

Visitor Services Project
Minuteman Missile National Historic Site
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Minuteman Missile National Historic Site (NHS) during June 15-23, 2009. A total of 340 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 249 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 73.2% response rate.
 - This report profiles a systematic random sample of Minuteman Missile NHS visitors. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables. Summaries of visitor comments are included in the report and complete comments are included in the Visitor Comments Appendix.
 - Forty-two percent of visitor groups were in groups of two and 39% were in groups of four or more. Eighty-five percent of visitor groups were in family groups.
 - United States visitors comprised 97% of total visitors during the survey period, with 13% from Minnesota, 11% from Wisconsin, and smaller proportions from 39 other states and Washington, D.C. International visitors were from six countries and comprised 3% of total visitors, with 45% from Canada and 20% from Sweden. Smaller proportions came from four other countries.
 - Fifty-four percent of visitors were ages 36-65 years, 9% were over 65 years, and 25% were ages 15 years or younger. Sixty percent of respondents were male. Two percent of visitors were Hispanic or Latino. Ninety-seven percent of visitors were White. Thirty-six percent had a bachelor's degree and 35% had a graduate degree. Two percent of visitor groups reported physical conditions that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services.
 - Twenty-two percent of visitors had an annual income of \$75,000 to \$99,999, 20% had an income between \$50,000 and \$74,999, and 19% had an income of \$100,000 to \$145,000. Forty-one percent of visitors had two members in their household, while 26% had four members.
 - The most commonly used language for communication within visitor groups was English (98%).
 - Ninety-eight percent of visitors were visiting the park for the first time since 2004. Sixty-three percent entered the park once during this visit. Ninety-seven percent of visitors used one vehicle to arrive at the park.
 - Three percent of visitor groups were residents of South Dakota. For 56% of visitor groups, Minuteman Missile NHS was one of several destinations in South Dakota. For 74%, visiting other attractions in the area was the primary reason for visiting the Minuteman Missile NHS area. For 47%, an interest in Cold War history was the primary reason for visiting the park.
 - Of those visitor groups (55%) who stayed overnight in the area, within 30 miles of the visitor center, 49% spent one night and 26% spent three or more nights. Fifty-nine percent stayed in lodges, hotels, motels, cabins, B&B, etc. and 27% were RV/trailer camping.
 - Thirty-one percent of visitor groups spent one hour visiting the park and 30% spent two or more hours. Four percent of visitor groups visited the park on more than one day.
 - Most visitor groups (82%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit and 77% received the information they needed. Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about Minuteman Missile NHS through the park website (46%) and travel guides/tour books (35%). Sixty-seven percent indicated they would prefer to obtain information for a future visit from the park website, while 35% would use travel guides/tour books.
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- The most common site that visitors visited at Minuteman Missile NHS was the visitor center (94%). Ninety-eight percent of visitor groups visited other national park sites in the area. The most common destinations were Badlands National Park (93%) and Mount Rushmore National Memorial (89%).
- The most common visitor activities were viewing visitor center exhibits (77%) and watching the park video/film (42%). The primary activities were ranger-led tours (35%) and viewing visitor center exhibits (20%).
- Forty-one percent of visitor groups attended a ranger-led tour, and 87% thought the length of the tour was about right. Sixty-two percent were interested in taking a tour between 9-11 am.
- Regarding what they learned during their park visit, 87% of visitor groups learned about missile history and 61% learned about nuclear weapons and the arms race. On a future visit, visitor groups indicated they would be interested in learning about personal stories related to missile field personnel (59%) and system technology and engineering (59%).
- The visitor services and facilities most commonly used by visitor groups were parking (83%) and indoor exhibits (82%). The service receiving the highest importance rating was ranger-led tours (96%, N=89). The service receiving the highest quality rating was ranger-led tours (100%, N=86).
- The average group expenditure in the park and the surrounding area (within 30 miles of the park) was \$316, with a median (50% spent more and 50% spent less) of \$133. The average total expenditure per person was \$119. Seventy-three percent had two adults covered by expenditures and 24% had two children covered by expenditures while 52% had no children covered by expenditures.
- Fifty-three percent of visitor groups would be likely to visit the park in the future. Ninety-five percent were interested in learning about cultural and natural history features of the park on a future visit. The most common preferred methods of learning about park features were ranger-led tours/programs (78%) and indoor exhibits (62%). Fifty-five percent of visitor groups were willing to pay a fee to use the shuttle to visit park sites.
- Most visitor groups (68%) rated the overall quality of services, facilities, and recreational opportunities at Minuteman Missile NHS as “very good” or “good.” Nine percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality as “very poor” or “poor.”

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at

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