# THE BOLD NO RTH SHINES

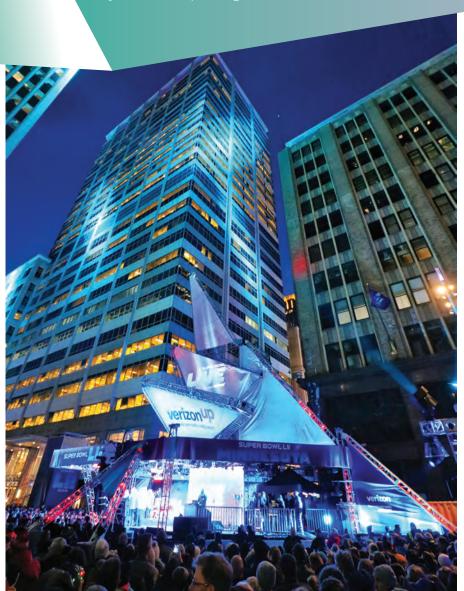
Minneapolis conquers Super Bowl LII.

BY MORGAN HALASKA

# WHEN MINNEAPOLIS WON THE BID TO HOST SUPER BOWL

LII BACK IN MAY 2014, the city and its people got to work. By the time the Eagles defeated the Patriots on Feb. 4, 2018, in front of a crowd of 67,612, more than 150 Super Bowl-related parties and events took place, 1,055,000 people attended the 10-day fan festival and 1.4 million people visited the Mall of America. The next day, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport waved good-bye to a record-breaking 61,000 visitors, and the people who worked tirelessly to pull off the event breathed a collective sigh of relief.

"It takes a cast of thousands to pull off an event of this scale," says Andrea Mokros, vice president of communications for the Minnesota Super Bowl Host Committee (MNSBHC). That cast consisted of 30 full-time staff members on the host committee, more than 400 committee members, more than 10,000 volunteers (covering 33,000 volunteer shifts, totaling 185,000 hours), and thousands of partners, vendors and law enforcement. "It took every single one of us to execute 10 days of events spanning the entire Twin Cities area."



## **ACTIVATING THE CITY**

Melvin Tennant, CAE, president and CEO of Meet Minneapolis, was present when Minneapolis won the bid over Indianapolis and New Orleans. "Having been there in the room when that decision was made is always etched in my mind and was just one of the proudest moments professionally that I can certainly recall," he says.

Winning the bid was just the start of it for Meet Minneapolis, which stayed heavily involved in the planning process to help execute certain items in the RFP. The CVB participated in a slew of committees (such as the hotel, volunteer, way-finding, cuisine, tourism and communications committees) to prepare the city for the Super Bowl. It collaborated with area CVBs to produce 35,000 welcome buttons to front-line hospitality staff and 10,000 decals to area businesses, and led six training sessions for hotel, transportation and other customer-facing employees. Staff members covered almost 50 shifts and several hundred hours of volunteer time. "With the game being on Sunday, a lot of us worked through the weekend, and we really didn't consider things over until Monday when most people left," says Tennant.

Meet Minneapolis certainly took advantage of the national platform the Super Bowl created for the city, too. "We hosted 85 clients that week. They were local, regional, national and international clients. Some were public show organizers that use the convention center,

some were sports events right holders, and we also had some domestic and international tour operators," explains Tennant. "We were able to draw our top-tier customers as a result [of hosting the Super Bowl] and the comments were just overwhelmingly positive. ... They were just very impressed with the way the city was activated, very impressed with the partnerships that had to take place to see all of those things happen. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to show our city at its best."

# **NORTHERN EXPOSURE**

Super Bowl LII had a record number of credentialed media members in Minneapolis (5,800 with 25 different countries represented), thanks in part to the public relation and marketing efforts from Meet Minneapolis. "In October of last year, two members of our communications team spent several days in New York to build relationships with a dozen or so key reporters and editors for future exposure," says Tennant. To prepare visitors for their visit, Meet Minneapolis expedited the time line of its new website, which launched in December 2017, and created a custom Super Bowl microsite. "Our website traffic year over year in January was nearly double," says Tennant. "We took full advantage of those media opportunities"

The MNSBHC created a program called Bold North Experiences, which encouraged media to participate in cold-weather adventures like dogsledding and visit landmarks like Paisley Park. "You saw anchors actually out and about experiencing what we had to offer (and showcasing it to their audiences), rather than just reporting from behind a desk," says Mokros. "We had more than 100 international media outlets participate and tell great stories about their adventures."

### **BUILDING THE BOLD NORTH**

Rather than treat Minnesota's cold climate as an obstacle to overcome, the MNSBHC rallied around it, creating the Bold North campaign. "The Bold North is the perfect



umbrella phrase for embracing our winter lifestyle. It was an evocative way to set expectations for your trip to Minnesota—it's not about being cold, it's about leaning in to what will make your visit special and memorable," says Mokros.

One way the MNSBHC executed its mission was with Super Bowl Live, the 10-day outdoor fan festival that took place on the newly renovated Nicollet (there were also indoor activities at the site of the Dayton's Project). The committee enlisted Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis to curate the music lineup, which featured 48 bands and artists. Over a million people went to the festival, with the busiest day (235,000 visitors on Feb. 3) also being the snowiest. "Seeing how people embraced the outdoor concert series—and how, incidentally, our coldest nights were also our busiest—also embodied everything that is great about our cities: great music, great people having a great time in the snow," says Mokros.

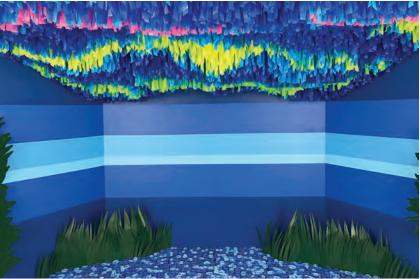
The American Birkebeiner International Bridge was transported (for the first time ever) from Hayward, Wisconsin, to Nicollet for Super Bowl Live, which took 12 semi-trucks and loads of logistical planning. The 200-foot bridge—the centerpiece of North America's largest cross-country ski race—was the site for cross-country skiing, skijoring and fat tire

bike racing during Super Bowl Live, and NBC and NFL Network used it as the backdrop to their coverage.

CRAVE's downtown Minneapolis location transformed its rooftop into the CRAVE Rooftop Ice Lounge & Ice Fishing Experience, which simulated ice fishing for visitors who might not have the resources or time to make it out to a lake. "We thought it would be really fun to bring that ice fishing experience to downtown Minneapolis so [visitors] could see what it's like to sit in an ice house and have a fishing rod in their hand and talk to a guide," says Zach Sussman, vice president of marketing for Kaskaid Hospitality. "We had about 3,000 people through the ice lounge, and we had over 150 international media outlets cover the story."

D'Amico Catering incorporated the Bold North into some of its culinary offerings. "We did a lot of Bold North menus, and really focused on local ingredients and local traditions," says Rachel Bruzek, cuisine and design manager. Some of its most Minnesota-centric menus included its North Woods Station (Minnesota smoked fish, beer-battered fried walleye, wild rice, sausage and morel mushroom risotto); Scandinavian Station (pickled herring, Swedish meatballs and lingonberry jam, build-your-own lefse); Minnesota Hot





# **'SOTA POP**

The Instagrammable pop-up experience prompted people to take out their phones, snap a picture and share.

In a vacant building in downtown Minneapolis, local artists took bare walls and transformed them into stimulating #OnlyinMN vignettes. From First Avenue's star wall to Babe the blue ox, 'Sota Pop, presented by Explore Minnesota and the brainchild of Colle McVoy, transported people to some of the state's unique attractions.

Girl Friday was one of the local artists asked to create a Minnesotan scene—a dock on a lake with the Northern Lights overhead. The team got creative with materials to make the night's sky pop. "I wanted something to fill the ceiling and bring in texture. And because we needed something that would hold up to lots of touching, we chose flagging tape—a nonadhesive stretchy tape—typically used to mark hazards or boundaries," says Carly Van Veldhuizen, owner.

For the water, Van Veldhuizen wanted to do more than just paint the floor blue. "We cut down thin, colored foam sheets and rolled it to create a textured water mat. Once rolled and attached to one another, they become pretty rigid and could be stepped on."

Dish Station (tater tot hot dish, green bean casserole, chicken pot pie); and Minnesota State Fair Station (pickles on a stick, cheese curds, turkey legs).

metroConnections made custom Bold North kiosks for the Bloomington CVB at Mall of America, which captured more than 10,000 email addresses and names to use for future marketing purposes. "We also created a custom Minnesota cut-out photo activation booth using the Bold North colors and feel," says Sydney Wolf, senior sales manager. At Herbie's On The Park in St. Paul, the metro-Connections team created an immersive Bold North experience. "We utilized our A/V team to project an official Super Bowl partner's logo on the side of the building and incorporated Bold North colors and elements on all signage and décor," says Emily Thielman, program manager of event services. "The event had an icy Northern Lights atmosphere, and a custom Super Bowl step-and-repeat made a fun background for group photos."

Possibly the boldest attraction, though, was the Bold North Zip Line. Suspended 100 feet in the air, up to four people at a time flew 750 feet across the Mississippi River at 20-30 miles per hour. "The zip line was certainly amongst the most memorable and truly embodied the two words separately," says Mokros. "You had to be bold to give it a try, and in the North we don't hide from the cold, we thrive in it."

# THE BOLD FUTURE

"[The Bold North campaign] really ties into a much larger initiative of ours," says Tennant.



"We have a tourism master plan [Destination Transformation 2030] ... and one of the eight initiatives that came out of this plan is to accentuate winter as a novel tourism adventure." The goal is to boost wintertime visitors to 11 million by 2030 by developing infrastructure to support outdoor and indoor winter activities and create a signature outdoor event; flip to page 30 to read more about Minneapolis' tourism plan.

The Super Bowl was the perfect place to start promoting Minneapolis as a winter destination. For the week of Jan. 28 to Feb. 3, hotel occupancy was up more than 50 percent with the average daily rate up almost 160 percent. "That time of the year is typically not as strong a tourism period as others," says Tennant. "It was wonderful for us to expose visitors to Minneapolis at a time when they typically are not here."

And while it is indeed cold in Minnesota, visitors will be warmly welcomed—the biggest piece of feedback Mokros said the committee received. "It left a positive impression on our visitors and is a big reason they want to come back."

# **VENUE DEBUTS**

When Jack Murphy, president of Nomadic Entertainment Group, was touring venues in August 2016 to produce Nomadic Live (a three-day concert series that precedes the Super Bowl), he was still questioning whether he'd have to build his own space or use an

existing venue (for the 2016 Super Bowl in San Francisco, Murphy transformed an abandoned warehouse on the water's edge into a night club, and in Houston in 2017 he built his own space). When he toured the Armory, he knew he found his space.

"A lot of people were looking at [the Armory] but nobody could see past the pigeons and the holes in the roof. The place was in pretty bad shape," recalls Murphy. "[Ned Abdul, owner of the Amory, and I] connected inside the building ... he told me his story and I told him mine, he shared his vision and I shared mine. We immediately connected and shook hands and said, 'We're gonna have a deal here.""

Because the Armory was still very much in the development stage when Murphy struck a deal with Abdul, he influenced a lot of the interior and structural design of the building for not only Nomadic Live, but also for the venue's future of an event space. "We brought a decent contingent of people in [for Nomadic Live], but we also took all the locals and trained them in a way that would be fashionable to our type of event. And because he shared that same vision, now he's got this going forward."

The Armory had a couple soft openings in December and on New Year's Eve, but Nomadic Live was the official launch and featured concerts on three different nights from Imagine Dragons, Jennifer Lopez and Pink, who require massive production value (Pink, for example, was rigged up to fly across the venue).

Murphy still talks to Abdul on a regular

# 1992 VS. 2018

A lot has changed in the 26 years between now and the last Super Bowl Minneapolis hosted.

# 1992 SUPER BOWL XXVI

Minneapolis Population 364,459

Metro Area Population 2,500,000

> Economic Impact \$120 million

Hotel Rooms in Minneapolis
4.460 downtown hotel rooms

Cost of a 30-second Super Bowl Commercial: \$850.000

Stadium Size & Seating Capacity Metrodome: 900,000 square feet; 64,121 for football

# **2018 SUPER BOWL LII**

Minneapolis Population 410,939

Metro Area Population 3,524,583

### Economic Impact

TBD (More than \$400 million was projected by the Minnesota Super Bowl Host Committee)

> Hotel Rooms in Minneapolis 8,730 downtown hotel rooms

Cost of a 30-second Super Bowl Commercial: \$5 million

Stadium Size & Seating Capacity U.S. Bank Stadium: 1,750,000 square feet; 66,200 for football

# **GAME-DAY FOOD**

FOOD IS A MAJOR PLAYER AT ANY SUPER BOWL PARTY.

Those lucky enough to be at U.S. Bank Stadium for Super Bowl LII were treated to a carefully curated selection of Minnesota-themed general concessions just for the game, representing the distinct taste of the Twin Cities and beyond. Aramark Senior Executive Chef James Mehne and his culinary team spent almost a year developing the menu. Among the many items, there were Bubble Waffle Shoppes (page 14); Revival's smoked pork belly sandwich and hush puppies; Andrew Zimmern's Canteen's Creamy Frozen Hot Chocolate and Northwoods Porketta Sandwich; Curds N Cakes' Blue Moon Bacon Cheese Curds; and Minnesota State Fair classics (smoked turkey leg, pork chop on a stick and cookie dough cone).

To pay tribute to the AFC and NFC teams going head to head, the Aramark team created two sandwiches and signature drinks for game day:

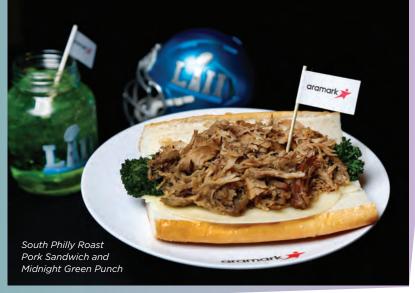
# **NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS**

- NEW ENGLAND CLAM ROLL kettle-chip crusted fried clams, house tartar sauce and shredded lettuce on a griddled roll
- THE WICKED RED cranberry juice, rum and blueberry

## PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

- SOUTH PHILLY ROAST PORK SANDWICH Italian roast pork, sautéed broccoli rabe and sharp provolone on a hoagie roll
- MIDNIGHT GREEN PUNCH vodka, sour apple and lemon-lime soda





basis, and plans on working on bringing more programs to the venue. "Just because we left the Super Bowl doesn't mean we've left," says Murphy.

Quincy Hall, the new CRAVE-operated event venue, hosted Wheels Up's star-studded private party well before its projected opening date of September. The industrial-chic event center will fill a gap in the city's venue repertoire, and the jet engine company was the first to capitalize on the space (supplying everything but the food since it was still under construction). "There's really nothing outside of hotel ballrooms in the downtown Minneapolis area that you can fit 3,000 people cocktail-style and 1,000 people seated," says Sussman.

The timing of the Super Bowl worked out well for Quincy Hall. "It certainly provided us the opportunity to activate the venue and get some visuals of what the place looks like with people in it and fully set for a party. Normally at this point we'd have interior renderings to show people," says Sussman. And while there's already a lot of buzz among the local industry about the venue, hosting this kind of high-end event put Quincy Hall in the spotlight and appealed to the kind of people the venue hopes to attract, says Sussman.

# **ALL HANDS ON DECK**

With the size and scope of the Super Bowl, and all the surrounding events, the industry players had to be on the ball.

metroConnections worked on almost 25 projects the week leading up to the Super Bowl and throughout Super Bowl weekend. "Planning was unlike other programs due to

so many moving pieces outside the control of our clients or internal planners, including NFL involvement, city logistics, celebrities, security, weather, travel plans," says Wolf. "The planning process was more complicated than we've seen due to incredibly short lead times. We're used to sticky layers of detail, but Super Bowl LII was on a whole new level."

Project requests even cropped up last minute—some less than seven days out. "Our phones and inboxes were filled with people looking for event support in the days, and even hours, leading up to Super Bowl weekend," says Wolf. "We were able to rely on our amazing logistics and operations team that are proactive in their approach and ready to handle any seemingly challenging request or call."

Renee Splittgerber, director of Transportation Services for metroConnections,



says transportation services were in high demand and there were more VIP transfers than initially thought. "It was difficult to plan for additional support staff we didn't know would be needed until sometimes hours before the event or activity," she says. "One thing that helped us avoid challenges was planning as much as we could ahead of time, including mapping out road closures and detours and establishing staff responsibilities."

D'Amico Catering worked 12 events that ranged in size from 40 guests to 1,500 at venues across the Twin Cities. "It was one party after the other ... we were all over the place" says Mike Sneen, executive chef, D'Amico Catering. With security much more present during this Super Bowl, as compared to 1992, getting from one place to another was much more difficult, too.

In some cases, turnaround was tight between parties, and because this wasn't a standard corporate party, the team had to go above and beyond to prepare for the big productions that were moving into the venues. "We had a lot of staff who ended up working overnight just to transition from party to party," says Bruzek. "We had a transition at IMS between [Rolling Stone Super Bowl Party, 1,500 guests] to the [NetJets Super Bowl Party, 500 guests]."

Teamwork was put to the test, certainly, to pull it all off. "What we can do when we all pull together as a team—it's pretty incredible," says Bruzek. "We have great global scheduling between all our venues ... we were able to use all our teams instead of having to have a lot

of rental staff, we really maximized our own people for all the events." To accurately plan for food needed, D'Amico created themed stations for clients to choose from, rather than customizing menus for each party, helping the company save on food costs and labor.

Kaskaid Hospitality was proactive in booking its venues for private events, rather than assuming clients would naturally find them. "We learned from our experience with the All-Star Game [in 2014], and we approached [Super Bowl LII] with a mentality that we were not going to sit back and wait for the business to come to us ... I think that was the fatal mistake that a lot of people made," says Sussman. "Everybody said there were going to be a million people in town and everyone was going to be so, so busy. And we just refused to believe it." Public attractions, like the ice lounge at CRAVE, "primed the pump" to ensure business, too, says Sussman.

# BUILDING UP A BETTER MINNESOTA

Diversity and inclusion are at the core of the NFL's Business Connect program's mission, which partners with local vendors and companies that were 51 percent-owned by a minority, woman, veteran or LGBT individuals during Super Bowls. More than 350 Minnesota businesses in 40 vendor categories participated in the year-and-a-half-long Business Connect program, preparing them for Super Bowl LII. "[Our Business Connect partners] served as event planners, caterers, suppliers, consul-

# MINNESOTA NICE

# What did visitors say about their Super Bowl experience?

"We just had an unbelievable experience [in Minneapolis]. ... We find that in some of those colder states [i.e. Indianapolis, Detroit, Minnesota], they're some of the most warming places we've been to."

### **JACK MURPHY**

President; Nomadic Entertainment Group

"I think [visitors] walked away realizing Minnesota is really friendly, has really good food, really good beverages, really good venues, and really great service all around."

### **MIKE SNEEN**

Executive Chef; D'Amico Catering

"We heard *nothing but positive feedback* from [clients such as the NFL, Wheels Up, NBC, ESPN and Paramount Pictures]. ... That was, for us, very rewarding to hear coming from the most high-level planners and companies in the world."

### ZACH SUSSMAN,

Vice President of Marketing; Kaskaid Hospitality

"Minnesotans are some of the hardiest, warmest folks you'll ever meet, and it was great to hear positive feedback from our clients. One said, 'We had a great experience in Minneapolis-St. Paul and I am so happy we decided to work with metroConnections on our program. The attention to detail and can-do approach from everyone we worked with was fantastic. The staff you all assigned to work at the airport, activities and at the game were some of the best I have ever worked with."

### SYDNEY WOLF

Senior Sales Manager; metroConnections

tants; and even created some of our most iconic images [Uzoma Obasi/Creative Mind Studios], whether it was crafting the ice sculptures or capturing the moment in photos," says Mokros. "Throughout the year they became a cohort, participating in training and development sessions. Our hope is that, with this on their résumé, they can now go forward to assist future large-scale events in our market."

The overarching goal of the MNSBHC was to ensure that the positive impacts of the Super Bowl touched were felt not only in Minneapolis, but also the entire state. Over the 52 weeks leading up to the Super Bowl, the Minnesota Super Bowl Legacy Fund invested \$5.5 million in 52 community organizations across Minnesota (ranging from urban, suburban and rural communities) to improve kids' health and wellness and spearheaded two campaigns focused on healthy eating. Over 80 percent of the grants were invested in organizations in Greater Minnesota-40 different cities across the state. The Legacy Fund identified racial, cultural (including Minnesota's 11 tribal communities) and low-income communities most in need. The year-long philanthropic initiative generated local and statewide press coverage, and 100 percent of the grantees reported that the Legacy Fund created additional awareness to its mission.

# A GREEN LEGACY

One of the NFL's missions is to leave behind a "green legacy" rather than a mess once the game is over. Through a series of initiatives, the NFL and MNSBHC worked to reduce the environmental impact of Super Bowl LII.

The NFL Environmental Program implemented its first zero-waste legacy project at Super Bowl LII, partnering with PepsiCo, Aramark, U.S. Bank Stadium, SMG and the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority to divert 91 percent of game-day waste from the landfill—the highest diversion rate achieved at U.S. Bank Stadium and at any previous Super Bowl. The nearly 63 of 69 tons of waste was recovered through recycling or donation for reuse (62 percent) and composting (29 per-

"IN 1992, we had many clients requesting outdoor activities such as snowmobiling, ice fishing, skating, touring the ice sculptures and ice castles, so we knew that having extra warm clothing on hand is essential. We realized visitors from other climates didn't expect or prepare for sub-freezing temps. Coming from warmer weather, clients might not realize what kind of outerwear they'll need—so we had extra hats, gloves and scarves for them to ensure they could partake and enjoy in activities here."

DAVID GRAVES, president and CEO, metroConnections



cent). This compares to a 20 percent diversion rate in the stadium's first season—no small feat in the world of facility management.

Aramark, the stadium's food and beverage provider, premiered its first compostable bag of peanuts earlier in the season in Kansas City, which appeared at Super Bowl LII (its first), while also replacing its food vessels, service products and utensils with compostable alternatives; minimizing food waste in the kitchen (composting food trimmings, for example); and donating unused bulk ingredients through Second Harvest Heartland to local food banks and charities.

The Rush2Recycle campaign showed fans how to recycle properly, and uniformed zero-waste ambassadors at the game helped fans identify the correct bins for recycling, composting and waste-to-energy in the new tri-bin waste collection system. A detailed postgame waste sort procedure was implemented to ensure each waste stream was contaminant free.

With the help of Second Harvest, 152,842 pounds of unserved food and beverages from Super Bowl events were recovered and donated to local shelters and community kitchens. The NFL Environmental Program also implemented a comprehensive material recovery program to repurpose upwards of 125,000 pounds of décor fabric, carpet, turf, office supplies, signage and lanyards from Super Bowl-related events. American Maintenance (the cleaning company hired by the host committee) recovered 21.25 tons of material from Super Bowl Live. In partnership with Salvation Army, the NFL worked with dozens of local nonprofits that found creative reuses for the material.

# BOLD NORTH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

# **DURING SUPER BOWL LIVE:**

62,434 likes on Facebook for posts mentioning the Bold North
35,369 references to Bold North on Twitter
14,073 Instagram posts mentioning the Bold North

I just learned skijoring. You put on cross country ski and strap yourself to a greyhound dog and hold the duck on. I'm going home to talk Minnesota winter vacation with the wife ASAP.

Ralph Dale Earnhardt Jr.; @DaleJr

Bundles of Love, for example, used décor fabric to make baby clothes for low-income families. Turf was given to animal shelters and theater groups; office supplies went to teachers/low-income schools through Companies to Classrooms; and some of the building materials went to Habitat for Humanity.

The E-Waste Recycling Rally in October at the Minnesota Zoo collected 42,081 pounds (67 pallets) of e-waste (computers, printers, monitors and television) that were responsibly recycled instead of thrown in the landfill, and 221 cell phones were given to Verizon's HopeLine Program.

More than a dozen forestry projects took place all over the state during the fall and summer months, adding thousands of seedlings and hundreds of large trees to local parks and recreation areas and a national forest to help create additional green space in local communities. Projects ranged from eight large pollinator gardens created at the Minnesota Zoo to 2,000-plus native plantings at Westwood Hills Nature Center.

In January, the Super Kids-Super Sharing project garnered 46,000 gently used or new donations (including sports equipment, games, books and school supplies) from surrounding families/students and put them into the hands of other students in need from local schools, after-school programs, shelters and more.

### A WIN FOR MINNEAPOLIS

The Eagles might be the official winner of Super Bowl LII, but consider Minneapolis the unofficial champion. Mokros sums it



up as "overall, a truly flawless event," and Minneapolis succeeded, says Tennant. "It really gave us confidence in our ability to go after any event," he says.

Minneapolis demonstrated all it has to offer to a national and international audience, grabbing the attention of people who never gave the city a second thought. If it's anything like Indianapolis, which saw a 20 percent increase in conference business in the years immediately following Super Bowl XLVI, Minneapolis should expect to see significant growth in tourism and convention business in the near future.

# **GET CONNECTED**

THE ARMORY | armorymn.com

D'AMICO CATERING | damicocatering.com

MEET MINNEAPOLIS | minneapolis.org/superbowl

METROCONNECTIONS | metroconnections.com

MINNESOTA SUPER BOWL LII
HOST COMMITTEE | mnsuperbowl.com

MINNESOTA SUPER BOWL LEGACY FUND mnsuperbowl.com/about/legacy-fund

QUINCY HALL | quincyhallmn.com

RUSH2RECYCLE | rush2recycle.com