

Grand Rapids Fact Sheet

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The Grand Rapids experience is cosmopolitan and cultured, fun and family friendly, environmental and outdoorsy. Grand Rapids was named “One of America’s coolest towns” by Men’s Journal in April 2010. Whether you are a meeting planner or a visitor, Grand Rapids exceeds expectations in every way- in the quantity and quality of our activities and attractions, in the warmth of our hospitality and in the power of our imagination. Grand Rapids offers all the big-city excitement you'd expect from a million-resident metropolis but the sense of community pride and closeness brings all residents together for such grand events as ArtPrize, Restaurant Week, the Grand Rapids LipDub, Beer City USA and more. Grand Rapids is an award-winning city and these accolades and news stories speak for themselves.

LOCATION: Grand Rapids is the second largest city in Michigan, the heart of Kent County, and the largest city in West Michigan. Grand Rapids is located on the banks of the Grand River that winds its way through downtown. It's the gateway to West Michigan Beach Towns, about 25 miles east of Lake Michigan and the lakeshore communities of Holland, Muskegon and Grand Haven. Kent County coordinates are latitude 43.24 and longitude 85.73, elevation 800 feet. Topography is characterized by rolling foothills, agricultural valleys and the Grand River (the largest river in Michigan), in addition to 180 lakes and 54 streams. Grand Rapids is easily accessible from the east and west via Interstate Highway 96, and from the north and south via Interstate Highway 196 and U.S. Highway 131. Kent County encompasses 856 square miles.

AREA INFORMATION:

Time Zone- Eastern

Population- Seven County CSA- 1,343,686, Kent County – 608,453, Grand Rapids – 189, 815

Climate- Average temperatures (F): Spring 47°, Summer 70°, Fall 51°, Winter 26°

Annual precipitation- 37.13 inches of rain, 71.9 inches of snow

Mileage from selected cities-

Lansing 68	Indianapolis 255
Traverse City 139	Cleveland 300
Detroit 157	Columbus 333
Chicago 184	Cincinnati 358
Toledo 186	Toronto 361
Milwaukee 270	Pittsburgh 416

HISTORY: Originally occupied 2,000 years ago by Hopewell Indians, the Grand River Valley

also was inhabited by Ottawa Indians in the early 1700s. Later, Kent County was settled by European immigrants (beginning with fur traders, who set up trading posts along the Grand River) in the 1820s and became self-governing in 1836. The county is named after James Kent, attorney and author of "Commentaries on American Law." Grand Rapids became a village in 1838 and a city in 1850. Grand Rapids was a center for craftsmen, carpenters and woodworkers during the lumber boom of the 1880s, and became known as "America's Furniture Capital." At the height of the lumber boom, Grand Rapids was home to 44 furniture companies. Gerald R. Ford, 38th president of the United States, was raised in Grand Rapids and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum is located here.

INDUSTRIES: West Michigan's major employment industries are manufacturing, health care, retail trade, admin./support/waste mgt./remediation services and government. Grand Rapids' top employers are Spectrum Health, Axios Inc., Meijer Inc., Spartan Stores Inc. and Amway Corporation.

LODGING: Kent County offers approximately 7,250 hotel rooms, 1,439 in downtown Grand Rapids and a majority spread throughout the southeast corner of Grand Rapids near the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Lodging options include chain hotels, quaint bed-and-breakfasts, the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel which is a Four-Star, Four-Diamond historic hotel and the JW Marriott, the luxury brand of the Marriott family and the first in the Midwest.

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS: Grand Rapids is one of the Midwest's hottest convention cities, hosting groups of all kinds from all areas of the country. Grand Rapids has an infrastructure of a much larger city, offering a convention campus just 20 minutes from Gerald R. Ford International Airport. The campus includes a state-of-the-art convention center located in the heart of downtown, DeVos Place Convention Center, which offers one million square feet of space on a 13-acre riverfront site. There is a 162,000 square foot "Class A" exhibition hall, 40,000 square foot ballroom, 35,000 square feet of sub-dividable meeting space and 75-foot-high Grand Gallery pre-function space. Also included in the campus is Van Andel Arena, a \$75 million entertainment venue downtown Grand Rapids which is home to the Grand Rapids Griffins hockey team and seats 12,000 for events, concerts, family shows, ice performances, seminars and conferences. Between these two facilities lay the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, the JW Marriott Grand Rapids and Courtyard by Marriott Downtown which combined boast 78,000 square feet of meeting space and 1,236 guest rooms. An enclosed, climate-controlled skywalk connects all of the above.

AIRPORT: Gerald R. Ford International Airport, (616) 233-6000 or www.grr.org, is the second-busiest commercial airport in Michigan. The airport is served by seven passenger airlines with 120 daily scheduled nonstop flights to and from 23 major market destinations. Destinations include: Atlanta, Baltimore/Washington, Chicago-O'Hare, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Detroit, Fort Lauderdale, Fort Meyers, Houston, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, New York-LaGuardia, New York-Newark, Orlando, Orlando-Sanford, Phoenix-Mesa, St. Louis, Tampa, Tampa/St. Petersburg- Clearwater, Toronto and Washington-Dulles.

Airlines include: Air Canada, Allegiant Air, American Airlines, AirTran Airways/Southwest Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Frontier Airlines and United Airlines.

DINING: Discover the art of dining in Grand Rapids. Two unique factors attribute to the culinary scene in Grand Rapids, we're located in the middle of one of the world's best growing regions and we're home to one of America's finest culinary schools, the Secchia Institute for Culinary Education at Grand Rapids Community College. Grand Rapids is surrounded by hundreds of family farms that harvest everything from apples to sweet corn and many local restaurants have been purchasing fresh produce, meats and dairy products for years. With over 60 restaurants in downtown Grand Rapids alone, visitors may choose from tapas bistros, contemporary seafood houses, ethnic specialty restaurants, specialty bakeries and more.

ATTRACTIONS:

ArtPrize
LaughFest
Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum
Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM)
Grand Rapids Public Museum
Voigt House Victorian Museum
Heritage Hill Historic District
Frank Lloyd Wright Meyer May House

Grand Rapids Children's Museum
Urban Institute of Contemporary Art (UICA)
John Ball Zoo
Robinette's Apple Haus & Gift Barn
IMAX® Theatre at Celebration! Cinema
Blanford Nature Center
Downtown Market Grand Rapids
Fifth Third Ballpark

PERFORMING ARTS:

Grand Rapids Symphony
Circle Theatre
Grand Rapids Ballet Company
Grand Rapids Civic Theatre
Master Arts Theatre
Jewish Theatre Grand Rapids

Broadway Grand Rapids
Spectrum Theatre Grand Rapids
Opera Grand Rapids
West Michigan Savoyards
Wealthy Theatre
Peter Martin Wege Theatre

SPORT TEAMS: Grand Rapids Griffins - AHL primary affiliate of the National Hockey League's Detroit Red Wings; playing in Van Andel Arena. West Michigan Whitecaps - Class A affiliate of the Detroit Tigers; playing April through September at Fifth Third Ballpark.

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES:

Aquinas College
Calvin College
Central Michigan University
Cooley Law School
Cornerstone University
Davenport University
Ferris State University
Grace Bible College

Grand Rapids Community College
Grand Valley State University
Kendall College of Art & Design
Kuyper College
Michigan State University College of Human Medicine
Secchia Institute for Culinary Education
Western Michigan University

