



GOROCKFORD

QUARTERLY REPORT

FY26, Q1
July - September, 2025

GO**ROCKFORD**
Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

The mission of GoRockford is to drive quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development.

gorockford.com



GoRockford Mission Statement

GoRockford 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

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

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO



As we begin FY26, the first quarter reinforced a simple truth: when we invest in place, people, and partnerships, the results follow. From July through September, **GoRockford** advanced destination development while delivering measurable economic impact for our region. This quarter blended community pride with national visibility and laid important groundwork for the year ahead.

Across Rockford, placemaking took center stage.

The installation of **18 new CRE8IV sculptures** and the relocation of the iconic **ROCKFORD letters** along the Rock River strengthened neighborhood identity, enhanced gateways, and created new moments of connection for residents and visitors alike. These visible investments reflect our belief that quality of place is fundamental to quality of life and to tourism growth.

Our sales and servicing efforts produced strong results. Sporting events, meetings, and conventions brought thousands of visitors to the region, resulting in more than **27,000 future hotel room nights** booked and an estimated **\$9 million in economic impact**. At the same time, Winnebago County continued to outperform regional benchmarks in occupancy, room demand, and visitor spending—clear indicators of a healthy and competitive destination.

This quarter also demonstrated the power of storytelling. National media coverage generated more than one billion impressions, spotlighting Rockford's affordability, amenities, and momentum. On our own platforms, GoRockford reached millions of users actively searching for things to do, places to explore, and reasons to visit—meeting audiences where curiosity turns into action.

Through **Made for Rockford**, we welcomed new residents, supported employers with talent recruitment, and strengthened connections that help people see Rockford not just as a destination—but as a place to belong.

Thank you to our partners, board, staff, and community champions who continue to move this work forward. FY26 is off to a strong start, and the momentum we are building together positions Rockford for continued growth, visibility, and impact.

Be well,

John Groh
GoRockford President/CEO

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SCULPTURE PROGRAM EXPANDS



A stunning new sculpture, "Neither Toil Nor Spin" by Ben Pierce features a stained glass center and sits on a bike path near Midway Village Museum.

GoRockford celebrates the expansion of its CRE8IV: transformational art sculpture program with the installation of **18 new sculptures** throughout the city and a new home for the beloved **ROCKFORD letters**. The new sculptures have been installed throughout Rockford, made possible thanks to an arts grant from the City of Rockford. In expanding the CRE8IV sculpture program, GoRockford made it a priority to install sculptures in additional neighborhoods across the community, including along West State Street, South Main Street, Perryville Road, Broadway, 7th Street, Harrison Avenue, the Edgewater neighborhood, and downtown Rockford. The donor-funded program has steadily grown to include 10 owned pieces and an additional five leased pieces, bringing the total number of pieces currently on display to **33 sculptures**. Five sculptures are part of a two-year lease and will be removed in 2026 and 2027.

"Thanks to the support from the City of Rockford's arts grant, we're not just adding more sculptures, we're adding public art to neighborhoods like never before," said **GoRockford's Executive Vice President Kristen Paul**. "These pieces invite community connection, spark joy, and reinforce Rockford's identity as a vibrant arts scene."

By situating sculptures in both historic corridors and emerging growth areas, the expansion not only beautifies high-traffic gateways and neighborhood centers but also reinforces Rockford's broader strategy to use public art as a driver of economic vitality, placemaking, and civic pride.

GoRockford worked with **Illinois Foodies (272K followers)** to promote the new sculptures. To view a sculpture map, visit gorockford.com/sculptures.

ROCKFORD 815 DAY CELEBRATES CIVIC PRIDE

This year's **Rockford 815 Day** celebration saw a record level of participation, featuring more than **20 events** and **126 deals and specials** across the community. The day

kicked off with a proclamation from Mayor Tom McNamara and the City of Rockford at the Rockford Public Library.

Many participants flocked to downtown Rockford for lunch, at the Beats & Bites block party event held near E. State and 1st Street. The block party capped off the 9-week Beats & Bites Thursday lunch initiative led by GoRockford and River District.

Visits to the GoRockford 815 Day pages on the website experienced record highs, with over **22,000 views** in August.



Rockford 815 Day attendees grab lunch at a local food trucks during the Beats & Bites block party located on E. State and 1st Street.

ROCKFORD REGION REACHES RECORD VISITOR SPENDING

Tourism is a powerful economic driver in the Rockford region, contributing to job creation in the hospitality industry and economic growth. In 2024, visitor spending in our region hit **\$523.4 million**, up from **\$515.4 million** in 2023, and an increase over the prior year, when some counties in Illinois experienced a decline. See sidebar for what that means for Winnebago County.

The tourism and economic impact information is part of a comprehensive annual report released by the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity and compiled by Tourism Economics. Regionally, Winnebago County also outperformed its Northwest Illinois neighbors, which collectively averaged a -0.68% decline in spending in 2024.

Looking ahead, GoRockford is confident this momentum will continue with major events and developments on the horizon, including IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford, the 2026 AHL All-Star Classic, the 2024 opening of the Hard Rock Rockford, and new projects emerging from the **Thrive 2035 Destination Master Plan**.

Tourism Spending Winnebago County 2024

- 💰 4,687 local jobs supported by tourism
- 💰 \$167.8 million in income generated for residents
- 💰 \$14.7 million in local taxes

SALES EFFORTS & RESULTS

SPORTS AND MEETING SALES HIGHLIGHTS



A player hits a softball at NAFA Men's Masters World Series.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESS CONVENTION EXPANDS

The summer kicked off in July as Rockford welcomed the Jehovah's Witness Convention, which spanned two weekends and filled the seats at the **BMO Center** in downtown Rockford. The event attracted more than 5,000 attendees per weekend from across the Midwest, including both English- and Spanish-speaking delegates, providing a significant boost to area hotels, restaurants, and attractions with an estimated economic impact of **\$3.6 million**.

BORDER BATTLE DEBUTS

The Wisconsin Off Road Series (WORS) Border Battle, a two-day mountain biking competition debuted at **Atwood Trails** on **July 19-21** for the first time in Illinois. The race drew riders from both Illinois and Wisconsin, highlighting Rockford's reputation for outdoor adventure and trail-based recreation weekend included **308 teams** and over **7,000 attendees** and an estimated economic impact of **\$129,285**.

TOUGH MUDDER REACHES MILESTONE

In August, the region celebrated the **10th anniversary of Tough Mudder**, one of the largest events of its kind in the nation. Participants from across the country traveled to take on either the 5K or 15K course, featuring more than 30 obstacles. This long-standing draws **10,000 athletes and spectators** each year, and an estimated economic impact of **\$527,572**.

NAFA BRINGS IMPACT

Rounding out the quarter in September, Rockford hosted the **North American Fastpitch Association (NAFA) Men's Masters World Series East** from **September 5-7** at **Mercyhealth Sportscore One**. The tournament brought in over 1,000 players, coaches, and spectators, with 40 teams competing throughout the weekend, bringing in an estimated economic impact of **\$550,540**.

TRADESHOW HIGHLIGHTS

The GoRockford sales team represented Rockford at the **Connect Marketplace Sports Trade Show** in Miami, Florida from **August 24-26**. During the show, they met with more than **25 tournament directors** to discuss bringing future events to Rockford. This tradeshow provided valuable opportunities to connect with new organizers while strengthening relationships with current and past tournament directors which reinforces Rockford's visibility and reputation within the national sports tourism industry.

BOOKING HIGHLIGHTS

Baseball for All

July 19- 24, 2026
3,000 Room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$1.5 Million

NXT PRO Boys and Girls Basketball

March & May 2026
2000 room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$1.1 Million

Midwest Women's Riders

July 11, 2026
1000 room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$936,000

Lady Bass Anglers

September 10, 2026
300 room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$143,982

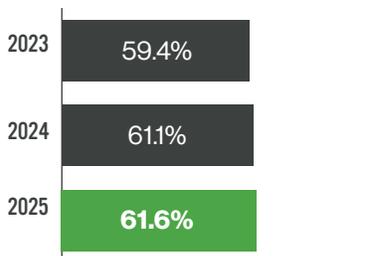
Future Hotel Room Nights Booked During the Quarter: 27,350 with an economic impact of \$9 Million
Number of Bookings: 16



Part of the GoRockford sales team Lindsay Arellano and Kara Davis attend Connect Marketplace Sports Trade Show in August.

WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOTEL STATISTICS Jan - September, 2025

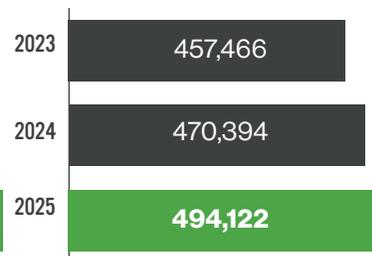
Year to Date Hotel Occupancy



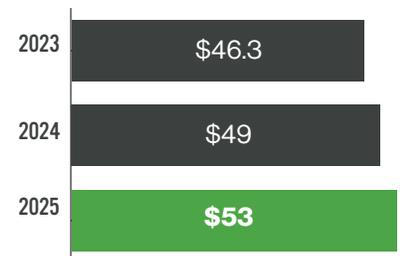
Year to Date Average Room Rate



Year to Date Room Demand (rooms sold)



Year to Date Revenue (in millions)



MARKETING

MEDIA MENTIONS & PLACEMENTS

GoRockford garners media mentions and placements to draw visitors to the Rockford region. Collaborating with regional and national media outlets, our team diligently seeks and shares captivating stories and compelling content centered experiences in Rockford, visiting the region and destination development.

NATIONAL MEDIA MENTIONS

Homes.com: *“Once called ‘miserable,’ Rockford, Illinois, is attracting new homebuyers”*(07/07/2025) 25,500,000 impressions and 943,500 Earned Media

Business Insider: *“They fled cities in the pandemic exodus, seeking a cheaper cost of living, safety, and more. Here’s how it’s panned out.”* (08/16/2025) 37,800,000 Impressions and \$1,398,600 Earned Media

HGTV: *“The Most Beautiful Garden You Can Visit in Every State.”* (08/25/2025) 3,700,000 impressions and \$136,900 Earned Media

Forth-Worth Star Telegram: *“Historic ballpark home to ‘A League of Their Own’ team getting \$2M upgrade”*(09/10/2025) 1,300,000 Impressions and \$48,100 Earned Media

They fled cities in the pandemic exodus, seeking a cheaper cost of living, safety, and more. Here’s how it’s panned out.



In an August Business Insider article, Andrew Blevins, an insurance agent in Rockford speaks on why he and his wife moved from New York City to Rockford in 2020.

SOCIAL MEDIA



FACEBOOK

4.3 Million Views
52,297 Followers



INSTAGRAM

1.1 Million Views
24,007 Followers



LINKEDIN

3,000 Followers



TikTok

705K Post Views
8,063 Followers

Top Facebook Post

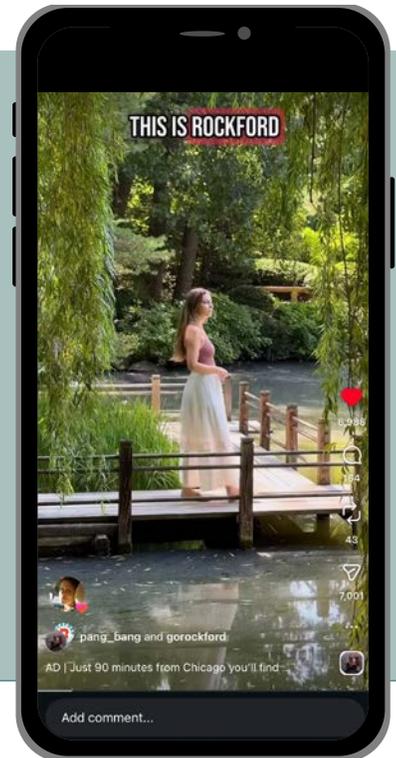
August 3, 2025 | Impressions 510,397



Everything we ate at @thefoodparkloves New food truck oasis offering delicious beverages,...

Go Rockford · Original audio

6,237
775
1,155



EARNED MEDIA (July - September, 2025)

GoRockford works to attract visitors by directly pitching stories to media. Pitches are focused on economic development, tourism marketing and travel public relations.



\$17,000,000
Ad equivalency



1,070,000,000
Total impressions



1,060
Number of mentions

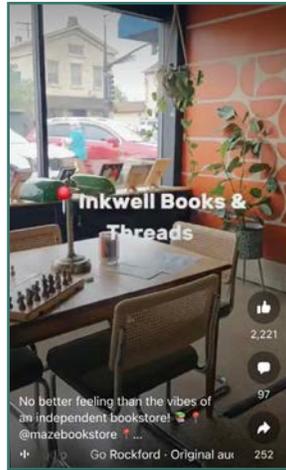
MARKETING

SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTIONS

Each month of the quarter had a different focus, leading to impressive engagement.

JULY

Leading up to the 4th of July, locals look to GoRockford for the major events happening. July's promotions also included promoting summer activities such as wakeboarding, summer festivals, Hurricane Harbor and enjoying the outdoors. July's efforts reached over **1.4 million views** between Facebook and Instagram.



AUGUST

Rockford 815 Day was the main focus of August, however smaller efforts were promoting the major festivals and events of the month, including the Winnebago County Fair. Also in August, the marketing team worked several posts about the new CRE8IV sculptures in Rockford. The efforts paid off, with close to **2 million views** on Facebook and Instagram. The top post for August was visiting the new **Food Truck Park** in Loves Park, and they reported an increase in sales.



SEPTEMBER

Starting in August, but really taking off in September was promoting fall fun in Rockford. Apple orchards, where to view leaves, fall festivals and more made it a September to remember. New business opening reels were popular, with GoRockford being on hand for the opening of **Clarence Hicks Sports Complex, Olivo Deli Market and The Picking Chicks**. September's views were **1.9 million** between Facebook and Instagram.



SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Summer Internship

GoRockford offered a summer internship to three interns over the summer. All three are studying marketing, but they learned from all departments. Our interns worked hard helping set up the Beats & Bites Thursday lunch, helping with IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford preparations, including community outreach and working at the GoRockford booth during the event.



They each wrote three blogs about their experiences in Rockford, and they worked on group projects such as creating social media reels. Their final project challenged them to present in front of the staff their ideas for the future of Rockford and new fresh ideas on how to market, placemaking, and more.

Community Outreach

During this quarter, the team hosted a marketing partnership meeting with local attractions at **Victory Pickleball**. The topic of September's meeting was a media roundtable and members of the media presented their best tips to gain valuable media coverage.



In August, **Fiesta Hispana** returned this past August from an 18 years hiatus. The festivities included a jalapeño eating contest, horse dancing and a queen competition. Local artists shared Latino heritage and the culture of Spanish-speaking countries with the community. GoRockford had the privilege of hosting a table at this event and witnessed a cherished tradition start again in Rockford for hopefully many more years to come.

MOST SEARCHED TERMS

- Rockford Events This Weekend
- Things to Do In Rockford, IL
- Restaurants in Rockford, IL

MOST SEARCHED EVENTS

- Polish Fest
- Rockford Day
- Tour De North End

MOST SEARCHED LISTINGS

- Anderson Japanese Gardens
- Food Truck Park
- Olson Lake Beach

Website Traffic Sources



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

NEW ART BRIGHTENS THE COMMUNITY



Newly installed "Astron" adds a pop of color to West State St. in Rockford.

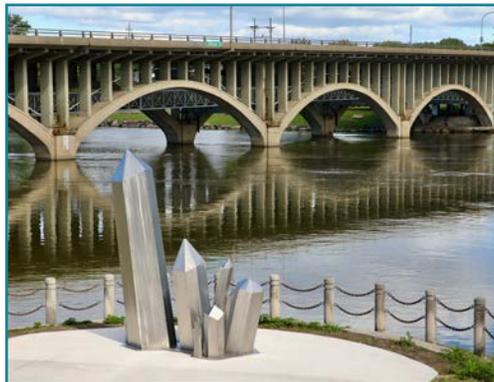
The main focus of Destination Development this summer adding new art to Rockford with the CRE8IV Sculpture program. In July, Executive Vice President Kristen Paul led a mural tour for a bus group coming from Evanston, Illinois, discussing how CRE8IV murals transformed the community.

Coinciding with the installation of the new sculptures, the iconic **ROCKFORD LETTERS** were repaired and moved to their new home next to the Rock River, close to the Rockford Public Library. The new home of the letters and spacing them closer together, provides an scenic backdrop for photos.

STROLL ON STATE PREPARATIONS BEGIN

In July, to promote **Stroll on State**, GoRockford celebrating **Christmas in July with Anderson Japanese Garden's** summer reading program. The Garden Explorers program offers families free admission to the gardens. GoRockford provided a Christmas craft for families.

In September, the Stroll on State Santa's Workshop opened for the season on Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings. The 11-week program helps prepare for Stroll on State, with volunteers painting, building, and so much more. Thousands of volunteer hours go into this program to prepare for the largest community festival of the year. Volunteers continue into January for Back-In-Box weekend to take down the decorations put up for the season.



From left: "Liquid Sunshine", top right: "Crystalline", bottom right: a family dresses in their holiday attire for the Christmas in July Garden Explorers at Anderson Japanese Gardens.

CRE8IV SCULPTURES

In August 18 new sculptures in the CRE8IV program were added to the following areas and neighborhoods:

WEST STATE STREET

"Sunstruck" by Nicole Beck

"Window" by Paul Bobrowitz

"Astron" by Peter Krsko and Nathan

Nathan "Sloke One" Nordstrom

"Skyward" by Ben Pierce

DOWNTOWN

"Florette II" by Sam Spiczka

"Crystalline" by Ben Pierce

HARRISON AVENUE

"Reach" by Ben Pierce

"Flux" by Luke Achterberg

BROADWAY & 7TH Street

"Triangle Play II" by Sunghee Min

"Here Comes the Sun" by Ben Pierce

"Greeting Tower" by Sunghee Min

NORTH END

"Cardinal" by Zan Knecht

"Unsure if this Peace is Abstract" by Ben

Pierce

PERRYVILLE ROAD

"Neither Toil, Nor Spin" by Ben Pierce

"Composition #1" by Chris Plaisted

"Liquid Sunshine" by Michael Alfano

SOUTH MAIN STREET

"Thank You Degas" by Terry Karpowicz

"Phoenix" by Chris Plaisted

MADE FOR ROCKFORD

MADE FOR ROCKFORD IMPACT AWARD



Roger Raley receives the Made For Rockford Impact Award in September 2025.

Made for Rockford presented its first **Made for Rockford Impact Award** in partnership with the **Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce**, recognizing new resident and business owner, **Roger Raley**, Vice President and General Manager Waldom Electronics who has made a significant difference in the community since relocating by joining non profit boards and working to provide more housing options to the downtown area.

MARKETING AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Made for Rockford partnered with a Madden Media to launch a targeted campaign promoting Rockford's cost-of-living advantage to the Chicago market. The effort included digital ads across major platforms, placements on bar and venue screens, digital billboards, and a Rockford radio campaign that aired more than **480,000 times**.

TALENT WARS PODCAST

Made for Rockford Director Whitney Martin was featured on Development Counsellors International's "**Talent Wars**" Podcast, highlighting the program as a national example of how relationship-building drives talent retention and community engagement.

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The **Made for Rockford 'Go Team** collaborated with **Rockford Promise** to send handwritten postcards to local students studying away from home, offering encouragement ahead of midterms. The initiative provides one of many personal touchpoint for scholars and a reminder that their hometown community is cheering them on year-round.

NEW RESIDENT MIXER

Made for Rockford hosted its third New Resident Mixer in July in partnership with **Anderson Japanese Gardens**. The event drew our largest crowd yet, with more than **70 new residents** in attendance, plus community members and Mayor Tom McNamara, who officially welcomed people to the city. The event fosters meaningful connections and a strong sense of belonging while highlighting area attractions.



New residents pose at the Made for Rockford backdrop during the July 2025 New Resident Mixer.

COMMUNITY TOURS

Made for Rockford continued its strong partnership with major employers, providing over **30 customized community tours** for job applicants throughout the quarter. These tailored tours highlight Rockford's unique neighborhoods, attractions, and quality of life, helping candidates see why Winnebago County is the ideal place to live, work, and play.

INFLUENCER PARTNERSHIPS

During this quarter, a partnership between Made for Rockford, GoRockford and the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce with DCI led to two notable influencer visits.

Nicole Pang (428,000 followers) visited in August and created two reels. Her first reel at Gretta's Goats had **51,000 in views** and **3,169 interactions**. Her second reel highlighted a weekend trip in Rockford and review **189,000 views** and **19,638 interactions**.

Expedition Kristen (142,000 followers), visited in September to promote some fall activities in the region. Her video had **22,817 views** and **897 interactions**, and she wrote a blog of her experience.

GoROCKFORD BOARD & STAFF

GoRockford Board of Directors

Geno Iafrate (Chair)
Hard Rock Rockford

Tiana McCall (Vice Chair)

Mick Gronewold (Treasurer)
Fehr Graham Engineering
& Environmental

Dana Martin (Secretary)
Rosecrance Behavioral Health

Carol Schuster
University of Illinois
College of Medicine - Rockford

Jennifer Furst
Furst Staffing

Shelton Kay
Rockford Regional Health Council

Richard Shuga
Painters District Council
No. 30 Local 607

Todd Cagnoni
City of Rockford

Gretchen Gilmore
Rockford Area Venues &
Entertainment Authority (R.A.V.E.)

Angela Larson
Greater Rockford Chamber of
Commerce

Chintan Thakkar
Decorum Management Group

Patricia Diduch
Village of Rockton

Bobbie Holzwarth
HolmstromKennedy

Ricardo Montoya-Picazo
Office of State
Representative Dave Vella

Patrick Thompson
Winnebago County

Duncan Geddes
City of Loves Park

Sonya Hoppes
City of South Beloit

Jay Sandine
Rockford Park District

Kirk Weitzel
Rock Hospitality

Ald. Kevin Frost
City of Rockford

GoRockford Foundation Board of Directors

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

Geno Iafrate (Vice Chair)
Hard Rock Rockford

**Marco Lenis
(Foundation Treasurer)**
Vocational Rehabilitation Management

**Gina Caruana
(Foundation Secretary)**
Foresight Financial Group

David Anderson
Anderson Japanese Gardens

Jennifer Furst
Furst Staffing

Jeff Marrs
Morgan Stanley

Leslie West
State Farm

Rebecca Francis
Ignite Change Solutions LLC

Theresa Kegley
Movement Fitness

Jim Pirages
AGHL Law

Alexis Wright-Conniff
Woodward

GoRockford Staff



John Groh
President, CEO



Kristen Paul
Executive Vice
President



Lindsay Arellano
Vice President of Sales &
Service



Joanne Nold
Vice President of
Finance



Amanda August
Social Media and
Communications Specialist



Chenaire Barmore
Communications Manager



Miranda Brook
Customer Experience
Coordinator



Kara Davis
Senior Sales Manager



Elizabeth Falls
Marketing Manager



Julie Huber
Destination Development
Operations Manager



Whitney Martin
Made for Rockford
Program Director



Emily Plumb
Sales & Servicing
Manager



Leah Ticknor
Office Manager &
Executive Assistant

MEETING MINUTES

**GoRockford Board of Directors
April 23, 2025
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
GoRockford Annex**

Board Present: Todd Cagnoni, Kevin Frost, John Groh, Tiana McCall, Carol Schuster, Bobbie Holzwarth, Dana Martin, Gretchen Gilmore, Jay Sandine, Angela Larson, Duncan Geddes, Rich Schuga

Board Absent: Sonya Hoppes, Mick Gronewold, Patrick Thompson, Patricia Diduch, Kirk Weitzel, Darrell Snorek, Geno Iafate, Shelton Kay, Ricardo Montoya-Picazo,

Guest Speaker: DCI-Susan Brake, Brittany Borsanyi, Taylor Fruedenberg, Fallon Carter

Staff Present: Kristen Paul, Joanne Nold, Lindsay Arellano

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:33 a.m. by Tiana McCall

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the March 19, 2025, meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Guest Presentation:

DCI, in partnership with GoRockford and the Greater Rockford Chamber, is a PR company hired to promote the Rockford Region on a national level. DCI shared strategy details on generating positive media coverage designed to assist with economic development, tourism growth and talent attraction. Discussion included how to shape local coverage, local influencers and how to elevate the region to attract talent for positions such as the new RPS superintendent and other key roles.

CEO Monitoring Reports:

It was moved, seconded, and approved to accept the Internal Monitoring Reports, including John Groh's CEO interpretations, for monitoring on:

- 1.2 Enhance Tourism Product
- 2.1 Treatment of Customers & Partners
- 2.3 Financial Planning/Budgeting
- 2.4 Financial Condition & Activities

Board Development Committee Report/Approval Election of Officers, Board Members:

It was moved and seconded to accept the recommendations of the Board Development Committee to elect, in one slate the following:

OFFICERS: The following individuals are recommended to serve as an officers, each serving a one-year year term, beginning at the conclusion of the June 2025 meeting and concluding June 2026.

- Chair: Geno Iafate, Hard Rock Rockford
- Vice Chair: Tiana McCall, State of Illinois
- Treasurer: Mick Gronewold, FehrGraham
- Secretary: Dana Martin, Rosecrance Behavioral Health

- Immediate Past Chair: Carol Schuster, University of Illinois College of Medicine Rockford

RETURNING: The following individuals are recommended to serve an additional three-year term, beginning at the June 2025 meeting and concluding June 2028.

- Kevin Frost, City of Rockford
- Bobbie Holzwarth, HolmstromKennedy
- Geno Iafrate, Hard Rock Rockford
- Richard Shuga, Painters District Council No. 30 Local 607
- Kirk Weitzel, Rock Hospitality

NEW: The following individuals are recommended to serve as voting board members for a three-year term, beginning at the June 2025 meeting and concluding June 2028.

- Jennifer Furst, President, Furst Staffing
- Chintan Thakkar, CHA, CHCS – President / CEO, Decorum Management Group

Expired Terms: The following member's term is expiring.

Having served two consecutive terms, the member is not eligible for an additional term. As such, he will depart the board following the June meeting with the gratitude of the board and staff.

- Darrell Snorek

FOUNDATION: The following individuals are recommended to serve an additional three-year term, beginning at the July 2025 meeting and concluding in July 2028.

- Rebecca Francis, Ignite Change Solutions

The motion carried unanimously.

CEO Report:

GoRockford won sports tourism of the year at the Sports ETA Conference, which is a culmination of all our sporting events, facilities, services, and partnerships. Huge congratulations to the team and the community for coming together to win this prestigious award.

IRONMAN is only two months away, and coordination and planning are going well. The board is encouraged to attend the event and is invited to assist with distributing medals to the finishers.

Josh Bilicki raced the GoRockford car at the NASCAR Rockingham event. It is estimated that the car received \$4,000,000 in earned media. The partnership was fully paid for by Insurance King to celebrate Rockford.

It is estimated that in the first quarter, the GoRockford website has generated over 50,000 referrals to partner websites—up over 300% year over year.

Partner Updates:

Todd Cagnoni and Kevin Frost shared that the new Aldermen will be sworn in next week. Also, the construction bids for Davis Park redevelopment are live and due back in June.

Duncan Geddes shared that the Parks Chamber has updated their full website and ticketing system. In addition, there is an after-hours event planned at Rockford Pool and Spa.

Angela Larson shared that nominations are live for 40 under 40. Leadership Rockford just celebrated its 70th cohort graduation. The Mayor's luncheon is scheduled for tomorrow and will include the state of the city.

Gretchen Gilmore shared that the IceHogs have made the playoffs and will play in Rockford on Friday night. If they win, there will be a second game on Sunday.

Jay Sandine shared that the Clarence Hicks Memorial Sports Park has been renovated, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony is forthcoming. The Chicago Bears donated a turf field. A community celebration is forthcoming. Buddy Baseball has broken ground for a park designed exclusively for children with disabilities.

Dana Martin shared that the Rockford Art Museum had its most successful Art in Bloom. The immersive exhibit will end on May 11; all are encouraged to attend.

Tiana McCall shared that the State of Illinois announced that the City of Rockford received 2 million for phase two of the Madison Street rehabilitation.

Adjournment: At 8:56 a.m. Chair Tiana McCall adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrell Snorek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

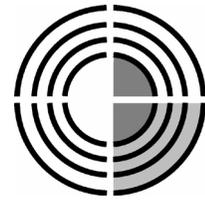
Darrell Snorek, Board Secretary
kp



MONITORING REPORTS



Governing Policy of the
GoRockford Board of Directors



Executive Limitations Policy 2.8 – Communication & Support to the Board

Management Limitations

To: Board of Directors
From: John Groh, President/CEO
RE: Internal Monitoring Report – Management Limitations Policies
Monitoring on Policy 2.8 – Communication & Support to the Board

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Management Limitations Policy 2.8 – Communication & Support to the Board, in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true for the six-month period ending June 2025.

Signed

John Groh, President/CEO

June 25, 2025

POLICY 2.8 – COMMUNICATION & SUPPORT TO THE BOARD

“The President/CEO will not permit the board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report.) One of the primary obligations of the CEO is to ensure the board has all necessary facts, evidence, knowledge and resources for the fulfillment of its role, as the board has defined it in its governing policies. I submit that the subsequent provisions comprehensively define this policy. Interpretations and reporting data are presented below.

“Accordingly, he or she may not:”

2.8.1 “Neglect to submit monitoring reports (including the President/CEO’s policy interpretations, as well as compliance/achievement data) required by the board (see policy 3.4 on Monitoring President/CEO Performance in Board/Staff Linkage) in a timely, accurate and understandable fashion.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report) The CEO shall submit monitoring reports in the month designated in policy 3.4. Each report shall include interpretation of each policy indicating whether that interpretation is new (noting whether any material changes have been made since last report), data that is factually accurate, and enough data for the board to make an informed judgment as to whether compliance/achievement is reasonably substantiated. I interpret “timely” to mean the board receives the report in advance of the scheduled board meeting, during which they will review the

report. I interpret “understandable” to mean that the information provided, and the logic outlined in the report would make sense to most people.

REPORT: All monitoring reports for the period were submitted within the specified month and distributed to the board prior to board meetings in compliance with policy 4.3.3.c., The January 2025 meeting was cancelled, and reports on 1.0, 1.3, 2.3 and 2.4 were deferred to March.

- January 29, 2025 (meeting cancelled)
- March 19, 2025
 - 1.0 Global Ends (deferred from January)
 - 1.3 Communicate with Constituents (deferred from January)
 - 2.3 Financial Planning/Budgeting (deferred from January)
 - 2.4 Financial Condition & Activities (deferred from January)
 - 2.2 Treatment of Staff
 - 2.8 Communication & Support to the Board
- April 23, 2025
 - 1.2 Enhance Tourism Product
 - 2.1 Treatment of Customers & Partners
 - 2.3 Financial Planning/Budgeting
 - 2.4 Financial Condition & Activities
- June 25, 2025
 - 2.8 Communication & Support to Board
 - 2.9 Programs/Events/Services/Logistics

The board has not conveyed any concerns about accuracy or ability to comprehend the information and data presented. All reports were approved, and in doing so the board accepted the CEO interpretations as reasonable and that reports demonstrated compliance or achievement.

I am reporting compliance.

2.8.2 “Let the board be unaware of any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any Ends or Management Limitations policy, regardless of the monitoring schedule set forth by the board.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report.) The CEO shall notify the board whenever there is an incurred or anticipated violation of Board Ends or Executive Limitations policy. I interpret “in a timely manner” to vary depending on the perceived importance of the non-compliance issue. Where the importance is deemed by me to be serious or potentially damaging to the organization, actual or anticipated non-compliance issues should be reported as soon as they are known. When the importance is deemed to be minor and the period of non-compliance is expected to be brief or related to an ongoing circumstance previously brought to the board’s attention, non-compliance should be at least reported in the regularly (or otherwise) scheduled monitoring report.

REPORT: There were no such issues during this reporting period.

I am reporting compliance.

2.8.3 “Let the board be without objective background/decision information it periodically requests, or unaware of relevant trends, anticipated adverse media coverage, or material external and internal/organizational changes. The Board should be notified in advance of material internal changes, when feasible.

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report.) At its request or when the board is preparing to make policy decisions, I am to submit background information and/or provide opportunities for dialogue with and/or data from industry experts, as requested by the board, on the pros and cons of the options being considered, and/or those otherwise available and in my estimation viable for board consideration. While some bias as CEO is, in my estimation, inevitable, I am obligated to temper any such bias with the presentation of objective information.

Further, I am to keep the board aware of observed industry and/or community trends that may impact favorably or negatively on the organization. In addition to formal reporting on board policies, I am to keep the board apprised of material developments. Material external changes such as major developments in our industry sector, issues with major stakeholders, legal challenges, etc., are to be conveyed to the board no later than the next board meeting, but perhaps sooner than dictated by the situation. The criteria for timeliness of board awareness of issues such as negative media coverage or litigation are based on when the material will become public and/or otherwise impact the organization. I interpret material internal changes to be issues such as significant revisions to strategy, to revenues or expenditures (that are compliant with our financial policies) or personnel changes at or above mid-management.

REPORT: When apprised by the board chair of action items on upcoming agendas, staff and I regularly prepare background information that is included in the board packets or other communications. We attempt to present logical and reasonable options and recommendations, and the pros and cons of each, and assure all new board members are equipped to govern according to approved policies.

In all cases, care is taken to provide information that is as complete and unbiased as possible. The board has not conveyed any concerns about a lack of adequate or objective information being presented.

The board has been informed of material **external** changes by the next board meeting, or sooner as the situation dictated/allowed. The following examples demonstrate compliance:

- On June 10, the board was informed that GoRockford will join our partners at the International Women’s Baseball Center to announce that the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) has officially awarded the hosting rights of the WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup Group Stage 2026 to IWBC and Rockford.
- On June 9, the board was invited to the VIP IRONMAN Hospitality Experience for the inaugural **IRONMAN 70.3** race on Sunday, June 22.
- On June 3, the board was informed that 2025 CRE8IV Sculpture Program approved by Rockford City Council.

- On April 1, GoRockford Announces 3rd Round of Restaurant Grants
- On January 22, the board was informed of Rockford Restaurant Week starting with a record 65 restaurants participating.
- On January 16, the board received the final Stroll on State by the numbers and press release.
- On January 17, the board was notified that IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford had sold out.
- On January 10, the board was invited to attend a BMO/Rave news conference announcing Rockford would host the 2026 AHL All-Star Classic.
- On January 2, the board was informed to hold this date/time news conference during which we will celebrate alongside a local partner as they announce a major, first-time event that will take place in Rockford and Illinois in 2026.

The board has been notified in a timely manner of material ***internal*** changes. For example, the board is notified in advance of media coverage regarding the organization (positive or negative), as we are aware of the coverage. The following demonstrates compliance:

- On June 10, the board was informed that Leah Ticknor has joined our team as Office Manager and Executive Assistant.
- On April 15, the board was informed GoRockford has been named the 2025 Sports Tourism Organization of the Year by the Sports Events & Tourism Association.
- On April 7, the board was informed that Rockford Branded Car in NASCAR Race Local Insurance Agency Drives Exposure for Rockford by Sponsoring Car

I am reporting compliance.

2.8.4 “Let the board be unaware of Board or Board member actions that, in the President/CEO's opinion, are not consistent with the board’s own policies on Governance Process and Board/Staff Linkage, particularly in the case of Board or Board member behavior that is detrimental to the work relationship between the board and the President/CEO.

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report.) I am to notify the board chair if I am aware of any board or board members’ actions that are inconsistent with the board’s own policies, especially if such actions undermine the board/CEO relationship. In the case of perceived non-compliance on behalf of the chair, I will report non-compliance issues directly to the board if the perceived non-compliance is not resolved after discussing the concern with the chair directly.

REPORT: There were no such issues during this reporting period for GoRockford’s board.

I am reporting compliance.

- 2.8.5 “Present information in unnecessarily complex or lengthy form or without differentiating among three types of written communications:**
- a. monitoring**
 - b. decision preparation, and**
 - c. incidental/ “FYI”**

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report.) Correspondence to the board is to be concise and identified as one of the three types listed in the policy. I interpret “monitoring” to be those items connected with the designated monitoring reports. I interpret “decision preparation” to be background material necessary or helpful for decision-making and “incidental” to be information/FYI type material.

REPORT: Information in all correspondence with and materials provided to the board (especially board meeting packets) has been labeled as either monitoring report-related, informational/FYI, or for preparation to make decisions or act. If the communication is urgent or requires immediate action, the content is labeled accordingly. Board meeting agendas are clear and indicate where attachments are included, or action is required.

I am reporting compliance.

- 2.8.6 “Allow the Board to be without logistical and administrative support for official board, officer or committee communications and activities.”**

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report.) As CEO, I am to ensure adequate support for operations of the board, its officers and committees. I interpret “official” to mean those functions dealing with the carrying out of the board’s governing responsibilities, including those of its officers and committees. Examples of support include arranging meeting schedules, meeting space, fulfilling communication needs, copying and distributing correspondence and materials, recording minutes, providing refreshments, etc.

REPORT: Staff support for board functions, including production and distribution of board meeting packets, minutes, meeting logistics and refreshments and similar arrangements for the work of the board and official board committees is regularly provided. No concerns to the contrary have been conveyed by the board to the CEO.

I am reporting compliance.

- 2.8.7 “Deal with the board in a way that favors or privileges certain board members over others, except when (a) fulfilling individual requests for information or (b) responding to officers or committees duly charged by the board.**

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report.) This is interpreted as meaning that I am to view the board, collectively, as my superior and am to provide communications about board issues and policy choices to all board members, rather than just to the chair and/or board members I may view as “sympathetic” to my concerns.

The exceptions are the two circumstances stated above as “a” and “b,” and I also interpret an exception to be when working with individual board members in their occasional capacities as

“volunteer staff members.” While I am to pass requests for agenda items to the chair, the background information supporting my request is to be distributed to all board members. I further interpret this is pertinent only to business dealings, not to personal or social relationships.

REPORT: Monitoring reports, informational content and background information on action items are distributed to all board members. Significant e-mail exchanges and other conversations have and do take place with individual board members, either as colleagues or pursuant to exceptions as set forth in the policy, but this correspondence does not limit the awareness or authority of the board.

I am reporting compliance.

2.8.8 “Neglect to supply for the consent agenda those items delegated to the President/CEO yet required by law or contract to be Board approved, along with applicable monitoring information.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (No changes since last report.) The CEO will submit for the board’s agenda all items that require board approval when such is mandated by third-party business requirements, the law, or per board policy. When such items are submitted, the background information supporting the action item will include written substantiation of adherence to relevant board policies.

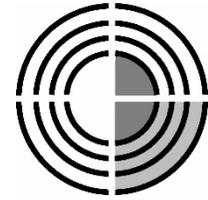
REPORT: Staff regularly executes agreements, contracts and reports with government and private entities, and all is done within the approved executive limitations policies. No such instances of required consent agenda items have been documented within the timing of this report.

I am reporting compliance.

Prepared by: John Groh, Leah Ticknor 6/16/2025



Governing Policy of the
GOROCKFORD Board of Directors



Executive Limitations Policy 2.9 – Programs/Events/Services/Logistics

Management Limitations

To: GOROCKFORD Board of Directors
From: John Groh, President/CEO
RE: Internal Monitoring Report – Management Limitations Policies
Monitoring on Policy 2.9 – Programs/Events/Services/Logistics

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Management Limitations Policy 2.9 – Programs/Events Services/Logistics, in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true for the annual period through June 30, 2025.

Signed,



John Groh, President/CEO

June 25, 2025

POLICY 2.9

“With respect to the programs and events produced or services provided by the organization, the President/CEO shall not fail to ensure these programs, events or services exceed community/industry standards for excellence in programming, safety and audience amenities.”

CEO INTERPRETATION (No change since last report): I interpret this to mean GoRockford will be informed of and utilize best practices in event planning, regularly evaluate all appropriate programs and events, implement GoRockford service standards and ensure that customer concerns and complaints are addressed promptly and appropriately.

REPORT: GoRockford utilizes systems for event planning, service standards and appropriate safety guidelines when planning or hosting GoRockford events.

GOROCKFORD staff continually seeks educational opportunities to ensure knowledge of best practices in the event planning and tourism industry. Examples of practices incorporated or improved upon in the past year include:

- GoRockford’s core service values require that we create an atmosphere of customer focus, whereby the needs of the customer are paramount, and staff has the flexibility, knowledge and procedures in place to meet those needs. The use of budgets, checklists and policies guide planning efforts for programs/events/services.
- Evaluation forms and/or surveys are distributed at or after selected events, special events, tournaments and conferences hosted or planned by GoRockford. The results are compiled and reviewed as a means of guiding our continual improvement efforts.

- GoRockford follows a pre-established written procedure for handling customer/visitor complaints and takes appropriate action. First the complaint is documented and categorized as urgent, GoRockford complaint or industry partner complaint. The category determines the degree of GoRockford involvement. If needed, as dictated by procedures, a task force is then assembled to handle the complaint. There are no written complaints within the timeline of this report.
- GoRockford has a written crisis communication plan in place that includes avenues of communication with visitors should a large-scale emergency arise.
- GoRockford has a written crisis management and communication plan specific to Stroll on State that is reviewed and approved by Rockford City Council members and the Police and Fire departments.
- When necessary, GoRockford employees use outside consultants and coordinate strategic site visits to help examine best practices.

I am reporting compliance.

Accordingly, he or she may not:

2.9.1 “Fail to produce and implement an operational plan designed to ensure that the programs, events or services are well organized, are safe for all attendees, and run on schedule.”

CEO INTERPRETATION (No change since last report): I interpret this to mean that when creating and hosting community/stakeholder events, or as related to GoRockford’s involvement with events produced by customers/clients, GoRockford must have in place and utilize appropriate plans to ensure GoRockford and staff are prepared, an event is well-planned and runs on time, and all measures are taken to ensure a safe environment.

REPORT: GoRockford staff uses an operational plan and checklist for all GoRockford hosted programs or events. This ensures the event is well organized, safe and runs on schedule, as evidenced by the responses to follow-up evaluations that demonstrate GoRockford standards are met.

When servicing groups and events, staff utilizes an extensive planning process including standards for opening ceremonies, welcome bags, information tables and additional standardized systems and instruments. Post-event evaluations ensure servicing standards are met, as exemplified by the following chart below. These numbers reflect no change year over year. Customer satisfaction remains strong.

Feedback From Group Customers

	Overall Satisfaction (Venue Experience) (scale 1/low-5/high)	Satisfaction with GOROCKFORD Staff (scale 1/low-5/high)	Intent to Return
Meeting/Event Planner Survey FY 24	100% ranked 4-5 (Actual 9)	100% ranked 4-5 0% ranked 3-2 (Actual 9)	88.89%

I am reporting compliance.

2.9.2 “Fail to work actively and cooperatively with venue management, as well as with neighboring property owners/merchants/residents to minimize any inconvenience or other negative impacts caused by the event(s).”

CEO INTERPRETATION (No change since last report): I interpret this to mean that the GoRockford should work in a professional manner to partner for success within the business and tourism community, taking measures to ensure a positive public perception of Bureau programs and services, as well as the local visitor industry.

REPORT: When working with unique and/or large events, GoRockford staff works with venue managers, municipal public works staff, public safety officials, neighborhood representatives, business owners and local media partners to prepare and proactively plan for event participants. By utilizing checklists, a variety of methods of communication and advanced planning meetings, staff members continue to maintain high service standards and take measures to uphold this policy and maintain a positive perception of these events.

Other services the GoRockford provides to ensure a successful event include:

- Convention/tournament calendars are updated/distributed monthly to Hotel Managers, attractions, and various organizations in the Rockford Region to inform them of citywide events.
- GoRockford reaches out to local media partners to invite them to attend press conferences and provides press releases to bring awareness to the community.
- Notifications are sent to downtown business owners when tournament or conference events are held at the BMO Center or UW Health Sports Factory.
- GoRockford notifies local restaurants and businesses of upcoming events by distributing a calendar of events and by posting on gorockford.com.
- Work with meeting/event planners to expedite any conflicting events that may overlap.

There have been no significant concerns raised by venues or neighbors in the past year.

I am reporting compliance.

Prepared by: JG/LT



To: GoRockford Audit Committee
From: John Groh/Joanne Nold
Re: FY26 Budget Overview
Date: 6/16/25

We are approaching the end of the bureau’s fiscal year, which included many accomplishments, and will end with a grand finale of the first IRONMAN race held in Illinois this week! Some of the other highlights from the past year are relaunching the Made for Rockford program in July, celebrating the bureau’s 40th anniversary in September, executing the 12th Stroll last November despite frigid temperatures, rebranding the bureau to GoRockford over the past 6 months, including new office décor and outdoor signage, granted three more rounds of the restaurant relief awards totaling \$498k; started our 2nd season of hosting Beats & Bites summer lunch series after a successful 1st season in 2024. All of this was funded by state and local grants, individual and corporate sponsorships, and steady and ahead-of-budget hotel tax revenue.

The next fiscal year will include further expansion of the Made for Rockford program with a new website, a goal to implement a tourism improvement district (TID) for the region, a new agreement with the City of Rockford to install 17 sculptures throughout the city, facilitating improvements to Davis Park with two major state grants, administering another restaurant relief grant to area restaurants, executing another successful Stroll on State and ending the fiscal year next June with the 2nd year of IRONMAN!

To make all this happen, we are presenting a 12-month budget for GoRockford for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, with a proposed profit of \$8k after depreciation. A snapshot of the proposed FY26 budget, compared to the FY25 budget, preliminary FY25 actual results after 11 months, and a projected 12-month result as follows:

	FY26	FY25	FY25	FY25
	Proposed Budget	Approved Budget	Actual (11 mos)	Projected (12 mos)
Revenue	\$4,808k	\$4,250k	\$3,718k	\$4,240k
Operating Expenses	\$4,725k	\$4,211k	\$3,751k	\$4,172k
Income (Loss) before Depr	\$83k	\$39k	(\$33k)	\$68k
Depreciation	\$75k	\$55k	\$51k	\$56k
Net Income (Loss)	\$8k	\$(16k)	\$(84k)	\$12k

Our projected bottom line for FY25 is a \$ 12,000 profit after depreciation, representing a positive swing from the May 31 loss of \$ 84,000. The swing is primarily due to the Made for Rockford grant coming online after a year of finalization, which allows 15% of indirect costs to be covered for all grant-eligible expenses, amounting to \$ 48,000. The restaurant grant’s final round is also contributing to indirect costs of \$9k. Lastly, we anticipate finishing the year strong, thanks to hotel tax revenue generated by IRONMAN and other events.

REVENUE

Hotel tax revenue accounts for roughly 38% of the proposed FY26 budget, and we closely monitor this revenue source. We receive weekly and monthly reports from STR, Inc. and watch hotel occupancy, average daily rate, demand, and revenue trends. All measurements have been improving each month. For FY25, we budgeted a 5% increase over the prior year, and with 11 months of results, we had a 9.2% increase in City taxes. Here is a snapshot of the past three months and 12 months running compared to the past two years:

Occup	2025	2024	2023	ADR	2025	2024	2023	Demand	2025	2024	2023	Revenue	2025	2024	2023
Mar	54%	53%	61%	Mar	\$100	\$97	\$101	Mar	49k	49k	53k	Mar	\$4955k	\$4771k	\$5164k
Apr	62%	54%	52%	Apr	\$103	\$105	\$98	Apr	54k	48k	47k	Apr	\$5580k	\$5073k	\$4612k
May	58%	57%	54%	May	\$107	\$98	\$94	May	53k	52k	50k	May	\$5661k	\$5063k	\$4658k
12 mos	58%	58%	59%	12 mos	\$102	\$101	\$100	12 mos	617k	592k	603k	12 mos	\$62.98M	\$60.06M	\$60.36M

For our analysis, we also compared actual hotel tax revenue received from the City of Rockford for the past three years to determine trends and project future receipts. Here is a comparison of the prior two years with the FY25 projection:

	FY25	FY24	FY23
City Hotel Tax Receipts	\$1,678,143	\$1,532,707	\$1,465,531
% Increase Over Prior Year	9.5%	4.6%	4.0%

Considering the above data, FY26 hotel tax revenue has been projected at a 7.5% increase over FY25 actual receipts. If the bureau is not realizing a 7.5% increase in hotel tax revenue midyear, we will adjust spending in the 2nd half of the year by making cuts in program costs

Grant revenue is a larger portion of our funding each year, with it comprising 31.4% of revenue for the FY26 budget, not including the Davis Park pass through grants. We are budgeting revenue from six different state grants at this time.

We estimate the **LTCB grant** allocation for FY26 will be 2.5% higher than FY25, or \$585k, an increase from \$571k last year, and includes an allocation of \$65k for the Freeport/Stephenson County visitors bureau. The Greater Freeport Partnership will pay us in essence a 12.5% admin fee for providing the grant opportunity and for our grant reporting services. As in prior years, 50% of the grant will be used to cover wages, 10% to cover admin costs and the rest for travel, trade shows, staff training, and contractual obligations.

The Tourism Promotion Fund is used to fund the **International Grant** and **Marketing Partnership Grant**. While we have not budgeted any proceeds from an International Grant for several years, this is the first in a few years that we are not budgeting proceeds from a Marketing Partnership grant. We anticipate another grant will become available sometime during FY26 but unsure of timing, grant period or proceeds. This grant would also have a 100% match requirement. If a Marketing Partnership grant becomes available, the bureau has a list of opportunities it would apply for.

A grant that was utilized in FY25 to fund Ironman among other first time sporting events is the **Tourism Incentive grant** that funds new opportunities coming to the state of Illinois for the first time. The total grant is \$800,000 and started March 2024 and runs thru February 2026, with up to another 3 year extension. Approximately \$185k will be recognized in FY25 and \$307k is budgeted to offset expenses in FY26.

Another state grant was recently finalized to help fund the **Made for Rockford** program. The grant award is \$500k and the grant period runs essentially June 2024 thru June 2026. It is anticipated \$335k will be recognized in FY25 and the remaining \$165k will be recognized in FY26. In addition to covering the program director's salary and benefits for one year, it also covers some administrative salaries and indirect costs totaling \$65k.

Another grant that is wrapping up this year, and will have a successor grant, is the **Restaurant Relief grant** of \$1.5 million that started July 2023 and ends June 2025. Nearly \$500k of this grant was recognized in FY24 and another \$548k will be recognized in FY25. A 2nd grant will start once the first grant is finalized, to spend out the remaining \$452k of the original \$1.5 million. The 2nd grant will cover \$20k in personnel costs and \$20k in indirect costs.

We have **two pass-through grants for Davis Park** improvements budgeted again this year, and as such, they are not included in the budget's revenue section or expense section but instead reported below the profit/loss line so as not to materially skew our comparative budgets. A \$3 million capital grant was awarded from the state of Illinois in 2021 and came online in FY25, with proceeds payable to the bureau but performance contracts managed by the City of Rockford. This will be a reimbursement grant with the City paying expenses upfront and the bureau applying for reimbursement from the state and remitting funds to the City upon receipt of grant payments from the state. Another capital grant for Davis Park in the amount of \$100k was finalized early in FY25 and will work in same manner with City paying expenses and the bureau receiving grant proceeds to reimburse it. There was no grant spending during FY25 for either of these grants but we anticipate the grants will be spent out during FY26.

Destination Development initiatives are another funding source for the bureau, making up 8.9% of total revenue, including Stroll on State, Forest City Beautiful and CRE8IV.

Stroll on State will be celebrating its 13th year in 2025! The cost of providing Stroll favorites and new additions has increased every year, with \$354k in sponsorships and day of revenue budgeted to cover those costs. As in years past, if funds are not raised to these levels, expenses will be scaled back accordingly. The popular Dasher Dash 5k will continue this year and is budgeted to profit \$25k for the foundation, between sponsorships opportunities and increased registrations.

The Forest City Beautiful initiative is another successful collaboration with the City of Rockford. The bureau entered into a new six year agreement with the City to cover seasonal plantings, replacements and maintenance and expands the footprint of the initiative. The City's anticipated contribution this fiscal year will be \$143k and the bureau has budgeted sponsorships and donations totaling \$58k, of which \$10k has been secured as part of a three-year sponsorship pledge for the I-90 Gateway.

The CRE8IV initiative has included the murals and sculptures program in recent years but 2024's CRE8IV music and art festival was the conclusion of the mural program. The sculpture program continues though, with five sculptures currently being leased and eight sculptures owned by the foundation. As an addendum to the new FCB agreement, the bureau entered into a project with the City to install 17 new sculptures in the downtown area over the next couple months, all to be leased over a two year period. The budget for the project is \$135k and will be recognized between FY25, FY26 and FY27, with \$87k budgeted in FY26.

Other Revenue primarily includes corporate sponsorship funding for the Made for Rockford program that markets Rockford as a place to live, work and play. A full-time program director was hired July 2024 to manage the program and secure additional funding. The \$165k grant mentioned above and nearly \$600k in sponsorship revenue are reflected in the current budget to fully cover the costs of the program.

Other revenue also includes profit from the Dasher Dash 5k to fund utilities, insurance and maintenance costs for the workshop building, partial funding from Rockford Chamber for marketing services in harmony with the Made for Rockford program, financial support of \$75k that will be raised for the TID initiative and an \$18k Workforce grant to fund our summer internship program.

PERSONNEL

Costs to retain staff and add positions continue to rise. Staffing is budgeted at 13.125 FTE positions during FY26. One part time staff was recently hired as the Executive Assistant. In addition, we budgeted for three summer interns for the remainder of this summer and next summer, that we plan to be funded by the Workforce grant mentioned above. A modest 3% increase in salaries has been budgeted for eligible staff to help retain experience and talent, the last increases were effective July 2024.

There is no change in employee benefits. The bureau was able to lower its health care costs by 14% with our June 2025 renewal by switching to Aetna from BlueCross Blue Shield coverage. The bureau pays 90% of premiums for staff and an average of 22% for dependent coverage.

SALES AND MARKETING

Sales and servicing costs are up \$75k for bid fees and servicing costs for new and recurring events. Approximately \$60k of the increase will be eligible for the Incentive grant, including IRONMAN year 2, US Ultimate D1 Nationals and USA Women's Baseball World Cup. Other bid fees are budgeted for Tough Mudder and BMX Nationals, to name the larger ones.

Marketing plans will be consistent with prior years, expenses will include promoting the IRONMAN race, promoting Stroll on State, new digital passports for trails being developed, and making Rockford Region Restaurant Week bigger and better.

The Made for Rockford program has budgeted a marketing firm, Development Counselors International, to provide monthly services for \$15.3k, with the Greater Rockford Chamber offsetting one third of the cost. Targeted radio ads, and social media marketing will be done by Madden Media for an estimated cost of \$200k. A new website will be created and launched for the program during FY26 at a cost of \$50k.

OPERATIONS

There are no significant changes for Operations, but the cost of phones, internet, HR and IT continue to rise with more staff and higher rates. Our annual audit cost is increasing from \$26k to \$32k also. As in prior years, the Stroll workshop building is being leased from the foundation and expenses have been budgeted at \$14k for operating costs and \$23k for rent/debt reduction. The rent/debt reduction will be eliminated in the consolidated financials with the foundation. As in prior years, in lieu of paying rent for the bureau's office space, the bureau pays \$85k annually for city initiatives and debt reduction on the workshop building.

CAPITAL ASSETS

There are several capital asset purchases planned for FY26. We have decided it's time to retire the 2002 GMC cargo van and get a vehicle that can serve current needs of the bureau. Giving tours of Rockford by the Made for Rockford staff is a primary need, but also hauling for sports servicing, Stroll, sculpture installs, press conferences, etc. Although we have not identified a vehicle yet, the budget reflects borrowing \$30k with 5 year payback. The Made for Rockford program will be building and launching a new website at a cost of \$50k which will be capitalized. The bureau currently has eight Windows 10 computers that need to be replaced with Windows 11 operating systems in September. Replacements are budgeted at \$16k, with two being funded by grants. New board room chairs and conference room tables are budgeted at \$20k. Stroll decorations to be capitalized are budgeted at \$6k for 2025.

FINANCING & DEBT

The bureau received a \$75,400 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) in June 2020 and the payback period started in December 2022. It carries a term of 30 years, 2.75% interest and monthly payments of \$322 are currently paying interest only but will start paying principal during FY26.

The foundation has a building improvement loan for a new roof and masonry work at the Stroll workshop. The monthly payments are \$1,940 with interest at 6.15%. Currently, the bureau pays the loan as part of their lease agreement with the foundation. The loan payments come out of the In Lieu of Rent account.

The bureau has a line of credit with IL Bank & Trust, which auto renews in August of each year. The \$250k line carries an interest rate equal to the prime rate, currently 7.5%. Our cash flow projections do not show us utilizing the line of credit during FY26, and we did not draw on the line during FY25.

In FY26, the bureau plans to borrow \$30k to finance the purchase of a used vehicle. The anticipated terms are 7.5% interest with a monthly payment of \$720 with a payback period of five years.

CASH FLOW PROJECTION

The bureau has approximately \$610k in bureau bank accounts as of today, including \$444k in the Designated Funds account for future grant spending and Made for Rockford expenses. The bureau's cash flow projection for the next 12 months shows the bureau's cash balance will remain positive all year and the line of credit will not be utilized, although cash is projected to decrease over the course of the year by \$46k. The bureau's cash flow continues to be tight as we wait for grant advances and reimbursements. We monitor cash daily, keep accounts receivables current and stretch accounts payables to the due dates.

A reserve fund is funded monthly from the operating account at \$2,500 per month, reducing cash available for general operations unless certain requirements are met according to the reserve fund policy.

Attached budget materials include:

- FY26 Proposed Budget Summary
- FY26 Cash Flow Projection

**INCIDENTAL
INFORMATION**



Be Part of the Action: Volunteers Needed for IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford – Illinois Triathlon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2025

Rockford, IL — In just a few weeks, the Rockford community will welcome approximately **2,500 athletes** and over **7,500 spectators** to the inaugural **IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois** triathlon on June 22. GoRockford is calling on the community to be part of the action. Volunteers are at the heart of IRONMAN events, playing a critical role in delivering a world-class experience for athletes and spectators. Hundreds of volunteers are needed, and spots are available throughout the weekend.

Why Volunteer?

Volunteering at **IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois** is a unique opportunity to be part of a global sporting phenomenon while showcasing Rockford's incredible community spirit. Volunteers will receive an official IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois volunteer shirt. The race weekend will be an exciting way for residents to help welcome athletes to the community and be a part of an extraordinary event. **Volunteer captains' spots are still available** for those interested in leading a group and helping recruit volunteers. Additional **individual volunteer opportunities include** athlete check-in, crowd control, civilian safety boats to assist the transport of lifeguards or spotters, swim start/finish, motorcycle transportation, aide stations and more.

"Whether you're an athlete or not, watching these athletes push their limits is something to experience. Most are just like you and me — they just set their minds to overcoming fear," **said Chris Hankins, volunteer director for IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois.** "To watch someone celebrate conquering what seemed impossible to them is powerful. Our volunteers will have a special window on all of it. And I suspect in the weeks and months afterward, they'll be sharing stories about how they were a part of it when IRONMAN came to Rockford."

"This event will bring thousands of visitors to Rockford, and it simply cannot happen without our volunteers," **said Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford Vice President of Sales and Service.** "It's an unforgettable way to get involved, meet new people, and show the world what Rockford hospitality is all about."

Event Details: IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois triathlon

- Volunteer Dates: **June 20 - June 22, 2025** (race day is Sunday, June 22)
- Location: Various locations throughout Rockford, including the Rock River, and additional areas as needed.
- Triathlon Course:
 - Swim: 1.2 miles in the Rock River
 - Bike: 56 miles through Rockford and scenic countryside north of the city into Rockton
 - Run: 13.1 miles throughout downtown Rockford and along the riverfront

Urgent Volunteer Needs

While all areas of the event require support, several key roles are especially critical for a successful race day.

– MORE –

GoRockford/IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois Volunteering/PAGE 2 OF 2

- **Kayak, Canoes, Stand-Up Paddleboard Support Crew:** Help ensure athlete safety on the swim course by providing kayak, canoe or stand-up paddleboard support along the Rock River.
- **Lifeguards:** Lifeguard volunteers will assist with water safety during the swim portion of the race.
- **Transition Area Assistants:** Volunteers in the transition zone help athletes move smoothly and safely between the swim, bike, and run portions of the race.
- **Environmental Crew:** Volunteers will assist with keeping the Ironman venue clean, including picking up trash as needed, monitoring trash receptacles, replacing bags, and taking full bags to the dumpsters. Areas include, but are not limited to, walkways, green spaces at the swim start and swim finish, the expo area, the transition area, and the finish line area.

How to Sign Up

Individuals, charitable groups, school groups, athletic teams, service clubs, and businesses are encouraged to sign up. Volunteers must be 14 years or older. Interested volunteers can visit <https://ironman.volunteerlocal.com/volunteer/?id=88525> to view all available open spots and register today. The deadline for volunteer sign-up is June 8, 2025.

About: GoRockford 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, GoRockford strengthens the region's economic position and provides opportunities for people in our communities. www.gorockford.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford Vice President of Sales and Service, 815.489.1664, larellano@gorockford.com
Chris Hankins, Volunteer Director IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois, 815.708.4408, chris.hankins@ironman.com



GoRockford Welcomes IRONMAN 70.3 Athletes & Fans to Rockford With Passport Program

Businesses offer extended hours, deals and specials

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 9, 2025

Rockford, IL — The Rockford region is gearing up to welcome over **2,500 athletes** and more than **7,500 visitors** for the inaugural **IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois** triathlon **on Sunday, June 22**, with a community-wide celebration that goes beyond the race. To elevate the visitor experience, GoRockford has engaged local businesses to offer exclusive IRONMAN deals, specials, and extended open hours.

The **IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois Deals & Specials Passport** includes **36 stops**. It encourages athletes, spectators, and residents alike to explore the Rockford region through exclusive offers at local restaurants, shops, and attractions. Participants can sign up online, check in at participating businesses, and unlock deals to earn a limited-edition **Rockmen lapel pin** with just **five check-ins**. Photos taken during the challenge may be featured on GoRockford's social media pages, adding an interactive layer to the experience.

"We are proud to activate our local businesses to bring visitors to their locations," said **Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford Vice President of Sales and Service**. "This is more than a race—it's a chance for Rockford to shine in how it welcomes sports visitors. Hosting a high-profile event, such as an IRONMAN race, enables us to showcase our city's hospitality and excitement on a grand scale.

In addition to the passport, the Rockford region is ready to welcome IRONMAN athletes with special events, including the activation of the Rockford City Market on Friday and a bike route watch party in downtown Rockton. IRONMAN banners, including a 50-foot tall banner at Burnham Lofts, welcome athletes and spectators throughout the city. Rockford region residents are encouraged to cheer on athletes during the race and take part in the passport program.

Local businesses weighed in on their excited to bring IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois to the region. "It is so exciting to have the IRONMAN race coming to our downtown," said **AJ Goff Subversive Cycling Company owner**. "It's going to be a great opportunity to show off what we are made of as a community and personally, with a bike shop near the event I'm proud to be able to support the racers. I encourage everyone to come downtown to enjoy the race and the dozens of great shops food our downtown has to offer."

"IRONMAN in Rockford?" said **Reed Sjostrom Chief Brand & Products Officer at Prairie Street Brewing Co.** "Now that's something to raise a glass to. At Prairie Street Brewing Co., we're all about endurance, community, and celebrating big moments—especially ones that shine a light on everything our city has to offer. We can't wait to welcome athletes and visitors to town and invite them to relax with us on the river. Cheers to all the athletes, support staff and the amazing volunteers! Have a great race Rockford!"

Participants can sign up for the passport now and view all participating businesses by visiting: <https://experience.gorockford.com/gorockford/ironman-703-rockford-illinois-specials-and-deals>

IRONMAN News Release Page 2/2

IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois Event Snapshot:

- Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025
- Swim: 1.2 miles in the Rock River
- Bike: 56 miles through Rockford and the surrounding countryside
- Run: 13.1 miles through downtown Rockford and riverfront trails
- Passport Dates: June 19 - June 22

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford Vice President of Sales and Service, 815.489.1664, larellano@gorockford.com



MEDIA INVITED TO “MEDIA BRIEFING” FOR IRONMAN 70.3 ROCKFORD

Get credential information and prepped for coverage of Illinois’ first-ever IRONMAN event

WHAT: With 2,500 athletes from across the globe arriving in Rockford for the first-ever IRONMAN-branded triathlon in Illinois, media outlets are invited to a pre-race press **briefing** to preview the week ahead.

GoRockford, IRONMAN representatives, and local race leaders will walk through:

- What to expect during race week (timeline, visuals, activities)
- When and where key moments will happen
- How to register for press credentials and secure coverage spots along the course
- Opportunities to interview local athletes, volunteers, and organizers

WHEN: Monday, June 16, 2025, 11 a.m.

WHERE: GoRockford Office
102 N. Main Street, Rockford

WHO: Eric Atnip, Race Director, IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois
John Groh, President/CEO, GoRockford
Lindsay Arellano, VP of Sales & Service, GoRockford
Chris Hankins, Volunteer Director, IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois

WHY: This is a historic moment for Illinois and for the city of Rockford. As excitement builds ahead of the IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois triathlon on Sunday, June 22, this briefing will help ensure that the media have the access, background, and assets they need for successful race-week coverage.

For updates on the 2025 IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois triathlon, please visit gorockford.com/ironman/.

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ABOUT: GoRockford is responsible for promoting Rockford, Illinois, and its surrounding region as an attractive travel destination and enhancing the community’s public image as a dynamic place to visit, live, and work. Through the impact of travel, GoRockford strengthens the economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in its communities. For more information, visit www.gorockford.com.

To learn more about the IRONMAN® and IRONMAN 70.3 brands and series of events, please visit www.ironman.com. Media inquiries may be directed to pam@kmkmedia.com or devin@kmkmedia.com.



IWBC & ROCKFORD AWARDED WBSC WOMEN'S BASEBALL WORLD CUP GROUP STAGE 2026

IWBC and Illinois Event Resumé to Now Include Women's Baseball World Cup for First Time Ever

ROCKFORD, Ill., June 10, 2025 – As announced today, the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) has officially awarded the hosting rights of the **WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup Group Stage 2026** to the International Women's Baseball Center (IWBC) in Rockford, Ill., USA. Scheduled for July 22-27, 2026, Group Stage play will mark the first time ever that the Women's Baseball World Cup is held in Illinois and only the second time in the United States.

"We are delighted to take the Women's Baseball World Cup back to the United States," said WBSC president **Riccardo Fraccari**. "The 2018 edition at the USSSA Space Coast Complex in Viera, Florida, attracted unprecedented attention and helped players and younger fans reconnect with the history of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. In 2026, the WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup will land in Rockford, Illinois, where that legend started. It will be a memorable experience for the whole WBSC family and the international women's baseball community."

As the world's only nonprofit dedicated to the preservation and advancement of women's and girls baseball, IWBC collaborated with the WBSC, local and national partners on a multi-year bid process. Alongside GoRockford as IWBC's domestic title partner, the WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup Group Stage 2026 will be played next summer at Rivets Stadium in neighboring Loves Park, Ill. In addition, IWBC and WBSC will activate World Cup programming at venues across the region, including Rockford's historic Beyer Stadium.

"When the International Women's Baseball Center came to Rockford in 2016, we promised to bring the world to this community – well get ready, here they come," said **Dr. Kat Williams**, IWBC CEO. "The IWBC is excited to partner with GoRockford, the City of Rockford, Rockford University, Rockford Park District and the Rockford Rivets to host the very best of women's baseball next summer."

The WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup is the most prestigious women's baseball event in the world, adding to IWBC's growing resumé of programs that drive economic, brand and community impact locally and globally. A two-stage program over consecutive years, the 10th edition of the WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup concludes in Summer 2027 with the six-team Final Stage – which IWBC and Rockford remain a finalist to host.

"This is a landmark moment for Rockford and a proud milestone for GoRockford. Hosting the Women's Baseball World Cup Group Stage 2026 puts our community on the global stage and reaffirms our deep commitment to advancing women's sports," said **John Groh**, president/CEO of GoRockford. "The prestige of this tournament brings powerful economic, reputational and civic benefits to our region – while honoring the legacy of the Rockford Peaches and inspiring and supporting the next generation of athletes. We're proud to stand with the International Women's Baseball Center in championing this historic event and can't wait to welcome the world to Rockford."

-MORE-



Page 2 of 2, IWBC to Host WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup Group Stage 2026 Next Summer

IWBC's impact extends through a myriad of programs including: educational symposia; celebrating cultural icons like the Rockford Peaches and the acclaimed film *A League of Their Own*; hosting community block parties and youth clinics; and cultivating global opportunities like the WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup. Moreover, IWBC and Rockford – a city affectionately known as “The Cradle of Baseball” – are poised to deliver long-term impact for women's and girls baseball and sports, as IWBC continues its quest to build a six-acre headquarter campus adjacent to Beyer Stadium. To date, IWBC has invested \$2.5 million in this south Rockford project and neighborhood.

“We are absolutely thrilled that Rockford will host the 2026 Women's Baseball World Cup Group Stage. This is only the second time this prestigious global event has been held in the United States, and we're ready to make a big splash,” said **Tom McNamara**, City of Rockford mayor. “From our deep baseball legacy to our passionate community, Rockford is the perfect stage for the world's best to compete. We can't wait to welcome the teams, fans and energy that come with it.”

The competition schedule, ticket packages, community activations and more event information will be announced in the coming weeks. For the most current updates, follow IWBC's World Cup digital home at www.IWBC.org/worldcup, as well as IWBC and WBSC social channels. Moreover, the WBSC's official Women's Baseball World Cup website can be followed [HERE](#).

In addition to the WBSC and GoRockford (domestic title partner), IWBC would like to thank all of its World Cup Group Stage sponsors to date, including: Rockford Park District (practice sites, Beyer Stadium activations), Rockford Rivets (games site) and Rockford University (team housing, practice site). Partnership opportunities for the WBSC World Cup Group Stage 2026 remain available – for more information, contact Nick@PlusSevenCompany.com.

About IWBC: At the International Women's Baseball Center, education is the cornerstone of our mission to protect, preserve, and promote all aspects of women's baseball, both on and off the field. We strive to inspire the next generation of players by helping them realize their dreams of not only participating in the sport, but also of passing on all they learn and achieve for generations to come. For more information, visit www.IWBC.org.

Media Contacts: Dr. Kat Williams, CEO, International Women's Baseball Center, KWilliams@IWBC.org, 304.617.4474; Nick Povalitis, founder, Plus Seven Company, Nick@PlusSevenCompany.com, 815.708.1644.

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USA BMX Midwest Nationals Returns to Rockford

Race set to bring over \$800,000 dollars in economic impact

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 13, 2025

What: GoRockford, Rockford Park District, and Rockford BMX are excited to announce the return of the **2025 USA BMX Midwest Nationals**. The exhilarating competition is expected to bring in over 1,500 athletes, 3,500 spectators, and 3,000 room nights. The Midwest nationals event has been hosted in Rockford for over 30 years and will bring an estimated economic impact of over **\$800,000 dollars**.

Last year's Midwest Nationals drew nearly **800 riders** and **3,300 fans** from **33 states** and six countries, solidifying Rockford BMX's status as a top-tier stop on the USA BMX circuit. Families are invited to enjoy this free, action-packed event featuring the opportunity to watch experienced BMX athletes in thrilling races.

"Rockford BMX continues to be one of the region's standout hidden gems," **said Garret Rapp, Public Relations Director for Rockford BMX**. "We're proud to offer one of the top-ranked tracks in the nation, right here in Rockford. The 2025 USA BMX Midwest Nationals, will bring thousands of riders and families together for an exhilarating, action-packed three-day experience."

When: **Friday, June 13 – Sunday, June 15**
Friday, Racing begins at 1:30 p.m.
Saturday, Racing begins at 9 a.m.
Sunday, Racing begins at 8 a.m.

Where: **Rockford BMX Searls Park 4950 Safford Road, Rockford, IL 61101**

Why: BMX (Bicycle Motorcross) is a fast-paced off-road bicycle sport on dirt tracks with jumps and obstacles. The sport started in the 1970s and has been growing in popularity ever since. Founded in 1977, the American Bicycle Association (ABA) is the world's largest BMX racing organization with over 70,000 members racing at more than 300 sanctioned tracks across North America. United States operations are conducted under the brand USA BMX and Canadian operations are known as BMX Canada.

"Rockford BMX has been an integral part of our community, hosting weekly races throughout the summer and welcoming riders of all ages and abilities," **said Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford Vice President of Sales & Service**. "We're incredibly grateful to track owners Candy and Jake Karau, the Rockford Park District, and the entire local community for their dedication and enthusiasm in making events like this possible, helping to solidify Rockford as a vibrant hub for BMX."

"We are honored once again to host the USA BMX Midwest Nationals," **said Candy Karau, Track Operator, Rockford BMX**. "We operate our track to the highest standards, offering races all summer. We appreciate the dedication and support we receive from our community, and we look forward to another incredible year of racing in Rockford."

Other: General parking is \$10 per day. Admission is free and open to the public. For competitors' registration fees and more information, visit www.rockfordbmx.com.

BMX Midwest Nationals Page 2 of 2

Contact: Garret Rapp, Rockford BMX Public Relations Director: 815.608.6158

About USA BMX

Established as the American Bicycle Association in 1977 and headquartered in Tulsa, Oklahoma, ABA is the nation's largest cycling organization with more than 70,000 members with combined racing and freestyle events at more than 300 sanctioned BMX tracks across the United States and Canada. ABA empowers and elevates the early stages of bicycle development by creating opportunities through facility development, programs, and national events. As a result, ABA has developed a structured blueprint. A cyclist can progress from humble beginnings on a balance bike to becoming a BMX Olympian by establishing these roots.

About GoRockford: *GoRockford 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, GoRockford 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: Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford Vice President of Sales & Service: 815.489.1653 or larellano@gorockford.com

Where to Watch & Park

Spectator Guide for IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford

Community Invited to Watch and Cheer Athletes June 22

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 12, 2025

ROCKFORD, IL — The 2025 IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford is making history as the first-ever IRONMAN race in Illinois. The event is sold out, with 2,500 athletes participating from 13 countries and more than 30 U.S. states. The IRONMAN 70.3 race includes a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike ride, and 13.1-mile run through Rockford and surrounding communities. Spectators are invited to welcome and cheer competitors on Sunday, June 22, with the race starting at 7 a.m.

Whether you're cheering from a bridge over the Rock River or joining the spectator party in Rockton, there are plenty of ways to catch the action and celebrate this historic athletic milestone. **Find more information at gorockford.com/ironman/.**

BEST SPECTATOR SPOTS

SWIM COURSE (1.2 miles) – 7 a.m.

- Rock River Recreation Path
 - (Park at YMCA – 200 Y Blvd.; Nicholas Conservatory lots are closed for the Swim Course)
- Riverfront Museum Park Path – 711 N. Main St.
- Prairie Street Brewhouse – 200 Prairie St.
- Rockford Public Library Riverwalk – 215 N. Wyman St.
- State St. and Jefferson St. Bridge sidewalks

BIKE COURSE (56 miles) – beginning around 7:30 a.m.

- 100–200 block of S. Wyman St., Rockford
- 200–300 block of W. State St., Rockford
- Downtown Rockton – Main Street, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Note: Most of the bike course is rural, with limited spectator access due to road closures.

RUN COURSE (13.1 miles) – beginning around 9:30 a.m.

- Rock River Rec Path (Park at YMCA, 200 Y Blvd. or Nicholas Conservatory, 1354 N. 2nd St.)
 - NOTE: The path is CLOSED to allow athletes to run the course. Spectate from grassy areas adjacent to the path.
- Riverfront Museum Park parking lot – 711 N. Main St.
- National Ave., Rockford (please follow all traffic and closure instructions)

FINISH LINE – beginning around 10:30 a.m.

- 100 block of S. Main St., downtown Rockford

ROCKTON SPECTATOR PARTY

Downtown Rockton, Main Street – Sunday, June 22 | 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Don't miss the excitement in Rockton as athletes fly by on their bikes!

Family-friendly activities in Settlers Park and along Main Street include:

- A fun obstacle course for spectators
- Shopping, food trucks, sign-making to cheer on athletes
- Cheering is encouraged!

RACE DAY PARKING

Special event parking is available for \$5/day at three downtown Rockford parking garages:

- Concourse Parking Garage – 200 S. Church St. (Open all day)
- Pioneer Parking Garage – 311 N. Main St. (Open all day)
- State & Main Garage – 301 W. State St. (Must enter before 6:30 a.m., cannot exit until after 2 p.m.)

Street parking and surface lots are also available throughout the downtown area. Be sure to follow all posted NO PARKING signage.

For updates on the 2025 IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois triathlon and information on attending IRONMAN events, please visit gorockford.com/ironman/. Athlete inquiries may be directed to Illinois70.3@ironman.com.

To learn more about the IRONMAN® and IRONMAN 70.3 brands and series of events, please visit www.ironman.com. Media inquiries may be directed to pam@kmkmedia.com or devin@kmkmedia.com.

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About GoRockford

GoRockford (Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau) is responsible for promoting Rockford, Illinois and its surrounding region as an attractive travel destination and enhancing the community's public image as a dynamic place to visit, live and work. Through the impact of travel, GoRockford strengthens the economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in its communities. For more information visit www.gorockford.com.