

“This Week in the Stateline” is our weekly Public Affairs Program that airs every Sunday from 6:00 am to 6:30 am, featuring a local host interviewing local guests about local topics of community interest.

### **2023 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter**

10/1/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Ann Wasser of Severson Dells Nature Center outlines their annual “Drinks for the Dells” fundraiser on Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>, including local breweries, games, food and live music, with proceeds to support nature education. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Nikki Ticknor of the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court and Domestic Violence Court talks about October being Domestic Violence Awareness Month, how victims can receive assistance and remain anonymous, and local resources available such as the Family Peace Center and Remedies Renewing Lives. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara discusses the renovation of the former Jerome Interiors building on Main Street into the future Think Big Minority Business Accelerator, which aims to help minority- and women-owned businesses break through barriers and find success, with a goal to complete the construction and open the center by next August. He also talks about new road construction which has started on Broadway.

10/8/23 1<sup>st</sup> guests, Rebecca and DeeDee of Youth Services Network discuss their mission of providing therapy and supportive services to children and families who have experienced trauma, and details about their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual “Spare No One” bowling fundraiser happening this Saturday, Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Mary McNamara of Rockford Area Arts Council talks about Fall ArtScene going on this weekend, a gallery walk downtown featuring paintings, sculptures, and more work from local artists, with free admission. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara discusses upcoming renovations of Riverview Ice House, the re-opening of Charles Street this Monday after months of construction work, and Collins Aerospace making a \$50 million dollar investment into their local facility with a new advanced power electric systems lab designed to help create a new generation of electric aircraft.

10/15/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Nikki Ticknor of the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court and Domestic Violence Court talks about October being Domestic Violence Awareness Month, how victims can receive assistance and remain anonymous, and local resources available such as the Family Peace Center and Remedies Renewing Lives. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Cole Regnery discusses the Sycamore Pumpkin Festival happening Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> in nearby Sycamore, IL. He provides an overview of festival activities and how this unique family festival started back in 1962 and still continues to impact the Sycamore community. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara talks about how important RAMP (the Regional Access Mobility Project) is for the city, the latest developments of the BMO Center remodeling and the impact of the Chicago Blackhawks and Rockford IceHogs organizations on our city and downtown area, and the work the city is doing to help in the battle against homelessness during World Homeless Awareness Week.

10/22/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Laura Gibbs-Green of the Rockford Park District talks about fall recreation and events, highlighting the improvements and new resources available at Harmon Park, made possible by a \$432,000 grant provided by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, including a brand-new fully-lit 1/3 mile pathway going around the perimeter of the park, with three fitness stations and recreational workout equipment. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, John Groh of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau discusses results of the Tourism Survey 2023, which was available through Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> – over 2000 people provided feedback about topics including outdoor recreation, riverfront development, and recognizing our great local sports facilities and the importance of bringing more amateur sports tournaments to our area – survey results indicated how much our residents appreciate and value visitors to our community. John also invited people to Town Hall sessions this Wednesday and Thursday, 10/25 and 10/26 to hear more about the survey results and have an opportunity to provide further input. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara talks about the reopening this weekend of the BMO Center downtown, after \$23 million dollars' worth of renovations through three phases of construction, with all construction accomplished during off-hours and off-times to avoid closing down the BMO Center entirely. The mayor also discusses this Monday's city council meeting as they work on the city's budget for next year, with an approved budget expected in the next 4-6 weeks.

10/29/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Nikki Ticknor of the 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court and Domestic Violence Court talks about October being Domestic Violence Awareness Month, how victims can receive assistance and remain anonymous, and local resources available such as the Family Peace Center and Remedies Renewing Lives. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Cole Regnery discusses the Sycamore Pumpkin Festival going on this weekend in nearby Sycamore, IL. He provides an overview of festival activities and how this unique family festival started back in 1962 and still continues to impact the Sycamore community. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara talks about Halloween safety and trick-or-treat times in our community, his first presentation of next year's budget plan to the City Council, and investments for new technology to fight crime.

11/5/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, John Groh of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau outlines the "Stroll on State" holiday celebration on Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>, entering its 11<sup>th</sup> year, and over 500,000 visitors have participated in the past decade – he talks about how this downtown festival got its start, changes over the years, additions, and returning favorites for this year – John also puts out a request to any community members who may be interested in volunteering to help out. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara also discusses this year's "Stroll on State" event, plus he shares news about the announcement of Stellantis reopening the Belvidere Assembly Plant, including plans to build a new Electric Battery Plant, which will add 1000 new jobs to our area.

11/12/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Mary McNamara of Rockford Area Arts Council talks about Art Access Grants, nominations going on now through January 13<sup>th</sup> for The Rockford Area Arts Awards next March, and an art contest with our local Rockford IceHogs hockey organization. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Ben Libman with Rockford Center for Sight & Hearing discusses their 7<sup>th</sup> annual “Dining in the Dark” event, this Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at the Rockford Radisson Hotel, where participants will experience what a person with limited to no vision has to go through each day at mealtime, as they enjoy a blindfolded journey through a delicious four-course dinner – proceeds benefit the Center for Sight & Hearing’s Vision Clinic. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Dennis Horton of the Better Business Bureau talks about scams to beware of this holiday season, including current scams with people claiming to be calling about Insurance Benefits – Dennis also outlines ways to reach out and report scammers to the Better Business Bureau.

11/19/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, John Groh of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau outlines the “Stroll on State” holiday celebration happening this Saturday, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> – throughout the last decade, over 500,000 visitors have enjoyed this annual event on the Saturday after Thanksgiving – as the event enters its 11<sup>th</sup> year, John discusses how this downtown festival got its start, changes over the years, additions, and returning favorites for this year – John also puts out a request to any community members who may be interested in volunteering to help out. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Major Monty Wandling of the Rockford Salvation Army talks about the needs in our area not only during the holiday season, but throughout the year – he outlines how people can volunteer, and the different ways in which funds raised by the Salvation Army benefit our local community.

11/26/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Renee Pixler of the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County discusses the 40+ Forest Preserves that are open during the winter and the variety of different wintertime activities available – she also mentions that there are job openings for anyone interested in pursuing a career in Forestry and Preserves. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Ted O’Donnell with Rockford’s Festival of Lights outlines the details about this annual family tradition since 1989, featuring over 100 creatively lighted displays set up at Sinnissippi Park – this free drive-thru event is sustained by volunteers and donations. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara discusses upcoming plans for Davis Park renovations and construction on Auburn Street. He also covers the approval of funds for YouthBuild Rockford, a youth and community development program that simultaneously addresses core issues facing low-income communities, including housing, education, employment, crime prevention, and youth leadership development.

12/3/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Jennifer Jones from Mercyhealth Development Foundation discusses their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual “Breakfast with Santa” on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> from 8 to 11 am to raise funds to benefit babies in the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) and their families – the event includes breakfast, horse-drawn carriage rides, cookie decorating, games, and a photo with Santa – donations accepted in cash or gift cards for needy families. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Laura Gibbs Green of the Rockford Park District covers a variety of upcoming wintertime activities including their free “All Aglow” holiday lights display at Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens through Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>, Winter Flurry Festivities, dates for Snow Sculpting events, and more. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara recaps the success of the annual “Stroll on State” downtown event on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. He also outlines the Capital Improvement Program going to City Council this Monday for a final vote – this largest plan in the city’s history includes improvements on roads, sidewalks, and water facilities.

12/10/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Amy Newell of The Arc of Winnebago, Boone and Ogle Counties discusses their biggest fundraiser of the year, “The Chocoholic Frolic” coming up on 2/29/24, featuring tasty chocolate treats from area businesses – tickets and “Crave Cases” are now on sale, and Amy explains how the funds help provide services and opportunities for those with disabilities in our area. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Pastor Bobby Sheets of Riverside Community Church outlines their annual “A Night in Bethlehem” free Drive-Thru Live Nativity happening this evening from 6 to 9 p.m. featuring six scenes depicting the birth of Jesus with characters and live animals – they receive no funds from this event, it’s their gift to the city from the church and its parishioners. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara recaps the City Council’s approval of Rockford’s biggest Capital Improvement Program ever, plus a new city budget, and the new Homeowner Repair Program Grant and how people can apply for this program.

12/17/23 1<sup>st</sup> guest, Freeport Mayor Jodi Miller recaps 2023 and looks ahead to 2024. She discusses changes in personnel for the City Managers and Council, the newly revised Strategic Plan for 2024, road work project completions and reviews, the \$13 million dollar water treatment project providing fresh upgraded services to residents, the importance of Highland Community College to the area, as well as the state on non-profits for the city – she wraps up with a compelling appeal to those who are new to the area to consider Freeport as their residence in 2024. 2<sup>nd</sup> guest, Ann Marie Walker of Discovery Center Museum outlines the calendar of December events planned for entertaining children this holiday season, including winter-themed activities and crafts, and a New Year’s Eve Countdown. 3<sup>rd</sup> guest, Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara discusses the City of Rockford Surplus Plans and why spending in the city is imperative to improvement. He also covers why Rockford has Lobbyists in Springfield and how it is advantageous to our city.

12/24/23 and 12/31/23 Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara joins us for a comprehensive year-end recap, covering local construction projects, crime statistics, education and more. In addition, he looks ahead to some plans for 2024, and also gives insight into the City Council and how they operate together for the benefit of the city.