuesday, October 6, 2026

8:00 AM **Breakfast Buffet Available**

9:00 AM **Welcome Back**

9:15 AM **Our Field Guide for Building a Board for the Future Bill Geist – CONFIRMED**
Just as today's DMOs are expected to provide broader and greater value to their communities, future Boards will need to play a much greater role than many currently do. Bill Geist will share ways for DMO pros to more effectively engage their Board members and turn them into the destination and organizational advocates we need. Attendees will come away with several action items to build a better Board for the future.

10:15 AM **Break**

10:30 AM **Tracking and Reporting Key Performance Indicators - CONFIRMED**
Panelists: Megan Cristianson, Kjersti Vick, Kat Holm
How do you ensure the statistics you are tracking and reporting are actually the ones that are meaningful to your stakeholders? This session provides examples and dashboards

11:15 AM **A Little Better, Channel by Channel**
Josh Woolery, Drift North Marketing
Sharing his findings from a comprehensive review of MNTA member websites, social media, and YouTube, Josh looks at the small gaps and opportunities that affect how easily travelers can find a destination. This session includes checklists and self-audit tools to conduct your own marketing audit.

12:00 PM **Networking Lunch**

12:45 PM **MNTA Annual Meeting & Presentation of Roger Toussaint Award**



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Tuesday, October 6, 2026 (Continued)

1:30 PM

Quick Hits for Tourism Professionals - CONFIRMED

Buckle Up! Tourism quick hits are designed to give you a lot of information in a quick 20-minute session. The next 3 presenters were recognized by Explore Minnesota Tourism for their work. You don't want to miss these information-packed sessions.

Social Media Excellence: Katrina Heibel, Rainy Lake CVB

Best Destination Website: Eric Satre, Destination: Woodbury

Outstanding Video: Brittany Hartman, Visit Fairmont

2:30 PM

Unplugged: A discussion with Bill Geist

Bill follows up his morning keynote with an unplugged session in which he'll share a couple case studies of what to do (and not to do) in building a great Board. And, while he'll be asking participants to comment on those case studies, be sure to bring your Board challenges and success stories to share.

3:30 PM

Break & Browse & Network

Final look at Silent Auction items, Vendor Expo, Network

4:00 PM

Silent Auction Closes

4:00 PM

Explore Minnesota – Lauren Bennet McGinty

Executive Director, Lauren Bennett McGinty provides an update on the latest campaigns, data, and strategy from the State's Tourism Agency.

4:45 PM

Adjourn

5:30 – 10:00 PM

Evening Activities

Gull Lake Dinner Cruise, Sponsored by Cragun's Resort



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Wednesday, October 7, 2026

8:00 AM **Breakfast Buffet Available**

9:00 AM **Welcome Back**

9:15 AM **The Business of The Business – Break Out by Size of DMO**
Join a facilitated discussion of budgeting and financial best practices by, and for DMOs of a similar size.

10:00 AM **Advocacy & Your DMO**
Panelists: TBA
The 2027 legislative session will begin in January with a crop of newly elected law makers. Learn how to be the trusted source for them on all things tourism.

10:45 AM **Break**

11:00 AM **Defending Local Lodging Tax, Todd Hill and Tony Kwilas**
MNTA has consistently fought to ensure that local lodging taxes are spent according to the statute that governs the use. MNTA commissioned a report on the history and legislative intent of Minnesota Statute §469.19. MNTA will be unveiling that report and Todd and Tony will be discussing how the contents of the report will be used to help continue to defend that position.

12:00 PM **Closing Remarks + Adjourn**

**Topics and speakers will be added as they are confirmed. Please note this agenda is fluid and subject to change.*