



STROLL *on* STATE

presented by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Stroll on State Returns to Downtown Rockford on Sat., Nov. 29 *RACVB Announces Merry & Bright: A Community Holiday Season*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2014

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is excited to announce the continuation of Rockford's newest holiday tradition – ***Stroll on State*** – set for 4 – 9 p.m. on Saturday, November 29 in downtown Rockford. The event is free and open to the public.

Last year, more than 30,000 people participated in the inaugural Stroll on State. To comfortably accommodate Stroll guests, this year the event will take place on both sides of the Rock River, along East State Street; additional food and retail vendors have also been added.

Stroll on State will kick-off the holiday season in Rockford with a variety of family-friendly activities. A highlight of the evening will be the community stroll along State Street from City Hall to the PNC Bank Plaza for the lighting of the City of Rockford Christmas tree. Additionally, live entertainment and music will greet visitors along State Street, and there will be a wide variety of shopping opportunities at downtown stores and pop-up shops special to the evening.

"Stroll on State is about creating traditions with family and friends," said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO. "Whether it is watching the tree lighting ceremony, talking with Santa, shopping at a downtown retailer, or simply enjoying the sights and sounds of the season, we know everyone will create their own cherished memories."

Fun for Families

This year, kids can visit with Santa and pet some of his reindeer at Joe Marino Park, which will be transformed into a magical **Santaland**. 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 enjoy festive **horse and wagon rides** throughout downtown.

The popular **ice skating rink** will move to a new location this year as the Stroll grounds expand to include activities on Wyman and Main Streets. Nestled under the lighted arches on North Main Street, the special synthetic ice-rink is expected to be a popular attraction again this year.

Fire & Ice is a perfect complement to the restaurants and shopping in the 400 and 500 blocks of East State Street. Enjoy the ambience, smell wood burning and watch flames flicker inside of the ice features.

S'mores stations will be set up in two locations downtown. Whether you've just visited Santa and his reindeer or are watching the Grinch in Who-ville, Stroll grillmasters will grill these tasty treats all night.

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Hammy Hog, of the Rockford Ice Hogs, and his **Hamboni** (team Zamboni) will be located on South Main Street, ready to take photos with families.

Allstate Insurance will again sponsor the horse & wagon rides where guests can sing and create memories as they experience the lights, sounds and decoration displays together in true, hometown holiday fashion. "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. Our local agents loved 2013 Stroll on State and they take a deep, personal interest in Rockford and its residents," said Meghan O'Kelly, corporate relations division manager for Allstate's Midwest Region.

Shopping & Entertainment

New this year will be the addition of **FROSTYLAND by Lisa Frost studio** in the historic lobby of Rockford's City Hall, 125 East State St. "My goal is to provide a unique and happy shopping experience where City Hall is filled with Lisa Frost original Christmas items such as banners, wrapping papers, stockings, dolls, mugs and ornaments for retail sale within a transformed, whimsical wonderland." said local artist, Lisa Frost. Guests will have an opportunity to purchase beverages and food treats while enjoying the sights and sounds within City Hall, also known as FROSTYLAND.

The Holiday Market will return! This year guests will have more opportunities to enjoy shopping for holiday decorations, gifts and treats **at not one but now three locations**: Chase Bank lobby, 401 East State St.; Stewart Square, 308 West State St.; and City Hall. Vendors will be announced soon.

Popular last year, professional ice sculptor **Randy Finch of Ice Brigades** and his team are returning to create art out of ice. The ice carving show will take place at the base of the historic Rockford Register Star tower, 99 East State Street. The Ice Brigades is a nationally known feature on the Food Network.

Deck the Halls - Volunteer Helpers

Crews of volunteers, led by Rockford Sharefest, will unleash the spirit of the holidays as they decorate downtown Rockford with white lights, garland, ribbons, oversized ornaments, and dramatic large-scale decorations. A core group of nearly 20 volunteers have worked since September to plan, design and build new decorations that will be installed throughout downtown, primarily along East and West State Streets and North and South Wyman.

In 2013, more than 350 volunteers participated in the downtown decorating. This year, with an expanded footprint; we have 500 opportunities to help. Volunteers are needed to decorate on Friday and Saturday, November 21 and 22. Volunteers can sign up at www.strollonstate.com by clicking on the volunteer section.

Stroll volunteers needed: Those looking to lend a helping hand for the night of the festival can get more information about opportunities available at www.strollonstate.com. The event takes many hands throughout the evening, with more than 400 volunteers needed to help make it a success.

Parking & Transportation

All parking decks in downtown Rockford will be open during the Stroll, for a modest fee. A map with suggested parking areas is available at www.strollonstate.com. There will be a Remote Parking Lot and Shuttle at the ID Pennock Family Y, 200 Y Blvd. Three shuttle buses, compliments of Rockford Mass Transit District, will run continuously from 4 – 9:30 pm. between the Y and Madison and Market Streets.

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Supporters & Partners: Led by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, the following entities have come together to generously sponsor and support Stroll on State:

- Allstate Insurance
- Ambrose Christmas
- Arte Verde
- Backyard Soiree
- Butitta Brothers
- Chase Bank
- City of Rockford
- Fire in Motion – Central States Fireworks
- Heartland Community Church
- Kaney Aerospace
- LaMonica Beverages, Inc.
- Laura Sanders-Ahern, Accent on Events
- Life Church
- Luxe Productions
- Mid-West Family Broadcasting
- Northeast Christian Church
- River District Association
- Rock River Development Partnership
- Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Rockford Area Venues & Entertainment Authority
- Rockford First
- Rockford Mass Transit District
- Rockford Park District
- Rockford Register Star
- Rockford Sharefest
- Rock River Times
- Sanco
- Signs Now
- State Street Management, LLC
- SVL Productions
- Townsquare Media
- Uncle Nick's
- WIFR 23
- WREX 13
- WTVO 17 / WQRF 39

Sponsorship opportunities are available by contacting Tana Vettore, Stroll on State director, at tvettore@gorockford.com.

Stroll on State Event Basics

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

- Saturday, November 29, from 4 to 9 p.m.
- Free and open to the public, some experiences may have a small charge
- Activities will take place along East and West State Street in downtown Rockford from 3rd Street on the east to Main Street on the west.
- The line up for the 'Stroll on State' begins at 5:30 p.m. at Rockford City Hall, 425 East State Street with step off at 5:45 p.m. Light Up The Tree concert begins at 6 p.m. at PNC Bank Plaza.
- Tree lighting at approximately 6:15 p.m. at PNC Bank Plaza, 120 West State Street.
- Water Street (State to Market Street) will close for the entire event and State Street will be closed from 3rd Street to Main Street. Areas along the stroll route will be designated for horse and wagon use.

Merry & Bright: A Community Holiday Season

The celebrations in the Rockford region won't end with Stroll on State. The region is filled with a great assortment of holiday and winter events from November 29 through January 31. To highlight these community events, RACVB has put together a Merry & Bright calendar highlighting many of the community traditions, both old and new, to help enliven the season.

View the full listing of events on the website www.gorockford.com, or follow along on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gorockfordregion. For more information on the event, visit www.strollonstate.com.

RACVB exists to drive quality of life and economic growth for the citizens of Rockford and Winnebago County through tourism marketing and destination development. gorockford.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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