



NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



A Merry and Bright Holiday Planned for Downtown Rockford *RACVB Announces New Event - Stroll on State*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 30, 2013

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is pulling the community together to create a new holiday tradition in downtown Rockford. Dubbed *Merry & Bright: a downtown holiday*, the celebration will last from November 30 through January 31 and takes in the civic and cultural events happening during this time period. Additionally, a new event, *Stroll on State*, will officially kick off the holiday season on Saturday, November 30 from 4 to 10 p.m. The event is free to attend.

Stroll on State includes a candlelight stroll from City Hall, across the Rock River, to the PNC Bank Plaza for the lighting of the City of Rockford official Christmas tree; a **stunning 30-foot tall evergreen** decked out with lights and ornaments. Visitors will enjoy live entertainment from strolling carolers and other roaming musicians, tasty treats from street vendors and local **food trucks**, holiday-themed cuisine and drinks at downtown restaurants all while doing holiday **shopping at unique specialty shops** and boutiques.

Fun for Families

Kids can visit with Santa and pet his reindeer at Joe Marino Park, which will be transformed in to a magical **Santaland**, the former Water Street Café will be transformed into the **Lollipop Café** with the Sweetery selling cupcake pops, strollers can stop and watch *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* projected on the side of a building in the 300 block of East State, and families can ice-skate on a special synthetic **ice rink** under the impressive Rockford Register Star tower.

"In the true spirit of the holidays our community is coming together, giving their time and talent, to bring this event to life," said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO. "Our vision is to make this a family tradition for many years to come – a night where we gather family, old friends and new friends to enjoy and appreciate the wonderment of the season together."

Shopping & Entertainment

Stroll on State is partnering with more than 20 Rockford City Market vendors and Rockford's Etsy shop owners to produce a **Holiday Market** that will take place in the stunning City Hall lobby. See list below.

Rockford's beloved **Moonlight Jazz Orchestra** will perform a free concert. Additional local and regional musicians will perform on the **Merry & Bright Stage** at PNC Bank Plaza and the **Snowmobile Stage** located on the grounds of City Market. Sony artist Clark Kelly will return home for the holidays to be a part of the first annual Stroll on State; he will perform on the Snowmobile Stage.

"I appreciate all of the work of our community partners helping us to celebrate Christmas and the season of giving," said Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey. "So much has gone into planning and executing this event. Our downtown will be transformed into a winter wonderland. We can all be proud of this effort and use this as an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful atmosphere of our downtown."

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Deck the Halls & Streets

Crews of volunteers from Rockford's Heartland Community Church will unleash the spirit of the holidays as they decorate downtown Rockford with white lights, garland, ribbons, oversized ornaments, and dramatic large-scale decorations on Friday and Saturday, November 22 and 23. A core group of nearly 20 volunteers have been working since September to plan, design and build decorations that will be installed throughout downtown, primarily along East and West State Streets.

Allstate Insurance is sponsoring the decorations that will be installed along State Street. "As part of our commitment to helping keep Rockford-area families safe and secure, Allstate is proud to sponsor Stroll on State. Giving back to the community is a long-standing tradition at Allstate, and local Allstate agents take a deep, personal interest in Rockford and its residents," said Kate Nack, corporate relations manager for Allstate's Midwest Region.

Supporters & Partners

Several entities have come together to support Stroll on State including

- Allstate Insurance
- Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau,
- City of Rockford,
- Rockford Park District,
- Heartland Community Church,
- Luxe Productions,
- SVL Productions,
- John Taphorn/ State Street Management LLC,
- Rock River Development Partnership,
- River District Association,
- Rockford Area Venues & Entertainment Authority,
- Northeast Christian Church,
- Life Church, and
- Buzz Carlson/Central States Fireworks.

Stroll on State Event Details:

Explore the sights, smells and sounds along State Street in downtown Rockford.

- Saturday, November 30, from 4 to 10 p.m.
- Activities will take place along East State Street in downtown Rockford
- Light Up The Tree begins at 5:45 p.m. at PNC Bank Plaza, line up for the Candlelight Stroll to the Tree begins at 5:30 p.m. at Rockford City Hall, 425 East State Street
- Tree lighting at approximately 6:15 p.m. at PNC Bank Plaza, 120 West State Street.
- Water Street will close for the entire event and State Street will close temporarily during the holiday stroll from approximately 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. between 2nd Street and Wyman Street.

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The following are confirmed and will participate in the Holiday Market at City Hall, 425 East State St. Additional vendors will be added as their participation is confirmed.

<u>Vendors</u>	<u>Product</u>
Candle Crest	soy candles
Katic Breads	bread and croissants
Ronit's Kitchen	middle eastern food
Kokobear Bakery	cheesecake, scones, cookie platters
Laynie Bug's Bows	children's clothing and accessories
Raines Honey	honey & skin care products
Tiny Bird Boutique	hand dyed children's clothing
Milani Glass	pendants, bracelets, wine stoppers
Jungle Wagon Press	children's books
Upcycled Eco	recycled mittens
Broadway Florist	floral décor
Juanita Hughes	jewelry
Reagan's Ruffles	hand knit hats, scarves, accessories

For more information on the event, visit www.strollonstate.com.

The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is a private, non-profit organization that champions efforts to promote and further develop the Rockford Region as an overnight visitor destination. RACVB generates positive economic impact for the community through investments in tourism marketing, sales, promotion and advocacy. www.gorockford.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION: Bridget French, Marketing Manager, 815.489.1655, bfrench@gorockford.com