



## 2009 GRAND RAPIDS FACT SHEET

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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### LOCATION:

Grand Rapids is the second largest city in Michigan, the heart of Kent County, and one of the principle cities of West Michigan. Grand Rapids is located on the banks of the Grand River that winds its way through downtown. It's the gateway to Michigan's West Coast, only 30 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.

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.

### DESCRIPTION:

Grand Rapids is a remarkable combination of urban sophistication and small town warmth, known for its philanthropic and sustainable driven community. It's a region of abundant natural resources, unique wonders of Lake Michigan and where outdoor recreation is a year-round pursuit. Grand Rapids offers all the big-city excitement you'd expect from a million-resident metropolis, featuring over 75 restaurants and nightspots, a state-of-art convention center, theatres, museums and sports venues all within a clean, safe, walkable downtown.

Kent County encompasses 856 square miles. 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.

### 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.

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**LODGING:**

Kent County offers 7526 hotel rooms; 1,412 of which are located in downtown Grand Rapids, with the remainder primarily in southeast Grand Rapids in close proximity to Gerald R. Ford International Airport (and a 15-minute drive from downtown Grand Rapids). Additional hotel rooms are located in northeast, northwest and southwest Grand Rapids, within five-to-10 minutes of the downtown convention campus. 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. Detailed accommodations information is available at [www.visitgrandrapids.org](http://www.visitgrandrapids.org).

**DINING:**

Culinary tourism is alive and well along Michigan's West Coast, especially in Grand Rapids where the only 5 Diamond restaurant in Michigan resides and hundreds of fine food eateries and upscale dining establishments reflect the city's abundance of fresh, organic produce and local farm-to-table cuisine. With over 60 restaurants in downtown Grand Rapids alone, visitors may choose from Michigan's only AAA-Five Diamond Restaurant (The 1913 Room at Amway Grand Plaza Hotel) to tapas bistros, contemporary seafood houses, ethnic specialty restaurants, specialty bakeries and more. A complete listing of restaurants can be viewed at [www.visitgrandrapids.org](http://www.visitgrandrapids.org).

**CULTURAL  
ATTRACTIONS:**

Grand Rapids takes pride in five outstanding museums including the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM), the world's first newly built "LEED-Certified Art Museum", Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum where the 38<sup>th</sup> President was interred in January 2007, the Public Museum, and the Grand Rapids Children's Museum. Other premier attractions include; Frederick Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park (known for its rich botanical gardens, world-class sculptures and exhibitions), the Grand Rapids Ballet Company (the only professional ballet company in Michigan), Opera Grand Rapids (Michigan's longest running professional opera company), Grand Rapids Symphony, and John Ball Park Zoo.

**MEETINGS &  
CONVENTIONS:**

Grand Rapids is an ideal second tier city convention base, offering a downtown convention campus conveniently located just 20 minutes from Gerald R. Ford International Airport. The convention campus includes DeVos Place Convention Center, an additional 78,000 square feet of hotel meeting space at Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Courtyard by Marriott Downtown, and JW Marriott Grand Rapids, 1,412 hotel rooms (an additional 6,114 hotel rooms are located within five-to-20 minutes of downtown) and Van Andel Arena. All are connected via a five-block, enclosed and climate-controlled Skywalk. Downtown delegate amenities include 60 restaurants, a thriving entertainment district, four museums, and numerous theatres, galleries and shops.

**DeVos Place** is the state-of-the-art convention center located in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids on the Grand River. The multilevel DeVos Place provides flexible and functional space with one million square feet of new and renovated space on a 13-acre riverfront site. It is ideally equipped for meetings, conventions and trade shows as well as performing arts and touring events, and has the capability of hosting a variety of events simultaneously. Located just 20 minutes from Gerald R. Ford International Airport, DeVos Place offers a 162,000 square foot "Class A" exhibition hall; 40,000 square-foot, flexible-use ballroom with 2,500-seat banquet facility; 35,000 square feet of sub-dividable meeting space; 12 enclosed loading docks; underground parking garage and heated skywalk to two hotels; and a 75-foot-high Grand Gallery pre-function space.

**Van Andel Arena** is a \$75 million entertainment venue located in downtown Grand Rapids. Seating 12,000, the Arena is home to the Grand Rapids Griffins hockey team and the Grand Rapids Rampage arena football team and hosts concerts, family shows, ice shows and special events throughout the year. In addition, the Arena is a state-of-the-art venue for seminars and conferences.

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**TIME ZONE:** Eastern

**POPULATION:** Seven County CSA Area – 1,323,287  
Kent County – 601,970  
Grand Rapids – 192,643

**AIRPORT:** Gerald R. Ford International Airport, 616/233-6000 or [www.flygrandrapids.org](http://www.flygrandrapids.org), is the second-busiest commercial airport in Michigan. Non-stop flights to Atlanta, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Memphis, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York/Newark and Pittsburgh (seasonally to Orlando and Tampa) and is served by the following passenger airlines:

ATA Connection	Midwest Connect/Skyway Airlines
Allegiant Air	Northwest/Northwest Airlin
American Eagle	United Airlines
Continental Express	US Airways Express
Delta Connection	

**MILEAGE FROM SELECTED CITIES:**

Lansing	63
Traverse City	139
Detroit	160
Chicago	184
Toledo	185
Milwaukee	279
Indianapolis	296
Cleveland	301
Columbus	331
Cincinnati	352
Toronto	379
Pittsburgh	426

**CLIMATE:** Average temperatures (F):

Spring	46°
Summer	69°
Fall	50°
Winter	26°

Annual precipitation: 37.13 inches of rain  
71.9 inches of snow

**INDUSTRIES:** West Michigan's major employment industries are manufacturing, educational, health, social services and retail trade. Grand Rapids' top employers are Spectrum Health, Meijer Inc., Steelcase Inc., Herman Miller Inc. and Alticor Inc.

**ATTRACTIONS:**

- Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum
- Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
- Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM)
- Public Museum & Planetarium
- Voigt House Victorian Museum
- Heritage Hill Historic District
- Frank Lloyd Wright Meyer May House
- Grand Rapids Children's Museum
- John Ball Zoo
- Robinette's Apple Haus & Gift Barn
- IMAX® Theatre at Celebration! Cinema

**PERFORMING ARTS:**

- Grand Rapids Symphony
- Community Circle Theatre
- Grand Rapids Ballet Company
- Grand Rapids Civic Theatre
- Master Arts Theatre
- Jewish Theatre Grand Rapids
- Broadway Theatre Guild
- Actors' at Spectrum Theatre
- Opera Grand Rapids

**NIGHTLIFE:** **Entertainment District** (includes the 12,000-seat Van Andel Arena and numerous restaurants, comedy clubs and pubs in the downtown Grand Rapids entertainment district, within easy walking distance of hotels)

**SPORT TEAMS:**

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

**OUTDOOR:**

*National Geographic's Adventure Magazine* named Grand Rapids one of the top 50 places to live and play in the U.S. in the waterfront category (September 2007). *Field and Stream Magazine* designated Grand Rapids as the sixth Best Fishing City in the U.S., (July 2006), while *Powerboat Magazine* named Michigan's West Coast one of the 10 best places in the U.S. for powerboat enthusiasts to live. (January 2008). *WaterSki Magazine* named Grand Rapids among the nation's top 10 places to ski and live (April 2008). Nearly 50 golf courses are located within an hour's drive.