

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



RACVB Encourages Community to Think Big, Then Act Annual Luncheon to be held Wednesday, May 23 at Cliffbreakers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2018

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau will celebrate advances in destination marketing and look ahead to future tourism growth during the organization's **Annual Luncheon** on **Wednesday, May 23** at 12 p.m., at **Cliffbreakers Riverside Hotel & Conference Center** (located at 700 W. Riverside Blvd., Rockford, IL 61103). The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

"We are excited to return to Cliffbreakers for this year's annual luncheon; the renovation of the conference center and hotel is impressive and we hope people walk away inspired to return to Cliffbreakers for their own meetings and events," said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO.

During the luncheon, RACVB leaders will share how staying future-focused, telling compelling stories and constantly making, adjusting and executing big plans leads to growth in our tourism industry and local quality of life. New members will also be inducted into RACVB's Tourism Hall of Fame.

Publisher of Midwest Living to Provide Keynote Address

This year's keynote speaker is Melissa Luebke, publisher of Midwest Living, the bi-monthly lifestyle brand that reached nearly 4 million readers. She will share her perspective on how destinations are redefining themselves and shaping their reputations with new experiences and compelling storytelling.

Midwest Living magazine (www.midwestliving.com), published by Meredith Corporation (NYSE: MDP), is a regional publication that celebrates the richness of life in the Midwest. Founded in 1987, the magazine is dedicated to providing its readers with a wealth of region-specific information and inspiration, focusing on travel and events, food and dining, and home and garden, as well as other editorial content categories.

As the leader of the corporate and business unit strategies for Midwest Living, Luebke oversees key strategic initiatives to elevate the overall brand utilizing multi-platform media strategies involving print, digital, social, video, database, and TV. Luebke also serves as the Publisher over Meredith Corporation's Travel Marketing division (MTM) and was recently inducted into Folio's 2018 Class of Top Women in Media.

Groh continued, "Over time as a community, we've developed a solid, compelling tourism product and as a result RACVB has been able to market the region and bring in record numbers of visitors and related spending. We know that Winnebago County's growth in visitor spending over the past 10 years exceeds that of all other major counties in Illinois except Cook County and Chicago. That's impressive. But, we can't stop there or take a break. During the lunch, we'll talk about new big ideas that will continue to improve our quality of life and attract new visitors. And, we'll share how the stories we tell about our region are changing impressions and perceptions of the region – internally and externally."

Based on the impact numbers released by the Illinois Office of Tourism in 2016, the tourism industry in Rockford accounted for more than \$350 million in spending and supported more than 2,800 jobs.

RSVP: Tickets are \$50 per person or \$500 for a corporate table of 10. Reservations can be made by calling 815.963.8111 or online at www.gorockford.com/lunch. RSVP deadline is May 14.

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The mission of the RACVB is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development.

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