The Range is a region of northeastern Minnesota that sits atop the largest iron ore deposit in North America, and is surrounded by glacial lakes, rugged forests and unique terrain. It’s a heritage-rich area where spending time outdoors – at the lake, in the woods, on the trails – is as much a part of life as an appreciation for mining, the industry that keeps the economic wheels turning and the landscape an ever-changing marvel.

**Iron Range Culture**

**The Range is known for:**

Hard-working and fun-loving people - Always happy to tell a story, take a novice angler ice fishing, and share whatever’s in their cooler on a hot day, Rangers have a passion for the outdoors and strong ties to a shared past.

Four seasons of diversions - From fishing, biking, golfing or boating to hunting, skiing, curling and hockey, the Range is a sporting paradise with outdoor recreation that’s as challenging, competitive, leisurely or laid-back as the participants choose.

A history worth mining - Settled in the late 1800s by immigrants from dozens of European nations, the Range was once a true melting pot, where vastly different ethnicities were thrown together in the workplace and ended up building much more than communities.

A taste for tradition Rangers love a fish fry or BBQ as much as the next person, but most have a special place in their hearts, and stomachs, for traditional ethnic foods like pasties, sarmas, potica, cardamom bread, mojakka or lefse.
General Information

Who gets to call themselves a Ranger?
The Range is a nickname for a region that includes the towns of Hibbing, Chisholm, Buhl, Mountain Iron, Virginia, Eveleth, Gilbert, Biwabik, Aurora, Hoyt Lakes and Embarrass.

Population:
Collectively, the Range communities total about 45,000 spread east to west across a 55-mile-long band that’s about 20 miles from north to south.
The largest Range towns are Hibbing (17,000) and Virginia (8,000)

Location:
The Range is a region approximately 3.5 hours north of downtown St. Paul and 50 miles north of Duluth.
Interstate 35 comes within about 65 miles from the Range; follow US Hwy 53 or US Hwy 73 north.
Access Range Regional Airport in Hibbing with direct flights daily from Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport.

Climate:
Something for everyone! The Range experiences the very best of every season: deep snow and good ice, springtime highs that mean a good long hike won’t leave you sweating, summer days when nothing feels better than a dip in the lake, and perfect-for-a-campfire autumns.

Famous Rangers who were born or lived on the Range

★ Jeno Paulucci ~ inventor of pizza rolls and Michelina’s frozen food lines
★ Kevin McHale ~ famous Boston Celtic player and NBA head coach
★ Doc “Moonlight” Graham ~ immortalized in the movie Field of Dreams
★ Bob Dylan ~ the poet, songwriter, singer
★ Roger Maras ~ (changed to Maris) held the MLB season home run record for 37 years
★ Mark Pavelich ~ hit the game-winning goal in the “Miracle on Ice” 1980 Olympic hockey game against Russia
★ Robert Mondavi ~ founder of Mondavi California wines
★ Rudy Perpich ~ former MN governor and the genius behind the Mall of America
★ Lois Jenson ~ inspiration for the 2005 film “North Country” starring Charlize Theron
Hibbing is the birthplace of Greyhound Bus lines. Learn all about it at the Greyhound Bus Origin Museum through exhibits, film and “busses through the ages” – climb aboard and see how transportation has changed through the years.

The US version of the Hockey Hall of Fame is a museum in Eveleth that contains all things hockey: exhibits, memorabilia, even a model rink where you can test the speed of your slapshot.

The Range recycles! Iron ore mining means holes are dug, and what’s not used, “overburden,” is placed somewhere else. Mine pits across the Range have filled with springwater and been stocked with trout; campgrounds, trails, beaches, docks and even a museum have been built alongside these manmade lakes. Elsewhere, the hills created by overburden have been turned into ski areas, off-road vehicle parks and scenic overlooks.

Biwabik is home to Giants Ridge Golf & Ski resort: two award-winning golf courses, a 35-run alpine ski area, and disc golf course. The resort also has paved, mountain and winter access trails, fishing piers and a rental shop with fishing boats, kayaks, inline skates and bikes. Condominiums and villa-style cabins are available for rent, and there are two restaurants on the campus.

Minnesota Discovery Center in Chisholm is a mining history museum with traveling exhibits, historic buildings and a mining-themed mini-golf course. Visitors gravitate to the trolley that runs on a 2.5-mile loop to a mining ghost town along the edge of the former Glen and Godfrey mines.

Finnish immigrants who came to the Range in the early 1900s were often wary of working in the mines. Many became farmers and several of their homesteads, including log homes and barns, may be toured in the small town of Embarrass.

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**Did you know?**

- The state’s first (and only) off-highway vehicle recreation park.
- The largest floating loon in the country (possibly the world!)
- The biggest open pit mine in the world (you must see it to believe it).

**ONLY ON THE RANGE:**

- The world’s largest hockey stick – and puck!
- The third-largest statue in America, Iron Man.
- One of the longest paved biking & hiking trail in the country, the Mesabi Trail.
The Mesabi Trail is a paved bike path that travels through nine of the 11 Range communities, passing lakes, minelands, marsh and forests along the way. Giants Ridge Rental Shop in Biwabik offers lodge-to-lodge biking and shuttle services.

There’s a lot of stuff, like businesses, called “Mesaba-this” or “Mesabi-that” on the Range. That’s because of an Ojibwe legend that tells of a “great and stout giant man” called Mesabi, who gathered and protected the region’s treasures. After roaming the northland for generations, he finally grew tired and lay still on the land, sleeping an endless sleep on top of his treasures, and becoming the contours of the earth.

Nothing testifies to the wealth and might of the early 1900s mining companies like the Hibbing High School. Built as a trade-off for literally moving the entire town to make way for mining, the high school cost $4 million to erect in 1923. No expense was spared, and cut glass chandeliers, Italian marble pillars, frescoes and an 1,800-seat theater are just a few of the features that may be viewed.

Virginia’s historic Olcott Park is the site of an annual Land of the Loon Ethnic Arts and Crafts Festival that draws more than 300 exhibitors, 30 food vendors and 30,000 visitors.

Iron ore has been mined here for more than 100 years. About 2 billion tons of rock have been moved around the Range in that time. But thanks to a commitment to outdoor sports and recreation by the people who live here, access to trails, lakes and wilderness remains part of everyday life on the Range.

Bring your group, field trip, or tournament to Minnesota’s Wilderness and Recreation Area. Call for planning assistance 800-777-8497.