



Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

# **2005**

## **YEAR IN REVIEW**

### Attendance Report for Rockford Region Sites, Attractions & Events

*Compiled by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.  
All data self reported data from Winnebago County sites, attractions and events.*

The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau was established in 1984 to promote and champion efforts to make our region an overnight visitor destination.

## **RACVB Mission**

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To Propel the Rockford Area to pre-eminent  
DESTINATION stature.

**Purpose:**

The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau exists for the Rockford Area to derive maximum benefit from its Hospitality Industry.

**Priorities/Goals**

CREATE AND PROMOTE EXISTING SUPERIOR VISITOR FACILITIES  
AND SERVICES TO ATTRACT VISITORS

INCREASE VISITOR SPENDING

SUSTAIN GROWTH

## 2005 Site Attendance Rankings vs. 2004

Sites/Attractions	2005	2004
1. Sportscore Complex/Indoor Sports Center	2,533,213	2,067,421
2. Rock Cut State Park	1,001,827	984,024
3. MetroCentre	503,765	467,158
4. Forest Hills Diamonds	300,000	298,648
5. Midway Village/Museum Center (Inc. Bike Path)	295,884	260,933
6. Magic Waters Water Park	242,367	195,472
7. Ice Facilities (RPD)	233,942	201,086
8. Discovery Center	192,112	178,239
9. Rkfd Park District golf courses (except Aldeen)	189,749	185,673
10. Rockford IceHogs	146,290	141,307
11. Volcano Falls Adventure Park	175,000	175,000
12. Burpee Museum of Natural History	137,617	97,273
13. Lockwood Park (Trailside Stables)	124,172	174,957
14. Winnebago County Golf Courses	110,000	110,000
15. Coronado Theatre	105,281	125,569
16. Rockford River Hawks	103,248	103,140
17. Rockford Speedway	93,575	85,016
18. Blackhawk Farms Raceway	75,000	10,000
19. Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden	65,457	65,000
20. Rockford Lightning	51,914	52,014
21. Harlem Community Center Ball Diamonds	45,000	40,000
22. Rockford Art Museum	42,380	36,824
23. Starlight Theatre/Studio Theatre	38,637	43,300
24. Anderson Japanese Gardens	32,500	36,000
25. Rockford Symphony Orchestra	32,000	20,000
26. Aldeen Golf Course	27,097	26,298
27. New American Theater	26,469	Not available
28. Davis Park	25,562	57,445
29. Rockford Dance Company	24,448	40,517
30. Severson Dells	20,985	21,260
31. Ski Broncs	15,000	15,000
32. Erlander Home Museum	10,511	6,500
33. Tinker Swiss Cottage	8,339	7,426
34. Guilford Tennis Center	7,000	7,000
35. Historic Auto Attractions	5,500	5,000
36. Forest City Queen	4,931	4,000
37. Ethnic Heritage Museum	3,500	4,483
38. Mendelssohn Club	2,750	6,500
39. Trolley Car	2,531	2,584
40. 317 Art Gallery	1,100	2,422
41. Graham Ginestra House	275	1,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,056,928</b>	<b>6,362,289</b>

## 2005 Event Attendance Rankings vs. 2004

Event	2005	2004
1. Fourth of July Celebration	400,000	400,000
2. On the Waterfront	308,740	324,649
3. Winnebago County Fair	200,000	150,000
4. Festival of Lights	136,983	120,400
5. Illinois Snow Sculpting Competition	88,431	55,626
6. Air Fest	30,000	New in 2005
7. Festa Italiana	30,000	35,000
8. Young at Heart	24,000	20,000
9. Rockford Home Show	24,000	5,403
10. Boat, Fishing, & Outdoor Show	23,000	5,026
11. RV Camping and Travel Show	21,000	12,468
12. Roscoe Lions Fall Festival	20,000	20,000
13. Pec Thing—May & September	20,000	16,000
14. Cherry Valley Festival Days	20,000	20,000
15. Holiday Folk Craft and Art Expo	20,000	20,000
16. Music in the Park	18,050	18,050
17. Stars & Guitars Summer Concerts	15,676	12,204
18. Summerwood Music Series	13,700	13,369
19. WXRX/Budweiser Wing Ding	11,000	12,000
20. Taste of Rockford	11,000	8,000
21. Monster Truck Show	10,800	11,334
22. Rockford Pro-Am	10,000	12,000
23. Fall Arts & Craft Show	9,500	9,574
24. Greenwich Village Art Festival	6,500	6,000
25. Rfd Speedway, Winston Nat. Short Track	6,000	5,500
26. Rfd Speedway, Trailer Race – June	5,500	5,000
27. Senior Expo – Lifescape Comm. Services	5,000	4,500
28. Chili Shoot Out	4,600	4,500
29. Head of the Rock Regatta	4,500	4,000
30. Keith Classics & Chrome Car Show	4,500	4,300
31. Rfd Speedway, Trailer Race – August	4,000	5,000
32. Industrial Trade Show	3,600	781
33. Groove Walk	3,200	2,647
34. Klehm Arboretum's Garden Glory Walk	1,895	1,500
35. PaleoFest @ Burpee	1,600	2,172
36. First Night Rockford	N/a	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,516,775</b>	<b>1,357,003</b>

### **2005 Attendance Totals**

2005 Total Site Attendance = 7,056,928

2005 Total Event Attendance = 1,516,775

Total 2005 Attendance = 8,573,703

### **2004 Attendance Totals**

2004 Total Site Attendance = 6,362,289

2004 Total Event Attendance = 1,359,007

Total 2004 Attendance = 7,721,296

### **2003 Attendance Totals**

2003 Total Site Attendance = 5,862,913

2003 Total Event Attendance = 1,352,801

Total 2003 Attendance = 7,215,714

### **2002 Attendance Totals**

2002 Total Site Attendance = 5,194,003

2002 Total Event Attendance = 1,486,246

Total 2002 Attendance = 6,680,249

### **2001 Attendance Totals**

2001 Total Site Attendance = 5,242,041

2001 Total Event Attendance = 1,485,091

Total 2001 Attendance = 6,727,132

### **2000 Attendance Totals**

2000 Total Site Attendance = 5,133,311

2000 Total Event Attendance = 1,792,249

Total 2000 Attendance = 6,925,560

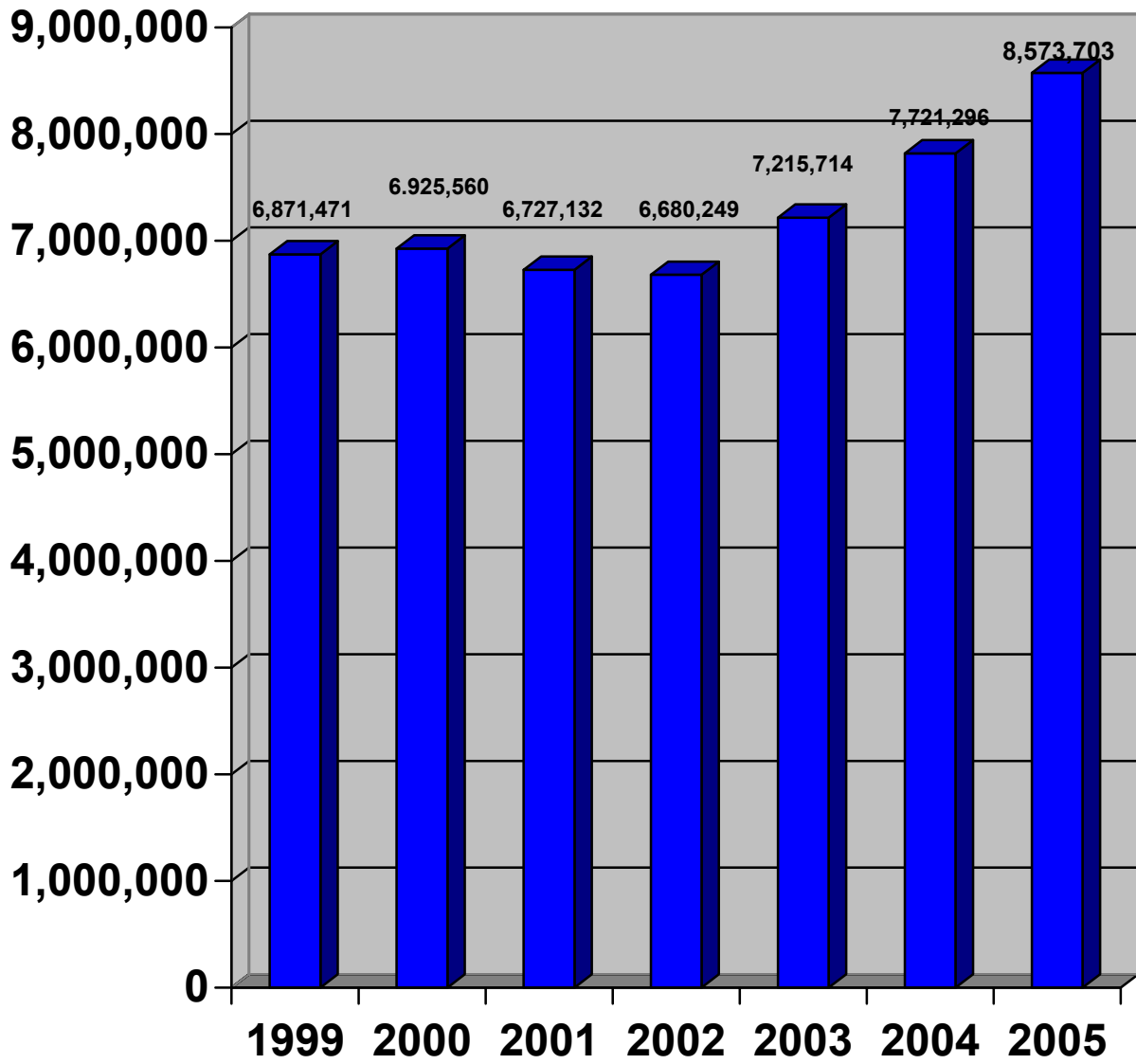
### **1999 Attendance Totals**

1999 Total Site Attendance = 5,084,281

1999 Total Event Attendance = 1,787,190

Total 1999 Attendance = 6,871,471

# 1999 - 2005 Comparison



## Top Ten Sites of 2005

Site	2005	2004
1. Sportscore Complex/Indoor Sports Center	2,533,213	2,067,421
2. Rock Cut State Park	1,001,827	984,024
3. MetroCentre	503,765	467,158
4. Forest Hills Diamonds	300,000	298,648
5. Midway Village/Museum Center (Inc. Bike Path)	295,884	260,933
6. Magic Waters Water Park	242,367	195,472
7. Ice Facilities (RPD)	233,942	201,086
8. Discovery Center	192,112	178,239
9. Rkfd Park District golf courses (except Aldeen)	189,749	185,673
10. Rockford IceHogs	146,290	141,307
	<b>5,639,149</b>	<b>4,979,961</b>

## Top Ten Events of 2005

1. Fourth of July Celebration	400,000	400,000
2. On the Waterfront	308,740	324,649
3. Winnebago County Fair	200,000	150,000
4. Festival of Lights	136,983	120,400
5. Illinois Snow Sculpting Competition	88,431	55,626
6. Air Fest	30,000	New in 2005
7. Festa Italiana	30,000	35,000
8. Young at Heart	24,000	20,000
9. Rockford Home Show	24,000	5,403
10. Boat, Fishing, & Outdoor Show	23,000	5,026
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,265,154</b>	<b>1,116,104</b>

# Notes on Differences in Attendance at Area Sites/Attractions and Events 2004 Versus 2005 (self-reported analysis)

## Sites/Attractions

- Sportscore's numbers increased by nearly 500,000 in 2005 due to more tournaments with more teams. Spring Fling alone brought 400 teams to the complex.
- Rock Cut State Park's attendance grew due to sunny, dry weather.
- Forest Hills Diamonds attributes higher numbers to larger tournaments with more teams in 2005.
- Midway Village's attendance increased after they grew their marketing efforts.
- Magic Waters attendance grew substantially with the warm, dry weather.
- The Rockford Park District's Ice Facilities grew in attendance in several areas: The public skate attendance numbers grew during the Winter Olympics, which is a trend that comes every four years; the figure skating classes are up, also due to the Olympics and the programming; kids hockey is up by 1,000 more players due to better programming; and adult hockey is up due to better game times.
- Sunny, dry weather attributed to an increase in city golf course attendance.
- Burpee Museum of Natural History's numbers increased by nearly 40,000 people with the addition of Jane, the world's most complete juvenile *T.rex*. Burpee saw the increase in visitors especially after the opening on June 30, 2005. Exceptional marketing efforts and world-wide public relations greatly contributed to this success.
- Lockwood Park had to cancel all horse activities due to the summer heat, which lowered attendance numbers.
- Harlem Community Center's numbers were up due to more tournaments and more teams in 2005.
- The Rockford Art Museum saw an increase with more special events along the Cultural Corridor, and a community-driven line of exhibitions.
- The Rockford Symphony Orchestra saw an increase of 12,000 visitors due to the popularity of the Itzhak Perlman concert and the added Holiday Pops show.
- Aldeen Golf Course also had 20,500 attend the Learning Center, in addition to purchasing golf rounds.
- Rockford Dance Company's numbers were down due to lack of funding and lack of involvement with outreach in schools.
- Erlander Home Museum was able to better track its attendance, showing an increase after the new tracking system was put in place.
- Tinker Swiss Cottage's numbers increased after the rebuilding of the suspension bridge in the summer of 2005, and an increase in group tours.
- Historic Auto Attraction's numbers were up due to more special events and special mailings.

## Events

- On the Waterfront's numbers decreased by about 16,000 attendees after prices for buttons were raised to \$12, and daily pricing was implemented. The decrease was anticipated by organizers.
- Snow Sculpting attendance numbers were up since snow sculptures held up for a long amount of time (didn't melt), allowing more people to look over an extended amount of time.



- Air Fest was new in 2005.
- Stars and Guitars attendance rose by nearly 3,000 people in 2005 with the popularity of stars Keith Urban, Billy Dean, REO Speedwagon and Deep Purple.
- For the first time the Chamber of Commerce was able to track attendance at the Taste of Rockford with a turnstyle. With the Fabulous Janes playing and more marketing efforts, the Taste grew by approximately 3,000 attendees in 2005. The Taste will not return in 2006.
- First Night has been cancelled, and will not return.
- Festa Italiana, Cherry Valley Festival Days, and Holiday Folk Art and Craft Expo organizers could not be reached; 2004 numbers were used for 2005 attendance numbers.

**To be expected in 2006:**

- The new indoor waterpark at the Clock Tower Resort will attract thousands more visitors to the Rockford Region after its opening in the fall of 2006.
- Anderson Japanese Gardens will add its restaurant, banquet facilities and gift shop, which will raise attendance.
- The Rockford River Hawks will begin playing at their new stadium this year. The River Hawks are expecting an increase by at least 50% in 2006.
- Air Fest organizers expect numbers to double in 2006 after knowing what to expect from the first year.
- The Greenwich Village Art Festival will bring artists from Sweden in 2006. This is expected to attract hundreds more visitors to the festival.