

The Rockford Region Welcomes the Winter Season With a Delightful Merry & Bright Event Lineup

Community hosts family-friendly activities and events all season long

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rockford, IL – Rockford region residents are gearing up for a fun holiday season filled with several “Merry & Bright” festivities and events happening from **November 24 to January 31**.

In addition to the region’s largest holiday celebration on November 24 in downtown Rockford, **Stroll on State presented by Illinois Bank & Trust**, the Rockford community can gather to shop Small Business Saturday which is aimed to support local businesses across the country. Many local retailers throughout Rockford and in the neighboring communities will offer holiday specials and events specific to this day only.

“Local businesses and organizations are prepping for a very busy Merry & Bright holiday season in the Rockford region. There’s so much to love about our lineup of winter events and a lots of fun activities for all ages and geared towards family adventures,” said Andrea Cook, RACVB’s associate director of marketing & communications. “There are several outdoor recreational parks and paths to explore and indoor events and coffee shops to warm up in too. A little something for everyone to enjoy.”

There are plenty of local, family-friendly events and attractions to attend all winter long. The **Rockford IceHogs Hockey Team** are members of the American Hockey League with home games at the BMO Harris Bank Center. **All Aglow at Nicholas Conservatory** is enchanting with holiday lights and beautiful floral displays inside the conservatory and the outer grounds (November 25 - January 6). **Williams Tree Farm** is a place to build lifelong traditions by cutting down the perfect Christmas tree to decorate. There’s a great lodge where folks can sip hot cocoa by the fire, shop the unique gift store, and enjoy pony rides and the children’s play area.

The temperatures are cooler this time of year in the Midwest but there are plenty of warm cups of coffee, tea and cocoa to drink. **Carambola Gelato and Coffee Shop** offers a great selection of old world gelato, coffee and pastries along with paninis and cannolis. **Katie’s Cup** is located in Rockford’s quaint Midtown District where it’s great to grab a hot beverage to go or enjoy it by their fireplace while reading a book or playing a board game. They provide fair-trade coffee drinks, baked goods and lunch items. **Rockford Roasting Company** serves up the ultimate coffee experience, with a large range of specialty coffee beans and a complete menu of espresso-based beverages, cocoas, teas, chocolates and other gourmet items. **Cuppa Java** is an upscale coffee house serving delicious flavored coffees and imported teas, and they have a great line of mugs, candies and other gift items. **Meg’s Daily Grind** has four convenient locations where they serve up gourmet coffees – including the flavor of the day – light lunches, smoothies and other goodies. **Wired Café** is located in downtown Rockford and a perfect spot for a pick-me-up from their espresso bar or homemade breakfast and lunch menu items.

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Other events that are part of the Merry & Bright Season include:

- **Stroll on State** – Downtown Rockford (Nov. 24) – Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust, returns for a sixth year to get the community in the holiday spirit. This event is Rockford's kick-off to the holiday season with a parade, tree lighting ceremony, horse & wagon rides and more.
- **34th Annual Rockton Christmas Walk** – Downtown Rockton (Nov. 30 - Dec. 2) – This celebration of the holidays includes visits with Santa, caroling in the park and the Lighted Christmas Parade.
- **Winnebago Buy Local – A Local Holiday Market** – Rockford University (Dec. 1) – Enjoy this one-of-a-kind shopping market filled entirely with local businesses.
- **9th Annual Tour de Frost** – The Vitamin Shoppe *start and end* (Dec. 1) – Folks gather for this winter group bike ride around Rockford with stops at The Olympic Tavern and Rockford Bicycle Company.
- **The Nutcracker** – Coronado Performing Arts Center (Dec. 1 - 2) – Rockford Dance Company performs this holiday classic ballet with music performed by the Rockford Symphony Orchestra.
- **J.R. Sullivan's Hometown Holiday** – Nordlof Center (Dec. 7 – 9) – This 23rd annual production features holiday music and comedy, all designed for the Rockford community.
- **A Charlie Brown Christmas** – Starlight Theatre (Dec. 7 - 15) – The perfect musical adventure for all ages features your favorite Peanuts characters (shows take place on Fridays and Saturdays).
- **Festival of Lights** – Sinnissippi Park (Dec. 7 – 31) – Over 50 light displays by local businesses and organizations are available for viewing and visits from Santa on the weekends.
- **Countdown to Fun!** – Discovery Center Museum (Dec. 31) – Design a party hat, create a noisemaker and get showered with confetti during a countdown to midnight on each hour.
- **New Year Around the World** – Burpee Museum (Dec. 31) – Engage in crafts and activities that celebrate cultures from around the world and join parades around the museum each hour as a different country rings in the new year.
- **Illinois Snow Sculpting Competition** – Sinnissippi Park (Jan. 16 - 19) – Snow sculpting teams from around the state compete for the right to represent Illinois in the 2020 U.S. National Snow Sculpting Competition. The snow sculptures will be available for the public to view while weather permits.
- **Rockton Yeti Fest** – Downtown Rockton (Jan. 31 – Feb. 3) – Enjoy snow sculpting, yeti hunting, ice skating, fort building and dog sled mushing in Rockton as well as eating and shopping in all the local businesses.

For more information to help you plan your itinerary and download the Merry & Bright calendar of events visit: <https://www.gorockford.com/events/winter-events/>.

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

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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