

Stroll on State Partners Encourage Area Businesses to 'Spread the Light' With Decorations Contest

Anderson Automotive Group, Parks Chamber, RACVB, Rockford Chamber and Village of Rockton Invite Businesses to Compete for Prizes, Community Pride

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rockford, IL – On behalf of its partners Anderson Automotive Group, The Parks Chamber of Commerce, Rockford Chamber of Commerce and Village of Rockton, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) is excited to announce **Spread the Light: A Merry & Bright Decorations Contest for our Business Community** as part of 2020 **Stroll on State presented by Illinois Bank & Trust**. Spread the Light will officially kick off Saturday, November 28, and run through Thursday, December 24, on the GoRockford Facebook page, where our region's best and brightest holiday business décor will be on display.

Businesses throughout Winnebago County are encouraged to decorate exteriors, interiors and storefronts with a little healthy holiday competition in mind. The best of the best in decorations and lights will have the chance to win cash prizes in three categories, including "The Griswolds" for the biggest and brightest lights, "The Real. Original." for most original in showcasing community pride, and "The Charlie Brown" for less-is-more, minimalist supremacy.

"Being a business with 50 years serving the Rock River Valley, we felt compelled to help spread holiday cheer, peace and goodwill throughout our community. Especially in a time of social distancing, we believe holiday displays will be a popular way for the community to express itself. Our hope is that the idea catches on in every corner of Winnebago County, so that our retail corridors will be the brightest they've ever been, and also that families take the opportunity to drive around town to see the lights and feel the magic of the holiday season," said **Chad Anderson, vice president of Anderson Automotive Group**.

"In what has been a bit of a dark year, we are looking forward to the warmth and joy of the holiday season, however simple it may be. 2020 has been a year for tenacity and reimagining every aspect of business. We look forward to a tradition – holiday lights - that brings with it a sense of normalcy for anyone to enjoy," said **Einar Forsman, president/CEO of the Rockford Chamber of Commerce**. "We hope our fellow businesses will be able to help spread the light this season in some way. Whether through a simple wreath, lights, or a full on Griswold display. We are excited for all of it."

How It Works: To participate, area businesses should submit decoration photos (one entry per business) with contact name, business name, business address, email address and phone number to Social@GoRockford.com by Sunday, December 13. Category galleries will be live on the Stroll on State Spread the Light event on the GoRockford Facebook page the week of Dec. 14-18, when public voting begins and runs through the contest's conclusion on December 24. Winning businesses will be determined by which

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get the most likes/engagements, and \$250 cash prizes will be awarded for each category winner. In addition, the business that gets the most likes/engagements of the three categories will also receive a staff meal or gift card(s) of up to \$250 for a local restaurant of the winner's choice.

"Creativity and resiliency win and that's exactly what this contest partnership is about," said **John Groh, RACVB president/CEO**. "There are so many businesses and organizations that have been models to follow amidst such a difficult year, and we're thrilled to partner with Anderson Automotive Group and the Rockford Chamber on a fun and competitive way for our business community to engage and shine a light again on the importance of supporting local."

With responsibility and safety at top of mind, this year's reimagined Stroll on State experiences are set to begin **Saturday, November 28** in downtown Rockford before extending region-wide with an at-your-leisure, safe line-up of in-person and virtual programs. As November 28, 2020, is also Small Business Saturday, RACVB is expanding Stroll activities and programs through December 24 to help raise awareness around the importance of supporting local, and as an avenue for enhanced marketing support of our region's local shops, restaurants, bars and small businesses of the hospitality and tourism industry.

This year's Stroll experience highlights include:

- Expanded decorations downtown Rockford;
- A new location for the official City of Rockford Christmas Tree at Davis Park with extensive new decorations throughout the park;
- A Merry & Bright Holiday television production from 6-7 p.m. Saturday, November 28, on Channel 13 WREX that will feature a live online tree lighting program and conclude with fireworks at multiple locations city-wide;
- An at-home version of the Fleet Feet Dasher Dash 5k;
- An extended SantaLand at Rockford City Hall; and
- Six locations around town to drop off letters to Santa.

For a complete listing of Stroll on State partners, programs and updates, visit www.strollonstate.com.

About RACVB: RACVB is responsible for promoting the Rockford region as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, RACVB strengthens the economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in our communities. www.gorockford.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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