



STROLL *on* STATE[®]



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2018

Stroll on State to Bring the Magic of the Holidays to Downtown Rockford for Sixth Year

Illinois Bank & Trust announces continued presenting sponsorship; expanded holiday parade and new live entertainment highlight event

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 24, 2018

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is excited to announce that the sixth annual **Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust**, is set to return on Saturday, November 24 in downtown Rockford with new announcements, event enhancements and continued partnerships.

The free community event, which is always held the Saturday after Thanksgiving, attracted more than 82,500 guests last year.

“As we approach Stroll on State’s sixth year in the Rockford region, I am truly amazed at just how much this event has exceeded our expectations. Each year, I am reminded that our community is filled with so many selfless, big-hearted people who help our team put on this amazing event,” said Tana Vettore, RACVB’s director of destination development. “Stroll brings the magic of the season to our downtown and joy to the hearts of many. We are truly grateful to our partners, volunteers, patrons, sponsors and vendors for their support throughout the years and this year.”

Stroll has become a community tradition that area residents and visitors love and look forward to. Sustaining the event and keeping it free for the community is of high importance to RACVB. To that end, RACVB is pleased to announce that **Illinois Bank & Trust** has agreed to extend its presenting sponsor partnership for **three additional years, supporting Stroll on State through 2022 – the event’s 10th year!**

“Illinois Bank & Trust has been the presenting sponsor of Stroll on State since 2015 and we are thrilled to continue this invaluable partnership with the RACVB to bring joy and happiness to so many people during the holiday season. We are dedicated to doing this for years to come, which is why we are thrilled to announce a three-year extension that will take us to 2022,” said Jeff Hultman, president/CEO of Illinois Bank & Trust. “Our company tagline is ‘Great Things Happen,’ and this event proves great things do happen when partners, sponsors and volunteers come together for the same purpose to bring vitality to downtown Rockford and to create a fun experience for the community to enjoy year after year.”

In total, 29 local companies and organizations are providing financial support through sponsorship of this year’s Stroll on State and Dasher Dash 5K. Additional local organizations and media companies provide support invaluable to the production of Stroll on State. A complete list is on pages 5 and 6 of this release.

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Stroll on State Announcements for 2018

1. Stroll on State's Holiday Parade

The Stroll Parade has expanded this year in a fun and super-sized way! **Stroll on State's Holiday Parade, presented by The Power Connection – IBEW 364 & NECA**, will step off on South Main Street at 3 p.m. and stroll from South Main and Chestnut Streets north to State Street and then east across the State Street Bridge, ending at 3rd Street. Parade onlookers are encouraged to find a spot along the route starting at 2 p.m. The parade will feature eight large-scale holiday-themed and character balloons – including Scooby Doo and Bugs Bunny - several festive floats, high school marching bands and a few extra surprises. In addition, our partners at **WREX Channel 13** will broadcast the parade live from start to finish.

Calling for Parade Entries: Local organizations and businesses are invited to participate in the parade. In order to be a part of the parade, participating floats must be decorated with a **Classic Christmas** theme such as the North Pole, Gingerbread House, Winter Wonderland, etc. The parade committee is pleased to provide commercially prepared floats for rental and use. Deadline to register is November 1. For pricing options and information, contact Kristen Paul, RACVB's destination development operations manager, at kpaul@gorockford.com. Visit www.gorockford.com/stroll-on-state/parade/ for a list of parade rules and to download a registration form.

2. Dasher Dash 5K

The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and Fleet Feet Sports Rockford are excited to bring back the much-anticipated **Dasher Dash 5K**. During its inaugural running, with nearly 1,000 participants, Dasher Dash was Rockford's largest run in 2017. This year, **SwedishAmerican**, a division of UW Health, has joined the Dasher Dash team as the event's presenting sponsor. The Dasher Dash will **begin at 8 a.m.** on the morning of Stroll on State. The event is a holiday-themed race which starts at the UW Health Sports Factory and goes 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., there will be a finishers award ceremony, sponsored by **Illinois Bank & Trust**, including holiday treats and entertainment.

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. Registration is open now; entry fees are **\$35 for adults and \$20 for kids 12 and under**. The entry fee includes the online processing fee and race swag. **Registration closes on Tuesday, November 20 at 11:59 p.m.** There will be no race day registration. Runners interested in participating can register online at www.strollonstate.com or at Fleet Feet, 1653 N Alpine Rd, Rockford, IL 61107.

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3. TUBACHRISTMAS

This magical ensemble of tuba performers will celebrate their 44th Anniversary this year and Rockford is one of 300 cities throughout the United States where “Merry TUBACHRISTMAS” will be performed this season! The **TUBACHRISTMAS** performers will be featured along the west bank of the Rock River near the Merry & Bright State. The performance at Stroll on State will feature traditional Christmas carols and the concert performances that pay grateful tribute to composers who have embraced these noble instruments throughout the years.

4. Tasty Treats, Drinks and plenty of Shopping!

As the event grows, so do the great food and drink vendor offerings throughout the festival grounds. This year, the vendor markets include retail vendors selling everything from jewelry, gift items, pet items, home décor and more. Stop by **Frosty’s Merry Market sponsored by Mercyhealth** to sample a wide variety of offerings from local food trucks, restaurants and retailers. Frosty’s markets are located at 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.

5. Stroll on State Special Moments

RACVB is offering a new way for Stroll attendees to participate in the event. Attendees are encouraged to share their favorite **Stroll on State moments** to their social media platforms and to geo-tag the location or use hashtag #strollonstate for their posts to be on display on large screens the night of the event and at strollonstate.com. Attendees who participate are automatically entered into a drawing to receive a Stroll on State-themed gift. A winner will be contacted via social media on Monday, November 26.

Classic Attractions

The popular **Hot Chocolate Express** expands to two locations; featuring a special recipe hot chocolate with sprinkles of marshmallows. Join the **Rockford Marlins Swim Team** at the **Grinch’s MovieLand, sponsored by Comcast**, where you can watch the classic cartoon version of “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” and the **Guilford High School Swim Team** at Rudolph’s Reindeer Village.

In 2018, the main event grounds will be along State Street in downtown Rockford bordered by Jefferson, Church, Chestnut and Third Streets where additional activities will take place. The **Official City of Rockford Christmas Tree, sponsored by Northwestern Illinois Building Trades**, is at the corner of West State Street and Wyman Street; and located next to the tree is the **Merry & Bright Stage, sponsored by Gallagher Williams-Manny**. The official tree lighting ceremony will begin promptly at 6 p.m. with the **Sky Lights Fireworks presented by ComEd** immediately following the tree lighting.

Along the banks of the Rock River, catch the synchronized light show **Rockford’s River Lights, sponsored by Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23**, 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

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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**, with children's activities hosted by B103, throughout the night thanks to the **Rockford Park District**.

More Live Entertainment

Live entertainment will take place at various locations including Veterans Memorial Hall, **sponsored by Roofers and Waterproofers Local 11**, where **Starlight Theater** will present "A Charlie Brown Christmas" along with **GiGi's Playhouse** and **Gateway Performing Arts Studio** performing, "Charlotte's Web." Just down the street at Nordlof Center, **sponsored by Ironworkers Local #498**, **The Studio Rockford** will perform "Mary Poppins."

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 dissolve into beautiful bonfires that create an enchanting display at the corner of East State Street and N. 2nd Street, as well as outside of Veterans Memorial Hall.
- **S'mores stations** will be set up in three locations. Whether you've just visited Santa or are watching a 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**

Shop on Small Business Saturday

Stroll on State takes place in conjunction with Small Business Saturday which is an annual holiday shopping tradition that gets communities out in support of shopping local. Several local area businesses throughout the River District will offer holiday specials and fun events.

The RACVB team will also support this national initiative by selling Stroll on State merchandise at the **Frosty's Merry Markets** and at the intersection of N. 2nd St and East State St near Rockford City Hall.

Volunteers Help Make It Happen

Stroll on State is made possible in part by several 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 held Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. and Tuesday evenings from 6 – 9 p.m. at 310 Winnebago 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.

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Volunteers are welcome to come to the workshops without prior registration. Workshops end on November 13. Volunteers are needed for the downtown decorating days Friday and Saturday, November 16-17. Those looking to lend a helping hand the day of the festival can get more information about available opportunities 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 (*handicapped paratransit buses are available*); 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.

“Stroll on State exemplifies the community spirit of Rockford, bringing people of goodwill from every part of the city together for a joyful common experience. I believe Stroll on State, while unique to Rockford, also exemplifies the welcoming, diverse, positive and enduringly progressive spirit of Illinois, characteristics that make it a perfect signature event for the community,” said Mayor Tom McNamara, City of Rockford.

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

Parade Presenting Sponsor:

- The Power Connection IBEW 364 & NECA

Supporting Sponsors:

- OSF HealthCare
- Allstate Insurance Company
- PCI Pharma Services
- Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Union
- Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23
- International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150
- Ironworkers Local Union 498
- Roofers & Waterproofers Local 11
- Mercyhealth
- LaMonica Beverages
- David & Colleen Anderson Family
- Comcast
- Rockford Mass Transit District
- Event Floral

- Gallagher Williams-Manny Insurance Group
- ComEd
- Nicor Gas
- Furst Staffing & Furst Professionals
- Project First Rate
- Pearson
- Landstar System, Inc.
- River District Association

Media Sponsors:

- Northwest Quarterly
- Rockford Register Star
- The Rock River Times
- Lamar
- Mid-West Family Broadcasting
- Townsquare Media
- WIFR 23
- WREX 13
- WTVO 17 / FOX 39
- Journal & Topics Newspapers
- El Sol

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Partner Organizations:

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

Dasher Dash 5K Sponsors

- SwedishAmerican, presenting sponsor
- Wolfe Landscaping
- A. Tanner Design
- Peak Sports Club
- Turano
- Mechanical
- Gorman & Co
- Pearson

Frosty's Merry Market presented by Mercyhealth

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

- Just Craftin' Around by Jen
- Rucci's Cinnamon Roasted Nuts
- The Candle Kiln
- Lulu's Roasted Corn
- The Pewter Dragonfly, LLC
- Frybabies
- Pet Wants Rockford
- Soap of the Earth
- BearMoon Soap
- Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity
- Cookies by Design
- Nothing Bundt Cakes
- Downtown Fancy Franks
- The Cheese Market
- Pizza on Earth
- Witches in Stitches
- Lucha Cantina
- BSA Troop 23
- The Olive Branch Greek Food Truck
- By the Dozen Bakery
- Sweet T's Kettle Corn
- 15th & Chris
- Past Thymes Market
- Amanda Flock Food Truck
- Mamma Mia's
- Bar None
- Evelyn's Acre
- Pino's on Main Pizza
- Rockford Woodcrafts
- Mohop
- Roosevelt Community Education Center
- Hey Brothers
- La Fiesta Candies
- Baker Street Burgers
- Wok n Roll by Bamboo
- Vineyard Books and Gifts
- Hermes Popcorn
- La Paloma Garden Designs
- Mario's Taco Express
- Franchesco's Ristorante
- Mary's Market
- District Bar & Grill

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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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