



RACVB Announces Return of CRE8IV Mural Festival 12 New Murals to Transform Public Spaces in Summer 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, together with community leaders from Rockford, Loves Park and Roscoe, participating artists and sponsors, announced the third annual CRE8IV: transformational ART. The RACVB-led public art festival will take place beginning June 1, 2022, at various locations in the Rockford region.

To date, 24 museum-quality CRE8IV murals (pronounced creative) have been created in Rockford, Loves Park, Rockton and Pecatonica. For a complete list, visit gorockford.com/cre8iv.

This summer, **10 local and visiting lead artists will work with teams of artists to create 12 new large-scale, vibrant murals** in the Rockford region – bringing the total number of CRE8IV murals to 36. New murals in Rockford will be created in the South Main St. business district, in The North End (Main/Auburn St.), in Midtown District (7th St.), and in downtown Rockford. The program will also include two murals in Loves Park and - for the first time - one in Roscoe.

“Residents, visitors and people looking to invest or live in a community are drawn to vibrant spaces. This year, we are excited to continue collaborating with residents, building owners, artists and donors to transform tired spaces into bright, bold and compelling works of art and welcoming spaces,” said **John Groh, RACVB president/CEO**. “Through the installation of impactful public art and placemaking efforts, we are creating a more exciting and compelling community and destination for our residents and visitors.”

Public art enhances the spirit, diversity and cultural life of a community

“I believe public art can alter the way we think of our surroundings in a positive way, and hopefully unify community members. These murals use images of the past and present to offer a vision into the future and help to create the identity of this community,” said **Bret Whitacre, a local CRE8IV artist**. “It’s a powerful process that is social, interactive and motivational – I love that I can help to make a positive difference and do what I love all at the same time.”

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Partnerships Key to Success

CRE8IV is made possible because of the support, help and funding of the partners who recognize the long-term impact of this community-building, arts-infused collaboration. For the third year, **Painters Union District 30, Local 607** has joined together with RACVB to make CRE8IV possible with their efforts to prep and prime all walls prior to artists arriving. Without their support, CRE8IV would not be possible. Sponsors to date include:

Painters Union District 30, Local 607
Bill Doran & Company
Brubaker Family Foundation
City of Loves Park
City of Rockford
Collins Aerospace

Kjellstrom Family Foundation
RACVB Board & Foundation board members
Rockford Area Arts Council/Amazon
Village of Roscoe
William Charles Construction
workplace

Mural Locations and Artists

Artists were selected through an open Call for Artists process and a local committee-led selection process. **More than 90 local and visiting artists from around the country**, including a few international, submitted proposals. A curatorial review committee comprised of partner organization representatives, neighborhood representatives and residents reviewed the proposals and concepts, considered the artists' experiences with similar projects, and then selected the artists for this year's CRE8IV festival. The selected artists represent a diverse group of local and visiting artists with varied backgrounds and artistic approaches.

This year, new murals will spotlight scenes and imagery portraying iconic Rockford landmarks, natural beauty native to the region, themes of belonging, hope, peace and love; diversity and inclusion; youth education, and historic symbolism rooted in our Midwestern hometowns

"We were honored to have had over 90 artist submit applications from around the county. Many of our CRE8IV artists apply each year because of the warm community welcome and neighborhood support they receive," said **Kristen Paul, RACVB director of destination development**. "The artists truly enjoy the sense of belonging, overwhelming support and genuine hospitality they receive from residents and business owners. They have said time and time again that Rockford is like no place they've worked because everyone they meet is truly amazing."

The list of mural locations, artists, concepts, and sponsors includes:

SOUTH MAIN ST.

1. Mural Address: 917 S. Main Street (North & South Facing) (2 Walls)
Artist: Anthony Lewellen (Chicago, IL)
Concept: "Hope" for a bright future, the sky is not the limit – youth focused, aerospace influenced
Sponsor: Collins Aerospace

THE NORTH END

2. Mural Address: 1444 Myott Ave. (North Facing)
Artist: OhYa Studio – Ray Mawst & Brian Kehoe (Madison, WI)
Concept: Tiled style patchwork highlighting Rockford attractions, staples, monuments, floral and fauna
Sponsor: Brubaker Charitable Foundation

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3. Mural Address: 1402 N. Main St (North Facing)
Artist: Jenny Mathews (Rockford, IL)
Concept: Geometric shapes cascading across the wall using vibrant colors
Sponsor: Rockford Area Arts Council

MIDTOWN DISTRICT

4. Mural Address: 206 7th Street & 208 7th Street (North Facing) (2 Walls)
Artists: Jenny Ustick & Atalie Gagnet (Cincinnati and Toledo, OH)
Concept: Rockford Peaches Baseball – one cohesive project on two walls with a Welcome to Midtown message
Sponsors: Kjellstrom Family Foundation & William Charles

DOWNTOWN ROCKFORD

5. Mural Address: 815 E. State Street (East Facing)
Artists: Jenny Ustick & Atalie Gagnet (Cincinnati and Toledo, OH)
Concept: Inclusiveness, Rockford focused using bold & vibrant colors to enhance the entrance of the downtown business district
Sponsor: workplace
6. Mural Address: 707 W. Jefferson Street (2 Walls)
Artist: Murals & More – Michael Cooper (Franklin, TN)
Concept: Windows boxes with native flowers emerging through with sight lines to the sky above through empty spaces - Trompe L'oeil style
Sponsor: Bill Doran & Co.
7. Mural Address: 311 Elm Street (West Facing)
Artist: Brett Whitaker (Rockford, IL)
Concept: Restoration and refreshing vintage mural
Sponsor: City of Rockford

ROSCOE

8. Mural Address: 10536 Main Street (North Facing)
Artist: Thomas Agran (Iowa City, IA)
Concept: Cityscape using broad brush strokes and vivid color
Sponsor: Village of Roscoe

LOVES PARK

9. Mural Address: 5316 N. 2nd Street (North Facing)
Artist: Dustin Eckhardt (Loves Park, IL)
Concept: A colorful character immersed in a playful environment of local Illinois flora and species, with an emphasis on native pollinators.
Sponsor: City of Loves Park

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10. Mural Address: 5545 N. 2nd Street (North Facing)
Artist: Brett Whitaker (Rockford, IL)
Concept: Color and compassion for the "City with a Heart" using vibrant shapes and lettering
Sponsor: City of Loves Park

Mural Sponsors and Supporters

This RACVB-led initiative is made possible with the help of the aforementioned CRE8IV sponsors and funding partners and in collaboration with the City of Rockford and Painters District Council 30, Local 607. We would also like to recognize and thank all artists, local and visiting, for their creativity and days of hard work to help elevate and beautify our region.

Businesses, organizations and individuals interested in sponsoring this initiative or a specific mural are invited to contact Kristen Paul, RACVB Director of Destination Development, at 815.489.1661 or kpaul@gorockford.com.

For more information about CRE8IV - including upcoming announcements, a public art map and other resources - visit www.gorockford.com/cre8iv or follow @GoRockford on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

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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FOR MORE INFORMATION: Kristen Paul, RACVB Director of Destination Development: 815.489.1661, kpaul@gorockford.com