



RACVB Announces New Festival with Lasting Impact

CRE8IV: transformational ART to occur May 15-19

Includes creation of eight large-scale murals and daily Block pARTy events

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 23, 2019

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, together with Mayor Tom McNamara and the City of Rockford, announced plans for **CRE8IV: transformational ART**, a new mural festival that will take place May 15-19, 2019 at various locations in downtown Rockford.

CRE8IV (pronounced “Creative”) will be a community-building, arts-infused event. Over the course of the festival, eight lead artists will work with teams of artists to create eight large-scale murals in Rockford’s central city. Each day the festival includes a free-to-attend Block pARTy at one of the mural locations.

CRE8IV is inspired by Rockford’s vibrant art scene and patterned off successful mural festivals in Montreal, Denver and Detroit and made possible, in part, by a \$91,800 matching grant from the **Illinois Department of Commerce, Office of Tourism**. “Illinois is full of vibrant cities and towns with endless attractions that are of interest to both residents and visitors alike. We are excited to provide the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau with a grant that will further their work to establish a new arts festival that will attract artists and tourists to the city,” said **Erin Guthrie**, Acting Director of Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

“As we considered new experiences we could bring to life, the idea of a mural festival quickly rose to the top. Local and visiting artists will transform tired and dull walls into beautiful works of art. The daily Block pARTy events will allow residents and visitors a chance to interact with the artists and explore downtown Rockford,” said **John Groh**, RACVB president/CEO. “Perhaps most important is the long-lasting impact the murals will have as, over time, the city itself becomes an art gallery.”

“Our community is transforming. It’s transforming when it comes to the economy, the housing market and now when it comes to public art,” says **Mayor Tom McNamara**. “In the last year, we’ve seen a dramatic increase in interest in creating community murals. I believe murals build a sense of community and a sense of belonging. I’m excited that we’ll be adding eight more to the area.”

State Grant Makes Festival Possible, Match Funding Needed

The festival is produced and presented by RACVB and made possible by a matching grant from the Illinois Office of Tourism and the partnership of Painters District Council No. 30, Local 607. In order to fully match

-MORE-

the grant and hire all eight artists, RACVB is working to secure match funding through sponsorship of the festival and each mural. Local match funding, to date, has been provided by the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois and RACVB.

“These new murals will create a beautiful tapestry in our central city,” said RACVB Foundation Board Chair Bobbie Holzwarth. “We look forward to engaging with donors and sponsors who wish to partner with us to see this vision become a reality.”

Businesses, organizations and individuals interested in sponsoring the festival or a specific mural are invited to contact Martesha Brown, RACVB Director of Advancement, at 815.489.1655 or mbrown@gorockford.com.

MURAL LOCATIONS AND ARTISTS

“We couldn’t do this without the building owners who are ‘all in’ on this new adventure. We appreciate their willingness to support CRE8IV and to lend their walls to such dynamic, creative artists,” said Groh. The list of mural locations and artists includes:

1. Lucette Holistic Salon and Boutique, 508 E. State Street
Artist: **Molly Z**, Chicago, <http://www.mollyz.net>
2. The Symbols, 316 W. State Street
Artist: **Yulia Avgustinovich**, Denver, www.Yulia-Art.com
3. Wired Café Alley, 416 E. State Street
Artist: **Jenny M. Mathews**, Rockford, <https://www.instagram.com/jenny1396/>
4. Lower Jefferson Street (under bridge approach on east side of Rock River), 299 N. Madison Street
Artists: **Lisa Frost** and **Libbie Frost**, Rockford, <https://www.lisafrost.com>
5. Rockford Orthopedic Appliance, 422 E. State Street
Artist: **Chris Silva**, Chicago, <https://chrissilva.com/>
6. Urban Equities, 114 N. First Street (visible from 324 E. State. Street)
Artist: **Corey Barksdale**, Atlanta, <http://coreybarksdale.org/>
7. Chocolat by Daniel, 211 E. State Street
Artist: **Jenny Roesel Ustick**, Cincinnati, <https://www.jennyroeselustick.com/>
8. Rockford MakerSpace, 203 N. Church Street
Artist: **Brett Whitacre**, Sycamore, <https://www.instagram.com/brettwhitacreat/?hl=en>

-MORE-

SCHEDULE FOR BLOCK pARTy EVENTS (All events are free to attend and open to all)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, Parking Lot 5 (corner of S. Church St. and W. State St., Symbols Clothing)

- 11 a.m. **Festival Kick-Off** presentation and release of color powder canons
- 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Community lunch with local food trucks, live DJ, and mural painting by Yulia Avgustinovich.

THURSDAY, MAY 16, Lot 4 (324 E. State Street, lot next to Bath & Body Fusion)

- 4 - 7 p.m. **Family Fest Night** including live "bubble" DJ, Once Upon a Dream princess characters, dancing, face painting, caricatures, cotton candy, food trucks, and beverages sold at the CRE8IV Airstream. Meet the Artist with Corey Barksdale. Rockford Art Museum activity on East State St. (between Madison and First Streets).
- First night of Dinner on the Docks at Prairie Street Brewhouse, so stop before or after dinner!

FRIDAY, MAY 17: Parking Lot 10 (508 East State Street, Lucette Holistic Salon | Boutique)

- 4 - 8 p.m. **The pARTy continues** with mural painting, cotton candy, henna tattoos and hair braids by Lucette Salon.
- 4 - 6 p.m. **Meet the Mural Artists with Chris Silva and Molly Z.**
- 6 - 8 p.m. Rockford singer/songwriter **Kelly Steward performs**
- First night of the season for Rockford City Market, stop by before/after/during!

SATURDAY, MAY 18: Lower Jefferson Street & Water Street

- 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. **Downtown trolley art tour.** Hop on and off at Riverfront Museum Park (Rockford Art Museum) or Rockford Art Deli.
- 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Discounted tickets to **Rockford Art Museum**, enjoy special CRE8IV activities.
- 6 - 10 p.m. **The pARTy continues** with live music, tattoo demonstrations, magician, live painting, food vendors and fire pits. Magical performances will have you in awe as Living World performers join us from California. Audiences from all cultures are struck by the innovative way their performances connect them to the language of art. Meet the Artists with **Lisa and Libbie Frost.**
- Dusk: **Fireworks** celebration.

SUNDAY, MAY 19: Wired Café Alley (414 E. State Street)

- 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. **Downtown trolley art tour.** Hop on and off at Riverfront Museum Park (Rockford Art Museum) or Rockford Art Deli.
- 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. **Discounted admission** to Rockford Art Museum, enjoy special CRE8IV activities.
- 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. **Active painting** of alley mural by artist Jenny M. Mathews

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: Pam Maher (pam@kmkmedia.com) or Maegan Ratts (maegan@kmkmedia.com) at KMK Media Group. 815.399.2805