



RACVB Announces Return of CRE8IV, Releases Call for Artists, Seeks Community Support

Mural Festival Returns, Expands to Rockton, Loves Park & Pecatonica

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2021

Rockford, IL – After a one-year hiatus, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) is pleased to announce the return and expansion of **CRE8IV: transformational ART**. Over the course of June 7-11, 2021, local and visiting artists will transform tired and dull walls into beautiful works of art in Rockford, Loves Park, Rockton and Pecatonica.

CRE8IV (pronounced “Creative”) is a community-building, arts-infused event launched in 2019 as part of RACVB’s placemaking and public art efforts designed to enhance the region for residents and visitors. In its first year, CRE8IV artists painted nine murals in downtown Rockford. **This year, dependent on fundraising and community support, RACVB will add another three to five murals in Rockford, and one mural each in Loves Park, Rockton, and Pecatonica.**

“As we consider experiences that will enhance our region, ideas that increase access to art, enhance civic spaces and create a strong sense of community rise to the top of our list,” said **John Groh, RACVB president/CEO**. “The murals created in 2019 brought a whole new level of vitality and artistry to downtown Rockford. This year, especially as we come out of the pandemic, our team wanted to bring even more of that vibrancy and creativity to Rockford’s central city, as well as to additional communities in the region. We hope these new murals will inspire all of our residents and visitors for years to come.”

Commenting on plans for 2021, **Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara** remarked, “We’re excited by the return of CRE8IV to Rockford and the region this year. Public art has a unique ability to bring people together and I’m certain, as we continue our recovery from the pandemic, that the artists who participate and the new public works of art they will create will have a positive and long-lasting impact on all of us.”

As CRE8IV expands to include three additional communities, **Nathan Bruck, Loves Park economic development/planning manager** commented, “The City of Loves Park is excited to be a part of this fantastic project celebrating art and culture in the Rockford Region. We look forward to working with RACVB and seeing a mural come to life in our city along North Second Street.”

CHALLENGE GRANT: CRE8IV is produced and presented by RACVB and made possible in part by a \$20,000 matching grant from the **Kjellstrom Family Foundation**. In order to fully match the Kjellstrom

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Family Foundation grant, RACVB is working to secure match funding through sponsorship of the initiative and each mural. “These new murals will create a beautiful backdrop to the everyday and important moments of our lives,” said **RACVB Foundation Board Chair David Anderson**. “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 or donating are invited to contact **Martasha Brown, RACVB director of advancement**, at 815.489.1655 or mbrown@gorockford.com.*

PREPPED AND READY TO GO: “Bringing tired walls to life as beautiful works of art is no small undertaking. A significant portion of the process involves ensuring each wall is appropriately prepped and primed before mural artists arrive and that’s where **Painters District Council No. 30, Local 607** comes in. We could not do this without their support and hard work,” said **Kristen Paul, RACVB director of destination development and director of CRE8IV**.

Commenting on the partnership and their involvement, John Penney, Local 607 business representative, said, “Painters District Council 30, Local 607 is proud to partner with RACVB for the next phase of CRE8IV to bring beauty, life and inspiration to our community through art. I encourage others to take part in the continual transformation that starts with our individual efforts to bring collective change and purpose for all.”

CALL FOR ARTISTS: RACVB is calling on artists with mural experience to produce large-scale works of art on exterior walls. Artists interested in producing original high-quality murals are invited to submit a proposal addressing all requirements for the project. Information is available at gorockford.com/publicart. Applications for artists are due midnight April 10, 2021. For any questions related to the Call for Artists, please contact Kristen Paul at KPaul@GoRockford.com.

For more information about these art-inspired programs or to see photos from CRE8IV 2019, **please visit GoRockford.com/PublicArt or GoRockford.com/CRE8IV**.

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About: 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. **gorockford.com**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Kristen Paul, RACVB director of destination development, 815.540.7342, kpaul@gorockford.com