



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GRANDMA'S MARATHON WEEKEND REACHES NEARLY \$40 MILLION, STUDY SHOWS

Total Impact Nearly Doubled Since Last Study in 2019

**(DULUTH, MINN.)** --- In a sport where participants work to make their times go down, Grandma's Marathon organizers are happy to see at least two numbers that continue to go up – registration and economic impact.

A new study, conducted last year by the University of Minnesota Extension, shows the total impact of the event has nearly doubled in the past five years to now bring nearly \$40 million in economic activity to the region.

"This is further proof that Grandma's Marathon is more than just a race," Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider said. "Our event weekend has become an economic boon that businesses and employees look forward to each year, and that's certainly a contributing factor in why Grandma's Marathon is so ingrained into who we are as a community."

Last year's race weekend was the largest race weekend on record for Grandma's Marathon – nearly 18,000 people made it to the start line of the marathon, half marathon, or 5K. Those participants came from 74 different countries and all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia.

Participants were surveyed following the weekend to draw the following conclusions on quantifying the economic contributions of Grandma's Marathon:

- Nearly 90% of the event's participants are visitors to Duluth.
- Each participant traveled with 2.7 people (nearly 50,000 total attendees), and each party stayed 2.5 nights in the region.
- Every person spent \$176.70 per day (largest amounts on lodging, dining, and transportation).



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Adding the above numbers to the nearly \$3.5 million Grandma's Marathon spends to host the race weekend, the study estimates the event's direct economic impact at \$25.4 million.

With each travel party spending \$1,239 in 2024 as compared to \$778 in 2019, that shows a nearly 60% jump in consumer spending on Grandma's Marathon race weekend. With an increase in the size of each travel party as well, this year's study indicates more spectators are accompanying participants than there were five years ago.

The study also estimated the indirect and induced economic effects of Grandma's Marathon weekend, showing 300 jobs and nearly \$14 million of activity at businesses not directly included in the event. Compared to other analytics available, the study estimates Grandma's Marathon is the busiest weekend of the year for the Canal Park area in Duluth.

"All of this is to say, Grandma's Marathon plays a major role in our local economy whether or not you're directly involved with the race," Schneider said. "It's the community involvement that truly makes our event possible and special, so to see these numbers is gratifying to know what comes around goes around when it comes to Grandma's Marathon."

The full report, presented by senior economic analyst Brigid Turk and University of Minnesota Extension educator John Bennett, is available [HERE](#).

For any questions or interview requests, please contact Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider via phone at (218) 343-9874 or via email at [zach@grandmasmarathon.com](mailto:zach@grandmasmarathon.com).

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#### ABOUT GRANDMA'S MARATHON

Grandma's Marathon began in 1977 when a group of local runners planned a scenic road race from Two Harbors to Duluth, Minnesota. After seeing just 150 registered participants that year, the marathon has now grown into the 10<sup>th</sup> largest in the United States.

The race got its name from the Duluth-based group of famous Grandma's Restaurants, the first major sponsor of the marathon. Having now added the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon and William A. Irvin 5K, the race weekend now welcomes more than 20,000 participants to Duluth and the surrounding region each year.

As the popularity of Grandma's Marathon weekend has grown, our mission has stayed the same – to organize, promote, and deliver annual events and programs that cultivate running, educational, social, and charitable opportunities to our communities.

Grandma's Marathon-Duluth, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization with an eight-person, full-time staff and a 17-member Board of Directors.



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