

A photograph of a lush, green Japanese garden. In the foreground, a small, arched wooden bridge spans a calm pond. The background is filled with dense foliage, including various types of trees and shrubs, some with vibrant red and yellow leaves. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Real. United. Rockford.

Rockford Region, Tourism Partners Prepare for Clean and Safe Community Reopening

While it's been 11 weeks since we began working remotely in light of COVID-19, **there are many signs of a responsible return to business and work in our community** that we're excited about—most notably, we're being brought slowly back together during [phase three](#) of the State's five-part reopening plan entitled Restore Illinois.

Phase three permits gatherings of 10 or fewer people and allows for restaurants (outdoor dining), outdoor recreation centers, youth day camps, manufacturing facilities, offices, retail outlets, barbershops and salons, fitness centers, and youth sports practices to reopen to the public with capacity limits and additional precautions, including face coverings, enhanced cleanliness practices and social distancing.

As things continue to trend toward our new normal, we're here to help return to our favorite places and spaces in a clean, safe and timely manner. On that note, please join us in taking a pledge of responsibility together.

LunchChat to Highlight Sports Tourism's Responsible Return

Register [HERE](#) to join our next LunchChat webinar at 12 p.m. CT tomorrow, Thursday, May 21, when we'll discuss how **"Sports Tourism Readies for a Responsible Return"**. Regarded locally as driver of our economy and quality of life, sports tourism has been brought to an uncharacteristic halt during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sports segment is projected to help lead destinations toward economic recovery. During this LunchChat, RACVB will be joined by national and local industry experts for a discussion about preventative measures being taken that can help us rebuild consumer confidence and reopen our venues responsibly as we progress toward a new sports tourism norm. Guest panelists include:

- **Stacey Lambert**, assistant executive director, Illinois High School Association
- **Louis Mateus**, general manager, Mercyhealth Sportscore Complexes
- **Jon Schmieder**, founder/CEO, Huddle Up Group

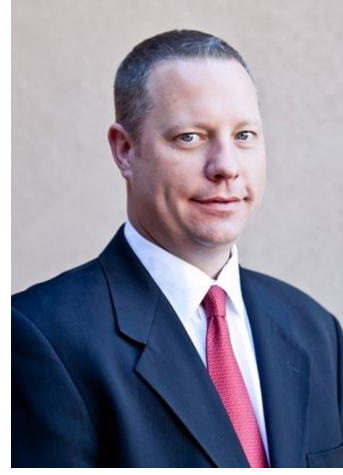
For more information, visit GoRockford.com/LunchChat.



Stacey Lambert



Louis Mateus



Jon Schmieder

Rockford Themed-Masks Help Raise \$4,000+ To Date for Local Arts!

In partnership with Rockford Art Deli's Here For Good campaign, the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and Rockford Area Arts Council are partnering to sell Rockford-themed face masks and Our Journey Begins at Home t-shirts online now. To date, the partnership has sold more than 800 masks and 15 t-shirts that have combined to raise \$4,165 that will seed the Our Journey Micro-Grant Program, which will benefit local artists and arts organizations to drive excellent project work in Winnebago County.



The Micro-Grant Program application period begins June 1, 2020. Completed applications should be emailed to KPaul@GoRockford.com. For more information on the Micro-Grant program or to purchase a mask or t-shirt, please visit GoRockford.com/OurJourney!

INDUSTRY UPDATES



Food/Beverage

ROCKFORD OUTDOOR DINING REOPENS FRIDAY!

The responsible reopening of outdoor dining is set to return this Friday, May 29, throughout the region! RBI Bar and Restaurant is a local favorite spot that is assembling an expanded outdoor patio this week to prep for service, which will feature onsite breakfast, lunch or dinner outside, as well as its curbside or delivery services for those on the go.

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



Sites/Attractions

WALK THE GARDENS THIS WEEKEND

Anderson Japanese Gardens and Fresco at the Garden will reopen on Friday, May 29, under significantly reduced capacities and strict social distancing protocol. Pre-purchased time admissions will be required to enter the Gardens. And while you visit, be sure to grab some food and refreshments via Fresco's outdoor dining space or order carryout to take with you.

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



Retail

SHOP SAFELY IN-PERSON OR ONLINE

Although it is opening a bit later than usual, the Edgebrook Farmers Market returns next week! Head to the shops at Edgebrook every Wednesday starting in June for your produce, floral, and delicious baked goods needs! In line with other area farmers markets, changes are being implemented for the health and safety of all shoppers and vendors.

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



Hotels

HOTELS OPEN, READY FOR SUMMER DEBUT

Rockford area hotels are essential and remain ready to accommodate guests. In case you missed it, Embassy Suites by Hilton Rockford Riverfront is another step closer to opening in July as it installed its exterior signage this week! The latest performance metrics show the Rockford hotel market continues to trend ahead of state and national averages.

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

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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

[GoRockford.com COVID-19 Resource Center](#)
[Rockford Area Tourism & Hospitality Facebook Group](#)
[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 COVID-19 in Winnebago County and the region, please contact the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at **815-319-6705** or covid19@wchd.org.





Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau