



ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

QUARTERLY REPORT

FY23, Q2

October - December, 2022



The mission of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development.



gorockford.com



RACVB MISSION STATEMENT

The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau drives quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development.

PRIORITY RESULTS

CREATE ECONOMIC WEALTH

The Rockford region experiences growth in tourism's leading indicators.

ENHANCE TOURISM PRODUCT

The Rockford region offers unique and marketable experiences and venues that meet or exceed visitor expectations and enhance quality of life for citizens.

ENGAGE CONSTITUENTS ON BEHALF OF TOURISM

RACVB tourism marketing and destination development efforts have broad support among key stakeholders.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO



While still challenging, it is an exciting time for the tourism and hospitality industry and for the Rockford area. **Stroll on State** turned 10 and 70,050 people attended, a 12.5 percent increase from the previous year.

This signature event continues to be a driver for downtown businesses, and for visitors and residents. With 85 sponsors, partners, and friends, and 2,400 volunteer hours making it happen, we can only be successful. The RACVB team is continually amazed by the dedication and support received to host Stroll on State. About three-fourths of attendees live in Winnebago County.

The Rockford Peaches continue to be part of marketing the Rockford area as a special place to visit. The Fan Trail is operational and the "Pose Like a Peach" interactive banners are making their way to events and sports tournaments. Story ideas around the Rockford Peaches, including women-owned businesses and welcoming diversity, were pitched to writers and were successful including landing a piece in Travel + Leisure.

Events like Stroll on State assist in building community appreciation and a vibrant downtown, while attractions like the Rockford Peaches Fan Trail remind visitors why they need to explore Rockford. Efforts to work together to promote what makes Rockford and our region special help to define the region and make it more attractive to visitors and potential new residents.

Be well,

John Groh
RACVB president/CEO

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RACVB NEWS



"Pose Like a Peach" brings interactive fun at tournaments and conferences while recognizing the Rockford brand.

SALES AND MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

Sales and marketing merged their efforts to promote the region and the Rockford Peaches. While the Rockford Peaches Fan Trail was unveiled in the previous quarter, the sales team brought the team into their events including "The Basset Hound, in a League of Their Own," held in October at Mercyhealth Sportscore Two.



RACVB's Lindsay Arellano, vp of sales, takes time to greet our furry guests.

The baseball theme was pronounced throughout the event from the food to the decorations. The RACVB sales team brought in the interactive banners "Pose Like a Peach" (above) for the Welcome Party. These fun and versatile promotional banners have made an appearance at subsequent events and will continue to be part of sales and marketing efforts.

Sales and marketing are teaming up in other ventures including making improvements to the RACVB store and the premium products offered to clients. And new marketing collateral will assist the sales team as they head into prime tradeshow season.

STROLL ON STATE 10TH YEAR SUCCESS

Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust, turned 10 this year and **70,050 people** attended to help celebrate. This is a 12.5 percent increase from the previous year. A record number - **85 sponsors, partners and friends** - helped make Stroll on State a success. Without them and the **2,400 volunteer hours**, this event which has become so important to the community doesn't happen.

"Stroll on State is a tradition for Rockford families and visitors," said Kristen Paul, RACVB vice president of destination development. "This year was particularly heart-warming as we celebrated 10 years of Stroll's impact. During the tree lighting ceremony, I loved seeing our community all together with folks filling the streets and overflowing to fill the outside stairwells of the BMO Center and looking on from each floor of the adjacent parking lot. It seemed like everyone wanted to be part of that moment and it's a memory I'll always cherish."

The team at RACVB is deeply grateful for the dedication to Stroll on State and looking forward to bringing the community together again at the **11th annual event set for November 25, 2023.**

Thanks to our sponsors!

Parade Sponsor

Presented By

Brought to you by

SUPPORTING SPONSORS

- Hard Rock Casino Rockford
- I Want SMART
- OSF Healthcare
- Northwestern Illinois Building
- Trades Union
- Great Water 360 Auto Care
- Pierce Distribution
- Amazon
- PCI Pharma Services
- LWHealth
- Mercyhealth
- Chicago Blackhawks Foundation

- Rockford IceHogs Community Foundation
- LaMonica Beverages
- Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23
- Xfinity
- ComEd
- Fehr Graham
- Bergstrom
- Winnebago County
- Rockford Ornamental Iron
- Pearson Plumbing & Heating
- FurstStaffing
- William Charles Construction

- Accuride
- Project First Rate
- Rosecrance
- Hilton Garden Inn
- United Union of Roofers Local 11
- COUNTRY Financial
- HolstromKennedyPC
- CoyLeKiley
- Entire Computer Solutions
- Prographics
- Alpha-Lit Marquee Letters
- Quartz Health Benefit Plans Corporation
- General Mills

FRIENDS OF STROLL ON STATE

- Alpha-Lit Marquee Letters
- Bennie's Dry Cleaning
- City First Church
- Coalition of Latino Leaders
- County Materials
- Entire 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
- Cars & Coffee Rockford
- B&W Event Décor
- Rockford Marlins Swim Club
- 815 After Hours Rotary
- Screw City Jeeps

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- City of Rockford
- Rockford Mass Transit District

- Rockford Park District
- BMO Center

- Two Men and a Truck

DASHER DASH PARTNERS

- I Want SMART
- Fehr Graham
- GreenState Credit Union

- Members Alliance Credit Union
- Brad Martin at Dickerson Nieman Realtors
- Data Point Inc.

- Fleet Feet
- Peak Fitness

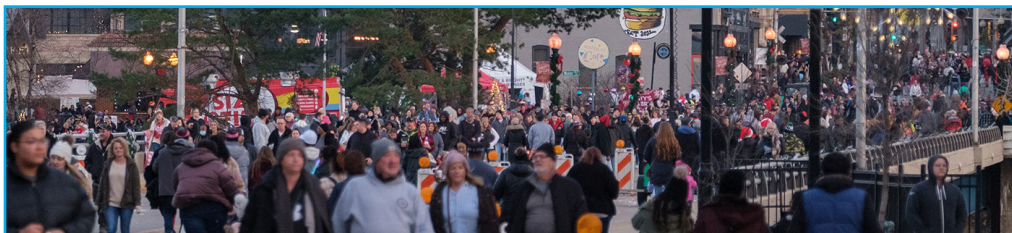
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

70,050 ATTEND 10TH ANNUAL STROLL ON STATE

A festive mood after pandemic-induced blues, unseasonably warm weather and special features in honor of the event's 10th anniversary contributed to a 12.5 percent increase in attendance at Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust, Saturday, November 26. An estimated 70,050 guests were in downtown Rockford.

In the 10 years of Stroll, an estimated 520,800 have attended the kickoff to the holiday season. This figure does not include 2020 in which the event was held virtually because of the global pandemic.

Rockford area residents and visitors packed the event that included the City's tree lighting ceremony, fireworks, Santa, live 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.



Other Numbers That Tell the Story

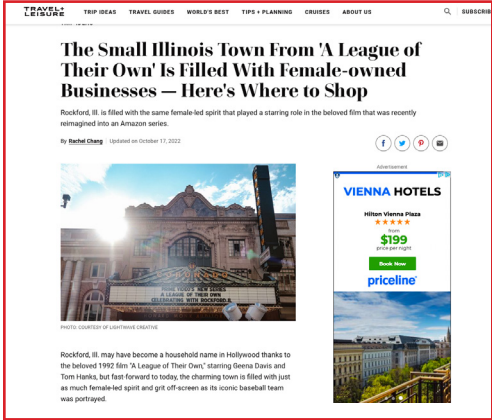
- 85 sponsors, friends and partners
- Over 2,400 volunteer hours before, during and after the event
- 815 Dasher Dash 5k runners
- 46 outdoor food and retail vendors
- 350 ornaments adorning the official City of Rockford Tree
- 68 large gift boxes decorating downtown
- 1,003 letters by children, 60 from other states and three from other countries
- 10 parade balloons, including two new Rockford-themed inflatable balloons – Rockford Peaches and Rick Nielsen's five-neck guitar
- 82 decorated Jeep® parade entries



MARKETING

MEDIA MENTIONS & PLACEMENTS

RACVB attracts visitors to the Rockford region by working with regional and national media outlets. Pitches focus on economic development, tourism marketing and travel public relations.



Travel + Leisure - "The Small Illinois Town From 'A League of Their Own' Is Filled With Female-owned Businesses — Here's Where to Shop" (10/17/22) 11,872,550 Impressions and \$109,821 Earned Media.

Yahoo Life - "The Small Illinois Town From 'A League of Their Own' Is Filled With Female-owned Businesses — Here's Where to Shop" (10/17/22) 405,937,546 Impressions and \$1,501,969 Earned Media.

Flipboard - "The Small Illinois Town From 'A League of Their Own' Is Filled With Female-owned Businesses — Here's Where to Shop" (10/17/22) 3,938,413 Impressions and \$36,430 Earned Media.

Travel Awaits - "8 Fantastic Stops In Rockford, Illinois That Celebrate The Iconic Rockford Peaches Baseball Team" (10/28/22) 4,501,911 Impressions and \$41,643 Earned Media.

Flipboard - "8 Fantastic Stops In Rockford, Illinois That Celebrate The Iconic Rockford Peaches Baseball Team" (10/28/22) 3,938,413 Impressions and \$36,430 Earned Media.

MSN - "8 Fantastic Stops In Rockford, Illinois That Celebrate The Iconic Rockford Peaches Baseball Team" (10/28/22) 155,435,838 Impressions and \$575,113 Earned Media.

Viator - "9 Underrated US Destinations That are Real-Life Winter Wonderlands" (11/17/22) 14,600,132 Impressions and \$135,051 Earned Media.

MSN - "Rockford Named One of 9 'Underrated' Real-Life Winter Wonderland Destinations" (12/21/22) 212,382,942 Impressions and \$785,816 Earned Media.



Illuminated, Anderson Japanese Gardens, 2022

EARNED MEDIA (October - December, 2022)

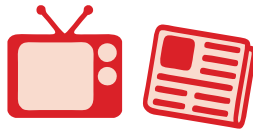
RACVB works to attract visitors by directly pitching stories to media. We focus pitches on economic development, tourism marketing and travel public relations.



\$9,727,039
Ad equivalency



669,000,000
Total impressions



670
Number of mentions

SOCIAL MEDIA

TOP FACEBOOK POST

November 9, 2022 | Reach 47,937

Stay tuned for more information on moving day and save the date for Stroll on State, Saturday, November 26!

Thank you to all involved in the tree harvest process. Tree Care Enterprises, Howe Freightways, Inc., Stenstrom Companies and Rockford Illinois Police Department.

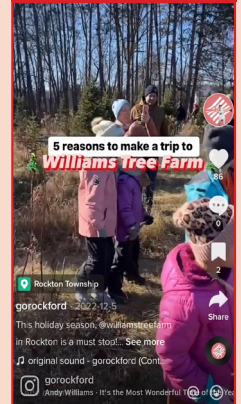


47,937 People reached | 5,094 Engagements | +11.3x higher Distribution score

555 | 125 comments | 27 shares

- FACEBOOK**
171,078 page reach
31,326 followers
- INSTAGRAM**
57,351 page reach
14,397 followers
- LINKEDIN**
1,609 followers
- TWITTER**
7,036 impressions
6,557 followers

Top TikTok



ROCKFORD REGIONAL PROMOTIONS

Key to the marketing strategy is to ensure we support our local partners, attractions, and venues with events that will attract visitors and also benefit residents in our region. This support integrates promotion on our social media, website listings, event calendar inclusion, features in our weekly Go Guide, press releases, and other promotional tactics to increase visibility and visitation for our partners. New this quarter, our Go Guide is back in The Rock River Times!

Rockford Area

Go Guide

December 21-27



Winter Wonderland
Discovery Center Museum
711 N. Main St. Rockford, IL 61103
December 21 - December 30
(815) 963-6769

Enjoy winter adventures without the cold! Test your skating skills at Discovery Center's new indoor Sock Skating Rink! No ice, no shoes, just slip-sliding fun with friends on this high-tech synthetic polymer surface. After a few spins around the rink, enjoy creating holiday crafts based on cultures around the world. These activities will be offered daily between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm.



Illuminated: A Lighted Garden Experience
Anderson Japanese Gardens
318 Spring Creek Rd. Rockford, IL 61107
December 21 - December 30
(815) 229-9290

Illuminated is Anderson Gardens' wintertime lights experience, featuring dramatic up-lighting and thousands of white string lights woven throughout the landscape and canopy of the Garden.

New this year - Made-to-order Woodfire Pizza and a rotating schedule of food trucks each night. Dine in our Visitor Center with a view of the illuminated lights.



Winter Solstice Poetry Caroling
Walker Park
1500 Myott Ave. Rockford, IL 61103
Wednesday, December 21
(779) 772-0716

"Chugno and her Acolytes" will be at Walker Park to hand out poetry scripts, hold a quick rehearsal, and then lead poetry carolers through the neighborhood. "Chugno and her Acolytes" will also teach the community a "snow dance." This is a free, inclusive, "all ages" event. Bundle up because it takes place entirely outside.

Where To...

Explore

FLOW Supreme Air Sports
5005 E. State St.
Rockford, IL 61108
(815) 295-8669

FLOW Supreme Air Sports is one of the world's leaders in adventure, offering gymnastics, trapeze, parkour and aerial sports to the city of Rockford!

Shop

Toad Hall Books and Records
2106 Broadway
Rockford, IL 61104
(815) 228-1259

Toad Hall has been Rockford's premier record and book store for over 30 years. We carry tons of records, CD's, cassettes, 8" tracks, books, comic books, 800 surf, 60's, 80's tapes, movie posters, vintage toys and magazines.

Eat

Sisters Thai Cafe
514 E. State St.
Rockford, IL 61104
(779) 774-9927

A locally owned, family operated restaurant serving authentic Thai and Laotian food. Everything is made fresh to order from famous family recipes.

The Rock River Times December 21-27, 2022

LOCAL/REGIONAL MEDIA MENTIONS

WTVO-TV - "Rockford Named One of 9 'Underrated' Real-Life Winter Wonderland Destinations" (12/21/2022) 698,558 Impressions and \$6,462 Earned Media.

WTVO-TV - "Rockford's 'Stroll on State' returning for 10th year, but with some new twists" (10/26/22) 581,000 Impressions and \$5,374 Earned Media.

Rockford Register Star - "A decade of memories: Stroll on State returns to downtown Rockford" (10/26/22) 363,000 Impressions and \$1,343 Earned Value.

WQRF-TV - "Dogs, Dogs, Dogs: 200 Basset hounds compete in Rockford for national crown" (10/03/22) 375,000 Impressions and \$3,468 Earned Media.

GOROCKFORD.COM WEBSITE STATISTICS

MOST SEARCHED TERMS

- Things to Do in Rockford, IL
- Events in Rockford, IL
- Rockford, IL

MOST SEARCHED EVENTS

- Stroll on State
- Festival of Lights
- Head of the Rock Regatta

MOST SEARCHED LISTINGS

- Anderson Japanese Gardens
- Burpee Museum of Natural History
- Discovery Center Museum

Website Traffic Sources



Marketing

6

4%
Referral

109,938 total website visitors

STROLL ON STATE ADVERTISING



"On behalf of Illinois Bank & Trust I want to thank and congratulate the RACVB and the Rockford community for another successful Stroll. We highly value our role as presenting sponsor. Stroll has become the marquee community event in our annual community calendar...It continues to represent the best in us as a region."

-Jeff Hultman
CEO/Illinois Bank & Trust

Celebrate with us!



STROLL on STATE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26 - 2-9 PM
DOWNTOWN ROCKFORD

StrollOnState.com

Presented by **ILLINOIS BANK & TRUST**



STROLL on STATE

Thanks to our sponsors!

SUPPORTING SPONSORS

- Hard Rock Casino Rockford
- Ward SMART
- OSP HealthCare
- Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Union
- Great Water 360 Auto Care
- Police Department
- Amazon
- PCI Pharmacy Services
- UWHealth
- MarchHealth
- Chicago Blackhawks Foundation

- Rockford Icehogs Community Foundation
- LaMocca Beverages
- Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23
- Xfinity
- ConEd
- Fair Dealmen
- Bergstrom
- Winnebago County
- Rockford Ornamental Iron
- Robison Plumbing & Heating
- FurnStuffing

- William Charles Construction
- Accoride
- Project First Rate
- Resurgence
- Ellen Gardens Inn
- United Union of Roofers Local 11
- COOLTRY Financial
- HoldomKinneyPC
- CitySentry
- Entre Computer Solutions
- Graphique
- Alpha-Lit Marquee Letters

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

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

DASHER DASH PARTNERS

- Ward SMART
- Fair Dealmen
- GreenState Credit Union
- MembersAlliance Credit Union
- Brad Miller at Dickerson Neman Rotors
- Data Point Inc.
- Fleet Feet
- Peak Fitness

MEDIA SPONSORS

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

SALES EFFORTS & RESULTS

SPORTS AND MEETING SALES HIGHLIGHTS



Head of the Rock Regatta Oct. 9, Rock River

The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau attended **Small Market Meetings in Wichita, Kansas** October 4-6. This show is a gathering of destinations, hotels, conference centers and meeting planners looking for small to medium size conferences and everything in between.

For the 2nd year Aldeen Golf Club hosted the **NJCAA Women's Golf Championships on October 1-2** and the host (organizing) school was Rockford University. The RACVB provided volunteers and arranged for hotel rooms for attendees from 11 colleges and universities, 66 golfers, and 25 coaches which brought in 150 room nights. The Rockford region looks forward to hosting this tournament again next October.

Head of the Rock Regatta took place on the Rock River on Sunday October 9. Steeped

in tradition, the YMCA's Rowing Crew plays host to the Head of the Rock Regatta every October. This decades-old race draws more than 2,000 rowers from across the country and more than 5,000 spectators to the banks of the Rock River.

In November the team attended **Holiday Showcase, hosted by Association Forum, in Chicago, IL.** This tradeshow and educational conference brought meeting planners and suppliers from around the Nation and there was a large focus on medical meeting planners. The RACVB team had a chance to showcase the region's meeting space venues at our booth where we interacted with hundreds of planners.

The RACVB provided sponsorship and servicing to the **Illinois Police Benevolent and Protective Association Annual Conference** November 18-20 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Rockford Riverfront. This conference brought approximately 200 attendees from across the state of Illinois.

The team was thrilled to help land the **Upper Midwest Lacrosse Conference Qualifier Tournament at Mercyhealth Sportscore Two April 28-30, 2023.** The Upper Midwest Lacrosse Conference (UMLC) consists of ten Division I teams and six Division II teams, representing Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Ohio.

GoRockford is looking forward to a busy spring with a heavy lineup of sports including volleyball, wrestling, wheelchair rugby, soccer and so much more.

BOOKING HIGHLIGHTS

Upper Midwest Lacrosse Conference Qualifier Tournament

April 28-30, 2023
500 room nights
Economic Impact \$206,000

Team Illinois Lacrosse

July 8-9, 2023
300 room nights
Economic Impact \$187,000

All In Volleyball

August 18-20, 2023
1,000 room nights
Economic Impact \$506,000

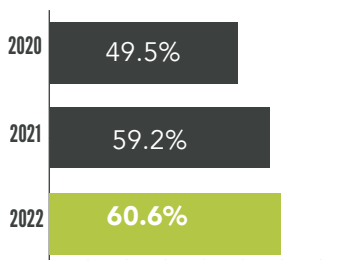
Future Hotel Room Nights Booked:
21,867 with Economic Impact of
\$13,127,000
Number of bookings - 25



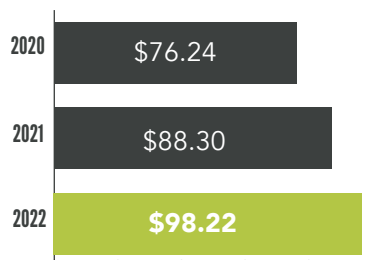
Illinois Police Benevolent and Protection Association Annual Conference. From left: Illinois State Representative John Cabello; Major General John Borling (USAF-ret); Lindsay Arellano, VP Sales/Service RACVB; and Eric McLain and Jeese Geiken, Rockford Police Department/ President and Vice President, Unit 6, PBPA.

WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOTEL STATISTICS January - December 2022

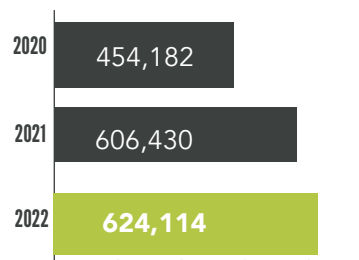
Year to Date Hotel Occupancy



Year to Date Average Room Rate



Year to Date Room Demand (rooms sold)



Year to Date Revenue (in millions)



RACVB BOARD & STAFF

RACVB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carol Schuster (Chair)
University of Illinois College of
Medicine - Rockford

Tinana McCall (Vice Chair)
Illinois Department of Commerce and
Economic Opportunity

Chad Anderson (Treasurer)
Anderson Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram

Darrell Snorek (Secretary)
Lamonica Beverages

Nathan Bruck
City of Loves Park

Todd Cagnoni
City of Rockford

Patricia Diduch
Village of Rockton

Kevin Frost
City of Rockford

Jennifer Furst
FurstStaffing

Mick Gronewold
Fehr Graham Engineering
& Environmental

Bobbie Holzwarth
HolmstromKennedy

Sonya Hoppes
City of South Beloit

Geno Iafrate
Hard Rock Rockford

Shelton Kay
Crusader Community Health

Dana Martin
Rush Oak Park Hospital

Ricardo Montoya-Picazo
Office of State
Representative Dave Vella

Caitlin Pusateri
Rockford Chamber of Commerce

Jay Sandine
Rockford Park District

Richard Shuga
Painters District Council
No. 30 Local 607

Therese Thill
Rockford Area Economic
Development Council

Patrick Thompson
Winnebago County

Kirk Weitzel
Rock Hospitality

RACVB STAFF



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President, CEO



Lindsay Arellano
Vice President of Sales &
Service



Jacqui Corsi
Vice President of Marketing



Joanne Nold
Vice President of Finance



Kristen Paul
Vice President of
Destination Development



Chenaire Barmore
Community Engagement
Coordinator



Nicole Blough
Destination Development Events
Manager



Kara Davis
Group Sales Manager



Julie Huber
Destination Development
Operations Manager



Janet Jacobs
Marketing Assistant



Lindsey Kromm
Accounting Assistant



Alexandria Lannon
Customer Experience &
Marketing Coordinator



Brandi Liantonio
Executive Assistant



Emily Plumb
Sales & Servicing Manager

