



ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

QUARTERLY REPORT

FY23, Q1
July - September, 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



As we make our way through the confines of the pandemic, RACVB continues to find ways to preserve and "drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism, marketing, and destination development." During the pandemic, RACVB focused on

home and finding ways for residents to appreciate and take advantage of all the assets and attractions here. Today, we can revel in that appreciation while returning to a more traditional approach to attracting visitors.

The **Rockford Peaches Fan Trail** - launched this quarter - is a perfect example of celebrating the history of Rockford, and it also gives RACVB the opportunity to market the area to baseball fans, those who want to honor women-owned businesses, or those who hold great fondness for the Peaches. On the trail, visitors and residents alike can experience places the Peaches frequented.

Stroll on State will have a milestone event with its 10th year. This event started as an idea to have a holiday tree downtown. With the return of in-person events, and a single tree lighting, we hope to see attendance back to pre-pandemic numbers.

Sports events and tournaments continue to be strong in the Rockford area. The RACVB worked alongside **Tough Mudder** for the sixth year, and **All In Volleyball** included over 60 college teams and had 1,500 attendees.

We look forward to increased activity in the Rockford area.

Be well,

John Groh
RACVB president/CEO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

2022 CRE8IV Murals 3

RAVCB NEWS

Rockford Peaches Fan Trail 4

Stroll on State Turns 10 4

MARKETING

Media Mentions & Placements 5

Earned Media 5

Social Media 5

Rockford Peaches Campaign 6

Website Statistics 6

SALES EFFORTS & RESULTS

Sports Sales Highlights 7

Meeting Sales Highlights 7

Booking Highlights 7

Winnebago County Hotel Statistics 7

RACVB BOARD & STAFF

RACVB Board of Directors 8

RACVB Staff 8

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

CRE8IV CONTINUES TO TRANSFORM PUBLIC SPACES



Our destination development team continues to bring out the potential of the Rockford area, instilling pride among residents, with CRE8IV: transformational ART. In the summer of 2022, 10 murals on 12 walls were completed by 10 teams of artists.

To date, 34 completed murals have transformed our area since 2019. In addition to Rockford, transformational art is also located in Roscoe, Rockton, Loves Park, and Pecatonica.

Rockford's existing CRE8IV murals have proven themselves to be successful in generating community-pride creating a tourism experience, and spawning a positive impact on our county's tourism and hospitality partners. Buildings adjacent to current projects have reported increased foot traffic as people take photos and visit the mural sites. CRE8IV murals have been installed in 2019, 2021 and 2022.



**Artists Ray Mawst and Brian Kehoe
of OhYa Studio,
Mural at 1444 Myott Ave.**



Artist Anthony Lewellen, Mural at 917 S. Main St.



**RACVB would like to thank
the following sponsors for
their dedication and
commitment to CRE8IV**

Painters District Council 30,
Local 607

Collins Aerospace

Kjellstrom Family Foundation

Brubaker Charitable Trust

Workplace

Rockford Area Arts Council

Bill Doran Company

City of Loves Park

City of Rockford

Amazon

William Charles Construction

Village of Roscoe

RACVB NEWS



Amazon Primes' "A League of Their Own" cast pose for a photo with former Women's Baseball Player Maybelle Blair

ROCKFORD PEACHES FAN TRAIL LAUNCHES

As tourism continues to bounce back following the pandemic, the Rockford area took advantage of outdoor activities, and the RACVB continued to promote one of the attractions that makes this area special - the Rockford Peaches.

The development of the **Rockford Peaches Fan Trail** brought together the love of outdoors with the admiration for the beloved female baseball team.

The timing for the opening of the trail coincided with the release of the Prime series "A League of Their Own." The series, which told some stories the movie did not, rejuvenated the interest in the Rockford Peaches. An advance screening was held at the Coronado Performing Arts Center in July.

In addition to the screening, a full slate of Fourth of July weekend activities were held celebrating the legacy of the Rockford Peaches, the 1992 movie directed by Penny Marshall and the coming Prime series. Some of the fun included free ballpark snacks, baseball games like "Throw Like a Girl" pitching, and 1940s music and cars outside the Coronado.

Information about the Peaches Fan Trail can be found on the website, gorockfordpeaches.com, which launched at the same time. In addition, visitors can learn about the Peaches' history and the impact they still have on the Rockford area on the website or by following the fan trail. *Results of the marketing campaign Page 5.*

STROLL ON STATE TURNS 10

The planning and execution of the 10th annual Stroll on State, presented by Illinois Bank and Trust, is in full swing. RACVB hopes to see a return to pre-pandemic attendance numbers when downtown Rockford is transformed into a magical wonderland Saturday, November 26.

Plans for this signature event include a return of the parade and fireworks, as well as the Dasher Dash 5K. However, this year will mark the return of the single tree lighting, a signal that it is safe to gather again.

The 10th annual Stroll on State also will include favorites - Letters to Santa, inflatable balloons in the parade, ice skating at the BMO Center, Blitzen's Ball, s'mores, hot chocolate, live entertainment, and horse and wagon rides. New this year there will be two Rockford-theme balloons in the parade.

Small Business Saturday, a national movement to encourage shoppers to support local shops, will also be on full display as downtown businesses are preparing for a return to pre-2020 crowds.

Dozens of businesses and organizations have stepped up to support this event so it can remain free for the community. For a full list of sponsors, as well as a list of events and activities, visit www.strollonstate.com.



2021 Stroll on State also featured several large balloons sponsored by Hard Rock Casino Rockford



Rockford's Mayor Tom McNamara helps son write a letter to Santa in 2021.

MARKETING

GoRockford Peaches and the Rockford Peaches Fan Trail

We continue to promote the Rockford Peaches Fan Trail as well as the history of the team, as a must-see for visitors in the area. **The Peaches Website:** gorockfordpeaches.com launched in August in conjunction with the release of the Prime series "A League of Their Own"

Ad Campaign Highlights:
Overall - 17,408 Clicks, CTR 2.88%

Best Performing Creative:

Clicks- 8,825

Impressions- 596,613



Second Best Performing Creative:

Clicks- 4,849

Impressions- 234,144

The Peaches Digital Campaign:



Google:

Video Distribution

160,542 Views, 498 Clicks

Responsive Display Ads

15,044,723 Impressions, 62,566 Clicks

Remarketing Display Ads

8,691,156 Impressions, 4,581 Clicks

Facebook Performance:

Social Remarketing

1,097,841 Impressions, 16,461 Clicks,
(Industry average is 1%) CTR 1.5%

Click to Site

1,199,157 Impressions, 19,402 Clicks,
(Industry average is 1%) CTR 1.62%

Source: Madden Media

GOROCKFORD.COM WEBSITE STATISTICS

MOST SEARCHED TERMS

Rockford Peaches
Rockford, IL
Polish Fest

MOST SEARCHED EVENTS

Delicate Forces Exhibit
Midway Village Museum | World War II Days
Rockford City Market

MOST SEARCHED LISTINGS

Anderson Japanese Gardens
Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden
Burpee Museum of Natural History

Website Traffic Sources

51%
Organic

15%
Display

15%
Paid Search

9%
Direct

5%
Social

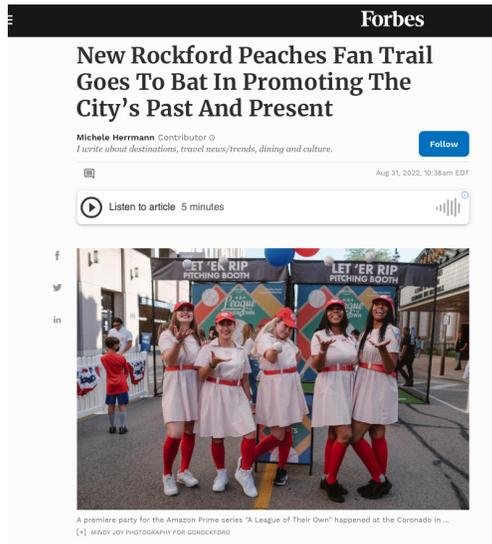
2%
Referral

175,087 total website visitors

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 reasons to travel to Rockford.

Source: Development Counsellors International



- **Forbes Magazine**- "New Rockford Peaches Fan Trail Goes To Bat In Promoting The City's Past and Present" (08/31/2022) 56,515,706 Impressions and \$209,108 Earned Media
- **Chicago Parent**- "Cool Adventures, Hot Summer" (07/02/2022) 143,301 Impressions and \$5,302 Earned Media
- **Matador Network**- "Rockford, Illinois, Is an Outdoor Haven Perfect for a Weekend Escape from Chicago" (08/04/2022) 1,336,511 Impressions and \$12,362 Earned Media

- **FOX 32 Chicago**- "Ukrainian Students Visit Sister City of Rockford, Illinois" (08/04/2022) 4,229,830 Impressions and \$39,126 Earned Media
- **Northern Public Radio**- "Ukrainian Students Visit Sister City of Rockford for Respite from War" (08/15/2022) 17,878 Impressions and \$1,323 Earned Media
- **Vacationer Magazine**- "Rockford, Illinois Celebrates Its Queer History and Support for Female Empowerment" (08/23/2022) 22,000 Impressions and \$814 Earned Media
- **Wherever Family**- "A League of Their Own Experiences in Rockford, Illinois" (09/05/2022) 150,000 Impressions and \$1,387 Earned Media
- **Traveling Adventures of a Farm Girl**- "Garden Fun While the Weather Holds!" (09/14/2022) 10,000 Impressions and \$740 Earned Media

Travel Writers & Influencers

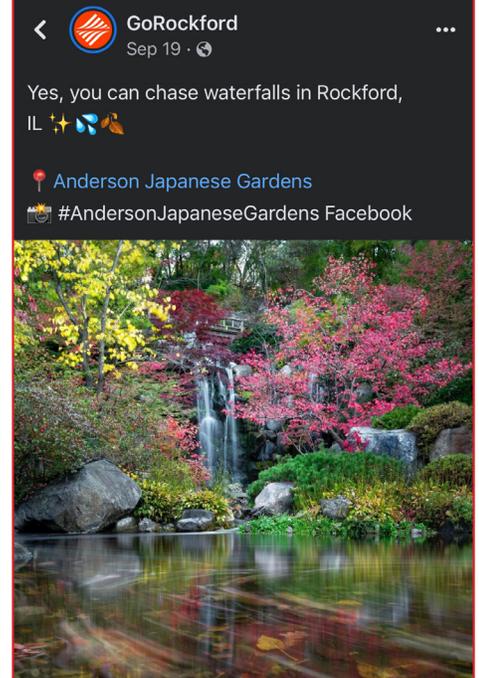
Cindy Ladage, Travel Awaits

Rachel Kawate, Instagram & Facebook

SOCIAL MEDIA

TOP FACEBOOK POST

Sept 19 | 75,447 impressions



FACEBOOK

828,365 page reach
31,067 followers



INSTAGRAM

37,313 page reach
14,185 followers



LINKEDIN

1,514 followers



TWITTER

26,257 impressions
6,619 followers

EARNED MEDIA

(July - September, 2022)

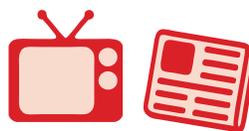
RACVB works to attract visitors by directly pitching stories to media. We focus pitches on economic development, tourism marketing and travel public relations. Source: Meltwater



\$4,841,613
Ad equivalency



525,000,000
Total impressions



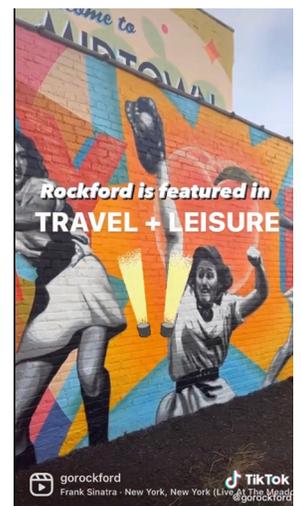
1,110
Number of mentions

TOP TikTok

POST

1,012

Impressions



SALES EFFORTS & RESULTS

SPORTS SALES HIGHLIGHTS

RACVB hosted several site visits to the region to show off our sports facilities. We hosted a cheer and dance group, a basketball group, and a badminton group. We were able to showcase the UW Health Sports Factory, Coronado Performing Arts Center, Mercyhealth Sportscore Two, and the BMO Center. Two of these clients were met at trade shows attended this year.

The RACVB worked alongside **Tough Mudder** for their sixth year at the Chicago Rockford International Airport. The race brought in over 1,000 athletes and helped fill our hotels. **All In Volleyball's** opening weekend took place at the UW Health Sports Factory in August. This tournament brought in 62 junior college teams from across the region and an estimated 1,500 spectators.

The RACVB attended the **Sports Relationship Conference** in Savannah, GA, September 19-21. We met with 17 tournament directors and rights holders, marketing the region as a premier sports destination.

MEETING SALES HIGHLIGHTS

RACVB attended the **Northstar-Destination Midwest** trade show in September. We sat down with 20 potential customers in Madison, WI. The conference was a great opportunity to learn more about third party booking agents, meeting the retirement club, and incentive trip planners for major industries.



Basset Hound Club of America Dog Show

The RACVB also attended and serviced the **Region 1 Planning Council Conference**. With 170 attendees from across the state, this was one of their largest attended events. The conference was held at the Embassy Suites Rockford Riverfront and we were able to showcase Downtown Rockford. Attendees left with a great impression of our city! We assisted **The Rockford Power Squadron** in finding a space near the Rock River. Riverview Inn & Suites was the host hotel and the RACVB provided hospitality. The RACVB continues to research and pursue association, meeting, and convention business that would be a great fit for Rockford.

We will attend the **Holiday Showcase**, hosted by the Association Forum in Chicago, IL, November 30 - December 1. The team also provided hospitality and servicing to different groups including the **Basset Hound Club of America, Special Olympics, Gods and Goddesses Poetry Slam, Secure the Bag, NAFA Illinois Fight Cancer, and West High School Class of 1977 Reunion.**

BOOKING HIGHLIGHTS

The Gods and Goddess Poetry Slam

October 8-9, 2022
60 room nights
\$38,966 EEI

2022 NAFA Illinois Fight Cancer

September 22-25
400 room nights
\$200,00 EEI

Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference

Women's Golf Championship
October 1-2, 2022
157 room nights
\$65,000 EEI

2023 Rockin' Rockford AAU Grand Prix Volleyball Tournament

March 10-11, 2023
800 room nights
\$840,980 EEI

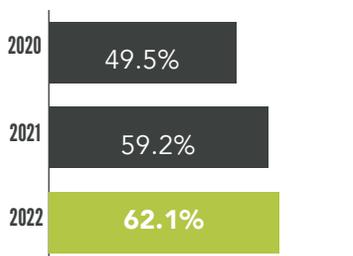
EEI Total = **\$1,144,9466**



Sports Relationship Conference, Savannah, GA

WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOTEL STATISTICS July - September 2022

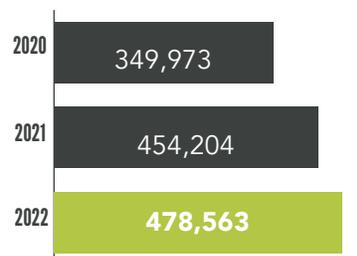
Year to Date Hotel Occupancy



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
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Jennifer Furst
FurstStaffing

Mick Gronewold
Fehr Graham Engineering
& Environmental

Bobby 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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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

