

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Wine, Dine, and Get Back Outside in our Real. Original. LOVELY. Rockford Region

From craft beer tastings to Sock Monkey Madness to dinosaur-sized fun at Paleofest, there is something for everyone this spring

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 9, 2016

Rockford, IL – From family-friendly activities to fantastic date night ideas to some of the best places in Illinois to see the snow melting and the flowers blooming, the Rockford region in Illinois has the perfect recipe to help you fall in love with all the local sites, attractions, shops and eateries.

"We are fortunate to have such a variety of events each spring that are fun and have a long tradition in our community," said Josh Albrecht, Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Director of Marketing & Public Affairs. "It's great to see events like Burpee Museum of Natural History's Paleofest, which began in 1997, and the many dino enthusiasts flocking to the museum to listen and interact with some of the world's most famous paleontologists. Longevity like that is a testament to how great the event is and how much the community enjoys it each year."

Other events that are part of the Rockford Area Real. Original. Lovely. scene include:

- **Lee Brice: Years Off My Life Tour (Feb. 12 at BMO Harris Bank Center)** – Lee Brice and special guest Jerrod Niemann both have catapulted singles to the top of the country charts. Brice has racked up an impressive four Platinum-selling singles with songs like "A Woman Like You" and "I Don't Dance" and achieved Gold with "I Drive Your Truck" and "Parking Lot Party."
- **Chocolate Sundae Sunday (Feb. 14 at Discovery Center Museum)** – Join us for this delicious annual event where you will enjoy a sundae you design yourself. Create special valentine crafts, delight in the music of Auburn Jazz Ensemble, and visit with Clifford the Big Red Dog!
- **The Rich & Romantic History of Valentines (Feb. 14 at Spring Creek United Church of Christ)** – Presented by Laurent House. Elizabeth Carlson, a Chicago area museum curator and historian, will present an entertaining look at the history of Valentine's Day. She will also weave into her talk the profound love story and read personal love letters between Phyllis and Ken Laurent, the original owners of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Laurent House.
- **56th Annual Antiques Show (Feb. 20 – 21 at Forest Hills Lodge)** – Professional antiques dealers from throughout the Midwest will be offering exciting quality antiques and collectibles. These experienced dealers will be bringing 19th and 20th century furniture, textiles, pottery, silver, folk art, toys, garden adornments and decorative elements from their vast inventories.
- **Feb_BREW_ary (Feb. 27 at Burpee Museum of Natural History)** – This celebration of craft brewing includes beer tasting, heavy hors d'oeuvres from local restaurants, educational speakers on brewing, and more throughout the night. Live music will also be featured throughout the museum. Don't miss this ice lounge on the terrace featuring BeamSuntory Bourbon Bar and Cigar Lounge.

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- **Sock Monkey Madness Festival (Mar. 5 – 6 at Midway Village Museum)** – Bring your Sock Monkey back to where it all began at the Sock Monkey Madness Festival! This year's theme is Safari Adventure as we explore Sock Monkeys in their natural habitat. The event includes the Make a Monkey workshop, games, crafts, vendors with Sock Monkey accessories and more!
- **Paleofest 2016 (Mar. 11 – 13 at Burpee Museum of Natural History)** – This 18th annual event attracts everyone from kids to experts of dinosaurs. Dino enthusiasts flock to the museum to listen and interact with some of the world's most famous paleontologists. The event also has hands-on activities and learning stations for kids of all ages.
- **St. Patrick's Day Parade and Party (Mar. 12 at Downtown Rockford)** - The annual parade celebrating Irish culture will make its way downtown and features the City of Rockford Pipe Band, the McNulty Irish Dancers and more. After the parade will be a party at Prairie Street Brewhouse where there will be live music.
- **Simply Spring: Butterfly Exhibit (Mar. 19 – May 15 at Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens)** - Celebrate the arrival of spring as you experience the magical world of native and tropical butterflies! Enjoy being surrounded by live butterflies in the tropical conservatory, and see the whole butterfly life cycle in action as you view butterflies emerging from their chrysalis in the emergence area.
- **Rockford MELTFEST 2016 (Mar. 26 at Prairie Street Brewhouse)** - Join us on the first Saturday in spring and celebrate the melting away of winter and the melting together of the community in this third annual fun family festival. There will be live music, a 5K run/walk, kids fun run, group bike ride, market vendors and more!
- **Spring ArtScene (Apr. 15-16 at Various Locations)** - Spring ArtScene showcases original works of art at different venues across the Rockford Region. Enjoy original works of art in varied media of watercolor, wood, sculpture, photography, jewelry and multi-media. Meet the artists and be inspired to buy!
- **Ragtime the Musical (May 4 at Coronado Performing Arts Center)** - The stories of an upper-class wife, a determined Jewish immigrant and a daring young Harlem musician unfold, all three united by their desire and belief in a brighter tomorrow. This musical set in turn-of-the-century New York is a timeless celebration of life.

With spring in the air and the tradition of Valentine's Day everyone is wondering where to wine and dine this season. DC Estate Winery is an ideal getaway destination. Conveniently located just minutes off I-90 in a picturesque park-like setting, the winery offers a romantic taste of Tuscany. It's the place where true pleasure is found in quality wine, beautiful scenery and warm hospitality with free guided tours daily. Or check out Artale & Co. where the extremely knowledgeable and dedicated staff will help you find the perfect selection for a relaxing weekend or that special date night. Cannot forget Five Forks and their free wine tastings offered on Saturday afternoons, and stay for the delicious tapas-based cuisine!

And if the highlight of the spring season means beautiful views of nature and crisp air hikes, the Rockford region has you covered. Rockford and Winnebago County are home to 42 forest preserves that make up more than 10,000 acres of land to be explored. Pecatonica Prairie Path and Bike Trail is an 18-mile long biking, hiking, cross country skiing, and nature trail, and the Nygren Wetland Preserve, a 721-acre tract near the confluence of the Rock River and Pecatonica River making it an important stopover and nesting spot for many species of birds.

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Rockford is known as the "City of Gardens" and in particular spring is a great time to view the Sinnissippi Gardens located along the Rock River. These gardens feature 2,000 rose plants including 62 varieties. There is also a 32-foot floral clock and a peaceful, shaded perennial garden.

For more information or to download our Real. Original. LOVELY. flyer with many of the recommended events and activities, go online to www.gorockford.com/lovely.

*Rockford, Illinois, is a vibrant community with big-city amenities and a small-town feel. Rockford is surrounded by many attractive towns and villages, each with its own character and appeal, making up a metro area of more than 330,000 people. This is a welcoming place dotted with green, blessed by rivers and untroubled by congestion. If you're looking for the real, original heart of America, welcome home to the **Rockford Region**.*

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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