



Rockford Area COVID-19 Tourism & Hospitality Updates

As we're well into week three of staying home, our community continues to learn and evolve as we navigate through COVID-19. We have a long way to go, but we're seeing many bright spots in and around the Rockford region. We are a resilient community and our goal is to ensure that message continues to be highlighted.

With the help of so many partners, colleagues and friends near and far, RACVB is committed to serving our community during this challenging time. We will continue to leverage our weekly e-newsletters, social channels and GoRockford.com as places to go for pertinent information--disseminating this information as best as we can is critically important. Through our engagement platforms, we also are going to continue to shine a light on how our community continues to come together, even if we must remain at distance. Thanks to online, social and virtual channels, **we remain in this together...**

Important updates:

CARES Act Overview & FAQ: The CARES Act, a \$2.2 trillion stimulus package was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Trump last week. The final bill includes several important provisions that the travel industry advocated for, including \$349 billion in small business loans; expanded unemployment insurance, tax rebates and business tax provisions; and funding for impacted industries, including hotels. A helpful FAQ document that covers the entire bill can be found [HERE](#).

City of Rockford Business Resources: If you own a business and need assistance navigating through local, state and federal available resources, take a look at this helpful PDF grid that the City of Rockford created. Download a copy [HERE](#).

LunchChat – Connect. Inform. Help.: RACVB hosted its first two LunchChat webinars this week and is solidifying plans to sustain the series in the coming weeks. During each webinar, RACVB will facilitate conversations that provide current information, ideas and inspiration for organizations, businesses and individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. **To sign up for LunchChat, visit [GoRockford.com/LunchChat](https://www.gorockford.com/LunchChat).** The next two LunchChat webinars are:

LunchChat - Financing and Grants Available to Tourism-Impacted Businesses
Thursday, April 2 at 12 p.m.

Local, state and federal grant and loan opportunities are available to small businesses and nonprofits. John Groh, RACVB president/CEO, will lead a panel discussion of how to access these critical resources. **Guest panelists will include:**

- Karl Franzen, director of community & economic development, City of Rockford

· Mike Mastroianni, director, Rockford Chamber's Illinois Small Business Development Center

LunchChat - Communicating and Marketing Through Challenging Times

Tuesday, April 7 at 12 p.m.

Sites, attractions, small businesses and hotel marketing and communications strategies have changed dramatically in the past few weeks due to COVID-19. Hear from industry experts on best practices for marketing and communicating during challenging times--and how to plan now for recovery. **Guest panelists will include :**

- Jay Graham, founder/co-creative director, GrahamSpencer
- Katryna Kirby, owner, Social Kat Co.
- Pam Maher, CEO, KMK Media

Support United Way Rock River Valley COVID-19 Relief Fund: As part of the LunchChat rollout, RACVB is encouraging individuals and businesses that have the means to please consider donating to the United Way of Rock River Valley's COVID-19 Emerging Needs Fund for Winnebago and Ogle Counties. Donations can be made directly at www.unitedwayrrv.org/covid-19 or by texting TOGETHER to 40403.

RACVB Resource Center: Our online resource center content continues to evolve at www.gorockford.com/resourcecenter. It is a resource for tourism and local partners, including a significant information hub for our small business community to help navigate these trying times. We're updating content daily to help streamline where to go for small business assistance--please check out our Business page [HERE!](#) If you have other questions, email us at covid19@gorockford.com and we'll help track down the answer.

Rockford Area Hospitality/Tourism COVID-19 Resource Group: RACVB's hospitality industry Facebook group is still active as a platform for best practices, go-to resources and valuable perspective from our local hospitality and small business experts—there are nearly 200 active members. Please continue to join us for this ongoing dialogue [HERE](#).

#StayHomeRKFD: RACVB continues to build out #StayHomeRKFD across GoRockford social channels by creating original, fun and informative content, as well as leveraging our partners' social channels to maximize community engagement from afar. We rolled out the campaign with an Instagram photo contest, staff and partner blogs, and through our LunchChat platform this week. Keep an eye out for more interactive social and web-based programs during the work week and weekends!

Staff Availability: As a reminder, our **staff is all available to you while working remotely**. Contact information is available [HERE](#).

Some other industry updates we're following include:



Food/Beverage

CURBSIDE, CARRYOUT & DELIVERY STILL ON!

Local restaurants continue to offer carryout, curbside, delivery and/or drive-through services. Prairie Street Brewing Company continues to mix up its to-go options with food and craft brews package specials daily. Please keep social distancing at top of mind as you consider essential stops at the grocery store!

[\(more restaurant information here\)](#)

Sites/Attractions

GO VIRTUAL WITH YOUR ATTRACTIONS

Did you hear the news? As one of our community's most cherished attractions, City Market is hosting a T-shirt design contest--all through its social and email channels! Submit your entry by April 24 for your chance to have



your design featured on the 2020 Market T-shirt. Online and social contests are a great way to remain engaged! [\(more attractions information here\)](#)



Retail

SHOP LOCAL ONLINE WITH SOCIAL IN MIND!

Many local retail shops are continuing to offer online catalogs with direct shipping to your house. Take a browse through the Toad Hall Books and Records digital store on Facebook to find your favorite band. Retail social channels offer a variety of creative shopping solutions. Check them out today to keep shopping local!

[\(more small business information here\)](#)



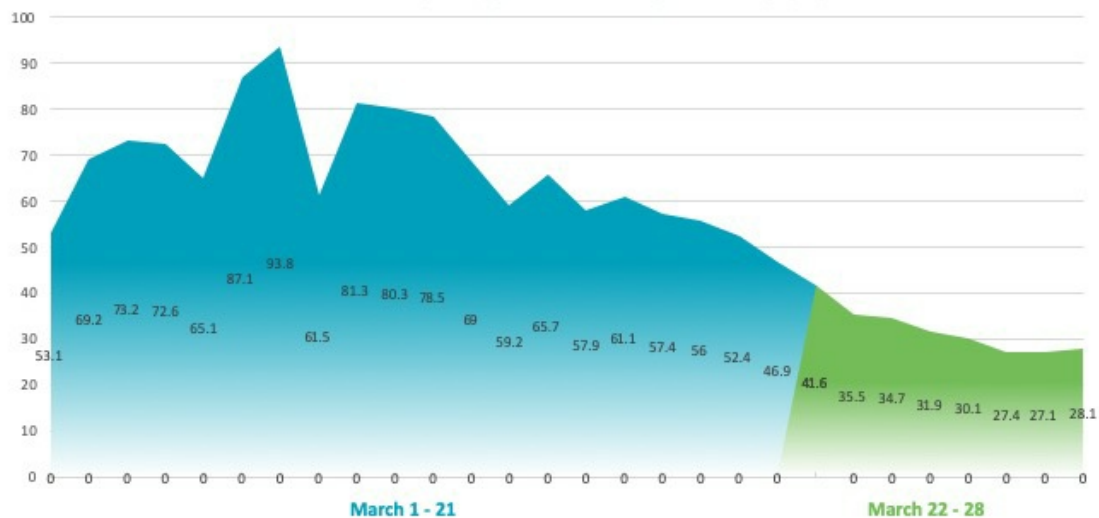
Hotels

ESSENTIAL & OPEN WITH PREVENTIVE MEASURES

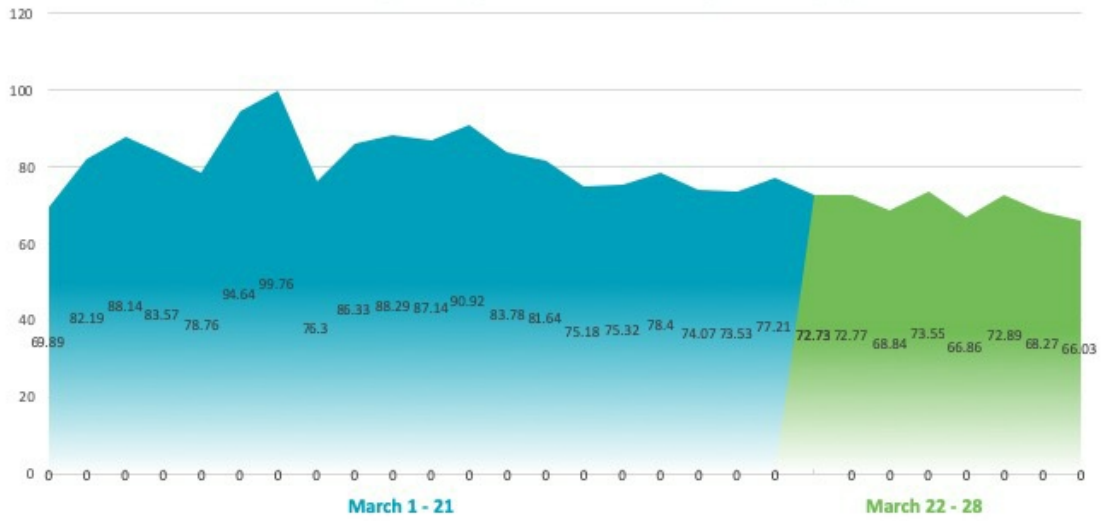
All Rockford area hotels are deemed essential and open. Enhanced cleaning, grab-and-go breakfasts and closed public spaces remain as standard practice. **Still, the steep financial impact is demonstrated in the below slides.** During the last week, hotel occupancy dipped below 30% while weekly revenue dropped nearly 62%.

[\(more hotel information here\)](#)

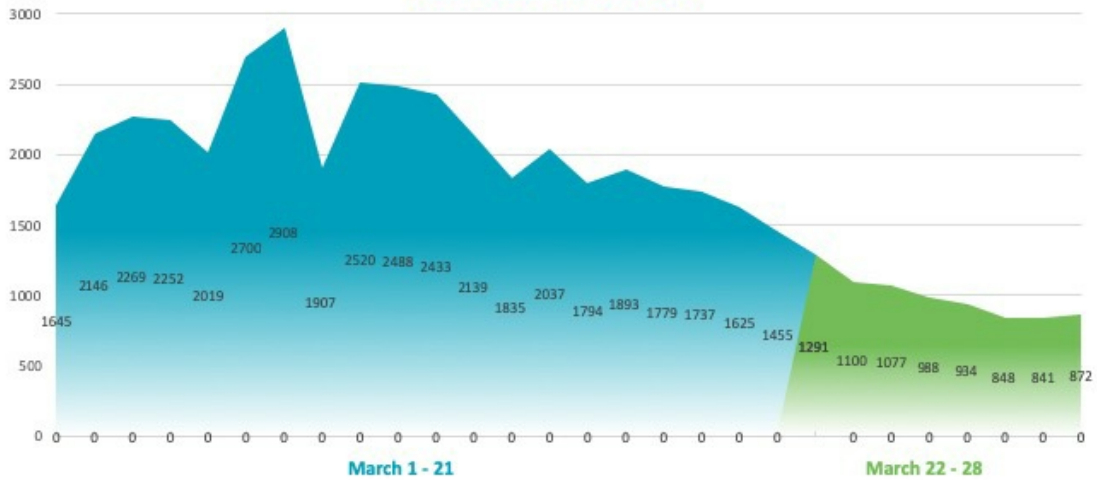
Hotel Occupancy in Winnebago County (%)



Hotel Average Daily Rate in Winnebago County (\$)



Hotel Room Demand in Winnebago County (Rooms Sold Per Night)



Hotel Revenue in Winnebago County (\$)



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stay up to date on all COVID-19 updates through these various resources:

[Winnebago County Health Department](#)
[Illinois Department of Public Health](#)
[Centers for Disease Control](#)
[World Health Organization](#)
[U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

For additional questions about Coronavirus in Winnebago County and the region, please call the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at **815-319-6705** or by emailing covid19@wchd.org.



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