



STROLL on STATE®



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2021

9th Annual Stroll on State Brings the Community Together, Exceeds 2019 Attendance

62,250 Guests Kickoff Holidays Together, Support Small Businesses

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 20, 2021

ROCKFORD, Ill. –Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust, made a triumphant return to an in-person experience on Saturday, November 27, reaching an estimated 62,500 guests in downtown Rockford, a significant increase from the last in-person event in 2019 that was impacted due to inclement weather. (2020 Stroll on State was a produced, televised event due to the global pandemic).

Rockford residents and visitors were welcomed back to this festive event filled with collaboration, partnership, multiple tree lightings, fireworks, Santa, music, and opportunities to shop and support local businesses. The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) produces the annual event with the support, services, and donations of many community partners, volunteers, and sponsors.

“Stroll on State, produced by the RACVB, continues to show what can be accomplished when a community comes together. The economic impact, support of small businesses, partnerships, and welcoming all to this event speaks to our region’s culture of collaboration and belonging,” said Mayor Thomas McNamara. “It was great to see our community together to kick off the holiday season.”

This year, RACVB contracted an event analytics firm that uses mobile device data to estimate attendance figures. Using historical data, the firm also was able to provide more reliable estimates from previous years in which the Bureau and the Rockford Police Department estimated attendance using manual calculations from aerial photography, crowd spotters, shuttle bus ridership, occupied parking stalls, sales numbers, and guest counts at attractions. For example, in 2019, using manual calculations, attendance was estimated at 21,875. Using mobile device data, we now estimate that year’s attendance to be approximately 57,900 guests.

Along with the overall attendance of 62,250 this year, the firm estimated that approximately 75% were Winnebago County residents, and more than 5% traveled from outside Illinois. “In analyzing the new attendance data back to 2017, we now know that the 75/25% breakdown between county and non-county residents has been fairly consistent each year,” said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO. The analysis also confirms that warm weather in 2017 and 2018 attributed to crowds of approximately 86,400 and 83,250, respectively, while rain and cold in 2019 dropped attendance estimates to 57,900.

“Stroll on State continues to create a joyful experience for Rockford families and visitors,” said Groh. “This year was particularly heart-warming as we returned to an in-person festival and added elements to create a safe environment while amplifying the attractions.” For example, the festival grounds were larger – including Davis Park for the first time to allow visitors to spread out – and were decorated with 69 large gift boxes and 101 string-lit trees. In addition, the event featured three tree lighting ceremonies, a new time and location for fireworks, Santa pop-up visits, indoor

and outdoor Letters to Santa mailbox locations, requirement of masks or face coverings for all indoor locations, additional space between vendors at outdoor markets and hand sanitizing stations located throughout the event.

Other numbers that tell the story of Stroll 2021 include:

- 49 sponsors and partners
- 3,142 volunteer hours before, during, and after the event
- 745 5K Dasher Dash Runners
- 49 food and retail vendors
- 324 ornaments adorning the official City of Rockford Christmas Tree
- 170 large gift boxes and trees decorating downtown
- 573 letters by children from 11 states written to Santa
- 9 parade balloons, including the new official Stroll on State inflatable
- 113 decorated Jeep® parade entries

Opportunities to give feedback for next year's event as well as more details about the festival's highlights, attractions, and sponsors are available at www.strollonstate.com. What can't be captured in the numbers is the depth of dedication from RACVB staff and volunteers who are inspired to bring our community together for an unforgettable day of awe and wonder.

"We are deeply grateful for our volunteers, sponsors, and partners," said Groh. "On behalf of our entire staff and Board of Directors, I thank them for their commitment to Stroll on State and look forward to bringing us all together for next year's 10th-anniversary event."

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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*

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