



RIVERLAND
Community College

Communications and Marketing Department

2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025

Compiled by James Douglass
Executive Director of Communications
Media Relations and Marketing

2024–2025 Annual Report

Communications and Marketing Department

Riverland Community College

James Douglass, Executive Director of Communications, Media Relations & Marketing

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Executive Summary

This report outlines the strategic efforts and measurable accomplishments of Riverland Community College’s Communications and Marketing team throughout the 2024–2025 fiscal year. The department operated as a lean, multi-skilled unit with high-impact contributions across enrollment marketing, internal communication, design, digital presence, public relations, accessibility, and storytelling. All team members advanced Riverland’s mission by supporting student success, institutional visibility, and compliance. The following sections detail the work of James Douglass, Sandy Roe, BJ Witts, and Sarv Mithaqiyan.

Internal and External Communications (James Douglass)

James led strategic planning, internal communications, media relations, and public messaging. He oversaw the college's response to federal policy changes and led communication for institutional achievements and crises.

Key Contributions:

- Published 49 issues of The Current employee newsletter.
- Drafted and managed public statements, including the ICE visa revocation response.
- Developed scripts, talking points, and releases for Ribbon Cuttings, Awards Ceremonies, and Legislative letters.
- Authored institutional messaging supporting Hispanic-Serving Institution designation.
- Coordinated internal branding, office relocation notices, and digital accessibility policy rollouts.
Managed relationships with regional and state media.

Media coverage highlights:

- [SkillsUSA and PTK wins:](#)
- [President Atewologun's Emeritus award](#)
- [HSI designation](#)
- [ICE visa incident:](#)

Web Development and Accessibility (Sandy Roe)

Sandy handled over 1,180 web-related service requests and directly supported 20 different departments. Her efforts advanced digital accessibility, analytics reporting, and internal transparency.

Key Metrics:

- 1,183 total tickets resolved
- 152 Annual Catalog and Curriculum edits
- 26 Web stories posted
- 49 editions of The Current uploaded and archived
- 57 event web updates

- 91 PDF accessibility remediations
- 48 accessibility reports for stakeholders

Public Website Traffic and Digital Trends:

Reporting Period: Jan 1–Dec 31, 2024

- **Users:** 292,935 | **Pageviews:** 3.4 million
- **Top Traffic Sources:** Search (43%), Direct (31%), Referral (10%)
- **Top MN Cities:** Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna
- **Device Access:** 50% Mobile, 48% Desktop
- **Most Visited Pages:** RN, Radiography, LPN, Scholarships, Apply Page
- **Program Inquiries from Top Cities:** 1,163

This data confirms continued strong interest in Riverland’s **nursing and healthcare programs**, as well as **scholarships and admission pathways**. High mobile usage affirms our focus on mobile-first design and readability.

Sandy’s cross-functional coordination with Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Marketing, and Web Development supported WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility goals and improved real-time communications.

Graphic Design and Brand Standards (BJ Witts)

BJ managed over 1,280 graphic design requests from 24 departments, ensuring all visuals aligned with Riverland’s brand identity. He also served as editor for The Weekly student newsletter and supported major campaigns.

Key Highlights:

- 1,287 design projects completed
- Designed print/digital materials for 24 unique departments
- Managed signage, wayfinding, event materials, campus displays
- Maintained brand guidelines and templates
- Created visuals for Spirit Week, Commencement, HSI campaign, career pathways
- Editor and compiler for The Weekly, the primary digital newsletter for students

BJ also supported strategic marketing campaigns and ensured visual consistency across departments, including HR, Allied Health, Equity, and Academic Affairs.

Social Media, Video, and Storytelling (Sarv Mithaqiyan)

Sarv led the creative content strategy for Riverland’s social media, video storytelling, and Riverland Quarterly publication. His work expanded the college’s digital footprint and enhanced prospective student engagement.

Platform Performance:

- 460+ social media posts
- 3,000+ interactions across channels
- 42,992 Facebook impressions
- 15,499 Instagram impressions
- 15,504 LinkedIn impressions
- 1,723 YouTube impressions
- 1,506 impressions on X (formerly Twitter)

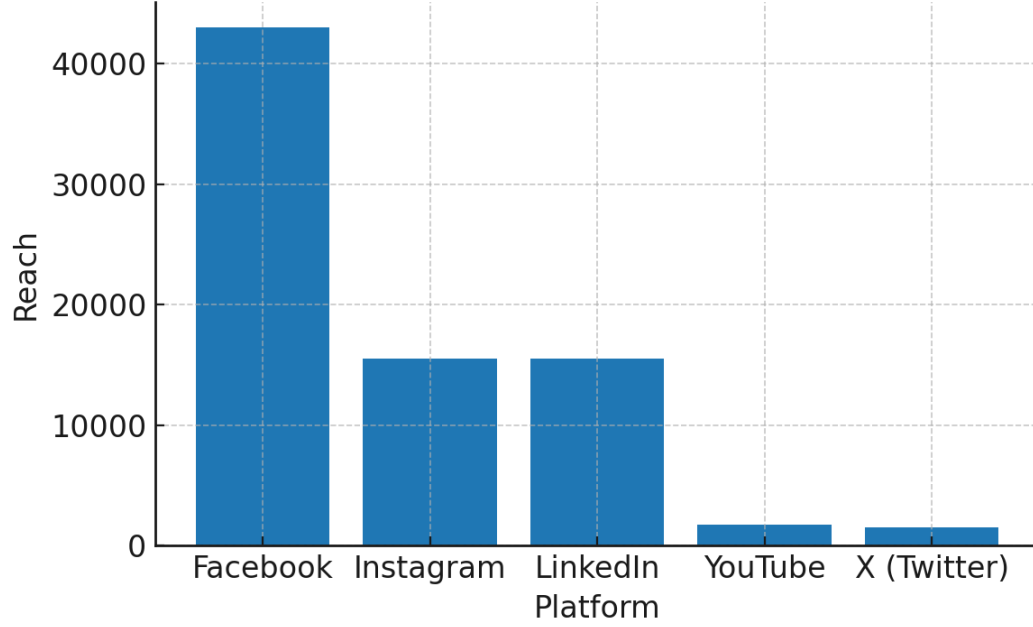
Key Deliverables:

- Video profiles of students, faculty, and events
- Content for Riverland Quarterly (video and layout)
- On-site multimedia coverage of ribbon cuttings, competitions, and student spotlights
- Collaboration with Admissions, Events, and Academic departments

Sarv’s timely and strategic posts helped improve visibility and drove traffic to the college website and program pages.

Social Media Reach by Platform

Social Media Reach by Platform (2024-2025)



Web Program Page Inquiries

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Dec		139	106	119	84	89	112	98	69	64
Nov		118	76	84	103	85	102	99	97	77
Oct		124	107	115	105	102	90	130	76	63
Sept	134	124	70	127	93	101	77	125	65	
Aug	165	172	92	117	111	97	109	137	54	
Jul	105	161	86	124	114	132	130	151	83	
Jun	137	117	121	119	105	88	83	118	73	
May	128	164	163	135	133	112	119	91	85	
Apr	124	151	140	110	117	82	115	112	91	
Mar	145	124	134	117	119	58	121	95	112	
Feb	135	112	129	98	115	108	106	85	62	
Jan	190	129	179	122	120	116	117	94	83	
Total	1263	1635	1403	1387	1319	1170	1281	1335	950	

RQ Newsletter Stats Report (Fall 2024 – Summer 2025)

Over the past year, the Riverland Quarterly (RQ) newsletter has consistently reached nearly 500 recipients per issue, with strong engagement rates across all editions.

Key Metrics (per edition):

- Deliveries: 444 – 482 per issue
- Opens: 221 – 267 per issue (48–56% open rate)
- Clicks: 59 – 73 per issue (12–15% click rate)

Highlights:

- The Winter 2025 edition achieved the highest engagement, with 267 opens and 73 clicks.
- Open rates remained steady throughout the year, averaging around 52%, which is well above typical industry benchmarks.
- Click-through activity was consistent, averaging about 65 clicks per issue.

Overall:

The RQ newsletter continues to show strong readership and engagement, reflecting both the relevance of its content and the interest of the Riverland community.

The Current Newsletter Stats Report (09/24 – 09/25)

Over the past year, The Current has consistently reached Riverland employees with weekly editions, delivering to roughly 340–430 recipients per issue. Engagement remains strong across all issues:

- Average Open Rate: 54%
- Average Click Rate: 25%

Highlights:

- The week of September 23, 2024 had the highest click engagement, with 153 clicks (38.4% click rate).
- Open rates stayed consistently above 50%, demonstrating high readership among employees.
- The most popular posts include Crew Member of the Week (breaking over 100 views each week), Job Postings, Employee Departures, and New Employee Hires. Our highest-ever viewed articles for the year involved the office move notices of May, 2024.

Overall:

The Current remains a highly effective internal communication tool, consistently engaging staff and maintaining low bounce and unsubscribe rates, reflecting both the relevance of the content and the loyalty of the Riverland community.

The Weekly Newsletter Stats Report (09/24 – 09/25)

Over the past year, The Weekly has consistently reached Riverland students, with issue deliveries ranging from 2,195 to 2,623 recipients per week. Engagement has been steady, with open rates averaging 33% and click rates averaging 2%, which is typical for student-targeted email communications. Bounces and unsubscribes remain extremely low, generally under 0.2%, demonstrating a strong list and audience retention.

Highlights:

- The highest open rates occurred in September 2025, with several issues above 43%, including 46% on September 2, 2025.
- Click engagement peaked with 100 clicks (4.6% click rate) for the September 16, 2024 edition.
- Mobile readership is significant, ranging from 40–50% of total opens, highlighting the importance of mobile-friendly design.

Overall:

The Weekly continues to be a reliable and effective tool for reaching Riverland students, maintaining consistent engagement while keeping bounces and unsubscribes to a minimum.

Spring/Summer Semester 2025 Marketing List

Targeted Postcard

- Prospect list via Admissions

Digital Advertising (APG/Pixel Ink)

- 40-mile radius from Austin + Extras
- Delivery: October 9 - January 1 (12 Weeks)

Google Digital Advertising

- 40-mile radius from Austin + Extras
- Delivery: October 30 - January 1 (9 Weeks)

Facebook Digital Advertising

- Delivery: October 30 - January 1 (9 Weeks)

Digital Advertising (Facebook Boosted Event)

- Delivery: June 1 - August 21

YouTube Advertising

- Delivery: October 30 - January 1 (9 Weeks)
- :15 General Spring

Streaming Radio Ads (Spotify)

- Delivery: October 30 - January 1 (9 Weeks)

Digital Billboards

- Delivery: November 1 - January 1 (8 Weeks)
- November: "Enroll Now in New Programs Starting in January..."
- December/January: "Programs Start January 8..."

Facebook Event

- Delivery: November 1- January 8 (8 Weeks)

Digital Displays

- October: Program Focus 1 and 2
- November: Program Focus 2 and 3
- December/January: Final Spring

Constant Contact Targeted Email

- Primary: November 1
- Secondary (Last Call): December 4 (4 Weeks Before Start)

Website Landing Page

- Delivery: September 12

Riverland Site Hero Banner

- October: Program Focus 1 and 2
- November: Program Focus 2 and 3
- December/January: Final Spring

Riverland Site Page Graphics

- Delivery: September 12
- Revisit Graphics for Update: October 30
- Academics Page
- Career Clusters Page
- Current Students Page

Riverland Site Callout Ad

- Delivery: October 30 - January 1 (9 Weeks)

Brightspace/D2L Ad

- Image 1: September 12 - October 11
- Image 2: October 12 - November 11
- Image 3: November 12 - December 15

The Weekly Banner/Placed Ad

- Image 1: November 1 - 30
- Image 2: December 1 - 15

Social Media

- Delivery: October 30 - January 8

Calendar Updating

- Delivery: September 12

Fall Semester 2025 Marketing List

Targeted Postcard

- Admissions supplied list (1,700)
- Delivery: Early June

Digital Advertising (APG/Pixel Ink)

- 35-mile radius from Austin + Extras
- Delivery: June 1 - August 21

Google Digital Advertising

- 35-mile radius from Austin + Extras
- Delivery: June 1 - August 21

Facebook Digital Advertising

- Delivery: June 1 - August 21

Facebook Boosted Advertising

- Delivery: June 1 - August 21

YouTube Advertising

- Delivery: October 30 - January 1 (9 Weeks)
- :15 General Spring

Streaming Radio Ads (Spotify)

- Expanded Region for Fall 2023
- Version 1 (:15): June 1 - June 30
- Version 2 (:15): July 1 - July 31
- Version 3 (:15): August 1 - August 14

Facebook Event

- Delivery: June - August

Digital Billboards

- Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna
- Delivery: June 1 – August 21
- June 1 - 30 (Image 1)
- July 1 - 31 (Image 2)
- August 1 - 20 (Image 3)

Campus Digital Displays

- Delivery: June 1 - August 21

Constant Contact Targeted Email

- Admissions Prospects + Web Inquiries
- Primary: June 1
- Follow-up: July 17 (5 Weeks Before Start)

Website Landing Page

- Delivery: Mid May
- riverland.edu/fall

Riverland Site Hero Banner

- June 1 - 30 (Image 1)
- July 1 - 31 (Image 2)
- August 1 - 20 (Image 3)

Riverland Site Page Graphics

- Delivery: End of May
- Academics Page Header
- Career Clusters Page Header

- Current Students Page Header
- Programs of Study Page Header

Riverland Site Callout Ad

- Delivery: June 1 - August 14

Brightspace/D2L Ad

- June 1 – July 4 (Gen. Reg. Image 1)
- July 5 – August 21 (Gen. Reg. Image 2)

Social & Interactive Media

- Multiple (Sarv)

Calendar Updating

- Delivery: May

Web Analytics

Our interactive Web Analytics can be found on our Employee Site on the Communications and Marketing site under Departments.

<https://infogram.com/1p6211xx9krx5xa5elnq72xwyqs3qrnxez9?live>

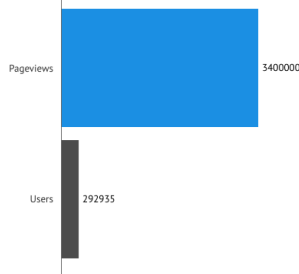
See graphs on the following pages.

Riverland.edu Overview:

- 292,935 users visited Riverland.edu in 2024 (steady year-over-year growth).
- 3.4 million pageviews — high engagement for a regional college site.
- Top cities: Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna.
- Traffic sources: Search (43%) and Direct (31%) remain dominant.
- Reflects strong organic visibility and returning audience loyalty.

Overview

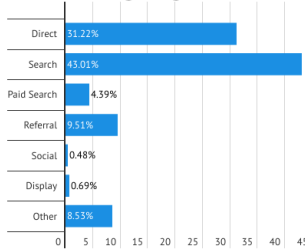
Webpage visits



Week of Aug 25-31 highest traffic week

Was the busiest day for the website with 11,956 page views.

How are users getting to us?



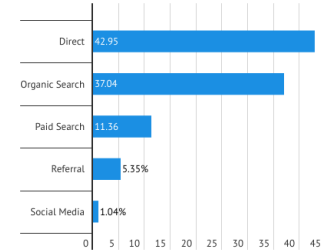
*Other - Vanity URLs, E-mail Links, MinnState



November, 2024

November was our busiest month with over 38,000 users

How did our users find us?



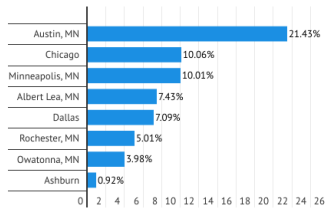
2:00

The average time spent on a page is a 2 minutes and 03 seconds.

Website Audience

Audience

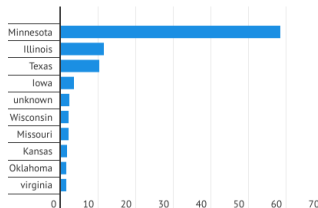
Top Ten Cities



Age

Age Group	Percentage
unknown	89.07%
18-24	4.92%
25-34	2.92%
35-44	2.58%
45-54	2.41%
55-64	1.54%
65+	1%

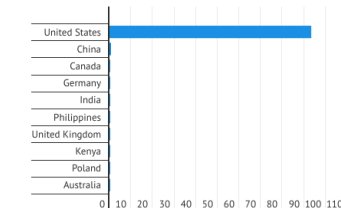
Top Ten States in United States



Gender

Gender	Percentage
unknown	87.61%
female	8.89%
male	6.79%

Top Ten Countries



Search Terms 2024

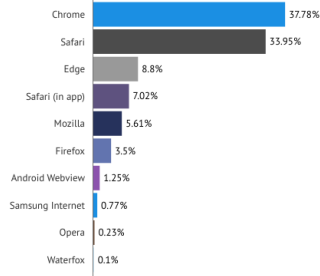
Search Term	clicks	impressions
riverland community college	21,957	80,057
riverland	4,244	20,073
riverland community college austin mn	1,853	5,656
riverland community college owatonna	648	1,669
riverland community college albert lea	508	1,413
riverland college	346	2,150
riverland austin mn	345	1,518
riverland cosmetology	294	1,022
riverland owatonna	219	646
riverland albert lea	119	534

Technology Used

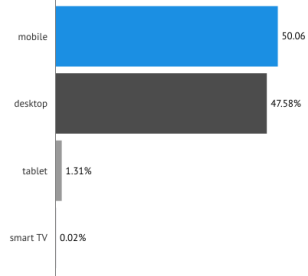
- Mobile access = 50% of users — validates mobile-first web strategy.
- Desktop = 48%, Tablet = 2% — balanced access across devices.
- Supports Riverland’s digital accessibility and responsive design priorities.
- Confirms importance of fast-loading and accessible mobile content.

Technology

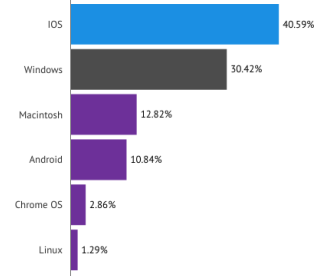
Browser Versions



Platform



Operating System



More users are choosing mobile over desktop—an exciting shift that shows just how important mobile access has become.

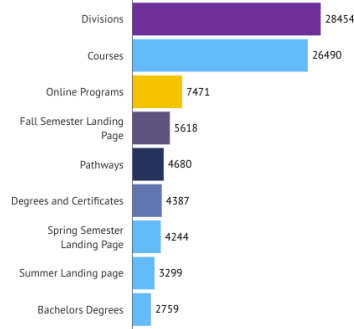
Top Site Content

Site Content

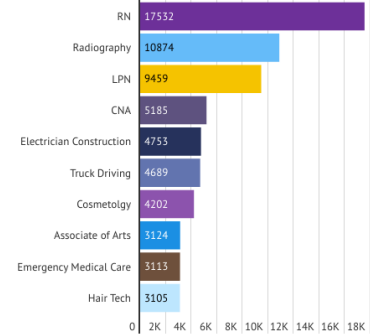


Users are spending about 2 minutes on the Academics page—that's a solid engagement win!

Top Ten Academic Pages



Top Ten Program Pages

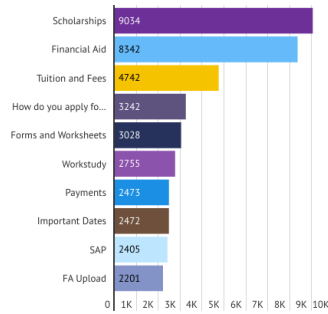


Most Visited Site Content

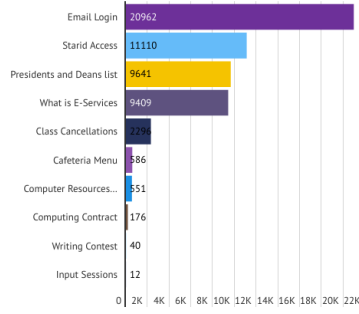
- Most visited pages: RN, LPN, Radiography, Scholarships, Apply Page.
- Healthcare programs consistently drive top engagement.
- Scholarship and Apply pages reflect strong enrollment intent.
- Indicates high student interest in career-ready pathways.

Site Content

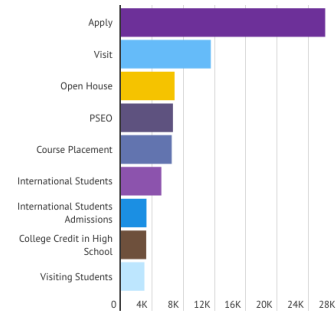
Most Visited Tuition and Aid



Most Visited Current Student Pages



Most Visited Admission Pages



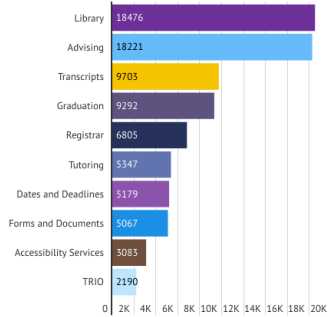
Student Services Site Content Use

- Strong traffic to Admissions, Advising, Financial Aid, and Registration.
- Indicates clear demand for enrollment and student support information.
- Suggests students rely on web access for self-service and navigation.
- Continues to justify investment in student-centered content.

See Graph Next Page

Site Content

Most Visited Student Services Pages



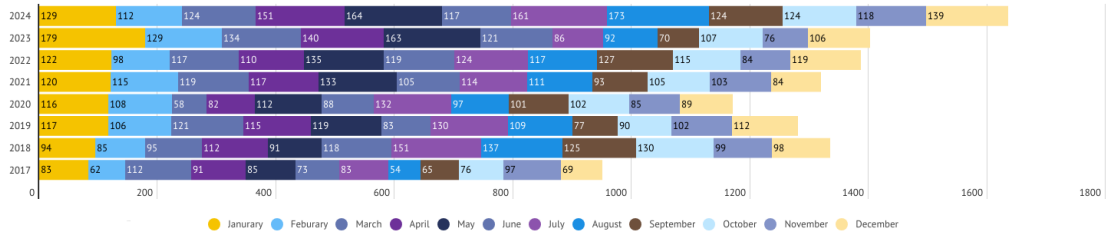
We asked "How did you hear about us" on the program pages.

Communication	Requests
Web Search (Ex Google)	714
Word of Mouth	309
-Select One-	159
From My High School	135
Campus Visit	80
Social Media	76
Online Ad	72
Local Business	39
College Fair	19
Billboards	14
Direct Mail	10
Radio Ad	4
TV Ad	3
Print Ad	1

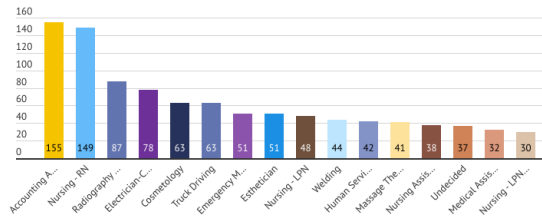
Program Inquiries Web Site

Program Inquiries

Monthly Inquiries



Top Program Inquiries



2024 Inquiries

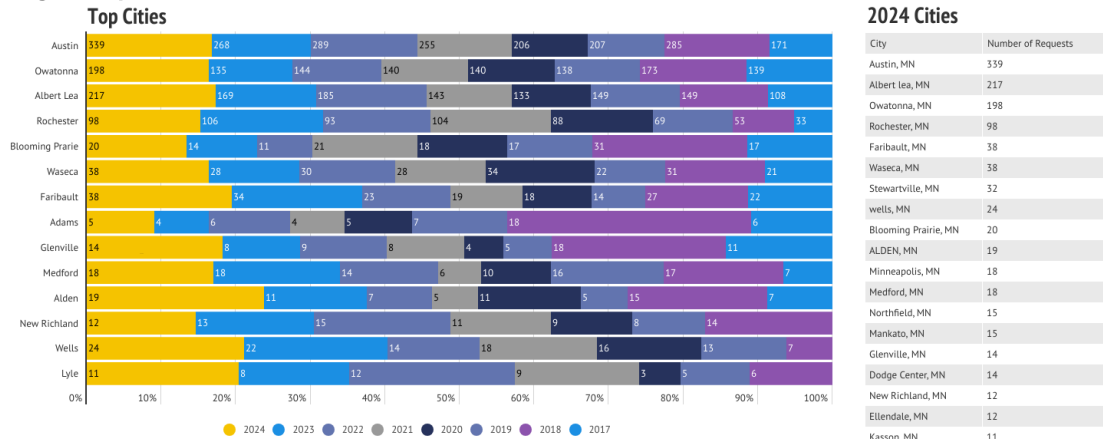
Program	Request
Accounting AAS	155
Nursing - RN	149
Radiography (X-Ray)	87
Electrician-Construction	78
Cosmetology	63
Truck Driving	63
Emergency Medical Care	51
Esthetician	51
Nursing - LPN	48

See Next Page for Top Cities.

Top Cities

- 1,163 inquiries generated from top cities — strong local engagement.
- Austin, Albert Lea, and Owatonna lead in inquiry volume.
- Demonstrates successful geographic targeting in campaigns.
- Reinforces Riverland’s regional enrollment strength and digital reach.

Program Inquiries



Web Analytics of Social Media

Social Media



622 New Followers

6.6K Followers
9.6K Post Reactions
1.1M Post Impressions



201 New Followers

6.2k Followers
1.7 k Post Reactions
96K Post Impressions



338 New Followers

1.5K Followers
12K Post Engagement
200K Post Impressions



174 New Subscribers

573 Subscribers
53K Video Views
231K Video Impressions

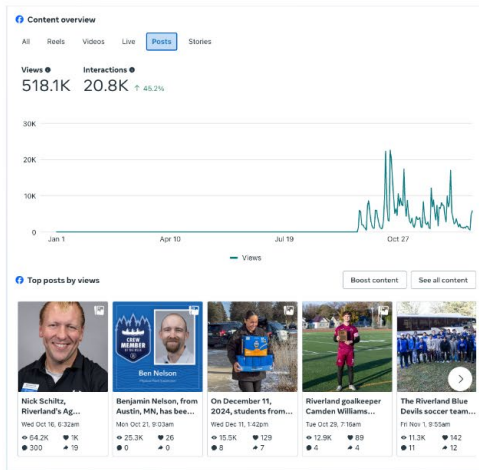


19 New Followers

665 Followers
141 Post Interactions
23K Post Impressions

Web Analytics of Top Content

Top Content of 2024 (Facebook)



Top Content of 2024 (Instagram)

