

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Travelers: Yes, You Can Afford a Vacation *Rockford, IL Offers Low-Cost, High Value Vacation Alternatives*

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ROCKFORD, IL — It seems as though every year it gets harder and harder to get away from the daily hustle and bustle and truly enjoy a much-needed vacation. With skyrocketing airfare and ever-increasing airline security measures, travel can easily make you feel like you're burning through your own pocket just to feel more stressed than when you left. But don't give up on getting away just yet. Swap some of those high cost big city attractions that are a hassle to get to for some low cost, high value attractions in conveniently located Rockford, Ill.

Sue vs. Jane

Sue, the best preserved and most complete *T. rex*, may be found at Chicago's Field Museum, but did you know the world's best preserved and most complete juvenile *T. rex*, Jane, can be found at Rockford's [Burpee Museum of Natural History](#)? Like Sue, very few of Jane's bones are replicas. However, what makes Jane so unique from Sue is that Burpee Museum researchers were directly involved in her discovery. Burpee's award-winning exhibit, *Jane: Diary of a Dinosaur*, explores the history of the young *T. rex* skeleton found by Burpee researchers in the badlands of Montana, called one of the ten most important dinosaur discoveries in the past 100 years. Burpee has also recently added to their dinosaur collection juvenile *Triceratops* Homer, who was also found in the Montana Badlands by Burpee volunteers. Visitors can view his skull and see Burpee staff members working on his bones in the lab.

While the two museums' dinosaur offerings are comparable, the Field Museum just cannot compete with Burpee's cost-savings. A visit to the Chicago Field Museum costs upwards of \$28 for adults, \$19 for children and \$23 for students and seniors. In addition to admission, parking in museum campus lots is \$16 for the first 4 hours and \$19 thereafter. **For a family of four, a visit to the Field Museum costs well over \$100 for admission and parking alone!**

At Rockford's Burpee Museum, admission for non-residents is \$7 for adults and \$6 for children, with parking offered absolutely free. This means **a family of four can visit the Burpee Museum for less than \$30!** With such a difference in pricing, a trip to the Burpee Museum is a natural alternative for the budget-conscious family. For more information, visit www.burpee.org.

COMING SOON: In conjunction with Discovery Center Museum, Burpee Museum broke ground in the summer of 2009 on an expansion project that will feature enhanced and new permanent exhibits, including an expanded Paleo Hall, and prominent traveling exhibitions. Burpee's portion of the expansion is projected to be completed in 2011.

Art Institute Chicago vs. Rockford Art Museum

The Art Institute of Chicago has an impressive selection of permanent and traveling exhibitions on display on any given day, but did you know the [Rockford Art Museum](#) is Illinois' largest art museum outside of Chicago? Featuring more than 1,200 works of art, Rockford Art Museum is noted for its permanent collection of 19th and 20th century American art, plus dynamic and changing exhibitions featuring

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regional and national artists. The Rockford Art Museum has hosted many prominent exhibitions, from *HE & SHE: Vallien & Hydman-Vallien* by internationally renowned glass artists Bertil Vallien and Ulrica Hydman-Vallien to *Expect the Unexpected* by Chicago artist Hollis Sigler.

While visiting the Art Institute Chicago is on every art lover's bucket list, the trip is not conducive to a starving artist's budget. Admission to the museum is \$18 for adults and \$12 for students and seniors, and parking, which is located at least a block away, ranges from \$14 to \$26 or more, depending on the duration of your stay. **Go alone or with a friend, you'll still spend upwards of \$50 or more on your visit to the Art Institute.**

Rockford Art Museum is part of the Riverfront Museum Park arts and humanities complex, with plenty of free parking in the museum's parking lot, and admission is a mere \$6 for adults and \$3 for students and seniors. **You'd have to visit the museum with a group of eight or more people to reach the \$50 you spent at the Art Institute!** For more information, visit www.rockfordartmuseum.org.

Legoland Discovery Center vs. Discovery Center Museum

Legoland Discovery Center is one of Chicagoland's most popular children's museums, with around 10 attractions for one ticket price, but did you know Rockford's [Discovery Center Museum](http://www.discoverycentermuseum.org) has more than 250 hands-on art and science exhibits? Featuring a planetarium, TV studio, robotics lab, as well as special events and traveling exhibits, the Discovery Center is recognized as one of the top ten science museums in the country by *Child Magazine*, one of the nation's top ten children's museums by The National Geographic Society, and was designated as a Good to Grow! Museum by the Association of Children's Museums. The Discovery Center also boasts the nation's first community-built outdoor science park, with 8,000 square feet of wooden fun, including a two-story maze, water play area and dinosaur fossil dig pit.

Legoland Discovery Center boasts that visitors can enjoy "over 10 great attractions for just one price," with admission of \$19 for adults and \$15 for children. However, at that price, a family of four will spend nearly \$70 on admission alone to Legoland. Admission to Rockford's Discovery Center Museum is only \$6 for adults and \$5 for children, so a family of four can visit the Discovery Center for only \$22. **Compare \$70 for around 10 attractions at Chicago's Legoland to \$22 for more than 250 hands-on activities at Rockford's Discovery Center – there's just no contest!** For more information, visit www.discoverycentermuseum.org.

COMING SOON: In conjunction with Burpee Museum of Natural History, Discovery Center Museum broke ground in the summer of 2009 on an expansion project that will feature enhanced and new permanent exhibits, including an expanded Tot Spot, and prominent traveling exhibitions. Discovery Center's portion of the expansion is projected to be completed in the summer of 2010.

Coming Soon

The Rockford Park District broke ground on the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens project located at Sinnissippi Park. Upon its projected completion in December of 2010, the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens will be the third largest in Illinois and will be included in the ranks of the Garfield Park Conservatory in Chicago and the Mitchell Park Horticulture Conservatory in Milwaukee.

Convenient Location

Rockford, Ill., is one of the best-kept secrets of budget-savvy travelers in the Midwest. Located in northern Illinois in the stateline area, Rockford is just a short drive away from most major Midwestern cities. Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee and Quad Cities residents can reach Rockford in less than 2 hours. Bloomington-Normal, Ill., Peoria and Dubuque residents can reach Rockford in less than 3 hours, and Champaign-Urbana, Ill., and Springfield, Ill., residents can reach Rockford in less than 4 hours.

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. 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 generates positive economic impact for our community through investments in tourism.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Mika Doyle, RACVB Communications Coordinator: 815.489.1678, mndoyle@gorockford.com

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