

Exploring A Community in a Digital World

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Telling the Rockford story is what the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau has been doing for more than 30 years. We share the fun and adventure that awaits visitors (more than 7.6 million people each year) who experience our region for a variety of reasons – attending sports events and tournaments, exploring our parks and rivers or taking in culture at one of our many museums and attractions.

Getting the message out to the world is one that has evolved through the years. As technology has become more prevalent, we have turned to it more and more to connect with our audience – both visitors to the region and our own citizens.

One of the newest ways that the message is spread to the world is the digital marketplace. That is why over the past year we have continued our strategy to tell our story online in dynamic ways. Staying on-trend and current can be difficult in the ever-changing digital landscape.

In the social media world, our GoRockford brand continues to see great success. In the first quarter of this year, our Facebook followers have increased to nearly 19,000 followers, Instagram increased to nearly 5,000 and Twitter jumped to 5,500. This past winter we added Snapchat which continues to rise in popularity throughout the country, and we already have several hundred followers on this social media platform. Add in our 267,000 YouTube video views and we are seeing lots of traction in the online social media space.

To maximize the impact of the social media world and those who help to tell the Rockford story via GoRockford, our newly redesigned website, www.gorockford.com, is one of the first tourism websites in the country to utilize a new social media integration platform called Stackla. Now, our visitors and residents can help to tell the story of Rockford simply by tagging us with #gorockford to their posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube (don't worry, the system is smart enough through filtering to make sure nothing inappropriate makes it through). Once a user tags us, their posts will then generate to our homepage. We are extremely excited to be able to use this new technology as part of our storytelling.

Also, later this summer, we will be partnering with our friends at the Illinois Office of Tourism to bring Rockford area experiences directly to travelers through a series of virtual travel experiences in partnership with Georama, the world's first real-time virtual tour platform. These tours will be broadcast live via www.gorockford.com and will feature several of our more popular sites and attractions. This will be a very authentic and fresh way to experience our great city and region. We anticipate these live broadcasts to take place in late July (more details on exact time and dates to come soon!).

Finally, in an effort to make the digital experience easier and more exciting when exploring the Rockford region, our newly redesigned website is now fully responsive, making it easier to read and use on all devices, from desktop computers to tablets to mobile phones. Add in our new geolocation map that helps you find what sites, attractions, restaurants and shops are closest to you and our revamped Blog section will allow our GoRockford team to share some of the best things about our region in an easier and more efficient way (Top 5 Burger Places and Top 5 Cool Treats in the Summer are both coming soon!)

Now, thanks to the digital world, there is only one better way to learn about our region than using the GoRockford brand and that is to go out and experience it for yourself (but don't forget to share what you learn by tagging #gorockford).