

Rockford Chamber Voice Column, August 2018

Give me an R-O-C-K-F-O-R-D

By John Groh

Here at RACVB, every day is Rockford Day, but for the past three years, our city has paused collectively on August 15 to celebrate the people, places and things that make us glad we live here.

Why August 15? Well, of course, the date relates to our 815 area code, which covers the entire region. Rockford Day is all inclusive of the region, which includes 815ers and 779ers in Cherry Valley, Durand, Loves Park, Machesney Park, New Milford, Pecatonica, Rockford, Rockton, Roscoe, Seward, Shirland, South Beloit and Winnebago.

Plans are in place to make Rockford Day 2018 bigger and better. Each year, more organizations and businesses choose to participate in activities or celebrate the day with special deals for customers. At RACVB, we're planning a Patio Party from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at our office at State and Main streets in downtown Rockford. Come for music, prizes and surprises.

Remember the musical tribute we used to sing to celebrate our moms on Mothers Day? "M is for the million things she gave me ..., " etc.? In the spirit of the occasion, I offer this guide to the good times for Rockford Day. (Don't expect me to sing it, though!)

Spell me PROUD

R is for a REAL and rocking good time with Andrew Robinson, a Rockford-based musician who'll bring his one-man band to the Patio Party at RACVB.

O is for ORIGINAL. Get in the spirit of Rockford Day by viewing episodes of "Our City, Our Story." Film maker Pablo Korona has captured original, one-of-a-kind stories about interesting people who make Rockford tick. You can find the OCOS videos on our website, gorockford.com.

C is for CIVIC PRIDE. Mayor Tom McNamara will kick off Rockford Day at 8:15 a.m. with a proclamation ceremony at Mary's Market on East State Street. Rockford Day helps us focus on and celebrate the obvious progress we're making in our region.

K is for KEEP NORTHERN ILLINOIS BEAUTIFUL, which is asking residents to save bottle caps and bring them downtown on Rockford Day for use in a piece of artwork to be created on the spot. Also, K is for KIDS, specifically teen apprentices in the ArtsPlace program, who will demonstrate their civic pride by creating a chalk drawing on the State Street Bridge.

F is for MRS. FISHER'S, a treasured Rockford chip-making company that will offer treats at RACVB's party. And, **F** is for FLOWERS. While you're downtown, check out the amazing impact of the FOREST CITY BEAUTIFUL efforts.

O. Again. OH MY GOODNESS, is there anything better than Zammuto's granita, made the OLD-FASHIONED Italian way? Come and get it at our party!

R is for ROCKFORD DANCE COMPANY, which will perform mid-day in the parking lot of the Rockford Register Star. The ROCKFORD AREA ARTS COUNCIL will offer an exhibit by the Rockford Art Guild from 8:15 a.m. to 8:15 p.m. at the Shumway Market Gallery. And **R** is for the first iBike Rockford community ride through downtown. Find the route on our website and plan to pedal from 6-7 p.m.

D is for DISCOUNTS, DEALS and DOCK PARTIES. In the evening, Prairie Street Brewhouse will host Rockford Day on the Docks featuring music, food and drink. We invite other public and private organizations from throughout the region to join in the celebration by offering Rockford Day-themed specials. Visit gorockford.com and find Rockford Day under the “Events” tab. Register your special, and we’ll feature it on our website and in social media.

Rockford Day is all about showcasing what we love and appreciate about our region. I hope you’ll join in the fun.

John Groh is president/CEO of Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. 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

The views expressed are Groh’s and do not necessarily represent those of the Rockford Chamber of Commerce.