

RACVB to Enchant Downtown Rockford With New 'River Lights' Experience

Dramatic light show to enhance the banks of the Rock River
debuts Nov. 28 during Stroll on State

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ROCKFORD, IL — Building on the success and popularity of Stroll on State, and as an extension of its public beautification and public art programs, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau will debut River Lights, a new experience that will light up the night and enliven the banks of the Rock River in downtown Rockford. River Lights will launch on Saturday, November 28 as part of Stroll on State.

"River Lights will illuminate downtown Rockford's riverbanks in a way the community hasn't experienced before. Imagine a laser light show choreographed to music and set against the backdrop of the riverfront and our downtown cityscape," said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO. "River Lights will take your breath away."

"Our goal is for River Lights to become a permanent installation beyond Stroll on State. We envision the light show performances continuing each night through the entire holiday season. With the community's help, River Lights can become a new holiday tradition and year-round experience. We believe it can and will happen," said Groh.

Thus, with the support of the community, the lights will stay on and the music will continue each night following Stroll until January 2, 2016. Nightly shows would be choreographed to music and feature moving and changing lights on both the west and east banks of the Rock River between the Jefferson and State Street bridges. After January 2, the nightly light performances would come to an end, however the dramatic lighting of trees would remain year-round.

The River Lights experience is designed to be viewed both from afar as well as up close. Residents and visitors will be invited to walk along the Esplanade on the west bank of the river and the Millennium Fountain path on the east side, between the State and Jefferson Street bridges.

In order to keep the lights beyond Stroll – thus allowing for nightly performances during the holiday season and year-round lighting of the riverfront – RACVB is working to raise \$125,000. To date, \$41,000 has been pledged by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, HolmstromKennedy, SupplyCore, the Rockford Area Association of Realtors and the Rockford Park District.

To raise the remainder of the needed funds, donations and sponsorships are being sought. Community members can support River Lights by making a donation online at <https://www.gofundme.com/riverlights>. Individuals and entities wanting to learn more about supporting or sponsoring River Lights are invited to contact RACVB at 815.963.8111. Donations are tax deductible when given through the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Charitable Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 organization.

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"We want to create something that is dynamic and groundbreaking and that will help the community dream big," said Bobbie Holzwarth, chair of the RACVB Board of Directors. "Our hope is that our citizens will join together and give the gift of River Lights to the community. We truly believe it will be a gift that keeps on giving, year after year."

When will the performances be?

When sufficient funds are raised, the lights will stay on and the music will continue each night following Stroll on State until January 2, 2016. Special performances of the show, which are free to the public, will be featured nightly Sunday through Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and three shows from Thursday to Saturday at 5:30, 6:30 and 7:30 p.m.

What happens if you don't raise all of the funds?

- River Lights would be a one- night- only event at Stroll on State.
- However, if enough funds are raised, but not enough for the full installation, it is possible to scale back the show to be on just one side of the Rock River. If this were to happen, RACVB would program River Lights on the western bank.
- Another option would be to offer the shows on both sides of the river but scale back the number of nights and total number of performances. Under this scenario, RACVB would offer the show on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, foregoing the Sunday to Wednesday shows.

What happens to the lights after January 2?

- The nightly light shows will come to an end, however the lights will stay up and on year- round. They will be programmed to change colors with the seasons and for special events and holidays. It will be possible to offer special light shows for special events/occasions and holidays. Interested parties would work with RACVB to make this happen.

The mission of the RACVB is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development. www.gorockford.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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