

Stroll on State Expands to Celebrate 5-Year Anniversary

*Dasher Dash 5K, Holiday Parade, expanded hours
and more live entertainment highlight downtown Rockford festival*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 26, 2017

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is excited to announce that the annual **Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust**, is set to return on Saturday, November 25 in downtown Rockford with several enhancements to help celebrate the festival's five-year anniversary.

The free community event, which is always held the Saturday after Thanksgiving, attracted more than 75,000 guests last year as Small Business Saturday went BIG in Rockford.

"It is hard to believe that just a few years ago we launched a small community festival that we hoped would bring our community together to celebrate the start of the holiday season," said Tana Vettore, director of Stroll on State. "Now, this wonderful community event brings together more than 75,000 people and continues to expand each year."

"Illinois Bank & Trust is excited to be the presenting sponsor for the third consecutive year for Stroll on State. Stroll has become a signature event in our region, representing our best attributes of community, connectivity, growth, excellence, and downtown vitality," said Jeff Hultman, president/CEO of Illinois Bank & Trust. "We look forward to gathering with tens of thousands of our fellow citizens to enjoy this special day and time of the year together."

Stroll's 5 Facts in Year 5

1. The Fun Starts at 2 p.m.

The official start time for Stroll on State is 2 p.m. We are adding one extra hour so patrons will have more time to experience the awe and wonder of the festival. The event concludes at 9 p.m.

2. A Reimagined Holiday Parade

The Stroll Parade started out featuring a few horse & wagons and Santa Claus leading up to the tree lighting. This year, the parade is super-sized! **Stroll on State's Holiday Parade, presented by National Electrical Contractors Association and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 364**, will step off at 3 p.m. and stroll from the Rockford Public Library on Wyman Street south to State Street and then east across the State Street Bridge and ending at N. 3rd Street. Featuring festive floats, high school marching bands and a few extra surprises, the parade will be a new highlight of the event. In addition, our partners at WREX Channel 13 will broadcast the parade live from start to finish.

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Calling for Parade Entries: Local organizations and businesses are invited to participate in the parade. In order to be part of the parade, participating floats must be decorated with a **Classic Christmas** theme such as the North Pole, Santa's Workshop, or Winter Wonderland. The parade committee is pleased to provide commercially prepared floats for rental and use. These floats average 28' in length and 8' in width, include the business or organization's name on both sides, and are ready to ascend and ride. Deadline is November 1 to register. For pricing options, contact Kristen Paul, RACVB's executive assistant, at kpaul@gorockford.com. Visit www.gorockford.com/stroll-on-state/parade/ for a list of parade rules and to download a registration form.

3. Dasher Dash 5K

RACVB and Fleet Feet Sports Rockford are excited to start a new holiday tradition in 2017. The Dasher Dash 5K, which starts at the UW Health Sports Factory, will be a holiday themed race through historic parts of downtown and central Rockford, including four bridge crossings, Haight Village and Founders Landing District, and the lovely grounds of Tinker Swiss Cottage. Runners shouldn't spend too much time sightseeing though, because once they cross the finish line on Grove St., they will receive a specially designed finishers medal, hot chocolate and yummy Christmas cookies.

This certified 5K course has been created for everyone with awards for overall and age group winners, finisher medals, and special pricing for kids 12 and under. Cost is \$30 (price increases November 21, 2017 at 11:59 p.m. CST) Children 12 and Under is \$15 (price increases November 21, 2017 at 11:59 p.m. CST). Late Registration and Packet Pick Up at Fleet Feet Rockford between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. on November 22 and 24. *There will be no race day registration.* Sign up at www.strollonstate.com.

4. More Live Entertainment

Each year, guests ask for more live music and entertainment throughout the festival grounds, so in year five, there will be three music stages throughout the grounds – The Merry & Bright Stage sponsored by SwedishAmerican, next to the City of Rockford's Christmas Tree, as well as the Silver Bell Stage at the corner of N. 2nd Street and State Street and the Jingle Bell Stage at the corner of Mulberry and Main Streets – both sponsored by the Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Unions. In addition, selections from the "Nutcracker Suite" will be performed by Steps to Grace Dance Academy throughout the event at Veterans Memorial Hall; and at the Nordlof Center The Studio presents: "James and the Giant Peach"; Gigi's Playhouse presents: an adaption of the "Wizard of Oz;" and there will be a "Christmas-Kwanzaa Celebration" by Rockford Readers Theater.

5. Tasty Treats and Drinks

As the event grows, so do the great food and drink vendor offerings throughout the festival grounds. Stop by Frosty's Bites & Brews outdoor market sponsored by Mercyhealth to sample a wide variety of offerings from local food trucks and restaurants. Frosty's markets are located at

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the Rockford City Market Pavilion at the corner of East State and Water Street, and the parking lot at the corner of North Main and Mulberry Streets. Illinois Bank & Trust ATMs will be available.

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 are Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. and Tuesday evenings from 6 – 9 p.m. at 120 N. 3rd Street, on the corner of Winnebago and Chestnut Streets. 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 14. Volunteers are needed for the downtown decorating days Friday and Saturday, November 17-18. Those looking to lend a helping hand the day of the festival can get more information about opportunities available at www.strollonstate.com.

Classic Attractions

The popular **Hot Chocolate Express**, sponsored by **Butitta Brothers Automotive**, will return with their special recipe hot chocolate and sprinkles of marshmallows as part of the **MovieLand** sponsored by **Comcast** experience where you can watch the classic cartoon version of “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.”

Once again in 2017, the main event grounds will be along State Street, from Main Street on the west to 3rd Street on the east. The **Official City of Rockford Christmas Tree** is 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**. The official tree lighting ceremony will begin promptly at 6 p.m. with the **Sky Lights Fireworks presented by Gallagher Williams-Manny** immediately following the tree lighting.

Along the banks of the Rock River, catch the synchronized light show **Rockford's River Lights** sponsored by **ComEd** or stop by and say high to Santa at **City First Church's outdoor SantaLand** located at the Millennium Fountain on Water Street (shhh ... don't tell the kids, but a second SantaLand is also available indoors at Stewart Square located at the corner of South Main and West State Streets.) The Riverview Ice House will once again be open for **free ice skating** throughout the night. The indoor ice rink will be available for skating with costumed characters

Additional Event Favorites Include:

- **Randy Finch and the Ice Brigades**, sponsored by **OSF HealthCare**, are back outside the Rockford Register Star building to showcase their amazing ice sculpture creations.
- The popular **Fire & Ice**, sponsored by **OSF HealthCare**, will wow crowds again as blocks of ice are combined with bonfires to create an enchanting display at the corner of East State Street and

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- 2nd Street, as well as outside of Veterans Memorial Hall (new, second location this year).
- **S'mores stations, sponsored by the Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Unions**, will be set up in three locations downtown. Whether you've just visited Santa or are watching the holiday movie, Stroll grill masters will grill these tasty treats all night.
- **Horse & Wagon Rides sponsored by Allstate Insurance** will be located in two locations – at the corner of Elm and South Main Street, across from the BMO Harris Bank Center, and at the Trolley Car Depot at the Riverview Icehouse parking lot.
- **A full listing of events and attractions is available at www.strollonstate.com**

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 run continuously from 2 – 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

Premier Sponsor:

- ComEd
- National Electrical Contractors Association and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 364

Supporting Sponsors:

- OSF HealthCare
- Allstate Insurance Company
- SwedishAmerican, a Division of UW Health
- Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Union
- Mercyhealth
- LaMonica Beverages
- Butitta Brothers Automotive
- David & Colleen Anderson
- Comcast
- Gallagher Williams-Manny Insurance Group
- Furst Staffing

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- Anderson Automotive Group
- Project First Rate
- Pearson Plumbing
- Landstar System, Inc.
- River District Association
- International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 150

Partner Organizations:

- City of Rockford
- Heartland Community Church
- City First Church
- Rockford Mass Transit District
- Rockford Park District
- Rockford Sharefest

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
- Journal & Topics Newspapers

Frosty's Bites & Brews presented by Mercyhealth

Stroll on State's vendor experience has been upgraded this year with outdoor vending at two locations: Rockford City Market Pavilion at the corner of East State and Water Street, and the parking lot at the corner of North Main and Mulberry Streets. Exact locations of the vendors will be announced soon.

- 15th & Chris
- AnJan's Eats
- Beepa's
- BSA Troop 23
- Burpee Museum of Natural History
- Meg's Daily Grind
- Fried & Fabulous Concessions
- Frybabies
- Gotta B Crepes
- Hermes Popcorn
- Hey Brothers Ice Cream
- La Canasta Taco Express
- Lucha Cantina
- LuLu's Roasted Corn
- Mama Lee's Popcorn
- Mamma Mia's
- Mary's Market Bakery & Café
- Pet Wants Rockford
- Pizza on Earth
- Rockford Wood Crafts
- Roosevelt
- Rucci's Cinnamon Roasted Nuts
- Simply Delish Catering
- Soap of the Earth
- The Cheese Market
- The District Bar & Grill
- The Glow Zone
- The Olive Branch Greek Food Truck
- The Vintage Beau
- Vibrant Hope Boutique
- Wepa Cuisine
- Wok n Roll by Bamboo

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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

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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