

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2019

RACVB Releases Stroll on State By the Numbers *5,406 Volunteer Hours, 62 Parade Floats Highlight 7th Annual Stroll*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 23, 2019

ROCKFORD, IL – Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust, welcomed residents and visitors to downtown Rockford for the seventh year on Saturday, Nov. 30 to ring in the holiday season. The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) produces the annual event with the support, services and donations of many community partners, volunteers and sponsors.

Thanks to the efforts of a community network that invested 5,406 pre- and event-day volunteer hours, RACVB is pleased to announce that Stroll on State attracted an estimated 21,875 guests to downtown Rockford despite gloomy, cold and rainy weather throughout the day and ending the event two hours earlier than scheduled due to weather.

“When Stroll was first imagined, we hoped it could become an event that families and friends would look forward to as a way to kick off their holiday season. While the weather certainly impacted attendance, we were pleased that despite the weather so many families still showed up. Their willingness to come out in gloomy weather tells our team that Stroll has become part of their family traditions,” said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO.

Organizers evaluate aerial photography, feedback from crowd spotters, shuttle bus ridership, occupied parking stalls, sales/participation numbers for local businesses and participation counts at event attractions throughout the duration of the event to help determine the attendance figure. “When analyzing these elements, consistently the numbers were about 25 percent of last year’s totals and thus our estimate for this year’s attendance is 25 percent of the 2018 attendance estimate,” said Groh.

The event spans more than 15 blocks in downtown Rockford, showcasing locally owned retail shops and eateries. It also features an abundance of family-friendly activities including the Stroll on State parade, visits with Santa, horse and wagon rides, live performances and entertainment, hot chocolate stations, and the magical lighting of the City of Rockford Christmas Tree followed by the Sky Lights Fireworks display.

In addition to attendance figures, RACVB tracks other festive metrics that help tell the Stroll on State story. Some of this year’s Stroll fun facts include:

- 11,800 multi-colored lights decorated Rockford’s Christmas tree
- 7,000 pieces of candy were given out by Mrs. Claus during the parade
- 102 balloon handlers, 62 floats, 51 Jeeps and 8 large balloons highlighted the Stroll on State parade, presented by IBEW/NECA
- 5,406 hours of work were put in by volunteers
- 4,000 children visited Santa Claus
- 2,819 guests utilized at least one of four park and ride shuttles to and from the event
- 1,219 people signed up to run/ walk in the Dasher Dash 5K

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- 452 letters written to Santa noting their wishes for Christmas
- 350 people watched "Newsies" at the Nordlof Center

"Stroll on State instills a great sense of pride in our community and each year continues to remind us of the goodness it brings to so many people. The Illinois Bank & Trust team is so grateful to be a part of this on-going tradition each year," said Jeff Hultman, Illinois Bank & Trust president/CEO.

In a post-event survey, **85 percent** of Stroll on State attendees reported a **positive experience** at the event. Some highlights of the Stroll survey feedback include:

- "This was my first year! It was the best experience truly! It made me more excited for the holidays."
- "Stroll on State is such a fun, holiday event for the whole family. We attend every year. Thank you to all the organizers that work all year to make this such a great event for our city."
- "I don't really think it could be much better than it already is! It is a fun, safe, friendly environment."
- "People were very friendly and the city really looked nice with the decorations. I also enjoyed going into a few of the stores downtown that I normally don't have the opportunity to go to."
- "The event keeps getting better each year!"

A few other key takeaways from the survey include:

- **93 percent** said they are more likely to come back downtown after experiencing Stroll on State.
- **88 percent** of people said they would recommend Stroll on State to a family member, friend and/or colleague.
- **80 percent** of people said that this was not their first time attending Stroll on State.
- **68 percent** of people said there were local businesses they visited that they plan to return to again.
- **45 percent** of people said that Stroll on State positively changed their perception of downtown.

Supporters & Partners: Led by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, the following entities came together to generously sponsor and produce Stroll on State:

Presenting Sponsor:

- Illinois Bank & Trust

Parade Presenting Sponsor:

- The Power Connection IBEW 364 & NECA

Attractions Sponsors:

- OSF HealthCare
- PCI Pharma Services
- Montel Technologies
- Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Union
- Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23
- Sheet Metal Workers Local 219
- Ironworkers Local Union 498

- Roofers & Waterproofers Local 11
- Mercyhealth
- LaMonica Beverages
- David & Colleen Anderson Family
- Xfinity
- Event Floral
- Danfoss
- Gallagher Williams-Manny Insurance Group
- ComEd
- Primary Eye Care
- Illinois Lottery
- Rosecrance
- Cleo
- Two Men and a Truck



STROLL on STATE®



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- Tractor Town
- Lino's
- Luxe Productions

- SVL
- Woodman's Markets
- FurstStaffing & FurstProfessionals
- Pearson
- Pierce Distribution
- Project First Rate
- SwedishAmerican, A Division of UW Health
- Landstar System, Inc.
- Buttita Brothers

Media Sponsors:

- Northwest Quarterly
- Rockford Register Star
- The Rock River Times
- Lamar
- Mid-West Family Broadcasting
- Townsquare Media
- WIFR 23
- WREX 13
- WTOV 17 / FOX 39

- Journal & Topics Newspapers
- El Sol

Partner Organizations:

- City of Rockford
- Heartland Community Church
- City First Church
- Rockford Mass Transit District
- Rockford Sharefest
- Rockford Park District
- Fleet Feet Rockford
- Rock Valley College

Dasher Dash 5K Sponsors

- SwedishAmerican, A Division of UW Health (presenting sponsor)
- Wolfe Landscaping
- A. Tanner Design
- Peak Sports Club
- Turano Baking Company
- Mechanical
- Gorman & Company
- Pearson

View the complete list of sponsors and partners on the website www.strollonstate.com.

The Merry & Bright season continues in Rockford through the end of January with many more community events and programs. Check out www.gorockford.com/merryandbright for recommendations and information. Stroll on State merchandise, sold during the event, is now available for purchase online by visiting the Rockford Store www.gorockford.com/about/rockford-store/ or at the RACVB office (102 N. Main St.). Items are available while supplies last.

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About RACVB: RACVB is responsible for promoting the Rockford region as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, RACVB strengthens the economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in our communities. www.gorockford.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Andrea Cook: RACVB Associate Director of Marketing & Communications: 815.489.1664, acook@gorockford.com