



STROLL *on* STATE®



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2022

Stroll on State to Celebrate a Decade of Fun and Memories

*Event to feature new experiences, tree lighting, shopping and dining,
Illinois Bank & Trust extends presenting sponsorship through 2025*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 26, 2022

Rockford, IL – The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is excited to announce that the 10th annual **Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust**, is set for Saturday, November 26 in downtown Rockford.

This year, the Stroll on State team, along with partners, volunteers and sponsors are planning to transform downtown Rockford into a winter wonderland once again. During the event, from 2 – 9 p.m. there will be new enhancements, attractions, live entertainment, vendors and more for eventgoers to enjoy.

The free community event, which is always held the Saturday after Thanksgiving in downtown Rockford, attracts tens of thousands of guests every year.

“As we celebrate the 10th annual Stroll on State, I am reminded that our community is filled with so many generous individuals and businesses who help our RACVB team put on this amazing event,” said **Kristen Paul, RACVB’s vice president of destination development**. “Stroll on State is designed to be the kickoff to the holiday season and a celebration of Small Business Saturday, but it also is a place where memories are made, and friendships are gained. We are truly thankful to our partners, volunteers, patrons, sponsors and vendors for their support throughout the last decade and hopefully for years to come.”

Sponsor Support Makes Stroll Possible

In total, 39 companies and organizations are providing financial support through sponsorship of this year’s Stroll on State and Dasher Dash 5K. Their investment allows RACVB to present the event as a free gift to the community and visitors.

“It is truly amazing to me how in 10 years Stroll on State has quickly come to represent the best we have as a community,” said **Jeff Hultman, CEO of Illinois Bank & Trust**. Since 2015, Illinois Bank & Trust has played an integral role in bringing holiday cheer to the region as the event’s presenting sponsor. As he announced a three-year extension, through 2025, of the bank’s support for the event Hultman noted, “We are thrilled to continue our partnership with RACVB to bring Stroll on State to life. This event has become a valued tradition for families in the region, and we love being a part of making it happen.”

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“It shows we have the local talent needed to pull off world-class projects and events. We do not need to look outside our community for big solutions. We have all we need here to be successful in anything we put our collective minds to accomplishing,” **said Hultman**. “Stroll on State shows what can get done when we join around our collective values of community, excellence and building traditions. This event shows that when we dream big and do not let how things were always done in the past drive our decision, we can accomplish great things.”

Additional local organizations and media companies provide support invaluable to the production of Stroll on State. A complete list is on page 5 of this release.

“We are excited to celebrate a decade of growth and memories for Rockford. As we look back on the last 10 years, we cannot help but look forward to what the future will hold and what the next years will bring,” **said Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara**. “When we gather in grand style to kick off the holiday season, we are also reminded that Stroll is a great example of the welcoming nature of our residents. This event illustrates the city’s progressive spirit and provides a wonderful opportunity for visitors and residents to join in the celebration.”

A special photo of a young child peering at his reflection in a large ornament has become what embodies the meaning of Stroll for organizers, volunteers and maybe even the public. RACVB sent out a call to identify the child and the public responded. The boy, now 9, is Hayden Conklin. He, along with his parents, Scott and Lauren Conklin of Loves Park, will be participating in various Stroll events this season.

Stroll’s Top 10 Announcements for Year 10 in 2022

1. **Gather for Tree Lighting**

One of the event’s most popular moments – the lighting of the city Christmas tree – will take place at 6 p.m. at the Main Stage at Main and Elm streets. This year’s City of Rockford tree is **sponsored by the Northwestern Illinois Building Trades**. The Main Stage, **sponsored by Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23**, will feature music and other entertainment throughout the day.

2. **Sky Lights Fireworks, presented by Pierce Distribution**, will once again be lighting up the skies of downtown Rockford. The fireworks will be launched from the Jefferson Street Bridge at 8:30 p.m. Viewers will be able to see the skies burst with color from anywhere in the festival as long as they can see the Jefferson Street Bridge.

3. **Inflatable Balloons Highlight Parade**

Stroll on State’s Holiday Parade, sponsored by The Power Connection – IBEW 364 & NECA steps off on S. Main Street at Chestnut Street at 2 p.m. and will move north to State Street then east across the State Street Bridge, ending at 3rd Street. Parade onlookers are encouraged to find a spot along the route starting at 1 p.m. **HolmstromKennedy PC and Mercyhealth** each are

– MORE –



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sponsoring a holiday-themed balloon. **Hard Rock Casino Rockford** is rocking the parade by sponsoring a total of six holiday-themed and two Rockford-themed balloons, rounding the total number of large balloons to 10 – a perfect number for the 10th anniversary.

In the St. Nick of Time: Local organizations and businesses are invited to participate in the parade. Deadline to register is November 11. For pricing options and information, contact Julie Huber at strollonstate@gorockford.com. Visit www.gorockford.com/stroll-on-state/parade/ for a list of rules, more information and to download a registration form.

4. **Blitzen's Ball, a Character Dance Party for Kids**

From princesses to heroes and everything in between this dance party is hosted by **Forest City Fairytale Company** and will take place inside the 4-story glass tower at Iconic Energy (formerly Rockford Register Star). The characters and music will be around throughout the event so be sure to stop by to create another set of memories. This event is sponsored by **OSF Medical Center**.

5. **Block 5 Party**

Sponsored by **COUNTRY Financial**, this is a must-see, first-time event in the 500 block of East State Street. Warm up with the Fire Pits, experience the DJ battle, shop and dine at local establishments on the block and see the popular Fire & Ice wow crowds as blocks of ice dissolve into beautiful bonfires creating an enchanting display.

6. **Holiday Hot Rods Classic Car Show**

Hosted by **Cars & Coffee Rockford** see this combination of classic and vintage cars decked out for the holidays in the parking lot behind CJ's Bar & Grill at 115 N. Madison St. Prizes for best in class as well as best decorated vehicles. The deadline to register is November 23. Email carsandcoffeerockford@gmail.com to register. A limited number of cars will be selected.

7. **Frozen in Time Selfie Stations**

Stop at any or better yet all 10 Selfie Stations at Stroll on State. Every photo tagged Stroll on State with #strollonstate10 will be entered into a drawing for a prize. The more you stop, the more chances you have to win! See the map for all 10 selfie stations. The prize will be a very special Stroll gift.

8. **Indoor and Outdoor Movie Land**

See the return of the fan favorite Outdoor Movie Land **sponsored by Xfinity** in Lot 4 next to Jimmy Johns and across from Capri Restaurant or experience the new Indoor Movie Land in Stewart Square. "The Grinch" will be shown at each location.

9. **Ice Skating at BMO Center**

Take a break from strolling the grounds and lace up some ice skates at the BMO Center put on by the **Rockford Park District** and the **Rockford IceHogs**. Additionally, there will be street hockey provided by the **Chicago Blackhawks Foundation** along with family friendly activities powered by the Rockford Park District in the lot outside of Veterans Memorial Hall.

– MORE –



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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2022

10. Dasher Dash 5k

Hosted by Rock River Multisport, this holiday-themed run/walk starts and finishes near Beattie Park (near 100 Park Avenue). Participants will travel across the beautiful Rock River and decorated East State Street. The run/walk starts at noon. Registration ends Nov. 24. There will not be registration on the day of the festival. Visit [here](#) to register. Register by Nov. 7 to guarantee your t-shirt.

Classic Attractions

- The main event grounds will be along State Street in downtown Rockford bordered by Jefferson, Church, Chestnut and Third Streets.
- Keep your eye open for **Santa Claus** who will be roaming throughout the festival. You may find him at a S'mores station, taking care of his reindeer, on state at the tree lighting or grabbing a hot chocolate.
- The popular **Hot Chocolate Express** will be at two locations – in the Veterans Memorial Hall parking lot and next to the Outdoor Movie Land.
- **Rudolph's Reindeer Village, sponsored by Mercyhealth**, is back and will be at Veterans Memorial Hall.
- Your favorite group of elves will be back at Rockford City Hall to collect letters and give them to Santa! At **Letters to Santa, Sponsored by FurstStaffing**, kids are encouraged to write and decorate their letters to Santa, and then mail them on site to the North Pole.

Additional Event Favorites:

- **S'mores stations** will be set up in three locations. These yummy, gooey snacks are made fresh to order by Stroll grill masters.
- **Horse & Wagon Rides, sponsored by Amazon** will be in one location – there will be one continuous loop on the west side of the Rock River with pickup and drop off locations near the corner of Wyman and Elm Streets.
- **Two Holiday Markets** will host local retail and food vendors sponsored by the **Chicago Blackhawks Foundation**.
- Hosted by the **Rockford Dance Company**, free performances of **"The Nutcracker"** will take place all afternoon at The Nordlof Center, 118 N. Main St., **sponsored by William Charles Construction**.
- **Veterans Memorial Hall, sponsored by Accuride**, will feature a toy train display on the main level and stage, hosted by **SOAR Assembly/SOAR Radio** on the second floor.
- A full listing of events and attractions is available at www.strollonstate.com.

– MORE –



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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2022

Shop Small Business Saturday

Stroll on State takes place in conjunction with Small Business Saturday which is an annual holiday tradition that encourages people to support local shop owners. Locally owned businesses throughout the downtown River District will offer holiday specials and fun events. Be sure to visit the wide range of stores and restaurants, both during Stroll and throughout the holiday season.

Volunteers Help Make It Happen

Stroll on State is made possible in part with the help of several organizations, businesses and volunteers. Volunteer Workshops are held Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. and Tuesday evenings from 6 – 9 p.m. at 310 Winnebago Street, on the corner of Winnebago and Chestnut Streets. Children ages 12-15 may volunteer with an adult and a signed waiver; 16- and 17-year-olds must provide a signed waiver.

Volunteers are welcome to come to the workshops without prior registration. Workshops end on Tuesday, November 22. Volunteers are needed for the **Downtown Decorating Days** on Friday and Saturday, November 18-19. Those looking to lend a helping hand the day of the festival can get more information about available opportunities at www.strollonstate.com.

Parking and Transportation

There will be parking options specified on detailed maps. On-street parking and surface parking lots will be available as posted. The event map with suggested parking areas is available at www.strollonstate.com. There also will be three Remote Parking Lots with free shuttle bus transportation, **sponsored by Rockford**

Mass Transit District:

- YMCA, 200 Y Boulevard (handicapped accessible paratransit buses are available);
- Forest City Church, 1280 S. Alpine Road; and
- Crusader Community Health, 1200 W. State St.

Shuttle buses run continuously from 1 – 9:30 p.m.

Supporters & Partners

Led by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, in addition to many partners, the following entities have come together to generously support Stroll on State.

Presenting Sponsor:

- Illinois Bank & Trust

Parade Presenting Sponsor:

- The Power Connection IBEW 364 & NECA

– MORE –



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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2022

Supporting Sponsors:

- Accuride
- Amazon
- Bergstrom
- Chicago Blackhawks Foundation and Rockford IceHogs Community Foundation
- ComEd
- COUNTRY Financial
- CoyleKiley
- Fehr Graham
- FurstStaffing
- Great Water 360 Auto Care
- Hard Rock Casino Rockford
- Hilton Garden Inn
- HolstromKennedyPC
- I Want Smart
- LaMonica Beverages
- Mercyhealth
- Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Union
- OSF HealthCare
- PCI Pharma Services
- Pearson Plumbing & Heating
- Pierce Distribution
- Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23
- ProGraphics
- Project First Rate
- Rosecrance
- United Union of Roofers Local 11
- UWHealth
- William Charles Construction
- Winnebago County
- Xfinity

Partner Organizations:

- City of Rockford
- Rockford Mass Transit District
- Rockford Park District
- BMO Center
- Two Men and a Truck

Friends of Stroll on State:

- Alpha-Lit Marquee Letters
- Bennie's Dry Cleaning
- City First Church
- Coalition of Latino Leaders
- County Materials
- Entre Computer Solutions
- Event Floral
- Forest City Fairytale Company
- Howe Freightways Inc.
- Iconic Energy
- Lino's
- Luxe Productions
- Power Road Auto Body
- Rockford Dance Company
- Rockford Ornamental Iron
- Rockford Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- SOAR Assembly
- Stenstrom Companies
- SVL Productions
- Tree Care Enterprises
- Ware Crane & Rigging

Dasher Dash 5K Sponsor:

- Brad Martin at Dickerson & Nieman Realtors
- Data Point Inc.
- Fehr Graham
- Fleet Feet
- GreenState Credit Union
- I Want Smart
- MembersAlliance Credit Union
- Peak Fitness

Media Sponsors:

- Mid-West Family Broadcasting
- Northwest Quarterly
- SOAR Radio
- The Rock River Times
- Townsquare Media
- WREX

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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:

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