



GOROCKFORD QUARTERLY REPORT

FY26, Q4
April - June, 2026

GO ROCKFORD
Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

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

gorockford.com



GoRockford Mission Statement

GoRockford drives quality of life and economic growth for our citizens through tourism marketing and destination development.

PRIORITY RESULTS

CREATE ECONOMIC WEALTH

The Rockford Region experiences growth in tourism's leading indicators at a rate greater than our competitive set.

ENHANCE TOURISM PRODUCT

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

ENGAGE CONSTITUENTS ON BEHALF OF TOURISM

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

ELEVATE THE BRAND

The Rockford Region's brand is clearly defined and positively perceived, supporting the region's competitiveness as a destination and place to live.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO



As we close the end of the fiscal year, the Rockford region continues to build momentum through strong partnerships, and experiences that attract visitors while enhancing quality of life for our residents. This quarter showcased the strength of our tourism industry through major events, national media exposure, destination development, and record-breaking marketing efforts.

IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford once again demonstrated the power of sports tourism, welcoming more than **2,200 athletes** and generating an estimated **\$7 million** in economic impact. Our sales team also secured **22,380 future hotel room nights** during the quarter, positioning Rockford for continued economic growth through future sporting events and tournaments.

Our marketing efforts reached new audiences on both the national and digital stage. Rockford earned coverage in **Forbes**, the **TODAY Show**, and **Midwest Living**, and generated more than **8 million social media views** during the quarter. We also launched the redesigned **Made for Rockford** website, creating a comprehensive relocation resource for prospective residents and generating more than **80 relocation kit requests** in its first month.

Looking ahead, we are excited to launch **RockYard Music Fest**, a new signature event that supports the vision of **Thrive 2035** by creating new destination experiences, activating public spaces, and strengthening downtown Rockford. Along with continued investments in destination development and community partnerships, these efforts ensure Rockford remains a vibrant place to visit, live, and invest.

Thank you to our board, staff, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners for making this momentum possible. Together, we continue to build a stronger future for the Rockford region.

Be well,

John Groh
GoRockford President/CEO

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GoROCKFORD NEWS

IRONMAN 70.3 ROCKFORD ELEVATES ROCKFORD'S SPORTS TOURISM



IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford athletes run along Rock River Recreation Path on June 14, 2026.

IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford returned to the Rockford region on **June 14**, welcoming **2,268 athletes** and approximately **7,500 spectators** from **30 states** and **19 countries**. The internationally recognized triathlon once again showcased the Rock River and region, while reinforcing Rockford's reputation as a premier destination for sporting events. The event generated an estimated **\$7 million in economic impact**, benefiting hotels, restaurants, retailers, attractions, and other local businesses throughout race weekend.



Athlete by the Numbers

- 2268 registered athletes
- 95 athletes from Rockford area
- 41 international athletes
- 1229 from Illinois
- 253 from Wisconsin
- 105 from Indiana
- 79 from Minnesota
- 63 from Michigan
- 58 from Missouri
- 38 from Florida
- 34 from California
- 31 from Texas

GoRockford partnered with IRONMAN, City of Rockford, Rockford Police Department, Rockford Park District, volunteers, and other community organizations to deliver a successful event. More than **1,200 volunteers** filled nearly **1,550 volunteer shifts**, helping create a welcoming race experience while demonstrating the community collaboration that has become a signature of Rockford's major sporting events.

In addition to supporting race operations and destination marketing, GoRockford encouraged athletes and spectators to explore local businesses, restaurants, attractions, and entertainment throughout the

weekend. The continued success of IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford strengthens the community's position as a nationally recognized sports tourism destination.

ROCKYARD ANNOUNCEMENT

GoRockford announced the launch of RockYard Music Fest at a May news conference. The new free, two-day music festival will debut in **Davis Park** on **August 14–15**.

Created as part of Rockford's America 250 celebration and in conjunction with Rockford 815 Day, the festival was developed to create a signature end-of-summer event that brings residents and visitors together while driving activity to downtown Rockford.

The inaugural festival will feature live music, food and beverage vendors, family activities, classic yard games, and community competitions. Friday night's festivities end with fireworks, and Saturday's end with a

Rockford-themed drone show. Saturday morning kicks off with a ticketed pancake breakfast. RockYard will also serve as one of the first major public events to activate the newly renovated Davis Park, showcasing the riverfront as a premier gathering space and destination for festivals.



Local artist Emilio Salinas performs at the RockYard Music Fest news conference in May. Emilio is part of the RockYard music line up.

Presented by **Foresight Bank**, RockYard reflects GoRockford's commitment to advancing the goals of **Thrive 2035** by creating new destination experiences, activating public spaces, strengthening downtown, and enhancing quality of life. Through strong partnerships with sponsors, local businesses, artists, and community organizations, the festival is designed to become a signature annual event that grows tourism while creating lasting economic and community impact.

MAJOR NEWS COVERAGE ELEVATES ROCKFORD

GoRockford's public relations strategy continues to generate national media coverage by pitching compelling stories that showcase the Rockford region's unique attractions, tourism investments, and visitor experiences. During the second quarter, the region earned significant national attention through a **Forbes** feature highlighting the opening of **Hidden Creek Estates' Wine Barrel Homes**. The article positioned the accommodations as a luxurious Midwest getaway, showcasing the wine barrel homes, restaurant, and serene setting while introducing Rockford to travelers seeking unique overnight experiences.

Rockford also received national exposure on the **TODAY Show**, where Rockford was featured in a segment highlighting destinations inspired by iconic films. The story encouraged viewers to visit the home of the original **Rockford Peaches** and experience the legacy of **A League of Their Own** through the city's baseball history, attractions, and fan experiences and also showcased the upcoming Women's Baseball Week in Rockford in July. Women's Baseball Week includes three high profile events including the WBSC Women's World Cup Group Stage.

SALES EFFORTS & RESULTS

SPORTS AND MEETING SALES HIGHLIGHTS



Local fitness influencer Noah Anderson crosses the finish line during his second IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford in June.

NCTTA CHAMPIONSHIPS RETURNS

The **National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA) Championships** were held **April 9–12** at the UW Health Sports Factory. The national event welcomed collegiate athletes and visitors from throughout the country. The event brought an estimated economic impact of **\$467,401** to the region.

MIDWEST WOMEN RIDERS SETS WORLD RECORD IN ROCKFORD

Midwest Women Riders made history in Rockford **June 11–13** by hosting the **Get Your Groove On 2026** world record female ride, bringing **1,433 women motorcyclists** together in a successful world record-setting ride. The three-day event at **Hard Rock Casino Rockford** attracted riders from across the country for workshops and entertainment. With an estimated economic impact of **\$936,233**, the event introduced a unique event to the region.

NATIONAL DOG SHOW MAKES ROCKFORD DEBUT

Rockford hosted the American Belgian Tervuren Club National Specialty for the first time **May 1–9**. The multi-day event brought over **\$752,590 in economic impact**. More than **350 competitors** participated in events that included herding, scent work, agility, tracking, obedience, and junior showmanship.

USA BMX DRAWS THOUSANDS TO ROCKFORD

The **USA BMX Midwest Nationals** returned to **Searls Park June 19–21**, generating an estimated **\$800,000** in economic impact for the Rockford region. The three-day event welcomed more than **3,500 athletes and fans**, representing over **100 teams** from across the United States while generating more than **2,700 hotel room nights**. Hosted in Rockford for more than **40 years**, the Midwest Nationals continue to showcase Searls Park as one of the nation's premier BMX facilities and reinforce Rockford's reputation as a leading sports tourism destination.

TRADE SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

In April, GoRockford's sales team attended the **Sports ETA Symposium** in Las Vegas, the premier conference and trade show for the sports tourism industry. During the event, the team conducted more than **30 appointments** with tournament directors, event owners, and industry partners to promote Rockford's sports facilities and event-hosting capabilities. The meetings introduced new event opportunities, and reinforced Rockford's position as a leading destination for sports tourism.

BOOKING HIGHLIGHTS

Team Illinois Lacrosse 2027

June & October 2027
5,000 Total Room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$2.8 million

Progressive Volleyball Events 2027

March & May 2027
3,600 room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$1.9 million

BMX Midwest Nationals

June 18–20, 2027
800 Room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$1.4 million

Forest City Classic

February 27–28, 2027
500 Room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$789,238

Windy City Invite

September 26–27, 2026
200 Room nights
Estimated Economic Impact \$182,004

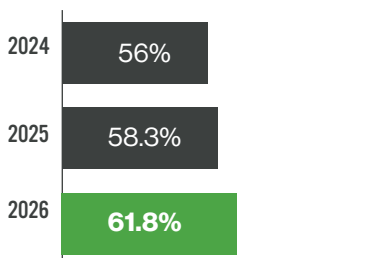
Future Hotel Room Nights Booked During the Quarter: 22,380 with an economic impact of \$15.2 Million
Number of Bookings: 38



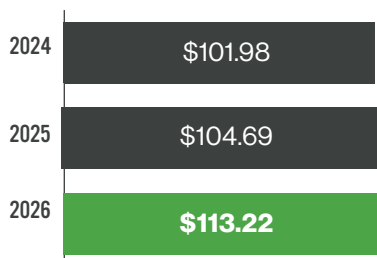
Midwest Women Riders line up for their world record ride on June 13, 2026 with 1,433 total female riders.

WINNEBAGO COUNTY HOTEL STATISTICS January - June, 2026

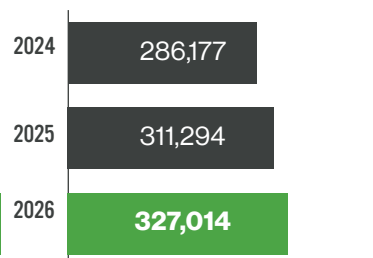
Year to Date Hotel Occupancy



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

Forbes: “*Enjoy The Serenity And Style At This Midwestern Getaway*” (06/10/2026) 47,210,000 impressions and \$1,746,770 Earned Media

TimeOut Magazine: “*The 29 Most Unique Day Trips from Chicago*” (04/09/2026) 9,063,000 Impressions and \$335,331 Earned Media

TODAY “*Summer Trips Inspired by Movies: ‘Rocky,’ ‘Hidden Figures,’ More*” (06/23/2026) 7,870,000 Impressions and \$291,190 Earned Media

Midwest Living: “*20 Best Botanical Gardens and Arboretums for an Easy Afternoon Escape*” (04/09/2026) 775,000 impressions and \$28,675 Earned Media



SOCIAL MEDIA



FACEBOOK

3.6 Million Views
66,136 Followers



INSTAGRAM

1.8 Million Views
26,973 Followers



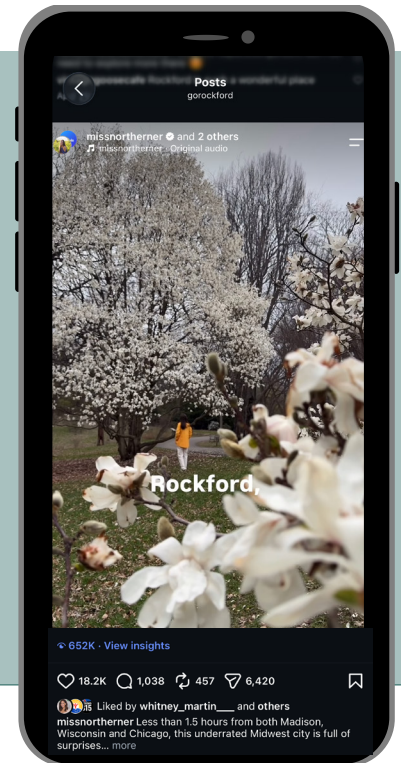
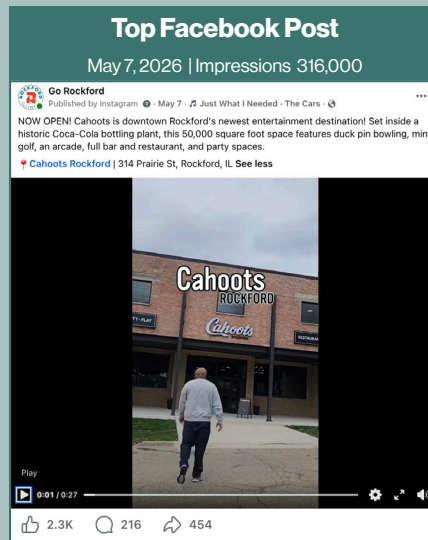
LINKEDIN

3,203 Followers



TikTok

2.6 Million Views
18,769 Followers



EARNED MEDIA (April - June, 2026)

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



\$5,700,000
Ad equivalency



616,000,000
Total impressions



1,163
Number of mentions

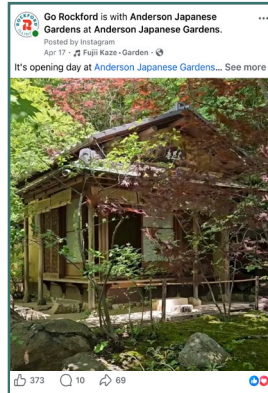
MARKETING

SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTIONS

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

APRIL

April's promotions were focused on spring attractions, seasonal openings and spring events. April also focused on gardens and what's blooming in Rockford. The top post for Facebook and Instagram in the quarter was in April, showcasing the opening of Cahoots, with **316,000 views**. April's promotions had **1.3 million total views** between Facebook and Instagram, an increase from **756,600 views** in April 2025.



MAY

May's promotional efforts continued promotion of spring events and highlights of summer travel in Rockford. Farmers markets including Rockford City Market and summer activities reopening in Rockford such as Food Truck Tuesdays, Dinner on the Dock, and live outdoor music were a major focus of May. May also included National Travel and Tourism Week (see sidebar). Viewers on Facebook and Instagram soared to **2 million**, up from **1.4 million** in May 2025.



JUNE

June's major focus was the return of IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford and promotional efforts leading up to America 250 Rockford celebrations. Summer things to do and major cultural festivals such as South Main Mercado and Juneteenth were also a focus. A posting for Midwest Riders world record ride also broke records for GoRockford's most viewed Tiktok video, with **1.5 million views** and over **83,720** in engagement. Total views for June between Facebook and Instagram was **2.5 million**, up from **2.3 million** in 2025.



MARKETING EFFORTS

National Travel & Tourism Week 2026

GoRockford celebrated **National Travel & Tourism Week (May 3-9, 2026)** with a campaign highlighting tourism's impact on the Rockford region while recognizing the people and businesses that create exceptional visitor experiences. In partnership with local businesses, GoRockford assembled **Experience Rockford Packs** featuring locally made products, increasing foot traffic to the GoRockford visitor center. A National Travel and Tourism Week prize giveaway generated **243 new e-newsletter subscribers**. For the fourth year, GoRockford recognized five local Hospitality Heroes: Cheryl Yanez (Embassy Suites), JoAnn Peterson (Anderson Japanese Gardens), Sports Factory Maintenance Team (Sports Factory), Carter Weaver (DairyHaus), and Alan Gonzalez (Screw City Vintage). Additional outreach included the launch of an official summer bucket list, social media campaign, and a marketing booth at Food Truck Tuesdays.

Influencer Collaborations

GoRockford collaborated with Enjoy Illinois and Wisconsin based content creator Miss Northerner on a Rockford itinerary including Rock Cut State Park, DC Estate Winery, Gretta's Goats, Embassy Suites, Klehm Arboretum and more. She created four total posts with combined views of 1.4 million views with 27,884 interactions. GoRockford worked with Illinois Foodies to promote a spring and summer bucket list in Rockford in April. The posts had 7,276 views with 288 interactions.

South Main Mercado & Juneteenth Awards

In June, GoRockford participated in South Main Mercado with a marketing booth to connect with a new audience and showcase the many attractions, events, and experiences throughout the Rockford region. GoRockford sponsored and selected the Juneteenth Community Award recipients who received their awards at the Rockford Juneteenth celebration on Friday, June 19.

MOST SEARCHED TERMS

Things To Do In Rockford
Events in Rockford
Restaurants in Rockford, IL

MOST SEARCHED EVENTS

IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford
South Main Mercado
Memorial Day Events

MOST SEARCHED LISTINGS

Anderson Japanese Gardens
Food Truck Park in Loves Park
Olson Lake Beach

Website Traffic Sources



122,115 total website users

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

CRE8IV SCULPTURE PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW



Static Vestige, by Benjamin Jose finds its new temporary home in Rockford for the CRE8IV biennial sculpture program.

GoRockford's CRE8IV sculpture initiative continued to expand in 2026, further strengthening Rockford's reputation as a destination for arts, culture, and placemaking. The biennial sculpture program welcomed **Static Vestige** by artist **Benjamin Jose**, installed at West State and Jefferson streets as the newest leased sculpture in the rotating outdoor exhibition.

Since its launch in 2018, the program has transformed public spaces throughout the region with large-scale sculptures that encourage exploration, enhance neighborhood character, and create memorable visitor experiences. There are

currently **33 sculptures** on display in the region and there are **57 large-scale murals** as part of the program.

The program also reached an important milestone with the addition of four sculptures to GoRockford's permanent collection through the generosity of community partners. **Steve and Rachel** and **Karen**, both by John McNamara, were donated by the Illinois Arts Council and the Brubaker Family Foundation, while **Millennium Gate** and **Keyhole Flutter Gateway**, both by Jim Gallucci, were donated by the Dean Alan Olson Foundation and GoRockford. These permanent installations ensure that the community's investment in public art will continue to enrich the Rockford region for years to come while advancing CRE8IV's mission of creating vibrant public spaces that inspire residents and visitors alike.

ART TOUR AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

GoRockford partnered with the Rockford Area Arts Council to provide a guided public art bus tour for residents of Wesley Willows. Led by Destination Development Operations Manager Julie Huber and Rockford Area Arts Council Community Engagement Officer Jordan DeWilde, the tour highlighted murals, sculptures, and other installations created through GoRockford's CRE8IV initiative. By introducing residents to the public art throughout the region, the experience celebrated Rockford's creative identity while demonstrating how placemaking can foster community pride, encourage exploration, and enhance quality of life for both residents and visitors.

As a thank you to one of its longtime partners, the Destination Development team hosted a hospitality tent at the Northwestern Illinois Building Trades annual golf outing, recognizing the organization's continued support of GoRockford events and the important role the skilled trades play in building and enhancing the community.



Destination Development sets up a hospitality tent for the Northwestern Illinois Building Trades.



Newly installed Forest City Beautiful signage uses GoRockford's new branding.

FOREST CITY BEAUTIFUL

Since 2014, **Forest City Beautiful** has enhanced downtown Rockford through seasonal landscaping, public art, streetscape improvements, benches, wayfinding signage, and other beautification projects that create welcoming spaces for residents and visitors. This year, the initiative introduced new signage featuring updated GoRockford branding, adding a fresh, cohesive look to key corridors while strengthening the city's identity and sense of place.

Made possible through partnerships with the City of Rockford and generous support from businesses, foundations, and individual donors, Forest City Beautiful continues to invest in projects that enhance the visitor experience, encourage exploration, and create a vibrant downtown that residents are proud to call home.

GoRockford is grateful to the community sponsors that help make this initiative possible including:

City of Rockford
David & Colleen Anderson Charitable Foundation
Bergstrom
LawnCare by Walter
CoyleKiley Insurance, Inc.
Rockford Park District
Franchesco's Ristorante
WIFR
WIPFLI
Community Foundation of Northern Illinois
Rockford University
John & LuAnn Groh
Bobbie Holwarth & Norm Lindstrom
Carol & John Schuster
BMO Center
Thomas McNamara
Jim Pirages
Marcia Mueller
Dickerson & Nieman Realtors
KMK Media Group
Geno Iafrate
Jennifer Furst
Greg Watt
Maurice West
NorthWest Illinois Alliance of REALTORS
Rockford Area Arts Council
Rocktown Adventures
Jim & Pam Keeling
Justin & Theresa Kegley
Leslie West
Patricia Diduch
Kim Keefe, Compass
Peter & Heather Provenzano Charitable Trust
Rockford IceHogs
Rosecrance
Iconic Energy
Fridh Corporation

MADE FOR ROCKFORD

NEW RESIDENT SPRING MIXER



New residents mingle at the spring Made for Rockford mixer in April.

More than **100 newcomers** gathered at the **Rockford Public Library** terrace for Made for Rockford's spring new resident mixer in April. The evening featured live saxophone music, interactive games, and opportunities to connect with fellow newcomers, community partners, and Mayor Tom McNamara. By helping new residents build relationships early, these events strengthen community connections and support long-term talent retention.

ROLECALL TALENT ATTRACTION SUMMIT



Made for Rockford Program Director Whitney Martin attends RoleCall Talent Attraction Summit in April.

Made for Rockford Program Director Whitney Martin was selected as a featured panelist at the **2026 RoleCall Talent Attraction Summit** in Buffalo, New York in April. During a session on strategic media coverage for community growth, Martin shared how authentic storytelling and earned media can elevate a community's reputation, attract new talent, and build lasting momentum for talent attraction efforts.

WEBSITE LAUNCH & MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Made for Rockford launched a redesigned website alongside a targeted marketing campaign focused on recruiting talent in key industries. The Made for Rockford website serves as a one-stop relocation resource, offering information on careers, housing, neighborhoods, schools, recreation, and quality of life. Interest was immediate, with more than **80 prospective residents** requesting complimentary Move to Rockford relocation kits during the first month.

IRONMAN 70.3 WELCOME BOOTHS



GoTeam members showcase Rockford attractions and information at IRONMAN welcome booths at hotels in June.

During IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford race weekend in June, Made for Rockford's **Go Team** ambassadors staffed welcome booths at participating hotels, greeting athletes and their families with local recommendations and community information. These conversations helped create a memorable first impression while showcasing Rockford's hospitality, making visitors feel welcomed and encouraging them to see the community as a place worth returning and potentially calling home.

MERCYHEALTH MEDICAL RESIDENT TOUR

Made for Rockford hosted a community bus tour for incoming Mercyhealth medical residents, introducing life in Rockford beyond the workplace. The tour included visits to **Anderson Japanese Gardens**, the **Coronado Performing Arts Center**, and **Rock Cut State Park**, along with stops highlighting local neighborhoods, recreation, and community amenities. Residents also sampled locally roasted coffee while learning about the region, helping them build an early connection to the community and supporting long-term physician retention.

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 & Administration



Amanda August
Social Media and
Communications Specialist



Chenaire Barmore
Communications Manager



Kara Davis
Senior Sales Manager



Elizabeth Falls
Marketing Manager



Julie Huber
Destination Development
Operations Manager



Whitney Martin
Made for Rockford
Program Director



Kyra Murray
Marketing & Customer
Experience Coordinator



Emily Plumb
Sales & Servicing
Manager



Leah Ticknor
Office Manager &
Executive Assistant

**GoRockford Board of Directors
April 22, 2026
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
GoRockford Annex**

Board Present: Todd Cagnoni, Kevin Frost, John Groh, Tiana McCall, Bobbie Holzwarth, Dana Martin, Gretchen Gilmore, Angela Larson, Rich Schuga, Kirk Weitzel, Geno Iafrate, Ricardo Montoya-Picazo, Jennifer Furst, Mark Henderson, Chintan Thakkar, Jay Sandine

Board Absent: Sonya Hoppes, Mick Gronewold, Patrick Thompson, Duncan Geddes, Carol Schuster, Shelton Kay

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

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:32 a.m. by Geno Iafrate

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the March 25, 2026, meeting minutes. Motion carried.

CEO Monitoring Reports:

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

- 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 officers, each serving a one-year term, beginning at the conclusion of the June 2026 meeting and concluding in June 2027.

- Chair: Geno Iafrate, Hard Rock Rockford
- Vice Chair: Jennifer Furst, Furst Staffing
- Treasurer: Chintan Thakkar, Decorum Management Group
- 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 2026 meeting and concluding in June 2029.

- Todd Cagnoni – City of Rockford

NEW: The following individual is recommended to serve a three-year term, beginning at the June 2026 meeting and concluding in June 2029.

- Tom Budd, Market President – Illinois, UMB Bank

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, she will depart the board following the June meeting with the gratitude of the board and staff.

- Tiana McCall

The motion carried unanimously.

CEO Report:

America 250 – GoRockford is acting as fiscal agent. News Conference on May 8th to announce scholarships awarded. United Way is spearheading the 1st 250th event, which is volunteering through service in the community. In honor of America250 and Earth Day, many volunteers will clean the Ironman run route.

Made for Rockford – April 23rd is the next Residence Mixer held at the library from 6-8 pm. Over 250 have responded. John invited the board to attend from 6-8:30 pm.

IRONMAN is only two months away, and coordination and planning are going well. 2,000 registered. The board is encouraged to attend the event and is invited to help pass out medals to the finishers. John will send emails to board members in mid-May asking them to volunteer.

Forest City Beautiful: Letters were sent out last week to begin the fundraising. Hanging baskets and planters will all be red, white, and blue for America 250. The Forest City Beautiful Program will also take over the Midtown planters to match the same schedule as the rest of the planters.

Sports ETA - Lindsay and Kara are at a trade show. They have 60 appointments. Looking forward to hearing about potential bookings for Rockford.

Rockyard - Press Conference on the patio, May 12th. GoRockford will announce a new annual end-of-summer festival. This event will launch as the final celebration of America 250 on 815 Day. Full lineup of bands, field activities like cake walks, pie eating, and lawn games. Working with Ramp on the 5k and 10k races. Fireworks and drone show. Kristen thanked Geno for being the 1st official sponsorship along with America 250 fundraising money.

Tourism Improvement District Update – Three weeks ago, GoRockford had meetings at Hard Rock with the TID Steering Committee, Hotel Owners/GMs, and local city Officials. Conversations have been healthy, and hoteliers have asked clarifying questions. John went through the TID Proposed District Plan, the TID's potential budget allocations, and the Formation Timeline with the Board. A 2% collection could start as early as September. Chintan Thakkar asked for clarification on the Steering Committee's responsibilities and on the GoRockford Board's responsibilities for TID. The board's future role is to review and approve the Steering Committee's recommendations on how the money will be spent. The board's involvement will be important as we go through the formation process with all municipalities and through public conversations as TID moves forward. New hotels with over 45 rooms would automatically be added to the TID. Chintan and Kirk Weitzel both stated that they supported the TID. Jay Sandine also commented in support of the TID on behalf of the park district.

Community Partner Updates:

Angela Larson – Economic Insight: A Conversation with Austan Goolsbee May 12 | 11:30 a.m. | Tebala Event Center, 7910 Newburg Rd, Rockford

Gretchen Gilmore – Nine graduations this year at BMO and capital improvements at the Coronado. Coronado Summer Cinema will be announced today. Wicked 2 and Zootopia 2, which will be free to the community.

Tiana McCall – Graduations for RPS

Todd Cagnoni – Davis Park is moving along and should be done by June 1st. Davis Park building structures to be open sometime this fall. Lots of construction is starting on Auburn and Chestnut Street. The remainder of Madison Street will hopefully be done by the end of the year.

Kirk Weitzel – Property improvement plan is underway.

Chintan Thakkar – Q1 was great, but April has been down 25% over last year.

Ricardo Montoya-Picazo – State Representative Dave Vella and Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful (KNIB) invite local residents to a free paint recycling event on Saturday, April 25, 2026.

Mark Henderson – May Day Faerie Festival on May 2nd, Rockton River Market kicking off May 20thduc, introcuding a Farmers Market, and the Rockton Pelican Fest on May 16th.

Jennifer Furst – Rosecrance Foundation Annual Benefit on May 12th at Hard Rock with a special performance by Emily Bear.

Jay Sandine – Redevelopment of Aldeen Golf Course bunkers is complete. Working on an Economic Impact Analysis which will be presented in May.

Bobbie Holzwarth - 1834 Alliance Honors & Celebration on June 4th, hosted by Transform Rockford, celebrating the people, partnerships, and bold efforts that have and continue to shape Rockford. John will send out more information to the board.

Dana Martin – Rosecrance Foundation Annual Benefit on May 12th at Hard Rock with special performance by Emily Bear, and getting started on Greenwich Village Art Scene September 19th & 20th

Adjournment: At 8:43 a.m. Chair Geno lafrate adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Martin".

Dana Martin, Board Secretary
It

**GoRockford Board of Directors
June 17, 2026
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
GoRockford Annex**

Board Present: Todd Cagnoni, John Groh, Tiana McCall, Bobbie Holzwarth, Dana Martin, Gretchen Gilmore, Rich Schuga, Geno Iafrate, Ricardo Montoya-Picazo, Jennifer Furst, Mark Henderson, Chintan Thakkar, Tom Budd, Mick Gronewold, Carol Schuster, Shelton Kay.

Board Absent: Sonya Hoppes, Jay Sandine, Angela Larson, Kirk Weitzel, Duncan Geddes, Patrick Thompson; Kevin Frost

Guests Present: Amy McIntyre

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

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. by Geno Iafrate

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

It was moved and seconded to approve the April 22, 2026, meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Recognition of Outgoing & Incoming of New Board Member

- Tiana McCall (Outgoing)
- Mick Gronewold (Outgoing)
- Tom Budd (Incoming)

CEO 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

Governance Process:

John presented Kyle Schilling's bio to the board for nomination and election to the GoRockford board. It was moved and seconded to approve Kyle Schilling's 3-year term on the GoRockford board, starting in July 2026. Motion carried.

CEO Report:

IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford Recap: John shared photos and highlights from another successful IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford weekend. Nearly 1,300 volunteers filled more than 1,600 volunteer shifts, approximately double the number typically needed to host a 70.3 event, demonstrating exceptional community support. The event concluded without any athletes being transported to the hospital, demonstrating a safe day for all athletes.

Board members noted increased spectator engagement throughout the course, driven in part by GoRockford's efforts to promote viewing locations. Popular activations, including Sprinkler Alley and Lot 7, enhanced the athlete and spectator experience, while the finish line atmosphere was especially memorable. John recognized the more than 50 community partners whose months of planning and collaboration made the event possible.

Board members also shared positive feedback. Mark Henderson noted a significant increase in spectators in Rockton. Gretchen Gilmore reflected on the emotional moment of a blind athlete crossing the finish line with his father. Bobbie shared an email from an attorney whose son competed, praising Rockford and the GoRockford team for their outstanding organization. Amy McIntyre commented that the event ran so smoothly because of the team's attention to detail and recognized the addition of the music trolley.

John reported that preliminary discussions have begun regarding an extension of the IRONMAN contract. The 2027 event is scheduled for Sunday, June 13.

Women's Motorcycle World Record Attempt: John shared a GoRockford video of the event, which has received more than one million views online. Nearly 2,000 women motorcyclists participated, surpassing the previous world record. Geno lafrate remarked that he had never seen anything like it. Organizers and participants were already discussing plans to return to Rockford next year.

Tourism Improvement District (TID) Update: John reported on the recent TID petition-signing event at Hard Rock, attended by hotel owners and the steering committee. Hotel owners representing 70% of the anticipated assessed revenue signed petitions in support of forming the district.

The project remains on schedule. John noted that the strong level of participation reflects the hotel community's confidence in GoRockford's ability to successfully implement and manage the TID.

America250: John invited board members to participate in the upcoming America250 celebrations on July 3, including the free concert and block party at the Coronado Performing Arts Center.

Forest City Beautiful: Geno encouraged the Board to demonstrate its support by participating in the Forest City Beautiful fundraising initiative.

RockYard: John provided an update on RockYard, the two-day music festival at Davis Park that will conclude the summer's America 250 celebration and 815 Day festivities. Kristen noted that sponsorship opportunities are still available and volunteers will be needed as the event approaches. RockYard will feature live music, games, and activities with a nostalgic, throwback atmosphere.

Community Partner Updates:

- **Gretchen Gilmore** – BMO Center successfully hosted multiple high school graduations. Next free movie is Zootopia 2 at the Coronado. The Coronado will turn 100 in 2027. A committee was formed to plan fun events around this milestone. Several improvement projects are happening this summer.
- **Todd Cagnoni** – Site work is predominantly done at Davis Park. The skate park is open and will hold a ribbon-cutting in about one month. Lots of road work being done this summer. City is working with Geno lafrate to get started on the new Hard Rock Hotel.
- **Mark Henderson** – Following environmental testing, the Village of Rockton found that the Sunoco property on the riverfront is better than expected, so working with developers to develop plans for how best to utilize the land. Old Settlers Day is coming up on June 18 - June 21.
- **Amy McIntyre** – Botanical exhibit going on; Battle of the Borders is back with Trek at Atwood Park, Alpine Park playground activation with new dog park Canine Corner opening in September. The full replacement of the irrigation system at Ingersoll Golf Course is underway. Installing AED outdoor safety cabinets around the Park District.

- **Geno lafrate:** Geno shared that Hard Rock Rockford has officially joined the Hard Rock Global Loyalty Program after navigating a complex process to comply with Illinois gaming regulations. Guests can now earn and redeem loyalty points at the Rockford property as part of the worldwide Hard Rock network.

Geno also clarified recent discussions regarding the planned hotel. He noted that the City is not giving Hard Rock millions of dollars to build the hotel. Rather, the project is being financed through a partnership in which the City provides financing backed by gaming tax revenues, while Hard Rock is responsible for repaying that financing in accordance with the agreement.

- **Carol Schuster** – Thanked Geno for hosting the Sum Function documentary premiere of Oscar Mike, an award-winning documentary about the U.S.-only all-veteran wheelchair rugby team, at Hard Rock.

Adjournment: At 8:44 a.m. Chair Geno lafrate adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting is Wednesday, July 15, 2026

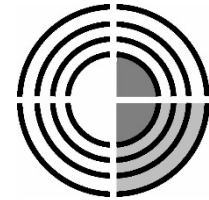
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Martin".

Dana Martin, Board Secretary
It



Governing Policy of the
GoRockford Board of Directors



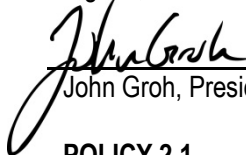
**Executive Limitations Policy 2.1 – Treatment of Customers,
Partners & Stakeholders**

Management Limitations

To: GoRockford Board of Directors
From: John Groh, President/CEO
RE: Internal Monitoring Report – Ends Policies
Monitoring on Policy 2.1 – Treatment of Customers, Partners & Stakeholders

I hereby present my annual monitoring report on your Executive Limitations Policy 2.1, Treatment of Customers, Partners & Stakeholders, 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 ending March 31, 2026.

Signed,


John Groh, President/CEO

April 15, 2026

POLICY 2.1

“With respect to interactions with customers, stakeholders and/or partners, the President/CEO will not cause or allow conditions or procedures which are unfair, unsafe, undignified, untimely, unresponsive, or which fail to provide appropriate confidentiality or privacy.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (There have been no changes since the last report.) I interpret “unsafe” conditions as those that would risk jeopardizing the physical safety of customers or others at the GoRockford office or at our sponsored events and functions. This includes ensuring facility safety, such as safe layouts, snow/ice removal, and trip-hazard mitigation.

I interpret “undignified” conditions to be those that would cause embarrassment or are inconsistent with a culture of providing a friendly, welcoming, and respectful customer service experience. All customers, stakeholders, partners, and residents are to be treated with respect and in a friendly manner.

I interpret “untimely” and “unresponsive” as meaning that programs, activities, and meetings are to take place as scheduled, and inquiries, applications, registrations, etc., are to be addressed and/or responded to within commonly accepted timeframes, such as one business day for telephone messages and email messages or to acknowledge requests for additional information.

I interpret “fail to provide appropriate confidentiality or privacy” as actions that infringe on the individual’s privacy (addressed further, along with confidentiality, under Provision 2.1.1 below) and time, such as repeated, unnecessary, or overly long phone calls, meetings, or communication from GoRockford.

REPORT: Regarding safety, GoRockford’s office space has been maintained to prevent undue risk of injury. In the past year, there have been no accidents or injuries to employees, customers, or visitors at our office.

When organizing events, logistical considerations always incorporate safety as a concern. No injuries or accidents have involved attendees at GoRockford-sponsored events (such as news conferences and industry partner

meetings). Additionally, as GoRockford plans for Stroll on State and IRONMAN events, significant consideration is given to public safety. GoRockford works closely with staff from the City of Rockford's Public Works, Fire Department and Police Department (and other related agencies) to ensure a safe environment. This is accomplished through active engagement and safety planning with partners prior to each event.

I'm pleased to report that complaints of disrespectful, undignified, and unnecessarily intrusive treatment by GoRockford are so rare that, while we have a documented complaint procedure, we have not had to activate our system of complaint tracking and response in this regard to GoRockford. Many compliments about the way our staff has treated customers/stakeholders have been received (via letter, e-mail, and/or telephone). While I've informed the board periodically of such compliments, a file is maintained and available for review upon request.

No complaints or concerns have been raised regarding privacy and confidentiality. Our processes for assuring confidentiality are outlined in section 2.1.1.

I am reporting compliance.

Accordingly, the President/ CEO shall not:

2.1.1 "Collect, review, transmit, or store client data/information without protecting against improper access to that information."

CEO INTERPRETATION: (There have been no changes since the last report.) Information collected from customers and stakeholders must be available only to appropriate staff as needed. It is to be stored, shared, and, when appropriate, destroyed in a manner that ensures documents/data are not accessed by or circulated to any parties other than those with relevant staff duties.

REPORT: GoRockford has established security systems for its documents, buildings, and equipment that meet industry standards for good business practices.

We have a security system in place: the office building is protected by an alarm system, and the office space is locked and alarmed at the end of each day. To further enhance security at the office, exterior security cameras are installed, and a keyless entry system is in place with individual codes for each staff member. All phone mailboxes and computers are protected by passwords. GoRockford stores and disposes of paper and electronic documents/files according to a board-approved records retention policy that complies with all state, federal, and regulatory policies.

All client information stored on our computer systems requires a login name and password for access, and files are backed up continuously. Additionally, client and partner records and contact information are stored in an internet-based, industry-specific Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that is updated and verified for accuracy regularly.

Credit card information is collected for retail sales at the bureau in electronic format to process transactions using Square. Receipts and reports display only the last four digits of the credit card number. All staff members handling the credit card information have undergone background checks.

Entré Computer Solutions remotely monitors our IT environment 24/7 using real-time data from our network. The NetMonitor program protects our system from data loss and theft while maintaining a continuous network connection. Reports are provided to staff as concerns arise and annual meetings are held with consultants to review the results.

No instances or complaints have been received regarding improper use of or access to stakeholder or customer information held by GoRockford.

I am reporting compliance.

2.1.2 “Operate without clearly conveying to customers/stakeholders/partners what may be expected from the services offered.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (There have been no changes since the last report) I interpret this to mean that customers, stakeholders, and partners are properly informed about our services, programs, and special events using various methods; (i.e., emails, news events, newsletters, blogs, etc.) and that, particularly for those to register for or participate in specific GoRockford functions, the information clearly and accurately portrays details to avoid confusion or misunderstandings regarding expectations.

REPORT: GoRockford regularly communicates information about its special events, online training/webinars, services, and programs to its customers/partners through various channels, e.g., phone, website, e-mail, mailings, social media, and direct contact.

Customers/partners are provided with a list of programs and/or services. Materials are updated and typically include the disclaimer that all “information is subject to change.” For further assistance, our name, address and contact numbers are on print/non-print materials. GoRockford updates its customers, partners, stakeholders, and community on an ongoing basis through news releases, industry partner newsletters, our website, news events, media appearances, community events, and via social media. Additionally, group clients (e.g., meeting/event planners) receive written confirmation of what services GoRockford will provide as part of our servicing commitment for their event.

All news releases, newsletters, advertisements, and printed materials are required to be proofread for accuracy and clarity by a minimum of two people in addition to the writer.

GoRockford follows a pre-established written procedure for handling all complaints regarding our programs and services, and I am pleased to report that there have been no complaints in the past year of GoRockford pertaining to the portrayal of programs or services.

I am reporting compliance.

2.1.3 “Operate without clear procedures to address complaints/concerns raised by customers/stakeholders/partners.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (There have been no changes since the last report.) I interpret this to mean that GoRockford must have an easy-to-understand procedure for addressing complaints or concerns received from customers, stakeholders, or partners.

REPORT: GoRockford does have a complaint policy and procedure. The policy details how complaints should be documented, processed, and resolved, and who on staff should be involved in resolving them. Further, the policy differentiates processes for complaints against GoRockford vs. partner organizations/businesses.

I am reporting compliance.

2.1.4 “Operate without earnest efforts to collaborate with other organizations and entities to achieve GoRockford’s Ends.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (There have been no changes since the last report.) I interpret this to mean we must consistently work strategically, cooperatively, and collaboratively with appropriate local, regional, state, and national organizations, governments, and businesses to achieve GoRockford’s ends.

REPORT: GoRockford staff works with key partners to advance the tourism industry by hosting regular meetings with industry partners, providing consistent communication through a variety of avenues and encouraging participation in GoRockford initiatives.

These meetings engage industry partners in the planning and execution of many GoRockford programs, initiatives, and services. GoRockford solicits input from area hotel and sites/attractions partners through regularly scheduled meetings, including hotel general manager/director of sales meetings, marketing partnership meetings, and periodic meetings with media partners, business leaders, elected officials, and other similar stakeholder groups.

The following provides a snapshot of how GoRockford has been involved in collaborative efforts and demonstrates compliance:

- GoRockford is participating in meetings with Tommy Meeks, the organizer of Rockford's Juneteenth Celebration, and the committee in preparation for the 2026 celebration.
- GoRockford's Forest City Beautiful initiative's scope has expanded beyond the 6-year agreement to include 36 additional planters in the Midtown District.
- GoRockford has maintained its quarterly Marketing Partners meetings with hoteliers, site, and attraction executive staff. The use of the Partner Portal at gorockford.com has increased engagement with our partners and enabled self-managed changes to listings and events.
- GoRockford is serving as a leader of the Rockford/Winnebago County America 250 committee, leading the volunteer and marketing subcommittees, and serving as the financial agency. In addition, GoRockford is launching a new event to celebrate the country's semiquincentennial.
- GoRockford staff provide leadership and serve on boards and committees of partner organizations to increase collaboration toward accomplishing GoRockford goals/priorities. In the past year, groups served in this capacity by GoRockford include, but are not limited to:
 - Destinations International committees
 - Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce – Economic Development Committee & Workforce Development Committee
 - Illinois Destinations Association board
 - Illinois Arts Council board
 - Juneteenth committee
 - Laurent House Foundation board
 - Next Rockford strategy team
 - Parks Chamber of Commerce board
 - River District Association board
 - Rockford Area Arts Council board
 - Rockford Day committee
 - 250th Celebration Committee
 - Center for Investment Readiness Joint Task Force
 - Sports Illinois board

I am reporting compliance.

2.1.5 “Operate without earnest efforts to continuously engage and build relationships with our diverse communities and residents.”

CEO INTERPRETATION: (There have been no changes since the last report.) I interpret this to mean the GoRockford staff will intentionally engage with our diverse community through both formal and informal avenues, including engagement in community groups, committees, or with organizations managed by or in support of diverse communities in ways that will provide additional insights on our ability to practice allyship. Further, we will seek out opportunities to engage with individuals and organizations (e.g., via emails, calls, meetings, volunteer service) to ensure collaboration and relationship building.

REPORT: Over the past year, the following actions demonstrate compliance:

- Stroll on State continues to create additional holiday décor, including nutcrackers painted to represent a diverse population. Our staff has grown partnerships with Soar Radio, the Coalition of Latino Leaders, Think Big!, and the Rockford Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to ensure diverse representation on music stages and throughout the vendor areas.
- Stroll on State continues to partner with over 10 nonprofit groups to fundraise at Stroll S'mores, hot chocolate, and bars, raising money and awareness for their organizations.
- GoRockford's marketing features the region's diverse cultural offerings. Blogs, social posts, and campaigns regularly highlight diverse audiences and culturally specific events, restaurants, and stores.
- In addition, during the year, GoRockford partnered with several groups to support and, in some cases, help plan events and festivals that were, in part, planned for diverse audiences, including Inner City Reconstruction Group's Juneteenth celebration and South Main Mercado.
- Made for Rockford talent attraction efforts intentionally connect newcomers with community groups and culturally diverse networks, helping foster belonging and deeper community integration beyond initial recruitment.

Collectively, these efforts demonstrate an ongoing, intentional commitment to building authentic relationships, elevating diverse voices, and ensuring that GoRockford's work reflects and supports the full breadth of our community.

I am reporting compliance.

2.1.6. "Operate without a process for considering the viewpoints of customers, stakeholders and/or partners along with relevant data and trends when considering matters of public policy or legislation that may materially impact GoRockford or the industry."

CEO INTERPRETATION: (There have been no changes since the last report.) I interpret this to mean that when GoRockford considers taking positions on public policy or legislation that has the potential to materially impact GoRockford or the industry, it must have a process that considers the views and opinions of key stakeholders, customers, and/or partners.

Further, our analysis must consider currently available information, fact-based data, and trends on the related topic under consideration. I define "material impact" as indicating that the policy or legislation could significantly impact GoRockford or the industry, positively or negatively. Recent examples include legislation on "bathroom bills," sanctuary city policies, gun control ordinances, and policies regarding LGBTQ rights. Locally, the issues might revolve around the imposition and use of industry-related taxes or tax incentives for industry projects/investments.

Notably, I interpret that while this policy requires that we consider the views of partners, customers, and stakeholders, we are required to especially consider the impact on GoRockford or the industry, not necessarily the impact on a single business or group of businesses/organizations.

Finally, when dealing with public policy, time is often of the essence. During such times, GoRockford staff will use their best judgment in making decisions and communicating the organization's viewpoints, keeping board members and partners apprised as appropriate.

REPORT: GoRockford staff utilizes a “filters” process designed to weigh the viewpoints of all sides, including potential opposition, of issues and measures what effects it may have on GoRockford’s standing in the community or the industry at large. The “filters” process is used to evaluate public policy anytime GoRockford is asked to make statements/take a position on public and private ventures of material impact or that GoRockford has not previously taken a position on.

During the past year, no issues have risen to the level of activating the formal filters process, nor have concerns been raised regarding GoRockford’s failure to consider the views of customers, stakeholders, or partners in public policy or legislation matters.

I am reporting compliance.

2.1.7 Operate without ensuring our marketing, advertising, and other efforts reflect and celebrate the diversity of our community and without utilizing communication channels owned by or proven to be successful in reaching diverse audiences.

CEO INTERPRETATION: (There have been no changes since the last report.) I interpret this to mean that as we implement marketing and advertising efforts, we will showcase visually and through cultural celebration our community’s ethnicities and diverse populations, intentionally including underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities, the disability community, and LGBTQ+ communities.

I interpret “utilizing communication channels owned by or proven to be successful in reaching diverse audiences” to mean that GoRockford will allocate a portion of its advertising budget to using media outlets that specifically cater to diverse individuals, including media outlets for individuals who speak/read a language other than English. Notably, I interpret that while this policy requires that we consider these media outlets, we should also consider the amount of use and ad spending within these outlets to ensure appropriate comparability and effectiveness.

I interpret “celebrate the diversity of our community” to mean GoRockford will seek and implement ways to share and create positive narratives surrounding the rich history and contributions of the many ethnicities and diverse individuals within Winnebago County. In addition, I interpret it to be the board’s intention that we establish partnerships and promote the work of others and their efforts to showcase the unique history of the Rockford community, intentionally being inclusive of the impact made by minority individuals in the region.

REPORT: The following demonstrates compliance:

- GoRockford’s year-round content strategy (blogs, social media, email marketing, and website features) consistently highlights diverse voices, including minority-owned businesses, cultural events, and community leaders, ensuring representation is not limited to designated heritage months.
- GoRockford continues its intentionality in ensuring diversity and inclusion in marketing materials and events. Below are some of the specific examples within recent programs:
 - Rockford Region restaurant industry video showcasing women, cultural and ethnic minority business owners, and utilizing minority social media influencers
 - Black History Month “What does black history mean to you” campaign
 - Stroll on State tree lighting ceremonies and musical performances stage representation
 - Stroll on State food/vendor markets and small business support
 - CRE8IV mural themes and imagery used in promotional materials
- Partnership with local influencers and content creators from diverse backgrounds continues to expand, helping authentically reach and engage underrepresented audiences through trusted voices.

- GoRockford Marketing team is working to incorporate additional marketing channels, including advertising Stroll on State: ads were purchased in El Sol and La Bamba radio to help reach our Spanish-speaking Latino and Hispanic communities. In addition, radio promotional interviews were completed with local radio stations 106.3 and SOAR Radio to help reach African American community members.
- GoRockford maintains AudioEye on GoRockford.com, an online tool that increases accessibility throughout the site. It has a recognizable global accessibility icon that lives on our website, and a toolbar is available for navigation as needed.

I am reporting compliance.

Prepared by: John Groh/Kristen Paul



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 outlined in Board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is accurate.

Signed,

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

John Groh, President & CEO

April 17, 2026
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.

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

My interpretations and data reporting are presented below. I will utilize the fiscal information provided in the preliminary financial statements as of March 31, 2026.

REPORT: On June 25, 2025, the board approved a twelve-month budget for the fiscal year (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026), with a projected net profit of \$8,012 after depreciation of \$75,000.

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 do not involve liquidity risk situations and conditions described as unacceptable in Section 2.4 of the 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 debt for the organization, settling payroll and payables on time, and ensuring the timely filing of government payments and filings.

REPORT: On June 25, 2025, the board adopted a twelve-month FY25 budget for the period from July 2025 through June 2026. The annual budget was approved with a projected profit of \$8,012 after depreciation of \$75,000.

The bureau did not draw on the line of credit during the last quarter due to stable hotel tax revenue, grant revenue, and spending that aligned with the planned and approved budget. All budgeted revenue for FY26 is consistent with our mission, and all revenue received during the quarter ended March 31, 2026, 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 the GoRockford Board for budget approval.

Management receives monthly financial reports that compare actual results to the budget, and the GoRockford Board receives quarterly financial reports, which include a cash flow statement and a financial analysis of any unanticipated activity. We ended the quarter of March 2026 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 FY26 budget shows a profit of \$8,012 after depreciation. Before the depreciation of \$75,000, the budget was approved with a projected net income of \$83,012.

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 outlined in our approved FY26 budget for the cost of Board prerogatives is \$19,000 and is budgeted for board consulting, retreats, and legal fees.

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 \$450,000 for FY26 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 \$200,000 for FY26, complemented by the existing \$250,000 line of credit). This will be funded from operating revenue, specifically hotel tax revenue, one of our few revenue streams that is not designated.

REPORT: As of March 31, 2025, the bureau's operating reserve bank account balance was approximately \$67,500, 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 August 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.

As we comply with the new Reserve Fund Policy, I am reporting compliance.

REFER TO MARCH 2026 FINANCIALS

Attachments: Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow
Prepared by: John Groh and Joanne Nold 4/17/26



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

April 17, 2026

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 the avoidance of waste, such that all expenditures are to be viewed as investments towards achieving 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 FY26 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 March 31, 2026, we have recorded operating revenues of \$3,254,701 and incurred operating expenses (expenditures of funds) before depreciation of \$3,331,847, resulting in a loss from operations of \$77,146. After deducting depreciation expense, we report a net loss of \$133,396 for the fiscal year. The approved budget projected a net loss of \$124,711 after Q3. 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.

Furthermore, I am responsible for ensuring that GoRockford credit cards are used solely for business 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 explicitly agreed upon, and otherwise within 30 to 60 days.

REPORT: The Bureau entered the quarter with a \$0 balance on the line of credit. As no draws were made during the quarter, the line of credit balance as of March 31, 2026, was \$0.

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

The board officers approved, and the board subsequently ratified, the Bureau's application for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) in April 2020. The initial loan proceeds of \$10,000 were received on May 1, 2020, and were forgivable under the program. The final loan proceeds of \$75,400 were received on June 19, 2020, and bear interest at 2.75% for a 30-year term. Monthly payments of \$322 began in December 2022 after multiple deferrals. Since October 2025, the Bureau has been making monthly payments that include both interest and principal.

On September 22, 2025, GoRockford entered into a three-year auto lease agreement for a Ford Explorer with monthly payments of \$599. There was no money down, and the auto lease expense was included in the board-approved FY26 budget.

Finally, corporate credit cards and accounts were used solely for typical business purchases during the quarter ended March 31, 2026.

I am reporting 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 March 31, 2026, trade accounts payable totaled \$104,416. Payables continue to be settled within 30 to 45 days, unless they depend on grant funding that has been delayed. In those situations, we have received payment flexibility from the vendors. Payroll has been paid on time, bi-weekly.

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, 2025, has been filed by the extended due date.

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: During the quarter, no purchase exceeding \$25,000 was made that was not specifically budgeted or subsequently approved by the board.

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 members.”**

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.*) During this period, no checks for amounts greater than \$5,000 have been executed solely, and no payments have been made solely to the President/CEO. Other signatories 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 FY25 audit 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's obtaining a loan secured by the building at 310 S. Winnebago St. to finance 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 travel expenditures during the quarter have been consistent with the organization's purpose and function.

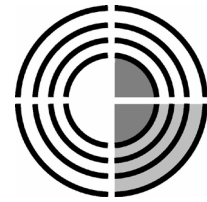
I am reporting compliance.

REFER TO MARCH 2026 FINANCIALS

Attachments: Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow. Prepared by: John Groh and Joanne Nold 4/17/26



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 2026.

Signed

John Groh/President/CEO

June 8, 2026

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 an interpretation of each policy, indicating whether that interpretation is new (noting whether any material changes have been made since the 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: With one exception, 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.

- June 17, 2026
 - 2.8 Communication & Support to the Board
 - 2.9 Programs/Events/Services/Logistics
- April 22, 2026
 - 1.2 Enhance Tourism Product (Deferred to July)
 - 2.1 Treatment of Customer & Partner
 - 2.3 Financial Planning/Budgeting
 - 2.4 Financial Condition & Activities
- March 25, 2026
 - 1.0 Global Ends (Revised in January)
 - 1.1 Create Economic Wealth
 - 2.2 Treatment of Staff
- January 28, 2026
 - 1.0 Global Ends (Approval of Revised Policy)
 - 1.3 Communicate with Constituents
 - 2.3 Financial Planning/Budgeting
 - 2.4 Financial Condition & Activities

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

I am reporting non-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 for inclusion in board packets or other communications. We aim to present logical and reasonable options and recommendations, including the pros and cons of each, and to ensure that all new board members are equipped to govern in accordance with 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.

The board has been informed of any material external changes by the next board meeting, or sooner as the situation dictates. The following examples demonstrate compliance January 2026-June 2026):

- On June 5, John invited the board to join IWBC on June 20 for the Grand Re-Opening of Beyer Stadium at Maybelle Blair Park.
- On May 7, John shared the details of the Hard Rock expansion.
- On May 6, John encouraged the board to attend the Hard Rock announcement of the next phase of Hard Rock’s development in Rockford.
- On April 24, John invited the board to the inaugural 1834 Alliance Honors & Celebration at the Nordlof Center on June 4.
- On March 24, John shared the exciting news of *Atlantic* article on shifting migration trends; Rockford is mentioned first as the nation’s most popular housing market and then highlighted again later as a leading example of why people are choosing Midwest communities.

- On March 10, the board was informed of the final round, which awarded \$427,631 to 34 restaurants, bringing the total program investment to \$1.4 million in support of 53 local establishments across Winnebago County.
- On January 31, the board was invited to attend the America 250th celebration kick-off press conference at Midway Village on February 6, 2026.
- On January 30, a video was sent to the board of NBC Nightly News re Letters to Santa with Jennifer Furst as Mrs. Claus.

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

- On June 2, John informed the board that Kristen Paul had been selected for the 40 Over 40 Honorees.
- On May 4th, the board was invited to attend the New Festival Announcement News Conference at GoRockford.
- On March 19th, the board was informed of the IHSA Selects Rockford to Host State Boys Soccer Finals in November 2026.
- On January 28, the board was reminded to attend the press conference announcing the 3-year extension of UMB Bank's presenting sponsorship for Stroll on State

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 that 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 set forth in the policy, but this correspondence does not limit the board’s awareness or authority.

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.

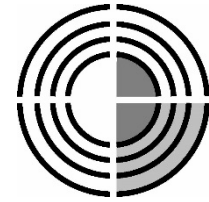
REPORT: Staff regularly executes agreements, contracts, and reports with government and private entities, all within the approved executive limitations policies. No such instances of required consent agenda items have been documented during the time frame of this report.

I am reporting compliance.

Prepared by: John Groh, Leah Ticknor 6/08/2026



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, 2026.

Signed,


John Groh, President/CEO

June 8, 2026

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.
- 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 the City of Rockford Police and Fire departments. Regular meetings are scheduled for large events with emergency 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 serving groups and events, staff use an extensive planning process, including standards for opening ceremonies, welcome bags, information tables, and other standardized systems and instruments. Post-event evaluations ensure servicing standards are met, as exemplified by the following chart below. These numbers reflect no change year over year. Customer satisfaction remains strong.

Feedback From Group Customers

	Overall Satisfaction (Venue Experience) (scale 1/low-5/high)	Satisfaction with GOROCKFORD Staff (scale 1/low-5/high)	Intent to Return
Meeting/Event Planner Survey FY 26	100% ranked 4-5 (Actual 9)	100% ranked 4-5 0% ranked 3-2 (Actual 9)	87.5%

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 using checklists, a variety of communication methods, and advance planning meetings, staff members continue to uphold high service standards and take steps to ensure 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 press conferences and provides press releases to bring awareness in the community.
- QR codes are provided to attendees to find open locations, hours and specials.
- Tournament-specific webpages are created to further promote the region to attendees.
- 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 resolve any overlapping events.

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

I am reporting compliance.

Prepared by: KP/LA/LT

National Collegiate Table Tennis Championships Returns to Rockford

Tournament set to bring \$467,401 in Economic Impact

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 9, 2026

What: GoRockford and Rockford Park District is pleased to welcome back **2026 National Collegiate Table Tennis Championships**, hosted by the **National Collegiate Table Tennis Association (NCTTA)**. This national championship will feature more than **250 collegiate athletes** from over **50 colleges and universities** across the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico competing for titles in singles, doubles, and team events. Athletes range in age from 17–30 and include both male and female athletes. The 3-day tournament is set to bring \$467,401 in economic impact to the region.

When: Friday, April 10 – Sunday, April 12, 2026

Where: Sports Factory 305 S Madison St, Rockford IL 61104

Why: Rockford continues to build momentum as a premier sports tourism destination, and hosting the NCTTA Championships again underscores the region's ability to attract high-level national events. The tournament is expected to bring in over 2,000 players, coaches, and spectators.

The event also highlights the rapid growth of collegiate table tennis, including the return of Puerto Rico teams after a 10-year hiatus. The long-standing event started in 1993 and will be held in Rockford for the third time.

"Hosting events like the NCTTA Championships continues to elevate Rockford's sports tourism brand on a national stage," said **Kara Davis, GoRockford Senior Sales Manager**. "We're proud to welcome top collegiate athletes and showcase our community as a premier destination for national competitive events."

"This facility is a perfect fit for a table tennis tournament, showcasing both the scale and flexibility of the Sports Factory," said **Milton Phillips, Sports Factory Supervisor**. "The open layout, quality playing surfaces, and ability to accommodate multiple courts create an ideal competitive environment for athletes and spectators alike. That versatility, paired with the economic impact of hosting regional and national competitions, is what makes the Sports Factory such an asset for our community."

Other: Spectator Admission is \$10 per day or \$20 for a weekend pass.

Contact: Willy Leparulo, willy.leparulo@nctta.org, 850.445.0780

-MORE-

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Laura Gibbs-Green, Rockford Park District Communications Manager, 815-298-5496, lauragibbsgreen@rockfordparkdistrict.org

Annual Puri Champions Cup & College Showcase Returns to Rockford Region

Youth Soccer Tournament Set to Bring \$1.1 Million in Visitor Spending

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2026

What: GoRockford and Rockford Park District are thrilled to welcome the annual **Puri Champions Cup & College Showcase** back to the Rockford Region. The youth soccer tournament is hosted by Rockford Raptors.

The event will bring 330 teams and more than 16,000 athletes and spectators to the Rockford region. Each team averages 16 players, with both boys and girls teams ranging in age from U8 to U19. Teams are traveling from across the Midwest, including Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Indiana. Due to weather conditions, organizers have expanded the tournament to additional locations.

When: Puri Champions Cup & College Showcase, April 17-19

Where: Mercyhealth Sportscore Two 8800 E Riverside Blvd, Loves Park
Mercyhealth Sportscore One 1288 Elmwood Rd. Rockford
Clarence Hicks Sports Complex 2004 Ogilby Rd, Rockford
Rock Valley College 3301 N Mulford Rd, Rockford
Rockford University 5050 E State St, Rockford

Why: The Puri Cup has been hosted in the Rockford Region since 2012.

"We always look forward to hosting one of the area's largest soccer tournaments, especially one that has become a tradition for so many families," **said Louis Mateus, General Manager of Mercyhealth Sportscore Complexes.** "However, this week's significant rainfall required us to adjust game locations because several fields at Mercyhealth Sportscore One are unplayable due to saturated conditions. Situations like this highlight the growing need for turf fields, which provide consistency, reliability, and the ability to keep events on schedule regardless of weather. Thanks to the turf fields at the Rockford Park District's newly renovated Clarence Hicks Sports Complex, along with strong partnerships with Rock Valley College and Rockford University, we were able to accommodate teams and maintain the integrity of the tournament. Events of this scale bring hundreds of athletes and families to our community and serve as an important economic driver for the region, reinforcing the value of continued investment in high-quality, all-weather athletic facilities."

-MORE-

Puri Cup Fast Facts Page 2 of 2

“The Puri Cup has been a staple event in the Rockford region for more than a decade, thanks to the continued leadership of the Rockford Raptors,” **said Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford vice president of sales and service.** “It’s a highly anticipated tournament that draws clubs from across the Midwest year after year. We love seeing our community come alive with thousands of athletes and families, and the strong economic impact this weekend brings to the region.”

Contact: Frank Mateus, director, Rockford Raptors Soccer Club, 815.505.1590, frankmateus3@gmail.com

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Forest City Frenzy Brings Over 300 Disc Golf Competitors to Rockford

Two-Day Tournament Visitor Spending is Estimated to be \$161,206

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2026

What: GoRockford, Rockford Park District, Rockford Disc Golf Club, Illinois Open Series, and Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA), will welcome more than 300 competitors and spectators, who are expected to book 200 hotel room nights, to the region for the 15th annual **IOS #137 Forest City Frenzy**. The A-tier regional disc golf tournament is presented by Discraft and is set to generate an estimated economic impact of **\$161,206**.

Players ranging in age from **17 to 71** will travel from across the region to compete in multiple divisions. The Forest City Frenzy tournament continues to draw both new and touring professional players, while also bringing visitors into the community to experience Rockford's growing outdoor recreation scene.

"Events like the Forest City Frenzy are exactly what position Rockford as a leader in sports tourism," **said Kara Davis, GoRockford senior sales manager**. "We're welcoming more than 300 players, along with their friends and families, who are not only competing on incredible courses, but also exploring our restaurants, shops, and attractions. It's a great example of how sports drive economic impact and introduce new visitors to everything our region has to offer."

"We're excited to welcome players and spectators to two Rockford Park District parks, which highlights both the growing popularity of disc golf and the quality of our park amenities," **said Amy McIntyre superintendent of operations**. "Disc golf is a unique activity that supports both physical and mental well-being while encouraging movement, time outdoors, and opportunities to reduce stress and connect with nature. Tournaments like this showcase how parks serve as active, accessible spaces for recreation, tourism, competition, and connection."

When: **Saturday, May 2 – Sunday May 3**

Where: **Anna Page Park**
3202 N Springfield Ave, Rockford

Ingersoll Memorial Park
101 Daisyfield Rd, Rockford

Why: Anna Page Park is widely recognized as one of the top disc golf facilities in the country, featuring multiple course layouts that allow for high-level competition and large-scale events.

-MORE-

Illinois and Iowa Disc Golf Hall of famer Chris Sprague will be competing. He has competed in 513-disc golf events and has 119 career wins.

Contact:

Mike Krupicka, Professional Disc Golf Association Scheduler, ios2026@krupicka.org, 331.444.2477

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NEWS RELEASE



GoRockford
Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

GoRockford Creates RockYard Music Fest, A New End-of-Summer Celebration

Festival to be held in Davis Park, August 14-15

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2026

Rockford, IL – GoRockford is excited to announce the launch of **RockYard Music Fest**, a brand-new, free-to-attend, two-day music and community festival coming to downtown Rockford on Friday and Saturday, **August 14-15, 2026**, at **Davis Park** along the Rock River.

Created as part of **Rockford's America 250** celebrations and in conjunction with **Rockford 815 Day** festivities happening throughout the region, RockYard Music Fest will bring together live music, art, food, games, fireworks, a drone show, family activities, and community experiences designed to celebrate the spirit and energy of Rockford while creating a new summer tradition.

The festival will feature major acts including **Trippin' Billies: A Tribute to Dave Matthews Band** and **One More Time: A Tribute to Daft Punk**, along with local and regional performers, interactive art experiences, throwback competitions, family activities, and community programming throughout the weekend.

"Launching RockYard at the newly renovated Davis Park feels symbolic of the momentum happening in Rockford right now. This festival is about celebrating our community, activating public spaces, supporting local businesses, and creating memorable experiences and events that bring people together," said **John Groh, president/CEO, GoRockford**.

The festival will serve as a capstone event to local America 250 celebrations, with plans to continue growing RockYard Music Fest as an annual community tradition.

"This community has wanted a large-scale summer festival experience for a long time, and we are incredibly excited to finally bring it to downtown Rockford," said **Kristen Paul, executive vice president of GoRockford**. "RockYard is designed to celebrate everything people love about summer, including live music, riverfront energy, food, art, competition, fireworks, a drone show, and unforgettable moments with friends and family. We hope this becomes a tradition people look forward to year after year."

While certain elements of the park will still be under construction, RockYard Music Fest will mark the first major public event hosted at the newly renovated Davis Park.

"Rockford takes tremendous pride in creating experiences that bring people together and celebrate our community," said **Rockford Mayor Thomas McNamara**. "RockYard Music Fest is an exciting addition to the momentum happening in Rockford and another opportunity to showcase the energy, creativity, and spirit of our city. Hosting the first major event at Davis Park makes this moment even more special for our community."

—MORE—

NEWS RELEASE



GO ROCKFORD
Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

RockYard News Release Page 2 of 4

Presenting Sponsor: GoRockford announced that Foresight Bank will serve as the presenting sponsor of the inaugural festival. “We are proud to support the launch of RockYard Music Fest and invest in experiences that bring people together,” **said Jeffrey Hultman, Foresight Bank president/Chief Banking Officer.** “Events like this strengthen community connections, support local businesses, and create positive momentum for downtown Rockford. We’re excited to help introduce what we believe will become a signature regional event.”

Two-Day Live Music Experience

RockYard Music Fest will feature performances throughout the weekend on a main stage at Davis Park, including local, regional, and national acts. Additional band announcements will be released in the coming weeks.

Fireworks and Drone Show

Top festivities will include a Friday night fireworks show over the Rock River, and an end-of-celebration drone show finale on Saturday, sponsored by **Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23.**

Community Competitions

Attendees can sign up for free throwback competitions and challenges throughout the weekend, with prizes awarded to winners. Throwback games will include sack races, pie-eating contests, cake walks, bags tournaments, limbo, Hula Hoop contests, tug-o-war, dizzy bat, wheelbarrow races, and more.

Rockford-Themed Events

RockYard will take place in conjunction with Rockford 815 Day. In 2025, over 125 events and specials were offered by local businesses for the community celebration. RockYard activities will include Rockford trivia, a downtown scavenger hunt, and more. Downtown businesses will be encouraged to host sidewalk sales, offer extended hours, feature themed specials, and host pop-up activations throughout the weekend.

Food and Beverage

The festival will feature a bar-and-grill tent with classic summer favorites, themed drinks, lemon shake-ups, and more. There will also be additional food vendors available. A ticketed pancake breakfast will kick off Saturday morning’s festivities, starting at 8 a.m.

Activity Tent

In addition to competitions and interactive experiences throughout the grounds, RockYard will feature an all-ages activity tent with hands-on art activities, including tie-dye, painting, sand art, sculpture, and more. The full schedule will be posted to the RockYard website in the coming weeks.

Public Art

RockYard Music Fest will also celebrate the expansion of public art in Rockford with the official unveiling of a new sculpture near Davis Park. Four sculptures currently on display through the CRE8IV sculpture program will become permanent installations with support from community sponsors.

—MORE—

NEWS RELEASE



RockYard News Release Page 3 of 4

The installations are part of a partnership involving the Illinois Arts Council, the Dean Alan Olson Foundation, and the John D. Brubaker Family Foundation, continuing efforts to expand public art throughout Rockford.

RockYard Schedule

FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 p.m. Grounds Open	8 a.m. Pancake Breakfast (ticketed, fee) Wellness Activities on Main Stage Yard Games
4 – 10 p.m. Music on Main Stage RockYard Bar & Grill Yard Games and Competitions Activity Tent	10 a.m. – 10 p.m. Music on Main Stage RockYard Bar & Grill Competitions Activity Tent
9:45 p.m. Fireworks	9:45 p.m. Drone Show (sponsored by Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 23)

RAMP River Run

Festivalgoers are encouraged to start Saturday with the RAMP River Run, featuring a 3K walk/wheel-a-thon, 5K, and half-marathon beginning at 7:30 a.m. Participants can head directly to RockYard afterward for the pancake breakfast and festival activities.

Community Partnerships & Sponsors

RockYard Music Fest is presented by Foresight Bank and supported by the City of Rockford, GoRockford, the America 250 Rockford/Winnebago County committee, Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 23, Illinois Arts Council, Dean Alan Olson Foundation, John D. Brubaker Family Foundation, Hard Rock Casino Rockford, Aetna Lumber, and additional community organizations and sponsors. Sponsorship opportunities are still available for businesses and organizations interested in being part of Rockford's newest summer tradition.

Volunteer Opportunities

GoRockford is currently seeking volunteers, community organizations, and partner groups to help bring RockYard Music Fest to life throughout the weekend. Volunteer registration information can be found at **RockYardMusicFest.com**.

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Top College Ultimate Teams Headed to Rockford for National Championships

Tournament Estimated to Bring in \$750,574 to Rockford Region

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 21, 2026

What: GoRockford, Rockford Park District, and USA Ultimate will welcome approximately 1,000 student-athletes, coaches, team personnel, families, and fans to the region for **the 2026 USA Ultimate Division I College Championships**. The four-day national championship tournament is expected to generate an estimated economic impact of **\$750,574** for the Rockford region.

The event will feature 40 elite college teams (20 men's and 20 women's teams) from across the United States and Canada competing in more than 100 games to determine two divisional national titles.

In addition to championship competition, attendees will also experience a Color of Ultimate showcase game and the presentation of the prestigious Callahan Award. Both championship finals will be broadcast live on ESPN-U.

When: Friday, May 22 – Monday, May 25, 2026

Where: Mercyhealth Sportscore Two 8800 E Riverside Blvd, Loves Park, IL 61111

Why: The USA Ultimate College Championships represent the culmination of the collegiate ultimate season, with more than 400 colleges and universities across North America competing throughout the year for a chance to qualify. Only 40 teams advanced to the Division I Championships.

Rockford has a strong history with USA Ultimate events, previously hosting the Division III College Championships in 2015 and 2018, as well as the USA Ultimate Club National Championships in 2016. The 2026 tournament marks just the second time the Division I Championships have been hosted in Illinois.

"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," said Kara Davis GoRockford Senior Sales Manager. "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."

More than 100 games will be played throughout the four-day tournament. Teams from powerhouse programs including Carleton College, Colorado, Michigan, North Carolina, Oregon, Washington, and Cal Poly qualified in both men's and women's divisions. Visitors can purchase tickets through the official Division I event website or onsite during the event.

Extensive livestream coverage will be provided through Ultiworld in addition to ESPN-U broadcasts of the finals.

-MORE-

Forest City Frenzy Fast Facts Page 2 of 2

Contact:

Samantha Kehl, USA Ultimate Communications Manager, 309.531.7343, samantha@hq.usultimate.org

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Rockford to Host National Women's Motorcycle Event

Get Your Groove On 2026 Aims to Make History with World Record Ride Attempt

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 11, 2026

Rockford, IL – GoRockford is pleased to welcome to the Rockford region **Midwest Women Riders**, a female-only motorcycle community, for its **Get Your Groove On 2026 World Record Female Ride**. Over **700 riders** from across the country are expected to travel to the Rockford region for a three-day celebration held at **Hard Rock Casino Rockford**. The event is expected to generate more than **700 hotel room nights** and an estimated economic impact of **\$1.4 million** for the Rockford region.

The highlight of the weekend will be an escorted non-stop **World Record Group Ride** on **Saturday, June 13**, with an official head count and ride beginning at 11 a.m. when Midwest Women Riders will attempt to set the **Guinness Book World Record** for the most females riding at the same time.

“This event is about more than motorcycles,” said **Kara Davis, GoRockford senior sales manager**. It’s about women coming together, building community and making history in the Rockford region. We are proud to support Midwest Women Riders as they welcome riders from across the country for this powerful world record attempt.”

Founded in 2008 by rider and community builder Ellie Rains, Midwest Women Riders was created to bring women together. Midwest Women Riders welcomes all women who ride, as well as those inspired to ride their own motorcycle.

Event highlights: Get Your Groove On 2026 is expected to include sisterhood, speakers, workshops, live entertainment, vendors, a Saturday night party, and an escorted non-stop World Record Group Ride. The female-only event begins on Thursday, June 11 and ends with the group ride and after party on Saturday, June 13.

Schedule highlights: Full schedules, activities and event details are available on <https://midwestwomenriders.com/>. Tickets for the ride only are available for \$30 on the day of the event (cash only). All riders and passengers must be female and 18 years and older. Passengers are welcome, but do not count towards the world record goal.

Saturday, June 13, 2026 - World Record Female Ride Day

- 8:00 a.m. - Registration and check-in open; ride-only ticket sales available (cash only); bike staging begins.
- 10:30 a.m. - Registration closes; ride announcements, prayer, National Anthem and group photo.
- 11:00 AM - Kickstands up; official head count; World Record Female Ride departs Hard Rock Casino.

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###

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Ellie Rains, Founder, Midwest Women Riders NFP, mwridders@aol.com

Rockford Welcomes Thousands for 5th Annual Team Illinois Summer Invitational & Showcase

Three-Day Tournament Estimated to Bring 1.8 Million in Economic Impact

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 26, 2026

What: GoRockford and the Rockford Park District are pleased to welcome the 5th Annual Team Illinois Lacrosse Summer Invitational & Showcase to the Rockford region.

The event begins with the Individual Showcase featuring boys college athletes, followed by the Summer Invitational Team Tournament. The tournament brings together more than 300 boys' and girls' youth, high school, and college teams from across the Midwest and beyond. Participating teams travel from Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Arizona, making this a premier Midwest regional lacrosse tournament.

The event is expected to generate an estimated **\$1.8 million** in economic impact, attract approximately **7,500** attendees, and an estimated **1,000 hotel room nights** for the Rockford region.

"Sports tourism continues to be a driving force for our local economy, and we're excited to partner with the Rockford Park District and Team Illinois Lacrosse to host another outstanding event," **said Lindsay Arellano GoRockford vice president of sales and service.** "We look forward to welcoming visitors from across the country and showing them everything the Rockford region has to offer."

"Hosting one of the largest lacrosse tournaments is a testament to the reputation our region has built as a sports tourism destination," **said Louis Mateus, Mercyhealth Sportscore Complexes General Manager.** "Nationally recognized facilities like Mercyhealth Sportscore Two and Mercyhealth Sportscore One are designed to accommodate events of this scale, and our team works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure every athlete, coach, and visitor has an exceptional experience. From field operations and traffic management to concessions, guest services, and tournament logistics, we're showcasing why organizations across the country continue to choose Rockford and Loves Park."

When: Friday, June 26 – Boys Individual College Showcase (1-7 p.m.)

Saturday, June 27 – Sunday, June 28 – Boys & Girls Summer Invitational Team Tournament

Where: Mercyhealth Sportscore One 1288 Elmwood Rd., Rockford, IL

Mercyhealth Sportscore Two 8800 E. Riverside Blvd., Loves Park, IL

Why: The Team Illinois Lacrosse Summer Invitational & Showcase is the organization's largest annual event and provides athletes with the opportunity to compete against top regional competition while showcasing their skills. Team Illinois Lacrosse also hosts a Fall Invitational each year.

Other: Parking is \$20 for the weekend.

FAST FACTS



Team Illinois Lacrosse Fast Facts Page 2 of 2

Contact: Kyle Pepich, kyle@yetilacrosse.com

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Rockford Welcomes Nation's Top BMX Racers for 2026 Midwest Nationals

Race Weekend Set to Bring Over \$800,000 in Economic Impact

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2026

What: GoRockford, Rockford Park District, Rockford BMX, and USA BMX are excited to announce the return of the **2026 USA BMX Midwest Nationals**. As Stop No. 17 on the 2026 USA BMX National Series, the three-day competition will bring riders from across the United States to compete for national rankings and championship points. The event has become a Father's Day tradition for BMX families and is one of the most attended weekends of the year for Rockford BMX.

Rockford BMX has hosted the Midwest Nationals for over 40 years. More than **100 teams** ranging in age from 2 to 87 years old are expected to participate, bringing over **3,500 athletes and fans** to the Rockford region and generating over **2,700 room nights** and an estimated economic impact of **\$800,000**.

"The USA BMX Midwest Nationals is one of the biggest weekends of the year for Rockford BMX, **said Garret Rapp, co-track operator and public relations at Rockford BMX**. "Months of preparation go into making sure our facility, volunteers, and staff are ready to welcome thousands of riders and families from across the country. We look forward to showcasing not only our track, but the entire Rockford community. It's exciting to see so many people travel from out of town to experience everything our city has to offer, and we're proud to continue a tradition that has become such an important event for both the sport of BMX and Rockford. Special thanks to our partners Rockford Park District, GoRockford and USA BMX for helping bring 40 years of this event to the city of Rockford."

"Hosting the USA BMX Midwest Nationals for more than 40 years is a testament to Rockford's strength as a premier sports tourism destination," **said Lindsay Arellano, GoRockford vice president of sales & service**. "This event not only brings high-energy competition to our community but also delivers a meaningful economic impact while showcasing the incredible partnership between Rockford BMX, the Rockford Park District, and our local supporters."

When: Friday, June 19 – Sunday, June 21
Friday, Racing begins at 1 p.m.
Saturday, Racing begins at 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, Racing begins at 8 a.m.

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

Why: 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.

BMX Midwest Nationals Page 2 of 2

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.

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

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