

Surge in Outdoor Recreation Participation Drives New Demographics and Infrastructure Needs in Regional Tourism Hubs

SANTA FE, NM, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Data from national outdoor industry organizations indicates a significant increase in public engagement with trail-based recreation across the United States. According to the 2025 Outdoor Participation Trends Report published by the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation has experienced consecutive years of record-breaking growth, led by substantial baseline increases in activities such as hiking, trail running, and mountain biking. The data shows that core outdoor users—defined as individuals who participate in outdoor activities frequently—increased by 5 million individuals nationally, with growth patterns accelerating among youth and senior demographics. Additionally, the Outdoor Industry Association's 2026 Hiking Report indicates that nationwide hiking participation reached an all-time high of 63.4 million active participants. This widespread increase in trail use has changed regional tourism dynamics, as travelers alter their lodging and destination preferences to center around outdoor infrastructure rather than conventional indoor urban attractions.



As municipal travel sectors adjust to this influx of active travelers, destinations with established trail infrastructure are experiencing distinct economic benefits. A comprehensive target industry analysis conducted by Santa Fe County indicates that outdoor recreation represents a major economic driver for the regional economy. The county currently features over 600 miles of designated hiking trails and more than 400 miles of mountain biking trails, which contributed to the International Mountain Biking Association designating the area as a Silver-Level Ride Center. Rather than sticking strictly to highly congested national parks, modern adventure travelers are distributing themselves across complex municipal and county networks. Visitors organizing excursions in Northern New Mexico are increasingly researching Santa Fe hiking and biking trails to utilize multi-use options such as the Dale Ball Trails network and high-altitude singletrack routes situated in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

Hotels are responding to these outdoor trends by focusing on properties that sit close to regional trailheads. Lodging options built on the edge of busy downtown areas allow travelers to avoid central city traffic when driving their outdoor gear up to the mountains. Piñon Court by La Fonda, located in the South Capitol neighborhood of Santa Fe, is one example of a hotel using this location strategy. The physical placement of the property gives travelers and outdoor groups a direct drive to the side highways that lead right to the local trail networks. This setup allows guests to stay clear of heavy downtown traffic during busy morning hours while offering a low-density property layout to return to at night.

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[About Piñon Court by La Fonda](#)

Piñon Court by La Fonda is a historic lodging property featuring 45 traditional guest rooms and suites arranged in a classic Southwest motor court layout. The hotel features a classic motor-court architectural configuration centered around an outdoor courtyard space equipped with communal fire pits. Guest rooms come with a complimentary hot breakfast buffet daily, 55-inch Smart televisions, complimentary high-speed wireless internet access, dedicated workspace desks, and some with fireplaces to complement cool desert evenings. The Bistro, the hotel's on-site restaurant and bar, is where guests can savor local food and cocktails. Hotel guests enjoy access to a 24-hour fitness center and full-service wellness spa at our sister property La Fonda on the Plaza, equipped with individual treadmills, stationary bicycles, and free weights.

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