



The Results are In and We Think Everyone's a Winner

20,000 attendees revive the Rock River Anything That Floats Race

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 7, 2016

ROCKFORD, IL – The Rock River Anything That Floats Race (RRATFR) volunteer committee is thrilled to share final results from the inaugural 2016 event that took place on Sunday, August 21.

The revival of this annual event exceeded expectations with an estimated **20,000** participants, spectators, volunteers and coordinators attending throughout the entire day during the race and into the evening at the after party hosted at Prairie Street Brewhouse. Attendance throughout the entire race day was determined by registration, photography, occupied and overflow parking, feedback from volunteers stationed at several different locations, trolley ridership, spectators viewing the race on both the east and west banks of the river for its full length of 1.65 miles and sales numbers for Prairie Street Brewing Company before, during and after the race. The event raised nearly **\$9,000** to benefit the **Rockford Fourth of July and Holiday Lighting efforts**, the **Rock River Trail Initiative** and the **Ski Broncs**.

"The rafters and the paddlers exhibited great spirit and a huge commitment to fun and as they crossed the finish line at the bow of *The Rock River Times* houseboat. All the organizers hope to see each and every contestant next year, and hope they bring their co-workers, friends, neighbors and family," said Frank Schier, Rock River Trail Initiative Founder & Coordinator. "This is a core principal of the Rock River Trail Initiative--promoting the enjoyment of our beautiful 320 mile National Water Trail, and protecting its quality so everyone can benefit in as many ways as possible. Many thanks to everyone involved; you are wonderful!"

Final Race Results

- **Raft 1st Place:** Metro Insulation
- **Raft People's Choice:** ABF Trucking
- **Raft Judge's Choice:** Metro Insulation
- **Single Kayak 1st Place:** Ashly Slechta, **2nd Place:** Bonnie Ecklund, **3rd Place:** Deb Kozak
- **Double Kayak 1st Place:** Justin Slabaugh, Olive White
- **Single Canoe 1st Place:** Andrew Holm
- **Double Canoe 1st Place:** Jennifer Grabowski, Andrew Smith, **2nd Place:** Tyler Brodstrom and Nick Leatherly, **3rd Place:** Traci Stramm and Bob Weber
- **Stand Up Paddleboard 1st Place:** Cynthia Mulligan, **2nd Place:** Rory Mulligan, **3rd Place:** Abby Hubert

Additional information including start/end times, team names and elapsed times for each category can be found on the event website at <http://rratfr.com/2016-results>.

-MORE-

Other Fun Race Facts

- 33 rafts
- 6 kayaks, 1 double kayak, 3 double canoes, 4 stand up paddle boards
- 55 volunteers and 7 vendors
- 72 people rode the Rockford Mass Transit District Trolley
- 278 RRATFR branded t-shirts were sold (4 unique styles are still available for purchase at Prairie Street Brewing Company and online at <http://rratfr.com/store>)
- In the first year the Facebook event page has already generated 615 likes, 2,250 page views, 17,042 post engagement and 34,317 reach. People are encouraged to follow RRATFR on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to receive race updates and the latest news.
- News releases and social media posts generated approximately 125 mentions in print, online and broadcast and 62 social media mentions and 37.22 million media impressions from August 1-31.
- It took an estimated 2,360 volunteer hours to plan, coordinate and set up for the RRATFR race. We are now accepting additional volunteers to join the committee and start planning for next year. Folks interested in helping should email info@rratfr.com for more information.

“The Rock River Anything That Floats Race is an excellent example of what our community can accomplish together with a vision in mind and the determination to make it happen. The RRATFR committee was honored to combine our resources and encourage others to get on board to keep the caliber of the event at the same level folks remember it from years ago,” said Chris Manuel, RRATFR committee chair. “We’ve learned so much and will continue to use all the great feedback we’ve received to make the event even better for years to come.”

What others are saying about RRATFR

- “Great event for all ages! Had lots of fun watching the race and seeing all the creative ideas! Rockford needs more positive family friendly events like this!” - Erica Sterbenz, race spectator
- “Great time, fun to watch.” – Dave Radtke, race spectator

Sponsors and Partners

- **Major sponsors:** Rock Valley Credit Union and Prairie Street Brewing Co.
- **Organizing and/or In-kind sponsors:** Prairie Street Brewing Co., Midwest Family Broadcasting Group, Channel 13 WREX, *The Rock River Times*, Rockford Park District, Graham Spencer and CMM & Associates, Rock River Disposal, Metro Ambulance, Wilson Towing, Rock River Enterprises and Barge Inc., Bourn & Koch, Inc., Fehr Graham, Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Joseph James/Rockford City Market, Ski Broncs, Tyler’s Landscaping, Nels Akerlund Photography + Video, Marion S. Momaly CPA, MST, Winnebago County Sheriff’s Department, Rockford Fire Department and Loves Park Fire Department.

The RRATFR committee would like to congratulate all participants - those who put in countless hours building exceptionally unique rafts to float the Rock River, event volunteers for their hard work and organizational efforts - and a big thank you to every single sponsor and person who supported this event in some way. Your desire to see this event come back to life in the Rockford region is a driving force for our committee, and planning is already underway for next year. #FloatOn

###

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Andrea Mandala, RACVB Marketing & Communications Manager/RRATFR committee member, 815.289.9269 or amandala@gorockford.com
- Chris Manuel, Prairie Street Brewing Company partner & vice president/RRATFR committee chair: 815.218.3784 or chris@psbrewingco.com
- For sponsorship opportunities, contact Mike Paterson, General Manager, Mid-West Family Broadcasting, mpaterson@rmgmwf.com