

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## **Visit Rockford, Illinois USA** **Smack-Dab in the Middle of America!** *Swedetown, Rare Dinosaurs, Farm Tours, International Airport*

**ROCKFORD, IL** — Rockford, IL USA is a mid-sized city, located smack-dab in the middle of America. The city is just a 60-minute drive west of Chicago's O'Hare Airport and 90 minutes west of downtown Chicago. After experiencing the hustle and bustle of Chicago, it's a great place for families to enjoy the friendliness and original attractions you won't find anywhere else.

**Swedish Culture:** Rockford has more Swedes per capita than almost any other U.S. city, and celebrates its Swedish culture in a number of ways. Swedish culture is found in Rockford's businesses; pancake cafes; churches; shops' festivals such as *St. Lucia Fest and Midsommar Festival*; and museums such as Erlander Home Museum.

**Rare Dinosaurs:** In June 2005, Burpee Museum of Natural History opened their spectacular exhibit *Jane, Diary of a Dinosaur*. Jane is the world's most complete juvenile *T. rex*, and was discovered in the Montana Badlands by Burpee's own staff. Jane was brought to Rockford in 2002. Her skeleton is more than 66 million years old and is 50% complete, making her one of the rarest dinosaur finds in the world. Families can now visit Jane in all her splendor at Burpee Museum's interactive exhibit that shows how Jane was found and how scientists made the controversial decision of just what type of dinosaur she really was.

Recently, a new teenage dinosaur has joined Jane at Burpee Museum – a juvenile *Triceratops* named Homer. Just like Jane, Homer was found in the Cretaceous Hell Creek formation in Montana by Burpee volunteers. Homer, a juvenile *Triceratops* whose gender is still unknown, is an extremely significant find in the dinosaur world because not only is it a young teenage dinosaur, but its bones were also found with the bones of two other young *Triceratops*. To learn more about Jane, Homer and their home at the Burpee Museum, log on to [www.burpee.org](http://www.burpee.org).

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**Farm Tours:** Some of America's most fertile farmland surrounds Rockford, making it ideal for group tours of working farms. The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau can customize multi-day farm tours that include specific types of agriculture, from dairy, beef and hogs to grain, wine and cheese...and more. Of special interest are the John Deere sites in nearby Grand Detour and the Quad Cities.

**Gardens:** Rockford's Anderson Japanese Gardens was rated the number one Japanese garden in North America by the *Roth Journal of Japanese Gardening*. The exquisite 12-acre pond-strolling garden began in 1978 as the passionate hobby of Swedish-American industrialist John Anderson, who gave it to the Rockford Rotary Charitable Association in 1998. New in 2005 was a massive wooden gate separating the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Kamakura-style pond-strolling garden and 16<sup>th</sup> Century Sukiya-style buildings from the contemporary Japanese-inspired Garden of Reflection, dedicated to Anderson's parents and featuring Swedish sculptor Carl Milles' bronze angels. Anderson Japanese Gardens' new Visitors Center is now open, featuring an Asian-fusion restaurant, gift shop and gallery.

**Major Annual Events:** February's PaleoFest features talks and workshops by famous dinosaur hunters. April's Classics and Chrome showcases 100 world-class antique, classic and specialty cars. Over Labor Day Weekend, On the Waterfront, Illinois' largest music festival, offers five simultaneous concert stages and 25 city blocks of music, food and fun. October's Head of the Rock Regatta attracts 2,000 rowers, 500 sculls and 100 rowing clubs to the Rock River.

**International Airport:** Chicago Rockford International Airport (RFD) is on its way to becoming Chicago's third airport, with passenger service to multiple US cities and Mexico. Parking is free! Log on to [www.flyrfd.com](http://www.flyrfd.com) for flight schedules and information.

Rockford, IL, is located approximately 60 minutes west of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport off Interstate 90. For information on accommodations and things to do, visit [www.gorockford.com](http://www.gorockford.com). RACVB is a private, non-profit organization established in 1984 to champion efforts to promote the Rockford Region as an overnight visitor destination. The RACVB adds wealth to the region's economy by investing in marketing programs that grow tourism.

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