

STROLL on STATE[®]

Brought to you by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



The Awe and Wonder of Stroll on State Set for Saturday, November 26

Illinois Bank & Trust to be presenting sponsor for annual event through 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 27, 2016

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is excited to announce that the fourth annual **Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust**, is set for 3 – 9 p.m. on Saturday, November 26 in downtown Rockford. The event is free and open to the public.

“We hope that everyone joins us as we kickoff the holidays and take in the awe and wonder of this magical night,” said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO. “Stroll on State has become a wonderful tradition for the community and is something we look forward to throughout the entire year. Stroll on State is the perfect embodiment of the spirit of Rockford.”

Stroll on State, which is held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, began in 2013. The event has continued to grow and expand in the past few years with more than 66,000 people attending the event in 2015.

Jeff Hultman, Illinois Bank & Trust president/CEO, announced that the bank will continue to support Stroll on State as the “Presenting Sponsor” through 2019. The announcement represents a three year extension of the bank’s support for Stroll on State.

“As a locally headquartered, leading provider of financial services in the greater Rockford area, Illinois Bank & Trust is excited to continue our sponsorship of Stroll on State. We are excited to be a key supporter of the growing vibrancy in our downtown and increasing community connectivity, both of which are tied to the growing success of our region,” said Hultman. “We hope tens of thousands of individuals and families join Illinois Bank & Trust at Stroll on State 2016!”

In addition to the wonderful support from Illinois Bank & Trust, RACVB also recognized additional partners during the annual Stroll on State Kickoff Celebration/News Conference today. Allstate was recognized as the event’s longest running sponsor, helping to provide the popular horse and wagon rides each year since the event’s inception in 2013.

The event’s longest running partner organizations, which are crucial in planning, set-up and volunteer recruitment for the past three years, are Heartland Community Church and Rockford Sharefest.

Creig Day, Heartland Community Church director of local and global outreach and Rockford Sharefest director, said that the best part of Stroll on State is seeing the outpouring of love and support that the community gives to the event.

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“When a city has people who are willing to take action, to give their time, energy and resources to make their city better, then it has discovered love,” Day said.

Volunteers Help Make It Happen

A community event takes a community to make it happen, and Stroll on State relies on many organizations, businesses and volunteers to execute this holiday tradition. Once again, **Heartland Community Church** and **Rockford Sharefest** are spearheading the volunteer efforts. Volunteer workshops began in late September and continue leading up to the event. Workshops are Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. and Tuesday evenings from 5:30 – 9 p.m. at 120 N. 3rd St., on the corner of East State Street and 3rd Street. Children ages 12-15 may volunteer with an adult and a signed waiver; 16- and 17-year-olds must provide a signed waiver. Volunteers are welcome to come to the workshops without prior registration. Workshops end on November 15.

Volunteers are needed for the downtown decorating days November 18-19, and those looking to lend a helping hand the night of the festival can get more information about opportunities available at www.strollonstate.com or call 815.963.8111.

Sites & Attractions

Two new attractions are sure to please the crowds this year. Rockford City Hall will be transformed into a **‘Twas the Night Before Christmas Headquarters sponsored by Barnes & Noble and GiGi’s Playhouse**. Kids are encouraged to come and hear readings of “‘Twas the Night Before Christmas” and to write their own letter to Santa that will be delivered to the big guy himself. The **Hot Chocolate Express, sponsored by Butitta Brothers Automotive and Rockford Marlins Swim Club**, will be a new attraction this year featuring a special recipe hot chocolate and sprinkles of marshmallows.

Once again in 2016, the main event grounds will take place along State Street, from Main Street to 3rd Street. The **Official City of Rockford Christmas Tree** is located at the corner of West State Street and Wyman Street; and located next to the tree is the Merry & Bright Stage. Both the tree and stage are **sponsored by SwedishAmerican, a division of UW Health**.

Merry & Bright Stage Entertainment Schedule:

3 p.m. – Lincoln Middle School Band
3:30 p.m. –Thurgood Marshall Elementary School Band
4:10 p.m. – Winter Jackets
5 p.m. – Olivia Dvorak
5:45 p.m. – Heartland Band
6:15 p.m. – Tree Lighting Ceremony/Fireworks/Heartland Band
7 p.m. – Ashley Armelin
7:45 p.m. – Guilford High School Acapella Group
8:30 p.m. – Dirty Fishnet Stockings

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Rockford First once again will create an interactive **SantaLand** experience in two locations. The outdoor SantaLand (that will also include Santa's reindeer) will be located at the Millennium Fountain on Water Street. The indoor SantaLand will be at Stewart Square and both locations will feature a "Polar Express" theme.

The popular **outdoor ice skating rink** will be back at the Rockford Park District's Riverview Ice House, 324 N. Madison Street. The indoor ice rink will be available for skating with costumed characters throughout the night and the outdoor synthetic ice rink will be set up near the Trolley Car 36 Barn.

Outdoor Holiday Markets sponsored by Mercyhealth

The popular outdoor Holiday Markets, **sponsored by Mercyhealth**, will return this year with a familiar twist. The Rockford City Market team has been helping to coordinate the Stroll on State Holiday Markets, so there will be a fun "city market" vibe with the outdoor vendors. A full listing of the event vendors is available at www.strollonstate.com.

"The Rock River Development Partnership is pleased to be a supporting sponsor for this year's Stroll on State. We look forward to lending our expertise in the management and placement of vendors and assisting the RACVB to enhance the customer experience," said Cathy McDermott, RRDP/Rockford City Market manager.

Additional Event Favorites Include:

- **Randy Finch and the Ice Brigades, sponsored by OSF HealthCare**, are back outside the Rockford Register Star to showcase their amazing ice sculpture creations.
- The popular **Fire & Ice, sponsored by OSF HealthCare**, will wow crowds again as large blocks of ice are combined with bonfires to create an enchanting display at the corner of East State Street and 2nd Street.
- **S'mores stations** will be set up in two locations downtown. Whether you've just visited Santa or are watching the holiday movie, Stroll grill masters will grill these tasty treats all night.
- **A full listing of events and attractions is available at www.strollonstate.com**

Plan Your Stroll & Text Alerts sponsored by Allstate

Looking for a way to help festivalgoers get ready for this year's event, RACVB is once again rolling out an interactive "**Plan Your Stroll**" experience that can be used on smart phones, tablets and desktop computers. The web application, available at www.strollonstate.com, will allow attendees to pick what events and attractions they want to attend and to create a personalized SOS map to use at the event.

In addition to creating their Stroll agenda, attendees can sign up to receive informational text messages throughout the Stroll. The texts will be used to remind attendees of major events and activities throughout the night, along with being a resource for any emergency announcements or event updates.

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Parking and Transportation

Parking decks in downtown Rockford open during Stroll are noted on the event map. On-street parking and surface parking lots will be available as posted. The event map with suggested parking areas is available at www.strollonstate.com. There also will be **three Remote Parking Lots** with free shuttle bus transportation, **sponsored by Rockford Mass Transit District**, again this year at the YMCA, 200 Y Boulevard; Heartland Community Church, 1280 S. Alpine Road; and Illinois Bank & Trust, 4048 E. State Street. Shuttle buses, compliments of Rockford Mass Transit District, run continuously from 3 – 9:30 p.m.

Supporters & Partners

Led by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, in addition to many partners, the following entities have come together to generously sponsor Stroll on State:

Presenting Sponsor:

- Illinois Bank & Trust

Supporting Sponsors:

- Allstate Insurance Company
- Butitta Brothers Automotive
- Mercyhealth
- OSF HealthCare
- SwedishAmerican, a Division of UW Health
- LaMonica Beverages
- Comcast
- Williams-Manny Insurance Group
- Landstar System, Inc.
- River District Association

Partner Organizations:

- City of Rockford
- Heartland Community Church
- Rockford First Church
- Rockford Mass Transit District
- Rockford Park District
- Rockford Sharefest
- Rock River Development Partnership

Media Sponsors:

- El Sol
- Mid-West Family Broadcasting
- Northwest Quarterly
- Rockford Register Star
- The Rock River Times
- Rock Valley Publishing
- Townsquare Media
- WIFR 23
- WREX 13
- WTVO 17 / FOX 39

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View the full event details at www.strollonstate.com and follow along on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gorockfordregion.

RACVB exists to drive quality of life and economic growth for the citizens of Rockford and Winnebago County through tourism marketing and destination development. gorockford.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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