



# THRIVE UP NORTH

2024 // ITASCA COUNTY  
COMMUNITY PROFILE

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**IEDC**  
Itasca Economic Development Corporation

**THRIVE  
UP NORTH**



# WHERE WE ARE

*Itasca County stands out as an area of growth, innovation and recreation in northern Minnesota.*

It maintains its traditional economic base in *taconite* (mining), *timber* (forestry), *tourism*, and *technology and manufacturing*. It is also home to a regional logistics hub located in Grand Rapids and is a popular tourism destination. All of this, paired with more than 1,000 lakes and millions of acres of forest surrounding the mighty Mississippi, make it certain to be your source for business growth and an unparalleled quality of life.



TACONITE



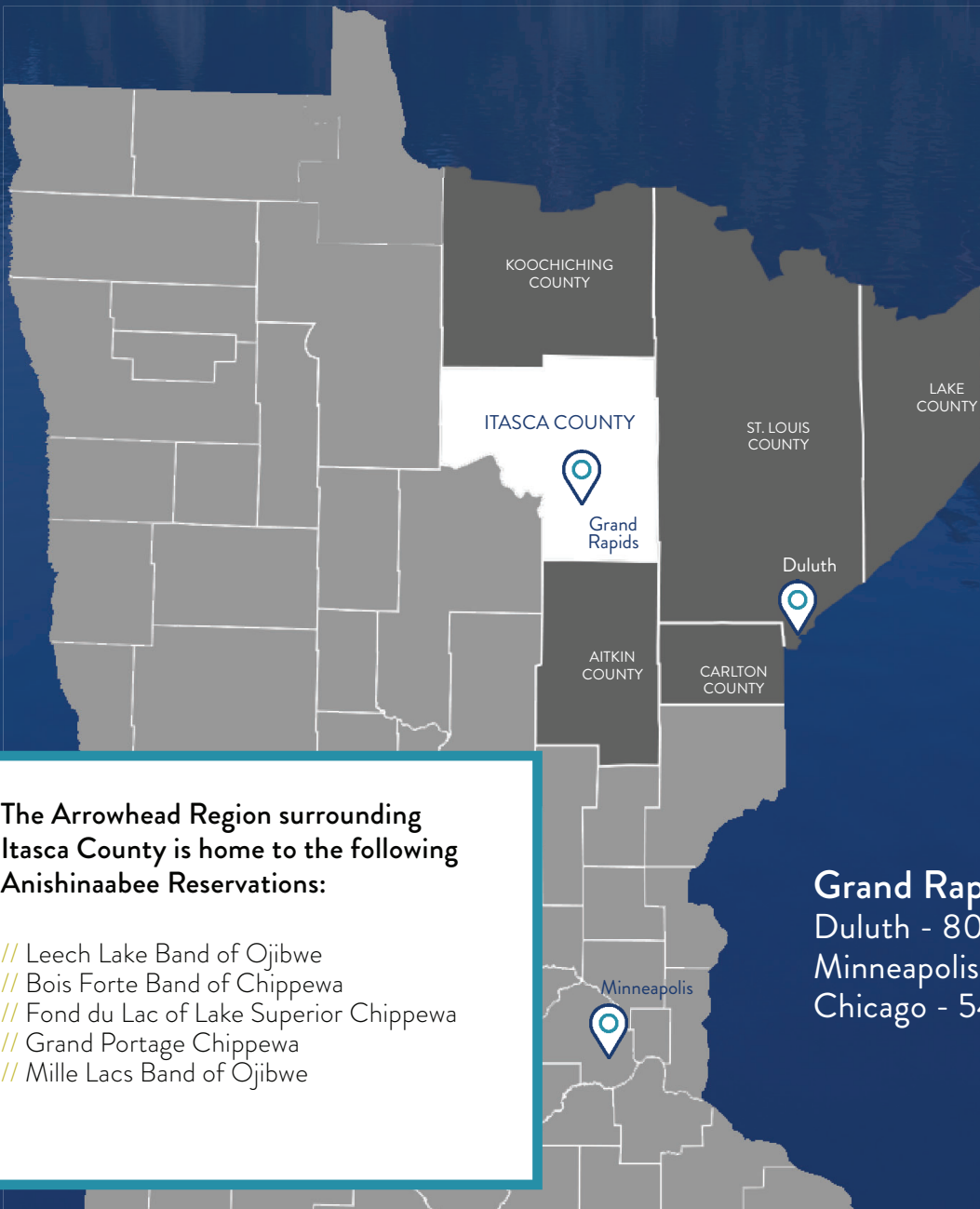
TIMBER



TOURISM



TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING



The Arrowhead Region surrounding Itasca County is home to the following Anishinaabee Reservations:

- // Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- // Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
- // Fond du Lac of Lake Superior Chippewa
- // Grand Portage Chippewa
- // Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Grand Rapids, MN is a logistics hub.  
Duluth - 80 Miles  
Minneapolis - 179 Miles  
Chicago - 547 Miles

# WHO WE ARE



## ARROWHEAD REGION POPULATION GROWTH/DECLINE 2010 - 2022

Aitkin County	-0.5%
Carlton County	+3.7%
Cook County	+10.3%
Itasca County	+0.3%
Koochiching County	-11.2%
Lake County	+0.7%
St. Louis County	-0.4%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and Population Estimates



## LARGER COMMUNITY POPULATION GROWTH/DECLINE 2010 - 2020

Grand Rapids	+3.7%
Cohasset	+0.7%

SOURCE: American Community Surveys, 2010 & 2022



## GRAND RAPIDS POPULATION 2020 11,158

SOURCE: US Census American Community Suvey. 2018 - 2022. 5-Year Estimates.



## POPULATION WITHIN 45 MILES 2022 115,000

SOURCE: US Census American Community Suvey. 2018 - 2022. 5-Year Estimates.



*Itasca County is a beacon of growth in northern, rural Minnesota*

Thanks to its diverse economic base and natural beauty, our county trends in northern Minnesota with a steady population and entrepreneurial spirit. With loyal and welcoming residents throughout, it's easy to see why so many who discover our area's assets are making communities within Itasca County their forever homes.





## OUR ECONOMY

*The secret is out! Itasca County is business-friendly and will support growth in all sectors of the economy*

Itasca County grew up along with the timber and taconite industries that form much of northern Minnesota's economy. The industries highlighted below provide an important base and offer jobs that support families and sustain communities. Today, Itasca County has diversified with a holistic view of economic growth and improved quality of life.

### ITASCA COUNTY WORKFORCE - 2022

INDUSTRY	WORKFORCE	TOTAL WAGES
Education & Health Services	5,044	\$247,321,216
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	3,325	\$163,809,966
Leisure & Hospitality	1,687	\$25,680,471
Public Administration	1,216	\$71,128,147
Manufacturing	796	\$51,330,131
Professional & Business Services	1,015	\$43,684,908
Construction	859	\$61,140,849
Natural Resources & Mining	595	\$67,565,983
Financial Activities	423	\$25,012,266
Information	119	\$6,968,865
Other Services	588	\$19,753,341
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	<b>15,667</b>	<b>\$783,396,143</b>

\*SOURCE: DEED QCEW 2022

## ITASCA COUNTY INDUSTRY LEADERS



## OUR BUSINESS

*Itasca County has a strong track record of regional partners.*

### ITASCA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (IEDC):

Comprehensive business development support of approximately \$3 million in loans and investments in 2018.



### DEPARTMENT OF IRON RANGE RESOURCES AND REHABILITATION:

A unique state agency with financial resources to support business development and expansion.



### GAP LENDERS:

Such as the Northland Foundation, Entrepreneur Fund and Arrowhead Regional Development Commission's Revolving Loan Fund.

### COHASSET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Loan funds and tax abatement options; commercial and industrial sites available.

### AREA PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC EXPANSION (APEX):

Regional Economic Development



### GRAND RAPIDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Loan funds and tax abatement options; commercial and industrial sites available.

### COMMUNITY-BASED BANKS:

Five local banks with nearly \$1 billion in total assets.

### SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER:

Comprehensive business development support of more than 180 small businesses in 2023.



### GRAND RAPIDS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:

More than 401 members and a strong advocacy arm.

Grand Rapids Area  
Chamber of Commerce

### BLANDIN FOUNDATION:

Strong philanthropic support for regional projects from organizations such as the Blandin Foundation. Awarded \$5.2M in local grants & \$2.3M rural grants in 2023



Blandin Foundation™  
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

## OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

### FIBER-OPTICS OR BROADBAND

Some of the fastest available in Minnesota through Paul Bunyan GigaZone, MediaCom and CenturyLink.

### NATURAL GAS

Service to all cities through Minnesota Energy Resources.

### ELECTRIC

Minnesota Power and Lake Country Power have competitive rates and experience serving some of the nation's largest electric users.

### WATER & WASTEWATER

Municipal services with additional capacity available in all county industrial parks.



## OUR EDUCATION

*Education has always been a priority for Itasca County area communities.*

Our strong public school systems are the lifeblood of our communities. Our areas are home to a technically skilled workforce with an incredibly high concentration of associates degrees.

THE FORGE  
WHERE IDEAS TAKE SHAPE



NEXT  
ITasca CAREER PATHWAYS

### MINNESOTA NORTH COLLEGE (formerly Itasca Community College)

**940** graduation rate (2024) // **65%** combined graduation/transfer out rate (2021-2022)\*

Progressive programs in **engineering, nursing and forestry** reflecting the local economy.

The Advanced Minnesota specialized training program, providing **customized on-site training and forestry** to local businesses.

**Two year, four year and MBA programs** through the University of Minnesota Extension and Duluth-based College of St. Scholastica.

Minnesota North College ranked in the **Top 100 of Community Colleges** in the USA and third best community college in the state by *Best Community Colleges*.

\*SOURCE: MN North College Report

### NEXT CAREER PATHWAYS

Next Career Pathways provides students with the opportunity to explore career opportunities through hands-on learning partnerships with colleges and businesses.

### THE FORGE: WHERE IDEAS TAKE SHAPE

The Forge is a space where innovators, students, entrepreneurs, and workers alike can bring forth their curiosity and ambition, evolving their ideas into products, careers, or businesses.

### ITASCA COUNTY AREA SCHOOLS

Bigfork, Cohasset, Deer River, Grand Rapids, Greenway, Nashwauk/Keewatin

**94%**  
Graduation rate

**ALI OFFERING**  
Applied Learning Institute (ALI) offering vocational education through local community colleges.

**IB/CITS PROGRAMS**  
International Baccalaureate (IB) program, College in the Schools (CITS) classes and Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO).

**IASC**  
Itasca Area School Collaborative (IASC) ensuring regional opportunities.

\*SOURCE: Minnesota Department of Education

### EDUCATED WORKFORCE\*

% of population over 25 with an associates degree.

#### ITASCA COUNTY

**63.42%**

#### MINNESOTA

**69.14%**

#### USA

**43.9%**

\*American Community Survey 2020

## OUR REAL ESTATE

### A Haven of Affordable Living!

Residents enjoy reasonable rents and home prices, and the home ownership rate is much higher than that of the Twin Cities and state as a whole. Escape long commutes and enjoy homes that provide both easy access to supportive communities and your very own refuge in Mother Nature's finest.

**21%**

Average Itasca County rents are 21% LESS than average Minnesota rents.

**24.2 min.**

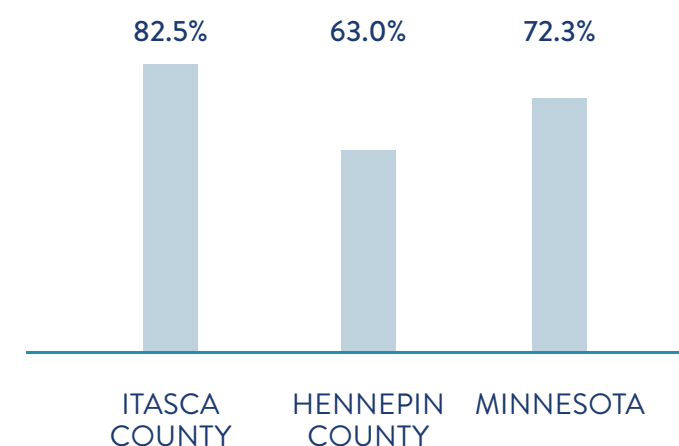
Average travel time to work in Itasca County is 24.2 minutes. Minnesota's average is 23.3 minutes.

**66%**

The cost of living for a family of four in Itasca County is 61% less than that of the Twin Cities.

### ACCESS TO HOME OWNERSHIP

Percent of households owning homes.



### MEDIAN HOME VALUE (\$)

ITASCA COUNTY  
**\$198,500**

HENNEPIN COUNTY  
**\$358,000**

MINNESOTA  
**\$286,800**

### INDUSTRIAL PARKS

More than 600 acres available in 4 industrial parks.

**Grand Rapids // Cohasset // Nashwauk // Bigfork**





## OUR LIFESTYLE

***Come and live life amid nature! In Itasca County, nature, amenities and nightlife are everywhere - they're the core of who we are.***

Whether it's exploring the many natural lakes and rivers, hiking our historic forests, taking in our artistic and cultural history or exploring the many amenities our communities have to offer, you are sure to find yourself living your best life!

### NATURAL AMENITIES

Chippewa National Forest  
Edge of the Wilderness Scenic Byway  
Lost Forty Virgin Pine Forest  
Mississippi River flat's (throughout Itasca County)  
Scenic State Park (Bigfork, MN)

### RICH ARTISTIC & CULTURAL HISTORY

Children's Discovery Museum (Grand Rapids, MN)  
Edge Center for Arts (Bigfork, MN)  
Forest History Center (Grand Rapids, MN)  
Judy Garland Museum (Grand Rapids, MN)  
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Pow Wows  
Macrostie Arts Center (Grand Rapids, MN)  
Reif Performing Arts Center (Grand Rapids, MN)

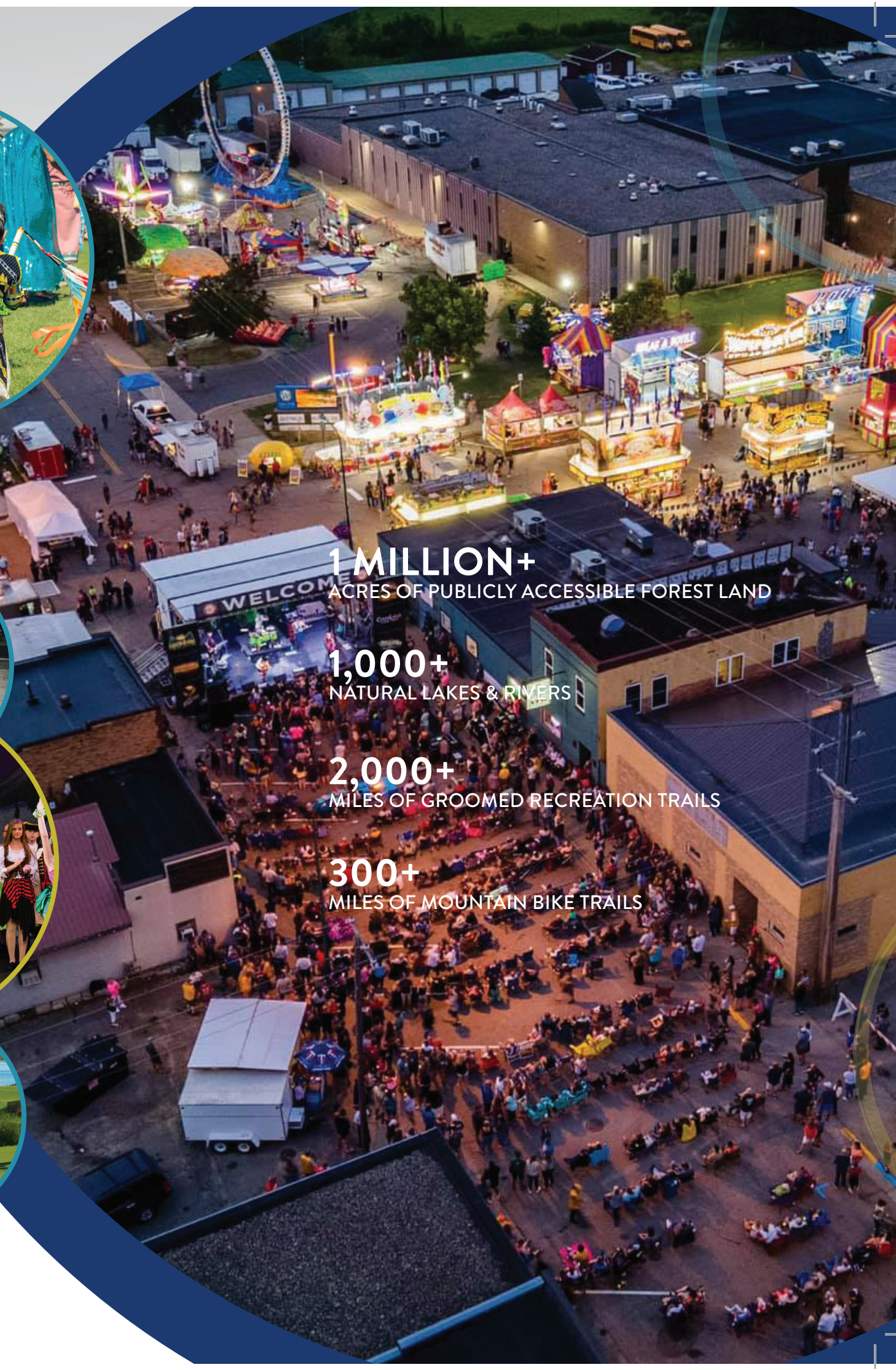
### ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT

Blackwater Environmental Area Nordic Trails (Cohasset, MN)  
Edge of the Wilderness Discovery Center (Bigfork, MN)  
Golf Courses: Pokegama, Sugar Lake, Eagle Ridge, Swan Lake, Golf on the Edge  
Itasca County Historical Society (Grand Rapids, MN)  
Mesabi Trail (155+ miles of paved bike trail to ride throughout Itasca County)  
Mount Itasca (Coleraine, MN)  
Tioga Beach & Recreation Center (Cohasset, MN)  
Tioga Recreation Area (450+ acres of mountain biking fun in Cohasset, MN)  
White Oak Casino (Deer River, MN)

### COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Bigfork // [cityofbigfork.com](http://cityofbigfork.com)  
Cohasset // [cohasset-mn.com](http://cohasset-mn.com)  
Coleraine // [colerainemn.govdd](http://colerainemn.govdd)  
Deer River // [deerrivercity.com](http://deerrivercity.com)

Grand Rapids // [visitgrandrapids.com](http://visitgrandrapids.com)  
Keewatin // [keewatinmn.org](http://keewatinmn.org)  
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe // [llojibwe.org](http://llojibwe.org)  
Nashwauk // [nashwaukmn.gov](http://nashwaukmn.gov)



**1 MILLION+**  
ACRES OF PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE FOREST LAND

**1,000+**  
NATURAL LAKES & RIVERS

**2,000+**  
MILES OF GROOMED RECREATION TRAILS

**300+**  
MILES OF MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS



## THRIVE UP NORTH

There are over 1,400 lakes in Itasca County, countless miles of trails, and endless amenities. We want to lure YOU to Itasca County: Hook, Line, and Sinkers.

Area leaders have come together to create a collaborative rural recruitment marketing campaign that showcases the Itasca County Communities as a place that offers a great work life balance, good place to start a business, and a great place to raise a family.

In 2022, the Thrive Up North Taskforce began an incentives program

**Many incentives, one great outcome: a life in Itasca County.**

**What's stopping you? Come THRIVE with us!**

THRIVE  
UP NORTH

## MORE INFORMATION



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## COOPERATIVE FUNDERS

