

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Forest City Beautiful

RACVB Announces Winners of Business is Blooming

*Program continues to honor community for innovation
and beautification efforts*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 1, 2019

ROCKFORD, IL — The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) announced the 2019 **Business is Blooming** program winners who further the efforts of Forest City Beautiful and aim to enhance the Rockford region by beautifying their storefronts and entrances to their businesses. Business is Blooming exists to build a culture of community involvement and visually appealing environments for our city. The program supports and acknowledges the positive values and efforts displayed by our business owners to make Rockford a beautiful and enjoyable place to live, work and play. Activities that strengthen civic pride and the customer experience are vital links to long-term success in the Rockford region. Rewarding beautification efforts acknowledges this value.

Now in its third year, the Business is Blooming program expanded the boundaries by more than doubling the geographic area of businesses who could participate to include businesses east of Alpine. A team of ten judges visited the exterior grounds of selected businesses to be considered for this designation. Out of more than 40 businesses, seven were chosen in select categories: Small Business **5 Forks Market** (6565 Lexus Dr, Rockford, IL 61108); Big Business **Mercyhealth Javon Bea Hospital - Riverside** (8201 E Riverside Blvd, Rockford, IL 61107); Restaurant Outdoor Dining **Franchesco's Ristorante** (7128 Spring Creek Rd, Rockford, IL 61114) AND **The Olympic Tavern** (2327 N Main St, Rockford, IL 61103); Best of State Street **The Standard** (214 E State St, Rockford, IL 61104); Returning Champion **UIC Health Sciences Campus - Rockford** (1601 Parkview Ave, Rockford, IL 61107); Hidden Gem **City Body Shop** (301 N Madison St., Rockford, IL 61107). This year, there were two Special Recognition winners as well; **Rockford Veteran's Circle** with "Biggest Blooms," and **Deli Italia** with "Unique Blooms" (507 E State St, Rockford, IL 61104).

Judging is based on the following criteria (if applicable):

- Well-maintained landscaping (trimmed and weed-free)
- No litter around entire perimeter (entrance, fence line, tree line, sidewalk, parking lot)
- Well-maintained façade (graffiti-free, no discoloration, no crumbling/chipping)
- Well-maintained lighting, benches, signage, fences (no burnt out bulbs, well-lit, clean seating, visible signs)
- Neat and tidy walkways and parking lot (no weeds, clearly painted, even surface)
- Clean windows (no smudges or cracks)
- Attractiveness (flowers, plants, fresh paint)
- Inviting signage (name, social media, menus, deals, hours)
- Creative exterior (colors, design, signage, displays, patio, exterior music)
- Accessibility (wheelchair ramp, stairs with railing, safe entrance)

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Winners receive a prize package including a trophy, an RACVB online promotions prize package valued at \$1,850 and a Business of Distinction window cling.

“It is exciting to see that ‘Business IS Blooming’ in Rockford as more and more business owners, operators and property owners in our community have become intentional about beautifying their front doors, creating beautiful **entrances** by incorporating planters and flowers, appealing and well-placed signage, color and comfort features like awnings and patio umbrellas and cool lighting that create welcoming experiences for all. Just look around as you drive in the city, especially as you visit the Businesses of Distinction honored today. They have invested in beautification and the customer experience and are excellent models within our community,” said Tana Vettore, RACVB director of destination development.

This annual program aims to develop and maintain a partnership among RACVB, businesses, neighborhood advocacy groups, schools, non-profit organizations, volunteer groups, etc. to share in the vision and maintenance of this program. As a result, they will serve as exemplary models to inspire more people to do the same. The program will recognize and incentivize businesses, organizations and property owners to improve the landscaping and facades of their buildings and properties; promote the goal of year-round activity/maintenance such as proper snow removal at businesses for customer access as well as lush summer landscapes and weed-free, litter-free environments; and selecting and rewarding outstanding or innovative beautification achievements.

“As a rule, Franchesco’s has always tried to focus on our customers’ level of comfort. We take great pride in providing our guests with the utmost when it comes to service, food and atmosphere,” said Benny Salamone, Franchesco’s proprietor. “This year’s recognition is most rewarding and we look forward to continued success in showcasing ROCKFORD as one the state’s premiere restaurant destinations.”

The 4th Annual, 2020 Business is Blooming program will expand city-wide is a nomination-based contest. Registration for the 2020 contest is open and all nominations are due by July 1, 2020. Business owners are encouraged to follow and like our Forest City Beautiful Facebook page, and visit forestcitybeautiful.com/bloom to get more information about the program and to register to participate. There is no cost to nominate a business.

Forest City Beautiful is a multi-year initiative aimed at creating and maintaining beautiful landscapes in downtown Rockford. RACVB leads the effort in collaboration with the City of Rockford. As part of the initiative, RACVB has the responsibility to plan, install and maintain landscaping in public spaces. More information can be found at forestcitybeautiful.com.

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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