CHAMBER & BUSINESSES ADJUST TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

There are no dogs allowed at the Rockford Farm Market at this time. Also, there will be a limit to the number of shoppers within the market and people are asked to stay 6-feet away from others and to not congregate. Thank you for keeping the market a safe place for everyone.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS
Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic, there are plenty of Rockford businesses that are open, albeit in a different way. Please support them as they weather the storm in this time of difficulty.

ROCKFORD FARM MARKET
The City of Rockford’s Farm Market will be opening Saturday May 2. However, there will be safety measures in place to assure shoppers’ safety as they select their merchandise. See article on Page 2

ROCKFORD Heating and Cooling is launching a “Shop Local” movement. The company is reallocating advertising dollars to help local businesses. Purchase a gift card from a local business and Schaafsma will match it up to $25. See Article on Page 2

A FOND FAREWELL
Walt Chest Boutique is closing its doors after a decade in downtown Rockford. This is a sad announcement as the shop has been a much beloved staple in the Rockford landscape. You can read about the reasons the Board has looked at to make their decision to close the Rockford location. See Article on Page 5

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES
To help bridge the gap between the normal and the now, Schaafsma Heating and Cooling is launching a “Shop Local” movement. The company is reallocating advertising dollars to help local businesses. Purchase a gift card from a local business and Schaafsma will match it up to $25. See Article on Page 2

ROCKFORD Heating and Cooling is launching a “Shop Local” movement. The company is reallocating advertising dollars to help local businesses. Purchase a gift card from a local business and Schaafsma will match it up to $25. See Article on Page 2

The annual Start of Summer Celebration is always a favorite for residents and visitors alike. The safety of the community is paramount to the Chamber organization, so it has been postponed but organizers are looking at new dates. (File Photo)

Popular Start of Summer Celebration postponed

For the safety of our community, the Rockford Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and the Start of Summer Steering Committee have decided to postpone the Annual Start of Summer Celebration.

This is the most anticipated event of the year in Rockford and though it was not an easy decision, these unknown times call for unexpected delays. The Start of Summer Celebration is a large fundraiser for the Rockford Chamber of Commerce along with other community organizations including the Rockford Lions Club, Rockford Rotary Club, and local businesses such as Rockford Brewing Company. For this reason, we have decided to not cancel the event but postpone.

At this time there is no new date for the celebration. Moving forward, the Chamber will await further updates in regards to the coronavirus pandemic and will be working closely with the carnival and other organizations to select a new date. We will announce this information on our social media, website, and via email once more details become available.

We miss you all and cannot wait to celebrate with you!

EXPO now slated for October 24, 2020

The Rockford Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, in accordance with the State and Federal Guidelines, has decided to postpone the 16th Annual Community EXPO to be held on Saturday, October 24, 2020.

Rockford’s Annual Community EXPO is held each year on the third Saturday in March. Unfortunately, in these unprecedented times, we have rescheduled it to be held in October. The Chamber believes the EXPO is an important event for the local business community and still needs to be held to promote the businesses once we get through this trying time. The event is still scheduled to take place at the Rockford High School and will have space for over 150 business booths and craft vendors.

"The Community EXPO is a great event for our businesses in the Rockford and surrounding areas but it is also a great event for our community members" states Linda Southwick, Executive Director of the Chamber. "We look forward to building the business community by holding the EXPO this fall and look forward to having the community there to support them.”
The Rockford Farmers Market is opening May 2 and will be open every Saturday from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. through October 31. The Farmers Market is located in the South Squires Parking Lot off Main St. Due to COVID-19, the organizers are taking extra precautions and following National and State guidelines to ensure the safety of both customers and vendors. Because of these guidelines, this year’s Farmers Market will be a little different, but the ability to buy fresh produce and high-quality food products will remain unchanged.

In an effort to promote social distancing and fulfill State guidelines on capacity, only 50 shoppers will be allowed at a time to enter the market area and they will be monitoring and directing shoppers accordingly. Please stay six feet away from other shoppers and utilize the X’s on ground when waiting in line. Please do not congregate. There will be two entrances/exits to the market, with one off the White Pine Trail and one off the parking lot. Because of the limitations of the number of people allowed into the market area, organizers are asking that only one person from each household attend the Farmers Market. It is also requested you not bring your pets at this time.

To help make your trip to the market quick and efficient, several of the vendors are offering pre-ordering and booth pick-up.

Please see the City’s website for details. https://www.rockford.mi.us/Community/ABOUTROCKFORD/FarmMarket/tabid/10713.

**Support businesses with Schaafsma’s ‘Shop Local’ program**

Businesses across Michigan are struggling to cope with the effects of COVID-19. Some have reduced hours and furloughed employees. Others, unfortunately, have closed their doors for good. While the multinational brands will weather the storm just fine, Main Street needs our help. To help bridge the gap between the normal and the new, Schaafsma Heating and Cooling is launching a “Shop Local” movement. Schaafsma Heating and Cooling is reallocating advertising dollars to help local businesses during this difficult time. Purchase a gift card from a local business and Schaafsma will match it up to $25 and will give you an additional $25 gift card for future services at Schaafsma!

Eligible businesses include lawn care, landscape, and floral companies; beauty salons and massage therapists; and independent restaurants. Go to schaafsma.com/shoplocal for more information, the rules and guidelines and to purchase a gift card.

As this program is designed to support local commerce, the selected businesses must be located in Kent County. This program will end when 400 gift cards have been distributed.

**Farmers Market Opens May 2**

The much-anticipated opening for the award-winning Rockford Farmers Market is slated for Saturday, May 2 and will be available until the last Saturday in October. (Courtest Photo)
Please remember to support local businesses during this time. We are all in this together and the way we can survive is to support each other as we work our way through the many obstacles COVID-19 has placed in front of us. We have compiled a list of restaurants that offer delivery/takeout as well as merchants that have added online sales and curbside pick up for this time period. Other business industries are still operating such as banking, service industries, and grocery stores.

### RESTAURANTS OFFERING TAKE-OUT and/or DELIVERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bier Distillery</td>
<td>5295 West River Dr. NE, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-888-9746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flo's Wood Fired Pizzeria</td>
<td>4465 14 Mile Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-951-3944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber's Inn Restaurant &amp; Tavern</td>
<td>6555 Bridge St, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-874-5553</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hermann's Boy, Inc.</td>
<td>220 Northland Dr NE, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-866-2900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ucello's</td>
<td>19 N. Main Street, Rockford MI 49341</td>
<td>616-866-0666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jody's Restaurant</td>
<td>503 E Division St, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-866-2546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marina's Pizzeria Bistro</td>
<td>109 Courtland Street, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-863-3100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza Hut</td>
<td>2745 10 Mile Rd, Suite L, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-866-8783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt Candy's Toy Company</td>
<td>616-866-8783</td>
<td>Call to arrange drop-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge Street Baby</td>
<td>616-951-4677</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/bridgestreetbaby/">https://www.facebook.com/bridgestreetbaby/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Pick-Up &amp; Delivery</td>
<td>616-951-7003</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/stonebridgekb/">https://www.facebook.com/stonebridgekb/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pizza Hut</td>
<td>2745 10 Mile Rd, Suite L, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-863-8331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockford Brewing Company</td>
<td>12 E Bridge Street, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-951-4677</td>
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<td>Nola's Pizza Shop</td>
<td>260 Northland Dr NE, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-866-3570</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delight In Designs</td>
<td>616-951-7003</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/delightindesigns/">https://www.facebook.com/delightindesigns/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Local Basket Case</td>
<td>616-866-1921</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/thelocalbasketcase/">https://www.facebook.com/thelocalbasketcase/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweetland Chocolates &amp; Coffee</td>
<td>910 Main Street, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-866-3570</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Julian Winery</td>
<td>2745 10 Mile Rd, Suite L, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-863-5311</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gild the Lily</td>
<td>616-951-7003</td>
<td><a href="https://gildthelily.com/">https://gildthelily.com/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Haven Creek</td>
<td>616-951-7003</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/havencrerkirkwood/">https://www.facebook.com/havencrerkirkwood/</a></td>
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<td>Ila &amp; Lucille</td>
<td>616-866-1921</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/ilawoodfiredpizza/">https://www.facebook.com/ilawoodfiredpizza/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Pump House</td>
<td>30 N Main St, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jade</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jadeandazalea.com">www.jadeandazalea.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>JT Stichery</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kimberly's Boutique</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/kimberlysboutique/">https://www.facebook.com/kimberlysboutique/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>LA Miller Boutique</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/lamilletboutique/">https://www.facebook.com/lamilletboutique/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee &amp; Birch</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://leeandbirch.com">https://leeandbirch.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Kay - Kris Riley</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/kristyrocks/">https://www.facebook.com/kristyrocks/</a></td>
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<td>Paperdoll Boutique</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
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<td>Resale Republic</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/resalepublic/">https://www.facebook.com/resalepublic/</a></td>
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<td>Bridge Street Baby</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Pick-Up &amp; Delivery</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/localpickupsanddelivery/">https://www.facebook.com/localpickupsanddelivery/</a></td>
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<td>Rockford Hemp Company</td>
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<td>Rogue Skate Shop</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/rogueskateboard/">https://www.facebook.com/rogueskateboard/</a></td>
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<td>The Local Basket Case</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/thelocalbasketcase/">https://www.facebook.com/thelocalbasketcase/</a></td>
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<td>WAR Chest Boutique</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/warchestboutique/">https://www.facebook.com/warchestboutique/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Michigan Collision &amp; Mechanical</td>
<td>4955 14 Mile Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-866-2640</td>
</tr>
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### MERCHANTS

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<th>Phone Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flo's Wood Fired Pizzeria</td>
<td>4465 14 Mile Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-951-3944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockford Ace Hardware</td>
<td>643 Northland Dr NE, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-951-7115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rogue Skate Shop</td>
<td>116 Courtland Street, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-951-7003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAR Chest Boutique</td>
<td>616-951-7261</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/warchestboutique/">https://www.facebook.com/warchestboutique/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Michigan Collision &amp; Mechanical</td>
<td>4955 14 Mile Rd NE, Rockford, MI 49341</td>
<td>616-866-2640</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Please be advised that not all Rockford area businesses are listed. We are sorry if we missed you. Please verify hours and operation with each individual business.*
new members

Joanne Royston
616-233-1002
joannelroyston@comcast.net
Joined: 7-19-19

Lindsay Gainor
616-633-1193
lindsay@canadawestinsurance.com
Joined: 3-9-20

Lady Elizabeth
616-648-1547
LadyElizabeth@canadawestinsurance.com
Joined: 6-7-19

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Jeni Willis
616-648-1547
jeni@coperrockprop.com
Joined: 2-28-20

George Carroll
616-749-7775
gcarroll@coperrockprop.com
Joined: 2-28-20

Justin Goushaw
616-535-3805
Justin@coperrockprop.com
Joined: 2-28-20

VIBRANT LIFE CHIROPRACTIC

This season has brought stress to individuals and families alike. Physical, emotional and chemical stress can take an enormous toll on the body causing symptoms and overall lack of functioning at your best. Vibrant Life Chiropractic, has been blessed to have been allowed to remain open to serve families and keep them healthy. They believe that by taking care of your nervous system, your entire body will be functioning better and will be able to thrive. They have gone to great lengths to create a safe and clean environment to ensure your safety. They  have family safe. They are currently accepting new patients and welcome any questions as they are a resource to the community. Please call (616) 855-2017 or go to their website for more information.

Farm Bureau announces Economic Give Back program

Justin Goushaw and George Carroll, with G&C Insurance Group, are excited to announce Farm Bureau’s Economic Give Back program. This program will give back over $5 million to members across the state as they support local business in our community.

More than 215,000 Farm Bureau members across the state, comprised of auto insureds and others, will immediately enjoy a meal on Farm Bureau at over 1,200 Michigan restaurants (over 280 restaurants in West Michigan).

How it Works: Our members will receive a voucher for $25 to use at any one of the participating Michigan restaurants. Locally in the Rockford area we have 15 restaurants participating. They include The Burger Shack, Pizzeria Grande, Ramona’s Table, Jody’s, Uccello’s, Timbers Inn, Third Nature Brewing, Fatzo’s Pizza, RBC, Flo’s Woz Pizzeria, The Corner Bar, Dickey’s BBQ, Honey Creek Inn, and Flo’s Sports Bar. Farm Bureau members can bring their vouchers to any one of these restaurants before July 31st and enjoy a free meal, complements of Farm Bureau.

“This community means the world to us and to be able to support it with this program is very exciting. We are very proud to have an opportunity like this and to be able to share it with our clients is amazing,” shares Goushaw.

If you would like more information on the Economic Give Back Program, please visit their Facebook page at G&C Insurance Group.
WAR Chest Boutique to close doors

A beloved Rockford store will be closing its doors in downtown Rockford. The WAR (Women at Risk) Chest Boutique, which is located on Squires Street, has been a Rockford favorite for over a decade, and has had to look closely at their ability to survive. The non-profit organization invited people “to shop with a purpose.” According to their website, when you bought a product from the WAR Chest Boutique, you became a fellow soldier in the fight to set women and children free from exploitation and slavery. The WAR Chest Boutiques are the retail arm of the non-profit, Women At Risk, International, selling items handmade by and sold in support of survivors and those vulnerable to human trafficking; both in the US and internationally. Ninety percent of the proceeds from product sales went back into their programs. The message was a wonderful one that Rockford residents and visitors embraced and supported.

Bethany Bratt, of WAR International, sent the following to the Rockford Chamber of Commerce: “On behalf of Women at Risk (WAR, International) and WAR Chest Boutique, I would like to say thank you for your tireless work during this tumultuous time.

Hulst Jepsen Physical Therapy knows it’s important to continue to deliver expert care to our community and will be able to see patients again when they open their doors back up, Friday, May 1. Prior to the stay-at-home order, Hulst Jepsen Physical Therapy had already partnered with CareConvene (another local company) to provide innovative and high-quality telehealth services to their neighbors, friends, and family. They have now extended those services for your convenience and most insurance carriers are extending coverage as well. If you are interested in connecting with a Hulst Jepsen Physical Therapist via telehealth or for an appointment, please email receptionist@hjphysicaltherapy.com or visit their website hjphysicaltherapy.com/specialties/telehealth.

Rockford resident Nita Russell shares why she donated her $1,200 stimulus check to help fund North Kent Connect (NKC) during the pandemic. Parts of Nita’s letter: “I was born September 11, 1950 in Greenville, Michigan, and raised there with my two sisters. Our father ended up in the Ann Arbor VA hospital in 1956 and was there for 17 months, so our then-stay-at-home mom went to work in a dime store. The “village” (our neighborhood) looked after us while our mom was working, along with an aunt and grandmother. I remember getting government surplus cheese and milk, and possibly some ADC (Aid to Dependent Children). Mom had always sewed our dresses, and we dressed alike, sometimes even like mom! We didn’t have much in material things but we were definitely loved. Not just by family, but by the village. To this day I am so grateful to them all. I’m 70 now, and thankfully doing fine financially. I’m not rich by any means, but I know this shutdown has not affected my income in any way. I am sending my stimulus money to North Kent Connect for you to help feed the many people that are truly hurting right now. Nita continues, “I would like to encourage everyone who gets stimulus money and does not need it, to give it back in some way. I feel like this is something small I can do to help. I’m hoping and praying this money will help people that are truly hurting so badly right now. Thank you for your service to our community.”

For more on Nita Russell, please see the article in the Review May 2020 edition by SPEA’s Mark W. Schipper. For questions or more information about Rockford Education Foundation and First Robotics, please contact at www.rockfordmichamber.com 516-314-6280.
Local brewing company adjusting nicely to obstacles

Third Nature Brewing Company had been open less than five months before Governor Whitmer’s shutdown mandate came in March. “We were just getting in the swing of things, gearing up for our first spring and summer when this hit us,” says co-owner Bryce Roebke. “Now we’ve pivoted to only doing take-out and delivery, things we weren’t doing at all before this and weren’t really set up to handle. But we’re managing and we’re doing everything we can to ensure we can bounce back from this.”

Third Nature has plans for eventual distribution, but to date, all their product is sold only through their Rockford taproom. “We have one little can seamer and we’re hand-canning per order, to the tune of about 1,200 cans a week. We’re also offering growler fills.” The brewery also offers a limited-to-go menu of food including pizza, salads, burgers and other sandwiches and can deliver food and beer within 5 miles. Like many local breweries, Third Nature had to cut operating costs drastically and could only retain a fraction of their staff, mainly in the kitchen. Front of house duties have mostly been handled by our General Manager and a rotating schedule of the owners. Their brewer, Troy Zitzelsberger, has become part-time brever, part-time deliveryman.

Third Nature is pooling all tips from take-out and delivery sales and distributing them to the staff. They have also partnered with several local businesses to support each other and the community. Third Nature recently partnered with Haven Creek, a boutique store also in Rockford, to deliver prepared meals to front-line workers at two local hospitals. General Manager Josh Hallwachs adds, “We’ve been blown away by the support the local community have shown us. Everyone’s been very generous and kept a positive attitude about this. It really helps reinforce that we’re all in this together.”

Third Nature Brewing Co. is located at 7733 Childsdale Ave NE in Rockford. They are open for curbside takeout and delivery 4-8 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Visit www.thirdnaturebrewing.com for their menu and online ordering, or call (616) 512-9314. Third Nature Brewing Company had been open less than five months before Governor Whitmer’s shutdown mandate came in March. “We were just getting in the swing of things, gearing up for our first spring and summer when this hit us,” shares Roebke. “Now we’ve pivoted to only doing take-out and delivery, things we weren’t doing at all before this and weren’t really set up to handle. But we’re managing and we’re doing everything we can to ensure we can bounce back from this.”

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The wonderful people at Mosquito Hunters want you to know plenty of important things:

- Best control is an essential business, so they’re ready to roll!
- They’re fully prepared to tackle another season of Mosquito, flea and tick abatement.
- They allow families to take back their own yards.
- Stuck in quarantine? – take advantage of your own backyard - they can help make that comfortable, enjoyable experience.
- They offer pay-as-you-go payment plans.
- There is a 10% discount for all chamber members.
- Mosquitoes are already hatching which is VERY early for them to show up and with a very mild winter it’s going to be a HEAVY mosquito season.
- The company features local owners – Beth & Chuck Willis, help support them so they can support you!
- “We believe that a remarkable experience with family and friends does not require a passport or a suitcase. We know that some of life’s best memories are literally made in your own backyard. From barbecuing to playing catch, from stargazing to relaxing in the hammock, we believe one of the simplest, most profound joys in life comes from using your yard to its full potential, especially in the company of family and friends. You’ve worked hard for your home. Take advantage of it. Unplug, step outside, and breathe in the fresh air. Your yard awaits.”

To set up an appointment, please call Beth and Chuck at (616) 236-3050 and get started on taking back your paradise!

KinderCare Essential Care Center is Open for Business

The KinderCare Learning Center’s essential care center is open for business and ready to serve the community.

Are you an essential worker who needs care for your children? We’re here to support you while you work hard to see us all through this crisis.

To serve those on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis, KinderCare has worked closely with their own medical advisor and local authorities to reopen their learning center. Their first responsibility is keeping you and your family safe, and they’ve introduced new safety measures to make sure they can continue to do so in these challenging times, including:

- Checking everyone’s temperature at the door
- Staggered drop-off and pick-up times
- Health and safety training for their teachers and staff
- Temporary suspension of their family dining program

Enroll now by contacting KinderCare – West River Belmont, Liz Deugaw (616) 719-1377 or e-mail at westriveruppers@kindercom.com.

Truax Outdoor Living has high quality poly lumber furniture with the lowest prices. Curbside pick-up for all furniture is available for their customer’s safety. There is also shipping available on select pieces, including Adirondack side tables, and ottomans. The company offers custom sets, with over 650 color combinations available. They also offer wonderful solutions to outdoor entertaining, such as firepit tables, dining tables, woviel gliders, rocking chairs, benches and much more. Some of their most popular sales are their Michigan or Seashell Adirondack chairs, and their 5-piece pub set, which includes a 48” table and four swivel chairs.

The turnaround times are around six weeks, so order soon to enjoy the summer. See all Truax Outdoor Living’s merchandise by going to their website. They also have a new, larger showroom in Comstock Park, located at 285 Dodge Ct. Suite D, if you’d like to see their beautiful merchandise in person. Prior to shopping, be sure to call (616) 309-0284 to verify hours.

Enjoy outdoor living in comfort and style

The staff at Third Nature Brewing has fun while delivering delicious food in a safe way. (Courtesy Photo)
CEDAR SPRINGS BREWING
Cedar Springs Brewing, 95 N. Main St., in Cedar Springs, is pleased to offer takeout, curbside and local delivery during this difficult time. Friends can order Monday through Saturday from 12 noon to 8 p.m. by calling (616) 696-8949. In addition, they’ve delighted to announce a new partnership with SpartanNash neighborhood stores, which means their friends will be able to find some of their favorite dishes at their local Family Fare stores, including Rockford!

CHRISTINA LESKOVAR PHOTOGRAPHY
Christina Leskovar Photography is now offering egift Cards! Send the special gift of bright and timeless photos to a newly engaged couple, mom-to-be, family member, friend or even yourself! These cards can be used for up to an entire year toward portrait sessions, wedding collections, or even product purchases on any CLP photo shoot or wedding. Christina is passionate about serving others and building relationships with her clients. Visit christinaleskovarphotography.com/egift-card to view more of her wedding and portrait work and to order your egift Card.

CLEANZ HOMES CLEANING
Cleanz Home Cleaning LLC is hiring. They are a residential cleaning company looking for a long term, part-time employee (average 3-4 days/week). Hours are 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. No holidays or weekends. Please apply via e-mail at steph@cleanzahomes.com, or mail your resume to 4981 Plainfield Avenue, Suite D, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. To learn more about Cleanz Home Cleaning, visit their website at www.cleanzahomes.com.

DAM DOGS & CUSTARD BY THE DAM
Custard by the Dam and The Dam Dogs will re-open Friday, May 1 and they are ready to serve you! Custard by the Dam’s hours will be Monday-Sunday noon-8 p.m. This is a takeout only, but feel free to call your order in and they can bring it out to you with curbside service! Order at (616) 463-6222. The Dam Dogs hours will be Monday-Saturday 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m. You can call ahead and place your order and they will bring it out to you with curb side service! Call to order at (616) 461-9565.

DRUCKENMILLER PAINTING
Wishing all are safe and healthy during this uncertain time. Druckemiller Painting is ready to roll (literally) once the ban is lifted. So, if you tried to DIY and you’re not happy, give us a call. Whether it’s interior or exterior, we’ve got you covered. We’re here for Rockford residents and businesses! Call (616) 632-4866 or e-mail druckemillerpainting@gmail.com to set up an appointment!

HANK’S HEATING & AC
Hank’s Heating & AC, LLC - Honesty, Integrity, and a Lifetime of Experience, wearing for you. Home of the FREE $50. HVAC, service and maintenance is an essential service, and Hank’s Heating & AC is taking calls now. Their Special – AC Tune-up (best in the business) for $59 – FREE $20 pay = $39. Call (616) 951-2341 to set up an appointment.

KIMBERLY’S BOUTIQUE
Kimberly’s Boutique is currently selling through their Facebook site! With Mother’s Day right around the corner, they’re promoting items that people can spoil their mommies, grandmas and all their loved ones with. The boutique has been posting significantly reduced apparel items on Facebook. They’ve been grateful for their clients’ support during this difficult time.

Rockford Area Museum expands website exhibit information
In early March, we were all hoping that winter would be over soon. However, the Rockford Area Historical Society (RAHS) and Rockford Area Museum (RAM) were excited about entering its 7th full year and the museum’s move into the building that formerly housed the Kent County 63rd District Court. The dream of a new museum had become a reality and the reality was living up to the dream. Visitors see professionally designed exhibits about the area’s development, early 1900’s rooms, athletics, WWW, schools, the military including Jon Sjogren, Rockford’s Medal of Honor recipient and much more.

The museum staff and volunteers were busy planning for a year filled with even more service to the community. Our goal of collecting $150,000 worth of Family Fare receipts had been met so that we needed only to finish some final tailoring processes and complete some paperwork to earn a $1,000 donation from Spartan Nash.

As in past years, the RAM was preparing to host every school’s second grade classes as these young people learn about Rockford’s history. A Cub Scout tour in April was also planned. The Ram was making plans to once again take part in the Krause Library’s “Reading Rocks in Rockford” event on Saturday, June 6.

An area in the RAM had been designated for exhibits that will be regularly changed so that visitors can always see fresh displays. An exhibit of “Rockford’s History as Seen Through Postcards” had recently been set up. Plans were being made to a very timely exhibit about voting and the Women’s Suffrage Movement. That has been put on hold until staff and volunteers can get back to work.

Procedures were being updated that would allow for more efficient handling of donated items resulting in getting them put on display, into storage, or into our archival files more quickly. A large donation of rare WWVW documents and memorabilia was being reviewed and sorted for placement in archival files and in the WWW exhibit.

Plans were being made for additions to our popular RAMmemories program that makes video recordings of prominent area individuals that will become part of our archives so that their knowledge, voices, and images will not be lost. RAM researchers were handling a constantly increasing number of requests for research assistance from area residents and businesses. A schedule of terrific monthly RAHS programs was being finalized. These programs are always informative, entertaining, FREE, and open to the public on the first Thursday of every month except July and August.

Volunteers were out and about to take photos of the area including all businesses so that we can create an accurate visual record of how Rockford looks as the second decade of the 21st century draws to a close. A more demanding photo project of taking pictures of scenes that would duplicate old views of specific Rockford area scenes, roads, churches, and businesses was being planned for the creation of a “Then and Now” exhibit.

Increased work by volunteers for the 2020 Make It and Take It Scarecrow project was about to get started in a big way. This is a year-around project for Denise Bradery, the event’s founder. It is also the RAHS and RAM’s biggest fund raiser. It is heavily depended upon to cover expenses.

THEN... Covid-19 hit the world with a knockout punch, the likes of which none of us ever expected to see in our lifetimes. The entire world began to shut down with Michigan being among the most dramatically affected states in the U.S. Like many businesses and institutions, the RAHS Board of Directors made the decision to close the RAM indefinitely.

If you have not had an opportunity to visit the Rockford Area Museum (RAM), please plan to do so when possible. It sets a high standard for small town museums and is a facility of which the entire community can be proud. Meanwhile, check out the RAM website.

The RAM, wanting to remain as relevant as possible during all of this, added pages featuring Revolving Exhibits to its website (rockfordmuseum.org). These pages feature many of the hundreds of postcards and old photos that are part of the RAM exhibit that now sits silent and unseen. Additions to the cards shown online are being made regularly. The date of the most recent update is shown on the website’s Home Page.

We know that many area residents will not only enjoy seeing these historic records of Rockford’s past but will find them useful to create enjoyable teachable moments for their families. Please take a few minutes to visit the RAM’s online presence at rockfordmuseum.org.

The RAM is an exceptional small town museum. Unlike most, it is generally open six days a week to serve the community. The RAM may be closed now but some expenses continue. It receives no guaranteed government funding. It depends primarily on RAHS memberships, donations, and memorials. If you can consider it, we hope you may want to help the RAM in one of several ways - become an RAHS member; Volunteer; or/and Donate. Further information about anything related to the RAHS or the RAM can be found on the website or by calling Al Pratt, RAM Director, at (616) 485-4144 or Terry Konkle, RAHS President, at (616) 866-0530.

Meanwhile, STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY as we get through the current crisis together.
Sylvan Learning Centers feature online learning

Since the Governor's stay at home Executive Order in mid-March, Sylvan Learning Centers converted their face-to-face tutoring services to online tutoring. Sylvan students no longer bring pencils, paper, and a return to school for the remainder of the academic year, parents are wondering how they can support their children's education. One way for parents to assist their children with their education is to contact Sylvan Learning Centers. Sylvan offers many benefits and advantages of Sylvan Learning Centers for parents who are trying to support their children.

- Sylvan Learning Centers was the first to market with a truly virtual platform for 1:1 online tutoring with a teacher.
- They are offering low cost specials on our academic assessment which is used to determine next steps for your child. Our academic assessments are $25 on a limited time basis. Through the academic assessment, Sylvan Learning can identify the academic needs of each student and develop a personalized tutoring plan that will address the exact needs of that student.
- Through the month of April, Sylvan Learning Centers donated the assessment fees to local food banks such as the Kids Food Basket. Additionally, we are offering free assessments to any child who has a parent working in healthcare or any first responder occupations.

The educational focus through Sylvan Learning Centers is K-12th grade students with the ability to support college preparation and college course work.

The educational platform that drives the online tutoring services is cloud based and can be used anywhere WiFi is available.

- Sylvan Learning Centers has lots of educational programs (reading, writing, and math) and also offers educational programs – such as study skills, speed reading, college prep, STEM, etc. Sylvan Learning Centers has State certified teachers as tutors. Our teachers are trained and certified to provide a high-quality education.
- Sylvan Learning has been in the West Michigan area for 35 years. We are a locally owned business with a learning center located at 6840 Northway Dr. NE in Rockford.
- For more information on the benefits of online tutoring, go to youtube.com/embed/wq5PonyG7Tzg/?rel=0.
- Sylvan Learning Centers would enjoy the opportunity to share how they can assist parents with the academic success of their children. Please call the Rockford Sylvan Learning Center at (616) 863-8835 or email rockford.Mi@sylvanlearning.com, and visit their Rockford Facebook site for STEM activities and other fun activities to do with your children.

Sylvan Learning Centers is K-12th grade students with the ability to support college preparation and college course work.

 ROCFORD ROTARY CLUB BOTTLE RETURN PROJECT

The Rockford Rotary is hosting a Bottle Return project. If you have returnable bottles and cans in your garage, please consider donating those to their club. They will return the cans and/or bottles and put the money back into the community. They will have a semi-trailer setup at Krupa Industries, Northland Dr. NE, Rockford, MI 49401, both Saturday, May 2 and Saturday, May 9. People can drop off returnables between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on those dates. If you have any questions, please call Jim Tal at (616) 328-3642 or email him at jntaljntal.com.

The Rockford Rotary would like to thank you for your support of their organization. They look forward to seeing you around town once the lockdown is lifted. Please stay safe and healthy.

BattleGR Announces New Location

Throughout 2019, BattleGR built on successes of the previous year. They proudly participated in events all over West Michigan. Highlights of the year included Start of Summer in Rockford, August 1 in Ada, Grandville 4th of July, Hudsonville Happenings on Harvey, and Jenison Slip & Slide. These events were just a sample of the growth and community involvement we pride ourselves in, shares co-owner Jenny Lashuay.

Their dream of moving from their current location in Standale to the Northeast side of Grand Rapids is becoming reality in 2020, announcing their new location opening this fall at 284 Dodge Ct, located off West River Dr and US 131.

“Our new, and larger location will allow us to continue to provide birthdays and public parties as well as corporate and team building engagements,” continues Lashuay. “We are excited to expand our locations to our business that will allow us to better accommodate corporate and private parties. The space will allow us to add two sport courts that will be lined for basketball, volleyball, and futsal. We will be adding a video game party room, expanding our arcade, and increasing the number of party rooms, and it will allow us to provide indoor archery tag.”

With the move, their laser tag arena will quadruple in size! Their indoor laser tag games are inclusive and do not allow players to get tagged out and have to wait for the next game to start. They also offer over 20 different strategic, objective based games to keep the fun interesting and engaging.

Battle GR will also continue to work in the schools to bring the fun to the carnivals, mom/son nights, as well as senior all-nighters. Their teen-ish night on Friday nights, and once a month adult night BYOB are expected to continue to reach capacity at their new location.

“We want to connect with you, Rockford!” concludes Lashuay.

Stay up-to-date on their website battlegr.com and facebook.com/battlegames.

They are currently taking reservations for their new space and mobile events. Call (616) 345-0698 or email party@battlegr.com for more information and pricing.

Insurance agency offers variety of solutions

We hope this article finds you healthy and safe! Here at Boichot Insurance Agency we help people through their health insurance needs. Whether you need more permanent coverage for a few months, need to find insurance through the Marketplace, turning 65 and need help understanding your Medicare options, or you are a small business owner looking to compare companies give us a call.

For those who are temporarily out of work, there are many options if you do not have coverage through your employer or if Cobra costs are high. Short term insurance can last from one month up to two years to cover you and your family until you regain permanent insurance or while waiting for open enrollment in the fall. There are also many supplemental insurance plans to help with dental, vision, hearing, hospital, and ambulance coverage.

If you are a small business owner or want more permanent coverage and have recently had a change in your insurance, you may qualify for a special election period (SEP). This SEP would allow you to purchase insurance through the marketplace and could be partially subsidized depending on your income. Most SEPs are for life changes, changes in employee sponsored insurance, or changes in your actual job.

For small businesses less than 50, we can review the various companies in the state to determine what options best meet your needs for this fall’s annual enrollment.

When you turn 65 you are required to register for Part A if you are still working and have credible insurance through your employer or if you are retired you have to sign-up for Part A, B, and D.

There are many pharmacies who offer stand-alone prescription drug plans (Part D) and Medicare Supplement Plans (Parts C, F, G, and N). This is where you need to look at your personal needs and what doctors and prescriptions you are currently taking to find the best company for you. When you turn 65 you have a special election period three months prior to your birthday month and three months after your birthday month to find a supplemental plan that works best for you. If you have a life change or if you have low income status through the state, you can make a change throughout the year. Normally you look at your best options in the fall during the annual enrollment period October 15-December 7. You may also have gaps up to 65 if you are disabled. We can help customers apply for extra help through the state and Medicaid, which are both based on income and current assets.

We are helping people remotely throughout this time and we will come meet you personally once you are all set. We are currently revamping our website so please continue to check at boichotinsurance.com for more information and via e-mail at Terese@boichotinsurance.com.

Are you considering selling or buying a home soon? Spica Real Estate can help! Spica Real Estate agents have over 35 years of combined real estate experience in the West Michigan market. Ryan Kaufman (Associate Broker) has lived in the Rockford and Belmont area for more than 15 years. Michael-Jay Williams (Associate Broker) has lived in Byron Center his whole life. Michael-Jay, who lives in the Rockford Highlands, has quickly become invested in the Rockford community by being active in his kids’ school, Valley View Elementary, as well as his local church. Most recently, Michael-Jay and Spica Real Estate have become a member of the Rockford Chamber of Commerce. Spica Real Estate is a boutique real estate agency with agents who have the heart of a teacher, rather than a salesperson. They rely heavily on a referral system for most of our clients.

Experience shows that the most challenging part of the real estate transaction is setting up 14 different industries and 47 people who get involved in the last phase of a transaction. Because of the level of complexity required, it’s more important than ever that you and your friends or family members have an experienced and competent person to lead, guide and protect you. Their agents love the process of helping a client from a beginning to the end of their transaction.

And once the purchase or sale of your home is complete, Spica Real Estate won’t stop there! Some of the events and activities our clients enjoy each year include their annual family-friendly bowling event, summer picnic at John Ball Zoo, and Thanksgiving pie giveaway. They also give away a $25.00 Amazon gift card to a lucky winner of our monthly trivia contest, Fun Day Monday. In addition to the Amazon gift card, Spica Real Estate donates $1 for every person who enters the contest to a charity making an impact in the greater Grand Rapids area, Kids’ Food Basket.

So, the next time you think about, or you hear a friend or family member thinking about selling or buying their most significant asset, let’s make sure the people you care about receive the representation they deserve. You can count on Spica Real Estate to deliver skilled advice through the entire process of buying or selling a home.

For more information, please reach out to (616) 730-1254, check out the website at www.spicaarealestate.com, and “like” their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/spicaarealestate.
MAY
FARM MARKET (SATURDAYS) MAY – OCTOBER
* THERE ARE SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES IN PLACE FOR THE MARKET’S OPENING AND NO DOGS ARE ALLOWED AT THIS POINT IN TIME.
This award-winning open-air market, sponsored by the City of Rockford, features fresh produce grown by local farmers. A variety of delicious fruits and vegetables are on display each week. The market also features bread, flowers, and some of the best chefs in the area.

JUNE
- Please note = United Bank Rogue River Blues Series (postponed until July).
Open Mic Night on Tuesday July 21st at the Rockford Center Park (all Chamber events are all being reviewed as time progresses on when they will be held this summer due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Be sure to check the events Facebook pages for updates.

FARM MARKET (SATURDAYS) MAY – OCTOBER
This open-air market, sponsored by the City of Rockford, features fresh produce grown only by Michigan farmers. A variety of delicious fruits and vegetables are on display each week and the selection changes as the season progresses. Additionally, there are flowers, homemade bread and honey, fresh from the hives.

MONDAY, JUNE 1
BI-MONTHLY LUNCHEON, 11:30 A.M.
The RCC Bi-monthly Luncheon is a networking opportunity. The luncheons are every other month throughout the year and feature a guest speaker. Cost is $15 for members and $20 for non-members. Call [phone number for the Chamber office] to reserve your seat. This month’s event is scheduled at Budweiser Lake Isle.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10
CHAMBER NETWORK CIRCLE, 8:30 A.M.
The Chamber Network Circle is a group of motivated individuals who network and share their business knowledge in presentations. The meetings consist of two presentations – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join this exciting group, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

THURSDAY, JUNE 18
THIRD THURSDY, 6-6:30 P.M.
This wonderful networking event offers a relaxing, fun atmosphere and discounted prices while attendees get to know each other better. All Chamber members are welcome. The location is at Fish Food Fresh Pizza, 4415 Riv Mere.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11
ROCKFORD AREA 5K TRIATHLON
This annual event is hosted at the Rockford High School and features young athletes competing for the best overall time in swimming, biking and running, with all proceeds going to Michigan Special Olympics. This is a track for kids 15 and under. Trophies are awarded to the top three finishers in each group. Certificates, medals and t-shirts are awarded for all finishers. For more info visit runmichigan.com/calendar_event_detail.php?eventid=253or email swennyk@runmichigan.com.

TUESDAY, JUNE 16
UNITED BANK ROGUE RIVER BLUES
This free outdoor concert series is a huge hit among visitors and locals, alike. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets, sit back and enjoy some of the best blues bands in the area. Don’t have time to pack a dinner? Just visit one of the many fine restaurants in the area and take it with you. The concerts take place in the heart of downtown Rockford in Garden Club Park. The setting is picture-perfect – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

TUESDAY, JULY 7
UNITED BANK ROGUE RIVER BLUES
This free outdoor concert series is a huge hit among visitors and locals, alike. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets, sit back and enjoy some of the best blues bands in the area. Don’t have time to pack a dinner? Just visit one of the many fine restaurants in the area and take it with you. The concerts take place in the heart of downtown Rockford in Garden Club Park. The setting is picture-perfect – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

TUESDAY, JULY 14
UNITED BANK ROGUE RIVER BLUES
This free outdoor concert series is a huge hit among visitors and locals, alike. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets, sit back and enjoy some of the best blues bands in the area. Don’t have time to pack a dinner? Just visit one of the many fine restaurants in the area and take it with you. The concerts take place in the heart of downtown Rockford in Garden Club Park. The setting is picture-perfect – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

TUESDAY, JULY 21
UNITED BANK ROGUE RIVER BLUES
This free outdoor concert series is a huge hit among visitors and locals, alike. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets, sit back and enjoy some of the best blues bands in the area. Don’t have time to pack a dinner? Just visit one of the many fine restaurants in the area and take it with you. The concerts take place in the heart of downtown Rockford in Garden Club Park. The setting is picture-perfect – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

THURSDAY, JULY 28
UNITED BANK ROGUE RIVER BLUES
This free outdoor concert series is a huge hit among visitors and locals, alike. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets, sit back and enjoy some of the best blues bands in the area. Don’t have time to pack a dinner? Just visit one of the many fine restaurants in the area and take it with you. The concerts take place in the heart of downtown Rockford in Garden Club Park. The setting is picture-perfect – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

Wednesday, August 5
CHAMBER NETWORK CIRCLE, 8:30 A.M.
The Chamber Network Circle is a group of motivated individuals who network and share their business knowledge in presentations. The meetings consist of two presentations – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

Saturday, August 8
MICHIGAN RUN RUFFIAN, 5K & 10K
This is the premier 5k and 10k in Michigan. More than a thousand runners come to the event this year that follows the streets of downtown Rockford. Mitchell’s Run is a fundraising event for Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy and helps fund research to find a cure for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy.

Monday, August 10
CHAMBER BUSINESS AFTER HOURS
The Chamber Network Circle is a group of motivated individuals who network and share their business knowledge in presentations. The meetings consist of two presentations – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

Thursday, August 13
UNITED BANK ROGUE RIVER BLUES
This free outdoor concert series is a huge hit among visitors and locals, alike. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets, sit back and enjoy some of the best blues bands in the area. Don’t have time to pack a dinner? Just visit one of the many fine restaurants in the area and take it with you. The concerts take place in the heart of downtown Rockford in Garden Club Park. The setting is picture-perfect – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

Friday, August 14
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 7 & 8 & SUNDAY, AUGUST 23
SLEIGH SALES – HEART OF ROCKFORD
The Heart of Rockford Business Association hosts this popular event that features many of the downtown businesses. The participants offer an excellent weekend of placing their summer goods out on the sidewalk and taking drastic markdowns.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11
UNITED BANK ROGUE RIVER BLUES
This free outdoor concert series is a huge hit among visitors and locals, alike. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets, sit back and enjoy some of the best blues bands in the area. Don’t have time to pack a dinner? Just visit one of the many fine restaurants in the area and take it with you. The concerts take place in the heart of downtown Rockford in Garden Club Park. The setting is picture-perfect – and plenty of networking. For more information, or to join, please call Tim Matusak (616) 433-5408.

In this page, we have shared the information about various events, including meetings, networking events, and concerts in the Rockford area. The events are held in various locations throughout the year, providing opportunities for socializing and networking with other Chamber members. The events cover a range of topics, from business strategy to community-building activities. These events are designed to help members stay informed, network, and connect with one another in a professional setting.

The Rockford Chamber of Commerce is committed to supporting local businesses and fostering a strong business community. By providing a platform for members to engage with each other, the chamber hopes to encourage collaboration, growth, and success among local businesses. The events calendar is an essential tool for members to stay informed about upcoming opportunities and to plan their participation accordingly.

In conclusion, the Rockford Chamber of Commerce’s events calendar serves as a valuable resource for members to stay connected, learn, and network with other Chamber members. Whether it’s a meeting, a networking event, or a concert in the park, these events aim to create a dynamic and supportive community that drives economic growth and success.