



# Planning and Development Committee Meeting Agenda

City Hall, Second Floor  
425 E. State Street  
Rockford, IL 61104  
[www.rockfordil.gov](http://www.rockfordil.gov)

**Monday, February 23, 2026  
5:30 PM**

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The following represents, in general, the chronological order of proceedings at the City Council/Committee Meetings: Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Public Speaking and City Council/Committee Agendas.

Meeting will be live streamed on Channel 17 and via this link:  
<https://rockfordil.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

## **II. INFORMATION ONLY**

1. FY26 Q1 Quarterly Results Report for GoRockford. [26-00197](#)
2. Update from the Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention. [26-00198](#)

## **III. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Approval of the 2026 Funding Agreement with the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce (GRCC) as the Regional Economic Development Organization in the amount of \$75,000.00. The funding source is the Redevelopment Fund. [26-00199](#)

## **IV. RESOLUTION**

1. A Resolution calling for a Public Hearing and convening a Joint Review Board in connection with a new South Rockford Industrial Tax Increment Financing District. [26-00218](#)

## **V. ADJOURNMENT**

**THE CITY OF ROCKFORD INTENDS TO COMPLY WITH THE INTENT AND SPIRIT OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. IF A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER, PERSONAL P.A. SYSTEM, OR OTHER SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS ARE NEEDED, PLEASE CALL THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT AT (779) 348-7391 AT LEAST 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE, SO WE CAN BE PREPARED TO ASSIST YOU.**



**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](http://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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### GOROCKFORD NEWS

CRE8IV Sculptures.....	3
815 Day.....	3
Visitor Spending.....	3

### SALES EFFORTS & RESULTS

Sports Sales Highlights.....	4
Booking Highlights.....	4
Winnebago County Hotel Statistics.....	4

### MARKETING

Media Mentions & Placements.....	5
Earned Media.....	5
Social Media Analytics.....	5
Social Media Promotions.....	6
Internship.....	6
Website Statistics.....	6

### DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Forest City Beautiful.....	4
Santa's Workshop.....	4

### MADE FOR ROCKFORD

Quarterly Highlights.....	8
Mixer and Campaign.....	8

### GOROCKFORD BOARD & STAFF

GoRockford Board of Directors.....	9
GoRockford Staff.....	9

## 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](http://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

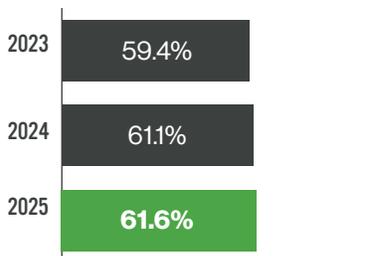
**Future Hotel Room Nights Booked During the Quarter: 27,350 with an economic impact of \$9 Million**  
**Number of Bookings: 16**



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

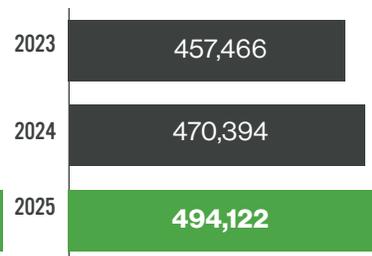
### Year to Date Hotel Occupancy



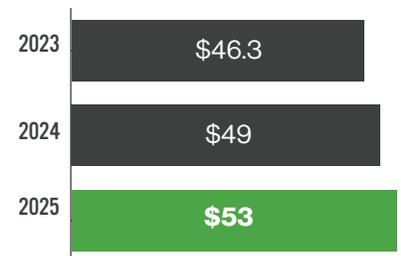
### Year to Date Average Room Rate



### 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

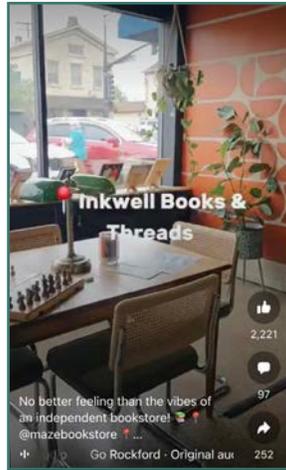
# MARKETING

## 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**

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**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 70<sup>th</sup> 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,

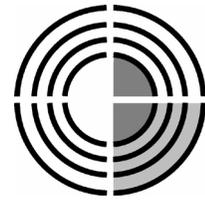


Darrell Snorek, Board Secretary  
kp

# **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.

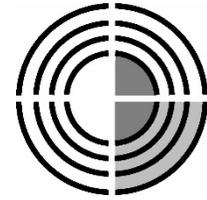
**REPORT:** Staff regularly executes agreements, contracts and reports with government and private entities, and all is done within the approved executive limitations policies. No such instances of required consent agenda items have been documented within the timing of this report.

**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**

	<b>Overall Satisfaction</b> (Venue Experience) (scale 1/low-5/high)	<b>Satisfaction with GOROCKFORD Staff</b> (scale 1/low-5/high)	<b>Intent to Return</b>
<b>Meeting/Event Planner Survey</b> 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 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September, executing the 12<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> season of hosting Beats & Bites summer lunch series after a successful 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> grant will start once the first grant is finalized, to spend out the remaining \$452k of the original \$1.5 million. The 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](mailto:larellano@gorockford.com)  
Chris Hankins, Volunteer Director IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois, 815.708.4408, [chris.hankins@ironman.com](mailto: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

###

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford Vice President of Sales and Service, 815.489.1664, [larellano@gorockford.com](mailto: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/](https://gorockford.com/ironman/).

###

**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](https://www.gorockford.com).

To learn more about the IRONMAN® and IRONMAN 70.3 brands and series of events, please visit [www.ironman.com](https://www.ironman.com). Media inquiries may be directed to [pam@kmkmedia.com](mailto:pam@kmkmedia.com) or [devin@kmkmedia.com](mailto: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 10<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.IWBC.org).

**Media Contacts:** Dr. Kat Williams, CEO, International Women's Baseball Center, [KWilliams@IWBC.org](mailto:KWilliams@IWBC.org), 304.617.4474; Nick Povalitis, founder, Plus Seven Company, [Nick@PlusSevenCompany.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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/](http://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/](http://gorockford.com/ironman/). Athlete inquiries may be directed to [Illinois70.3@ironman.com](mailto:Illinois70.3@ironman.com).

To learn more about the IRONMAN® and IRONMAN 70.3 brands and series of events, please visit [www.ironman.com](http://www.ironman.com). Media inquiries may be directed to [pam@kmkmedia.com](mailto:pam@kmkmedia.com) or [devin@kmkmedia.com](mailto: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](http://www.gorockford.com).



**GOROCKFORD**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT**

**FY26, Q2**  
**October - December, 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](http://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 close the second quarter of FY26, and reflect on 2025, this period offered an important opportunity to reflect on how Rockford's story is being shared beyond our region, and how meaningful, community-driven moments can resonate on a national stage.

One of the most notable highlights of the quarter was Rockford's feature on **NBC Nightly News**, which showcased **Stroll on State's "Letters to Santa"** program.

The segment captured the heart of our community and the spirit of the season. That national exposure reinforced the value of authentic experiences and local storytelling in shaping how Rockford is perceived across the country.

We also welcomed a visiting journalist from **Matador Network**, who spent time exploring Rockford's art, architecture, attractions, and outdoor spaces. The resulting coverage introduced Rockford to a broad national audience.

Beyond media exposure, we continued to make progress on projects that will shape Rockford's future. Construction began on several significant attractions, including **Davis Park** and **Beyer Stadium**, while the redevelopment of the historic **Chick House Hotel** moved forward. These investments represent long-term commitments to downtown vitality, visitor experience, and quality of life for residents.

Our sales team focused on relationship-building through key industry tradeshow this quarter, including **TEAMS Conference & Expo** and **US Sports Congress**. These efforts are translating into results, with hotel revenue up more than **\$5 million** over 2024.

Marketing efforts this quarter included a winter campaign across digital and out-of-home channels, along with influencer partnerships that highlighted Rockford's dining, shopping, and seasonal experiences.

Thank our partners, sponsors, volunteers, and community leaders for their continued collaboration and support. We look forward to 2026 and the return of **IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford**, and the **WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup**.

Be well,

John Groh  
GoRockford President/CEO

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### GOROCKFORD NEWS

Stroll on State.....	3
Women's World Cup.....	3
Davis Park Ground-breaking.....	3

### SALES EFFORTS & RESULTS

Sports Sales Highlights.....	4
Booking Highlights.....	4
Winnebago County Hotel Statistics.....	4

### MARKETING

Media Mentions & Placements.....	5
Earned Media.....	5
Social Media Analytics.....	5
Social Media Promotions.....	6
Influencers.....	6
Website Statistics.....	6

### DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Stroll on State Partnership.....	7
Stroll on State By the Numbers.....	7

### MADE FOR ROCKFORD

Quarterly Highlights.....	8
Mixer and Campaign.....	8
NBC Nightly News Coverage.....	8

### GOROCKFORD BOARD & STAFF

GoRockford Board of Directors.....	9
GoRockford Staff.....	9

## 13TH ANNUAL STROLL ON STATE



Balloon handlers walk with the Stroll on State ornament balloon during the Merry & Bright parade at the 13th annual Stroll on State.

The **2025 Stroll on State** on **November 29** marked the snowiest Stroll in the event's **13-year history**, coinciding with the season's first measurable snowfall. More than 10 inches of snow fell across the Rockford area, creating a picturesque holiday setting while also presenting significant operational challenges. Event organizers, volunteers, and the City of Rockford Public Works team worked quickly and corroboratively to maintain safe, accessible streets, sidewalks, and activities throughout the day. Despite the extreme winter conditions, an **estimated 15,000 attendees** came downtown to celebrate, shop, and enjoy the festivities. The strong turnout highlighted the resilience of Stroll on State and the enduring holiday spirit of the Rockford community, demonstrating that even severe weather could not diminish enthusiasm for this signature annual event. Additional event metrics can be found on page 7.

Stroll on State kicks off the holiday season in downtown Rockford and encourages local shopping during Small Business Saturday. Holiday decor, including a donated 40-foot tree, larger than life present boxes, holiday planters, two additional trees, over 30 wreaths on the bridge crossing the Rock River, over 100 string lit trees and more adorn the downtown, bringing holiday cheer and festive beauty for all to enjoy until early January.

"Stroll on State is truly made possible by the incredible support of our community; from the sponsors and partners who invest in the event to the volunteers who show up year after year," **said Kristen Paul, Executive Vice President of GoRockford.** "That collective commitment is what allows Stroll on State to continue growing and bringing people together each holiday season. As we look ahead to 2026's event, we invite additional businesses and partners to be part of creating a memorable and meaningful holiday experience in downtown Rockford."

## DAVIS PARK RENOVATIONS UNDERWAY

Davis Park broke ground on major renovations in October. This milestone marked a major step in creating a vibrant community hub in the heart of downtown Rockford. Looking ahead, improvements include a universally accessible playground, skate park, performance stage, concessions and restroom building, new river walk, Rock River shoreline improvements and public art displays for all to enjoy.

"This project honors decades of community vision while creating a welcoming, dynamic space that energizes the entire downtown," said Mayor Tom McNamara. "We are excited to see Davis Park come to life as a destination where people can play, gather and enjoy all that Rockford has to offer." With construction underway, the goal is for Davis Park to be able to host IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford for the second time June 14, 2026.

## HISTORIC PROPERTY SEES NEW LIFE

The historic Chick House Hotel is finally getting the restorative remodel it deserves. Originally opened in **1857**, the Chick House Hotel stands at the corner of South Main and Elm Street. The landmark is one of only three commercial buildings still standing in Rockford from the 1850's and early 1860's. In October, City leaders and Urban Equity Properties officially kicked off nearly a **\$14 million redevelopment**. The plan for Chick House is to convert the building into **18 luxury loft apartments** with three retail spaces on the ground floor and a future restaurant. The revitalization of this historical building will not only provide more housing and shopping for those living downtown but provide tens of thousands of people an amazing experience when visiting the BMO.

## BEYER STADIUM BREAKS GROUND

The **International Women's Baseball Center (IWBC)** announced **\$2.35 million** in new funding to accelerate construction of Beyer Stadium, including a \$2 million grant from the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation and \$350,000 from the Amazin' Mets Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the New York Mets.



Maybelle Blair, 98, announces the Beyer Stadium upgrades at the ground breaking ceremony in September 2025.

The park surrounding the historic stadium will be named Beyer Stadium at Maybelle Blair Park, honoring IWBC founding director emeritus and baseball pioneer Maybelle Blair, a former All-American Girls Professional Baseball League pitcher for the Peoria Redwings in 1948.

Phase one of the three-phase project is scheduled for completion in 2026, with full build out targeted for 2030. In October, there was a ground breaking ceremony to start renovations. Also in women's baseball news, GoRockford and Rockford Park District announced **Baseball for All Nationals** will come to the region **July 19-25, 2026** during the same week as the **WBSC Women's Baseball World Cup** group stage. Baseball For All is a national nonprofit providing opportunities for girls to play, coach, and lead in baseball. BFA Nationals is the largest girls' baseball tournament in the country.

# SALES EFFORTS & RESULTS

## SPORTS AND MEETING SALES HIGHLIGHTS



### LEATHERNECK CLASSIC STRIKES BACK

The **25th annual Leatherneck Classic Bowling Tournament**, hosted by **Western Illinois University**, returned to Rockford on **November 8–9**. The tournament is the largest non-major tournament in college bowling, bringing **112 teams** and approximately **1,500 bowlers** and fans to compete across four venues: Don Carter Lanes, The Cherry Bowl, Park Lanes, and Forest Hills Lanes. The tournament generated an estimated more than **500 hotel room nights** and an economic impact of **\$329,000**.

### HEAD OF THE ROCK REGATTA ACTIVATES ROCK RIVER

**Rockford Rowing Crew**, with support from the **YMCA of Rock River Valley**, hosted the annual **Head of the Rock Regatta** on **October 12**. Recognized as one of the top fall regattas in the country, this signature event brought approximately **2,000 athletes** to Rockford from **15 states**, featuring 50 collegiate club crews competing along a 3.1-mile course on the Rock River. The regatta drew more than **7,500 spectators** and an estimated **\$925,000 in economic impact**.

### TEAM ILLINOIS LACROSSE SHOWCASES YOUTH TALENT

**Team Illinois Lacrosse** hosted their **Fall Invitational & Showcase** on **October 26–27** at **MercyHealth Sportscore Two**, welcoming top Midwest lacrosse teams for an elite event that provides athletes the opportunity to showcase their talents in front of over 60 college coaches. The event generated an estimated **\$755,000 economic impact** and approximately **800 hotel room nights**.

### FUJI BJJ DEBUTS

A new martial arts event **Rockford FUJI BJJ Open**, debuted at the **UW Health Sports Factory** on **December 13**. Part of the national FUJI BJJ Tournament Series, a popular nationwide Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu competition circuit, the event welcomed **444 competitors**, with divisions starting as young as age 4.

### TRADESHOW HIGHLIGHTS

GoRockford attended the **TEAMS Conference & Expo** in Columbus, Ohio, **October 13–15**. GoRockford's booth was activated by two costumed **Rockford Peaches** who drew significant attention and traffic to the booth. Throughout the event, the team connected with more than **40 tournament directors**.

GoRockford attended **US Sports Congress** in **Lexington, Kentucky (December 8–11, 2025)**. US Sports Congress is a premier industry conference that convenes senior-level sport rights holders, Olympic national governing bodies, destinations, and key suppliers. GoRockford conducted **20 rights-holder meetings** and sponsored an off-site activation attended by 40 people, including 20 rights holders from various sports.

## BOOKING HIGHLIGHTS

#### WBSC Women's World Cup 2027 Group Stage

July 23, 2027  
2,200 Room nights  
Estimated Economic Impact \$2.1 Million

#### USA BMX Midwest Nationals

June 19, 2026  
800 room nights  
Estimated Economic Impact \$1.4 Million

#### Winter Classic & Hoopfest

January 16 & February 13, 2026  
600 Room nights  
Estimated Economic Impact \$505,607

#### Team Illinois - Spring Lacrosse Invitational

May 2, 2026  
2,000 room nights  
Estimated Economic Impact \$967,892

#### Trek Bike WORS - Border Battle

August 15, 2026  
400 room nights  
Estimated Economic Impact \$222,957

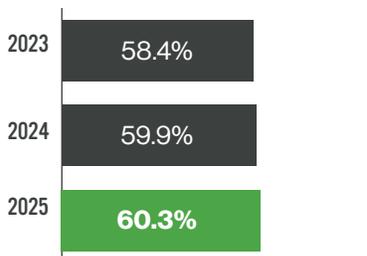
**Future Hotel Room Nights Booked During the Quarter: 21,578 with an economic impact of \$14.8 Million**  
**Number of Bookings: 43**



The GoRockford sales team poses with Rockford Peaches impersonators and Greg Mihalich of Sports Illinois and Illinois Office of Tourism.

## WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOTEL STATISTICS Jan - December, 2025

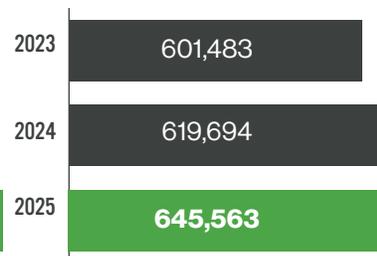
### Year to Date Hotel Occupancy



### 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

**NBC Nightly News:** "Good News: 'Mrs. Claus' answers Santa letters from hundreds of kids" (12/20/2025) 2,130,000 impressions and \$78,810 Earned Media

**NBC 5 Chicago:** "Illinois City Named No.1 Housing Market in the US, according to Zillow" (12/21/2025) 3,700,000 impressions and \$136,900 Earned Media

**Islands.com:** "Illinois 'Crown Jewel' Is A Tranquil Garden Escape Where Japanese Artistry Meets Midwestern Charm" (10/04/2025) 18,370,000 Impressions and \$679,690 Earned Media

**TimeOut Magazine:** "These 3 Illinois state parks were just named among the best (and most affordable to visit) in the U.S." (10/01/2025) 10,300,000 Impressions and \$381,100 Earned Media

**Matador Network:** "Rockford, IL, Is More Than a Pit Stop. Here's Where to Play, Eat, and Stay" (12/15/2025) 381,310 impressions and \$14,071 Earned Media

**Rockford, IL, Is More Than a Pit Stop. Here's Where to Play, Eat, and Stay.**



Matador Network profiles Rockford in a piece focusing on art, gardens, and history in December.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



### FACEBOOK

8.7 Million Views  
59,922 Followers



### INSTAGRAM

1.4 Million Views  
25,353 Followers



### LINKEDIN

2,935 Followers

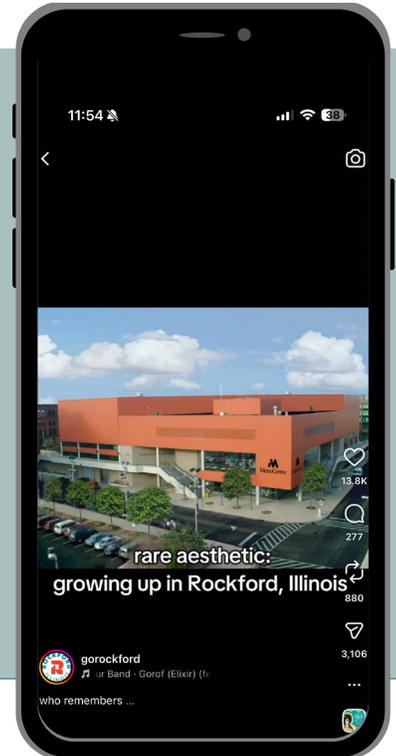


### TikTok

1.8 Million Views  
12,620 Followers

### Top Facebook Post

November 18, 2025 | Impressions 1,682,107



## EARNED MEDIA (October - December, 2025)

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



**\$7,755,000**  
Ad equivalency



**833,000,000**  
Total impressions



**1,310**  
Number of mentions

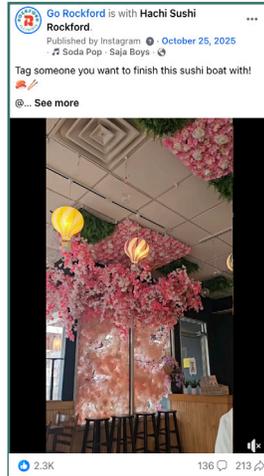
# MARKETING

## SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTIONS

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

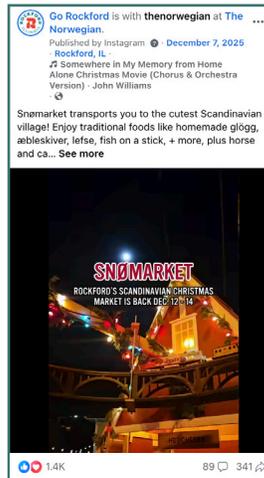
### OCTOBER

October's promotions included fall activities, Halloween events including the return of Eerie Autumn Lights at Klehm Arboretum, Dia de Los Muertos and new business openings. Notably, a profile of Hachi Sushi collectively received 530,000 views between Meta and TikTok. Total views for October was over **2 million** with **49.2K** content interactions on Meta, a **230% increase** from October 2024.



### NOVEMBER

November's social media channels saw incredible growth with over **6.5 million views** on the GoRockford and Stroll on State pages, up **2.3 million** in 2024. Promotions in November focused on Stroll on State, holiday activities and local shopping. GoRockford's most viral video happened in November with holiday light displays. It was the first video to receive over 1 million views, and received over 2.2 million combined views on Meta and Tiktok.



### DECEMBER

December's focus was promoting local holiday shopping and holiday events. GoRockford partnered with Midland States Bank to offer a holiday shopping promotion basket with 6 local businesses. The post received 18,000 views with 713 interactions. The entire month received 2.8 million views between Facebook and Instagram, double the amount of views in 2024.

## 3-MONTH MARKETING CAMPAIGN

### Holiday Marketing Campaign

GoRockford kicked off a 3-month campaign with Nextstar Media starting in November. The campaign included Stroll on State promotion, holiday travel and is ending with Rockford Restaurant Week promotion into February. The media mix included out of home billboards in Milwaukee and Chicago suburbs, Amazon CTV advertising, Google Display and Meta advertising. To date, the campaign has generated the following impressions: **1 million social media, 363,613 out-of-home, 144,199 Google display, and 131,700 Amazon CTV.**

### Influencers

GoRockford worked with Lizanne Lately (71K+ followers) to create a reel and blog encouraging fall visitation to Rockford. Her reel generated **29,255 views** and **2,086 interactions**. During her fall visit, she visited coffee shops and had brunch at The Norwegian. She explored attractions such as Tinker Swiss Cottage and Anderson Gardens.

GoRockford had a call for influencers for Stroll on State 2025 and five local and regional influencers posted about their experience. Combined views was **104,744** across **8 posts**.

### Community Outreach

In October, GoRockford provided an informational table and giveaways at the Dia de Los Muertos event at UW Health Sports Factory.

This was the second of two informational booths (the first in August) to help reach Spanish speaking residents and visitors.



### MOST SEARCHED TERMS

- Rockford Events
- Stroll on State
- Restaurants in Rockford, IL

### MOST SEARCHED EVENTS

- Stroll on State
- Festival of Lights
- Festival of Frights

### MOST SEARCHED LISTINGS

- Anderson Japanese Gardens
- Coronado Theatre
- Burpee Museum of Natural History

## Website Traffic Sources



127,490 total website visitors

# DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

## GOROCKFORD & UMB ANNOUNCE NEW PARTNERSHIP



A couple takes a selfie in front of the City of Rockford Tree.

GoRockford announced a new three-year presenting partnership with **UMB Bank** for Stroll on State, securing the future of the beloved holiday festival through 2026, 2027, and 2028. As the presenting sponsor, UMB Bank's support ensures the continued success and growth of Stroll on State, which is funded entirely through the generosity of community sponsors, volunteers, and partners.

In addition to driving downtown business activity, Stroll on State continued its long-standing tradition of giving back to the community. This year, GoRockford returned all vendor fees due to lower attendance. Proceeds from the hot chocolate, bar, and s'mores stations directly benefited local nonprofit organizations. This financial giveback

reinforces the event's commitment to supporting causes that make a positive impact across the Rockford region.

In 2025, the following organizations received financial contributions from GoRockford in recognition of their volunteer efforts: La Onda, NFP, Jack Baumann Memorial, Nikolas Ritschels Foundation, Wesley Willows Good Samaritan Fund, Auburn High School Key Club, Scouts of America Troops #32 and #432, Girl Scout Troop #3172 and Comprehensive Community Services. Stroll on State would not be possible without the support presenting sponsor UMB Bank along with premiere sponsors: The Power Connection IBEW/NECA, Hard Rockford Casino Rockford and Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23. In addition to these, GoRockford is grateful to the nearly **100 community sponsors and partners**, as well as 300 volunteers collectively contributing over **3,600 volunteer hours of service**. GoRockford extends its sincere thanks to the sponsors whose investment makes the event possible and to the volunteers who generously give their time and energy to bring the holiday tradition to life.



Top Left: Kids make snow angels during the festivities; top right: a child mails their letter to Santa; bottom left: Santa happily greets a child during Santa visits; bottom right: Dasher Dash runners begin their race.

## STROLL ON STATE BY THE NUMBERS

- 👤 15,000 attendees
- 👤 3,600+ volunteer hours logged, supported by dedicated paid staff
- ❄️ 10 inches of snowfall
- 👤 12 professional weather reports
- 👤 56 brand-new snow shovels deployed
- 👤 3 ride-on Snowrators used for snow removal
- 👤 2,300 lbs. of salt used to keep streets and sidewalks safe
- 👤 1,380 registered runners and walkers
- 👤 110 string-lit trees throughout downtown
- 👤 94 street pole snowflakes
- 👤 202 red velvet and glitter bows
- 👤 42 snow angels created during the event
- 👤 35,000 multi color lights on 3 trees
- 👤 72 ice blocks used to build ice towers
- 👤 274 letters written to Santa
- 👤 4 Two Men and A Truck trucks were utilized for event support
- 👤 10,000 (unofficial estimate!) snowballs thrown by kids and adults alike
- 👤 24 firepits with 4 truckloads of wood
- 👤 2 live music stages
- 👤 5.9 million views on social media pages in November
- 👤 Website 44,008 views
- 👤 764 Media Mentions: 1.1 billion event exposures
- 👤 532,214 billboard views

# MADE FOR ROCKFORD

## NATIONAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS ROCKFORD



NBC Nightly News films the "Letters to Santa" segment with Mrs. Claus.

In partnership with a nationally recognized public relations firm, Rockford received significant media attention this quarter across national and regional platforms. Highlights included a tourism feature by **Matador Network**, where a visiting journalist showcased Rockford-area attractions and local restaurants. Matador Network reaches more than 1 million followers on Facebook alone, expanding Rockford's visibility to a national audience. Additionally, **NBC Nightly News** aired a special feature highlighting **Stroll on State** and the Letters to Santa program, further elevating Rockford's community-driven initiatives.

Rockford was recognized by **Zillow** as the top housing market in the nation, a designation that was subsequently picked up by Chicago-area media outlets, amplifying regional awareness.

## HOLIDAY BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN – "IT'S TIME TO MOVE HOME"



A holiday billboard campaign from Made for Rockford gives reasons to move back to Rockford for holiday visitors.

Made for Rockford launched a targeted holiday billboard campaign aimed at individuals returning home for the holidays. Titled "**It's Time to Move Home**," the campaign featured billboards in high-traffic areas and leveraged messaging focused on affordability, family connections, and quality of life. Creative concepts included relatable, emotionally driven lines such as, "You don't need a nanny when you have Nana," reinforcing the value of family support and community. The billboards ran intermittently from Thanksgiving through New Year's and were seen more than **1.5 million** times, strategically timed to reach audiences considering relocation during the holiday season.

## NEW RESIDENT MIXER BRINGS CONNECTIONS



A family poses with at the Made for Rockford photo opp during the New Resident Mixer in November at the Rockford Icehogs game.

Made for Rockford hosted its fourth **New Resident Mixer** in November, marking the largest turnout to date. More than **100 new community members** attended a **Rockford IceHogs** game, where they connected with Go Team ambassadors and fellow residents. The event fostered new friendships, encouraged community engagement, and introduced attendees to local activities and hobbies, strengthening their connection to the Rockford region.

## MADE FOR ROCKFORD ATTENDS TALENT ATTRACTION CONFERENCE

Program Director Whitney Martin attended the **Young, Smart, and Local (YSL) Talent Attraction Conference** in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to strengthen Made for Rockford's talent attraction and retention strategies. YSL is a national network focused on best practices for engaging and retaining young professionals. The conference brought together leaders from economic development, higher education, business, government, and community organizations, providing valuable insight into successful programs being implemented nationwide. With more than 1,000 network members and over 250 professionals in attendance annually, the conference offered actionable ideas and peer connections that will directly inform Rockford's efforts to attract, welcome, and retain talent.

## INVESTING IN ROCKFORD'S FUTURE

Program Director Whitney Martin connected with Rockford Promise students during a retreat at Rockford University, reinforcing the message that Rockford can be their future and that the community is invested in their success. The session emphasized local career opportunities, community support, and the importance of building professional networks. Students participated in structured networking activities designed to build confidence and strengthen their connection to Rockford as a place to live and work after graduation.

# 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

**Mark Henderson**  
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  
June 25, 2025  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
GoRockford Annex**

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**Board Present:** Tiana McCall, Geno Iafrate, John Groh, Todd Cagnoni, Shelton Kay, Patrick Thompson, Kevin Frost, Dana Martin, Carol Schuster, Bobbie Holzwarth, Angela Larson, Jay Sandine, Patricia Diduch

**Board Absent:** Mick Gronewold, Richard Shuga, Kirk Weitzel, Darrell Snorek, Sonya Hoppes, Duncan Geddes, Gretchen Gilmore, Ricardo Montoya-Picazo

**Staff Present:** Joanne Nold, Kristen Paul, Lindsay Arellano, Leah Ticknor

**Others Present:** Mayor Tom McNamara

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by board chair Tiana McCall

- President/CEO John Groh thanked Tiana for her role as Chair and thanked Darrell Snorek for his service on the board. Darrell's seat will be filled by Jennifer First, President of FurstStaffing. Also coming onto the board is Chintan Takar, President & CEO at Decorum Management Group.
- Many board members took time to celebrate the many wins and many shared positive volunteer stories or moments from the race.
- Mayor McNamara commented on a job well done communicating to businesses and neighborhoods. He received no complaints from his neighborhood which was a part of the racecourse, only positive feedback. Mayor McNamara said you really saw a sense of pride for Rockford throughout the IRONMAN race.
- The board gave the staff a standing ovation for a job well done hosting the Inaugural IRONMAN 70.3 race.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the April 23, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**Internal Monitoring Reports:**

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

- 2.8 Communication & Support to Board
- 2.9 Programs/Events/Services/Logistics

**Audit/Budget Committee:**

Recommendation of Approval of FY26 Budget. The board audit/budget committee recommended approval of the FY26 budget as presented. An overview of changes year over year, projected ending point for FY25 and other details were shared. After discussion, the FY26 budget as presented was approved unanimously.

**CEO Report:**

John Groh shared photos and celebrated many wins from the Inaugural Rockford IRONMAN Triathlon hosted on June 22, 2025. John shared that Eric Atnip (IRONMAN Race Director) made it clear IRONMAN wants this to be a

long-term partnership. John shared that many elite athletes said, "Rockford is their new favorite race." Between the many community partnerships and all the volunteers, John said, "we really pulled off something special!"

Lindsay Arellano shared social media quotes shared by volunteers, racers, and others in our community regarding IRONMAN.

A couple of quotes she shared:

- "Rockford set the bar,"
- "It wasn't just a race...this felt like a statement. And Rockford made it loud and clear: we showed up, we care, and we delivered."
- "Rockford, you were legit. The community showed up...and we needed you."

Lindsay said the volunteers just didn't show up but inspired racers to keep going.

Kristen Paul gave an update on the summer Sculptures. 17 pieces will be installed throughout the community by July 15, 2025. Kristen shared that the team is excited to be expanding to new neighborhoods beyond the downtown area.

**Partner Updates:**

County has no news to report.

Jay Sandine invited everyone to attend Friday Night Lights for the Rockford Park District on August 1<sup>st</sup> from 6-9pm.

Angela Larson invited everyone to secure their table for the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner 8-1-5 Rockin' Eve at Hard Rock August 14, 2025, from 5-8:30pm.

Geno Iafate announced Hard Rock Casino Rockford has won 6 awards from Casino Player Magazine for Best New Restaurant, Best Place to See a Concert, and Best Overall Entertainment Best Happy Hour and Best Place to People Watch all less than a year after opening just to name a few.

Carol encouraged 100% donation sponsorship for all board members. Reminding everyone that if they have not contributed to please do so soon.

The board adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

**The next meeting is Wednesday, July 23, 2025**

Respectfully submitted,



Darrell Snorek, Board Secretary  
It



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

---

**Board Present:** Geno Iafrate, Todd Cagnoni, Shelton Kay, Ricardo Montoya-Picazo, Patrick Thompson, Kirk Weitzel, Gretchen Gilmore, John Groh, Jennifer Furst, Chintan Thakkar, Patricia Diduch.

**Board Absent:** Bobbie Holzwarth, Carol Schuster, Mick Gronewold, Angela Larson, Tiana McCall, Richard Shuga, Dana Martin, Kevin Frost, Jay Sandine, Duncan-Geddes, Sonya Hoppes

**Staff Present:** Joanne Nold, Kristen Paul, Whitney Martin, Leah Ticknor

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:36 a.m. by board chair Geno Iafrate. A quorum of the board was not present.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:**

It was moved and seconded to approve the June 25, 2025, meeting minutes. Without a quorum present, approval of the minutes will be deferred until the September meeting.

Geno introduced new board members, and other board members made self-introductions.

Chintan Thakkar gave a more detailed introduction about himself. Chintan is proud to belong to this community and this team. He is excited to be a bridge for the community and advocate for his neighbors.

**Internal Monitoring Reports:**

It was moved and seconded to accept the Internal Monitoring Reports, including John Groh’s CEO Interpretations, for monitoring on 2.3 and 2.4. Without a quorum present, approval of the reports will be deferred until the September meeting.

- 2.3 Financial Planning/Budgeting
- 2.4 Financial Condition & Activities

**Governance Process:**

John encouraged everyone to check their information on the Board Contact Information sheet and send any changes to Leah Ticknor.

**Board Priorities and Governance Policies**

John had an initial call with Attorney Bill Charney to discuss how the board can best lead, influence, and monitor progress on the Destination Master Plan. Bill will also work with John and the Governance Committee to review and update board priorities and governance policies so they reflect the new plan and provide clear direction to staff on implementation. More information will be shared in October.

**Staff Recognition**

John congratulated Kristen Paul on achieving her CDME Certification, the industry’s highest professional credential for destination management executives. The board applauded Kristen.

**CRE8IV Sculpture Program Update**

Kristen provided an update on the CRE8IV sculpture program, noting that the City funded this year’s installations. Seventeen new pieces are planned for installation this summer, and the program continues to receive enthusiastic

community feedback — including artists reporting that passersby rolled down their windows to shout thanks during the installation process. Kristen highlighted how meaningful it has been to expand the program throughout the community.

She also shared that her team is restoring the *ROCKFORD* letters previously located at Davis Park. Once restored, the letters will be relocated to the backside of the library, with the possibility of adding a sculpture to complement the installation.

### **Stroll on State Update**

Staff are actively securing sponsorships for Stroll on State and are halfway to the goal, with a notable new balloon donation from Hard Rock. The team continues to seek new sponsors and welcomes board suggestions. Kristen noted rising costs make even small sponsorships important. The drone show has been booked again due to its popularity. The Stroll Workshop will open in September on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Volunteer needs remain high, with several lead roles to be filled.

### **Sales & Events Update**

John reported on behalf of Lindsay Arellano that the sales team has exceeded its FY25 goal with 76,000 in hotel room night bookings. IRONMAN is nearly wrapped up, and an all-agency partner meeting with our race director is scheduled to review improvements for next year. Ironman dates have been moved off Father's Day weekend to June 14, 2026, and June 13, 2027. Atwood Trails hosted 700 riders this past weekend in a new partnership with the Park District and the Wisconsin Off-Road Series, marking the first time this event was held in Illinois.

### **Made for Rockford Update**

John congratulated Whitney on her 1st anniversary with both the organization and the Made for Rockford program. Whitney highlighted growing visibility and impact, including 70 attendees at the June mixer at Anderson Gardens, where newcomers were welcomed with stickers to spark conversations. She emphasized the program's goal of ensuring new and returning residents feel connected. The team is also offering community tours and preparing to launch the Made for Rockford Impact Award through the Chamber of Commerce. Partnerships now include Rockford Promise, with plans to engage students through postcards and mentoring.

### **Partner Updates**

Gretchen reported that *Beats and Bites* is being hosted downtown every Thursday with food trucks and live music, and encouraged board participation. She noted BMO will host the second weekend of the Jehovah's Witness Convention this Friday with 4,500 attendees.

**Todd Cagnoni** provided an update on Davis Park. Two bid packages have been released covering landscaping, art, the skate park, stage and other amenities. The goal remains to complete Davis Park by Ironman 2026. The board thanked Todd for his efforts.

**Geno lafrate** shared positive feedback from attending Old Settlers Days, calling it a fantastic and well-done event. Tricia Diduch expressed appreciation for the feedback.

The board adjourned at 8:22 a.m.

**The next meeting is Wednesday, September 24, 2025**

Respectfully submitted,



Dana Martin, Board Secretary

LT

# **MONITORING REPORTS**



102 N. Main St.  
Rockford, IL 61101  
Ph 815.963.8111

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Date: July 17, 2025  
To: GoRockford Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
Re: Summary of:

- Internal Monitoring Report on Management Limitations
  - Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning / Budget
- Internal Monitoring Report on Executive Limitations
  - Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Condition and Activities

Monitoring Report 2.3 refers to fiscal financial planning and budget.

Monitoring Report 2.4 deals with RACVB's ongoing financial condition and has attached the preliminary Balance Sheet, preliminary Summary Income Statement, and Cash Flow Statement as of June 30, 2025.

**We are reporting compliance in all matters contained in monitoring reports for the period ending June 30, 2025, with the exception of 2.4.2.**

Please call me with any questions regarding these reports.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Groh  
President & CEO



## Internal Monitoring Report - Management Limitations

June 30, 2025

Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budget  
Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Conditions and Activities

### SUMMARY

1. **Compliance:** The President/CEO reports compliance on all 2.3 and 2.4 monitoring reports, with exception of 2.4.2.
2. **Line of Credit:** GoRockford ended the month of June 2025 with a \$0 balance on its line of credit.
3. **Total Current Net Assets:** \$1,481,378
4. **Total Current Liabilities:** \$1,381,224
5. **Board Governance:** Budgeted \$10,100 – year-to-date expense is \$24,556
6. **Total Operating Revenues:** \$4,291,991 to date at June 30, 2025 for FY25
7. **Total Operating Expenses:** \$4,278,598 year to date at June 30, 2025 for FY25
8. **Trade Acts. Receivable:** \$57,876 (does not include hotel taxes or grants)
9. **Accounts Receivable Grants:** \$5,142
10. **Accounts Payable:** \$159,814
11. **Total Cash on Hand:** \$688,284, including \$127,170 Funds Held in Trust and \$401,065 Designated Funds

SEE JUNE 2025 FINANCIALS



To: GoRockford Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report - Management Limitations  
Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budget

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Management Limitations Policy 2.3, “Financial Planning/Budget,” in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Groh", written over a horizontal line.

John Groh, President & CEO

July 17, 2025  
Date

## **POLICY 2.3 – FINANCIAL PLANNING/BUDGETING**

### **BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:**

**“Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year will not deviate materially from the Board’s Ends Priority, risk fiscal jeopardy, or fail to address multi-year planning considerations.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** Except for the multi-year planning component, I submit that the Board has comprehensively interpreted this broadest policy statement in its subsequent provisions.

As to multi-year planning, I interpret this policy to require that we sufficiently project all capital and depreciation needs and develop financial resources needed to achieve our Board’s Priority End Results. I also interpret this policy to indicate that as the President & CEO, I have the flexibility to revise budgetary projections throughout the year, but I am to keep the Board apprised of material changes, and any changes must meet all the criteria in this policy.

My interpretations and reporting data are presented below. I will utilize the fiscal information provided in the June 30, 2025 preliminary financials.

**REPORT:** On July 24, 2024, the board approved a twelve-month budget for the fiscal year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), with a projected net loss of \$16,387 after depreciation of \$55,000.

**Accordingly, the President & CEO shall not allow budgeting that:**

**2.3.1 “Risks incurring those situations or conditions described as unacceptable in the “Financial Conditions and Activities” Board policies 2.4.1 - 2.4.4.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** I interpret this policy to require that I ensure that financial plans and budgets prepared must avoid the liquidity risk situations and conditions described as unacceptable in the 2.4 Financial Condition and Activities Board policies. These policies include items such as expending more funds than have been received during a fiscal year relative to

operating reserve guidelines, incurring the organization, settling payroll and payables in a timely manner, and ensuring timely filing of government payments and filings.

**REPORT:** On July 24, 2024, the board adopted a twelve-month FY25 budget for July 2024 through June 2025. The budget was approved with a projected loss of \$16,387 after depreciation of \$55,000.

The bureau did not draw on the line of credit during the last fiscal year due to stable hotel tax revenue and conservative spending. All budgeted revenue for FY25 is consistent with our mission, and all revenue received during the quarter ended June 30, 2025, was from sources consistent with our mission.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.3.2 “Omits credible projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operational items, cash flow, and disclosure of planning assumptions.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** I interpret this policy to mean that the budget prepared, utilized, and available for presentation must have adequate data to support the credibility of projections. It must highlight the separation of capital items from operational expenses, include a presentation of cash flow expectations for the year, and convey the key assumptions used in creating the projections.

**REPORT:** The VP of Finance & Administration, along with the President/CEO and program directors, developed the annual budget based on sales and marketing plans, historical financial data, and projected revenue from hotel taxes, state grants, and other predictable sources. Capital expenditures were budgeted separately from expenses. A cash flow projection and a narrative budget summary of assumptions were prepared and shared with the Audit Committee and GoRockford Board for budget approval.

Management is provided monthly financial reports comparing actual results to budget, and the GoRockford Board receives quarterly financial reports, including a cash flow statement, along with a financial analysis of any unanticipated activity. We ended the quarter of June 2025 with a \$0 balance on our line of credit, demonstrating that our revenue, expenses, and cash flow projections were reliable.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.3.3 “Plans the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be received.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** This policy requires that a conservative projection of revenues must exceed our most realistic projection of expenses for any fiscal year.

**REPORT:** Only revenue that is contracted for, on hand from the retained earnings of prior years, or reasonably attainable (e.g., sponsorships) is budgeted.

The projected twelve-month FY25 budget shows a deficit of \$16,387 after depreciation. Before depreciation of \$55,000, the budget has projected net income of \$38,613.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.3.4 “Omits allocation for board prerogatives during the year than as set forth in the Cost of Governance Board policy 4.10.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** As the Board establishes its budget for what it believes is important to invest in its own governance, this policy requires that I ensure that the annual budget I prepare for the corporation as a whole allocates at least as much as is stated in the Cost of Governance policy for board prerogatives and functions.

**REPORT:** The amount set forth in our approved FY25 budget for the cost of Board prerogatives is \$10,100 and is budgeted for board consulting and retreats.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.3.5 “Fails to maintain operating reserves equivalent to three months of basic operating expenses. Operating reserves are defined as available cash on hand in cash or highly liquid assets and do not include any line of credit or other form of cash flow debt instruments in the calculation thereof.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as previous report)** I interpret this policy regarding liquidity to require that our financial planning must maintain cash or cash equivalents of at least three months of basic operational costs (estimated at approximately \$436,000 for FY25 under the approved budget). As outlined in the policy, this includes cash on hand and highly liquid assets, which I interpret to include the calculation of total short-term assets less short-term liabilities. Additionally, the calculation of operating reserves does not include access to any line of credit or other form of cash flow debt instruments.

**NOTE:** In June 2023, the board approved a new Reserve Fund Policy that calls for building a designated cash reserve fund over time up to 25% of the annual expense budget for personnel and operations, in combination with the \$250,000 line of credit already in place (thus, approximately \$186,000 for FY25, complemented by the existing \$250,000 line of credit). This will be funded from operating revenue, namely hotel tax revenue, one of our few sources of revenue that is not designated.

**REPORT:** As of June 30, 2025, the bureau's operating reserve bank account balance was approximately \$45,000, with monthly transfers of \$2,500 from the operating account to the reserve account. Thus, we are on track to implement the new policy's recommendations and requirements.

At the current transfer rate of \$2,500/month, the reserve fund will grow by \$30,000 annually. Assuming continued funding and no withdrawals, the balance is projected to reach the target by March 2030.

**Revisions to Board Policies 2.3 and 2.4 are recommended to ensure consistency and clarity across governing documents.** These revisions should explicitly acknowledge the Reserve Fund Policy and incorporate the designated reserve fund as a distinct component of the organization's overall liquidity and risk management strategy. Updating these policies will align financial oversight expectations with the current board-approved approach and clarify the distinction between the original three-month liquidity requirement and the long-term reserve-building goal.

***As we are in compliance with the new Reserve Fund Policy, I am reporting compliance.***

**REFER TO JUNE 2025 FINANCIALS**

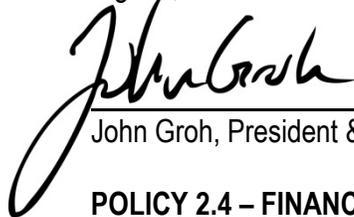
**Attachments:** Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow  
Prepared by: John Groh and Joanne Nold 6/17/25



To: GoRockford Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report- Executive Limitations  
Quarterly Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Condition and Activities

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Management Limitations Policy 2.4, “Financial Condition and Activities”, in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report and the accompanying Income Statement and Balance Sheet are accurate in all material respects.

Signed,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Groh, President & CEO

June 17, 2025  
Date

## **POLICY 2.4 – FINANCIAL CONDITION AND ACTIVITIES**

### **BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:**

**“With respect to the financial condition and activities, the President & CEO will not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from the board’s Ends priorities.”**

**CEO’s INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** I submit that the board’s concerns about avoidance of fiscal jeopardy are comprehensively interpreted in this policy’s subsequent provisions. Regarding expenditures, I interpret “material deviation of actual expenditures from the Board’s Ends priorities” to mean avoidance of waste, such that all expenditures are to be viewed as investments towards the achievement of GoRockford’s Ends.

**REPORT:** My interpretations and reporting data on the fiscal jeopardy provisions are presented with those provisions noted below. With respect to expenditures deviating from Ends policies, anticipated expenditures itemized in our FY25 budget are reviewed by the Board when monitoring to ensure adherence to our Financial Planning/Budgeting Policy (2.3). Material variances (none this reporting period) are noted in the monitoring of provision 2.4.5 below.

### **Accordingly, he/she may not:**

**2.4.1 “Expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year to date unless the operating reserve guidelines are met according to 2.3.5.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** This policy requires that year-to-date expenses be less than corresponding revenues. Any exceptions are subject to the operating reserve guidelines.

**REPORT:** As of June 30, 2025, we have recorded operating revenues of \$4,291,991 and incurred operating expenses (expending of funds) before depreciation of \$4,278,598, resulting in a profit of \$13,393 from operations. After depreciation expense, we are reporting a net loss of \$43,131 for the fiscal year. The approved budget projected a net loss of \$16,388. We are meeting our operating reserve requirements, therefore we are reporting compliance.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.2 “Indebt the organization, with the exception of: credit cards or credit accounts used for regular business purposes and paid in full each month; accessing a Board-approved Line of Credit in an amount not to exceed \$100,000, with notification to Board Governance Committee of any draws on the line within four business days of each draw. Draws of over \$100,000 require Board approval. Any draw on the line should be viewed as a short-term float and be accompanied by a plan for repayment, ideally within 90 days.**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** This policy gives the CEO the latitude to approve any draws against the line of credit (currently maintained at \$250,000) within the parameters explicitly stated in the policy provision.

Further, I am to ensure that GoRockford credit cards are used only for bureau purposes and that balances are paid in full each month. However, consistent with my interpretation of Policy 2.4.3, I interpret that other credit accounts can be settled by the due date if terms are specifically agreed upon and otherwise within thirty to sixty days.

**REPORT:** The Bureau entered the quarter with a balance of \$0 on the line of credit. As no draws were made during the quarter, it ended June 2025 with a line of credit balance of \$0.

In May 2022, the board approved the bureau borrowing up to \$100,000 for the newly acquired building at **310 S. Winnebago St.** On September 14, 2022, the bureau received a \$100,000 loan from IL Bank & Trust to pay for major roof repairs and masonry work. The loan is amortized on a 30-year repayment schedule at 6.15% interest, but **monthly payments of \$1,940 started on October 14, 2022, to repay the loan in 5 years.** The loan is secured by the building.

The board officers approved, and the board later ratified, the Bureau to apply for an **Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)** in April 2020. The initial loan proceeds of \$10,000 were received on May 1, 2020, and are forgivable under the program. The final loan proceeds of \$75,400 were received on June 19, 2020, and carry a term of 30 years, at 2.75%, with deferred monthly payments of \$322 that started in December 2022 after multiple delays. The loan payments are paying down accrued interest only until June 2025, at which time a portion of the monthly payments will also pay off the principal.

Finally, corporate credit cards and accounts were only used for typical business purchases during the June 30, 2025 quarter, with one exception. During the quarter there was one violation in regards to non-business purchases with a corporate credit card. The staff member inadvertently used a CVB-issued card for a personal purchase of \$57 and the staff member immediately paid the bureau back for the purchase upon self-identifying the error.

***I am reporting non-compliance.***

**2.4.3 “Operate without settling payroll and payables in a timely manner.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** Payroll must be paid as required every other Friday. For other payables, I interpret “timely” to mean by the due date if terms are specifically agreed upon and otherwise within thirty to sixty days.

**REPORT:** As of June 30, 2025, trade accounts payables totaled \$159,814. Payables continue to be settled within 30 to 45 days unless they are dependent on grant funding that has been delayed. In those situations, we have received payment flexibility from the vendors. Payroll has been paid timely on a bi-weekly basis.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.4.4 “Allow tax or other government ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed. Requirements include but are not limited to annual independent audits, audit compliance, annual 990 statements, annual budgets, quarterly activity reports and financial statements, minutes, and agendas from Board meetings.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** All tax and government-required payments or filings must be made promptly and accurately.

**REPORT:** All withholding taxes and other such payments or filings for the period have been made on time and accurately. Federal and state income tax withholdings have been submitted to the proper taxing authorities within 5 business days following the payroll dates. Federal and state unemployment taxes have been paid by the end of the month following the payroll quarter. There are no outstanding filings, and there have been no late penalties. The annual Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2024 was filed by the due date of December 15, 2024.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.4.5 “Make a single purchase or commitment of greater than \$25,000 unless such purchase was explicitly itemized in monitoring reports previously disclosed to the board. Splitting orders and /or paying from two consecutive fiscal years to avoid this limit is not acceptable.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** The Board must specifically approve all single expenditures of more than \$25,000 that were not previously disclosed as part of budget monitoring data.

Further, I interpret that individual expenditures paid to a single vendor and, in the aggregate, exceeding \$25,000 do not require board approval if they are within the overall projected expense for the fiscal year. As noted in the policy, splitting payments to avoid this limit is not acceptable.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** During the quarter, no purchase or commitment more than \$25,000 has been made that was not specifically projected in the annual budget or subsequently

approved by the board, with the exception of some expenses in the Made for Rockford program, which were not identified in the original FY25 budget because the program was reactivated after the budget's approval last June. Because sponsorship revenue and a DCEO state grant cover all expenses for this program, we did not seek additional approval.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.6 **“Solely execute payments in an amount greater than \$5,000, or solely execute any payments to himself/herself. Signatures are to be in the priority order of signing as outlined in Policy 4.8.2.C where signatures on checks are required by Board member.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** No checks or electronic fund transfers (EFTs) can be solely executed in an amount greater than \$5,000, nor solely executed as payments to the President/CEO.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** For this period, no checks in an amount greater than \$5,000 have been executed solely, and no solely executed payments have been made to the President/CEO. Other signators were as specified in Policy 4.3.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.7 **“Acquire, encumber, lease or dispose of real property.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** All decisions regarding the purchase or sale of land or buildings are considered to be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** No real property has been encumbered, acquired, or disposed of during this period.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.8 **“Operate without aggressively pursuing material receivables in accordance with commonly accepted practices.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report)** I interpret a “reasonable grace period” to be sixty (60) days and “material” to be receivables that, when collected, are of greater value than the cost of collection (including staff time). I interpret “aggressively pursuing” to require regular follow-up in writing, over the phone when all other avenues have been exhausted, and when the cost would benefit the recovery utilizing a collection agency.

**REPORT:** At the end of this period, no material receivables were outstanding.

*I am reporting compliance.*

- 2.4.9 **“Obtain revenues from sources that are not, in fact and appearance, legal and consistent with the ends policies, mission and values of the organization.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** I interpret this policy as allowing staff to identify and generate new revenue streams and sources without requiring explicit board approval (as long as they meet the “prudence” test). However, “prudence” in this case is further defined to preclude any revenue sources that conflict with our mission and values and thus could provide embarrassment to the organization and its constituents.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** During this period, no revenues have been obtained from sources that are inconsistent with GoRockford’s mission and values or would provide embarrassment to GoRockford or its constituents.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.10 “Use restricted funds for purposes other than stated by the contributor or use Board designated funds except as explicitly authorized by the Board.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** This policy requires that we manage finances consistently with generally accepted accounting principles regarding the segregation and use of restricted funds. “Restricted” contributions are monies directed to GoRockford to be used for a specific purpose. Board-designated funds are those funds the board had pre-determined to hold in reserve for specific purposes.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** Finances have been managed in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and any restricted funds will be reported separately in the balance sheet attached to this report. Funds have only been used for their intended purposes.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.11 “Operate without adequate internal controls over receipts and disbursements to avoid unauthorized payments or material dissipation of assets. The organization shall not have secret funds, and it shall prohibit any unaudited transactions or loans.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report)** Controls must be in place to ensure all receipts are properly recorded, and disbursements are appropriately authorized. Further, all payments (checks, EFTs, credit card purchases, petty cash, etc.) must have corresponding documentation sufficient to satisfy the auditor. Finally, we may not make unaudited loans of any type.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** Internal controls in place are consistent with Board policy and the generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) prescribed by the Board-appointed auditors. As part of the annual audit, the independent auditor reviews our internal control procedures in place during the year. The organization does not have secret funds and does not allow unaudited transactions or loans. The most recent audit for FY24 reported a clean opinion.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.12 “Pledge any of the assets of the corporation as security within any contracts.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** No assets can be pledged as security within any contracts without board approval.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** During the period, no corporation assets were pledged as security within any contracts.

In June 2020, the board approved the bureau's application for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan in the amount of \$75,400. The loan required the bureau to pledge personal property as collateral.

In May 2022, the board approved the bureau to obtain a loan secured by the newly acquired building at 310 S. Winnebago St. to finance major building improvements. A \$100,000 loan was obtained on September 15, 2022, from Illinois Bank & Trust. The loan is secured by the building.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.13 “Allow the expenditure of organizational funds for travel purposes which are not specifically related to or consistent with the organization’s purpose and functions.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** Compliance with this policy is achieved when all travel expenses can be justified as reasonable investments toward achieving our Priority Results.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** All expenditures for travel during the quarter have been consistent with the organization’s purpose and function.

*I am reporting compliance.*

## **REFER TO JUNE 2025 FINANCIALS**

**Attachments:** Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow.  
Prepared by: John Groh and Joanne Nold 7/17/2025

Rockford Area ConventionisitorsBureau  
Statement of Financial Position  
June 30, 2025  
July 16, 2025

**ASSETS**

**Current Assets**

Petty Cash	\$ 132.00	
Cash - Operating IL B & T	102,750.96	
Cash - Designated Funds	401,065.43	
Cash - Capital Planning & Dev	1,990.15	
Cash - Private Sector Funds	10,073.16	
Cash - Operating Reserve	45,102.15	
Cash - Funds Held in Trust	127,170.54	
Accounts Receivable	5,142.02	
Other Grants Receivable	402,838.56	
City/County Gov't Receivable	135,901.67	
Due from Foundation	3,326.20	
Other Receivables	160,088.88	
Inventory	10,955.76	
Prepaid Expenses	<u>74,840.78</u>	
 Total Current Assets		 1,481,378.26

**Property and Equipment**

Furniture & Equipment	506,229.99	
Leasehold Improvements	635,079.30	
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(936,275.64)</u>	
 Total Property and Equipment		 205,033.65

**Other Assets**

Long-Term Receivable	<u>718,010.20</u>	
 Total Other Assets		 <u>718,010.20</u>

**Total Assets** **\$ 2,404,422.11**

**LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL**

**Current Liabilities**

Funds Held in Trust	\$ 125,186.28	
Accounts Payable-Operating	159,814.33	
Accrued Accounts Payable	65,522.10	
Accrued Payroll	102,398.17	
Accrued Vacation Pay	46,064.29	
Payroll Taxes and Withholding	7,800.00	
Accrued Interest	458.46	
Unearned Income	<u>873,980.82</u>	
 Total Current Liabilities		 1,381,224.45

**Long-Term Liabilities**

Unearned Income	718,010.20	
SBA Loan Payable - LT	<u>75,400.00</u>	
 Total Long-Term Liabilities		 <u>793,410.20</u>

Total Liabilities 2,174,634.65

**Capital**

Net Assets	272,915.44	
Net Income	<u>(43,127.98)</u>	
 Total Capital		 <u>229,787.46</u>

**Total Liabilities & Capital** **\$ 2,404,422.11**

Income Statement  
For the Twelve Months Ending June 30, 2025  
July 16, 2025

	Current Quarter	Year to Date	Year to Date	Year to Date	Annual Budget
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>					
City/County Gov't Agreements	\$ 424,745	1,661,456 \$	1,617,467	43,989 \$	1,617,467
County, other city contracts	3,633	17,199	16,946	253	16,946
Marketing Partnership Grant	15,397	83,785	85,000	(1,215)	85,000
LTCB Grant Revenue	142,870	571,450	571,450	0	571,450
Other Grant Revenue	645,341	1,220,782	1,080,280	140,502	1,080,280
Stroll on State	0	351,422	362,800	(11,378)	362,800
CRE8IV Revenue	12,690	12,690	20,340	(7,650)	20,340
Forest City Beautiful	84,249	176,899	167,400	9,499	167,400
Other Revenue	(142,426)	113,529	254,764	(141,235)	254,764
Coop Partnership Revenue	0	45,899	46,000	(101)	46,000
Room Rebate Revenue	1,000	1,000	0	1,000	0
Advertising Revenue	7,281	19,622	18,000	1,622	18,000
Miscellaneous Income	1,341	10,503	9,700	803	9,700
Interest Revenue	1,595	5,755	40	5,715	40
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES</b>	<b>1,197,716</b>	<b>4,291,991</b>	<b>4,250,187</b>	<b>41,804</b>	<b>4,250,187</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>					
Total Personnel	341,071	1,450,590	1,485,134	(34,544)	1,485,134
Total Operations	53,042	235,695	224,690	11,005	224,690
Total Activities	693,484	2,592,313	2,501,751	90,562	2,501,751
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,087,597</b>	<b>4,278,598</b>	<b>4,211,575</b>	<b>67,023</b>	<b>4,211,575</b>
<b>INCOME FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>110,119</b>	<b>13,393</b>	<b>38,612</b>	<b>(25,219)</b>	<b>38,612</b>
<b>NON OPERATING REVENUE</b>					
In-Kind Revenue	21,346	115,141	85,383	29,758	85,383
<b>PARTNERSHIP REVENUE</b>	<b>(21,346)</b>	<b>(115,141)</b>	<b>(85,383)</b>	<b>(29,758)</b>	<b>(85,383)</b>
<b>NON OPERATING EXPENSES</b>					
Inkind Expenses	21,346	115,141	85,383	29,758	85,383
<b>PARTNERSHIP EXPENSE</b>	<b>21,346</b>	<b>115,141</b>	<b>85,383</b>	<b>29,758</b>	<b>85,383</b>
<b>INCOME FROM PARTNERS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Depreciation Expense	14,521	56,524	55,000	1,524	55,000
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 95,598</b>	<b>(43,131) (\$</b>	<b>16,388)</b>	<b>(26,743) (\$</b>	<b>16,388)</b>

For Management Purposes Only

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
FY25 Cash Flow

	Actual July	Actual August	Actual September	Actual October	Actual November	Actual December	Actual January	Actual February	Actual March	Actual April	Actual May	Actual June	FY25 TOTALS
<b>Initial Cash Balance (not including funds held in trust and operating reserve)</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,863</b>	<b>\$ 1,001,374</b>	<b>\$ 913,878</b>	<b>\$ 723,519</b>	<b>\$ 803,264</b>	<b>\$ 863,103</b>	<b>\$ 812,654</b>	<b>\$ 809,166</b>	<b>\$ 1,030,727</b>	<b>\$ 855,418</b>	<b>\$ 755,889</b>	<b>\$ 654,040</b>	
<b>Add Cash Receipts:</b>													
City Contract	127,993	170,530	172,855	172,437	165,554	161,506	121,426	100,286	107,619	86,052	142,931	143,999	1,673,188
County/S.Beloit Contracts	3,944	943	882	3,353	25	2,502	3,269	722	1,132	738	650	394	18,553
LTCB Grant/Marketing Ptshp Grant				200,000	129,062			170,741	114,582	37,322			651,707
Other grants	16,327	31,974				19,742	50,000	181,734	11,184	12,000			322,961
Made for Rockford receipts	100,000	25,000			50,000		150,000						325,000
Forest City Beautiful/Sculptures/Murals	25,000		68,842		9,822		2,096			56,800		135,250	297,809
Other Revenue	5,000	11,803	18,326			8,826						23,451	67,406
Stroll on State	9,500	27,100		-	99,000								135,600
Annual Meeting			32,444	10,910	400	400	100						44,254
Advertising revenue	972	534	956	1,384	1,687	831	3,375	1,153	1,340	3,464	1,583	1,486	18,765
Interest income	386	639	515										1,540
Misc Income	942	4,498	131	344	2,898	295	2,991	606	2,684	11,850	429	1,105	28,773
<b>Total Cash Receipts</b>	<b>290,064</b>	<b>273,020</b>	<b>294,951</b>	<b>388,429</b>	<b>458,448</b>	<b>194,101</b>	<b>333,257</b>	<b>455,241</b>	<b>238,541</b>	<b>208,226</b>	<b>145,593</b>	<b>305,685</b>	<b>3,585,555</b>
<b>Less Operating Expenses:</b>													
Total Personnel	114,710	158,623	108,210	107,935	116,554	112,122	172,854	110,085	105,966	108,730	108,028	124,316	1,448,133
Total Operations	16,744	29,704	13,715	22,490	20,390	19,461	20,728	18,658	20,629	15,617	19,534	17,476	235,146
Total Activities	153,392	167,290	360,546	172,600	252,673	105,481	139,211	102,437	284,755	180,908	113,728	299,421	2,332,442
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>284,846</b>	<b>355,617</b>	<b>482,471</b>	<b>303,025</b>	<b>389,617</b>	<b>237,064</b>	<b>332,793</b>	<b>231,180</b>	<b>411,350</b>	<b>305,255</b>	<b>241,290</b>	<b>441,213</b>	<b>4,015,721</b>
<b>Plus Other Receipts:</b>													
Prepays expensed	10,400												10,400
<b>Less Other Disbursements:</b>													
Transfer to Reserve Fund	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	30,000
Payments for Outstanding Payables	50,000												50,000
Payments for Debt Service	339	339	339	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,017
Payments for Fixed Assets	1,868	2,060		3,158	6,492	4,986	1,452	-	-	-	3,652		23,668
<b>End Cash Balance (not including funds held in trust and operating reserve)</b>	<b>\$ 1,001,374</b>	<b>\$ 913,878</b>	<b>\$ 723,519</b>	<b>\$ 803,264</b>	<b>\$ 863,103</b>	<b>\$ 812,654</b>	<b>\$ 809,166</b>	<b>\$ 1,030,727</b>	<b>\$ 855,418</b>	<b>\$ 755,889</b>	<b>\$ 654,040</b>	<b>\$ 516,012</b>	



102 N. Main St.  
Rockford, IL 61101  
Ph 815.963.8111

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Date: July 17, 2025  
To: GoRockford Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
Re: Summary of:

- Internal Monitoring Report on Management Limitations
  - Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning / Budget
  
- Internal Monitoring Report on Executive Limitations
  - Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Condition and Activities

Monitoring Report 2.3 refers to fiscal financial planning and budget.

Monitoring Report 2.4 deals with RACVB's ongoing financial condition and has attached the preliminary Balance Sheet, preliminary Summary Income Statement, and Cash Flow Statement as of June 30, 2025.

**We are reporting compliance in all matters contained in monitoring reports for the period ending June 30, 2025, with the exception of 2.4.2.**

Please call me with any questions regarding these reports.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Groh  
President & CEO



## Internal Monitoring Report - Management Limitations

June 30, 2025

Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budget  
Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Conditions and Activities

### SUMMARY

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Compliance:                 | The President/CEO reports compliance on all 2.3 and 2.4 monitoring reports, with exception of 2.4.2. |
| 2. Line of Credit:             | GoRockford ended the month of June 2025 with a \$0 balance on its line of credit.                    |
| 3. Total Current Net Assets:   | \$1,481,378  |
| 4. Total Current Liabilities:  | \$1,381,224  |
| 5. Board Governance:           | Budgeted \$10,100 – year-to-date expense is \$24,556   |
| 6. Total Operating Revenues:   | \$4,291,991 to date at June 30, 2025 for FY25  |
| 7. Total Operating Expenses:   | \$4,278,598 year to date at June 30, 2025 for FY25   |
| 8. Trade Acts. Receivable:     | \$57,876 (does not include hotel taxes or grants)  |
| 9. Accounts Receivable Grants: | \$5,142  |
| 10. Accounts Payable:          | \$159,814  |
| 11. Total Cash on Hand:        | \$688,284, including \$127,170 Funds Held in Trust and \$401,065 Designated Funds                    |

SEE JUNE 2025 FINANCIALS



To: GoRockford Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report - Management Limitations  
Monitoring on Policy 2.3 – Financial Planning/Budget

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Management Limitations Policy 2.3, “Financial Planning/Budget,” in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Groh", written over a horizontal line.

John Groh, President & CEO

July 17, 2025  
Date

## **POLICY 2.3 – FINANCIAL PLANNING/BUDGETING**

### **BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:**

**“Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year will not deviate materially from the Board’s Ends Priority, risk fiscal jeopardy, or fail to address multi-year planning considerations.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** Except for the multi-year planning component, I submit that the Board has comprehensively interpreted this broadest policy statement in its subsequent provisions.

As to multi-year planning, I interpret this policy to require that we sufficiently project all capital and depreciation needs and develop financial resources needed to achieve our Board’s Priority End Results. I also interpret this policy to indicate that as the President & CEO, I have the flexibility to revise budgetary projections throughout the year, but I am to keep the Board apprised of material changes, and any changes must meet all the criteria in this policy.

My interpretations and reporting data are presented below. I will utilize the fiscal information provided in the June 30, 2025 preliminary financials.

**REPORT:** On July 24, 2024, the board approved a twelve-month budget for the fiscal year (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), with a projected net loss of \$16,387 after depreciation of \$55,000.

**Accordingly, the President & CEO shall not allow budgeting that:**

**2.3.1 “Risks incurring those situations or conditions described as unacceptable in the “Financial Conditions and Activities” Board policies 2.4.1 - 2.4.4.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** I interpret this policy to require that I ensure that financial plans and budgets prepared must avoid the liquidity risk situations and conditions described as unacceptable in the 2.4 Financial Condition and Activities Board policies. These policies include items such as expending more funds than have been received during a fiscal year relative to

operating reserve guidelines, incurring the organization, settling payroll and payables in a timely manner, and ensuring timely filing of government payments and filings.

**REPORT:** On July 24, 2024, the board adopted a twelve-month FY25 budget for July 2024 through June 2025. The budget was approved with a projected loss of \$16,387 after depreciation of \$55,000.

The bureau did not draw on the line of credit during the last fiscal year due to stable hotel tax revenue and conservative spending. All budgeted revenue for FY25 is consistent with our mission, and all revenue received during the quarter ended June 30, 2025, was from sources consistent with our mission.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.3.2 “Omits credible projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operational items, cash flow, and disclosure of planning assumptions.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** I interpret this policy to mean that the budget prepared, utilized, and available for presentation must have adequate data to support the credibility of projections. It must highlight the separation of capital items from operational expenses, include a presentation of cash flow expectations for the year, and convey the key assumptions used in creating the projections.

**REPORT:** The VP of Finance & Administration, along with the President/CEO and program directors, developed the annual budget based on sales and marketing plans, historical financial data, and projected revenue from hotel taxes, state grants, and other predictable sources. Capital expenditures were budgeted separately from expenses. A cash flow projection and a narrative budget summary of assumptions were prepared and shared with the Audit Committee and GoRockford Board for budget approval.

Management is provided monthly financial reports comparing actual results to budget, and the GoRockford Board receives quarterly financial reports, including a cash flow statement, along with a financial analysis of any unanticipated activity. We ended the quarter of June 2025 with a \$0 balance on our line of credit, demonstrating that our revenue, expenses, and cash flow projections were reliable.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.3.3 “Plans the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be received.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** This policy requires that a conservative projection of revenues must exceed our most realistic projection of expenses for any fiscal year.

**REPORT:** Only revenue that is contracted for, on hand from the retained earnings of prior years, or reasonably attainable (e.g., sponsorships) is budgeted.

The projected twelve-month FY25 budget shows a deficit of \$16,387 after depreciation. Before depreciation of \$55,000, the budget has projected net income of \$38,613.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.3.4 “Omits allocation for board prerogatives during the year than as set forth in the Cost of Governance Board policy 4.10.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** As the Board establishes its budget for what it believes is important to invest in its own governance, this policy requires that I ensure that the annual budget I prepare for the corporation as a whole allocates at least as much as is stated in the Cost of Governance policy for board prerogatives and functions.

**REPORT:** The amount set forth in our approved FY25 budget for the cost of Board prerogatives is \$10,100 and is budgeted for board consulting and retreats.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.3.5 “Fails to maintain operating reserves equivalent to three months of basic operating expenses. Operating reserves are defined as available cash on hand in cash or highly liquid assets and do not include any line of credit or other form of cash flow debt instruments in the calculation thereof.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as previous report)** I interpret this policy regarding liquidity to require that our financial planning must maintain cash or cash equivalents of at least three months of basic operational costs (estimated at approximately \$436,000 for FY25 under the approved budget). As outlined in the policy, this includes cash on hand and highly liquid assets, which I interpret to include the calculation of total short-term assets less short-term liabilities. Additionally, the calculation of operating reserves does not include access to any line of credit or other form of cash flow debt instruments.

**NOTE:** In June 2023, the board approved a new Reserve Fund Policy that calls for building a designated cash reserve fund over time up to 25% of the annual expense budget for personnel and operations, in combination with the \$250,000 line of credit already in place (thus, approximately \$186,000 for FY25, complemented by the existing \$250,000 line of credit). This will be funded from operating revenue, namely hotel tax revenue, one of our few sources of revenue that is not designated.

**REPORT:** As of June 30, 2025, the bureau's operating reserve bank account balance was approximately \$45,000, with monthly transfers of \$2,500 from the operating account to the reserve account. Thus, we are on track to implement the new policy's recommendations and requirements.

At the current transfer rate of \$2,500/month, the reserve fund will grow by \$30,000 annually. Assuming continued funding and no withdrawals, the balance is projected to reach the target by March 2030.

**Revisions to Board Policies 2.3 and 2.4 are recommended to ensure consistency and clarity across governing documents.** These revisions should explicitly acknowledge the Reserve Fund Policy and incorporate the designated reserve fund as a distinct component of the organization's overall liquidity and risk management strategy. Updating these policies will align financial oversight expectations with the current board-approved approach and clarify the distinction between the original three-month liquidity requirement and the long-term reserve-building goal.

***As we are in compliance with the new Reserve Fund Policy, I am reporting compliance.***

**REFER TO JUNE 2025 FINANCIALS**

**Attachments:** Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow  
Prepared by: John Groh and Joanne Nold 6/17/25



To: GoRockford Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President & CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report- Executive Limitations  
Quarterly Monitoring on Policy 2.4 – Financial Condition and Activities

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Management Limitations Policy 2.4, “Financial Condition and Activities”, in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report and the accompanying Income Statement and Balance Sheet are accurate in all material respects.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Groh", written over a horizontal line.

John Groh, President & CEO

June 17, 2025  
Date

## POLICY 2.4 – FINANCIAL CONDITION AND ACTIVITIES

### BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:

**“With respect to the financial condition and activities, the President & CEO will not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from the board’s Ends priorities.”**

**CEO’s INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** I submit that the board’s concerns about avoidance of fiscal jeopardy are comprehensively interpreted in this policy’s subsequent provisions. Regarding expenditures, I interpret “material deviation of actual expenditures from the Board’s Ends priorities” to mean avoidance of waste, such that all expenditures are to be viewed as investments towards the achievement of GoRockford’s Ends.

**REPORT:** My interpretations and reporting data on the fiscal jeopardy provisions are presented with those provisions noted below. With respect to expenditures deviating from Ends policies, anticipated expenditures itemized in our FY25 budget are reviewed by the Board when monitoring to ensure adherence to our Financial Planning/Budgeting Policy (2.3). Material variances (none this reporting period) are noted in the monitoring of provision 2.4.5 below.

### Accordingly, he/she may not:

**2.4.1 “Expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year to date unless the operating reserve guidelines are met according to 2.3.5.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** This policy requires that year-to-date expenses be less than corresponding revenues. Any exceptions are subject to the operating reserve guidelines.

**REPORT:** As of June 30, 2025, we have recorded operating revenues of \$4,291,991 and incurred operating expenses (expending of funds) before depreciation of \$4,278,598, resulting in a profit of \$13,393 from operations. After depreciation expense, we are reporting a net loss of \$43,131 for the fiscal year. The approved budget projected a net loss of \$16,388. We are meeting our operating reserve requirements, therefore we are reporting compliance.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.2** “Indebt the organization, with the exception of: credit cards or credit accounts used for regular business purposes and paid in full each month; accessing a Board-approved Line of Credit in an amount not to exceed \$100,000, with notification to Board Governance Committee of any draws on the line within four business days of each draw. Draws of over \$100,000 require Board approval. Any draw on the line should be viewed as a short-term float and be accompanied by a plan for repayment, ideally within 90 days.

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** This policy gives the CEO the latitude to approve any draws against the line of credit (currently maintained at \$250,000) within the parameters explicitly stated in the policy provision.

Further, I am to ensure that GoRockford credit cards are used only for bureau purposes and that balances are paid in full each month. However, consistent with my interpretation of Policy 2.4.3, I interpret that other credit accounts can be settled by the due date if terms are specifically agreed upon and otherwise within thirty to sixty days.

**REPORT:** The Bureau entered the quarter with a balance of \$0 on the line of credit. As no draws were made during the quarter, it ended June 2025 with a line of credit balance of \$0.

In May 2022, the board approved the bureau borrowing up to \$100,000 for the newly acquired building at **310 S. Winnebago St.** On September 14, 2022, the bureau received a \$100,000 loan from IL Bank & Trust to pay for major roof repairs and masonry work. The loan is amortized on a 30-year repayment schedule at 6.15% interest, but **monthly payments of \$1,940 started on October 14, 2022, to repay the loan in 5 years.** The loan is secured by the building.

The board officers approved, and the board later ratified, the Bureau to apply for an **Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)** in April 2020. The initial loan proceeds of \$10,000 were received on May 1, 2020, and are forgivable under the program. The final loan proceeds of \$75,400 were received on June 19, 2020, and carry a term of 30 years, at 2.75%, with deferred monthly payments of \$322 that started in December 2022 after multiple delays. The loan payments are paying down accrued interest only until June 2025, at which time a portion of the monthly payments will also pay off the principal.

Finally, corporate credit cards and accounts were only used for typical business purchases during the June 30, 2025 quarter, with one exception. During the quarter there was one violation in regards to non-business purchases with a corporate credit card. The staff member inadvertently used a CVB-issued card for a personal purchase of \$57 and the staff member immediately paid the bureau back for the purchase upon self-identifying the error.

*I am reporting non-compliance.*

**2.4.3 “Operate without settling payroll and payables in a timely manner.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** Payroll must be paid as required every other Friday. For other payables, I interpret “timely” to mean by the due date if terms are specifically agreed upon and otherwise within thirty to sixty days.

**REPORT:** As of June 30, 2025, trade accounts payables totaled \$159,814. Payables continue to be settled within 30 to 45 days unless they are dependent on grant funding that has been delayed. In those situations, we have received payment flexibility from the vendors. Payroll has been paid timely on a bi-weekly basis.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.4 “Allow tax or other government ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed. Requirements include but are not limited to annual independent audits, audit compliance, annual 990 statements, annual budgets, quarterly activity reports and financial statements, minutes, and agendas from Board meetings.**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** All tax and government-required payments or filings must be made promptly and accurately.

**REPORT:** All withholding taxes and other such payments or filings for the period have been made on time and accurately. Federal and state income tax withholdings have been submitted to the proper taxing authorities within 5 business days following the payroll dates. Federal and state unemployment taxes have been paid by the end of the month following the payroll quarter. There are no outstanding filings, and there have been no late penalties. The annual Form 990 for the year ended June 30, 2024 was filed by the due date of December 15, 2024.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.5 “Make a single purchase or commitment of greater than \$25,000 unless such purchase was explicitly itemized in monitoring reports previously disclosed to the board. Splitting orders and /or paying from two consecutive fiscal years to avoid this limit is not acceptable.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** The Board must specifically approve all single expenditures of more than \$25,000 that were not previously disclosed as part of budget monitoring data.

Further, I interpret that individual expenditures paid to a single vendor and, in the aggregate, exceeding \$25,000 do not require board approval if they are within the overall projected expense for the fiscal year. As noted in the policy, splitting payments to avoid this limit is not acceptable.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** During the quarter, no purchase or commitment more than \$25,000 has been made that was not specifically projected in the annual budget or subsequently

approved by the board, with the exception of some expenses in the Made for Rockford program, which were not identified in the original FY25 budget because the program was reactivated after the budget's approval last June. Because sponsorship revenue and a DCEO state grant cover all expenses for this program, we did not seek additional approval.

***I am reporting compliance.***

- 2.4.6 “Solely execute payments in an amount greater than \$5,000, or solely execute any payments to himself/herself. Signatures are to be in the priority order of signing as outlined in Policy 4.8.2.C where signatures on checks are required by Board member.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (*Same as the previous report.*)** No checks or electronic fund transfers (EFTs) can be solely executed in an amount greater than \$5,000, nor solely executed as payments to the President/CEO.

**REPORT: (*Same as the previous report.*)** For this period, no checks in an amount greater than \$5,000 have been executed solely, and no solely executed payments have been made to the President/CEO. Other signators were as specified in Policy 4.3.

***I am reporting compliance.***

- 2.4.7 “Acquire, encumber, lease or dispose of real property.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (*Same as the previous report.*)** All decisions regarding the purchase or sale of land or buildings are considered to be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

**REPORT: (*Same as the previous report.*)** No real property has been encumbered, acquired, or disposed of during this period.

***I am reporting compliance.***

- 2.4.8 “Operate without aggressively pursuing material receivables in accordance with commonly accepted practices.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (*Same as the previous report.*)** I interpret a “reasonable grace period” to be sixty (60) days and “material” to be receivables that, when collected, are of greater value than the cost of collection (including staff time). I interpret “aggressively pursuing” to require regular follow-up in writing, over the phone when all other avenues have been exhausted, and when the cost would benefit the recovery utilizing a collection agency.

**REPORT:** At the end of this period, no material receivables were outstanding.

***I am reporting compliance.***

- 2.4.9 “Obtain revenues from sources that are not, in fact and appearance, legal and consistent with the ends policies, mission and values of the organization.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** I interpret this policy as allowing staff to identify and generate new revenue streams and sources without requiring explicit board approval (as long as they meet the “prudence” test). However, “prudence” in this case is further defined to preclude any revenue sources that conflict with our mission and values and thus could provide embarrassment to the organization and its constituents.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** During this period, no revenues have been obtained from sources that are inconsistent with GoRockford’s mission and values or would provide embarrassment to GoRockford or its constituents.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.10 “Use restricted funds for purposes other than stated by the contributor or use Board designated funds except as explicitly authorized by the Board.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** This policy requires that we manage finances consistently with generally accepted accounting principles regarding the segregation and use of restricted funds. “Restricted” contributions are monies directed to GoRockford to be used for a specific purpose. Board-designated funds are those funds the board had pre-determined to hold in reserve for specific purposes.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** Finances have been managed in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and any restricted funds will be reported separately in the balance sheet attached to this report. Funds have only been used for their intended purposes.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.11 “Operate without adequate internal controls over receipts and disbursements to avoid unauthorized payments or material dissipation of assets. The organization shall not have secret funds, and it shall prohibit any unaudited transactions or loans.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report)** Controls must be in place to ensure all receipts are properly recorded, and disbursements are appropriately authorized. Further, all payments (checks, EFTs, credit card purchases, petty cash, etc.) must have corresponding documentation sufficient to satisfy the auditor. Finally, we may not make unaudited loans of any type.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** Internal controls in place are consistent with Board policy and the generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) prescribed by the Board-appointed auditors. As part of the annual audit, the independent auditor reviews our internal control procedures in place during the year. The organization does not have secret funds and does not allow unaudited transactions or loans. The most recent audit for FY24 reported a clean opinion.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.12 “Pledge any of the assets of the corporation as security within any contracts.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** No assets can be pledged as security within any contracts without board approval.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** During the period, no corporation assets were pledged as security within any contracts.

In June 2020, the board approved the bureau's application for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan in the amount of \$75,400. The loan required the bureau to pledge personal property as collateral.

In May 2022, the board approved the bureau to obtain a loan secured by the newly acquired building at 310 S. Winnebago St. to finance major building improvements. A \$100,000 loan was obtained on September 15, 2022, from Illinois Bank & Trust. The loan is secured by the building.

*I am reporting compliance.*

**2.4.13 “Allow the expenditure of organizational funds for travel purposes which are not specifically related to or consistent with the organization’s purpose and functions.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (Same as the previous report.)** Compliance with this policy is achieved when all travel expenses can be justified as reasonable investments toward achieving our Priority Results.

**REPORT: (Same as the previous report.)** All expenditures for travel during the quarter have been consistent with the organization’s purpose and function.

*I am reporting compliance.*

## **REFER TO JUNE 2025 FINANCIALS**

**Attachments:** Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow.  
Prepared by: John Groh and Joanne Nold 7/17/2025

Rockford Area ConventionisitorsBureau  
Statement of Financial Position  
June 30, 2025  
July 16, 2025

**ASSETS**

**Current Assets**

Petty Cash	\$ 132.00	
Cash - Operating IL B & T	102,750.96	
Cash - Designated Funds	401,065.43	
Cash - Capital Planning & Dev	1,990.15	
Cash - Private Sector Funds	10,073.16	
Cash - Operating Reserve	45,102.15	
Cash - Funds Held in Trust	127,170.54	
Accounts Receivable	5,142.02	
Other Grants Receivable	402,838.56	
City/County Gov't Receivable	135,901.67	
Due from Foundation	3,326.20	
Other Receivables	160,088.88	
Inventory	10,955.76	
Prepaid Expenses	<u>74,840.78</u>	
 Total Current Assets		 1,481,378.26

**Property and Equipment**

Furniture & Equipment	506,229.99	
Leasehold Improvements	635,079.30	
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(936,275.64)</u>	
 Total Property and Equipment		 205,033.65

**Other Assets**

Long-Term Receivable	<u>718,010.20</u>	
 Total Other Assets		 <u>718,010.20</u>

**Total Assets** \$ 2,404,422.11

**LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL**

**Current Liabilities**

Funds Held in Trust	\$ 125,186.28	
Accounts Payable-Operating	159,814.33	
Accrued Accounts Payable	65,522.10	
Accrued Payroll	102,398.17	
Accrued Vacation Pay	46,064.29	
Payroll Taxes and Withholding	7,800.00	
Accrued Interest	458.46	
Unearned Income	<u>873,980.82</u>	
 Total Current Liabilities		 1,381,224.45

**Long-Term Liabilities**

Unearned Income	718,010.20	
SBA Loan Payable - LT	<u>75,400.00</u>	
 Total Long-Term Liabilities		 <u>793,410.20</u>

**Total Liabilities** 2,174,634.65

**Capital**

Net Assets	272,915.44	
Net Income	<u>(43,127.98)</u>	
 Total Capital		 <u>229,787.46</u>

**Total Liabilities & Capital** \$ 2,404,422.11

Income Statement  
For the Twelve Months Ending June 30, 2025  
July 16, 2025

	Current Quarter	Year to Date	Year to Date	Year to Date	Annual Budget
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>					
City/County Gov't Agreements	\$ 424,745	1,661,456 \$	1,617,467	43,989 \$	1,617,467
County, other city contracts	3,633	17,199	16,946	253	16,946
Marketing Partnership Grant	15,397	83,785	85,000	(1,215)	85,000
LTCB Grant Revenue	142,870	571,450	571,450	0	571,450
Other Grant Revenue	645,341	1,220,782	1,080,280	140,502	1,080,280
Stroll on State	0	351,422	362,800	(11,378)	362,800
CRE8IV Revenue	12,690	12,690	20,340	(7,650)	20,340
Forest City Beautiful	84,249	176,899	167,400	9,499	167,400
Other Revenue	(142,426)	113,529	254,764	(141,235)	254,764
Coop Partnership Revenue	0	45,899	46,000	(101)	46,000
Room Rebate Revenue	1,000	1,000	0	1,000	0
Advertising Revenue	7,281	19,622	18,000	1,622	18,000
Miscellaneous Income	1,341	10,503	9,700	803	9,700
Interest Revenue	1,595	5,755	40	5,715	40
<b>TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES</b>	<b>1,197,716</b>	<b>4,291,991</b>	<b>4,250,187</b>	<b>41,804</b>	<b>4,250,187</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>					
Total Personnel	341,071	1,450,590	1,485,134	(34,544)	1,485,134
Total Operations	53,042	235,695	224,690	11,005	224,690
Total Activities	693,484	2,592,313	2,501,751	90,562	2,501,751
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,087,597</b>	<b>4,278,598</b>	<b>4,211,575</b>	<b>67,023</b>	<b>4,211,575</b>
<b>INCOME FROM OPERATIONS</b>	<b>110,119</b>	<b>13,393</b>	<b>38,612</b>	<b>(25,219)</b>	<b>38,612</b>
<b>NON OPERATING REVENUE</b>					
In-Kind Revenue	21,346	115,141	85,383	29,758	85,383
<b>PARTNERSHIP REVENUE</b>	<b>(21,346)</b>	<b>(115,141)</b>	<b>(85,383)</b>	<b>(29,758)</b>	<b>(85,383)</b>
<b>NON OPERATING EXPENSES</b>					
Inkind Expenses	21,346	115,141	85,383	29,758	85,383
<b>PARTNERSHIP EXPENSE</b>	<b>21,346</b>	<b>115,141</b>	<b>85,383</b>	<b>29,758</b>	<b>85,383</b>
<b>INCOME FROM PARTNERS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Depreciation Expense	14,521	56,524	55,000	1,524	55,000
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 95,598</b>	<b>(43,131) (\$</b>	<b>16,388)</b>	<b>(26,743) (\$</b>	<b>16,388)</b>

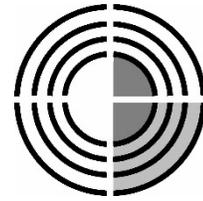
For Management Purposes Only

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
FY25 Cash Flow

	Actual July	Actual August	Actual September	Actual October	Actual November	Actual December	Actual January	Actual February	Actual March	Actual April	Actual May	Actual June	FY25 TOTALS
<b>Initial Cash Balance (not including funds held in trust and operating reserve)</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,863</b>	<b>\$ 1,001,374</b>	<b>\$ 913,878</b>	<b>\$ 723,519</b>	<b>\$ 803,264</b>	<b>\$ 863,103</b>	<b>\$ 812,654</b>	<b>\$ 809,166</b>	<b>\$ 1,030,727</b>	<b>\$ 855,418</b>	<b>\$ 755,889</b>	<b>\$ 654,040</b>	
<b>Add Cash Receipts:</b>													
City Contract	127,993	170,530	172,855	172,437	165,554	161,506	121,426	100,286	107,619	86,052	142,931	143,999	1,673,188
County/S.Beloit Contracts	3,944	943	882	3,353	25	2,502	3,269	722	1,132	738	650	394	18,553
LTCB Grant/Marketing Ptshp Grant				200,000	129,062			170,741	114,582	37,322			651,707
Other grants	16,327	31,974				19,742	50,000	181,734	11,184	12,000			322,961
Made for Rockford receipts	100,000	25,000			50,000		150,000						325,000
Forest City Beautiful/Sculptures/Murals	25,000		68,842		9,822		2,096			56,800		135,250	297,809
Other Revenue	5,000	11,803	18,326			8,826						23,451	67,406
Stroll on State	9,500	27,100		-	99,000								135,600
Annual Meeting			32,444	10,910	400	400	100						44,254
Advertising revenue	972	534	956	1,384	1,687	831	3,375	1,153	1,340	3,464	1,583	1,486	18,765
Interest income	386	639	515										1,540
Misc Income	942	4,498	131	344	2,898	295	2,991	606	2,684	11,850	429	1,105	28,773
<b>Total Cash Receipts</b>	<b>290,064</b>	<b>273,020</b>	<b>294,951</b>	<b>388,429</b>	<b>458,448</b>	<b>194,101</b>	<b>333,257</b>	<b>455,241</b>	<b>238,541</b>	<b>208,226</b>	<b>145,593</b>	<b>305,685</b>	<b>3,585,555</b>
<b>Less Operating Expenses:</b>													
Total Personnel	114,710	158,623	108,210	107,935	116,554	112,122	172,854	110,085	105,966	108,730	108,028	124,316	1,448,133
Total Operations	16,744	29,704	13,715	22,490	20,390	19,461	20,728	18,658	20,629	15,617	19,534	17,476	235,146
Total Activities	153,392	167,290	360,546	172,600	252,673	105,481	139,211	102,437	284,755	180,908	113,728	299,421	2,332,442
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>284,846</b>	<b>355,617</b>	<b>482,471</b>	<b>303,025</b>	<b>389,617</b>	<b>237,064</b>	<b>332,793</b>	<b>231,180</b>	<b>411,350</b>	<b>305,255</b>	<b>241,290</b>	<b>441,213</b>	<b>4,015,721</b>
<b>Plus Other Receipts:</b>													
Prepays expensed	10,400												10,400
<b>Less Other Disbursements:</b>													
Transfer to Reserve Fund	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	30,000
Payments for Outstanding Payables	50,000												50,000
Payments for Debt Service	339	339	339	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,017
Payments for Fixed Assets	1,868	2,060		3,158	6,492	4,986	1,452	-	-	-	3,652		23,668
<b>End Cash Balance (not including funds held in trust and operating reserve)</b>	<b>\$ 1,001,374</b>	<b>\$ 913,878</b>	<b>\$ 723,519</b>	<b>\$ 803,264</b>	<b>\$ 863,103</b>	<b>\$ 812,654</b>	<b>\$ 809,166</b>	<b>\$ 1,030,727</b>	<b>\$ 855,418</b>	<b>\$ 755,889</b>	<b>\$ 654,040</b>	<b>\$ 516,012</b>	



Governing Policy of the Board of Directors



Policy 2.0 Monitoring Report, General Executive Constraint

Management Limitations

To: GoRockford Board of Directors
From: John Groh, President/CEO
RE: Internal Monitoring Report- Executive Limitations
Monitoring on Policy 2.0 – General Executive Constraint

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Executive Limitations Policy 2.0, "General Executive Constraint," in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is accurate for the annual period through September 2025.

Signed,

Handwritten signature of John Groh
John Groh
President/CEO

September 22, 2025

POLICY 2.0 – GENERAL EXECUTIVE CONSTRAINT BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:

"The President/CEO will not cause nor allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is either unlawful, imprudent, or in violation of commonly accepted business and professional ethics and practices."

CEO INTERPRETATION: (no changes since last report) I interpret "practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance" to mean and include all operational activities, methods, and decisions, i.e., those that occur under my authority as President and CEO of the Bureau. By definition, this does not encompass the Board's actions, although I am to inform the Board should I have any concerns regarding the same.

I interpret "unlawful" to require that GoRockford establish policies and implement practices that follow all applicable laws, ordinances, and regulations of the jurisdictions in which we operate.

Regarding "ethics" and "prudence", I submit that the Board has comprehensively interpreted these concerns in the other policy titles under "Management Limitations." I further interpret this to mean that, should a circumstance arise about which the Board has not articulated any specific policies, it will use the test of "is this something a reasonably ethical CEO, exercising sound business judgment, might have done in this context?" as the "catch-all" criterion for evaluation.

I also interpret "commonly accepted business and professional ethics and practices" to mean that we conduct business in ways that are aligned with the stated best practices and ethics of our industry group, Destinations International. Achievement of this is marked, in part, by maintaining accreditation

Internal Monitoring Report – Executive Limitations
Quarterly Monitoring on Policy 2.0 – General Executive Constraint

within the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program.

I also interpret this policy to mean that we communicate as appropriate and necessary to all board members, staff, contracted workers, and our partners our expectation that they comply with such laws, ethics, and best practices.

**REPORT:** Our reports on prudence, ethics, and business practices are, per my interpretation above, incorporated into specific monitoring reports provided to the Board on each of the other Management Limitations policies. I am therefore focusing this report on the policy provision proscribing against any “unlawful” actions or situations, and compliance with the “best practices” standards of Destination International, our trade industry association.

The organization, its board, staff, contractors, and partners conduct their GoRockford-related business with sound judgment and prudence, and in ways that comply with these legal and industry standards. In the past year, **no legal action has been brought against GoRockford** for breaches of any laws, regulations, ordinances, or ethics violations, and **there have been no allegations made** publicly (e.g., via the news media) or privately regarding such breaches of laws, regulations, ordinances, or ethics violations. There have been **no allegations or formal actions taken against GoRockford** for failing to fulfill its contractual commitments, nor am I aware of any situation that would lead to such allegations.

As evidence that GoRockford follows industry best practices and standards, as defined by Destinations International, the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) officially accredited GoRockford in April 2009. We have continuously maintained the accreditation since that time, completing annual updates as required, including submitting documentation and **receiving reaccreditation in 2023**.

As of July 2025, **GoRockford was one of six in Illinois (out of 37) and one of only approximately 150 Destination Marketing Organizations globally** that have met these standards, out of more than 1,500 CVBs in the US.

Additionally, though anecdotal, evidence of the industry’s regard for GoRockford is that President/CEO John Groh is sought out to serve on industry boards and committees. His leadership roles have included board service for Destinations International and the Destination International Foundation (including terms as vice chair, chair, and past chair). In Illinois, he has served as a board member, committee chair, and chair of the Illinois Council of Convention & Visitor Bureaus, now the Illinois Destinations Association, where he serves as a member of the board. Staff members also serve on a variety of local boards and committees.

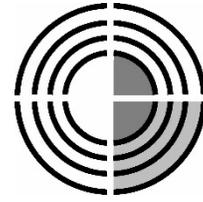
Additionally, to ensure lawful conduct, as well as to protect the assets and reputation of GoRockford, staff regularly seek professional counsel and guidance of legal, accounting/finance, human resource, marketing, and destination marketing industry professionals. Use of an attorney’s counsel to protect the Bureau’s legal interests in the past year includes seeking counsel on human resource and personnel matters, and for issues related to the property tax exemption of GoRockford’s 310 S. Winnebago St. property.

I am reporting compliance.

Prepared by: Leah Ticknor/John Groh



Governing Policy of the  
GoRockford Board of  
Directors



Policy 2.6 Monitoring Report, Emergency CEO Succession

*Management Limitations*

To: GoRockford Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President/CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report- Executive Limitations  
Monitoring on Policy 2.6 – Emergency CEO Succession

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Executive Limitations Policy 2.6, “Emergency CEO Succession,” in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is accurate for the annual period through September 2025.

Signed,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Groh

September 22, 2025

**POLICY 2.6 – EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE SUCCESSION**

**BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:**

**“The President/CEO will not operate without management succession planning processes to facilitate smooth and competent operation of the organization during key personnel transitions.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (no changes since last report)** I interpret this to mean that there will be established processes in place to ensure the organization can continue to operate normally in the event that any key leadership positions become vacant.

I interpret “key personnel” to be synonymous with our “leadership team” which includes our Executive Vice President, Vice President of Sales & Service and Vice President of Finance & Administration. “Transitions” for the purpose of this policy interpretation would include people leaving their positions of employment with GoRockford or having to take a family or medical leave lasting more than twelve weeks.

**REPORT:** GoRockford has established regular practices of communication, process implementation, professional development, and cross-training, which allow the organization to continue to function fully in the absence of and/or during the transitions of key positions.

As an example, the CEO and executive team members meet bi-weekly, both corporately and individually, to communicate key information regarding each department and GoRockford. Weekly all-staff meetings ensure each staff member is up to date on current key projects and activities, and are made accountable for all accounting processes. GoRockford has a strong commitment to professional development, offering regular opportunities for individuals and the team to grow in their positions and areas of expertise.

Where cross-training is not an option, contract services are available to ensure a seamless transition. For example, Keri Benhoff of Furst Consulting serves as GoRockford's outside HR contractor, assuring proper compliance with HR rules and regulations. Steve Andante, a local CPA, is available to GoRockford if a sudden vacancy were to occur in our financial management area.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.6.1 “Operate without at least one other member of the executive/management team sufficiently familiar with board and chief executive issues and processes to take over with reasonable proficiency as an interim successor.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (no changes since last report)** There must be at least one other member of our executive/management team with the capability of filling in as an interim President/CEO, as may be designated by the Board of Directors if I became unavailable. This person would have the capability to guide and lead the operational organization, and to support and communicate with the Board, with the ability to fulfill Board expectations about operations (i.e., achieving and complying with the Board's Ends and Management Limitations policies).

**REPORT:** As of September 22, 2025, my executive leadership team includes:

- Kristen Paul, Executive Vice President
- Lindsay Arellano, Vice President of Sales & Service
- Joanne Nold, Vice President of Finance & Administration

At this time, Paul, Arellano, and Nold are sufficiently apprised of organizational priorities and practices, including Board and chief executive issues and processes, and would *consider* stepping into an interim role if requested. They each attend board meetings, regularly participate in executive-level training, and are versed in Policy Governance, including GoRockford's executive limitations and our budgeting processes. They are also aware of all significant issues and projects in which GoRockford is involved.

Should the board need to appoint an interim successor, the board will want to evaluate which member of our team is best suited to lead the organization based on their individual skills, experience, aptitude, and relationships. However, at the current time, the board should feel confident knowing there is at least one member of our executive/management team with the capability to fill in as an interim President/CEO if needed.

Further, in doing so, the Board should feel confident that the interim successor would have a well-rounded leadership team surrounding them.

**I am reporting compliance.**

**2.6.2 “Fail to have in place a “key person” life insurance policy in the amount of at least \$500,000 with Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau as the named beneficiary.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret this to mean that the CEO needs to be insured with a sufficient amount of life insurance, with GoRockford as the designated beneficiary, so as not to put the organization’s financial condition into jeopardy, in case of the CEO’s untimely death and loss of chief executive services.

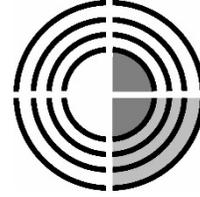
**REPORT:** A 20-year term Key Person Insurance policy, underwritten by Symetra Life Insurance Co., and naming GoRockford as the primary beneficiary, was issued for John Groh on February 18, 2022, for \$700,000. This policy was most recently renewed and paid for in February of 2025.

**I am reporting compliance.**

*Prepared by: Leah Ticknor/John Groh*



Governing Policy of  
the GoRockford  
Board of Directors



Policy 2.7 Monitoring Report, Compensation and Benefits

*Management Limitations*

To: GoRockford Board of Directors  
From: John Groh, President/CEO  
RE: Internal Monitoring Report- Executive Limitations  
Monitoring on Policy 2.7 – Compensation and Benefits

I hereby present my monitoring report on your Executive Limitations Policy 2.7, “Compensation and Benefits,” 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 September 2025.

Signed,

  
John Groh  
President/CEO

September 22, 2025

**POLICY 2.7 – COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS BROADEST POLICY PROVISION:**

**“With respect to employment, compensation and benefits to employees, consultants, contract workers and volunteers, the President & CEO shall not cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal integrity or public image.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (no changes since last report)** I submit that, regarding employment, compensation, and benefits, the Board’s concerns and expectations regarding fiscal integrity and the Bureau’s public image are addressed by the subsequent provisions. My interpretations and reporting data are presented with the provisions below.

Accordingly, the President & CEO shall not:

**2.7.1 “Change his or her own compensation and benefits.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (no changes since last report)** I interpret this to mean that I will not change or direct any employee or contractor to change my compensation (salary or any additional incentive pay) or benefits, except for changes that are consistent with the benefits program provided to all full-time employees. Benefits are defined as any monetary or non-monetary benefit that the GoRockford provides to the President/CEO, including, but not limited to, insurance, paid time off, transportation, telecommunication devices, and computer equipment used primarily for business at home. Any change in the compensation package for the CEO needs to be administered by the Board Chairman, with the authorization of the Board Governance Committee, per Governing Policy 4.8.3, Product #4.

**REPORT:** I have not changed my own compensation and benefits package or directed anyone else to change my compensation or benefits package.

The current compensation and benefits package for the President/CEO is consistent with terms outlined and approved by the Board Governance Committee on August 29, 2025.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.7.2 “Promise or imply anything other than “at-will” employment.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (no changes since last report)** I interpret this to mean that at no time will GoRockford insinuate or promise any employee guaranteed employment or a permanent position with GoRockford. I interpret “at-will employment” to mean that either party is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause. As this is a Management Limitations policy, I interpret this policy to simply mean that I have no authority to offer guaranteed employment, and if there is a circumstance in which an employment contract is, in my estimation, appropriate, the Board must authorize such an agreement.

**REPORT:** I have not promised or implied permanent or guaranteed employment to employees, consultants, contract workers, or volunteers. Our personnel policies and all letters offering employment contain an employment “at will” policy. This means either the Bureau or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time and for any reason, with or without advance notice. All employees annually sign an acknowledgement of having received and reviewed these personnel policies.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.7.3 “Establish current compensation and benefits which deviate materially from the geographic or professional market for the skills employed.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (no changes since last report)** I interpret this to mean that at no time will GoRockford compensate an employee or contractor an amount that is not comparable with other similar positions within the Midwest region and/or within the professional arena, which for purposes of this policy I interpret to mean not only other destination marketing organizations, but also similar positions in membership associations and/or the hospitality industry (e.g. sales positions). To be fiscally sound and yet have a reputation as a competitive employer, I interpret not “deviating materially” from the market to mean that we should target to have the total value of compensation and benefits be within + or – 20% of the median for comparable positions, with placement on that range based on years of experience, specific job descriptions, etc. If to be competitive I felt it important to compensate a senior staff member above that variance, my interpretation is that I should first bring this issue, along with rationale, to the attention of the Governance Committee.

**REPORT:** Based on review of comparative data, current compensation and benefits do not deviate materially from the geographic or professional market for the skills employed.

Current compensation and benefits are compared regularly with other convention & visitors bureaus using region, size, budget, number of employees and similar non-profit status for analysis. Specifically, we use Destination International's Compensation & Benefit Survey/Report as our data resource in our review.

We also examine and compare our compensation and benefits with those of other local non-profit organizations, government agencies, and hospitality-related businesses and associations. This data is gathered through readily available internet sources and through research/discussion with local human resource professionals and data sources.

We also annually review our sales incentive plan against industry data/reports, as well as the employee contribution percentages for the payment of health, dental, and vision insurance premiums.

***I am reporting compliance.***

***2.7.4 “Pertaining to consultants and contract vendors, create obligations over a longer term than revenue can be safely projected, in no event longer than one year.”***

**CEO INTERPRETATION:** I interpret this to mean that at no time will GoRockford commit its resources to a consultant or contract service vendor for a period beyond what we can project revenues, and no longer than one year. I interpret smaller contracts, e.g., those with a total expenditure commitment by GoRockford to be less than \$10,000 per year, to be a reasonable exception. Further, if a project or vendor requires a contract term greater than one year, there must be a reasonable out clause (e.g., 30 or 90 days).

**REPORT:**

- GoRockford and the City of Rockford entered into a new agreement for services on June 26, 2022, for a six-year term, beginning January 1, 2023, and running through December 31, 2028. The board approved this agreement on June 22, 2022.
- GoRockford entered into an agreement with Granicus (formerly Simpleview, Inc.) for a Customer Relationship Management and internet/cloud-based system (sales software/database program) July 1, 2024, for a three-year term. The agreement will expire on June 30, 2027. Total annual cost for license/use of this system is \$17,020.
- GoRockford entered into an agreement with Granicus (formerly Simpleview, Inc.) for an AudioEye Accessibility Platform on January 1, 2024, for a two-year term. The platform ensures all users can easily access website content. The agreement expires on December 31, 2026. The annual licensing fee is \$8,800.
- GoRockford renewed its agreement with Granicus (formerly Simpleview, Inc.) for Content Management Software (CMS) licensing on July 1, 2025, for a three-year term. The CMS is the “backend” database and systems that powers our website. The agreement expires June 30, 2028. The annual licensing fee is \$31,400.
- GoRockford renewed its agreement with Granicus (formerly Simpleview, Inc.) for Search Engine Optimization on July 1, 2025, for a two-year term. The service enhances our website’s visibility and ranking on search engines. The agreement expires on June 30, 2027. The annual cost for SEO engagement is \$26,250.
- GoRockford entered into a multi-year agreement with World Triathlon Corporation (WTC) in May, 2024 to hold IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford in June 2025, 2026 and 2027. Payments of \$25,000 to WTC are due annually by May 1, as well as providing support services outlined in the agreement. Expenses for this event will be funded by the State of Illinois DCEO Tourism Incentive grant each year.

No other obligations to consultants or contract vendors have been created for a term longer than revenue can be safely projected and not longer than one year, except as described above.

***I am reporting compliance.***

**2.7.5 “Establish or change retirement benefits so as to cause situations that are unpredictable for the organization or inequitable for the employee.”**

**CEO INTERPRETATION: (no changes since last report)** I interpret this policy to mean that while, per provision #2.7.3 above, I have authority to establish certain benefit programs if consistent and competitive with the marketplace, I may not enter into or revise such benefits if the consequence to GoRockford would be either unknown in advance or not equitable among affected employees. Our 401(k)-retirement plan is a “defined contribution” plan, which has legal stipulations regarding it being applied equitably among participants.

**REPORT:** Our 401(k) plan is administered by American Chamber of Commerce Executives in accordance with government guidelines and standard business practices. Full-time employees may make voluntary contributions after six months of service. After six months of service, GoRockford contributes 2% of gross salary and matches employee contributions up to 4% of the gross wage, which is predictable and included in our budget forecasting. Our plan has not incurred unfunded liabilities.

***I am reporting compliance.***

*Prepared by: John Groh & Joanne Nold*

# **INCIDENTAL INFORMATION**

# Made for Rockford Welcomes Newcomers at Third Community Mixer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 7, 2025

**What:** Made for Rockford will host its third **New Resident Mixer**, bringing together over **150 people** who've recently made Rockford and Winnebago County their home. The event is part of an ongoing effort to help newcomers build genuine connections, explore local culture, and feel at home more quickly.

**When:** **Tuesday, July 8, 2025, 5:30 - 8 p.m.**

**Where:** Anderson Japanese Gardens, 318 Spring Creek Rd, Rockford, IL 61107  
(The mixer will coincide with the Tuesday Evening in the Gardens concert event.)

**Why:** "We've seen how powerful these mixers can be. When people start forming real connections and experiencing what makes Rockford special, they're much more likely to stay," said **Whitney Martin, Made for Rockford Program Director**. "It's about showing up, feeling welcomed, and realizing you're already part of a community."

This is the first outdoor mixer in the Made for Rockford program and has over 150 people registered. Previous mixers were held at The Top Rooftop Bar & Lounge at Embassy Suites and Lucha Cantina.

**Who:** Interviews with 'Go Team members, new residents, and Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara are available upon request.

**Media/Interview Inquiries:** **Whitney Martin, Made for Rockford Program Director**, at [wmartin@gorockford.com](mailto:wmartin@gorockford.com)

**About: GoRockford**, formerly the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, 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](http://www.gorockford.com)

**Made for Rockford**, a program of GoRockford, is a talent and resident attraction initiative designed to highlight the city as an ideal place to live and work. Supported by the City of Rockford, the State of Illinois, and private sector partners, the program seeks to grow the region's population, assist employers in recruiting talent, and connect new residents with local resources and community networks. Learn more at [madeforrockford.com](http://madeforrockford.com).

###

## Kristen Paul Earns Industry's Top Certification; GoRockford Announces Promotions and New Hires

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 10, 2025

Rockford, IL — GoRockford is proud to announce that **Kristen Paul**, Executive Vice President, has earned the **Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME)** designation from **Destinations International**—the highest individual certification available in the tourism marketing and management industry. The designation was recognized during Destinations International's **annual conference in Chicago** this week.

The CDME program is a rigorous educational and professional development program tailored for senior leaders in destination marketing and management. It equips participants to apply strategic leadership, develop forward-thinking initiatives, and enhance organizational productivity. Certification requirements include four core and two elective courses, applied research papers, and a comprehensive three-part exam. Designation holders must also complete continuing education every four years to maintain the credential.

“Kristen’s achievement of the CDME designation reflects her deep commitment to professional excellence and her dedication to the Rockford region,” said **John Groh**, **GoRockford President/CEO**. “She continues to be an inspiring leader and advocate for our community, and this certification only strengthens her already substantial impact on our destination.”

Kristen has served as **Executive Vice President** of GoRockford since 2023, overseeing the **marketing and destination development teams**. In this role, she also serves as a strategic advisor to staff and the GoRockford Charitable Foundation board, leads fund development efforts, and acts as a spokesperson for the organization while cultivating community and stakeholder relationships. She directs many of GoRockford’s most visible and celebrated initiatives, including **Stroll on State**, **CRE8IV: transformational ART**, and **Forest City Beautiful**. Kristen also played a key role in GoRockford’s **recent rebranding**, the launch of a **new website**, and the production of an **updated visitor guide**—all designed to more effectively promote the region and enhance the visitor experience.

Since joining GoRockford in 2016 as **Executive Assistant to the President/CEO**, Kristen has steadily advanced through leadership roles. She became **Operations Manager** of the Destination Development Department in 2018, was promoted to **Director** in 2020, **Vice President** of Destination Development in 2022, and to **Executive Vice President** in 2023. She was named one of the **Twenty People You Should Know** by the **Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce** in 2024. Kristen holds a **bachelor’s degree from Wright State University** and spent 10 years in Chicago’s hospitality industry before joining GoRockford.

– MORE –

In addition to Kristen's professional milestone, GoRockford is proud to announce several staffing updates that reflect the organization's continued investment in team development and regional storytelling:

- **Chenaire Barmore** has been promoted to **Communications Manager**. Since joining GoRockford in 2022, Chenaire has brought creativity and community insight to the marketing team. Previously serving as Community Engagement Coordinator, he now leads communications efforts, including management of the **events calendar**, **website updates**, and initiatives focused on **highlighting local businesses** and **building community partner relationships**. Chenaire graduated from **Northern Illinois University**.
- **Amanda August** has been promoted to **Social Media and Communications Specialist**, leading efforts to promote the region through strategic digital content. Amanda's promotion reflects her creativity, strategic thinking, and commitment to growing GoRockford's online presence. As a key member of the marketing team, she continues to develop engaging content, manage social media campaigns, and collaborate with partners to elevate the Rockford region. Amanda August graduated from **North Central College** and serves on the **Rockford Symphony Orchestra** Board of Directors.
- **Miranda Brook** has been hired as **Customer Experience Coordinator** following a three-month internship with GoRockford during the summer of 2024. In her role, she helps operate and grow the **GoRockford Store** and serves as the **first point of contact** for in-person visitors and phone and digital inquiries. As part of the marketing team, Miranda contributes frequently to the GoRockford blog, sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm for the region with visitors. Miranda graduated from **Eastern Illinois University**.
- **Leah Ticknor** joins GoRockford as **Office Manager & Executive Assistant**. With a strong background in administrative leadership and support, Leah will play a vital role in supporting organizational staff and board leadership. With work experience including administrative leadership at Bethesda Church, office management at Heyl Royster law firm, and store management and human resources at Target Corporation, Leah will assist in advancing strategic initiatives, including those identified in the Thrive 2035 Master Plan. Leah graduated from **Western Illinois University**.

These team updates, alongside Kristen's CDME achievement, demonstrate GoRockford's commitment to nurturing emerging talent, recognizing internal growth, and strengthening its capacity to position the Rockford region as a thriving and welcoming destination.

Learn more about the CDME designation: <https://destinationsinternational.org/cdme>

**About: GoRockford** is the official destination marketing and management organization for Rockford and Winnebago County, 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 regional economy and provides opportunities for people in our communities. [www.gorockford.com](http://www.gorockford.com)

###

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Elizabeth Falls, GoRockford Marketing Manager, 815.708.0089, [efalls@gorockford.com](mailto:efalls@gorockford.com)

# Chicago Bears NFL FLAG Regional Tournament Grabs the Flag in Rockford

*First-time Tournament Set to Generate \$467,509 in Economic Impact*

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 4, 2025

**ROCKFORD, IL** —GoRockford and the Rockford Park District are excited to announce that the **Chicago Bears NFL FLAG Regional Tournament** will make its debut in Rockford on Saturday, **October 25, 2025**, at the new **Clarence Hicks Sports Complex** (2004 Ogilby Road, Rockford).

This is the first tournament to be held at the expanded Clarence Hicks Sports Complex, welcoming over 1,000 players, coaches, and fans to Rockford. The tournament is expected to generate an estimated economic impact of **\$467,509 for the local community**.

Hosted by NFL Flag, this invite-only competition is expected to bring 50 teams from across the Midwest, including Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, and others. Boys' and girls' teams will compete across **11 divisions**, with ages ranging from **8U–14U for boys** and **10U through high school for girls**.

*“INSERT QUOTE FROM LAMONT JONES, highlighting the excitement of hosting the first tournament at Clarence Hicks Sports Complex.”*

*“INSERT QUOTE FROM GUS, connecting the significance of the event to Rockford’s growing role as a regional sports destination.”*

This year marks both the **first time the event has been held in Rockford** and the **second annual edition** of the Bears' regional competition. Champions from Rockford will earn a spot in the **prestigious NFL FLAG Summer Championships in July 2026**.

Flag football continues to grow at an unprecedented pace and will officially make its debut at the 2028 Olympic Games. It also recently became an IHSA (Illinois High School Association) sanctioned sport.

## **EVENT DETAILS Chicago Bears NFL FLAG Regional Tournament**

Date: Saturday Oct. 25

Games start at 9 a.m., with championship games in the afternoon, and the event concludes around 5 p.m.

Location: Clarence Hicks Sports Complex 2004 Ogilby Road Rockford

Admission: Free; Team Registration \$399 (closes on September 29)

<https://nfflag.com/events/bears>

**Interviews/Media Inquiries:** Lamont Jones, General Manager, Rockford Park District, Clarence Hicks Sports Complex, 815.494.9415, [LamontJones@rockfordparkdistrict.org](mailto:LamontJones@rockfordparkdistrict.org)

**-MORE-**

**GoRockford News Release/Flag Football Page 2 of 2**

**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 economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in our communities. [www.gorockford.com](http://www.gorockford.com)

**About the Rockford Park District:** The Rockford Park District improves the quality of life for citizens by providing a vibrant, inclusive, and relevant park system that increases property values, stimulates economic development, creates economic impact, increases positive outcomes for youth, and improves our community's health. A vibrant and relevant park system also protects the environment, employs hundreds of area teens, and brings our diverse community together in unity, through the common love of play.

###

**Contact:** Kara Davis, GoRockford Senior Sales Manager, 815.963.8111, [kdavis@gorockford.com](mailto:kdavis@gorockford.com)

# Rockford Selected to Host 2026 USA Ultimate Division I College Championships

*Championship Estimated to Bring in \$750,754 in Economic Impact*

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 19, 2025

**ROCKFORD, IL** — GoRockford and Rockford Park District are pleased to announce the Rockford region has been selected as the host city for the **2026 USA Ultimate Division I College Championships**, one of the premier events in the sport of ultimate.

The tournament will take place **May 22–25, 2026** at the **Mercyhealth Sportscore Two** (8800 E Riverside Blvd, Loves Park). The tournament is estimated to bring **\$750,752 in economic impact** and will include 40 teams, bringing in approximately 1,200 athletes, coaches, and fans for four days of world-class competition.

The USA Ultimate College Championships mark the culmination of the college ultimate season. More than 600 colleges and universities from across North America compete for a spot in the event, with only 72 teams earning invitations to vie for four national titles.

“We are absolutely thrilled to welcome the Division I College Championships to our community,” **said Kara Davis, Senior Sales Manager at Go Rockford.** “Bringing an event of this caliber to our region is not just a win for sports – it’s a celebration of teamwork, passion, and the vibrant energy that collegiate athletics brings. We are honored to host some of the most talented young athletes in the nation, and I can’t wait for our local fans, families, and businesses to experience the excitement and camaraderie that ultimate fosters.”

“The Rockford Park District is honored to host next year’s College Nationals and welcome athletes from across the country to our community. Our world-class facilities played a key role in securing this major sports tourism event, and we look forward to showcasing Mercyhealth Sportscore Two as a premier destination for competition, excellence, and play,” **said Louis Mateus, General Manager of the Mercyhealth Sportscore Complexes.**

Rockford has a strong history with the sport, having previously hosted the Division III College Championships in 2015 and 2018, as well as the USA Ultimate Club National Championships in 2016. The upcoming 2026 tournament marks just the second time in history that the Division I Championships will be held in Illinois; Champaign-Urbana last hosted in 1995.

**-MORE-**

**GoRockford News Release/USA Ultimate Page 2 of 2**

“USA Ultimate is excited to bring the College Championships to Rockford next spring and showcase our unique sport to current and future fans of ultimate,” **said Byron Hicks, Senior Events Manager USA Ultimate.** “Rockford has a long history of hosting championship-level ultimate tournaments with a supportive and enthusiastic community, world-class facilities and a geographic location that is convenient to several major fan bases throughout the midwest. The ultimate community – including more than a thousand competing student-athletes, their families, volunteers and fans – will surely have a thrilling and memorable experience as we feature one ultimate’s premier events.”

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###

**Contact:** Kara Davis, GoRockford Senior Sales Manager, 815.963.8111, [kdavis@gorockford.com](mailto:kdavis@gorockford.com)

Report Filing Receipt  
for  
The City of Rockford

Please acknowledge receipt of the electronic Quarterly Results Report for GoRockford for the Quarter ended December 31, 2025.

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Haley Galarza  
Executive Coordinator  
Date

Acknowledged by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leah Ticknor  
Executive Assistant  
Date

Acknowledged by: \_\_\_\_\_  
John Groh  
President/CEO  
Date

# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

February 23, 2026

JENNIFER CACCIAPAGLIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DIANA HERNANDEZ, CHILDREN EXPOSED TO  
VIOLENCE, PROJECT MANAGER

*Lethality Prevention - Medical Responses*

*RPS Teen Dating Violence*

*Human Trafficking Initiatives*

*Data*

*Community Violence Prevention*



**COMMUNITY GAP INTERVIEWS**

Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Prevention

City of Rockford, Illinois

Mayor Thomas P. McNamara

Jennifer K. Cacciapaglia, Manager

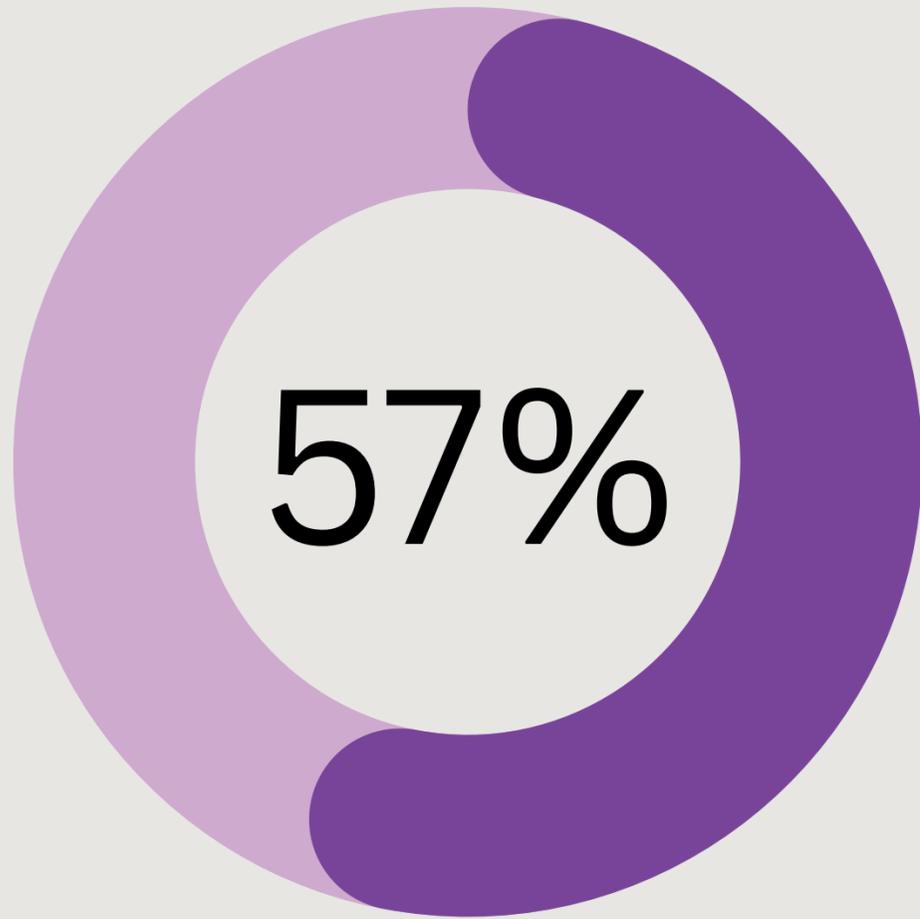


Published: April 2019



**DATA DRIVEN &  
COMMUNITY  
CENTERED**

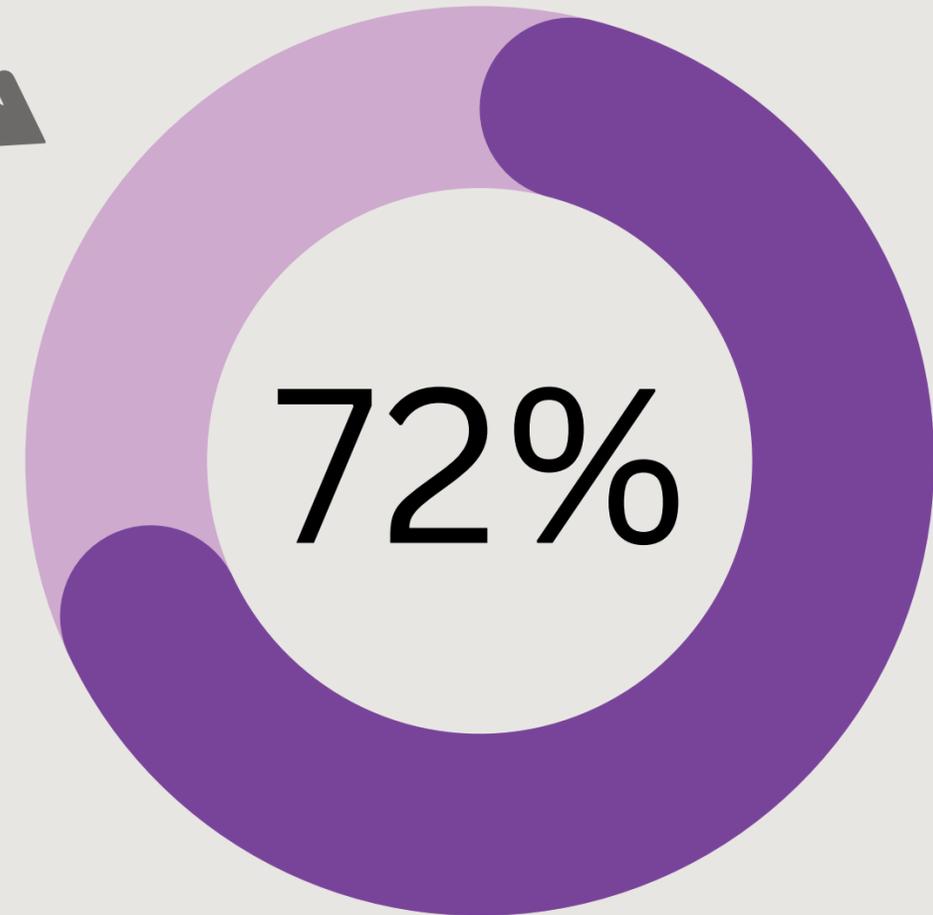
# Danger Assessment Data 2025



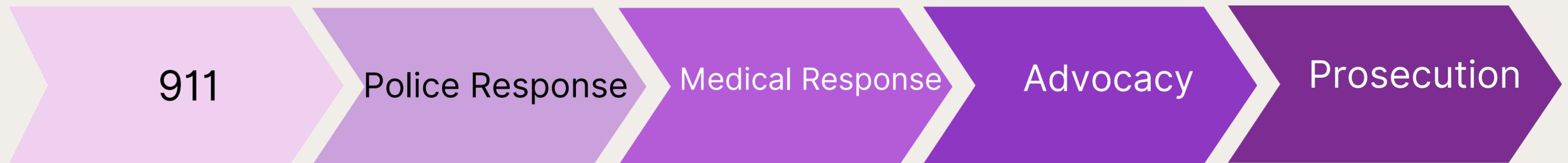
**57%**  
**Reported  
History of  
Strangulation**



**72%**  
**Identified as  
High Risk of  
Lethality**



# Strangulation Response Continuum



**Community Response Protocol**

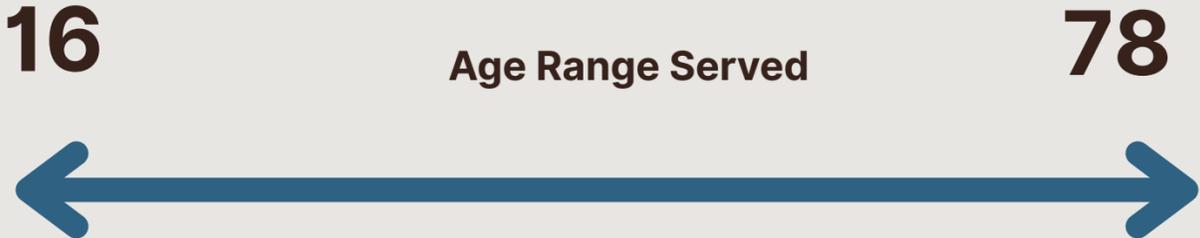
# UW Medical Advocacy Response Project



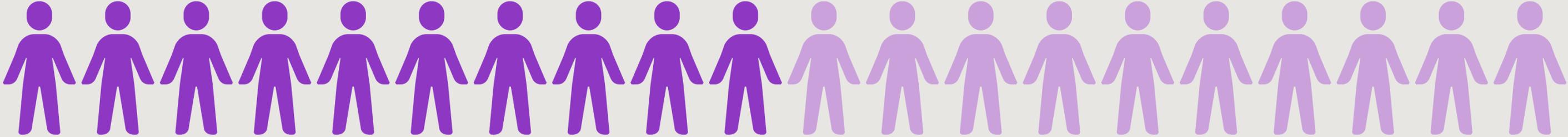
**Family Peace Center**  
Restoring Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence



# UW Medical Advocacy Response Project



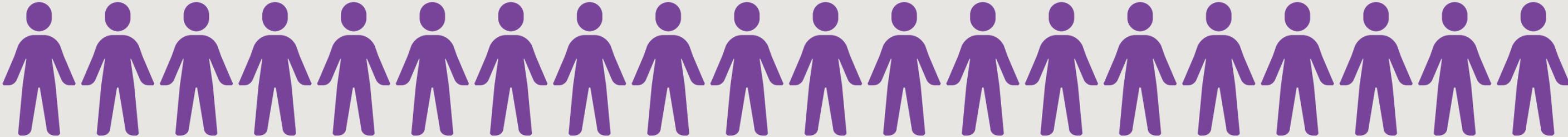
10 of 20 Survivors seen had CHILDREN ★ 3 Survivors were PREGNANT



11 of 20 Survivors seen had been, or had a history of STRANGULATION

36 Referrals & 20 Served  
9/1/25-1/31/26

# UW Medical Advocacy Response Project

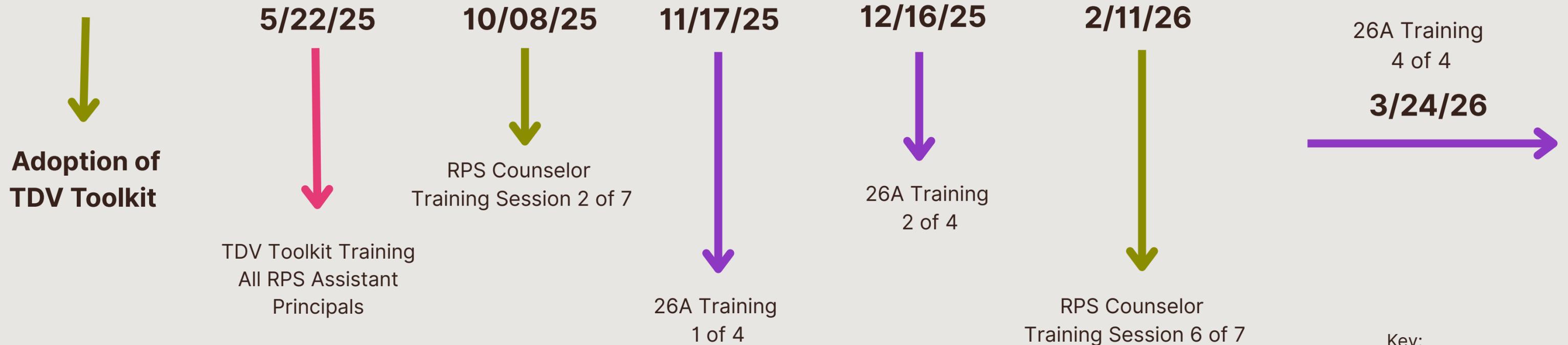
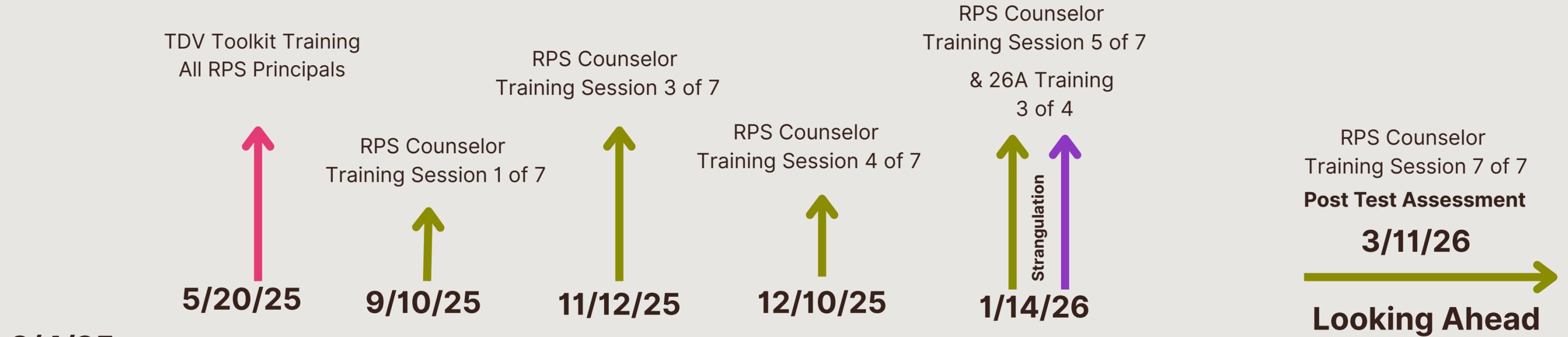


**All 20 Survivors were connected to services, including emergency housing.**



# Teen Dating Violence Efforts

Rockford Public School District 205



Key:

- Toolkit Training
- Counselor Training Series
- 26A Training

# Intimate Partner Violence Training

August 2025 | 10 New Officers Trained

Post-training confidence increased across all measured areas, with gains of up to +1.2 points on a 5-point scale.

↑ 1.2

May 2025 | 5 New Officers Trained

Post-training confidence increased across all measured areas, with gains of up to +1.4 points on a 5-point scale.

↑ 1.4

January 2026 | 36 Field Training Officers

Post-training confidence increased across all measured areas, with gains of up to +0.69 points on a 5-point scale despite high pre-training baseline knowledge.

↑ .69

Officers reported a stronger ability to:

- Recognize domestic violence
- Understand domestic violence dynamics
- Confidently support survivors
- Connect survivors to services
- Provide information to others about domestic violence



# Human Trafficking Task Force Members

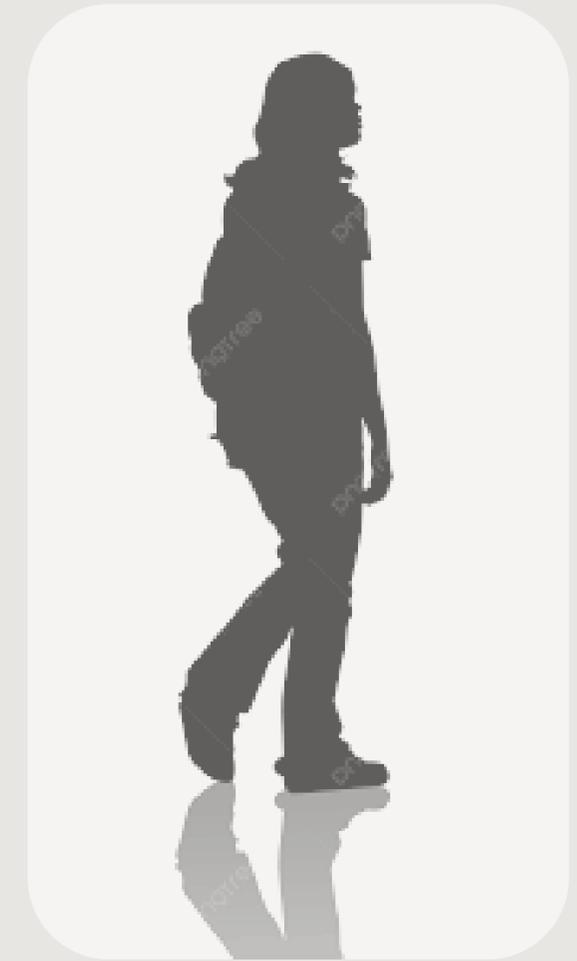


- **Carrie Lynn Children's Center**
- **City of Rockford Legal Department**
- **City of Rockford Mayor's Office**
- **City of Rockford Police Department**
- **Federal Bureau of Investigation**
- **Illinois Department of Child and Family Services**
- **Illinois Gaming Board**
- **Illinois State Police**

- **Rockford Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation**
- **The United States Marshals Service**
- **Winnebago County Adult Probation Department**
- **Winnebago County Juvenile Probation Department**
- **Winnebago County Public Defender's Office**
- **Winnebago County Sheriff's Office**
- **Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office**
- **Youth Services Network**

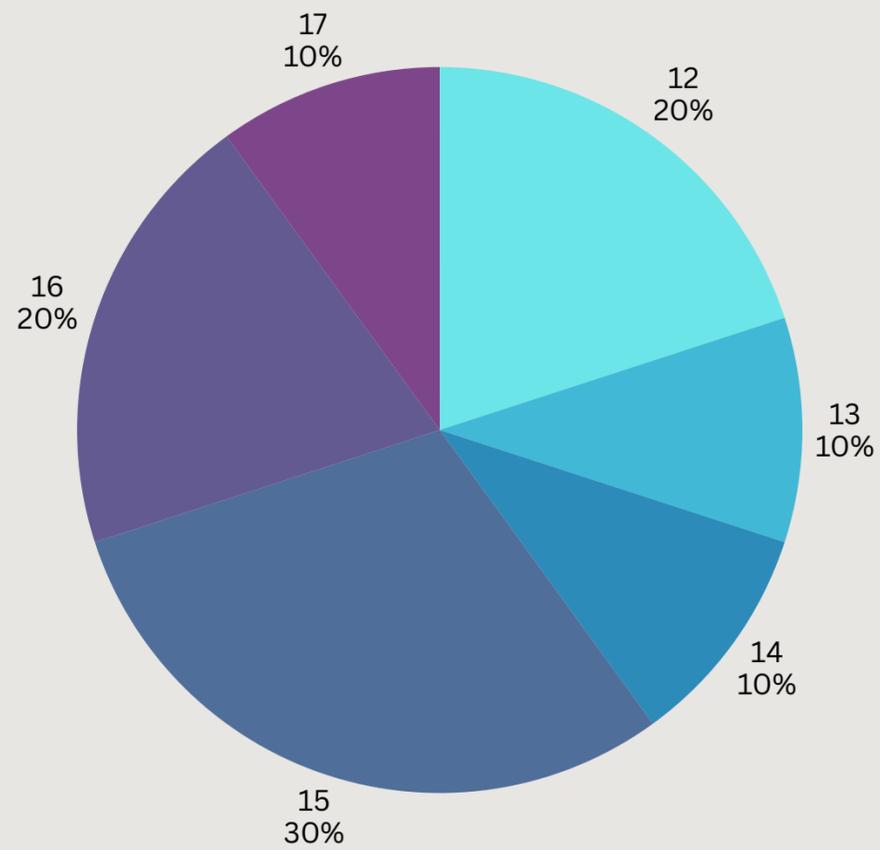
# *Human Trafficking Initiatives*

- Task Force
- Community Response Protocol
- iEmpathize - First Responder Training
- Not A Number
- My Life My Choice
- NetSmartz

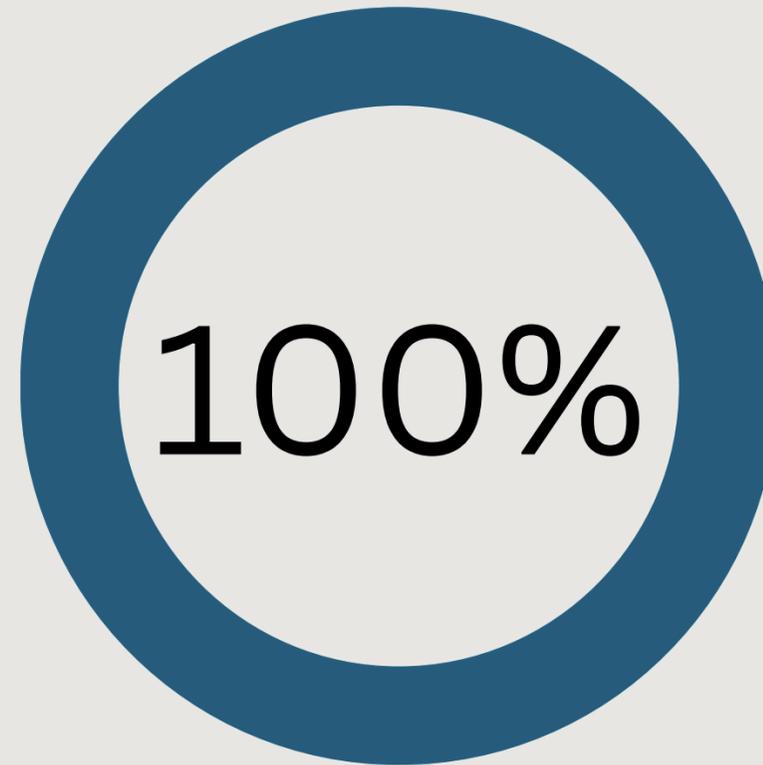


# Case Staffing Data

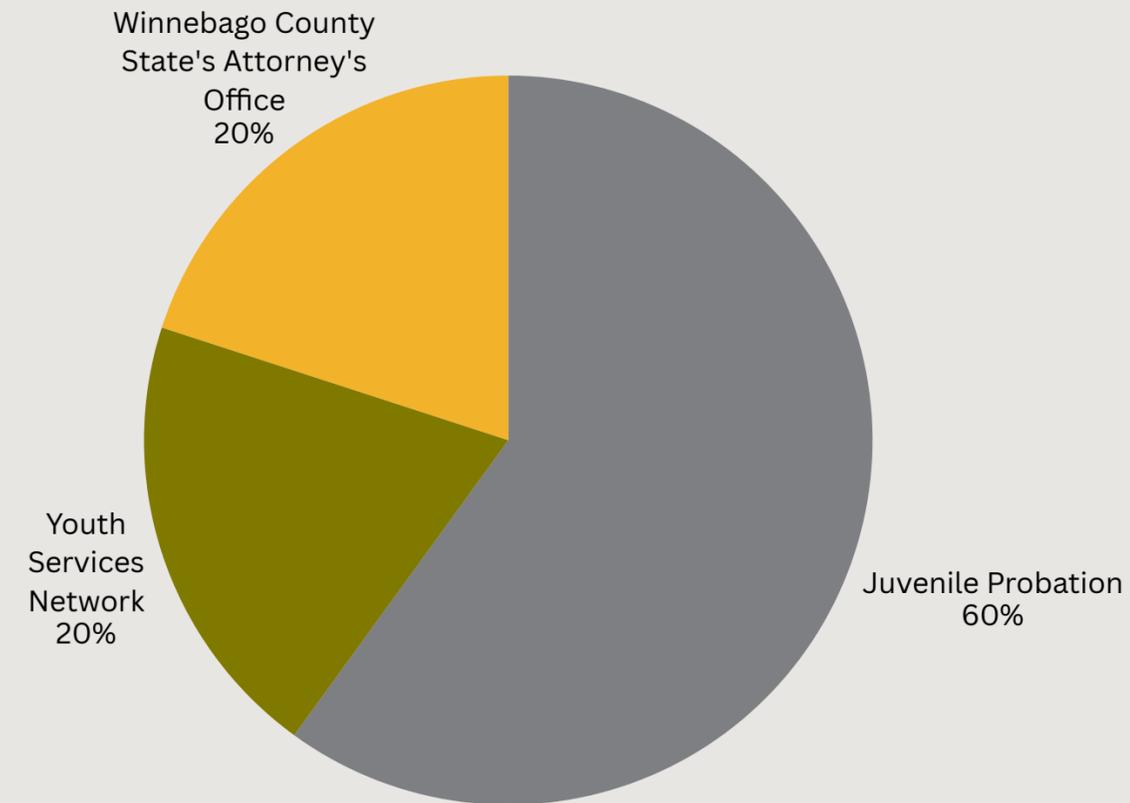
Age of Child Referred



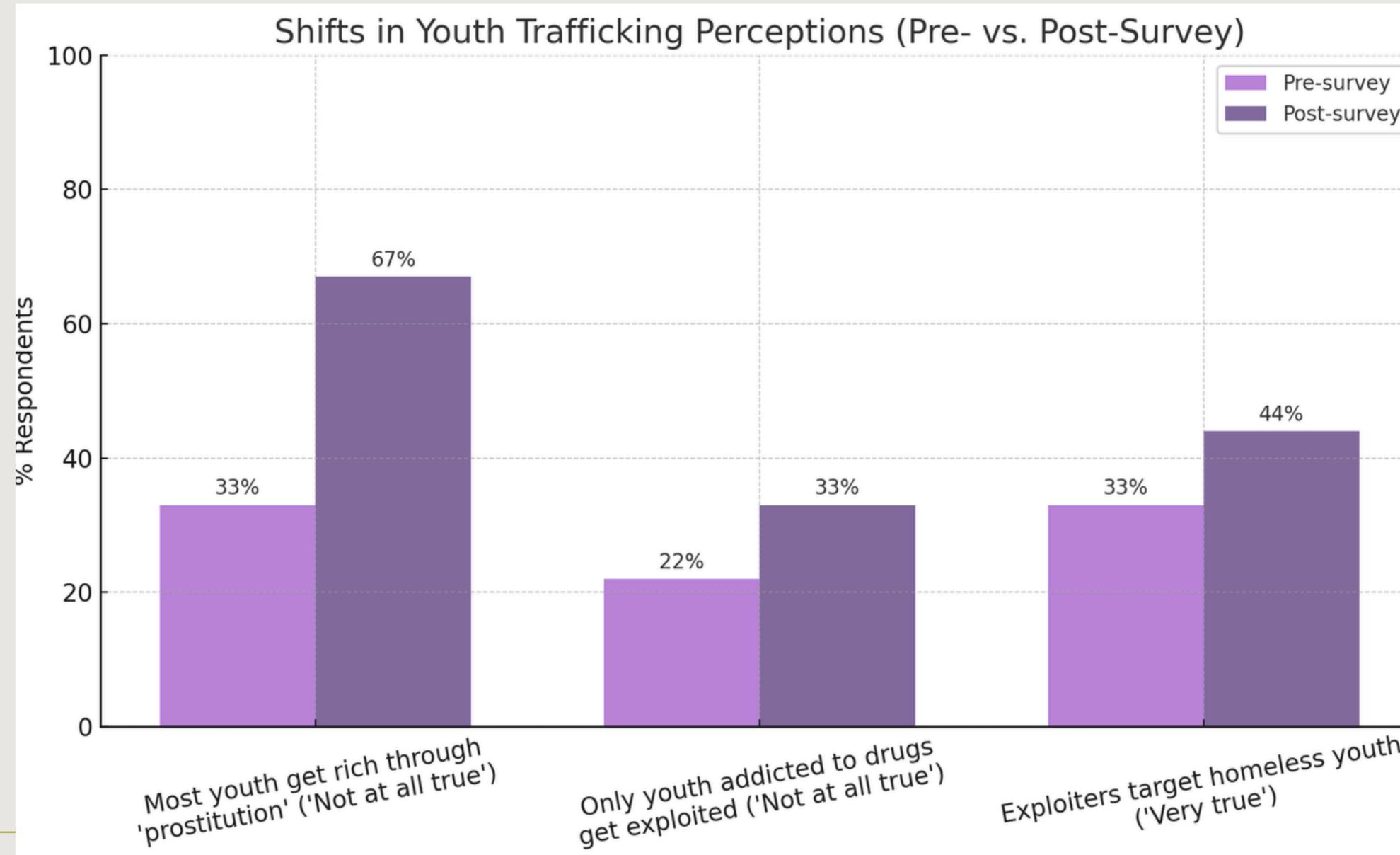
System/Agency Involvement



Cases Referred for Staffing by Agency



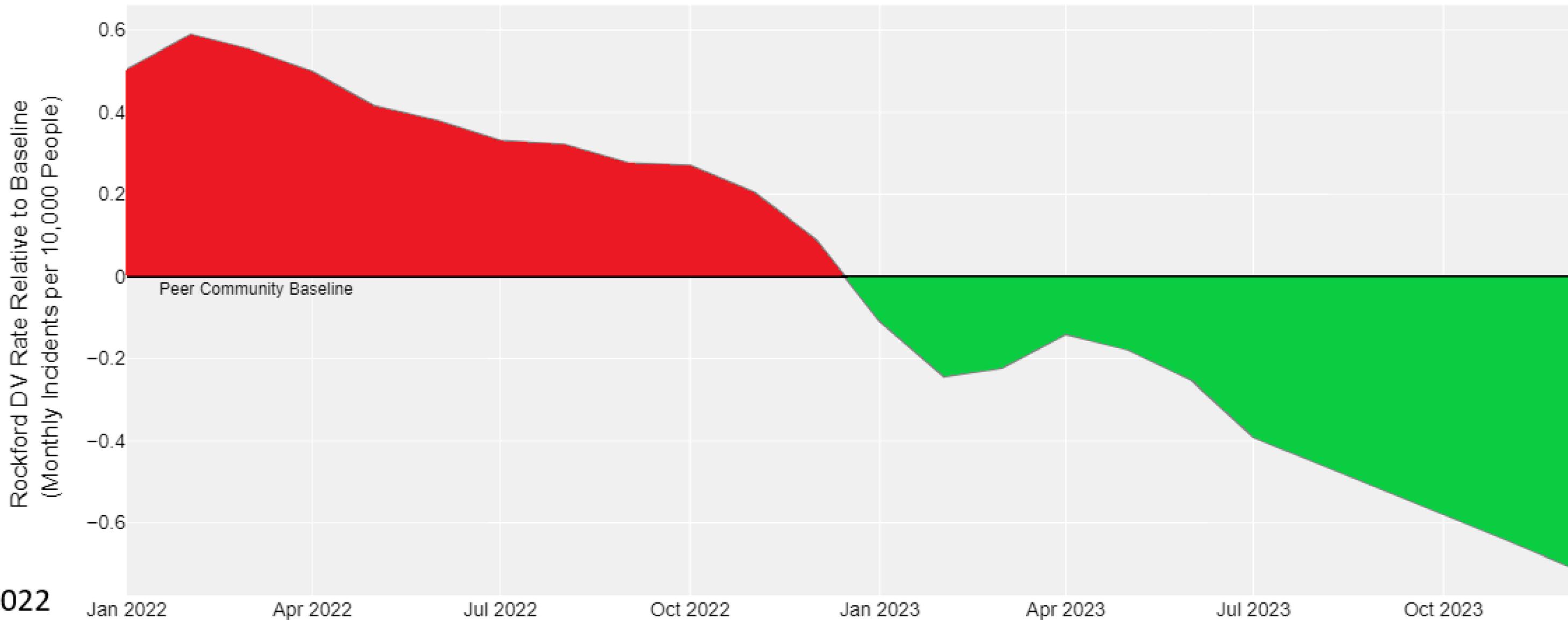
# My Life My Choice



# New NIBRS Peer Community Model Rockford vs Peoria

Fixed effects regression model on  
only Rockford and Peoria

Peer Comparison Analysis of Rockford DV Incident Rates (Monthly 2022 - 2023)



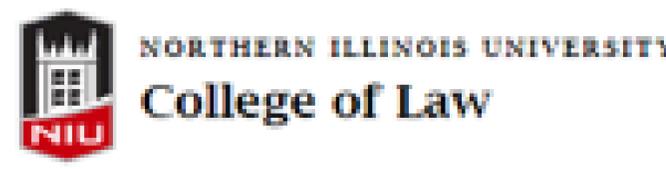
# MODCVP Coordinated Community Response



Family Peace Center



Children's Safe Harbor



# Community Healing Center

History, Impact and Continued Reach

City Council Committee Meeting

February 23, 2026

# Today's Discussion

- Community Healing Center Progression
  - Current services and focus areas
  - Human trafficking prevention efforts
  - Impact and continued reach
-

# Community Healing Center Progression

**October  
2022**

**2023**

**April  
2024**

**August  
2024**

**January  
2025**

**Today**

Federal project period began

Infrastructure, staffing, and partnership development

Official public launch

Expansion to On-site Strong House On-site services at Washington Park

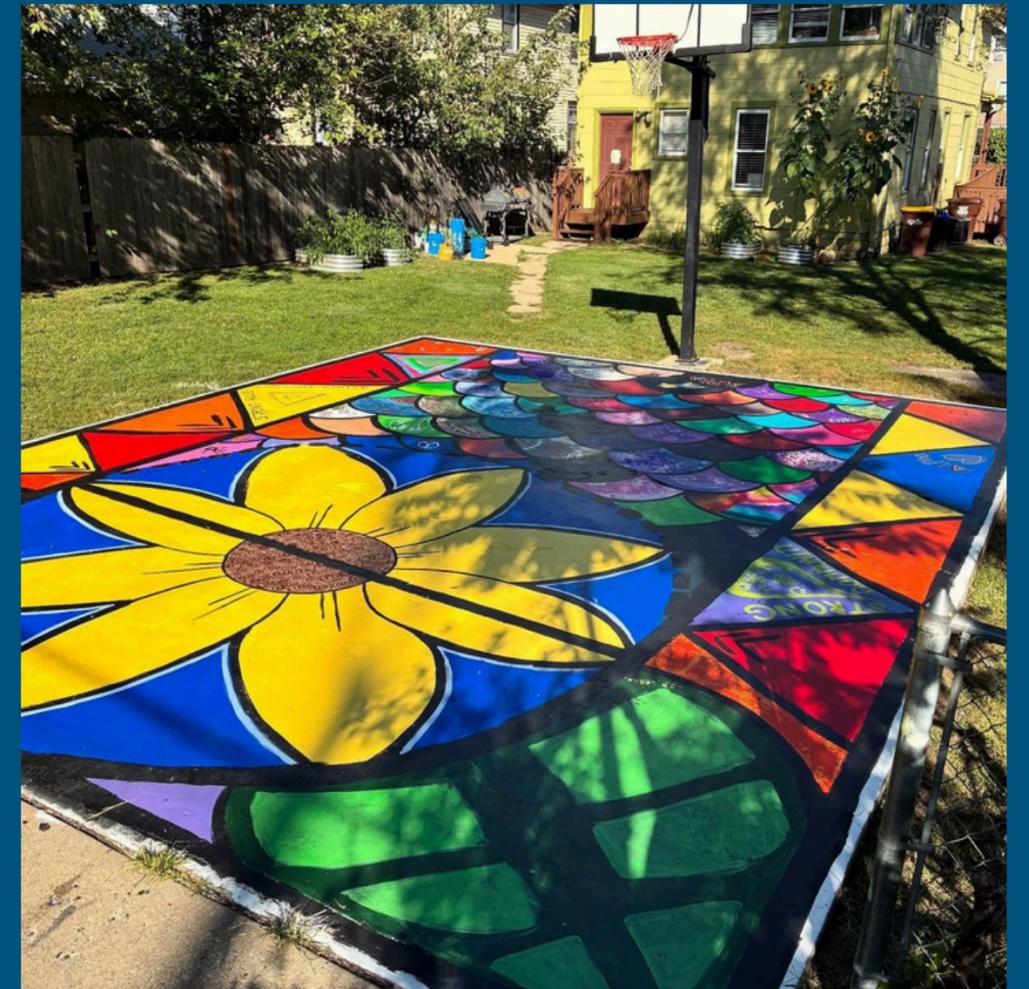
On-site services at McIntosh Elementary  
Launch of Youth Advocacy Board (25-26)

Multi-site, trauma-informed coordination hub

# What We Are Doing Today

---

- Service navigation and case coordination
- Mentorship and youth engagement
- School-based restorative and prevention services
- Drop-in programming and structured enrichment
- Human trafficking prevention and response



*Strong House location – Irving Avenue*

# Youth Advocacy Board

---

- Launched 2025-2026 program year
- 18 youth representatives from multiple schools
- Structured leadership and civic development
- Youth-led identification of community priorities
- Engagement in local government and community initiatives
- Leadership partnership with By Any Dreams Necessary



*Youth Advocacy Board meeting – 2025*

# Human Trafficking Prevention & Response

---

- Staff trained in evidence-based prevention curriculum
- Implementation of My Life My Choice, Not a Number, and internet safety curriculum
- 41 youth actively engaged in prevention groups (January 2026)
- 12 exploitation + victimization disclosures since launch

# Impact at a Glance

---

- **Service Reach**
  - 221 total youth served
  - 81 active youth currently engaged
    - 56% ages 0-10
    - 44% ages 11-17
  - 17 new youth intakes during since January 1, 2026
  - 59 referrals to community-based and therapeutic partners
  - 65 prevention group participants
- **Community Presence**
  - 5 School and community sites served
  - 1,865 individuals reached through outreach efforts

# Impact at a Glance

---

- **Outcomes & Indicators**

- 12 of 22 center clients (55%) demonstrated measurable improvement in Hope Scale scores



- 27 center clients completed matched pre- and post- program surveys
- Greatest improvements observed in:

- **Decision-Making (avg. 7.69% increase)** ↑

- **Peaceful Conflict Resolution (avg. 4.04% increase)** ↑

# Cross-Department Coordination

- Ongoing partnership with RPD Community Services Unit
- Direct coordination with Assistant Deputy Chief Paul Gallagher and Chief Carla Redd
- Collaboration with the Family Peace Center
- Case management support from the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council
- Joint outreach and community engagement events



Irving Avenue Strong House offers resources to the community at Summer Block Party (WIFR)

**Irving Avenue Strong House offers resources to the community at Summer Block Party**

# Community Partners



## MODCVP Grassroots Team



# Continuing the Work Together

- Expanding prevention and mentorship programming
- Strengthening cross-department and community partnerships
- Remaining responsive to youth and family needs
- Ongoing evaluation and data-informed improvement



Thank you!

# Storymap

- [bit.ly/DVDataDashboard](https://bit.ly/DVDataDashboard)





# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
<p><b>WORKING GROUPS:</b></p> <p><b>Task Force</b></p> <p><b>Working Teams under the Task Force Framework include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Domestic Violence Prevention Team</b></li> <li>* <b>Family Peace Center Team</b></li> <li>* <b>Juvenile Enhanced Response Team</b></li> <li>* <b>Community Violence Prevention Team</b></li> </ul>	<p>Multidisciplinary teams convene regularly to define and develop measurable objectives to address gaps in our community's response to domestic violence, human trafficking, and community violence under the pillars of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnerships, and guided by our Community Gap Document.</p>	<p>Brightpoint, Children's Safe Harbor (CHS), City of Rockford Health and Human Services Department, Comprehensive Community Solutions (CCS), Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Equip for Equality (EFE), Family Counseling Services (FCS), Family Peace Center (FPC), Get Connected 815, National Alliance on Mental Illness Northern Illinois (NAMI), National Youth Advocacy Program (NYAP), Northwest Community Center, OSF Health Care - Strive Trauma Recovery Center, Prairie State Legal Services, Regional Access &amp; Mobilization Project (RAMP), Remedies Renewing Lives, Rockford Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (RAASE), Rockford Police Department, Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling (RSAC), Simmons Law, St. Vincent de Paul Society, United States Attorney's Office, University of Illinois Chicago College of Medicine Rockford Medical Evaluation Response Initiative Team (MERIT), Winnebago County Adult Probation – DV Unit, Winnebago County Juvenile Probation, Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, Winnebago</p>	<p>Identification and deployment of collaborative strategies to address specific gaps documented in the Community Gap Document including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct annual strategic planning and year-in-review with Team Chairs.</li> <li>• Created the Quick 10 Educators Video Series.</li> <li>• Supported the updates to the Illinois Domestic Violence Act form provided to survivors on the scene.</li> <li>• Collaborating in a community-wide trauma response effort.</li> <li>• Ongoing juvenile crime data reviews to determine indicators that drive the occurrence.</li> <li>• Enhanced processes to identify repeat high-risk runaways vulnerable to sex trafficking.</li> <li>• Developed a Rockford Fire Department Training Series.</li> <li>• Hosted a virtual community resource fair for professionals.</li> <li>• Create public awareness campaigns for designated awareness months.</li> <li>• Police Department Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault General Order Review.</li> <li>• Hosted and organized a training for the community and law enforcement on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.</li> <li>• Led in the development of the Lifetime Civil No Contact Protection Order legislation.</li> <li>• Collaborated with and guided the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office on the development of a Domestic Violence Data Collection process.</li> <li>• Investigated and compiled information on best practices for school-based teen dating violence policies provided to inform their efforts to create a Teen Dating Violence Tool Kit, which was adopted in January of 2025.</li> <li>• A Multidisciplinary Team provided four Teen Dating Violence (TDV) training sessions to RPS 205 counseling staff, with an average attendance of 36 per session. Three additional sessions are planned</li> </ul>



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	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
		County State's Attorney's Office, YMCA, Youth Services Network (YSN), and Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic – Northern Illinois University.	for 2026. Additionally, RPS 205 Principals and Assistant Principals were provided training on TDV and the Toolkit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a multidisciplinary response to provide support and information to families and loved ones impacted by intimate partner violence.</li> <li>Supported and informed the development of resources to provide litigants with information about Guardian ad litem.</li> <li>Supported and informed the development of training for attorneys and the judiciary working in cases involving intimate partner violence.</li> </ul> Evaluation Method: Varies based on the project being deployed
<b>VOICES Committee</b>	VOICES is a committee of survivors of domestic violence who volunteer their time to celebrate their strength and survival. This group of individuals uses their collective voice to help others through advocacy, education, and empowerment. The VOICES Committee was integral in the development of the Family Peace Center and helps to ensure that all strategies deployed by the Office are survivor-centered.	Family Peace Center, Community Survivors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convened a group of local survivors.</li> <li>Advised in the development of the Family Peace Center.</li> <li>Advised Rockford Police Department's Policies and Procedures update.</li> <li>Advised the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court on the development of their proposed Domestic Violence Court renovation and modified Protective Order Court.</li> <li>Advised the Winnebago County State's Attorney on a proposed Domestic Violence Diversion program.</li> <li>Supported and informed the development of training for medical students and residents on working with survivors of intimate partner domestic violence.</li> </ul>
<b>Human Trafficking Task Force</b>	This team is building a collaborative response to the identification, referral, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking in Winnebago County.	Carrie Lynn Children's Center, Department of Children and Family Services, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Illinois Gaming Board, Illinois State Police, Rockford Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, Rockford Police Department, United States Marshals Service, Winnebago County Adult Probation, Winnebago County Juvenile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular convening of a working, multidisciplinary team.</li> <li>Creation of a mission and vision statement.</li> <li>Developed a framework for a case review process to identify gaps, barriers, and improvements.</li> <li>Coordinated training and technical assistance from the Office for the Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center at no cost to partners and local law enforcement.</li> <li>Created an Enforcement Subcommittee to coordinate law enforcement efforts.</li> </ul>



# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
		Probation, Winnebago County Public Defender's Office, Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office, United States Attorney's Office Northern District of Illinois, and Youth Services Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convened a Data Subcommittee with UIC as lead, to develop research on social determinants and demographics of traffickers using local and regional data.</li> <li>• Co-facilitated a weeklong national training reaching 260 frontline responders, including firefighters, EMS, law enforcement, and healthcare workers.</li> </ul> Evaluation Method: Training attendance data & Development of community outcome measures with Region 1 Planning Council.
<b>Educators Team</b>	A multi-disciplinary team of educators, education professionals, and youth service providers working to develop training and assistance for educators to identify and respond to children in crisis from domestic and sexual violence.	Catholic Charities, Family Peace Center, Regional Office of Education, Rosecrance, School staff from Belvidere Community Unit School District 100, School staff from Hononegah Community High School District 207, Alignment Rockford, and School staff from Rockford Public School District 205.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized and hosted eight annual multi-day summits, reaching over 1,100 professionals in total.</li> <li>• Pre- and post-test results indicate a significant increase in participants' ability to identify factors that may increase a youth's risk of being a target of trafficking. Before the training, 26% rated their ability as "good," while after the training, that number rose to 69%, reflecting a 43 percentage-point improvement.</li> </ul> Evaluation Method: Pre and Post-Summit Evaluations
<b>Juvenile Enhanced Response Team (JVERT)</b>	A multi-disciplinary team of the Task Force convenes to identify and deploy prevention, intervention, and protective strategies that aid in the interruption of trauma.	Comprehensive Community Solutions, Department of Child and Family Services, Equip for Equality, Rockford Police Department, Winnebago County Juvenile Probation, Winnebago County State's Attorney, and Youth Services Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team members attended a fellowship in Washington, D.C. through Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform to develop a capstone project.</li> <li>• Identified and deployed the My Life My Choice Curriculum.</li> <li>• Identified and deployed the StepUp Curriculum.</li> <li>• Identified the need for a Human Trafficking Task Force.</li> <li>• Conducting a strategic review of juvenile diversion. programming identifying the need for the integration of community navigators in the juvenile assessment and detention centers, and the reopening of the day reporting center for system-involved youth.</li> <li>• Identified the need for and created a youth violence interruption case staffing team.</li> <li>• Built a strong referral and service engagement/re-engagement process, linking high-risk youth to supportive services.</li> </ul> Evaluation Method: Varies depending on the project deployed



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	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
<b>Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT)</b>	A multidisciplinary team convened by the Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention and the Family Peace Center's Lethality Prevention Division to review domestic-related homicide (or near homicide) cases to decrease IPV fatalities and improve services by identifying service problems and coordination gaps, increasing communication and resource sharing across agencies responding to IPV survivors, and raising public awareness with reports and recommendations.	Children's Safe Harbor, City of Rockford Police Department, City of Rockford Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention, Family Peace Center, Northern Illinois University College of Law-Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic, Region 1 Planning Council, Remedies Renewing Lives, UW Health SwedishAmerican Hospital, Winnebago County Adult Probation, Winnebago County Coroner's Office, Winnebago County Health Department, Winnebago County Public Defender's Office, and Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation drafted, finalized, introduced, and signed.</li> <li>• Appointment to the Statewide Illinois Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission.</li> <li>• Selected as one of five pioneer sites in the state of Illinois to convene a local review team.</li> <li>• Team members have been onboarded and participated in statewide training efforts presented by a national technical assistance provider.</li> <li>• Case selection criteria have been established, and the first local case review was concluded in January 2025.</li> <li>• As part of the second formal case review in 2025, we introduced interviews with impacted individuals to incorporate the voices of those with lived experience into the review process. This marks the first time this practice has been included.</li> <li>• As we enter 2026, the team will draft its initial set of recommendations informed by insights from prior case reviews.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: The team is working with local and state data teams to determine measures.</p>
<b>Strangulation Response Team</b>	A multidisciplinary team co-led by the Office and UW SwedishAmerican Hospital to improve the community-wide response to strangulation.	City of Rockford Fire Department, City of Rockford Police Department, City of Rockford Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention, Family Peace Center, UW Health SwedishAmerican Hospital, Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office, and Winnebago County Sheriff's Office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided 911 Telecommunicator New Employee Training.</li> <li>• Developed a 911 Telecommunicator Strangulation Card.</li> <li>• Embedded training into each new employee's 911 telecommunicator training session.</li> <li>• Implementation of the Rockford Fire Department's automatic medical response procedure, which has produced a 20% increase in transports of domestic violence survivors to the emergency room since the implementation.</li> <li>• Presented at statewide and international level conferences.</li> <li>• Developed a continuum of response from the 911 call to the hospital medical response.</li> <li>• Developed and implemented a law enforcement strangulation supplemental form, with outcome data demonstrating improved prosecutorial outcomes in strangulation cases.</li> <li>• Secured funds to implement an emergency room advocacy response to domestic violence and strangulation.</li> </ul>



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	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State's Attorney's Office Victim Service Staff provide a strangulation advisory when making Pretrial Fairness first contact calls.</li> <li>• Implemented a QR code linking to strangulation information and resources on law enforcement IDVA forms (July), provided on scene to survivors and UW SwedishAmerican After Visit Summary sheets (September), provided to all patients; accessed 336 times within the first six months.</li> <li>• Created and released a Community Response to Strangulation document, which details each partner's individual and coordinated response to intimate partner non-fatal strangulation.</li> <li>• Team members trained new Rockford Fire Department Telecommunicators and Law Enforcement Officers on intimate partner violence and strangulation, with pre- and post-surveys showing significant knowledge and confidence gains.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Development of community outcome measures with Region 1 Planning Council.</p>
<p><b>Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (DVERT)</b></p>	<p>A multidisciplinary team was organized to identify the most violent DV offenders and develop strategies to engage them in the criminal justice system while simultaneously increasing connection to resources and the safety of the survivor.</p>	<p>Family Peace Center, Prairie State Legal Services, Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office, Rockford Police Department, Winnebago County Sheriff's Office</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convening of a multidisciplinary team.</li> <li>• Development of a case review process.</li> <li>• Development of case-specific coordinated strategies.</li> <li>• Developed a data framework to track trends and outcomes.</li> <li>• Received 19 referrals and conducted multidisciplinary reviews for each of the referred high-risk cases in 2025. Eleven (11) of the cases involved stalking, and 14 were identified as having a history of strangulation.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Development of community outcome measures with Region 1 Planning Council.</p>
<p><b>Medical Advocacy &amp; Collaboration</b></p>	<p>The Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention, the Family Peace Center, and the Voices Committee have created and expanded partnerships with local medical systems, educational institutions, and professionals to</p>	<p>Epic Systems, LP Johnson, Mercyhealth, Mobil Integrated Health Program, Rockford Fire, UIC College of Medicine, UW Health, Voices Survivor Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a 2024 pilot training, 65 first- and second-year UIC medical students were trained to recognize domestic violence, use evidence-based screening tools, make referrals, and teach others how to respond. Pre- and post-survey data showed statistically significant gains in knowledge and confidence.</li> <li>• Student feedback from the pilot highlighted a desire for hands-on experience, more time, and mandatory curriculum integration. In</li> </ul>



# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
	<p>help support a more coordinated, trauma-informed response to survivors of domestic violence, one that strengthens early identification, streamlines referrals, removes barriers to care, and equips current and future providers with the tools they need to offer survivor-centered, trauma-informed responsive services.</p>		<p>response, a standardized patient simulation and lecture were developed and delivered to 50+ UIC students in April.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2025, teams delivered multidisciplinary IPV/strangulation trainings to more than 160 medical providers and students across UW Health, MercyHealth, UIC, and residency programs.</li> <li>• Launched on-site medical services at the Family Peace Center in partnership with Mercyhealth's Family Medicine Residency Program. Resident physicians provide trauma-informed care every Friday, including checkups, chronic condition management, injury care, and prescriptions. In the first seven months of operation, the program received 14 referrals.</li> <li>• The Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Program provides on-site services at the FPC, supporting survivors with mental health and chronic disease management through both short- and long-term care.</li> <li>• In partnership with Epic Systems and UW Health, an integrated referral and data system is in development to coordinate survivor care and track outcomes. The pilot is currently moving through UW Health's approval process and has potential for national replication.</li> <li>• The Medical Advocacy Response Program was launched in September 2025, providing supportive services to survivors of intimate partner violence seeking care in the UW Health SwedishAmerican Emergency Department.</li> <li>• From September through December 2025, 16 survivors received emotional support, safety planning, and assistance navigating resources and services.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Varies based on the project being deployed. Trainings use pre- and post-tests.</p>
<b>GRANTS/GRANT SUPPORTED:</b>			
<p><b>Grant Supported: Family Peace Center</b></p>	<p>A multi-agency, multi-disciplinary hub to support survivors of interpersonal violence. The facility focuses on reducing the number of times survivors tell their stories and the number of places</p>	<p>On-site Partners: Brightpoint, Children's Safe Harbor, City of Rockford Police Department Domestic Violence Unit, Family Counseling Services, National Alliance on Mental Illness, NIU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applied for and received federal funding to support the establishment of the Family Peace Center.</li> <li>• Secured an international technical assistance provider, The Alliance for HOPE International, who facilitated a two-day strategic planning process and produced a strategic planning report.</li> </ul>



# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
<p>survivors must go for help, as well as increasing access to services and support for survivors and their children.</p>	<p>College of Law's Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic, Prairie State Legal Services, Remedies Renewing Lives, Rockford Fire Department Mobil Integrated Health Unit, Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling, 17th Circuit Therapy Dog Volunteers, Healing Home Ayurveda, Winnebago County Housing Authority, Mercyhealth Family Medicine Residency.</p> <p>Partners: 17th Circuit Court, Carrie Lynn Children's Center, City of Rockford Human Services Department, Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity's ReStore, LP Johnson, Lifescape, MERIT, Regional Access and Mobility Project (RAMP), Region 1 Planning Council, Rock River Valley Pantry, Rockford Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, Rockford Rescue Mission, Rosecrance, RPS 205, St. Vincent de Paul, The Workforce Connection, UW Health, Winnebago County Animal Services, Winnebago County Health Department, Winnebago County Probation Department, Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office, YMCA, Youth Services Network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convened several multidisciplinary working groups to develop the framework of a community-centered Family Peace Center for Rockford, Illinois.</li> <li>• Opened a survivor-centered, trauma-informed organization and, in partnership with over 36 on-site and referral partners, served 2,597 survivors and their children (1,908 adults and 597 children) from July 2020 through January 12, 2026.</li> <li>• Presented at the International Family Justice Center Conference.</li> <li>• Acquired new space to relocate the Family Peace Center. This location will allow for the expansion of space and on-site partnerships.</li> <li>• Collaborated with Winnebago County on the Jail Call Project and Order of Protection Service Project to increase service rates.</li> <li>• Convened community partners for the SART development-planning phase.</li> <li>• Implemented the Danger Assessment, an evidence-based lethality assessment tool used to help survivors better understand their risk of harm/lethality. This also promotes more informed advocacy at the FPC.</li> <li>• Implemented the Lethality Prevention Division, which includes coordinating three high-lethality teams and a high-lethality case manager.</li> <li>• Developed a process to collect court-related data aimed at identifying ways to improve the system's response to survivors experiencing post-separation abuse.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Grant Outcomes, Hope Scale Surveys, Exit Surveys, ongoing data collection, and review</p>



# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
<p><b>Grant: Improving Responses for Survivors with Disabilities</b>  <b>Grant Partner</b>  <b>Lead Grant Recipient: Regional Access &amp; Mobilization Project (RAMP)</b></p>	<p>A multidisciplinary team was established to increase the organizational capacity of partners to provide accessible, safe, and effective services to individuals with disabilities and Deaf individuals who are survivors of violence and abuse by identifying needs in the service area and by developing a plan to address the needs identified sustainably.</p> <p>* The Family Peace Center is a named partner on a pending federal grant to expand this project and strengthen services for survivors with disabilities.</p>	<p>Remedies, Mercy Health and Home, Rockford Sexual Assault and Counseling, Regional Access and Mobilization Project, and the Family Peace Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed development of Strategic Planning.</li> <li>• Developed a Mission and Vision statement.</li> <li>• Conducted listening sessions separately with executive directors, staff, and clients of partner agencies.</li> <li>• Completed a comprehensive data review.</li> <li>• Developed performance indicator reviews.</li> <li>• Development of next steps that include reviewing data with partner agencies and utilizing data to develop action plans that address the service gaps identified in serving survivors with disabilities.</li> <li>• Family Peace Center is a partner on a Federal Grant pending approval</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Grant Outcomes</p>
<p><b>Grant: Camp Hope</b></p>	<p>Yearlong healing and mentoring programming for youth ages 7-17 that helps them process experiences of being exposed to domestic and/or sexual violence in a trauma-informed way to help them heal and find pathways for hope.</p> <p>This project, first launched through a successful partnership with the City, has now grown into a fully independent initiative, with our partner organization, the YMCA, proudly taking the lead in 2024, marking a powerful milestone in sustainability and community impact.</p>	<p>Family Peace Center, YMCA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated inaugural Camp Hope, which hosted 18 youth participants.</li> <li>• Pathways program facilitated to provide ongoing connection and mentorship to Camp Hope participants.</li> <li>• Provided the second annual Camp Hope, reaching 15 community youth.</li> <li>• Worked with the YMCA to coordinate Camp Hope staff training and camper referrals for the first overnight camp experience occurring in Summer 2024.</li> <li>• 15 youth participated in the inaugural week-long Camp Hope, overnight experience.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Hope Scale and Grant Outcomes</p>



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	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
<p><b>Grant: Strategies to Support Children Exposed to Violence</b></p>	<p>A project to develop and establish a multiagency, multidisciplinary facility, where children exposed to violence and their families can come to receive healing and supportive services that promote trauma recovery, youth development, and violence prevention and interventions.</p>	<p>Boys and Girls Club of Rockford, Boys and Girls Club of Rockford, By Any Dreams Necessary, City of Rockford Police Department, Comprehensive Community Solutions, Creating Initiative Through Interaction Education &amp; Development (CITIED), Family Peace Center, Juvenile Probation Dept, Regional Access &amp; Mobilization Project, Rockford Area Arts Council, Rockford Barbell, Strong Neighborhood Houses, Washington Park Community Center, and Youth Services Network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selected as one of seven federal grant award recipients.</li> <li>• Services operate at multiple locations, including Irving Strong House, Comprehensive Community Solutions, Boys &amp; Girls Club Stenstrom Unit, and Washington Park Community Center.</li> <li>• Community engagement reached over 2,100 people, including a Summer Block Party with 200+ attendees, and provides donation support to families experiencing hardship.</li> <li>• Since April 2024, 205 youth completed intakes (144 ages 0–10; 61 ages 11–17)</li> <li>• Over the first year of drop-in programming, CHC has served 163 youth through 1,311 visits at Irving Strong House, providing mentorship, social-emotional learning, restorative circles, and service connections</li> <li>• Providing school-based restorative justice circles and community-building activities at McIntosh School, resulting in a 78% reduction in disciplinary referrals.</li> <li>• Led a 7-week My Life My Choice, human trafficking prevention group at Washington Park, with 17 participants.</li> <li>• Developed a framework to recruit and select youth for the peer-led Youth Advocacy Board that includes 18 active members.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Grant outcomes, supported by ongoing data consultation of Region 1 Planning Council.</p>
<p><b>Grant: Engaging Men and Boys as Allies in the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls Program</b></p>	<p>A project aimed at creating educational programming and community organizing to encourage men and boys to work as allies with women, girls, and marginalized communities to prevent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking.</p>	<p>YMCA of Rock River Valley, Comprehensive Community Solutions, Boys &amp; Girls Club of Rockford, Family Peace Center, Rockford Park District.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selected as one (1) of nine (9) federal grant award recipients.</li> <li>• Convened a multidisciplinary team to complete the needs assessment and planning phase.</li> <li>• Facilitated cross-training between each of the partner agencies.</li> <li>• Developed and deployed a customized train-the-trainer curriculum for partner agencies to use with supervisory-level staff, who then train program staff and incorporate it into onboarding plans.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Grant Outcomes</p>



# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
<p><b>Grant: Violence Prevention Coordinating Council</b></p>	<p>The Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention (MODCVP) established a Violence Prevention Coordination Council, which serves as a lead body to work across the Rockford community to coordinate violence prevention resources and continue the Rockford Local Advisory Council (LAC) work established by the Illinois Department of Human Services Office of Firearm Violence Prevention.</p>	<p>Voices of Inspiration, Comprehensive Community Solutions, Get Connected 815, Crisis Co-Response Team, National Youth Advocacy Program, Northwest Community Center, Rockford Police Department, Rockford Public School District 205 Families in Transition (FIT) Program, Rockford Regional Health Council, Boys and Girls Club, By Any Dreams Necessary, Total Faith, Sisters by Love.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convened local council members to guide community violence prevention efforts.</li> <li>• Established a multidisciplinary Emergency Response Team to coordinate responses to firearm-related incidents involving multiple victims.</li> <li>• Mapped local resources and organized partners to deliver services directly to neighborhoods through targeted outreach and referrals.</li> <li>• Hosted bilingual community education events (English and Spanish) to promote self-advocacy within the school system.</li> <li>• Added a Community Liaison position to strengthen community outreach and youth engagement.</li> <li>• Developed policy recommendations and a Community Safety Action Plan for the State of Illinois.</li> <li>• Guided the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation in designing grant funding opportunities aligned with VPCC recommendations.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Grant Outcomes</p>
<p><b>YOUTH-BASED INITIATIVES:</b></p>			
<p><b>My Life My Choice</b></p>	<p>Human Trafficking Prevention curriculum for girls ages 12-18 to learn the signs of grooming and human trafficking, so they are equipped to avoid tactics and seek help.</p>	<p>Community Healing Center, Rockford Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, Washington Park Community Center, Strong Neighborhood Houses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained facilitators and deployed curriculum in Lincoln Middle School.</li> <li>• Twelve (12) youth participants enrolled in the curriculum and reported identifying signs in their lives and in friends' lives that connected to the information being shared in the sessions.</li> <li>• Youth were connected with additional support and services.</li> <li>• Facilitated the training of staff from Brightpoint, Family Counseling Services, Community Healing Center, and Comprehensive Community Solutions as trainers of MLMC curriculum to expand offerings.</li> <li>• Deployed a 6-week group at West Middle School with six (6) female students enrolled.</li> <li>• Deployed a 7-week group at Washington Park Community Center with 15 youth enrolled, and 9 fully completed the program.</li> </ul>



# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
<b>Step Up</b>	<p>21-week intervention/diversion program for youth ages 13-18, and their family unit, to receive group and individual support.</p> <p>In 2025, a collaborative project originally developed in partnership with the City was successfully transitioned to Youth Services Network (YSN), which now proudly hosts and leads the initiative, demonstrating both the strength of our partnerships and a shared commitment to long-term impact for youth and families.</p>	Boys and Girls Club, Youth Services Network (YSN), JVERT Team Members.	<p>Evaluation Method: Pre and Post-Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created project partnership.</li> <li>• Conducted facilitator training.</li> <li>• Conducted sessions.</li> <li>• All youth participants completing the pilot program in June 2020 have had no further criminal justice involvement.</li> <li>• Expanded partnerships to expand programming in community settings.</li> <li>• Conducted facilitator training for Boys &amp; Girls staff to conduct community-based Step Up groups.</li> <li>• Partnered with YSN to host programming. Four families completed the first cohort.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Pre and Post-surveys</p>
<b>Barbershop Project</b>	<p>What began as a project of the Grassroots Team, a group of community members with lived experience who advised the Office and helped amplify local organizations, has evolved into The Barbershop Project. The Barbershop uplifts barbers as trusted community advocates, helping to destigmatize mental health services by fostering connection, offering training, and providing ongoing support and resources to community members. This transition represents a meaningful investment in community-rooted leadership and healing.</p>	Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, Community Life Center, Comprehensive Community Solutions, Family Peace Center, Get Connected 815, Grassroots Team, Health Choice Illinois, Local Barbers and Beauticians, NAMI, Northwest Community Center, Power of Hope.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created a sustainable grassroots framework that empowers barbers to serve as frontline mental wellness advocates.</li> <li>• Coordinated four (4) organized youth-based community violence listening sessions.</li> <li>• Developed and delivered nonprofit training and mentorship to local grassroots groups, helping build organizational capacity and grant readiness.</li> <li>• Supported successful grant applications and contributed to the design of violence prevention strategies and projects across the Office and partner task forces.</li> <li>• Hosted a multidisciplinary training for barbers with subject matter experts and launched a kickoff event with 15 barbers/stylists providing nearly 30 free haircuts to community members.</li> <li>• Facilitate monthly Shop Talk community conversations on trauma and mental wellness, averaging 12 participants per session.</li> <li>• Delivered Mental Health First Aid and suicide prevention trainings (QPR – Question, Persuade, Refer) to participating barbers and community members.</li> </ul>



# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured sponsorships from Portillo's and Blue Cross Blue Shield to support community health through nutritious food and wellness resources.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Conducted pre- and post-tests to evaluate training impact and inform ongoing development.</p>
<p><b>Handle With Care</b></p>	<p>A collaborative notification system providing school staff with notice that a student may have been exposed to a traumatic event. Notice promotes a trauma-informed response to potential behaviors.</p>	<p>Rockford Public Schools, Rockford Police Department, Regional Office of Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led a collaboration that was necessary to develop and implement a school district-wide project.</li> <li>Achieved development and deployment of the project over three months.</li> <li>City of Rockford and School District 205 Information and Technology departments created an innovative automated notification system.</li> <li>Worked collaboratively with partners in the development of the project rollout plan and participated in the creation and presentation of rollout training for all school staff.</li> <li>Since the start of the program (2/28/22) and December 2025, the Rockford Police Department provided Rockford Public Schools with over 12,148. Handle With Care Notices. 2,353 notices were provided during the 24-25 school year.</li> <li>RPS has developed a data framework around HWC notices and responses.</li> <li>Additional schools in nearby districts and local charter schools have begun implementing the Handle With Care project, modeled after the Rockford initiative.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: To be determined, pending Rockford Public Schools' development of a response to identified Handle With Care Students</p>
<p><b>School-Based Supports</b></p>	<p>Collaborative identification and connection to support for school staff and students.</p>	<p>Alignment Rockford, Boys &amp; Girls Club, Family Peace Center, Community Healing Center, NAMI, Region 1 Planning Council, Rockford Park District, Rosecrance, RPS 205, Winnebago County Health Department, YMCA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted the STARS (Support, Teach, and Respond to Students) proposal through Rockford Public Schools' Call to Action ARP ESSER process, advancing a cross-system approach to coordinated in- and out-of-school student supports; the proposal was not selected for funding.</li> <li>Mayor's Office and FPC staff provided Vicarious Trauma Support Training for 30 RPS 205 administrators and 79 school staff members, focusing on recognizing and mitigating the impact of secondary trauma, emphasizing self-care, resilience, and school-wide trauma-responsive strategies.</li> </ul>



## MAYOR'S OFFICE OF DOMESTIC & COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVE OUTCOMES & EVALUATION METHOD
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ongoing Vicarious Trauma and Wellbeing Training and direct support to staff at Constance Lane school.</li> <li>• Identified 17 high-need students in an elementary school to participate in a 10-week Youth Support Group Service to provide social-emotional support through the end of the school year.</li> <li>• Facilitate a Community Building Circle for a 4th-grade class impacted by a traumatic firearm incident.</li> <li>• Trained RPS 205 middle and high school principals (5/20) and assistant principals (5/22).</li> <li>• Provided ongoing specialized training and technical assistance to support toolkit implementation for the upcoming year.</li> </ul> <p>Evaluation Method: Examination of community and school data</p>



# Community Healing Center

## Mayor's Office of Domestic & Community Violence Prevention

### Purpose

The Community Healing Center (CHC) provides trauma-informed support to youth exposed to violence. Informed by our youth and their families, CHC delivers services in trusted neighborhood spaces and school settings.

Since launching in April 2024, CHC has expanded to multiple community-based sites including the Boys & Girls Club Stenstrom Unit, Irving Avenue Strong House, Washington Park Community Center, Comprehensive Community Solutions, and McIntosh Elementary school.

### Mission

Led by the voices of our youth, the Community Healing Center will strengthen the resilience of children and their families exposed to violence, by collaborating with community agencies to provide supportive services that promote youth development and empowerment through supportive trauma-informed services, provided with compassion, dignity, and integrity.

### Core Services

- Service navigation and case coordination
- One-on-one and group mentorship
- Restorative justice and prevention programming
- Human trafficking prevention and response
- School-based partnerships and structured drop-in programming
- Emergency and basic-needs stabilization support

### Impact Since Launch

- 221 unduplicated youth served
- 81 youth currently engaged in services
- 59 referrals to community-based and therapeutic partners
- 65 prevention group participants
- 12 of 22 youth (55%) showed measurable improvement in Hope Scale scores
- 1,865 individuals reached through outreach efforts
- 12 exploitation and victimization-related disclosures addressed

### Cross-Department Coordination & Partnerships

- Rockford Police Department Community Services Unit
- Violence Prevention Coordinating Council
- Family Peace Center
- Youth Services Network
- Comprehensive Community Solutions
- Boys & Girls Club of Rockford
- Additional community and grassroots partners

CHC sites serve as consistent, low-barrier hubs where youth can receive mentorship, participate in groups, and connect to essential resources. Collaboration with partners such as Rockford Area Arts Council, CITIED Foundation, Rockford Barbell, and By Any Dreams Necessary reduces service gaps and strengthens coordination.

### **Youth Leadership**

The Youth Advocacy Board gives young people a direct voice in shaping programs and identifying issues affecting their neighborhoods, in partnership with By Any Dreams Necessary.

### **Why This Matters**

The CHC brings coordinated support into the environments where youth already spend their time. By meeting families in familiar spaces and reducing barriers to services, CHC strengthens protective factors and responds to real-world challenges facing youth in our community.

# A Year with the Family Peace Center

## ~A Survivors Testimony

This past year has been one of profound growth, healing, and rediscovering myself—one I did not walk alone. Family Peace Center walked beside me through one of the most painful and disorienting seasons of my life, when I felt stripped of my voice, my stability, and my sense of self. When I could not see my own strength, they held space for it until I could.

They reminded me to trust my intuition when I had learned to doubt it. They encouraged me to advocate for myself when I felt powerless, unheard, and overwhelmed. Through their domestic violence groups and unwavering support, I found the courage to stand firmly in who I am and reclaim my life.

Family Peace Center didn't just listen—they believed me. They empowered me. They reflected my worth back to me when I had forgotten it myself.

They cared for me in ways that went beyond survival. Through self-care services like acupuncture and a sensory deprivation tank—experiences I had never tried before—I was able to reconnect with my body, my breath, and my calm during a time when peace felt out of reach. Those moments helped me feel human again.

Their support showed up in countless, deeply meaningful ways. They provided gift cards to help get my pets registered and healthy, gas cards that helped me keep moving when I was starting from nothing, and donated Ring cameras that brought safety and peace of mind back into our home. I also received one-on-one support from a case manager who checked in consistently—encouraging me, grounding me, and gently helping me find my way when I felt overwhelmed or lost.

Family Peace Center also connected my family with vital community resources that changed my son's future. Through Comprehensive Community Solutions (CCS), he is now close to completing the program with OSHA certification, a carpenter's license, and a solar panel certification—opportunities that once felt unimaginable and are now opening real doors for his life after high school.

Their holiday party touched my family more than words can express. During a season of deep financial strain, they helped provide gifts for my children, lifting a weight from my heart I had been carrying silently. They brought joy, dignity, and light into a moment that could have been filled with fear and loss.

With their encouragement, I found the strength to confront a deeply narcissistic situation and reclaim my home for myself and my children. Their belief in me ignited something I didn't know I still had—the desire to want more, to do better, and to believe in a future beyond survival.

Step by step, I moved forward. I earned my CDL. I started a career as a bus driver. I rediscovered my sense of purpose. I am now even considering taking classes to become a diesel mechanic—expanding my opportunities and building long-term stability for my family.

Family Peace Center didn't just help me survive—they helped me heal, grow, and rebuild. They changed the trajectory of my family's future, and I will carry their compassion with me for the rest of my life.

Recently, I had a moment that stopped me in my tracks. While driving my bus at dusk, I watched a small family of deer—a doe, a fawn, and a young buck—prepare to cross the road. The sun was setting, the sky washed in soft sherbet orange, and everything felt still.

**by Heard and Held**

*Holding space for voices finding their way home*

And in that quiet moment, it finally hit me: *I am standing in a life I once prayed for.*

I lived for so long in fight-or-flight mode, always bracing for what might come next. Because of the support of Family Peace Center, I now feel safe enough to slow down. Safe enough to breathe. Safe enough to notice beauty, silence, and simplicity.

What once felt impossible is now my reality. Family Peace Center helped me believe that I was always capable of more. This next chapter of my life is about honoring peace—being present, grounded, and at ease with everything I fought so hard to build.

*~Offered under a pen name to honor confidentiality, lived experience, and the safety of those whose stories are still unfolding.*

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by Heard and Held  
*Holding space for voices finding their way home*



Sarah Leys  
Director  
Community and Economic  
Development Department

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Ald. Janessa Wilkins, Chair  
Planning and Development Committee

**FROM:** Sarah Leys, Deputy Director  
Community & Economic Development Department

**DATE:** February 23, 2026

**RE:** 2026 Funding Agreement with the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce

.....

Please find the attached 2026 funding agreement with the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce (GRCC) as the Regional Economic Development Organization.

This agreement supports the GRCC as a key partner in advancing economic development by attracting, retaining, and growing primary jobs through a strong, competitive business community, while backing GRCC-led strategies around business growth, regional marketing, site readiness, workforce and talent alignment, and innovation. In turn, the GRCC commits to supporting the City’s overall economic development vision and specific projects to ensure prosperity across all residents and areas of Rockford and the surrounding region. Through its expertise and work plan, the GRCC will help implement the City’s strategies in areas such as leadership development, business retention and attraction, marketing, workforce alignment, and innovation, working collaboratively to resolve any strategic conflicts. The GRCC also recognizes the close link between economic and community development and agrees to actively participate in broader community development efforts that contribute to overall community health.

Since the merger with RAEDC, leadership at GRCC spent time creating a new strategic plan for regional economic development, hiring 815Impact to facilitate stakeholder conversations. That plan is included in this packet with their proposal. To oversee and implement this work, GRCC hired a Vice President of Business Expansion and Attraction, and his team be focused on the following activities:

**Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)**

Business Retention & Expansion remains the most immediate and cost-effective strategy for sustaining Rockford’s economic stability. Ongoing outreach to existing employers helps identify operational



*Sarah Leys  
Director  
Community and Economic  
Development Department*

challenges, workforce needs, and growth opportunities before they escalate into job loss or relocation risks. Coordinated BRE efforts between the city, the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce, and regional partners allow for timely problem-solving and reinforce Rockford's reputation as a business-supportive community. Council awareness and support of BRE initiatives can help protect the existing tax base while encouraging reinvestment and job retention.

### **New Business Attraction**

New Business Attraction efforts focus on positioning Rockford competitively for companies considering expansion or relocation. This includes maintaining site readiness, supporting infrastructure improvements, and evaluating strategic incentive tools that align with community priorities. City Council plays a key role in enabling timely project responses and ensuring that Rockford presents a coordinated, business-friendly environment for prospects and site selectors. Attraction strategies are designed to complement existing industry strengths while prioritizing projects that deliver long-term economic value, quality employment opportunities, and sustainable growth.

### **Marketing to Target Industries**

A targeted industry marketing approach allows Rockford to focus resources on sectors where the region has established advantages, including precision manufacturing, food and beverage manufacturing, and pharmaceutical manufacturing. Clear, consistent messaging strengthens Rockford's visibility and credibility in competitive markets. Strategic marketing efforts may include coordinated branding, industry outreach, trade association engagement, and collaboration with regional partners to highlight workforce capabilities, transportation access, and available sites. Aligning marketing with identified target sectors helps ensure efficient use of public and private resources.

### **Metric and Data Tracking**

Effective metric and data tracking provides transparency and accountability for economic development initiatives presented to the City Council and the public. Tracking employer engagement, project pipeline activity, workforce alignment outcomes, and industry growth indicators allows decision-makers to evaluate progress against strategic goals. Utilizing consistent data systems and reporting practices supports informed policy decisions, helps measure return on investment, and ensures alignment with broader regional economic development priorities. A data-driven approach enables the city to refine strategies over time while clearly communicating with measurable outcomes.

The funding request will support the full work, and represents 3% of the GRCC budget.

Please contact me with any questions at 779-348-7442. Thank you

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

**TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:**

Council Members:

The Committee on Planning and Development, to whom was referred the matter of the approval of the 2026 Funding Agreement with the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce (GRCC) as the Regional Economic Development Organization in the amount of \$75,000.00, hereby begs leave to report **recommending approval** of the request as recommended.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Janessa Wilkins (Chair)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Durkee (Vice Chair)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Hoffman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jaime Salgado

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gina Meeks

Committee Action Taken: February 23, 2026

Wilkins: Ayes:\_\_\_ Nays:\_\_\_ Absent:\_\_\_  
Durkee: Ayes:\_\_\_ Nays:\_\_\_ Absent:\_\_\_  
Hoffman: Ayes:\_\_\_ Nays:\_\_\_ Absent:\_\_\_  
Salgado: Ayes:\_\_\_ Nays:\_\_\_ Absent:\_\_\_  
Meeks: Ayes:\_\_\_ Nays:\_\_\_ Absent:\_\_\_

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR SERVICES

### PARTIES

**THIS FUNDING AGREEMENT** (the “Agreement”) is made by and between the **CITY OF ROCKFORD**, an Illinois municipal corporation (hereinafter referred to as “City”) and the **GREATER ROCKFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation (hereinafter referred to as the “GRCC”), regarding the participation of the City in the GRCC’s economic development activities.

### CITY SUPPORT FOR THE GRCC MISSION:

1. The City acknowledges and supports the GRCC’s general economic development mission to attract and retain primary jobs by relentlessly growing, developing and supporting a thriving business community. The City also acknowledges the GRCC is a partner organization, and supports their strategies that will strengthen their capacity and establish leadership roles in economic development; drive business retention, expansion, and attraction with collaborative engagement across the region; market the region as a competitive location for existing and new businesses with emphasis on targeted industries; collaborate in improving marketability of existing development sites and help advance more sites toward readiness; enhance how businesses interact with workforce development and talent attraction resources; and collaborate with the region’s innovation leaders to amplify break-through ideas and technology.

### GRCC SUPPORT FOR THE CITY’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION:

2. The GRCC specifically acknowledges that its primary responsibility pursuant to this Agreement is to help all residents and all areas of the City of Rockford and surrounding areas to prosper by supporting the City’s general economic growth and development and specific projects as identified during the course of this Agreement; and

3. **Scope of Services.** The GRCC shall provide its special knowledge, services, skills, and training to support the City’s economic development goals and implement the City’s strategies through the work outlined in the GRCC’s proposed work plan (Exhibit A). The City and the GRCC believe that this can be done consistently with the focused strategies defined in the GRCC’s Economic Development Strategy Roadmap including: organizational development and leadership, business retention and expansion, marketing and business attraction, site readiness, workforce alignment and talent attraction, and innovation. To the extent, however, that any of the GRCC’s internal strategies conflict with the requirements of this Agreement or goals of the City, then the GRCC and City agree to work through those conflicts to a mutually satisfactory result.

4. **Support for Community Development.** The GRCC recognizes the interrelationships between economic development and community development in a comprehensive approach to overall community health. The GRCC will be an active participant in these efforts as may be appropriate and helpful.

5. **Sponsorship.** The GRCC agrees to list the City of Rockford as a civic sponsor in every event at no additional cost. Through the GRCC membership, the City receives complimentary event tickets and credits as specified.

6. **Term.** The term (“Term”) of this Agreement shall be from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026.

7. **Payment.** In consideration of the services provided by the GRCC, the City agrees to pay to the GRCC from its Redevelopment Fund the sum of Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000.00) for year 2026. The payment shall be made within 30 days of the execution of the Agreement.

8. **GRCC Economic Development Committee Representative.** The City may nominate a representative with expertise on economic growth that is an employee or contractor of the City to the Chairman of the GRCC Nominating Committee, to be a part of the GRCC’s Economic Development Committee. In addition, the City’s Economic and Community Development staff are invited to participate in the GRCC’s monthly Partners Meeting, comprised of economic development representatives from throughout the region.

9. **Information & Reporting.** The GRCC shall meet with City staff once a month to discuss the Scope of Services. The GRCC shall also meet with the Mayor and/or Community Development Director on an as-requested basis to discuss overall market activity within the greater region. The GRCC will report to City Council annually and from time to time as requested by the City.

10. **Independent Contractor.** It is agreed that the GRCC shall perform as an independent contractor with sole control of the manner and means of performing the services required under this Agreement. It is understood, however, that the City and the GRCC must work closely together to support successful implementation of this Agreement and the GRCC and the City agree to mutually support good communication regarding the expectations and progress of work performed pursuant to this Agreement. The GRCC shall utilize its specialized knowledge and experience and its own means and methods of work, which shall be in the exclusive charge and control of the GRCC and which shall not be subject to control or supervision by the City. The GRCC is, for all purposes arising out of this Agreement, an independent contractor, and neither the GRCC nor the GRCC employees shall be deemed an employee of the City, by reason of this Agreement.

11. **Confidentiality.** The City and the GRCC agree and acknowledge that the GRCC’s work pursuant to this Agreement with clients and/or the City remains confidential unless the client and/or the City specifically approves of the disclosure or as directed by a court or regulating agency pursuant to applicable law. Confidential information under this Agreement shall not apply to any Confidential information which is required to be disclosed by operation of law, including but not limited to, pursuant to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (50 ILCS 140).

12. **Indemnification of City.** The GRCC releases, covenants, and agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the City of Rockford, its representatives, officers, agents, and employees from any and all claims, causes of action, demands for damages, suits, either in law or in equity, expenses, or liability of any kind arising out of or by virtue of the execution and performances of this Agreement.

13. **Insurance.** The GRCC shall obtain and maintain in full force and effect during the term of this Agreement comprehensive general liability insurance in the amount of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000.00). The GRCC shall provide the City with a Certificate of Insurance for said coverage prior to execution of this Agreement. All insurance policies procured by the GRCC pursuant to this Agreement shall name the City as additional insured. All insurance policies shall provide that they may not be cancelled or modified, except for increase in coverage, without thirty (30) days', prior-written notice to the City. All insurance required hereunder shall be by a company or companies licensed to conduct business in the State of Illinois.

14. **Non-Assignability.** This Agreement and the monies to become due and services provided hereunder shall not be assignable, either by action of the GRCC or by operation and execution of this Agreement.

15. **Subcontracts.** The GRCC shall be allowed to subcontract portions of its services, provided:

a. The GRCC will in no way be relieved or excused from its responsibilities and liabilities because of its entering into a subcontract for work to be done pursuant to this Agreement; and

b. The City shall not be liable for the payment of any wages, materials, or other expenses of any and all subcontractors.

16. **Conflict of Interest.** The City and the GRCC hereby covenant and agree:

a. No member of the City Council, nor any other public official who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to this program during the individual's term of office or for one year thereafter, shall have any personal or financial interest, direct or indirect in connection with any program assisted under this Agreement or the proceeds thereof.

b. The provisions of subparagraph A shall also apply to employees of the GRCC.

17. **Termination.**

a. **Events Causing Termination.** This Agreement shall terminate upon any of the following events:

i. Voluntary or involuntary dissolution of the GRCC, or a request from the GRCC, granted by the City, to terminate its duties under this Agreement.

ii. Termination by the City for any reason upon sixty (60) days notice.

b. **Termination for Cause.** If, through any cause, the GRCC shall fail to fulfill in timely and proper manner its obligations under this Agreement, or if the GRCC shall violate any of the covenants, agreements or stipulations of this contract, the City shall give written notice to the GRCC of such violation. In the event that the GRCC neglects

or refuses to correct or cure said violation to the satisfaction of the City within thirty (30) days of its receipt of notice, then to the extent that a material or substantive breach of this Agreement still exists as of said date, this Agreement shall be void and the parties shall be subject to the liabilities set forth below.

c. Liabilities Upon Termination. In the event of termination, the GRCC shall be entitled to receive just and equitable compensation for any satisfactory work or services rendered, or expenses properly incurred under the scope of services, prior to termination. Notwithstanding the above, the GRCC shall not be relieved of liability to the City for damages sustained by the City by virtue of any breach of this Agreement.

d. Remedies Other Than Termination. Should review of the GRCC's performance show nonconformance to the Scope of Services, or any other terms or conditions herein, the GRCC shall be in breach of this Agreement, and the City may take appropriate actions as it deems necessary, including but not limited to temporary withholding or reduction of payment, or suspension of program operations. The selection of a remedy other than termination shall not prevent the City from subsequently terminating this Agreement as described herein.

18. Administration. The terms and provision of this Agreement shall be administered on behalf of the City by its Director of Community & Economic Development. Unless law otherwise requires, all necessary notices, submissions, and approvals shall be given to or by the Director.

19. Notices. All notices, approvals, demands, requests, or other documents required or permitted under this Agreement, other than routine communications necessary for the day-to-day operation of this program, shall be deemed properly given if hand delivered or sent by United States certified mail, postage prepaid, at the following addresses:

a. AS TO THE CITY: Director, Community & Economic Development; City of Rockford; 425 E. State Street; Rockford, Illinois 61104

b. AS TO THE GRCC: CEO, Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce; 308 W. State Street, Suite 190, Rockford, Illinois 61101

20. Amendments. This Agreement may be amended by written instrument executed by the parties hereto, acting therein by their duly authorized representatives. Any amendment(s) must be approved by the City Council of the City of Rockford by ordinance or resolution.

21. Severability. If any term or provision of this Agreement or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, shall to any extent, be held invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement, or the application of such term or provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid or unenforceable, shall not be effected thereby, and each remaining term and provision hereof shall be deemed valid and be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.

22. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois and the Ordinances of the City of Rockford.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the City and the GRCC have executed this Agreement on the date above first written.

CITY OF ROCKFORD, A Municipal Corporation

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas McNamara, Mayor Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Angela L. Hammer, Legal Director Date \_\_\_\_\_

Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce  
An Illinois non-for-profit Corporation

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Angela Kay Larson, CEO Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Advancing Local Growth *Together*

**A Partnership Approach to  
Economic Development**

**Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce**



# Why Together is Better

O+



# Collaboration that Drives Results

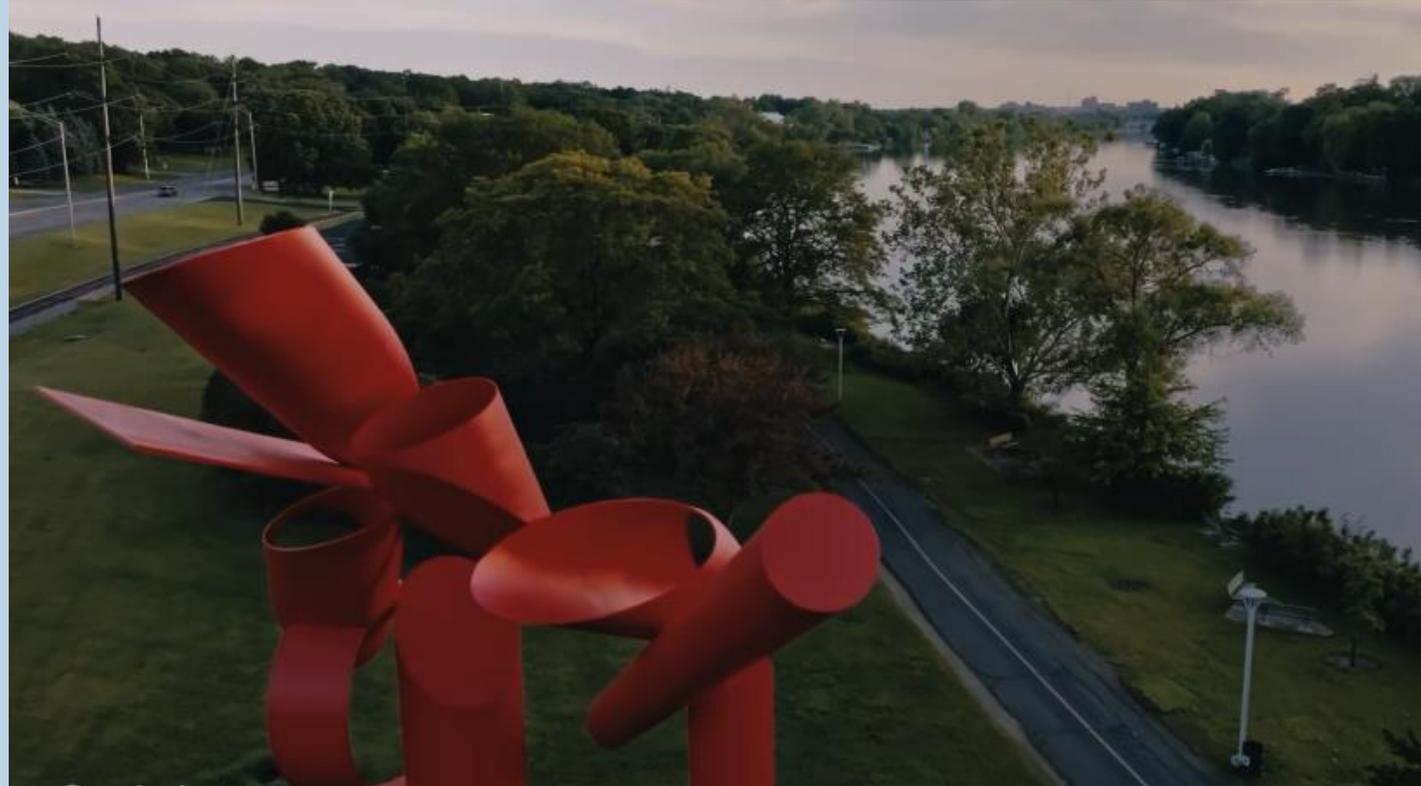
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## Why It's Important

- Economic development is cross-functional by nature
- Businesses experience the community as one system
- Shared accountability improves outcomes

## Best Practices

- Regular, structured communication
- Shared data and intelligence
- Mutual respect for roles and authority
- Focus on outcomes, not ownership



*Courtesy of GoRockford*

# One Region. Stronger Communities.

---

- **Expanded Capacity with Minimal Municipal Cost**
- **Stronger Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Outcomes**
- **Increased Competitiveness for Business Attraction**
- **Single Point of Contact for Prospects & Partners**
- **Workforce Alignment that Supports Local Employers**
- **Data-Driven Decision Support**
- **Regional Collaboration Over Fragmentation**
- **Enhanced Access to State & Regional Resources**
- **Proactive Site Readiness Strategy**
- **Long-Term Tax Base & Community Growth**

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# What This Means for Elected Officials

- **Delivers Results Constituents Care About**
- **Strengthens the Local Tax Base Without Raising Taxes**
- **Reduces Risk in Economic Decision-Making**
- **Adds Resources for Local Businesses**
- **Enhances Regional Competitiveness**
- **Provides Professional Capacity Without Expanding Government**
- **Protects Jobs and Prevents Business Losses**
- **Creates Clear Lines of Accountability**
- **Builds Long-Term Community Stability**

# Investing in the GRCC Mission & Talent

# 02



# GREATER ROCKFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# LEADING BUSINESS GROWTH

## 2025-2029



## MISSION

Deliver benefit to the community by leading regional economic growth, pro-business advocacy, and services and educational opportunities that help our members grow. In short, Leading Business Growth.

### VALUES

We work as a team.

We are connectors, conveners,  
and collaborators.

We make business personal.

We are forward thinking.

We strive for operational excellence.

We are energized by good work, good  
laughter, and good coffee.

### EQUITY PROMISE

We partner with members and the  
community to foster a business culture  
of equity and belonging.

### VISION

Relentlessly grow, develop, and support a thriving business community.

### KEY INITIATIVES

- Strengthen our capacity and establish leadership roles in economic development.
- Drive business retention, expansion, and attraction with collaborative engagement across the region.
- Market the region as a competitive location for existing and new businesses with emphasis on targeted industries.
- Collaborate with the region's innovation leaders to amplify break-through ideas and technology.
- Serve as the unified voice of members in pro-business advocacy.
- Develop our region's leaders and workforce members through training, best practice sharing, recognition, and networking.
- Strengthen our publications and communications as the region's confident, reliable source of business news and information.
- Partner with GoRockford, The Workforce Connection, and our region's schools to address members' current and future workforce needs.
- Implement systems of productivity, efficiency, and innovation as a model of profitability and performance excellence.

# Meet the Team



**ANGELA KAY LARSON**

Chief Executive Officer  
alarson@rockfordchamber.com



**CAITLIN PUSATERI**

Chief Operating Officer  
cpusateri@rockfordchamber.com



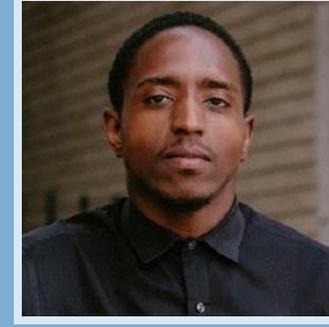
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**CHRISTINE HAND**

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**CARMEN KELLERMAN**

Events Manager  
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# How GRCC Supports Economic Development

03



# SIX VISION-DRIVEN FOCUS AREAS

**GRCC VISION: Relentlessly grow, develop, and support a thriving business community**

- 1. Organizational Development & Leadership**  
**Goal:** Strengthen internal capacity and establish leadership in regional economic development.
- 2. Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)**  
**Goal:** Drive business expansion, retention, and civic engagement across the region.
- 3. Marketing & Business Attraction**  
**Goal:** Market the region as a competitive location for business with emphasis on targeted industries.
- 4. Site Readiness**  
**Goal:** Collaborate in improving marketability of existing sites and help advance more sites toward readiness.
- 5. Workforce Alignment & Talent Attraction**  
**Goal:** Enhance how businesses interact with workforce development resources and support talent attraction initiatives.
- 6. Innovation**  
**Goal:** Collaborate with the region's innovation leaders to amplify break-through ideas and technology.

# GRCC Serves as an Extension of Your CED Staff

- ✓ **Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)**
- ✓ **Project Management & Confidentiality**
- ✓ **Lead Generation, RFIs, & Site Visits**
- ✓ **Site & Building Data Management**
- ✓ **Incentive Coordination & Navigation**
- ✓ **Workforce Development Alignment**
- ✓ **Regional Marketing & Storytelling**
- ✓ **Policy & Advocacy Support**
- ✓ **Market Intelligence**



# Recent Successes

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GRCC worked hand-in-hand with the new owners of **Rockford Brake Manufacturing**, connecting them to RLDC, banks, elected officials, government programs, and new vendors that led to an investment of **\$6.6M** and the retention of the **City's oldest manufacturer** and **150+ jobs**.

We are currently **managing 30+ leads and projects** with individual companies and site selectors related to retention, expansion, and attraction of businesses. **More than half represent manufacturing companies, estimating more than 5,000 new jobs.**

Annually, we produce the **Midwest Aerospace Conference**, our 2025 matchmaking sessions **paired 40 local companies with procurement leaders** from Boeing, Gulfstream, Collins, Woodward, and GE Aerospace; **14% of buyers said yes to follow up discussions** and 44% were further evaluating suppliers.



# Proposed Financial Investment

**\$75,000**

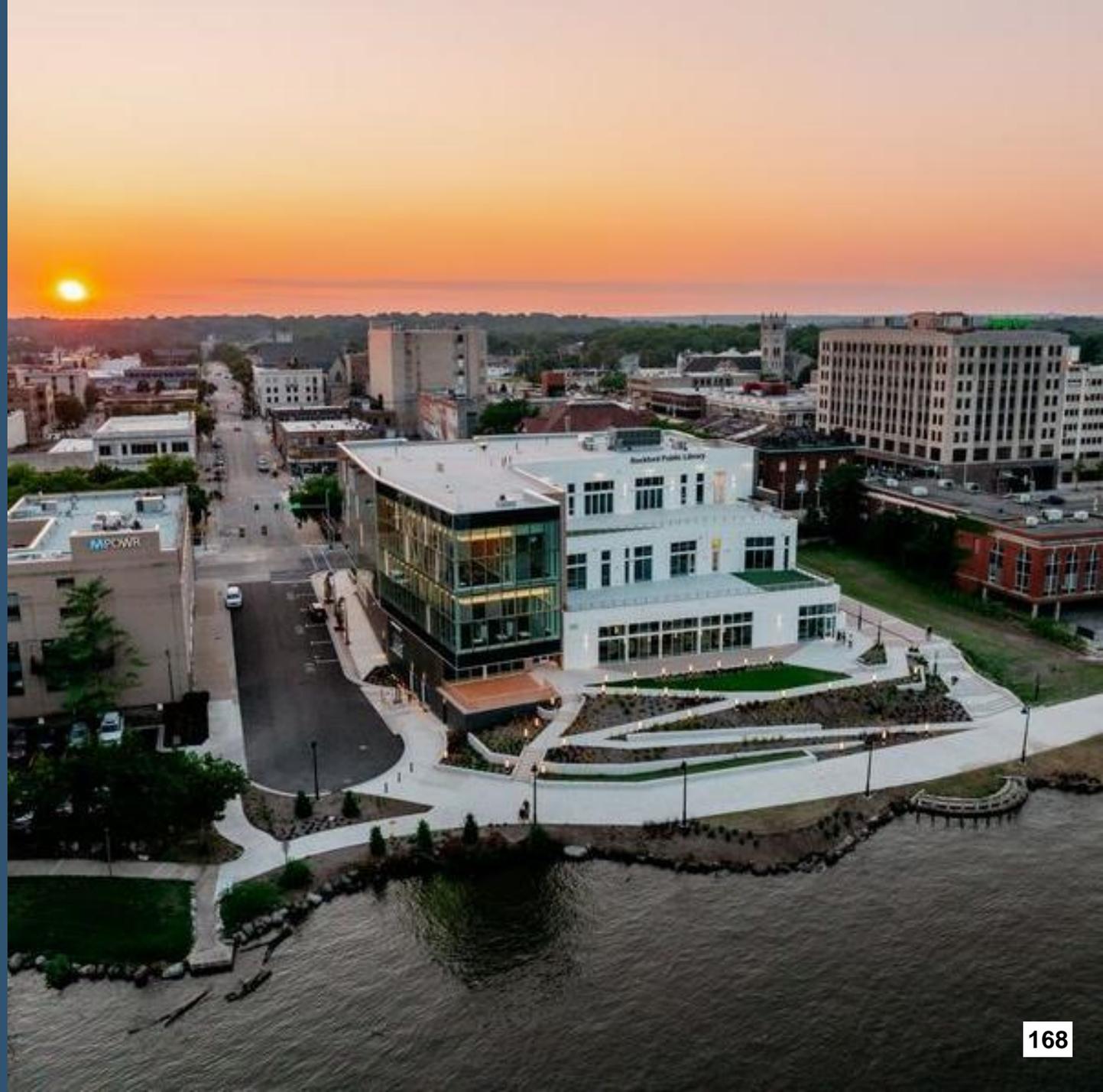
## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Business Retention & Expansion

New Business Attraction

Marketing to Target Industries

Metric and Data Tracking



# Appendix

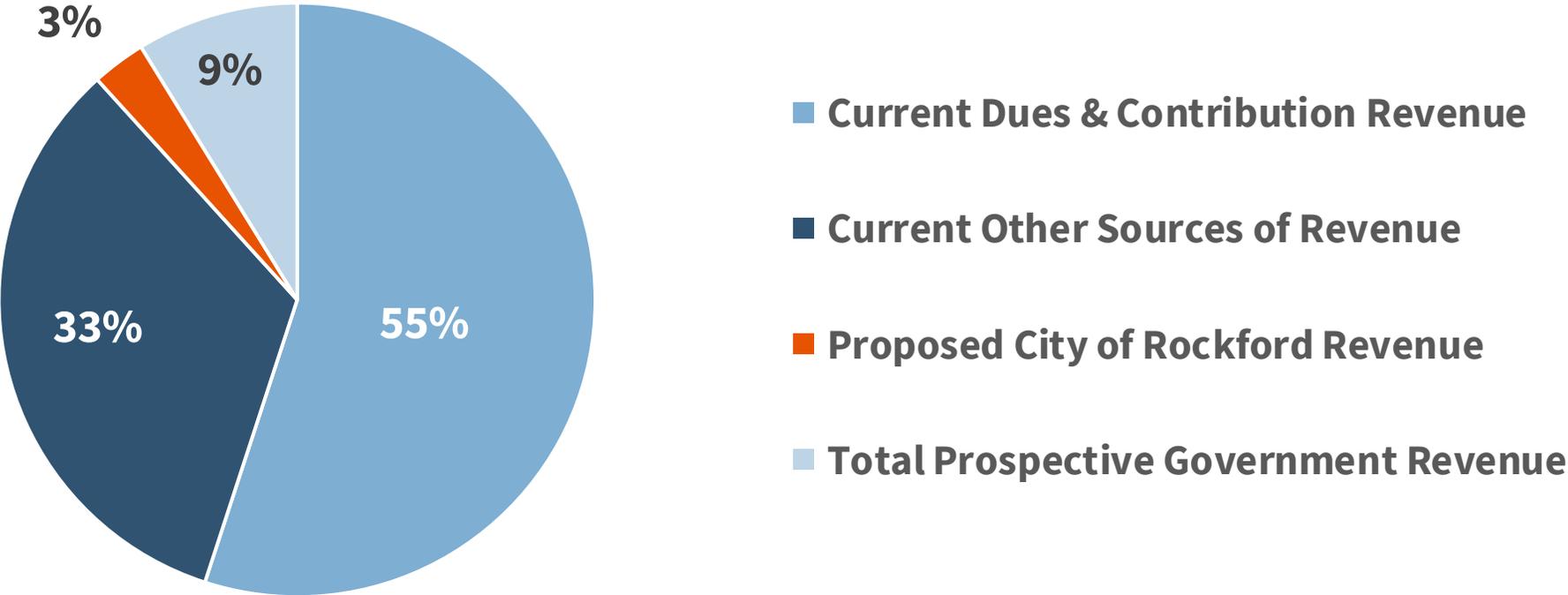
# 04

# GRCC 2026 Budget

	<b>% of Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Dues & Contribution Revenue*	62.3%	1,410,534
Other Sources of Revenue	37.4%	853,660
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>2,264,194</b>
<b>Direct Expenses/Cost of Goods Sold</b>	22%	<b>493,831</b>
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>		<b>1,770,362</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Payroll/Staff Expenses	51%	1,157,504
Overhead Expenses	27%	611,267
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>		<b>1,768,770</b>
<b>NET OPERATING REVENUE</b>		<b>1,592</b>
Interest Income		6,000
Unrealized Gain on Endowment Fund		3,304
<b>NET REVENUE</b>		<b>10,896</b>

\* Includes memberships, contributions from government entities, and grants

# 2026 GRCC Current and Prospective Sources of Revenue



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

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**EIGHT FIFTEEN**  
*Impact*



**GREATER  
ROCKFORD**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

GRCC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP



# SIX VISION-DRIVEN FOCUS AREAS

**GRCC VISION: Relentlessly grow, develop, and support a thriving business community**

- 1. Organizational Development & Leadership**  
**Goal:** Strengthen internal capacity and establish leadership in regional economic development.
- 2. Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)**  
**Goal:** Drive business expansion, retention, and civic engagement across the region.
- 3. Marketing & Business Attraction**  
**Goal:** Market the region as a competitive location for business with emphasis on targeted industries.
- 4. Site Readiness**  
**Goal:** Collaborate in improving marketability of existing sites and help advance more sites toward readiness.
- 5. Workforce Alignment & Talent Attraction**  
**Goal:** Enhance how businesses interact with workforce development resources and support talent attraction initiatives.
- 6. Innovation**  
**Goal:** Collaborate with the region's innovation leaders to amplify break-through ideas and technology.

# 1. Organizational Development & Leadership

---

**Goal: Strengthen internal capacity and establish leadership in regional economic development.**

01

Build  
Organizational  
Capacity

02

Strengthen  
Community Trust  
and Engagement

03

Enhance Visibility  
of Economic  
Development  
Work and  
Successes

04

Grow Membership  
and Investment

## 2. Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)

---

**Goal: Drive business expansion and retention with civic engagement across the region.**

01

Enhance BRE  
Visit Program

02

Support Existing  
Business Growth  
and Expansion

03

Create  
Opportunities  
for Industry  
Collaboration

# 3. Marketing & Business Attraction

---

**Goal: Market the region as a competitive location for business with emphasis on targeted industries.**

01

Enhance Targeted Messaging and Branding

02

Drive Lead Generation and Outreach

03

Emphasize Digital Marketing and Strengthen Storytelling

## 4. Site Readiness Support

---

**Goal: Collaborate in improving marketability of existing sites and help advance more sites toward readiness.**

01

Maintain Property Catalogs  
and Assessments

02

Advance Strategic Site  
Readiness in Partnership  
with Region 1 Planning  
Council

# 5. Workforce Alignment & Talent Attraction

---

**Goal: Enhance how businesses interact with workforce development resources and support talent attraction initiatives.**

01

Increase Employer Engagement in Collaboration with Schools and The Workforce Connection

02

Enrich Local Leaders through Training and Development Programs

03

Promote Talent Attraction in Collaboration with GoRockford

# 6. Innovation

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**Goal: Collaborate with the region’s innovation leaders to amplify break-through ideas and technology**

01

Tell Region’s  
Innovation Story

02

Facilitate  
Collaboration  
Among Region’s  
Innovation  
Partners

03

Strengthen  
Ecosystem and  
Access to Capital

# COMPLETE PLAN DOCUMENT

Contact the GRCC for the complete  
Economic Development Roadmap, including

- Approach to Planning
- Economic Context
- Strategic Inputs
- Organizational Assessment
- Focus Areas
- Data Insights





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To: Ald. Janessa Wilkins, Committee Chair  
Planning & Development Committee

Cc: Mayor Thomas McNamara  
City Council

From: Anna Garrison, Economic Development Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna EC Garrison".

RE: Proposed South Rockford Industrial TIF District – Joint Review Board & Public  
Hearing Resolution

Date: February 23, 2026

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Staff have been engaged with Ryan LLC to analyze the eligibility and draft a redevelopment plan and project for a new South Rockford Industrial TIF District. In accordance with the State of Illinois Tax Increment Financing statute, the proposed resolution will authorize the City to hold a Joint Review Board meeting on March 31, 2026 with stakeholder taxing bodies and a Public Hearing on May 11, 2026. The proposed TIF District will then be brought to City Council consideration for approval.

The proposed South Rockford Industrial TIF District generally consists of tax parcels on Edson Rd west of IL 251 to Rothwell Rd and Condon Rd/South Bend Rd to the north. The area is currently covered by the existing Global Trade Park South TIF District.

Please contact me with any questions at 779.348.7449

**RECOMMENDATION FOR RESOLUTION**

**TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:**

Council Members:

The Committee on Planning and Development having received a request hereby begs leave to report recommending **approval** of a resolution calling for a Public Hearing and convening a Joint Review Board in connection with a new South Rockford Industrial Tax Increment Financing District. The Legal Director shall prepare the appropriate resolution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Janessa Wilkins (Chair)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Durkee (Vice Chair)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Hoffman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jaime Salgado

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gina Meeks

Committee Action Taken: June 12, 2026

Wilkins:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Durkee:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Hoffman:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Salgado:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Meeks:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___

**RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION calling a Public Hearing and convening a Joint Review Board in connection with approval of a Redevelopment Plan and Project for and the designation of the South Rockford Industrial Redevelopment Project Area.**

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, as supplemented and amended (65 ILCS 11-74.4-1 *et seq.*) (the “Act”), the Mayor and City Council (the “Corporate Authorities”) of the City of Rockford, Winnebago and Ogle Counties, Illinois (the “City”), do hereby determine that it is advisable and in the best interests of the City that the City propose a redevelopment plan and project (the “Redevelopment Plan and Project”) for and designate a redevelopment project area to be known as the South Rockford Industrial Redevelopment Project Area (the “Redevelopment Project Area”) as further described in Exhibit A attached hereto; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires the City to conduct a Public Hearing, as defined herein, and convene a Joint Review Board prior to the adoption of an Ordinance approving a redevelopment plan and project, designating a redevelopment project area, and then adopting tax increment allocation financing for the redevelopment project area, and at which hearing any interested person or affected taxing district may file with the Legal Director written objections to and may be heard orally with respect to the proposed Redevelopment Plan and Project for the proposed Redevelopment Project Area; and

WHEREAS, the Act further requires that such Joint Review Board consist of a representative selected by each taxing district that has authority to levy real property taxes on the property within the proposed Redevelopment Project Area, a representative selected by the City, and a public member to consider the subject matter of the Public Hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Act further requires that the time and place of such Public Hearing be fixed by Resolution or Ordinance adopted by the Corporate Authorities; and

WHEREAS, the Act further requires that prior to adopting such Resolution or Ordinance fixing the time and place of a Public Hearing, the City must make available for public inspection a copy of the

Redevelopment Plan and Project or a separate report (“Eligibility Report”) that provides in reasonable detail the basis for the proposed Redevelopment Project qualifying as a “conservation area” under the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Act further requires that the Redevelopment Plan and Project or such separate report, along with the name of a person to contact for further information, shall be sent to the affected taxing districts by certified mail within a reasonable time following the adoption of the Resolution or Ordinance establishing the time and place for the Public Hearing; and

WHEREAS, City staff and the firm of Ryan LLC (formerly Kane, McKenna and Associates), have conducted an eligibility analysis of the proposed Redevelopment Project Area and have prepared the draft Redevelopment Plan and Project or Eligibility Report, on behalf of the City, and have concluded that said proposed area qualifies as a “conservation area” and “blighted-vacant area” as defined in the Act which analysis and finding have been presented to the Corporate Authorities and are now on file in the official files and records of the City; and

WHEREAS, the Plan and Project or Eligibility Report has heretofore been placed on file and is available for public inspection in the offices of the Legal Director as required under the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires that notice of the Public Hearing be given by publication and mailing; and

WHEREAS, the City reasonably expects to reimburse itself or third party consultants, developers, or property owners for eligible expenses under the Act by using incremental property tax revenues derived from tax increment financing or from issuing obligations pursuant to the Act (“Reimbursement Obligations”).

NOW, THEREFORE, Be It Resolved by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Rockford, Winnebago and Ogle Counties, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1.     *Preambles.*   The preambles to this Resolution be, and the same hereby are, incorporated into this Resolution by this reference as if set out in this Section in full.

Section 2.      *Time and Place of Public Hearing Fixed.* A Public Hearing (the “Public Hearing”) shall be held by the Planning and Development Committee of the Corporate Authorities at 5:30 o’clock p.m. on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of May 2026, in the City Hall Council Chambers of the City of the Rockford, 425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois, for the purpose of hearing from any interested persons or affected taxing districts regarding the proposed approval of the Redevelopment Plan and Project, designation of the proposed Redevelopment Project Area, and the adoption of tax increment allocation financing for said Area.

Section 3.      *Publication of Notice of Public Hearing Authorized.* Notice of Public Hearing, substantially in the form attached hereto as Exhibit B, shall be published at least twice. The first publication to be not more than 30 nor less than 10 days prior to the Public Hearing, in a newspaper of general circulation within the taxing districts levying taxes on real property in the proposed Redevelopment Project Area.

Section 4.      *Mailing of Notice of Public Hearing Authorized.* Notice shall be mailed by certified mail not less than 10 days prior to the date set for the Public Hearing, addressed to the person or persons in whose name the general taxes for the last preceding year were paid on each lot, block, tract or parcel of land lying within the proposed Redevelopment Project Area. In the event taxes for the last preceding year were not paid, the notice shall also be sent to the persons last listed on the tax rolls within the preceding three years as the owners of such property. Notice shall also be given by certified mail to all taxing districts that levy taxes on real property included in the Redevelopment Project Area and to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity not less than 45 days prior to the Public Hearing, and such notice shall also include an invitation to each taxing district and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to submit written comments prior to the date of the Public Hearing to the City, to the attention of the Legal Director, City of Rockford Legal Department, 425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois 61104, concerning the subject matter of the Public Hearing. Each such mailed notice shall include a copy of the Plan and Project and the name of an appropriate person to contact for additional information.

Section 5.      *Public Inspection of Redevelopment Plan.* A draft of the Redevelopment Plan and Project was placed on file at the offices of the Legal Director on or before January 14, 2026.

Section 6.      *Joint Review Board Convened.* A Joint Review Board as set forth in the act is hereby convened. The Board shall meet, review documents, make an advisory recommendation to the City, and issue a report as set forth in the Act. The Mayor, or his designee, is hereby designated the representative of the City. The public member shall be selected by the majority members present of the Joint Review Board. The first meeting of said joint review board shall be held at 10:00 a.m. on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of March at the City Hall, 425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois 61104.

Section 7.      *Reimbursement of Expenditures.* The City intends to reimburse all or a portion of the expenditures eligible for use of tax increment revenues generated within the RPA under the Act. Reimbursement obligations may be issued for this purpose. This Resolution is a declaration of official intent under Treasury Regulations Section 1.150-2. All negotiations and all agreements relating to redevelopment of the RPA and use of tax increment revenues shall be and shall remain non-binding on the City unless they are formally approved by vote of the City Council. The City shall not be liable for the payment of any costs or expenditures unless and until the same are authorized and approved by City Council.

Section 8.      *Superseder; Effective date.* All resolutions, motions or orders in conflict with the provisions of the Resolution are, to the extent of such conflict, hereby repealed. This Resolution shall become effective upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026.

APPROVED this 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026.

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Thomas P. McNamara, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Legal Director

Alderman \_\_\_\_\_ moved and Alderman \_\_\_\_\_ seconded the motion that said resolution as presented and read by the Legal Director be adopted.

After a full discussion thereof including a public recital of the nature of the matter being considered and such other information as would inform the public of the nature of the business being conducted, the Mayor directed that the roll be called for a vote upon the motion to adopt said resolution as read.

Upon the roll being called, the following Aldermen voted AYE:

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The following Aldermen voted NAY:

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The following Aldermen were ABSENT:

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Whereupon the Mayor declared the motion carried and said resolution adopted, approved and signed the same in open meeting and directed the Legal Director to record the same in full in the records of the City Council of the City of Rockford, Winnebago and Ogle Counties, Illinois, which was done.

Other business not pertinent to the adoption of said resolution was duly transacted at the meeting.

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the meeting was adjourned.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Director

STATE OF ILLINOIS            )  
  )  
COUNTY OF WINNEBAGO    )

SS

**CERTIFICATION OF RESOLUTION AND MINUTES**

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am duly qualified and acting Legal Director of the City of Rockford, Winnebago and Ogle Counties, Illinois (the “City”), and that as such official I am the keeper of the records and files of the City Council of the City (the “Corporate Authorities”).

I do further certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and complete transcript of that portion of the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Authorities held on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026 insofar as same relates to the adoption of a Resolution entitled:

A RESOLUTION proposing the approval of a Redevelopment Plan and Project for and designation of the South Rockford Industrial Redevelopment Project and convening a Joint Review Board and calling a public hearing in connection therewith.

A true, correct and complete copy of which said Resolution as adopted at said meeting appears in the foregoing transcript of the minutes of said meeting.

I do further certify that the deliberations of the Corporate Authorities on the adoption of said Resolution were conducted openly, that the vote on the adoption of said Resolution was taken openly, that said meeting was held at a specified time and place convenient to the public, that notice of said meeting was duly given to all of the news media requesting such notice; that an agenda for said meeting was posted at the location where said meeting was held and at the principal office of the Corporate Authorities at least 48 hours in advance of the holding of said meeting; that said meeting was called and held in strict compliance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act of the State of Illinois, as amended, and the Illinois Municipal Code, as amended, and that the Corporate Authorities have complied with all of the provisions of said Act and said Code and with all of the procedural rules of the Corporate Authorities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto affix my official signature and the seal of the City this 16<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Legal Director

**EXHIBIT A**  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**AREA 1**

Part of Section 27, 28, 33, 34 and 35 in Township 43 North, Range 1 East along with Section 3 and 4 in Township 42 North, Range 1 East all of the Third Principal Meridian, State of Illinois, described as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the East right of way line of Junction Road and the South right of way line of Edison Road; thence South 02 Degrees 52 Minutes 27 Seconds East on said East right of way line of Junction Road for 2,656.66 feet; thence South 89 Degrees 12 Minutes 16 Seconds West for 6,487.45 feet; thence North 01 Degrees 33 Minutes 24 Seconds West for 2,582.48 feet; thence South 89 Degrees 58 Minutes 11 Seconds West for 2,656.83 feet; thence North 00 Degrees 15 Minutes 14 Seconds West for 2,657.80 feet; thence North 86 Degrees 14 Minutes 15 Seconds East for 607.92 feet; thence North 00 Degrees 59 Minutes 16 Seconds West for 2,622.18 feet; thence South 87 Degrees 56 Minutes 28 Seconds East for 713.75 feet; thence North 55 Degrees 48 Minutes 00 Seconds East for 1,536.71 feet; thence South 73 Degrees 59 Minutes 17 Seconds East for 2,119.32 feet; thence South 10 Degrees 08 Minutes 19 Seconds West for 408.66 feet; thence South 79 Degrees 49 Minutes 05 Seconds East for 977.38 feet; thence North 15 Degrees 13 Minutes 41 Seconds East for 291.04 feet; thence South 74 Degrees 01 Minutes 20 Seconds East for 1,899.71 feet; thence South 21 Degrees 03 Minutes 02 Seconds East for 642.40 feet; thence South 86 Degrees 52 Minutes 08 Seconds West for 989.80 feet; thence South 01 Degrees 44 Minutes 23 Seconds West for 1,287.73 feet; thence South 88 Degrees 18 Minutes 42 Seconds East for 1,305.06 feet; thence South 05 Degrees 03 Minutes 41 Seconds East for 678.02 feet; thence North 85 Degrees 40 Minutes 18 Seconds East for 451.75 feet; thence North 02 Degrees 07 Minutes 33 Seconds West for 694.49 feet; thence North 85 Degrees 03 Minutes 31 Seconds East for 1,060.38 feet; thence North 01 Degrees 30 Minutes 59 Seconds West for 1,632.15 feet; thence South 72 Degrees 25 Minutes 05 Seconds East for 1,235.66 feet; thence North 87 Degrees 52 Minutes 27 Seconds East for 486.15 feet to the Westerly right of way line of Illinois Railway; thence South 09 Degrees 51 Minutes 54 Seconds West on and along last named line for 4,011.42 feet to said South right of way line of Edison Road; thence South 86 Degrees 18 Minutes 19 Seconds West on and along last named line for 1,267.92 feet; to the Point of Beginning, EXCEPT THE FOLLOWING PARCEL Commencing at the intersection of the East right of way line of Junction Road and the South right of way line of Edison Road; thence South 89 degrees 31 minutes 26 seconds West on and along said South right of way line of Edison Road for 1,035.10 feet to the Point of Beginning; thence South 01 Degrees 40 Minutes 53 Seconds East for 273.30 feet; thence South 89 Degrees 52 Minutes 51 Seconds West for 332.82 feet; thence North 01 Degrees 39 Minutes 48 Seconds West for 262.71 feet to said South right of way line of Edison Road; thence North 88 Degrees 03 Minutes 24 Seconds East on and along last named line for 332.61 feet to the Point of Beginning, All containing 1,481.89 Acres, more or less

**AREA 2**

Part of Section 35 in Township 43 North, Range 1 East, along with Section 2 in Township 42 North, Range 1 East all of the Third Principal Meridian, State of Illinois, described as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the South right of way line of Edison Road and the Southerly extension of the East line of the Southwest Quarter of said Section 35; thence South 88 degrees 41 minutes 46 seconds West on said South right of way line of Edison Road for. 1077.87 feet to

the Southerly extension of the East line of PIN 15-35-300-004; thence North 00 degrees 58 minutes 53 seconds West on said East line for 735.54 feet to the Northeast corner of said PIN 15-35-300-004; thence South 88 degrees 41 minutes 46 seconds West on the North line of said PIN 15-35-300-004 for 242.20 feet to the Easterly right of way line of the Illinois Railway; thence North 09 degrees 55 minutes 32 seconds East on said right of way line for 3,322.76 feet to the South line of Lot 3 of Plat No. I of Reload Center. the Plat of which is recorded in Book 48 of Plats on Page 19/A in the Winnebago County Recorder's Office; thence North 88 degrees 20 minutes 01 seconds East on said South line for 691.22 feet to the East line of the Northwest of said Section 35; thence South 00 degrees 59 minutes 18 seconds East on said East line for 1,323.23 feet to the North line of the Southeast Quarter of said Section 35; thence North 88 degrees 38 minutes 10 seconds East on said North line for 1,203.55 feet; thence South 00 degrees 58 minutes 53 seconds East for 2,677.43 feet to said South right of way line of Edison Road; thence South 88 degrees 42 minutes 31 seconds West on and along last named line for 1,203.54 feet to the Point of Beginning. containing 166.83 Acres, more or less.

## EXHIBIT B

### FORM OF NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

##### CITY OF ROCKFORD, WINNEBAGO AND OGLE COUNTIES, ILLINOIS PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA

Notice is hereby given that on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Rockford City Hall, 425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois, a public hearing will be held to consider the approval of the proposed redevelopment plan (the “*Redevelopment Plan*”) and the designation of that certain proposed redevelopment project area to be known as the South Rockford Industrial Redevelopment Project Area (the “*Redevelopment Project Area*”/“*RPA*”). The Redevelopment Project Area consists of the territory legally described in Exhibit 1 attached and is generally described below:

The RPA generally consists of tax parcels on Edson Rd west of IL 251 to Rothwell Rd and Condon Rd/ South Bend Rd to the north.

There will be considered at the hearing approval of the Redevelopment Plan and Project for and the designation of the proposed Redevelopment Project Area and adoption of tax increment allocation financing therefor. The proposed Redevelopment Plan and Project is on file and available for public inspection at the office of the City Clerk, Rockford City Hall, 425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois. Pursuant to the Redevelopment Plan and Project the City proposes to alleviate blighted area conditions in the Redevelopment Project Area and to enhance the tax base of the City and the taxing districts having taxable property within the Redevelopment Project Area by utilizing tax increment financing to fund various eligible project costs to stimulate private investment within the Redevelopment Project Area. These eligible project costs may include, but may not be limited to, studies, surveys, professional fees, property assembly costs, construction of public improvements and facilities, financing, administrative and other professional costs, all as authorized under the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act, as amended. The Redevelopment Plan objectives include promoting and protecting the health, safety, morals and welfare of the public by establishing a public/private partnership, establishing economic growth, development and training in the City by working within the guidelines of the business attraction and retention strategies developed by the City, encouraging private investment while conforming with the City’s Comprehensive (2040) Plan, restoring and enhancing the City’s tax base, enhancing the value of the proposed Redevelopment Project Area, improving the environmental quality of the proposed Redevelopment Project Area, and retaining and attracting employment opportunities within the proposed Redevelopment Project Area. To achieve these objectives, the Redevelopment Plan proposes to provide assistance by paying or reimbursing costs related to the acquisition, construction and installation of public facilities, property assembly, site preparation and improvement, job training and other eligible redevelopment project costs, the execution of one or more redevelopment agreements, and the payment of financing, administrative and other professional costs.

Prior to the date of the hearing, each taxing district having property in the Redevelopment Project Area and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity may submit written comments to the City, to the attention of the City Clerk, 425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois 61104.

There is hereby convened a joint review board to consider the proposed Redevelopment Plan and Project for and the designation of the proposed Redevelopment Project Area and the adoption of tax increment allocation financing therefor. The joint review board shall consist of a representative selected by each community college district, local elementary school district and high school district or each local community unit school district, park district, township, fire protection district and county that will have the authority to directly levy taxes on the property within the Redevelopment Project Area at the time that the Redevelopment Project Area is approved, a representative selected by the City, and a public member. The first meeting of said joint review board shall be held at 10:00 a.m. on the 31st day of March, 2026, at the Rockford City Hall, 425 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois.

At the hearing, all interested persons or affected taxing districts may file written objections with the Legal Department and may be heard orally with respect to any issues regarding the approval of the Redevelopment Plan and Project for and the designation of the Redevelopment Project Area and the adoption of tax increment allocation financing therefor. The hearing may be adjourned by the City of Rockford Planning and Development Committee of the City Council without further notice other than a motion to be entered upon the minutes of the hearing fixing the time and place of the subsequent hearing.

Legal Director  
City of Rockford  
Winnebago and Ogle Counties, Illinois