

# Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Website and Social Media Inclusion Policy



## Underlying philosophy and goal of www.gorockford.com

- To position the Rockford Region as a Real, Original destination offering value and convenience for the leisure and business traveler
- To provide trip planning information to visitors to the Rockford Region
- To promote and encourage the growth of local tourism-related businesses, attractions, accommodations and dining facilities to the leisure and group/meeting/convention markets
- To provide a quick-access reference website for Rockford residents
- To improve and promote the perception that Rockford is home to original activities, but not to be a calendar of every-day events, on-going meetings and non-tourism related activities (a role fulfilled by the *Rockford Register Star* calendar).

## To be considered for inclusion

- **Attractions, Accommodations, Dining:** Inclusion of any entity is based on the sole discretion of the RACVB, keeping in mind the best interest of the leisure and group market customer and the **uniqueness/originality** of the facility:
  - All hotels in Winnebago County meeting health and safety standards are included at no charge
  - All non-profit attractions/sites in Winnebago County are included at no charge
  - All locally owned restaurants in Winnebago County are included at no charge to encourage and promote the development of locally-owned and unique dining experiences
  - Chain or franchise retailers are not eligible for inclusion
- Any entity can request to be included on the website, however, ***the RACVB has final say on inclusion and makes the decision on the proper category in which to list the entity within the website:***
  - **All listings are free and can include the following:** company name, full address, phone numbers, website link, and full description (to be edited by RACVB) of site. Photos of site must be approved by RACVB before inclusion.
  - **Events should be of interest to visitors but *not necessarily limited to their ability to draw visitors to Rockford.*** Events may be included based on their contribution to the “quality of visit”—e.g. while a given event might not have sufficient appeal to draw large numbers of tourists by itself, its entertainment or cultural value may be supplemental and provide an increased incentive to visit and stay. Cases in point are prairie walks and children/adult classes at museums.
  - **Sites and events should be located within the boundaries of Winnebago County.** The RACVB maintains contracts with the City of Rockford, Winnebago County and other local municipalities that direct us to use available hotel tax resources to promote events and destinations exclusively within the Winnebago County boundaries. Exceptions to this rule include but are *not necessarily limited to* events that take place in a surrounding community that is not serviced by another CVB, events that do not have any local hotels to service visitors or events that will create significant economic impact for the Rockford Region (in the form of overnight stays). ***Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the RACVB has final say on inclusion or exclusion of any event.***

## Criteria for gorockford.com Calendar of Events

- Annual events, but not limited to annual events
- Events of interest to tourists for entertainment, recreational or cultural value
- Events pertaining to the arts—music, museums, visual art, dance, literature
- Events pertaining to social and political themes presented as part of on-going cultural series by accredited institutions and organizations (e.g. Forum series at Rockford University)
- Events or performances with significant, nationally or regionally recognized speakers or performers
- Events related to cultural and ethnic heritage (e.g. Black Family Reunion, Midsommar Fest)
- Festivals, fairs and shows
- On-going art and historical exhibitions
- Family activities and workshops at attractions, excluding multi-day camps and classes
- Professional and semi-professional sports events open to and of interest to spectators
- High school and college sports events of broad appeal (e.g. High School Hoops Showdown, NIU or DePaul opening season game.) General season local high school and college sports events are not included
- Runs and marathons that appeal to a wide base of runners and are accredited by a sanctioning body
- Meets, tournaments and hobby shows of fairly-broad appeal to participants and spectators and that are open to the public (e.g. car club shows, model train shows, radio-controlled airplane meets)

## Criteria for www.enjoyillinois.com Calendar of Events

The primary purpose of www.enjoyillinois.com is to promote events that are annual and have sufficient appeal to draw a significant number of visitors whose travel requires an overnight stay. In general, enjoyillinois.com criteria mirror those of gorockford.com. Events submitted by the RACVB to enjoyillinois.com are subject to review by the Illinois Bureau of Tourism for acceptance or rejection.

### Events *not* suitable for inclusion

- Benefits and recognition dinners and fundraisers that do not have inherent intrinsic economic value (e.g. regional or nationally known speakers, entertainers) as part of the event
- Gala fundraisers
- Medical meetings/conferences
- Self-help workshops/ wellness/health clinics and workshops (e.g. events that have little related tourism value)
- Golf play days
- Children's classes limited to children; children's classes not at museums/ attractions
- Religious gatherings/events unless they feature entertainment by nationally or regionally recognized performers
- Political rallies unless characterized by broad appeal; (e.g. political debates of regional or national candidates)
- Summer camps and extended workshops (longer than one day)
- On-going flea markets not meeting RACVB criteria for inclusion in other portions of website
- On-going amateur sports leagues such as bowling and baseball
- Bus trips outside the Rockford area (e.g. trips to shows, gardens, attractions in Chicago or Milwaukee, etc.)

*Revised March 6, 2020*