Voice Article: Stroll on State

By John Groh, RACVB President/CEO

We are making our lists and checking them twice at RACVB as we gear up for our Merry and Bright signature event, Stroll on State. After the pandemic year spent celebrating with online events and activities, we are all eager for downtown Rockford to safely come to life once again as families and friends make memories and extent holiday cheer.

So how does it all happen? Simply stated, the day would not be possible without the overwhelming generosity and passion of our volunteers and community sponsors.

Volunteer efforts will officially start on September 21 when the elves return to Santa’s Workshop at 310 S Winnebago St. Every Tuesday from 6 to 9 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon volunteer elves will gather to work their magic in preparing the streetscape decorations. Downtown will be transformed to a winter wonderland during “Decoration Days” which take place the weekend of November 19 and 20.

Would you like to join us as a volunteer at Santa’s workshop, on Decoration Days or for the Stroll on State event? All are welcome and we have jobs for all skill sets and abilities. Check out the Volunteer section at [strollonstate.com](http://www.strollonstate.com) for more details.

The Stroll on State parade, which kicks off the event on November 27 at 2 p.m., has become a much anticipated, must-attend event. We encourage businesses, non-profit organizations and civic groups to apply to enter a float to show your pride and help make the Stroll experience even more festive. Not inspired to build your own? Float rentals and balloon sponsorships are available.

One of the most prestigious honors in the area is having your tree selected to shine for all during the tree lighting ceremony on the night of Stroll on State and then throughout the holiday season. This year we are planning to showcase not one, not two, but three trees! Think your spruce is spectacular? Wondering if your pine is perfect? The application and requirements are available at [strollonstate.com](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cdobert%5CDownloads%5Cstrollonstate.com). This opportunity is ideal for a tree that may have outgrown its space or that needs to be removed for safety concerns.

Last but certainly not least, Stroll on State could not happen without our generous sponsors, including Illinois Bank & Trust, The Power Connection – IBEW 364 & NECA, OSF Healthcare, Northwestern Illinois Building Trades Unions, Pierce, PCI, Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 23, Xfinity, ComEd and FurstStaffing & FurstProfessionals, among others. Their commitment and generosity are a gift to all of us. If you’d like to make support of Stroll on State part of your holiday tradition, additional sponsorships are still available. Contact Martesha Brown at 815.963.8111 to explore options for supporting Stroll.

Want to know more? Visit strollonstate.com. Our elves will be busy updating the website throughout the season, so check back often!