

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



1,000 Athletes Descend on Downtown Rockford for Illinois Kids Wrestling Tournament

Tournament visitors to spend an estimated \$252,000 while in Rockford

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2016

ROCKFORD, IL — The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is pleased to host the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation (IKWF) state tournament at the BMO Harris Bank Center from March 10-12, 2016. This is the 14th consecutive year the IKWF tournament will take place in Rockford, making Rockford the longest-running host of this youth wrestling state competition.

"We thank the IKWF tournament directors and affiliates for providing our region with the opportunity to accommodate the wrestlers and their families and friends for another exciting year. Sports tourism has grown significantly over the last decade and the Rockford market has grown right along with it," said John Groh, RACVB president and CEO. "One of the key factors to our success has been the partnerships made with area leaders offering a unique experience at the host venue and also while visiting a variety of our local establishments throughout the region."

Approximately 1,000 top wrestlers in Illinois, boys and girls, ages 10-14 will compete for championship accolades in the tournament. This three-day event is projected to generate an estimated \$252,000 while visiting Rockford. The RACVB, one of the event sponsors, orchestrates the opening ceremony and color guard presentation.

"The IKWF championship tournament will feature the top wrestlers in 35 weight classes with 840 potential state qualifiers from 8 sectionals throughout the state. We are so happy to be working with the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, City of Rockford and BMO Harris Bank Center to host another successful tournament in Rockford this year," said Gene Lee, IKWF Vice President. "We rely greatly on our area partners to meet the needs of the wrestlers, their families, friends and fans during their stay in the Rockford region. We couldn't be more pleased with the service and accommodations provided each year."

Hospitality Ambassadors will be assisting visitors on Friday, March 11

RACVB staff, community partners and volunteers will circulate throughout downtown Rockford on Friday from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. handing out information sheets, maps and coupons that will help visitors get around with ease. This team of Rockford Ambassadors will answer questions guests may have and recommend where to eat, stay and play throughout the region. They will be on foot at various locations near the BMO Harris Bank Center.

Traffic and Parking Advisory

All downtown businesses and commuters are advised that traffic will be heavy Thursday afternoon, March 10 and the morning of Friday, March 11. RACVB is collaborating with the City of Rockford and the BMO Harris Bank Center to help direct traffic and minimize delays for both commuters and visitors.

Parking will also be impacted by the tournament. All city lots and on-street parking will operate according to the posted time restrictions and daily rates (parking fees may apply to some lots and decks). For visitors, suggested

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parking locations available throughout the three-day tournament include the Pioneer Deck across from the Coronado (on North Main Street), the Hinshaw & Culbertson lot (on the corner of North Wyman Street and West Jefferson Street) and the YMCA south lot on Y Boulevard. A map is available at GoRockford.com that includes information on shuttle service, directions and a full list of parking lots available for each day of the tournament.

Important Safety Note For Tournament Attendees

For safety reasons, all guests are subject to search upon entering the BMO Harris Bank Center. In the event that prohibited items are revealed during the search, the guest will be permitted to dispose of the item or return it to their vehicle. The BMO Harris Bank Center reserves the right to confiscate any prohibited items and/or escort the guest from the building. The BMO Harris Bank Center will not safeguard any personal belongings or items of any type.

To speed up the check-in process and to avoid having items confiscated, please refer to the attached "Restricted Items List." For additional information or questions regarding this please visit <http://thebmoharrisbankcenter.com/venue/bmoinfo/services/>.

Additional information about the tournament can be found at <http://ikwf.org/index.php>.

***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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