

# ROCKFORD REGION

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News From The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors For Community Leaders Who Have a Stake In Our Visitor Industry.



See Jane Put Rockford Region On The Map;

## Rare Dinosaur Gets International Attention

**“My kids raved about Jane and couldn’t stop talking about the new exhibit,”**

reported Tim Gaffney, senior vice president of investments with Wachovia Securities. The Gaffney children (clockwise) – Benjamin, 6; Meghan, 9; and Andrew, 11– were eager to see Jane in her new home at the Burpee Museum of Natural History, restored, assembled and properly displayed.

*Jane: Diary of a Dinosaur* opened on June 29 to international media attention and **20,000-plus visitors in July alone, a 1000 percent increase over a typical summer month of 2,000 visitors.**

To date more than 31,500 people have seen Jane. “Andrew described Jane to me in detail. They were all really excited! I think it’s a great asset to the community and a real draw,” added Gaffney.



## Jane Exhibit Facts



**Here are just a few statistics from Jane: Diary of a Dinosaur**

- Associated Press covered the Jane opening and the story continues to pop up in newspapers and websites worldwide
- Public relations efforts have reached 21.7 million consumers in the following outlets, to name a few: Associated Press, CNN.com, Daily Herald, Fox News, MSNBC, Rockford Register Star, and more.
- Chicago Tribune featured Jane on the front page on June 28
- As of August 31, 31,500 people have visited Jane.

## Jane’s Significance to Rockford Region

**Q.** *What does the discovery of a rare juvenile Tyrannosaurus rex who lived and died 66 million years ago mean to the Rockford Region?*

**A.** *\$5 million in economic impact in the first year alone, with 57,500 visitors from outside the region staying at area hotels, eating at local restaurants and shopping at Rockford-area stores. Visitor expenditures will support 59 jobs in the hospitality industry and generate \$90,000 in local tax revenue a year.*

**“Jane” is a great example of how improving our tourism infrastructure with new world-class attractions can help create critical mass in our downtown cultural corridor so that the Rockford Region can continue to attract visitors,**” said Bob Rhea, RACVB board chair. “That means local citizens can enjoy a better quality of life and the tax revenue from visitor spending,” he added.

*More about Jane continued on back*

Visitors Mean Jobs!



## Behind the Scenes How did Jane succeed so well?

“Teamwork,” replied Lew Crampton, president of Burpee Museum. “Over the past year, Burpee and the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau were joined at the hip, planning the exhibit’s opening and marketing, meeting every two weeks, then weekly. We could not have done this without the RACVB,” he stated emphatically. “They got the State of Illinois involved. That made it possible for us to do so much more than we could have done on our own. For example, there are Jane posters in the CTA bus stops in Chicago, at Water Tower Place and Woodfield Mall. Truly, Jane has exceeded our expectations and we give the RACVB a lot of the credit,” he added.

## Visitors Spent More in 2004; Yet Below High of 2000

Visitor spending in Winnebago County improved after a three-year decline, with visitor expenditures in 2004 coming in at \$248 million, up 6.8 percent from the previous year. That helped support 2,770 jobs in local hotels, restaurants and other retail businesses, up 1.8 from the year prior.

The 2004 visitor revenue also generated—

- \$71 million in payroll for the 2,770 jobs up 2.3 percent
- \$4.25 million in local tax receipts, up 4.5 percent
- \$13 million in state tax receipts, up 5.1 percent

“We still have a ways to go to get back to the \$304 million of 2000,” said Bob Rhea, RACVB board chair. To bring visitor expenditures back up to and exceed the 2000 level, the bureau will work to introduce new products and continue to aggressively market the Rockford area.

## New RACVB Board Members

The following leaders joined the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors:

- **John Chadwick**  
WREX-TV vice president and general manager
- **Janyce Fadden**  
Rockford Area Economic Development Council president
- **Jack Lawson**  
Clock Tower Resort & Conference Center general manager
- **Matthew Provenzano**  
SupplyCore vice president
- **Jim Ryan**  
City of Rockford city administrator
- **Scott Sullivan**  
Williams & McCarthy partner
- **Dan Conness**  
City of Rockford liaison
- **Pat Curran**  
City of Rockford liaison
- **Pearl Hawks**  
Winnebago County liaison

Officers for 2005-2006 are:

- **Bob Rhea, chair**
- **Rena Cotsones, first vice chair**  
Northern Illinois University executive director of community relations
- **Brent Brodeski, second vice chair**  
Savant Capital Management, Inc., principal
- **Heather Markhardt, treasurer**  
First Rockford Group controller
- **Lewis Jordan, secretary**  
Rockford Housing Authority executive director

## RACVB’s New Office Wins Award

The River District Association recently recognized the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau with a Heart of Rockford Award/Commercial Renovation for its new downtown offices at State and Main Streets.

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