

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



RACVB Wins Best Tourism Marketing and Best Branding Initiative at IL Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism

Campaigns highlighting Cheap Trick's Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction and Bring Your Game 2 Rockford featuring tourism ambassador Fred VanVleet honored

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ROCKFORD, IL — The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) was honored during the Illinois Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism with two of the top destination marketing awards in the state. Hosted by Enjoy Illinois, the annual conference was held in Springfield, Illinois March 20-22, 2017.

Recognition to the RACVB was given for "**Best Tourism Marketing Campaign**" featuring Cheap Trick's induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The campaign featured a wide variety of integrated advertising including:

- Creating the website www.GoTrickford.com highlighting all things Cheap Trick and Rockford.
- A video with Chad Smith of the Red Hot Chili Peppers talking about Cheap Trick and their connection to their hometown of Rockford. The video has been viewed more than 120,000 times between Facebook and Youtube and reached more than 260,000 people.
- Each band member's childhood street was renamed in their honor.
- Special "Dream Police" welcome signs were installed at key roads entering the city.
- A mayor proclamation stated: "Rockford (unofficially officially) renamed Trickford."
- Streetlight banners were displayed throughout the community.
- Billboards were erected throughout the community.
- A comprehensive digital advertising campaign received more than 1.4 million impressions.
- Featured on WGN-TV's "Around Town" segment with a live remote from the Coronado Theatre and other downtown Rockford attractions and an on-air interview with Rick Nielsen.

Recognition was also given for "**Best Branding Initiative**" featuring the Bring Your Game 2 Rockford (#BYG2RKFD) sports tourism brand and RACVB sports tourism ambassador Fred VanVleet of the Toronto Raptors. The campaign was launched in November 2016 during a press conference at the UW Health Sports Factory. Other highlights of the campaign include:

- Announcing local basketball favorite Fred VanVleet as the RACVB's first Sports Tourism Ambassador.
- More than 2 million earned media impressions.
- Advertising with industry publications like Sports Planning Guide and Sports Travel.
- Branding at industry trade shows such as US Sports Congress.
- Branded merchandise direct marketed to industry professionals, including shirts, socks, clocks, darts and mini basketball hoops.
- An all-new Bring Your Game 2 Rockford sports tourism showcase video.
- The Fred VanVleet All-Star Party fundraiser at the District Bar & Grill.
- Billboards erected in Rockford featuring Fred VanVleet.

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"We think it is very fitting that both of these projects focused on individuals who help to make Rockford a unique and inspired destination," said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO. "Our staff works hard throughout the year to share the great stories of our people and the community. The awards are a wonderful recognition of the work they do in showcasing our region to the world. We are honored to receive the awards on behalf of a great community."

In addition to the Governor's Conference wins, RACVB projects garnered branding and marketing agency GrahamSpencer several American Advertising Federation ADDY awards at the 2017 competition presented by the Northern Illinois Advertising Federation. Winning ADDYs included BYG2RKFD Sports Tourism advertising insert; Trickford USA website (www.GoTrickford.com); Welcome to Trickford advertising campaign; In Good Company video and digital advertising campaign.

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

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