

# NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



## Illinois Office of Tourism Recognizes Rockford Area Attraction and Makers in 2018 Marketing Programs

*Tourism initiatives inspire travelers to uncover unique destinations throughout Illinois*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 15, 2018

**ROCKFORD, IL** – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) is pleased to announce the Illinois Department of Commerce's Office of Tourism's spring/summer 2018 **Travel Illinois Magazine** will highlight Rockford's **Anderson Japanese Gardens** on the cover and as a feature story within the magazine. This bold recognition comes in time to celebrate Anderson Japanese Garden's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018.

The Illinois Office of Tourism also named Rockford area businesses, **MainFraiM – Habitat for Art** and **Rockford Roasting Company**, as **Illinois Made Makers**. Both businesses will be featured in a series of in-depth editorial videos, exclusive web content and social media posts. These collective marketing initiatives will position the Rockford region as a travel destination throughout the upcoming spring and summer travel season.

"We are extremely grateful that the Illinois Office of Tourism is shining a spotlight on our local partners and our community. I'm constantly inspired by the entrepreneurial spirit of our makers and attraction leaders who work so hard and help ensure our region is a fun and vibrant place to live, work and play," said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO. "The hard work certainly pays off when we get to see our destination featured in branded marketing materials and programs promoted by the state. Congratulations to Anderson Japanese Gardens on 40 wonderful years and to MainFraiM and Rockford Roasting Company for being named 2018 Illinois Made Makers. RACVB is proud to work alongside each of you and we look forward to seeing what you have in store in the years to come."

As **Anderson Japanese Gardens** celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it is also celebrated in the magazine as one of Illinois' *Hot Destinations* to experience in the Midwest. The Travel Illinois magazine's latest cover photo depicts garden visitors practicing yoga amid the garden's lush trees and foliage. This amazing destination comes highly recommended by IOT and a four-page spread attests to this with additional details on pages 34 – 37.

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There are so many ways to appreciate the spring and summer seasons in Illinois from the tranquil oasis of Rockford's Anderson Japanese Gardens to the stunning views of southern Illinois to urban adventures in Chicago neighborhoods. The Travel Illinois Magazine feature story also promotes other popular Rockford attractions including **Rockford Art Museum, Burpee Museum of Natural History** and **Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens** and its 85-year-old rose garden. The magazine will be distributed to nearly 700,000 potential visitors in nine Midwest markets and it is also available for download from IOT's website.

"The new Travel Illinois magazine combines rich content and stunning photography to highlight the amazing destinations and attractions across Illinois, inspiring travel to the state," said **Cory Jobe, director of the Illinois Office of Tourism**.

#### **About Anderson Japanese Gardens:**

Anderson Japanese Gardens has been named one of the highest quality Japanese gardens in North America and is an award-winning tourist destination tucked away on twelve acres of Rockford's rich soil. With the ongoing assistance of renowned master craftsman and designer Hoichi Kurisu, the Andersons' swampy backyard along Rockford's Spring Creek was transformed into a Japanese-style landscape. From groundbreaking in 1978 to today, the placement of every rock, alignment of every tree, and layout of all paths have been made with careful consideration by Mr. Kurisu. In 1998, John and Linda Anderson donated the Gardens as a supported organization to the Rockford Rotary Charitable Association. It now exists as a not-for-profit entity and continues to grow and change to this day. To view a list of upcoming events, programs and tours of the garden for the 2018 season, visit [www.andersongardens.org](http://www.andersongardens.org).

"It's such an honor that Anderson Japanese Gardens is recognized as a 'must see' destination by the Illinois Office of Tourism in the state's travel magazine this spring/summer. Forty years ago my father set-out to create a Japanese inspired garden at his home. Now, four decades later, Anderson Japanese Gardens is recognized as one of the highest-quality public Japanese gardens outside of Japan," said **David Anderson, RACVB board chairman and a member of Anderson Japanese Gardens' founding family**. "As we look ahead, it is our goal to continue to maintain a world-class garden that inspires the mind and energizes the soul. We are more than just a beautiful outdoor setting, however. The garden offers first-class cultural experiences and community events that help make our area a more vibrant and culturally rich region and we do that in the pristine backdrop of our *unexpected oasis* in Rockford."

#### **Illinois Made:**

Illinois continues to team with craftspeople from across the Land of Lincoln to spotlight their creativity and uniqueness with the **Illinois Made Program**.

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This program celebrates hand-selected independent inventors, designers and craftspeople that have the ingenuity and skills to help make Illinois thrive. Visitors can get an intimate glimpse into the lives of these makers through a video series available on the website. In addition, in-depth editorial features allow visitors to explore the unique stories behind each maker's establishment. The program's aim is to introduce new featured craftspeople throughout the summer months. The local Rockford area businesses to be recognized as Illinois Made Makers for 2018 are:

**MainFraiM - Habitat for Art** established a distinguished reputation in the industry by providing beautifully designed custom framing, lighting, sculptures and built-in displays. Their business pays homage to Rockford's heritage and manufacturing past. Owners Jeremy Klonicki and Carmen Turner capture "history and industry joined with earth and light", and the result is captivating art. They create with a wide array of salvaged and cultured materials that range from unearthed antique bottles and a wide assortment of reclaimed woods, to industrial relics and endless fascinating objects. Their work transforms discarded treasures into modern masterpieces. MainFraiM hand-selects found wood and makes unique items tailored to any environment and request. Their services also include traditional handcrafted framing with full onsite mat and glass cutting services, free on-site consultations, and design that exceeds expectation. To learn more about MainFraiM and watch their repurpose process, visit <https://www.ourcityyourstory.com/rockford/season/1/mainfram/>.

**Rockford Roasting Company** delivers the ultimate coffee experience with an intimate two-story gathering space and a large range of specialty coffees including a complete menu of espresso-based beverages, cocoas, gourmet teas and other specialty drinks. Owners Benjamin Chauvin and Lucretia Ristin start their days bright and early freshly roasting whole beans that are available for purchase, along with locally produced chocolates, pastries and gourmet sandwiches and salads. RoRoCo, affectionately called by the locals, is also a nationally recognized coffee shop named one of Food Network Star Alton Brown's **top 8 coffee shops in the U.S.** and a great place to grab a pick-me-up. The owners honed in on their passions to turn a hobby into an extremely successful and authentic business venture. For more information about these coffee gurus, watch the story here [www.ourcityyourstory.com/rockford/season/2/humble-beginnings/](http://www.ourcityyourstory.com/rockford/season/2/humble-beginnings/).

"We know today's travelers crave authentic experiences they can't find anywhere else and that is what Illinois Made is all about. This latest group of artisans, creators and small businesses will only add to the success of Illinois Made and will continue driving tourism to our state," says Jobe. "Research shows the Illinois Made advertising campaign had a direct impact on tourism, generating nearly 21,000 hotel bookings and \$7.5 million in tourism spending, from March 1 to July 31, 2017. In fact, every dollar invested in the Illinois Made campaign returned \$18.25 in state tax revenue, helping grow Illinois' economy."

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In 2016 **Rockford Art Deli (RAD)**, a creative collective located in downtown Rockford, also earned the Illinois Made designation. Local entrepreneurs and owners of this artisan deli, Jarrod Hennis and Britney Lindgren, received this distinction for their marketing prowess and screen printing capabilities. Their business remains a success because they provide unique art, web design services, urban graphic design and screen printing services to the Rockford community and beyond. RAD holds screen printing classes and hosts art gallery showings and other events for the public. The store also sells signature artist series goods and gift items. To learn more about this Illinois Made Maker, visit [www.enjoyillinois.com/explore/listing/rockford-art-deli](http://www.enjoyillinois.com/explore/listing/rockford-art-deli).

To learn more about the Illinois Office of Tourism, to view a digital copy of the Travel Illinois Magazine and to read more about the Illinois Made program, visit [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com), [www.enjoyillinois.com/illinoismade](http://www.enjoyillinois.com/illinoismade) or [www.facebook.com/enjoyillinois](https://www.facebook.com/enjoyillinois).

*The **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Office of Tourism** manages industry efforts that result in sustainable and significant economic and quality-of-life benefits for Illinois residents. More information about the Illinois Office of Tourism can be found at [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com).*

*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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