

*Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau*

# Quarterly Report

**FY16, Q4**  
April – June 2016



**News &  
Notes**

**Marketing**

**Sports**

**Meetings**

**Bookings**

The mission of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development.



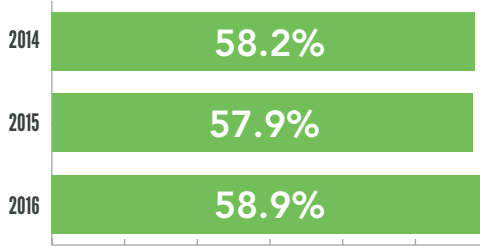
- Roberta Holzwarth** (Chair), Holmstrom & Kennedy PC
- David Anderson** (Vice Chair), Anderson Japanese Gardens
- Bill LaFever** (Secretary), Bill Doran & Co.
- Gary Strakeljahn** (Treasurer), Electroform Company
- Stacy Bernardi**, Representing Winnebago County
- Robert Burden**, City of Loves Park
- Todd Cagnoni**, City of Rockford
- Patrick Curran**, Curran's Orchard
- Bryan Davis**, SupplyCore
- Tim Dimke**, Rockford Park District
- Dave Fiduccia**, Winnebago County Board
- Einar Forsman**, Rockford Chamber of Commerce
- Jamie Getchius**, City of Rockford
- Patrick Hoey**, Village of Rockton
- Ben Holmstrom**, William Charles Construction
- Marco Lenis**, Vocational Rehabilitation Management
- Tim Myers**, WIFR-TV
- Michael Nicholas**, Rockford Area Economic Development Council
- Ted Rehl**, City of South Beloit
- Darrell Snorek**, LaMonica Beverages, Inc.



- John Groh**, President/CEO
- Josh Albrecht**, Director of Marketing & Public Affairs
- Lindsay Arellano**, Director of Sales and Service
- Jenny Caiozzo**, Group Services Manager
- Jennie Hahn**, Group Services Specialist
- Fred Harris**, Brochure Distribution Assistant
- Janet Jacobs**, Marketing Assistant
- Lori Johnson**, Executive Assistant to President/CEO
- Andrea Mandala**, Marketing & Communications Manager
- Joanne Nold**, Director of Finance & Administration
- Katrina Peterson**, Receptionist & Office Coordinator
- Nick Povalitis**, Sports Destination & Sales Manager
- Tana Vettore**, Director of Destination Development
- Elizabeth Wood**, Creative Services Manager

# Winnebago County Hotel Statistics (Jan – June 2016)

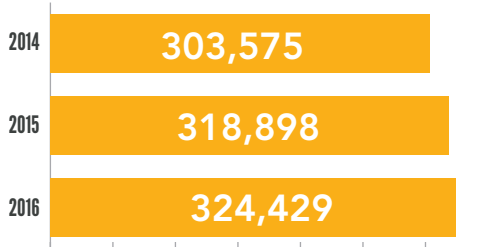
## YTD Hotel Occupancy



## YTD Average Room Rate



## YTD Hotel Room Demand (rooms sold)



## YTD Revenue (in millions)



## Regional Challenge Grant

RACVB continues its efforts to grow relationships with local municipalities outside the City of Rockford by increasing targeted communications and initiating individual meetings in those communities. Funds received by municipalities other than the City of Rockford are matched by the city's Regional Challenge Grant.



## Sister City Reports

The Rockford Sister Cities Commission held its quarterly meeting on June 2. Limited reports were made during the meeting, but the committee discussed Rockford Day, the Kids Around the World project and the International Peace Day celebrations. In addition, a few notes from the Swedish Sister Cities were highlighted:

**LIDKOPING, SWEDEN** — This fall Linnea Bengtsson will host her sixth round of Swedish Nursing students. In addition, students will work in partnership with the Swedish Historical Society. The 10th Anniversary of the Industrial Agreement between Rockford and Lidkoping will be celebrated this October. The agreement was set to expire in December of 2016 but has been renewed.

**BORGHOLM, SWEDEN** — Swedish Historical Society will promote a walk from the UW Health Sports Factory complex to the Nordic Cultural Center on August 27 to celebrate Borgholm's 200th birthday. There will be a large celebration in August in Borgholm.

Discussions of the Swedish Historical Society's Midsommar Festival in Rockford concluded that the event may expand to two days in the future.



## Sports Sales Highlights

### April Highlights

RACVB sports sales kicked off the fourth quarter on April 1 by hosting another site visit at the UW Health Sports Factory with the **Midwest Badminton Association**. Thereafter, the sales team traveled to the 2016 NASC Symposium from April 4 - 7 in Grand Rapids, MI, where GoRockford was named the **2015 NASC Sports Tourism Organization of the Year**. RACVB continued its sales efforts in Colorado Springs, CO, where it attended the 2016 **US Sports Congress Board Advisory Meeting and Sponsor Forum** from April 25 - 27. With proximity to many national governing bodies while in Colorado Springs, GoRockford also completed 13 customer visits including a hand-delivery of its bid to host the 2018 USA Ultimate Division III College Championships. RACVB achieved another landmark sports booking in partnership with Rock Valley College. The organizations co-announced our region's first ever National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association (NJCAA) championship will take place in Rockford—the 2018 **NJCAA Division III Women's Soccer Championship**.

### May Highlights

On May 3 - 4, RACVB attended the **NCAA Championships Symposium** in Indianapolis alongside Kristyn King, director of athletics at Rockford University. While in Indy, GoRockford also hosted a rights holder dinner with USA Track and Field, USA Sports Production, USA Football and Soccer by Design. Site visits to the Forest City continued with USA Field Hockey and 360 Sports LLC on May 12, followed by the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) on May 17. And thanks to its relationship with USA Sports Production, RACVB announced a new dance/cheer event booking: the **2017 Midwest Champions Cup Challenge** set for March 25 - 26 at Guilford High School.

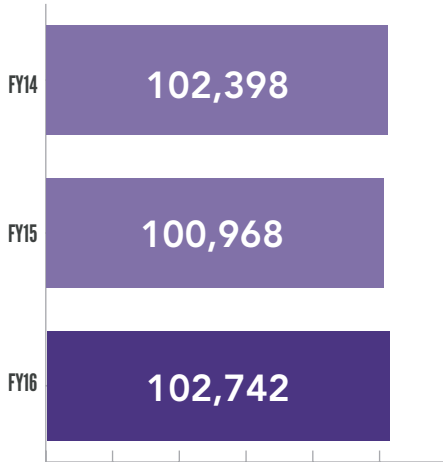
### June Highlights

After its site visit a month earlier, 360 Sports LLC secured the first gymnastics event at the UW Health Sports Factory when it announced the **2017 AAU Midwest Gymnastics Championships** for downtown Rockford. Moreover, RACVB, which visited NJCAA national office representatives in Colorado Springs six weeks prior, completed and submitted another collaborative bid proposal with Rock Valley College—this time hoping to host the **2018 and 2020 NJCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship**.

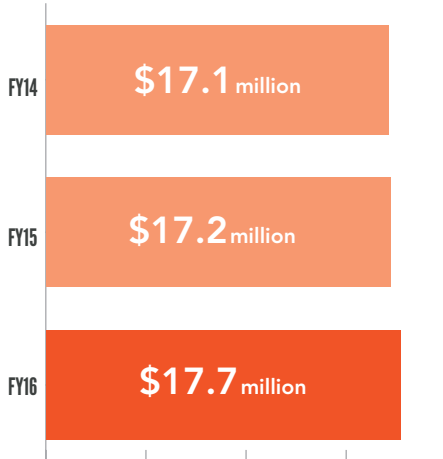


# Sports, Servicing & Bookings

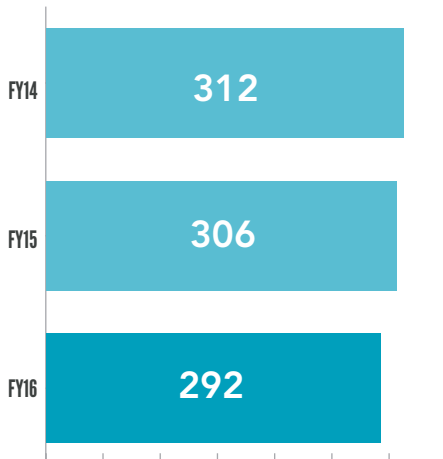
## Future Hotel Room Nights Booked



## Estimated Economic Impact



## Number of Event Bookings



## Tough Mudder



11,788  
participants

17,222  
total  
visitors



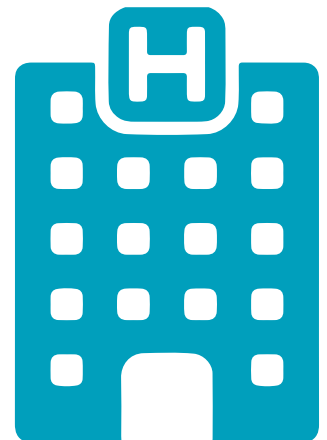
\$6,103,879  
total economic impact

\$3,380,246  
direct spending



3,707  
hotel room  
nights

3,648  
total visitors  
in hotels



## Booking Highlights for the Region

### Labor Day Cup 2016

September 2 - 4, 2016  
1,350 room nights | \$243,000 EEI

### NXT Fall Classic Lacrosse Tournament

October 29, 2016  
120 room nights | \$21,600 EEI

### IHSA Girls State Bowling (4 year extended contract)

2017 - 2020 (4 year contract)  
2,300 room nights | \$414,000 EEI (over 4 years)

### 2017 US Synchronized Skating Championships

February 21 - 26, 2017  
4,000 room nights | \$720,000 EEI

### 2017 Midwest Champions Cup Challenge

March 24 - 25, 2017  
485 room nights | \$87,300 EEI

### 2017 AAU Midwest Regional Gymnastics Championships

May 5 - 7, 2017  
600 room nights | \$108,000 EEI

**Total Q4 Booked Highlights EEI = \$1,593,900**

# News & Notes

## UW Health Sports Factory Opens With RACVB Annual Luncheon



The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau showed love for our region and celebrated major tourism wins during the organization's **Annual Luncheon** presented by SwedishAmerican, a division of UW Health. The luncheon was the inaugural event at the new **UW Health Sports Factory** and more than 750 people turned out for the celebration.

"Years from now, we will look back on the opening of the UW Health Sports Factory as a catalytic moment that helped transform downtown Rockford and the region," said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO.

"Many individuals and organizations worked together to reclaim and redevelop this riverfront site into one of the country's premier sports facilities. Our visitors will be able to compete in a world-class facility and our residents will enjoy a higher quality of life and stronger economy as a result."



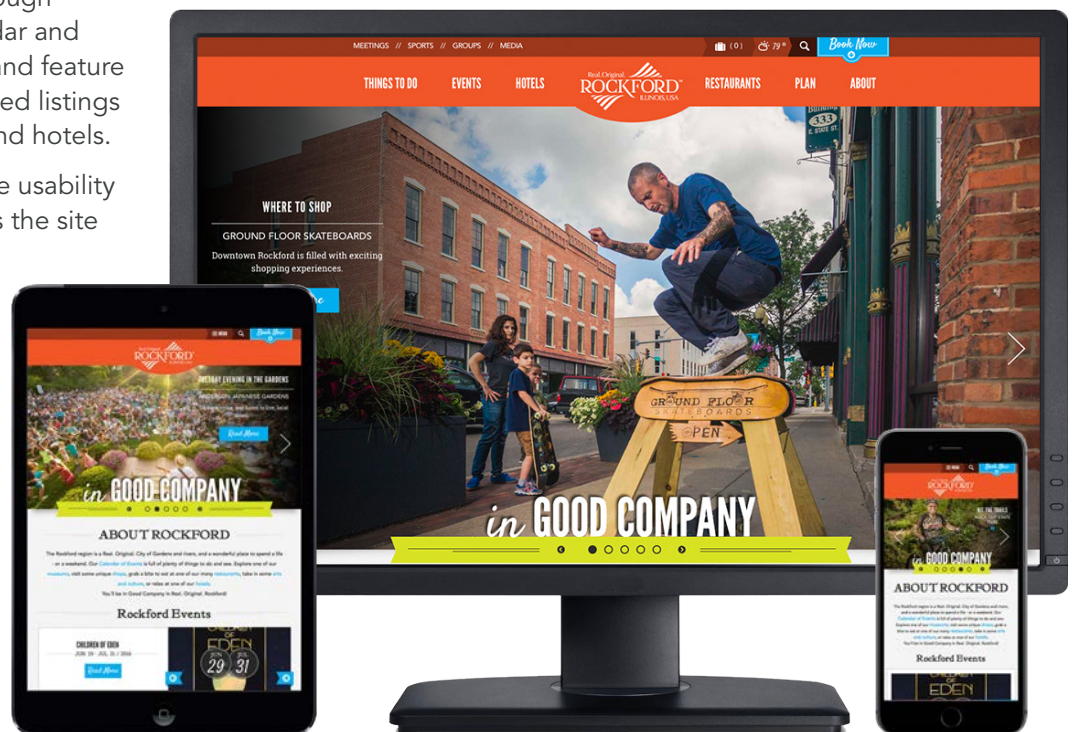
Keynote speaker Peter Kagayama

## RACVB Launches Enhanced Website

Figuring out what to do this weekend in the Rockford area just got a lot easier. The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau re-launched [www.GoRockford.com](http://www.GoRockford.com) in May with a brand new design that focuses on telling the region's story through dynamic photos, comprehensive calendar and event listings, user generated content and feature articles from local bloggers and enhanced listings for our attractions, restaurants, shops and hotels.

One of the biggest enhancements is the usability of the website as the new design allows the site to be **fully responsive across all platforms and devices**. What that means is that users can easily access the same content from their desktop computer, tablet device or smart phone without having to download an app or change any settings.

GoRockford.com currently sees strong readership and usage and increased use is anticipated with the new responsive design. In 2015, the site saw 504,311 visits with 1.3 million page views.



# News & Notes

## RACVB Year in Review

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau announced strong attendance numbers for sites, attractions and events in Winnebago County in 2015. The region's tourism attractions and events welcomed **7,662,205 guests in 2015**, up from 7,604,578 guests in 2014, an **increase of 57,627 people** over the prior year.

### Top 5 Rockford Region Events in 2015

1. AirFest .....  
150,000 people
2. Fourth of July Celebration  
125,000 people
3. Winnebago County Fair  
95,000 people
4. Stroll on State  
66,000 people
5. Festival of Lights  
58,000 people



### Top 5 Rockford Region Attractions in 2015

1. Sportscore Complexes / Indoor Sports Center .....  
2,878,847 people
2. Rock Cut State Park  
1,076,346 people
3. Ice Facilities - Carlson & Riverview  
491,815 people
4. BMO Harris Bank Center (includes IceHogs)  
289,837 people
5. Forest Hills Baseball Diamonds  
200,000 people



## Trickford, USA

### RACVB Spearheads Local Cheap Trick Celebrations

RACVB and the City of Rockford banded together to recognize and celebrate the long-overdue induction of local Rockford heroes **Cheap Trick into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame**. For Rick Nielsen, Tom Petersson, Robin Zander and Bun E. Carlos April 8, 2016 was Heaven Tonight as they became the first Rockfordians to be so honored in a grand ceremony in Brooklyn, New York.

**Rockford Becomes Trickford:** The City of Rockford is also playing an active role in the celebration and recognition of the band's accomplishments. Mayor Morrissey has ceremonially "officially, unofficially" renamed the city "Trickford" in honor of its Hall of Fame artists and signed a proclamation to that effect. New "welcome to Trickford" signs will be installed at the city's gateway entrances and the boyhood streets of the four band members will be renamed in celebratory fashion. And a new **GoTrickford.com** website will help visitors and residents alike learn about Cheap Trick's history and legacy in Rockford. The site features biographies, an interactive timeline, a Fan Trail, videos and more.



## RAEDC Emerging Opportunities Fund Grant

RACVB submitted a project to the Rockford Area Economic Development Council Leadership Council to create a strategic plan to manage and enhance the region's reputation. The Council awarded the requested **\$75,000** to manage the Rockford Region's **Reputation & Recruitment: via online and external media and influencers.**

The RACVB will utilize the funds for reputation and recruitment efforts online for the Rockford Region. Efforts will focus on how to get the good news and information about our region to rise to the top – online, in external media outlets and with key influencers. Efforts will be deployed to ensure that **positive and balanced information is available**

in order to highlight the progress and momentum the region is experiencing. Managing the regional reputation online will help local companies secure talented employees who in turn will help grow local businesses and advance our economy.

# Marketing

## Advertising & Promotions

Local and national advertisements from April 1 to May 1 were headlined by Cheap Trick's honorary induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of fame. A mix of print, digital and billboard advertisements featured the Rockford region's celebratory campaign "officially" and "unofficially" renaming the city Trickford in honor of the band. The great news was shared through local print publications, radio and television and strategically placed billboards throughout the region. National digital retargeting ads and boosted social media posts also extended the reach to a larger targeted audience. Other leisure-focused ads this quarter helped to promote the Rockford region as a staycation destination for spring and summer. In Good Company themed leisure ads were placed in **Midwest Living's Out and About** section focusing on the Rockford region as a great destination to get away and experience local adventure. The ads reached 373,400 subscribers with a total of 1.1 million readers (IL, IN, WI, MI) and generated 435 leads interested in receiving the RACVB Visitor's Guide. RACVB's Marketing Manager also talked with **Don Rosen "Radio Rosen" on WLES-AM** highlighting several local sites, attractions and fun things to do in the Rockford region during spring and summer.



The RACVB continued a great multi-year partnership with **670 The Score** to promote the grand opening of the UW Health Sports Factory. On June 4th The Score radio personalities David Schuster and Steve Rosenbloom hosted a live remote in the upper mezzanine of the facility during the opening weekend as several thousand people were on-site during the kickoff of Rockford Hoops (first event hosted in the facility). Hosting this live remote allowed us to activate on-air branding of the facility and our region, drive traffic to our website through complimentary digital exposure and create buzz around the facility's opening to approximately 85,000 listeners per day in the Chicagoland market.

## Website Statistics

### Most Searched Terms

- Things to Do
- Rockford Events
- Magic Waters Waterpark
- Rocktown Adventures
- Rock Cut State Park

### Most Searched Events

- APR** Nicholas Conservatory - Simply Spring Butterfly Exhibit
- MAY** Rockford Marathon, Half Marathon & 10K
- JUNE** 4th of July Celebration

### Website Traffic Sources



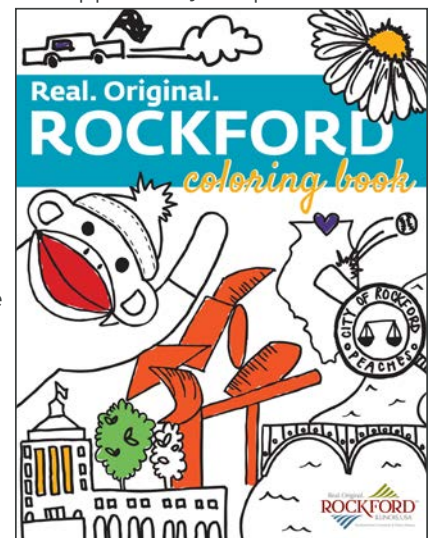
**107,168**  
Total Website Visitors

### Most Searched Attractions/Restaurants

- APR** Discovery Center Museum
- MAY** Anderson Japanese Gardens
- JUNE** Magic Waters Waterpark

## GoRockford Coloring Book

The RACVB launched a **Rockford Coloring Book** during Spring ArtScene in April. It was created as a way to extend our brand and create a fun, educational tool for residents and visitors to learn more about local places and things to do in the Rockford region. This 28-page book includes several area attractions, eateries and events that make our region so special. Partners were given the opportunity to sponsor a one-page drawing created by local area artists. Those that did not sponsor a page could also be included in the activity word search or crossword puzzle. Books are sold at several local businesses and organizations. Because of the immense popularity, a second edition of the coloring book is set to launch for Fall ArtScene this upcoming October.



# Marketing

## Promoting Rockford to Rockford

RACVB continues to build relationships with local media with new, ongoing weekly spots through various outlets. In addition to a weekly television segment on **WIFR's**

**"Morning Blend"** on Thursday mornings, RACVB now has weekly radio spots on WXRX and WROK. The broadcast on **WXRX** is with radio DJs Stone and Double T and airs live on Thursdays at 8:15 a.m. and replayed on Friday mornings. **WROK** with Riley O'Neil airs a live broadcast with RACVB every Friday morning from 8 - 8:30 a.m. During each weekly spot, RACVB Marketing & Communications Manager Andrea Mandala visits each outlet and talks to the host about upcoming events in the Rockford region and current initiatives of the RACVB.



For the second year in a row, RACVB was invited to speak at the **Young Women's Leadership**

**Organization.** The mission of this networking event is to encourage and build leadership in young women through social, community service, academic and professional activities. The event was held at East High School on April 21. RACVB spoke with 15 students about the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and the significance of marketing the Rockford region as a tourism destination.

## Travel Writer Visits

Rockford was featured in **Mayfair Magazine's August edition** (circulation 50,000) after partnering with the Illinois Office of Tourism to host freelance writer **Clare Vooght** on a travel writer familiarization trip in May. Within the magazine is the "Mayfair Recommends" section where Vooght suggests taking a mini road trip to Rockford. She describes how the city is home to the impressive Anderson Japanese Gardens and the Rockford Art Museum. This is luxury lifestyle magazine, whose main target audience is affluent residents and sophisticated visitors in London.

A **German media group** traveling throughout Illinois also had a stopover in Rockford in May. A highlight of their trip was meeting Rick Nielsen at Anderson Japanese Gardens and talking with him about Cheap Trick's recent induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. They also enjoyed an exclusive tour of the Laurent House, the Coronado Performing Arts Center and Stockholm Inn. Along with blog and social media posts, there were also several mentions in podcasts on **Sunshine Radio** with a listenership of over 390,000 within 3 weeks.



## Social Media



**Facebook**  
20,265 followers  
(1,608 increase)



**Instagram**  
6,157 followers  
(1,235 increase)



**YouTube**  
284,684 video views  
(17,325 increase)



**Twitter**  
5,638 followers  
(180 increase)

## Earned Media

RACVB uses **Cision**, a public relations management software, to track and report the effectiveness of media mentions and their ad value through various outlets, e.g., television, online, print, radio and social media.

### 37,190,344

Total impressions by media type  
(TV, newspaper, online, magazine, other publications)



### April

1,956 news clips

18,628,464 circulation



### May

524 news clips

10,303,706 circulation



### June

357 news clips

8,659,630 circulation

## Total Earned Media

(April – June 2016)

2,837 news clips

37,591,800 circulation

## Top Outlets

**WTVO (TV)** – 162 online news clips

**WREX (TV)** – 151 broadcast news clips

**WQRF (TV)** – 106 broadcast news clips



**Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau**

**January 27, 2016**

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

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**Board Present:** Bobbie Holzwarth, John Groh, David Anderson, Bob Burden, Gary Strakeljahn, Ben Holmstrom, Todd Cagnoni, Michael Nicholas, Einar Forsman, Patrick Curran, Patrick Hoey, Stacy Bernardi, Marco Lenis

**Board Absent:** Dave Fiduccia, Jamie Getchius, Bryan Davis, Darrell Snorek, Bill LaFever, Mayor Ted Rehl, Tim Myers, Ken Strawbridge, Tim Dimke

**Staff Present:** Josh Albrecht, Lori Johnson, Joanne Nold

**Guests:** Alderman Tom McNamara, Bill Geist with DMOProz

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Bobbie Holzwarth.

**Public Comments:**

Alderman Tom McNamara requested the opportunity to briefly join the RACVB Board meeting. He was thankful for the decisions and investments the Board and RACVB staff have made to beautify and bring momentum back to downtown Rockford. He highlighted events like Forest City Beautiful, Stroll on State and River Lights.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the November 18, 2015 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**Stakeholder Research Report:**

Bill Geist, DMOProz, reported to the Board the feedback gleaned from stakeholder interviews and focus groups in the fourth quarter of 2015. After his comments there was extended discussion. Bill offered several recommendations: increase alternate revenue streams, increase communication to key stakeholders regarding funding non-traditional initiatives, and to continue to offer new and innovative destination development/experiences.

**Budget Report:**

At the recommendation of the Audit/Budget Committee, the revised FY16 Budget was approved.

**Internal Monitoring Reports:**

The approvals of the following Monitoring Reports were held over until the February 24, 2016 meeting, due to the loss of a quorum.

- 1.0 – Global Ends
- 1.3 – Engage Constituents on Behalf of Tourism
- 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budgeting
- 2.4 – Financial Condition & Activities
- 2.8 – Communication & Support to Board

**Governance Process:**

Per Board policy, Bobbie Holzwarth announced the 2016 CEO Compensation Committee will consist of the same members as the Governance Committee.

Board members were requested to complete and submit their Conflict of Interest Disclosures for 2016.

**CEO Report:**

John Groh reported on the 2015 Stroll on State. With almost \$60,000 in sponsorship funding and \$20,000 in other revenue, the event had a "break-even" expense bottom line.

Paint the (Down)town Green fundraising event is Friday, March 18 at the Rockford Morning Star Building, 127 N. Wyman Street. The RACVB Foundation Board members will serve as hosts for the event. There is a \$20,000 fundraising goal. Board members received copies of the sponsorship packages and were encouraged to attend.

Board members were notified of two news conferences for Bowling Tournament wins and the Tough Mudder competition in May 2016.

RACVB Annual Luncheon is confirmed for Wednesday, June 1, 2016 and will be held at the UW Sports Factory downtown. RACVB, in conjunction with Transform Rockford, has contracted Peter Kageyama, author of "For the Love of Cities" to speak at the Annual Luncheon as well in a "community conversation" session hosted by Transform Rockford.

In appreciation for marketing support for their Ethnic Parade and Festival, Midtown District gifted RACVB a plaque to say thank you.

John Groh confirmed that Rockford was not chosen as a recipient for the 2016 Levitt Music Grant.

The board adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bill LaFever, Board Secretary

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Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

## Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

April 27, 2016

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

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**Board Present:** John Groh, David Anderson, Bill LaFever, Bob Burden, Todd Cagnoni, Michael Nicholas, Patrick Hoey, Stacy Bernardi, Marco Lenis, Tim Dimke, Tim Myers, Bryan Davis

**Board Absent:** Bobbie Holzwarth, Dave Fiduccia, Jamie Getchius, Darrell Snorek, Mayor Ted Rehl, Gary Strakeljahn, Ben Holmstrom, Einar Forsman, Patrick Curran

**Staff Present:** Tana Vettore, Joanne Nold, Lindsay Arellano, Lori Johnson

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by David Anderson.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the January 27, 2016 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

#### **Internal Monitoring Reports:**

It was moved and seconded to accept all monitoring reports as presented that were deferred from January and February 2016. Motion carried.

- 1.0 – Global Ends
- 1.3 – Engage Constituents on Behalf of Tourism
- 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budgeting
- 2.4 – Financial Condition & Activities
- 2.8 – Communication & Support to Board

It was moved and seconded to accept all monitoring reports as presented for April 2016. Motion carried.

- 1.2 – Enhance Tourism Product
- 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budgeting
- 2.4 – Financial Condition & Activities

#### **Governance Process:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the recommendation of the Board Development Committee to elect as one slate proposed Officers and returning board members as follows. Motion carried.

The following individuals are approved to serve as an officer, each serving a one-year term, beginning at the conclusion of the May 2016 meeting and concluding May 2017.

- Chair: Bobbie Holzwarth
- Vice Chair: David Anderson
- Treasurer: Gary Strakeljahn
- Secretary: Bill LaFever

The following individuals are approved to serve an additional (2<sup>nd</sup>) three-year term, beginning at the May 2016 meeting and concluding May 2019.

- Bobbie Holzwarth
- Bill LaFever
- David Anderson
- Ben Holmstrom
- Marco Lenis
- Stacy Bernardi (as County's voting representative)

The resignation of Ken Strawbridge was accepted, opening one board member position for consideration.

**Audit Committee:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the Engagement Letter from Benning Group, LLC for the second year of our agreement as recommended by the Audit Committee. There will be an additional \$2,200.00 fee for the RACVB Charitable Foundation Audit and 990.

**CEO Report:**

Bob Burden made a motion, and Tim Myers seconded the motion for the approval of the Banking Resolution from Illinois Bank & Trust regarding RACVB line of credit and credit card documents.

Forest City Beautiful is entering its third year. Sharefest successfully completed its two-year agreement beautifying the downtown area. The third year will focus on maintenance of the existing planted materials downtown.

John Groh reported that Paint The (Down)town Green event was well done, however it did not meet the revenue expectations through sponsorships or registrations. New relationships that were made at the event will be cultivated by RACVB Foundation Board members and staff.

RACVB Annual Luncheon is confirmed for Wednesday, June 1, 2016 and will be held at the UW Sports Factory. There is currently \$23,000 in sponsorships for the event. RACVB, in conjunction with Transform Rockford, has contracted Peter Kageyama, author of "For the Love of Cities" to speak at the Annual Luncheon as well in a "community conversation" session hosted by Transform Rockford that evening at Prairie Street Brewhouse. Other events such as book discussions are being hosted individually and by Rockford Public Library.

John Groh asked Tim Dimke to provide an update on the MercyRockford Sportscore 2 Zone 5 Dedication & Mega Center Groundbreaking. Please save the date of Friday, June 24, 2016 at 3:30 p.m. which will take place at 8800 E. Riverside Blvd. Six indoor soccer fields will be completed at the Mega Sports Center by July 2017.

There was discussion regarding amount of available hotels during heavily attended tournaments in Rockford. Todd Cagnoni gave a positive update regarding Cliffbreakers and the Section 108 Loan the City's Planning & Development Committee is scheduled to consider on Monday, May 2, 2016.

Bryan Davis gave an update on the Joseph James boutique hotel proposed for downtown Rockford. Progress has been made with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and financing is also progressing. They are on track to break ground in 2016.

John Groh reported that National Tourism Week, May 1 – 7, 2016 will be celebrated in numerous ways by RACVB. Please mark your calendars for a sports win press conference on Wednesday, May 4 at 1 p.m. at RACVB and for a Tourism Award Fiesta at Garrett's on Thursday, May 5 (Cinco de Mayo).

John Groh, currently in the role of Vice Chair for the ICCVB Board, discussed tourism funding for the State of Illinois. There is an ongoing grassroots advocacy effort happening state wide.

John Groh reported on the excitement surrounding the city's celebration of Cheap Trick and their induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The board adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William D. LaFever".

Bill LaFever, Board Secretary  
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## Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

May 25, 2016

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

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**Board Present:** Bobbie Holzwarth, John Groh, David Anderson, Gary Strakeljahn, Bob Burden, Michael Nicholas, Patrick Hoey, Stacy Bernardi, Marco Lenis, Tim Myers, , Einar Forsman, Patrick Curran

**Board Absent:**, Dave Fiduccia, Jamie Getchius, Darrell Snorek, Mayor Ted Rehl, Ben Holmstrom, Bill LaFever, Todd Cagnoni, Bryan Davis, Tim Dimke

**Staff Present:** Josh Albrecht, Lori Johnson

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Bobbie Holzwarth.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the April 27, 2016 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

#### **Internal Monitoring Reports:**

It was moved and seconded to accept all monitoring reports as presented. Motion carried.

- 2.1 – Treatment of Customers, Partners & Stakeholders
- 2.9 – Programs/Events/Services/Logistics

#### **Governance Process:**

A survey will be sent to the board on behalf of the Board Chair to collect data regarding the CEO performance.

#### **CEO Report:**

John reminded the board of the RACVB Annual Luncheon Wednesday, June 1, 2016 and will be held in conjunction with the dedication ceremonies at the UW Sports Factory. The first tournament follows the weekend of June 4, 2016.

John Groh, currently in the role of Vice Chair for the ICCVB Board, discussed tourism funding for the State of Illinois. There is an ongoing grassroots advocacy effort happening state-wide. He will testify at a hearing in Springfield on tourism appropriation on May 25, 2016.

John Groh asked all board members to hold the date of July 27, 2016 for a potential scheduling of the June board meeting due to the unknown State budget scenario.

John Groh reported that the RACVB was selected to be awarded the Rockford Area Economic Development Council Emerging Opportunities Fund Grant of \$75,000. This grant will be used to manage the Rockford Region's Reputation & Recruitment via online and external media & influencers.

A financial proposal will be brought to the Board of Directors regarding a potential fall music festival that could include Cheap Trick. Discussions are in early stages at this time.

John Groh gave a report on the results of Tough Mudder 2016 and showed a recap video created by WIFR.

The board adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

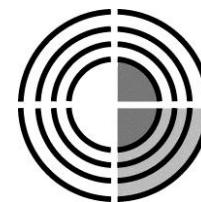
Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William D LaFever".

Bill LaFever, Board Secretary  
Lj



Governing Policy of the RACVB Board of Directors



Ends Policy Policy 1.0 Global Ends Statement

Management Limitations

To: RACVB Board of Directors
From: John Groh, President/CEO
RE: Internal Monitoring Report – Ends Policies
Monitoring on Policy 1.0 – Global Ends Statement

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Executive Limitations Policy 1.0, Global Ends Statement, in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true.

Signed,

Handwritten signature of John Groh
John Groh
President/CEO

January 27, 2016

POLICY 1.0 – GLOBAL ENDS STATEMENT

BROADEST POLICY PROVISION: “The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau exists to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development.

CEO INTERPRETATION: I interpret this statement to mean the basic, fundamental mission of the RACVB is to utilize its funding, human resources and all other available strengths and assets to improve the quality of life of area citizens and that we do this by ensuring the continued growth of the visitor industry in the Rockford Region, defined as Winnebago County.

I interpret that inclusion of both marketing and destination development to be the board’s directive that we have a two-pronged strategy. This strategy should focus attention and resources on marketing/promoting/selling our regions’ existing product while always having an eye toward the future and advocating for new development projects, priorities and enhancements that will keep our region appealing to citizens (quality of life) but also to visitors.

Further, I believe that in restating its Global Ends Statement (approved in April 2014) RACVB’s board desires that we have a “citizens first” mentality. Said another way, our approach is guided by the underlining thought that “what is good for and appealing to a citizen will likely be attractive to and compelling to a visitor.”

The RACVB board and staff maintain Policy 1.0 as our primary goal and “bottom line”, which guides the allocation of resources, defines strategy and directs implementation. The board provides RACVB with three directives for achieving its mission (1.1 – Create Economic Wealth, 1.2 – Enhance the Tourism Product, and 1.3 – Engage Constituents on Behalf of Tourism), which RACVB uses in developing its strategy.

I believe these three priorities comprehensively define the impacts RACVB can create for the Rockford Region, given available resources, and that they collectively represent achievement of mission.



**REPORT:** Monitoring reports presented on 1.1 (November 18, 2015), 1.2 (April 22, 2015) and 1.3 (April 22, 2015), which provide details about how effectively the RACVB is achieving its goals in each of these areas. Except in Policy 1.2, sub-end when targeted expectations for hotel experience declined in 2015, all reports reported achievement. Following are brief summaries of how RACVB is achieving results in each of these priority areas.

To ensure continued results in achievement of **1.1 (Create Economic Wealth)** RACVB sales staff continues to see a large demand for room nights associated with amateur sports related to the Reclaiming First master plan.

Our results in group sales outpace similarly sized and funded CVBs; our sales team exceeded its FY15 goal of booking 100,000 room nights. All hotel indicators such as occupancy, average daily rate, revenue per available room and room tax generated, showed growth. Food and beverage tax increased 12% year over year.

The region advanced critical visitor industry projects in 2015. These products directly relate to **1.2 (Enhance Tourism Product)**. Of note, the City of Rockford and Rockford Park District have completed approximately 70% of construction on the newly named UW Sports Factory downtown and is on schedule to open in May 2016. Sportscore Two and the Indoor Sports Complex started extensive expansions and renovations in 2015 and will continue in 2016. The advancement of the Embassy Suites and Joseph James hotel projects are crucial to the needs of convention/meeting planners and visitors for amateur sports.

Event and Festival attendance increased this past year. Stroll on State, in its third year, saw a record attendance of 66,000 people to the downtown area. New to the Merry & Bright Season in 2015, the introduction of River Lights, an innovative lighting show series, synchronized to music debuted at Stroll on State and provided nightly shows throughout the holiday season. In December 2015, two new events were also added to the Merry & Bright season line-up. 12 Bars of Christmas, which was a sold out event, and Shop on State with a Wine tasting at Waterside, which was also successful.

Other projects – i.e., a downtown conference center/hotel and mixed-use renovations – are all in different stages of discussion, consideration and planning. These larger, capital-intensive projects will by their nature take longer to come to fruition. Nonetheless, they should remain on our radar and RACVB remains vigilant in partnership and advocacy for them.

The need to gain support and move forward on the critical visitor industry projects noted above highlights the importance of **1.3 (Engage with Constituents)**. RACVB systematically seeks out opportunities to promote the importance of tourism and the organization's successes so stakeholders and citizens better understand the impact of tourism and the role of RACVB as it relates the economy.

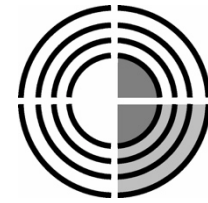
As an example of this outreach, RACVB regularly hosts Marketing Partnership Meetings to bring together tourism professionals from throughout the region to network and share their successes. Each month the meetings are held in different locations to expose the group to the offerings and to educate the group on the value of tourism. RACVB continues to host bi-monthly hotel general managers meetings and bi-monthly sites/attraction general manager meetings.

Results from our 2015 Community Survey indicate that 95.9 percent of those surveyed agreed that tourism is "very important" (69.2%) or "important" (26.7%). This far exceeded our target of 85%. 98.5 % of residents believe tourism has a positive or strong impact on the economy. Additionally, a majority of citizens would support additional funding for several of RACVB's destination development priority projects: revitalizing downtown, amateur sports facilities, and connecting bike paths.

As I have reported achievement in reports on 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 this year (with the exception of hotel experience in 1.2), **I am reporting achievement** of your Global Ends Statement, 1.0.



Governing Policy of the  
RACVB Board of Directors



Ends Policy 1.3 Communicate with Constituents

*Management Limitations*

To: Board of Directors

From: John Groh, President/CEO

RE: Internal Monitoring Report – Ends Policies, Annual Monitoring on Policy 1.3

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Ends Policies Policy 1.3 - "Engage Constituents on Behalf of Tourism: RACVB tourism marketing and destination development efforts have broad support among key stakeholders" in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy.

Signed,

John Groh, President/ CEO

January 27, 2106

Date

**POLICY 1.3 – ENGAGE CONSTITUENTS ON BEHALF OF TOURISM:** RACVB tourism marketing and destination development efforts have broad support among key stakeholders.

1. The role of tourism is valued by residents of Winnebago County
2. Tourism initiatives and RACVB are supported by government leaders and public policy
3. Business and community leaders invest time, energy and money in tourism initiatives
4. There is appropriate exposure of plans and activities in local and regional media

**BROADEST POLICY PROVISION: "RACVB tourism marketing and destination development efforts have broad support among key stakeholders."**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(no changes since last report)* At the broadest level, I interpret this to mean that RACVB's success is reliant on demonstrable broad-based support for its work and role in the community.

Provisions 1, 2, 3 and 4 comprehensively identify the key segments of stakeholders (residents, government leaders, business and community leaders, and media) that cumulatively encompass "broad" support. Each of these is more fully interpreted and reported on below.

Of note, while not explicit in provision 3, I include industry partners (i.e., owners, managers and key staff of hotels, restaurants, sites, attractions, events and those businesses that are suppliers to the industry) in the broad category of "business and community leaders."

Further, to ensure such support, I interpret this to mean RACVB must have in place regular practices and programs that maintain a proactive, diversified effort to encourage dialogue with all the individuals and entities that comprise our stakeholders. In order to monitor perceptions and ensure support, the communication process should provide outlets and opportunities for RACVB to hear and understand the needs, expectations and awareness of our stakeholders.

The objective is to ensure the RACVB has strong relationships with stakeholders and other community opinion leaders, and those individuals understand the bureau's mission, programs and positive impact on the region's economy and quality of life. As a result, these stakeholders are appropriately involved and support bureau initiatives, and the RACVB is ensured of ongoing resources/funding in order to fulfill its mission and purpose.

**CEO REPORT:** This report on Ends Policy 1.3 – Engage Constituents on Behalf of Tourism covers the period since the last report in April 2015.

RACVB's Public Affairs efforts focus on achieving the board's priority as laid out in Ends Policy 1.3. The primary objective of our efforts is to effectively communicate the message that 1) tourism is important for economic development and growth, 2) RACVB is an effective and innovative steward of public funds and 3) that investing in tourism marketing and destination development projects will further the positive impact of tourism and benefit our region's quality of life. The primary strategies include government relations, media relations, stakeholder communication and engagement, and community and industry outreach.

### **1. The role of tourism is valued by residents of Winnebago County.**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(no changes since last report)* Adult residents of Winnebago County should be aware of and value the positive economic and quality of life impacts of tourism in Winnebago County, even if not a direct stakeholder in the tourism industry. Though economic impacts are primary, residents should also recognize that tourism product benefits and enhances their quality of life (e.g. availability of sports and recreation amenities, entertainment venues, restaurants, sites and attractions, etc.).

In April 2015, I shared results of our 2015 Citizen's Stakeholder Research Report, and reported compliance on this sub-end. Data has not changed or been collected since the biennial report was completed.

I am reporting achievement.

### **2. Tourism initiatives and RACVB are supported by government leaders and public policy.**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(no changes since last report)* With RACVB funding so heavily reliant on governmental grants and contracts (e.g. City of Rockford funding equates to 51% of FY15 revenue, and funding from the State of Illinois equates to 36%), it is vital that government leaders and others who influence public policy recognize the economic and other tangible and intangible benefits the region derives from tourism and RACVB's tourism marketing and development efforts, and that this recognition results in proactive support of tourism initiatives and RACVB.

Additionally, support from government leaders is vital to advancing destination development strategies. As policy makers and appropriators of public funds, it is vital that elected leaders are continually aware and supportive of the benefits from a comprehensive destination development strategy, as well as destination development projects and initiatives.

As outlined in the CEO monitoring report on 1.3 in April 2015, tourism priorities we committed to working toward included gaining support for the following:

1. Support amenities and services related to Reclaiming First projects (i.e., signage, transportation)
2. Maintain or expand funding from the State of Illinois for statewide and local promotion efforts
3. Maintain and expand support from the City of Rockford for Forest City Beautiful
4. Secure new revenue from local municipal and government partners.
5. Continued momentum in Downtown Rockford redevelopment, i.e., approval to convert one-way streets to two-way, re-development agreement for a hotel/conference center

**REPORT: *The following demonstrates achievement since the last report:***

DMOproz (formerly Zeitgeist Consulting) was engaged during the fourth quarter of 2015 by RACVB to conduct a series of interviews and focus groups with key community and destination stakeholders in the Rockford Region. DMOproz conducted a series of face-to-face interviews with over 25 key regional stakeholders and roughly 50 other community leaders through Focus Group discussions. According to DMOproz:

- The vast majority of stakeholders are extremely pleased with the direction of the RACVB over the past couple years. Initiatives such as Forest City Beautiful, Stroll on State and River Lights have ignited stakeholder pride, vision and enhanced self-esteem for the Downtown.
- RACVB's work to realize the expansion of Sportscore 2 and the creation of the Sports Factory were often cited as game-changing initiatives that only the Bureau could have done.
- With very few exceptions, the majority of Stakeholders saw the RACVB as the "Go To" agency in town.
- Local businesses are very appreciative that RACVB markets Rockford to Rockford.
- Rockford City officials were especially pleased, saying that the RACVB has the capacity, the leadership and the creativity to do great things. A few other Stakeholders, however, believed that the RACVB was too beholden to the whims of Rockford City Hall, again citing a fear of Mission Creep.
- The Park District said RACVB has been crucial in the retention of tournaments and maximizing participant enjoyment.
- Several stakeholders offered kudos to the Bureau for its Marketing and PR efforts. Others said they liked that the RACVB wasn't afraid to take risks.
- Stakeholders connected to the Downtown are generally elated at the job the RACVB is doing. Those not connected with the Downtown are fairly unimpressed with the Bureau's work there. That said, a Downtown Stakeholder opined, "Beautification has ignited the neighbors. This is core to becoming who we want to be. It has created an attitude of investment. There's never been this kind of energy Downtown before. The Bureau needs to continue to choreograph this excitement."

Additional evidence of achievement is as follows:

- RACVB staff managed and executed 11 tours for stakeholders and citizens of the construction progress at the UW Sports Factory. These tours are offered to ensure citizens and partners continue to view the project as important to the community and are up informed regarding construction progress.
- Monthly joint meetings with the Rockford Park District are held at the RACVB office to discuss

marketing, sales and various readiness issues in advance of the opening of Sportscore 2 expansion and the Sports Factory. As an example of outcomes from these meetings, in 2015, RACVB and RPD piloted a program to transport guests from tournament facilities to attractions and restaurants. Discussions are underway on making this pilot service a more regular offering during 2016.

- RACVB has been actively engaged in Wayfinding Signage planning meetings with the City of Rockford, Rockford Park District, City of Loves Park and River District Association. The outcome of these meetings will be an updated way finding system that effectively helps guests find their way to/from sports tournament facilities.
- Throughout the state budget impasse, RACVB played an active role in communicating the value of tourism to the regional and state economy. Despite the continued overall stalemate, the legislature passed and Governor Rauner signed a bill in early December that freed up tourism funding for local CVBs. Efforts are ongoing to restore full funding to the Illinois Office of Tourism.
- RACVB/Forest City Beautiful, with support from Rockford Sharefest, executed a multi-day clean up and beautification of downtown Rockford. More than 700 volunteers worked to better their community. As part of this effort, new planters, banners, and furnishing were installed in downtown Rockford with the help of the City.
- The City of Rockford continued to support Stroll on State in its third year. For example, the City has offered free storage space for SOS decorations (approx. 5,000 sq. ft), provided equipment when needed and aiding in set-up and teardown of the event and holiday decorations. More than 100 businesses and organizations were involved in the event and more than 700 volunteers helped with execution.
- As part of the Forest City Beautiful program, nine sculptures were installed in May and June with the help of numerous agencies and individuals. RACVB leads the effort with support from and coordination by Sanders Design Group, the City of Rockford, Rockford Art Museum, Rockford Park District and Behr Metals. Public art is consistently considered as an important element of placemaking efforts.
- The City of Rockford, with considerable constituent and citizen involvement, has finalized a new Downtown Rockford Strategic Action Plan. RACVB staff was active in the development of this plan. Farr Associates worked as the City's lead planning facilitator on the development of the action plan.
- The City of Rockford, in tandem with Conservation Design Forum, is developing a new master plan for Davis Park. This planning process is ongoing; with concepts being refined during early 2016. RACVB is part of this process and considered to be one of the primary stakeholders for planning purposes.
- RACVB introduced two new events, Shop on State and 12 Bars of Christmas, to promote and bring visitors to the downtown during the holiday season. As first-time events, both were considered successful in terms of number of participants and positive impact on businesses.
- Reinvestment and development continues at an accelerated pace in the downtown core. For example, the Trust Building is undergoing conversion in to 62 loft/apartment spaces; The Standard will open in 2016 as a mixed-use event/restaurant/retail space in the 200 block of East State Street and RACVB's River Lights, presented by MercyRockford Health System, was a popular and well-attended new attraction along the riverfront – especially during the holiday season.

**I am reporting achievement.**

### **3. Business and community leaders invest time, energy and money in tourism initiatives.**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(no changes since last report)* This End speaks to “broad support. When combined with provision 1.3.2 (government leader support) and 1.3.4 (media exposure), virtually all “leaders” in the Rockford Region are included. I interpret that highest priority should be given to business and government leaders, as if the most prominent and respected individuals in these sectors actively advocate for tourism, it is likely that the media and especially governmental bodies will join in support.

I interpret this to suggest that in order for RACVB to advance its priorities and initiatives, it is important for RACVB to generate support in a variety of forms, both monetary and non-monetary. Tourism initiatives are inclusive of CVB-supported projects and priorities and efforts by others that advance the tourism industry.

As outlined in the CEO monitoring report on 1.3 in April 2015, examples of engagement we prioritized were:

1. Grow private sector and philanthropic support for initiatives such as Stroll on State and Forest City Beautiful, as new sources of funds will help sustain and expand such programs.
2. Continued growth in support for and attendance at RACVB's Annual Meeting
3. Regular meetings with elected officials, i.e., mayors, aldermen, state representatives and senators
4. Involvement with community wide movements and initiatives such as Transform Rockford, Alignment Rockford, Next Rockford, etc.
5. Regular outreach/public affairs efforts via media relations, partner meetings, feedback sessions, etc.

**REPORT:** *The following demonstrates achievement toward those priorities listed above:*

- Stroll on State's paid sponsorships increased in 2015 to a total of \$59,500 from \$6,250 in 2014. Paid sponsors included Illinois Bank & Trust, Comcast, Allstate, River District Association, Williams-Manny, LaMonica Beverages, Landstar, and SwedishAmerican.
- Rockford's River Lights project received strong financial support from the community, lead by a \$25,000 presenting sponsorship from MercyRockford Health System. In addition, 22 other businesses and more than 50 individuals donated more than \$100,000 to the effort.
- In total, since inception in the summer of 2014, \$208,077.86 has been raised to support Forest City Beautiful efforts. Of note, \$90,000 came from the City of Rockford, \$70,000 came from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois with the balance of \$48,077.86 coming from local companies, organizations and individuals. In addition, our first ever Paint the Downtown Green event held in March 2015 raised more than \$12,500 (net) to support Forest City Beautiful.
- After a one-year hiatus, RACVB's Annual meeting had 360 attendees at Giovanni's. All local television news outlets as well as the Rockford Register Star and Rock River Times covered the event.
- As President/CEO, I hold/attend regular update meetings with elected officials, as well as, key personal in the City and community organizations. Along with board officers, during 2015 we met with all aldermen, with the exception of one due to continued schedule conflicts.
- RACVB staffed worked closely with State Rep. Litesa Wallace on a Staycation event for her constituents.

- US Congresswoman Cheri Bustos was a guest of RACVB's for a meeting to discuss recent downtown Rockford initiatives and tourism industry updates.
- Involvement with community wide movements and initiatives.
  - RACVB is represented on two spoke teams for Transform Rockford, attended spoke team trainings, and assisted in community meetings held by Transform Rockford.
  - RACVB has several representatives that serve on the Community Partners (formerly EDEEN) committees with the City of Rockford.

I am reporting achievement.

#### **4. There is appropriate exposure of plans and activities in local and regional media.**

**INTERPRETATION: CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret appropriate exposure to mean that local and regional media outlets provide regular coverage of news provided and created by the RACVB. Local and regional media outlets include television stations WIFR, WTVO/WQRF, WREX; radio companies Townsquare Media and Midwest Family Broadcasting; as well as the Rockford Register Star, and Rock River Times.

**REPORT: RACVB's 2015 local public relations strategy resulted in a high profile for RACVB in the community through media coverage of RACVB and RACVB-partner events/news.**

As outlined in the CEO monitoring report on 1.3 in April 2015, short-term targeted metrics/success indicators were

1. Not less than eight news conferences are held by the Bureau & covered by local/regional media
2. A minimum of 500 stories run in print and on TV/radio about bookings secured by the Bureau that include the economic impact of tourism
3. A minimum of 20 interviews are conducted by local and regional media that look to the Bureau as a leader and a reliable source to provide comments for pertinent stories

*The following demonstrates achievement this past year:*

1. RACVB coordinated 12 news conferences/events the past year, including Stroll on State, Forest City Beautiful/Rockford Sharefest, Midtown Ethnic Parade & Festival and River Lights.
2. Total number of media placements were tracked by two different sources:
  - April – July 2015 – High Tail (via Chartwell Agency) tracked 224 media placements
  - Sept – Jan. 2016 – Cision tracked 3,851 media placements
  - **Combined tracked placements = 4,075 media placements (that is an increase of 3,475 media placements, an 85% increase over prior year)**
3. Total number of interviews with RACVB staff, including Morning Blend, Stroll on State and River Lights, news conferences, etc. is 103 interviews conducted.
4. Additional factors that demonstrate achievement this past year include:
  - a. 52 news releases were issued for the RACVB (and an additional 22 on behalf of the Rockford City Market). Total news releases by staff totaled 74.
  - b. Total earned media valued (tracked from Sept. 2015 – Jan. 2016 by Cision is \$1,105,177.40.

c. 8 FAM visits were coordinated by the RACVB with travel writers.

Staff regularly monitors local and regional media for news items related to the visitor industry, and then when appropriate contacts those media outlets offering staff members to comment as subject matter experts. This often results in RACVB receiving exposure via media outlets.

**I am reporting achievement.**

Prepared by: Josh Albrecht/John Groh 1/27/16





Governing Policy of the  
RACVB Board of Directors



Executive Limitations Policy 2.2 – Treatment of Staff

*Management Limitations*

To: RACVB Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President/CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report – Ends Policies  
Monitoring on Policy 2.2 – Treatment of Staff

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Executive Limitations Policy 2.2, Treatment of Staff, in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true.

Signed,

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Groh, President/CEO

\_\_\_\_\_  
February 24, 2016

**POLICY 2.2:** With respect to the treatment of paid and/or volunteer staff, the President/CEO may not cause or allow conditions that are unfair, unsafe or undignified.

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret this to mean each paid and/or volunteer staff member has a right to a fair, safe, and dignified work environment, and the President/CEO must ensure the RACVB has the policies and procedures in place to safeguard those rights.

I define fair as meaning that staff is treated equally, being held to the same codes of conduct and expectations. Further it means each job has a description fitting and appropriate to that position, each staff member knows the responsibilities of their job, what is expected of them and whether they are meeting those expectations. I believe "safe" to mean the building and environment is appropriately maintained, any safety concerns are immediately addressed, and each staff member and/or volunteer is able to effectively do their job without risking personal harm or injury. I define "dignified" as meaning each person's innate right to respectful and ethical treatment.

**REPORT: (No changes since last report)** RACVB operates within the boundaries dictated by our personnel policies; corporate priority expectations; corporate leadership and team performance expectations; building and equipment maintenance standards; and customer service standards. These key guidelines and documents provide a framework to ensure working conditions are fair, safe and dignified.

Evidence of the fairness and dignity expectations is outlined in my reporting on the subsequent provisions below. As to safety, there have been no workplace injuries to staff or any RACVB volunteers during the last 12 months.

***I am reporting compliance.***

Accordingly, the President/CEO shall not:

**2.2.1 “Operate without written personnel policies, approved by legal counsel, which clarify personnel rules for staff, provide for effective handling of grievances protect against wrongful and/or unlawful conditions.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret this to mean RACVB has an employee handbook, approved by legal counsel, that outlines the expectations for employees, sets the rules of conduct, and provides an avenue for dispute resolutions should an employee believe their rights have been violated, as well as bringing to the attention of management, or ultimately the Board of Directors, grievances or concerns about conduct observed that is in violation of any governing policy of the Board. Policies must guide actions in a way to preclude or address “wrongful conditions,” would include those that are unlawful, unjust or unfair.

**REPORT:** RACVB has a comprehensive set of personnel policies that outline employee expectations, defines the corporate culture, sets the rules of conduct, outlines standard office procedures and provides an avenue for addressing grievances. The policies (known internally as our employee handbook) underwent a comprehensive review led by the President/CEO, with an HR consultant and employment attorney Sam Castree of Staff Management, Inc. in 2015. The newly revised handbook was reviewed by staff with the HR consultant in July of 2015.

RACVB staff last reviewed and signed an acknowledgement and receipt of the existing personnel policies in February 2016.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.2.2 “Allow staff to be unaware of these governing policies.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I am to ensure each employee is made aware of the governing policies and has access to them.

**REPORT:** All staff members receive a copy of the Board Governing Policies during their new employee orientation. Policies are also available on RACVB’s website and internal computer network. Each new employee participates in an orientation program that outlines the handbook and board policies. At the time of hire, staff members are required to sign an acknowledgment that they have received and read the personnel and governing policies. A copy of this acknowledgment is placed in the employee’s personnel file. Additionally, board policies are available on RACVB’s internal computer network

Additionally, all employees are required annually to read and acknowledge in writing their receipt and understanding of the Personnel Policies and Board Governing Policies. This was last completed in February 2016.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.2.3 Retaliate or allow retaliation against an employee for non-disruptive, internal expression of dissent, or for reporting to management or to the Board of Directors (per the process for handling of grievances in the personnel policies) acts or omissions by RACVB personnel, management or the Board of Directors that the employee believes, in good faith and based on credible information, constitutes a violation of state or federal law or a governing policy of the board.**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret this to mean the President/CEO must create an atmosphere in which staff is permitted to disagree with prevailing opinions, decisions or policies, provided the disagreements are not aired publicly and do not interfere with their productivity or functional ability of other employees or the organization. Further, an employee must be free to utilize the grievance procedures in place without fear of retribution, provided they truly believe a violation of policy or law has occurred.

**REPORT:** No grievances have been filed with the CEO, management or to the Board of Directors since the last report on April 22, 2015.

- A. Staff may not be prevented from grieving to the board when (1) internal grievance procedures have been exhausted and (2) the employee alleges that board policy has been violated.**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret this to mean that no one is allowed to interfere with an employee's right to take their grievance to the board if the employee has been unable to reach a resolution after properly utilizing the internal channels available and the complainant believes the violation is in direct conflict with board policy.

**REPORT: (No changes since last report)** All employees are made aware of their rights to file a grievance. Staff members receive a copy of the grievance process in their personnel handbook, and a copy of Board Policy 2.2. These policies are explained during new hire orientation. Employees are also required to sign off on both Personnel Policies and Board Governing Policies annually.

In addition to the problem clearance process in the personnel handbook, which details the process by which an employee addresses a complaint involving the President/CEO, a new operating policy/procedure titled "Reporting Fraud, Waste, Theft or Misuse of Funds Policy" was added to all personnel handbooks in October 2013. This policy was added to detail the process an employee should follow when/if they have a concern with the CEO, which was not resolved by the CEO. The policy language is as follows:

*If an employee or board member encounters or becomes aware of any suspected financial misconduct or fraudulent financial activities, the first report should be to the President/CEO of the Bureau. However, if the report is about the President/CEO or they are unavailable, the first report should be directed to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.*

As there have been no grievances filed in this reporting period, there was no employee grievance that rose to the level of an employee seeking to address the Board of Directors.

***I am reporting compliance.***

Prepared by: John Groh and Lori Johnson 2/24/16



Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

# MEMO

102 N. Main St.  
Rockford, IL 61101  
Ph 815-963-8111 Fax 815-963-4298

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Date: April 20, 2016  
To: RACVB Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
Re: Summary of:  
– Internal Monitoring Report on Executive Limitations  
Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Condition and Activities  
– Internal Monitoring Report on Management Limitations  
Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning / Budget

Monitoring Report 2.3 refers to fiscal financial planning and budget. Monitoring Report 2.4 deals with the RACVB's ongoing financial condition and has attached the preliminary Balance Sheet as of March 31, 2016, and the preliminary Summary Income Statement.

**We are reporting compliance in all matters contained in monitoring reports for the period ended March 31, 2016.**

Please note: The above-referenced reports have been e-mailed (in PDF format) to you for your review. If you would prefer hard copies, please contact me at [jgroh@gorockford.com](mailto:jgroh@gorockford.com) or by phoning 815.489.1673. Those of you who have previously requested hard copies will receive them in the mail.

Please call me with any questions regarding these reports.



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John Groh  
President & CEO

**Internal Monitoring Report - Management Limitations**  
**March 31, 2016**  
Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budget  
Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Conditions and Activities

SUMMARY

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Compliance:                | The President/CEO reports compliance on all 2.3 and 2.4 monitoring reports.   |
| 2. Line of Credit:            | RACVB ended the month of March 2016 with a \$0 balance on its line of credit. |
| 3. Total Current Net Assets:  | \$848,504   |
| 4. Total Current Liabilities: | \$209,886   |
| 5. Board Governance:          | Budgeted \$43,600 – year to date expenses are \$2,215                         |
| 6. Total Operating Revenues:  | \$1,784,433 year to date at March 31, 2016 for FY16                           |
| 7. Total Operating Expenses:  | \$1,598,650 year to date at March 31, 2016 for FY16                           |
| 8. Trade Acts. Receivable:    | \$15,339 (does not include hotel taxes or grants)                             |
| 9. Accounts Payable:          | \$81,548  |
| 10. Total Cash on Hand:       | \$286,762   |

SEE MARCH 2016 FINANCIALS

To: RACVB Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report - Management Limitations  
Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budget

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Management Limitations Policy 2.3, "Financial Planning/Budget", in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true.

Signed,



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John Groh, President & CEO

April 20, 2016  
Date

## POLICY 2.3 – FINANCIAL PLANNING/BUDGETING

### BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:

**"Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year shall not deviate materially from the Board's Ends Priority, risk fiscal jeopardy, or fail to take into consideration a three-year plan."**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret this policy to require that we sufficiently address all capital and depreciation needs, as well as the development of financial resources needed to achieve our Board's Priority End Results. I also interpret this policy to indicate that, as the President & CEO, I have the flexibility to revise budgetary projections throughout the year, but that at all times, I must have a financial plan that meets all of the criteria in this policy and avoids unacceptable risk situations and conditions. **My interpretations and reporting data are presented below. I will be utilizing the fiscal information provided in the March 31, 2016 preliminary financials.**

**REPORT:** Our adherence to a revised budget, approved by the RACVB Board on January 27, 2016, supports our bottom line.

*I am reporting compliance.*

Accordingly, the President & CEO, shall not allow budgeting that:

2.3.1 **"Risks incurring those situations or conditions described as unacceptable in the 'Financial Conditions and Activities' Board policy."**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as previous report.)** I interpret this policy to require that I ensure budgets prepared for the corporation must avoid the risk situations and conditions described as unacceptable in Board policy 2.4 – Financial Condition and Activities, which include items such as failure to meet operating reserve guidelines, indebting the organization to an amount

greater than \$100,000, and obtaining revenues from sources inconsistent with the mission and values of the organization.

**REPORT:** The FY16 revised Budget - adopted by the board on January 27, 2016 - was prepared for the organization in a way that avoided risk situations and conditions described as unacceptable in Board policy 2.4 - Financial Conditions and Activities. Performance of actual results compared to budget is monitored on a monthly basis.

This policy gives the CEO the authority to approve draws that increase the line of credit up to \$100,000 to manage operational cash flow needs. To authorize draws from the line of credit totaling more than \$100,000, the CEO must obtain approval from the Board Officers.

**As of March 31, 2016, we were in compliance with a line of credit balance under \$100,000 and operating reserves equivalent to three months of operational costs (\$257,000) for payroll, payroll related expenses, technology, utilities, etc. We entered the quarter with a balance of \$0 on the line of credit and ended the quarter on March 31, 2016 with a balance of \$0 on the line of credit.**

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.3.2 “Contains too little information to enable credible projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operational items, cash flow, and disclosure of planning assumptions.”

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as previous report.)** I interpret this policy to mean that the budget prepared, utilized and available for presentation must have adequate data to support the credibility of projections. It must highlight the separation of capital items from operational expenses, include a presentation of cash flow expectations for the year, and convey the key assumptions used in creating the projections.

**REPORT:** The Director of Finance & Administration provides the president/CEO and staff monthly reports, and quarterly reports to the Governance Committee and Board providing financial analysis and cash flow forecast to highlight variables and note any unanticipated activity. **We ended the month of March 2016 with a \$0 balance on our line of credit, demonstrating that our cash flow projections were reliable.**

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.3.3 “Plans the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be received in that period.”

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as previous report.)** This policy requires that a conservative projection of revenues must exceed our most realistic projection of expenses for any fiscal year.

**REPORT:** Only revenue that is contracted for or is on hand from the retained earnings of prior years is budgeted. As of March 31, 2016, the Bureau reported eight months of actual hotel tax revenue with one month accrued.

The FY16 revised budget was prepared by management and approved by the board on January 27, 2016 to reflect conditions reasonably expected to be the “worst case scenario” for the fiscal year. **Under this scenario, the board approved a deficit budget with a projected net loss of approximately \$90,000.** This is due to spending \$90,000 of prior year profits designated by the board for the Forest City Beautiful initiative and Bid Development fees and \$21,000 of FY15 pledges to be spent in 2016 for Forest City Beautiful.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.3.4 “Provide less for board prerogatives during the year than is set forth in the Cost of Governance Board policy 4.10”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as previous report.)** As the Board establishes its budget for what it believes is important to invest in its own governance, this policy requires that I ensure that the annual budget I prepare for the corporation as a whole, allocates at least as much as is stated in the Cost of Governance policy for board prerogatives and functions.

**REPORT:** The amount set forth in our FY16 revised budget for the cost of Board prerogatives was \$43,600 and was budgeted for the following: audit and monitoring of organizational performance, surveys, retreats and annual luncheon. **Year to date expenses as of March 31, 2016 total \$2,215 for Board governance.**

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.3.5 “Fails to maintain operating reserves equivalent to 3 months of basic operational expense. Operating reserves are defined as available cash on hand in cash or highly liquid assets, and does not include any line of credit or other form of cash flow debt instruments in the calculation thereof.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as previous report.)** I interpret this policy regarding liquidity to require that our financial planning must maintain cash or cash equivalents of at least 3 months of basic operational costs (estimated at approximately \$294,000 for FY16). As outlined in the policy, this includes cash on hand and highly liquid assets, which I interpret to include the calculation of total short-term assets less short-term liabilities. Additionally, the calculation of operating reserves does not include access to any line of credit or other form of cash flow debt instruments and does not include the Board designated funds.

**REPORT:** As of March 31, 2016, total current assets were \$848,504 and total current liabilities were \$209,886. This equates to total current net assets of \$638,618 less \$126,483 of board-designated reserve funds and \$18,273 of funds held in trust, resulting in a reserve of \$493,862. The reserve requirements are more than equal to three months of operations or approximately \$294,000.



*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.3.6 “Does not maintain and include a list of unfunded project priorities for board awareness, in the event of an unplanned/unanticipated increase in unrestricted cash.”

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* I interpret this policy regarding unfunded project priorities to require the CEO and staff to maintain a list of projects that would be possible for completion in the event of an unplanned increase in unrestricted cash.

**REPORT:** *(Same as previous report.)* The staff maintains an annual “wish list” of projects that would be completed if funds allowed.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**REFER TO MARCH 2016 FINANCIALS**

***Attachments:***

Income Statement  
Balance Sheet  
Cash Flow

Prepared by: John Groh and Joanne Nold 4/20/16

Internal Monitoring Report – Management Limitations  
Quarterly Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Condition and Activities

To: RACVB Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report- Executive Limitations  
Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Condition and Activities

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Management Limitations Policy 2.4, "Financial Condition and Activities", in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report and the accompanying Income Statement and Balance Sheet are accurate in all material respects.

Signed,



John Groh, President & CEO

April 20, 2016  
Date

**POLICY 2.4 – FINANCIAL CONDITION AND ACTIVITIES**

**BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:**

**"With respect to the actual, ongoing financial condition and activities, the President & CEO shall not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from board priorities established in Ends policies."**

**CEO's INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* I submit that the board has comprehensively interpreted this policy in its subsequent provisions. My interpretations and reporting data are presented with those provisions, below.

**Accordingly, he/she may not:**

**2.4.1 "Expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year to date unless the operating reserve guidelines are met according to 2.3.4."**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* This policy requires that year-to-date expenses be less than corresponding revenues. Any exceptions are subject to the operating reserve guidelines.

**REPORT:** As of March 31, 2016, we have recorded operating revenues of \$1,784,433 and incurred operating expenses of \$1,598,650. Operating revenue includes city and county tax revenue that is accrued at actual amounts to be received.

***I am reporting compliance.***

- 2.4.2 “Indebt the organization in an amount greater than \$100,000. The long-term financial goal shall be the development of operating reserves sufficient to maintain normal operations during low revenue periods, and the development of a separate Board designated reserve.

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* This policy gives the CEO the latitude to approve any draws that increase the line of credit (currently retained at \$250,000) up to \$100,000 to balance out fluctuating operational cash flow needs. For anything beyond \$100,000, the CEO must exercise internal controls, which require review and approval of the Board Officers. A separate bank account is maintained as a general/reserve account and has been designated to hold accumulated net assets of the Bureau.

**REPORT:** The Bureau entered the quarter with a balance of \$0 on the line of credit. During the quarter, the Bureau made no draws on the line of credit and ended the quarter on March 31, 2016 with a line of credit balance of \$0, demonstrating the achievement of adequate operating reserves. The total cash balance on March 31, 2016 was \$521,820, including board designated reserve funds of \$126,483 and funds held in trust of \$18,273.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.3 “Operate without settling payroll and debts in a timely manner.”

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* Payroll must be paid as required every other Friday. For other payables, I interpret “timely” to mean within thirty to sixty days.

**REPORT:** As of March 31, 2016, trade accounts payables totaled \$81,548. Payables continue to be settled within 30 to 45 days, as the Bureau stretches out payables more this fiscal year due to the lack of grant funding. Payroll has been paid timely and on a bi-weekly basis.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.4 “Allow tax or other government ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed. Requirements include but are not limited to annual independent audits, audit compliance, annual 990 statements, annual budgets, quarterly activity reports and financial statements; minutes, and agendas from Board meetings.

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* All tax and government required payments or filings must be made in a timely and accurate manner.

**REPORT:** All withholding taxes and other such payments or filings for the period have been made on time and accurately. Federal and state income tax withholdings have been submitted to the proper taxing authorities within 5 business days following the payroll dates. Federal and state unemployment taxes have been paid by the end of the month following the payroll quarter. The annual Form 990 was approved by management and the audit committee and submitted to the board prior to being filed by the extended due date of January 15, 2016.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.5 “Make a single purchase or commitment of greater than \$10,000 unless such purchase was explicitly itemized in monitoring reports previously disclosed to the board. Splitting orders and /or paying from two consecutive fiscal years to avoid this limit is not acceptable.”

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* When authorizing expenses or purchase orders, all single expenditures in excess of \$10,000 must be specifically authorized by the Board, with the only exceptions being items that were specifically noted within monitoring data (such as the annual budget and /or quarterly financial monitoring reports) that the board has already received and accepted as compliant with board policy.

Further, I interpret that individual expenditures when paid to a single vendor and in the aggregate meet or exceed \$10,000 do not require board approval. As noted in the policy, splitting payments to avoid this limit is not acceptable.

**REPORT:** During the quarter, no purchase or commitment in excess of \$10,000 has been made that was not specifically noted in the annual budget or subsequently approved by the board.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.6 “Solely execute checks in an amount greater than \$2,500, or solely execute any payments to himself/herself. Signatures are to be in the priority order of signing as outlined in Policy 4.8.2.C where signatures on checks are required by Board member.”

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* No checks can be solely executed in an amount greater than \$2,500, nor solely executed as payments to the President/CEO.

**REPORT:** *(Same as previous report.)* For this period, no checks in an amount greater than \$2,500 have been executed solely, and no solely executed payments have been made to the President & CEO.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.7 “Acquire, encumber or dispose of real property.”

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* All decisions regarding the purchase, or sale of land or buildings are considered to be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

**REPORT:** *(Same as previous report.)* At the end of this period, no real property has been encumbered, acquired, or disposed.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.8 “Fail to aggressively pursue material receivables in accordance with commonly accepted practices.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret a “reasonable grace period” to be sixty (60) days, and “material” to be receivables that, when collected, are of greater value than the cost of collection (including staff time).

**REPORT: (*Same as previous report.*)** At the end of this period, no material trade receivables were outstanding greater than 60 days.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.9 “Obtain revenues from sources that are not, in fact and appearance, legal and consistent with the ends policies, mission and values of the organization.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (*Same as previous report.*)** I interpret this policy as giving staff the authority to identify and generate new revenue streams and sources without requiring explicit board approval (so long as they would meet the “prudence” test). However, “prudence” in this case is further defined to preclude any revenue sources which conflict with our mission and values, and thus which could provide embarrassment to the organization and its constituents.

**REPORT: (*Same as previous report.*)** During this period, no revenues have been obtained from sources that are inconsistent with RACVB’s mission and values or would provide embarrassment to RACVB or its constituents.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.10 “Use restricted funds for purposes other than stated by the contributor.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (*Same as previous report.*)** This policy requires that we manage finances consistently with generally accepted accounting principles regarding the segregation and use of restricted funds. “Restricted” contributions are monies directed to the RACVB to be used for a specific purpose, other than restricted grants.

**REPORT: (*Same as previous report.*)** Finances have been managed in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and any restricted funds would be reported separately in the balance sheet attached to this report.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.11 “Fail to exercise adequate internal controls over disbursements to avoid unauthorized payments. The organization shall not have secret funds and it shall prohibit any unaudited transactions or loans.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (*Same as previous report.*)** Controls must be in place to ensure all disbursements are appropriately authorized. Further, all payments must have corresponding documentation sufficient to satisfy the auditor. Finally, we may not make unaudited loans of any type.

**REPORT:** *(Same as previous report.)* Internal controls in place are consistent with Board policy and the generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) prescribed by the Board-appointed auditors. As part of the annual audit, the Independent auditor reviews our internal control procedures in place during the year.

The organization does not have secret funds and does not allow unaudited transactions or loans. The most recent audit reported a clean opinion.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.12 “Pledge any of the assets of the corporation as security within any contracts.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* No assets can be pledged as security within any contracts.

**REPORT:** *(Same as previous report.)* During this period, no contracts have been signed pledging the assets of the corporation.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.13 “Allow the expenditure of organizational funds for travel purposes which are not specifically related to or consistent with the organization’s purpose and functions.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* Compliance with this policy is achieved when all travel expenses can be justified as reasonable investments towards the achievement of our Priority Results.

**REPORT:** *(Same as previous report.)* All expenditures for travel during the quarter have been consistent with the organization’s purpose and function.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.14 “Permit use of corporate credit cards or RACVB corporate credit accounts for non-business purchases.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(Same as previous report.)* Corporate credit cards and credit accounts can only be used for business-related purchases.

**REPORT:** *(Same as previous report.)* There has been no violation of board policy in regards to non-business purchases with corporate credit cards or credit accounts during the quarter ended March 31, 2016.

*I am reporting compliance.*

2.4.15 “Authorize the utilization of funds from the reserve Bid Development & Hosting Fund for events that do not meet the stated purpose of this designated fund or in an amount greater than \$15,000 per event without first consulting with, and obtaining concurrence from, the Board Chairman and Treasurer.”

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** Funds designated for the Bid Reserve Fund cannot be used for events that do not meet qualifying criteria or in an amount greater than \$15,000 without approval from the Board Chairman and Treasurer.

**REPORT: (Same as previous report.)** There were no expenditures from the Bid Reserve Fund during the quarter ended March 31, 2016.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**REFER TO MARCH 2016 FINANCIALS**

***Attachments:***

Income Statement  
Balance Sheet  
Cash Flow

Prepared by: John Groh and Joanne Nold 4/20/16

Rockford Area ConventionisitorsBureau  
Statement of Financial Position  
March 31, 2016  
April 18, 2016

**ASSETS**

**Current Assets**

Petty Cash	\$ 132.00	
Cash - Operating Rkfd B& T	335,653.45	
Cash - Board Designated Funds	126,482.96	
Cash - Funds Held in Trust	18,273.27	
Cash - Capital Planning & Dev	41,277.98	
Accounts Receivable	15,338.97	
City/County Gov't Receivable	125,185.31	
International Grant Receivable	38,583.00	
Due from Foundation	31,167.21	
Note Receivable - Foundation	5,000.00	
Other Receivables	3,158.46	
Inventory	203.18	
Prepaid Expenses	<u>108,048.44</u>	
 Total Current Assets		 848,504.23

**Property and Equipment**

Furniture & Equipment	560,572.59	
Leasehold Improvements	508,572.98	
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(728,092.98)</u>	
 Total Property and Equipment		 341,052.59

**Other Assets**

 Total Other Assets		 <u>0.00</u>
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**Total Assets** \$ 1,189,556.82

**LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL**

**Current Liabilities**

Funds Held in Trust	\$ 18,273.27	
Accounts Payable-Operating	81,547.94	
Accrued Accounts Payable	60.00	
Accrued Payroll	60,299.57	
Accrued Vacation Pay	22,593.08	
Payroll Taxes and Withholding	(2,377.57)	
Unearned Income	<u>29,490.00</u>	
 Total Current Liabilities		 209,886.29

**Long-Term Liabilities**

 Total Long-Term Liabilities		 <u>0.00</u>
---------------------------------	--	-----------------

Total Liabilities 209,886.29

**Capital**

Net Assets	846,385.74	
Net Income	<u>133,284.79</u>	
 Total Capital		 <u>979,670.53</u>

**Total Liabilities & Capital** \$ 1,189,556.82



Rockford Area Conventionists Bureau  
Income Statement  
For the Nine Months Ending March 31, 2016  
**April 18, 2016**

	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Budget
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>					
City/County Gov't Agreements	\$ 76,971	844,811	\$ 847,400	(2,589)	\$ 1,143,500
County, other city contracts	11,783	135,499	123,600	11,899	169,100
Matching Grants Revenue	8,748	151,550	133,600	17,950	179,100
International Grant	71,931	138,625	138,041	584	200,084
LTCB Grant Revenue	29,471	265,240	265,239	1	353,653
Stroll on State	0	75,665	60,000	15,665	60,000
Forest City Beautiful	0	3,578	21,000	(17,422)	31,275
Paint the Town Fundraiser	29,213	29,213	45,000	(15,787)	45,000
Rockford River Lights	0	95,629	0	95,629	0
Coop Partnership Revenue	5,354	14,475	0	14,475	15,000
Other Revenue	0	19,400	10,000	9,400	10,000
Interest Revenue	6	37	45	(8)	60
Miscellaneous Income	19	10,711	2,250	8,461	3,000
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES</b>	<b>233,496</b>	<b>1,784,433</b>	<b>1,646,175</b>	<b>138,258</b>	<b>2,209,772</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>					
Total Personnel	79,423	797,628	801,631	(4,003)	1,042,780
Total Operations	10,455	97,972	98,575	(603)	131,637
Total Activities	199,307	703,050	628,741	74,309	1,048,020
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>289,185</b>	<b>1,598,650</b>	<b>1,528,947</b>	<b>69,703</b>	<b>2,222,437</b>
<b>INCOME FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>(55,689)</b>	<b>185,783</b>	<b>117,228</b>	<b>68,555</b>	<b>(12,665)</b>
<b>NON OPERATING REVENUE FROM PARTNERS</b>					
In-Kind Revenue	4,526	50,907	140,734	(89,827)	154,312
<b>PARTNERSHIP REVENUE</b>	<b>(4,526)</b>	<b>(50,907)</b>	<b>(140,734)</b>	<b>89,827</b>	<b>(154,312)</b>
<b>NON OPERATING EXPENSES FROM PARTNERS</b>					
Inkind Expenses	4,526	40,972	140,734	(99,762)	154,312
Inkind Expenses	0	9,935	0	9,935	0
<b>PARTNERSHIP EXPENSE</b>	<b>4,526</b>	<b>50,907</b>	<b>140,734</b>	<b>(89,827)</b>	<b>154,312</b>
<b>INCOME FROM PARTNERS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Depreciation	5,833	52,497	52,500	(3)	70,000
Loss on Disposal	0	0	0	0	0
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>(\$ 61,522)</b>	<b>133,286</b>	<b>\$ 64,728</b>	<b>68,558</b>	<b>(\$ 82,665)</b>

Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Cash Flow Summary  
For the Year Ending June 30, 2016

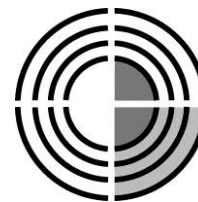
CASH FLOW SUMMARY	Actual July	Actual August	Actual September	Actual October	Actual November	Actual December	Actual January	Actual February	Actual March	Budget April	Budget May	Budget June	TOTALS
<b>Initial Cash Balance (not including funds held in trust)</b>	<b>401,168</b>	<b>373,295</b>	<b>357,890</b>	<b>440,959</b>	<b>371,087</b>	<b>269,086</b>	<b>268,263</b>	<b>205,933</b>	<b>493,113</b>	<b>424,200</b>	<b>341,062</b>	<b>298,249</b>	
<b>Add Cash Receipts:</b>													
City Contract*	97,203	122,312	120,036	102,721	110,756	103,915	73,578	66,793	69,200	75,600	92,600	103,900	1,138,615
County/Loves Park Contracts*	20,213	17,122	17,466	20,219	15,647	14,660	11,401	16,074	10,300	8,100	13,000	14,000	178,202
International Grant**	57,880	39,721											97,601
Marketing Partnership Grant**			32,522										32,522
LTCB Grant**								235,769					235,769
City of Rockford Challenge Grant	62,163							115,327					177,490
Forest City Beautiful	10,796	6,821	11,500	338			3,578	338		675			34,045
Stroll on State			7,500			45,000	16,012						68,512
River Lights						40,000	32,000						
Other Revenue		5,000	5,000			9,220							19,220
Interest Income	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	48
Coop & Contribution from Partners				1,476	736	496	2,325	830		900			6,763
Misc Income	10,556	6,007	9,742	669	3,791	1,640	3,805	463					36,674
<b>Total Cash Receipts</b>	<b>258,815</b>	<b>196,987</b>	<b>203,770</b>	<b>125,427</b>	<b>130,934</b>	<b>214,936</b>	<b>142,703</b>	<b>435,597</b>	<b>79,504</b>	<b>85,279</b>	<b>105,604</b>	<b>117,904</b>	<b>2,025,460</b>
<b>Less Operating Expenses:</b>													
Total Personnel	(111,664)	(78,788)	(75,133)	(74,787)	(74,593)	(105,881)	(74,295)	(74,295)	(74,295)	(74,295)	(74,295)	(74,295)	(966,616)
Total Operations	(7,750)	(14,888)	(12,542)	(17,603)	(7,876)	(15,907)	(11,298)	(11,298)	(11,298)	(11,298)	(11,298)	(11,298)	(144,354)
Total Activities	(167,274)	(113,076)	(33,026)	(36,140)	(128,382)	(70,111)	(102,824)	(62,824)	(62,824)	(62,824)	(62,824)	(62,824)	(964,953)
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>(286,688)</b>	<b>(206,752)</b>	<b>(120,701)</b>	<b>(128,530)</b>	<b>(210,851)</b>	<b>(191,899)</b>	<b>(188,417)</b>	<b>(148,417)</b>	<b>(148,417)</b>	<b>(148,417)</b>	<b>(148,417)</b>	<b>(148,417)</b>	<b>(2,075,923)</b>
<b>Plus Other Receipts:</b>													
Transfer from Board Designated	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Less Other Disbursements:</b>													
Payments for Debt Service													
Payments for Fixed Assets		(5,640)		(66,769)	(22,084)	(23,860)	(16,616)			(20,000)		(2,650)	(157,619)
<b>End Cash Balance</b>	<b>373,295</b>	<b>357,890</b>	<b>440,959</b>	<b>371,087</b>	<b>269,086</b>	<b>268,263</b>	<b>205,933</b>	<b>493,113</b>	<b>424,200</b>	<b>341,062</b>	<b>298,249</b>	<b>265,086</b>	
<b>Line of Credit Activity:</b>													
Beginning Balance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Borrowings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Payments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Ending Line of Credit Balance</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

\*Hotel tax receipts are one month in arrears.

\*\*Grant program payments represent both prior year receivables and current year grant payments.



**Governing Policy of the  
RACVB Board of Directors**



**Executive Limitations Policy 2.8 – Communication & Support to the Board**

**Management Limitations**

To: RACVB Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President/CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report – Ends Policies  
Monitoring on Policy 2.8 – Communication & Support to the Board

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Executive Limitations Policy 2.8 – Communication & Support to the Board, in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true for the six-month period ending December 31, 2015.

Signed

John Groh, President/CEO

January 27, 2016

**POLICY 2.8 – COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT TO THE BOARD**

**“The President/CEO shall not permit the board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.”**

CEO INTERPRETATION: One of the primary obligations of the CEO is to ensure the board has all necessary facts, evidence, knowledge and resources for the fulfillment of its role, as the board has defined it in its governing policies. I submit that the subsequent provisions comprehensively define this policy. Interpretations and reporting data are presented below.

**“Accordingly, he or she may not:”**

**2.8.1 “Neglect to submit monitoring reports (including CEO interpretations of Board policies being monitored, as well as relevant data) required by the board (see policy 3.4 on Monitoring President/CEO Performance in Board/Staff Linkage) in a timely, accurate and understandable fashion, directly addressing provisions of board policies being monitored.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(no changes since last report)* The CEO shall submit monitoring reports in the month designated in policy 3.4. Each report shall include interpretation of each policy indicating whether that interpretation is new (noting whether any material changes have been made since last report), data that is factually complete, and enough data for the board to make an informed judgment as to whether compliance/achievement is sufficiently substantiated. I interpret “timely” to mean the board receives the report in advance of the scheduled board meeting, during which they will review the report. I interpret “accurate” to mean the information provided is factual. I

interpret “understandable” to mean that the information provided and the logic outlined in the report would make sense to most people.

**REPORT:** All monitoring reports for the period were submitted within the specified month and distributed to the board prior to board meetings in compliance with policy 4.3.3.c. However, at its August board meeting, due to timing of available data and the prior semi-annual report in April, the Board approved deferring Monitoring Report 1.3 to January, 2016. The board has not conveyed any concerns about accuracy or ability to comprehend the information and data presented. All reports were approved, and in doing so the board accepted the CEO interpretations as reasonable and that reports as demonstrating compliance or achievement.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.8.2 “Let the Board be unaware of relevant trends, anticipated adverse media coverage, or material external and internal changes. The Board should be notified in advance of material internal changes, when feasible.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** *(no changes since last report)* In addition to formal reporting on board policies, I am to keep the board apprised of material developments. Material external changes such as major developments in our industry sector, issues with major stakeholders, legal challenges, etc., are to be conveyed to the board no later than the next board meeting, but perhaps sooner as dictated by the situation. The criteria for timeliness of board awareness of issues such as negative media coverage or litigation are based on when the material will become public and/or otherwise impact the organization. I interpret material internal changes to be issues such as significant revisions to strategy, to revenues or expenditures (that are compliant with our financial policies) or personnel changes at or above mid-management.

**REPORT:** The board has been informed of material external changes by the next board meeting, or sooner as the situation dictated/allowed. The following demonstrate compliance:

- Three high-level concepts for Davis Park renovation were introduced to the RACVB Board prior to a community input meeting on September 23, 2015. The primary points that guided the planning team were to provide a gathering place for active and passive use and to compliment surrounding land uses.
- The board was updated on a regular basis, both during board meetings and via email communication, regarding the status of the construction progress of the Downtown Sports Complex. For example, on November 12 the Board was notified of a new significant naming rights partnership between Rockford Park District and SwedishAmerican, a division of UW Health. At a press conference on the same date the new name for the complex was announced as UW Health Sports Factory.
- In November the Board was reminded of their commitment to creating new destination defining experiences with the introduction of the River Lights concept for their discussion and eventually their approval. River Lights debuted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Stroll on State on November 28, 2015.

The board has been notified in a timely manner of material *internal* changes. For example, the board is notified in advance of media coverage regarding the organization (positive or negative), as we are aware of the coverage. The following demonstrates compliance:

- On July 1, 2015 the Board was notified of the impact of the State of Illinois budget impasse on the RACVB. After a month of impasse continuation, on July 30, 2015 key points were shared to the Board that provided language for discussion of Board Members to outside parties. On December 7, 2015 the Board was notified when the Illinois Senate unanimously passed and Governor Rauner signed SB 2039. This bill included funding for all Illinois Convention & Visitor Bureaus by way of the LTCB and International grant programs.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Stroll on State took place on Saturday, November 28, 2015. The board received a Rockford Register Star article on December 21, 2015 highlighting the event's success and the positive results from Stakeholders who participated in a post Stroll on State survey.
- In an attempt to keep the board apprised of CVB-related information, the CEO has sent at least 28 e-mail updates since the last report on Policy 2.8 (July 29, 2015) keeping the board informed of pertinent information, news releases and other matters concerning the RACVB and the tourism industry that occur between scheduled board meetings.
- The CEO holds regular meetings with individual board members to discuss organizational, industry and community issues and opportunities.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.8.3 “Fail to advise the board if, in the President/CEO’s opinion, the board is not in compliance with its own policies on Governance Process and Board/Staff Linkage, particularly in the case of board behavior that is detrimental to the work relationship between the board and the President/CEO.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION** (*No changes since last report*): I am to notify the board chair if I am aware of any board or board members’ actions that are inconsistent with the board’s own policies, especially if such actions undermine the board/CEO relationship. In the case of perceived non-compliance on behalf of the chair, I will report non-compliance issues directly to the board if the perceived non-compliance is not resolved after discussing the concern with the chair directly.

**REPORT:** There were no such issues during this reporting period.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.8.4 “Fail to marshal for the Board as many staff and external points of view, issues and options as needed for fully informed board choices.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION** (*No changes since last report*): When the board is preparing to make policy decisions, I am to submit background information and/or provide opportunities for dialogue with and/or data from industry experts, as requested by the board, on the pros and cons of the options being considered, and/or those otherwise available and in my estimation viable for board consideration. While some bias as CEO is, in my estimation, inevitable, I am obligated to temper any such bias with the presentation of objective information. Further, I am to keep the board aware of observed industry and/or community trends that may impact favorably or negatively on the organization.

**REPORT:** When apprised by the board chair of action items on upcoming agendas, staff and I regularly prepare background information that is included in the board packets or other communications. We attempt to present logical and reasonable options and recommendations, and the pros and cons of each, and assure all new board members are equipped to govern according to approved policies.

- In November, Bill Geist of DMOProz Consulting met with various stakeholders and interviewed them regarding their perceptions of the RACVB and its impact in Rockford. Bill has briefed board officers since the interviews, and will provide a complete report at the January board meeting.
- The CEO provided an orientation for new board members on August 12, 2015.

In all cases, care is taken to provide information that is as complete and unbiased as possible. The board has not conveyed any concerns about a lack of adequate or objective information being presented.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.8.5 “Present information in unnecessarily complex or lengthy form or in a form that fails to differentiate among information of three types:  
a) monitoring  
b) decision preparation, and  
c) incidental**

**CEO INTERPRETATION** (*no changes since last report*): Correspondence to the board is to be concise and identified as one of the three types listed in the policy. I interpret “monitoring” to be those items connected with the designated monitoring reports. I interpret “decision preparation” to be background material necessary or helpful for decision-making and “incidental” to be information/FYI type material.

**REPORT:** Information in all correspondence with and materials provided to the board (especially board meeting packets) has been labeled as either monitoring report-related, informational/FYI, or for preparation to make decisions or take action. If the communication is urgent or requires

immediate action, the content is labeled accordingly. Board meeting agendas are clear and indicate where attachments are included or action is required.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.8.6 “Allow the Board to be without logistical and administrative support for official Board, officer or committee communications and activities.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION** (*No changes since last report*): As CEO, I am to ensure adequate support for operations of the board, its officers and committees. I interpret “official” to mean those functions dealing with the carrying out of the board’s governing responsibilities, including those of its officers and committees. Examples of support include arranging meeting schedules, meeting space, fulfilling communication needs, copying and distributing correspondence and materials, recording minutes, providing refreshments, etc.

**REPORT:** Staff support for board functions, including production and distribution of board meeting packets, minutes, meeting logistics and refreshments and similar arrangements for the work of the board and official board committees is regularly provided. No concerns to the contrary have been conveyed by the board to the CEO.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.8.7 “Fail, when addressing official Board business, to deal with the Board as a whole, except when (a) fulfilling individual requests for information or (b) responding to officers or committees duly charged by the board.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION** (*No changes since last report*): This is interpreted as meaning that I am to view the board, collectively, as my superior and am to provide communications about board issues and policy choices to all board members, rather than just to the chair and/or board members I may view as “sympathetic” to my concerns.

The exceptions are the two circumstances stated above as “a” and “b,” and I also interpret an exception to be when working with individual board members in their occasional capacities as “volunteer staff members.” While I am to pass requests for agenda items to the chair, the background information supporting my request is to be distributed to all board members. I further interpret this is pertinent only to business dealings, not to personal or social relationships.

**REPORT:** Monitoring reports, informational content and background information on action items are distributed to all board members. Significant e-mail exchanges and other conversations have and do take place with individual board members, either as colleagues or pursuant to exceptions as set forth in the policy, but this correspondence does not limit the awareness or authority of the board as a whole.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.8.8 “Fail to report in a timely manner any actual or anticipated non-compliance with any policy of the Board.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION** (*No changes since last report*): The CEO shall notify the board whenever there is an incurred or anticipated violation of Board Ends or Executive Limitations policy. I interpret “in a timely manner” to vary depending on the perceived importance of the non-compliance issue. Where the importance is deemed by me to be serious or potentially damaging to the organization, actual or anticipated non-compliance issues should be reported as soon as they are known. When the importance is deemed to be minor and the period of non-compliance is expected to be brief or related to an ongoing circumstance previously brought to the board’s attention, non-compliance should be at least reported in the regularly (or otherwise) scheduled monitoring report.

**REPORT:** In November I reported to you non-compliance on policy 2.3; which requires that we not expend more in a fiscal year than can conservatively be projected to be received in the period. As the board approved the FY budget in July with an anticipated net loss (due to the State budget impasse), the board was aware of the situation and approved the non-compliance situation.

There have been no other reports of non-compliance since the last report on July 29, 2015

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.8.9 “Fail to supply for the consent agenda all items delegated to the President/CEO yet required by law or contract to be Board approved, along with the monitoring assurance pertaining thereto.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION** (*No changes since last report*): The CEO will submit for the board’s agenda all items that require board approval when such is mandated by third-party business requirements, the law, or per board policy. When such items are submitted, the background information supporting the action item will include written substantiation of adherence to relevant board policies.

**REPORT:** Staff regularly executes agreements, contracts and reports with government and private entities, and all is done within the executive limitations of approved policy. There were no items during this reporting period that were required to be put on the board agenda, due to external/third party requirements.

**I am reporting compliance.**

Prepared by: John Groh and Lori Johnson 1/13/16



# 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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

**-MORE-**

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](http://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](http://gorockford.com)

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Andrea Mandala, Marketing & Communications Manager: 815.489.1664 or [amandala@gorockford.com](mailto:amandala@gorockford.com)

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## Puma Cup Kicks Off Spring and Summer Tournament Seasons

*Largest tournament brings in \$2.31 million of economic impact to the region*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2016

**ROCKFORD, IL** — The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) welcomes the Rockford Raptors Soccer Club's Puma Cup to the Rockford region for a 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. The **Puma Champions Cup College Showcase** will take place **Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 1-3**. The **Puma Champions Cup** will take place **Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 8-10**. Both tournaments will be played at **MercyRockford Sportscore 1** and **MercyRockford Sportscore 2** and **Wedgbury Stadium**.

The Puma Champions Cup College Showcase includes 204 teams representing U12-U19 year old athletes in boys and girls divisions. The high level of competition attracts approximately 86 college coaches to scout and recruit players. The Puma Champions Cup is a competition for 588 teams, which is an increase of 216 teams from last year, representing mid to lower level boys' and girls' teams in the U8-U19 age range. These combined tournaments include teams traveling from across the Midwest including two international girls teams from Canada. The combined two Puma Cup tournament weekends make it the largest soccer tournament held in the Rockford region with an estimated 52,275 attendees expected to have an economic impact of \$2.31 million.

"Over the last 15 years I have watched this tournament grow and become one of the region's most successful International soccer tournaments around. This year alone these athletes and their families will fill approximately 9,000 room nights in our local area hotels, over the two weekends, which is a significant increase from previous years," said Lindsay Arellano, Director of Sales and Servicing. "With the recent upgrades and new lighted turf fields at MercyRockford Sportscore 2, the Rockford Park District is able to accept more teams and play longer into the evening. We are truly grateful to the numerous community partners, such as our hotels, restaurants and attractions, who continue to provide a high level of service for the soccer players and their families while they're visiting the Rockford region.

Puma Cup symbolizes a big achievement in the Reclaiming First initiative as this is the first time any athletes have played on the five multi-purpose synthetic turf fields at MercyRockford Sportscore 2. These fields are lighted and can be used for soccer, softball, baseball, football, ultimate Frisbee, lacrosse, and other turf field related programs.

Additional site improvements include: adding a minimum of 1,000 additional parking spaces, new food and beverage building, restroom facility, paths, and other player and spectator experience enhancements. During the Puma Cup tournament construction will continue on the new food and beverage building but the restroom facility is operational. Temporary food carts will be on-site to accommodate tournament guests. The food and beverage

– MORE –

## *Puma Cup/Page 2 of 2*

building is anticipated to be fully operable May 1, 2016. The Rockford Park District will hold a dedication to celebrate the expansion of MercyRockford Sportscore 2 in June.

The modernization of MercyRockford Sportscore 2 began with upgrades to Wedgbury Stadium, making it a premier sports tournament destination. The new state-of-the-art facility allowed the Rockford Park District to seek a FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) certificate. FIFA standards for sports turf systems are designed to ensure that a consistent world-class standard of surface is available internationally.

“Soccer players from a five state region will be the first to experience these state of the art fields so we are extra excited to welcome these guests to our facility and hear their feedback. These five fields allow for expanded play and programming plus we no longer have to worry about rainy conditions impacting games as synthetic turf provides a consistent year-round, all-weather playing surface,” said Louis Mateus, General Manager of MercyRockford Sportscore Complexes.

Additional information related to the tournament can be found at [rockfordraptors.org](http://rockfordraptors.org). Admission is free for spectators.

### **About Reclaiming First**

*Reclaiming First* is a community-wide comprehensive plan to enhance and enlarge the sports facilities in the Rockford area to reclaim the region’s dominance in sports tourism. The plan will retain, regain, and grow sports tourism in an increasingly competitive market vying for sports tourism dollars, and provide world class amateur sports tournament facilities for Rockford area residents. Amateur sports tourism at MercyRockford Sportscore 1 and MercyRockford Sportscore 2 currently accounts for \$15.25 million in income for the Rockford region that would otherwise not occur. Local municipalities receive an estimated \$1.8 million in the form of direct additional general fund tax revenue from amateur sports tournaments. Further, income generated from amateur sports tournaments means local citizens are able to use these facilities at reduced or no cost.

The Winnebago County Regional Tourism Facility Board formed to administer the hotel tax includes board/council members and chief elected officials and staff leaders from the Rockford Park District, Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, City of Rockford, City of Loves Park, Village of Machesney Park, City of South Beloit, Village of Rockton, Village of Roscoe, Village of Cherry Valley, and Winnebago County. For additional information on Reclaiming First, see [reclaimingfirst.org](http://reclaimingfirst.org).

*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](http://gorockford.com)*

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# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## RACVB Nets Top Awards at State and National Levels

Winners of Sports Organization of the Year, Best Visitor's Guide,  
Best Social Media Marketing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 6, 2016

ROCKFORD, IL — The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) is thrilled to take home top honors at the state and national levels for excellence in the travel and tourism industry. The National Association of Sports Commissions named the RACVB "**Sports Tourism Organization of the Year**" at the annual conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The RACVB also recently took home two awards at the 2016 Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism held in Springfield, Illinois. Recognition was given for "**Best Social Media Marketing**" during Stroll on State, which attracted over 60,000 attendees, and for "**Best Visitor Guide Publication.**"

The Sports Tourism Organization of the Year award is given to an active member of the National Association of Sports Commissions who has had the most outstanding impact on their local community through marketing and sales efforts, the growth of sporting events, community events and generating results and economic impact. In giving the award, the NASC judging panel said of the Rockford CVB: "The diversity of events hosted impressed us, along with the fact they hosted 200 events for 79,000 room nights."

"I'm honored that the RACVB was recognized by the National Association of Sports Commissions as the "Sports Tourism Organization of the Year" for populations over 250,000," said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO. "To be recognized by our peers and selected as "the best" in the industry for larger markets across the nation is a true honor and significant recognition of the quality of our staff team, marketing and sales efforts, results and partnerships."

The Best Social Media Marketing award honors the top tourism experience best promoted through online videos, viral promotions, blogs, e-mail marketing or creative use of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Snapchat. The Best Visitor Guide Publication award honors the best visitor's guide used to promote a tourism destination and incorporating more editorial story content with high quality photos.

"Our staff works hard to effectively market local sites, attractions and experiences like Stroll on State through various social media platforms and by means of a creative and informative visitor's guide," stated Josh Albrecht, RACVB Director of Marketing & Public Affairs. "We are honored to receive these prestigious awards from the State of Illinois and leaders of its tourism industry."

### **About the Awards:**

*National Association of Sports Commissions Member Awards recognize the outstanding achievements of our members and are presented at the NASC Sports Event Symposium each year. Member Awards are the highest honor an organization or individual in the sport tourism industry can receive as they are created and awarded by industry peers*

*Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism recognizes innovative tourism promotional and marketing initiatives from across the state. Representatives of destination marketing organizations, trade associations, chambers of commerce, convention and visitor bureaus, tourism attractions, museums and cultural institutions, restaurants, hotels, retail and entertainment centers and other travel-related companies who are registered to attend the conference are invited to submit entries.*

*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](http://gorockford.com)*

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Andrea Mandala, Marketing & Communications Manager: 815.489.1664 or [amandala@gorockford.com](mailto:amandala@gorockford.com)

# News Release

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## Congratulations Cheap Trick, Rockford's Favorite Sons Rockford Renamed "Trickford", Kicks-off Celebratory Campaign

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 2016

Rockford, IL - Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and the City of Rockford have banded together to recognize and celebrate the long-overdue induction of local Rockford heroes Cheap Trick into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

For Rick Nielsen, Tom Petersson, Robin Zander and Bun E. Carlos April 8, 2016 will be Heaven Tonight as they become the first Rockfordians to be so honored in a grand ceremony in Brooklyn, New York.

And, very soon, Rockford will be decked out in Cheap Trick finery for months to come.

"We're a community that has always made things," said Rockford Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey. "From furniture to fasteners to aerospace engineering and high-tech manufacturing and of course Cheap Trick has been making music at a world-class level for over 40 years. We are honored to count these four men as top among our favorite sons and are excited to honor them."

"Cheap Trick is one of Rockford, Illinois' greatest exports and a major point of pride for our community," said John Groh, president/CEO of RACVB. "Everywhere they go, Cheap Trick draws positive attention to Rockford. We should be proud of them and we should honor them."

To celebrate the band's accomplishments and recognize their years of being Rockford's roaming rock ambassadors, RACVB will implement a comprehensive celebratory campaign.

"We are launching a Cheap Trick takeover of outdoor billboards, streetlight pole banners, a new website, full page newspaper ads and more, all honoring the band," said Groh. "We didn't want to let the opportunity pass by to help the community recognize and express our love for Cheap Trick, but also to share the band's fame and tie it to our community so that residents and visitors know this is where Rick, Tom, Robin and Bun E. all polished their skills."

**Rockford Becomes Trickford:** The City of Rockford is also playing an active role in the celebration and recognition of the band's accomplishments. Mayor Morrissey has ceremonially "officially, unofficially" renamed the city "Trickford" in honor of its Hall of Fame artists and signed a proclamation to that effect. New "welcome to Trickford" signs will be installed at the city's gateway entrances and the boyhood streets of the four band members will be renamed in celebratory fashion:

- Spring Creek Road: Rick Nielsen Parkway
- Buckingham Drive: Tom Petersson Terrace

- Waterview Road (Machesney Park): Robin Zander Place
- Parkview Avenue: Bun E. Carlos Avenue

"I would have given them the key to the city," Mayor Morrissey joked, "but another Mayor beat me to it a long time ago. That's what happens when a band has been touring the world for almost forty years. So, we decided there was nothing left to do but fully 'Surrender' to them by renaming Rockford in their honor."

**Website:** The "Trickford" name will be adopted as the URL address of a new website RACVB has launched that will help visitors and residents alike learn about Cheap Trick's history and legacy in Rockford. The site will feature musician biographies, an interactive timeline, a Fan Trail, videos and more: **GoTrickford.com**

**Cheap Trick Fan Trail:** The Fan Trail concept is one that will be expanded into the real world with scheduled tours as RACVB launches an exploration into how best to celebrate Cheap Trick's Rockford roots in the future for leisure travelers and residents alike.

**Music Experience:** Finally, RACVB is in the early stages of planning a two-day celebratory music festival for early fall. Dates, times and bands will be announced in the coming months, but fans can register now for ticket information and updates at **gotrickford.com**.

*The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is the region's destination marketing and management organization. RACVB exists to drive quality of life and economic growth for the citizens of Rockford and Winnebago County through tourism marketing and destination development – and by celebrating Rockford's native sons Cheap Trick. [gorockford.com](http://gorockford.com)*

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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Josh Albrecht, director of marketing/public affairs: 815.489.1655, [jalbrecht@gorockford.com](mailto:jalbrecht@gorockford.com)

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## RACVB Celebrates the Opening of the UW Health Sports Factory on June 1

*Annual Luncheon features author Peter Kageyama, highlights tourism wins  
and kicks off the grand opening of the new sports facility*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 1, 2016**

**Rockford, IL** – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau shows love for their region and celebrates major tourism wins for the community on Wednesday, June 1, 2016 during the organization’s Annual Luncheon, which is presented by SwedishAmerican, a division of UW Health. The luncheon takes place in the brand new UW Health Sports Factory and is directly followed by the grand opening of the sports facility.

At this first-ever event held at the UW Health Sports Factory in downtown Rockford, the luncheon gives the community its first look at the expansive and transformational riverfront development. Tours gave guests a change to explore the facility prior to the event and after the ribbon cutting.

**Keynote Speaker:** Peter Kageyama, author of *For the Love of Cities* and *Love Where You Live*, serves as this year’s keynote speaker. He explores what makes cities lovable, what motivates ordinary citizens to do extraordinary things for their cities and how people who are truly in love with their cities are the key to the future development of communities.

### **Tourism in Winnebago County Means...**

- Visitors to Winnebago County spent \$340 million at area businesses in 2014 (the largest amount on record!)
- Visitors to Winnebago County generated \$5.57 million in local tax receipts in 2014 (funds that help local governments pay for services residents rely on.)
- 7,662,205 guests visited attractions and events in Winnebago County in 2015.
- Visitor spending in Winnebago County supported 2,700 jobs in the hospitality sector in 2014.
- 504,380 total visitors and residents anticipated to use the UW Health Sports Factory in the first year.
- \$16.5 million generated annually of new private sector economic activity and \$1.9 million generated annually in new tax revenue (combined with Mercy Sportscore 2 improvements)
- 225 permanent jobs upon opening (combined with Mercy Sportscore 2)

“Sports tourism has reached an all-time high with \$16.5 million in visitor spending being pumped into our region annually. It’s truly exhilarating to look back on the infancy stages of the Reclaiming First initiative where a single idea has transformed into a reality for our community and the gears are now spinning into motion,” said Josh Albrecht, RACVB Director of Marketing & Public Affairs. “This project signifies many

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accomplishments and with all the hard work put in, our partnerships continue to strengthen. With the opening of UW Health Sports Factory and the many upgrades and expansion plans in the works at Mercy Sportscore 2, we're already scoring big - and it's just the beginning."

### **About UW Health Sports Factory**

The UW Health Sports Factory opens June 1 as a new venue in the region's sports tourism facility portfolio. The former riverfront manufacturing site underwent a complete transformation as part of the region's Reclaiming First capital improvement projects. The 108,000 sq. ft., multi-function facility will feature 96,000 sq. ft. of hard court surfaces which can be used as 8 basketball courts, 16 volleyball courts, or 42 pickleball courts, and can accommodate 16 wrestling mats with seating for up to 3,700 spectators.

The facility complements the region's recreational and tournament facilities currently operated by the Rockford Park District. These amenities will allow the Rockford region to retain, regain and grow sports tourism in an increasingly competitive market and provide world-class amateur sports tournament facilities for visitors and residents to utilize. There currently are 55 total booked events, with 15 confirmed events in 2016 alone.

*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](http://www.gorockford.com)*

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# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## Visitor Spending Sets New Record in Winnebago County, Reaching \$350 Million Last Year Local tourism/hospitality industry supports 2,800 jobs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2016

**ROCKFORD, IL** – Rockford and Winnebago County continues to see an increase in tourism spending expenditures – the total amount of money travelers spend during their time in the region – **reaching \$349.91 million in 2015, a 3 percent increase over the prior year’s record setting numbers**, according to data released by the Illinois Department of Commerce’s Office of Tourism.

“Bolstered by the continued success of our sports tourism industry and the continued growth we are seeing from our leisure tourism partners such as Discovery Center Museum and Anderson Japanese Gardens, I am pleased to see visitor spending continue to rise,” said John Groh, president/CEO of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau – the region’s destination marketing and management organization.

Locally, tax revenue from tourism – funds that help local governments pay for services residents rely on – reached \$5.9 million, a 6 percent increase over the prior year. In addition, the local tourism and hospitality industry **employment increased 4 percent to 2,810 jobs**.

“We are delighted to see such strong results again this year for the tourism economy in Winnebago County,” said RACVB Board Chair Roberta Holzwarth. “Sustained economic growth is crucial as we transform our region. The RACVB Board knows that the more we invest in our community to make it a dynamic destination, and the more we work to promote and market our destination, the greater our returns will be.”

The Illinois Office of Tourism announced that the tourism industry as a whole in Illinois achieved continued growth in 2015, with expenditures topping \$37 billion, a 2.6 percent increase from 2014. In addition, the industry created over 10,000 new jobs in 2015, a 3.5 percent increase from 2014. The jobs and revenue generated by Illinois tourism industry supports local communities and the growth of Illinois’ economy.

“Illinois has something for everyone to enjoy, from world-class museums and galleries, historic sites, a rich cultural arts community to professional sports, outdoor recreation and beautiful vistas,” said Cory M. Jobe, Director of the Office of Tourism. “Our tourism and hospitality industry are Illinois’ greatest champions, drawing not only new visitors, but repeat travelers as well, in order to support and grow our local economies.”

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“With the UW Health Sports Factory now online and the advancements that have been made at Mercy Sportscore 2, the local tourism industry is poised for continued success in the years to come,” said Groh. “In addition, we continue to see the reinvestments being made in Rockford’s downtown core and the ripple effect that is having on our local events and attractions such as Rockford City Market, which is seeing record breaking numbers of its own this summer.”

*These numbers, provided by the U.S. Travel Association, are preliminary numbers only. Final visitor statistics will be available later this year.*

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