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Much to love in the Rockford region...



## **International Cycling Marathon Coming to Winnebago County**

I am thrilled to welcome the internationally known Gran Fondo New York Marathon to the region this summer! The 75 mile marathon route will begin in Rockford and run through scenic parts of Winnebago county including by the Pecatonica, Sugar and Rock Rivers. The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau signed a three year deal with GFNY adding Rockford to a list of hosts that include Bali, Cannes and Portugal. Not only is this an amazing opportunity to show off our beautiful city, the 750 cyclists and hundreds of spectators will bring in millions of tourism spending for our region.



## **Next Step with Mercy Health's Proposed Closure**

Thank you to the dozens of local residents who spoke out at a public hearing in late January about the devastating impact of Mercy Health's application to close its 70-bed medical/surgical services at its hospital on Rockton Avenue on the west side of Rockford. Not one resident spoke in favor of the closure.

Residents still have an opportunity to share their thoughts with the Illinois Health Facilities & Services Review Board until February 23 at [DPH.HFSRB.PublicHearings@Illinois.gov](mailto:DPH.HFSRB.PublicHearings@Illinois.gov). The board is scheduled to vote on the issue on March 15.



### **Congrats to Our New Youth Poet Laureate**

I had a chance to meet and celebrate an amazing young lady, Giulyana Gamero, as the City of Rockford, Rockford Area Arts Council and Rockford Public Library recognized the Auburn High School junior as the city's 2022 Youth Poet Laureate. Giulyana demonstrates love and talent for the written and spoken word, and we look forward to her sharing that passion as she focuses on workshops and special events within our community, emphasizing culture and identity.



## **Hard Rock Receives Approval for Permanent Casino**

The Illinois Gaming Board unanimously approved the license for Rockford's permanent casino, paving the way for a spring groundbreaking at the site near I-90. The Rockford Casino—A Hard Rock Opening Act was the first of six casinos approved in the 2019 casino expansion bill to pass each step of the approval process:

- First to receive a finding of preliminary suitability
- First to sign a Project Labor Agreement ensuring our casino is built by union labor
- First to have investors approved
- First to be granted a supplier license
- First to begin construction on the temporary site
- First to open a temporary casino
- First to receive final license for permanent casino

## **RMTD to Receive \$16 Million for Renovations**

As part of the \$600 million Governor JB Pritzker awarded to transit operations across the state, the Rockford Mass Transit District will receive \$16 million to renovate and expand its downtown facility on Mulberry Street. RMTD's facility was designed nearly 35 years ago to house and maintain a total of 50 diesel and gasoline-powered vehicles. It now has a fleet of 77, and some of those vehicles are hybrid electric, with more to come.



## **Rockford Promise Continues to Grow**

Over 300 RPS seniors have applied for the Rockford Promise scholarship this year! Rockford University saw more than double the number of applications this year with a 100% retention rate. To date, Rockford Promise has also increased the number of RPS 205 students attending NIU by 380%. Applications are closed for NIU and RU this year, but still open for [Rock Valley College](#).





## 2022 Snow Sculpting Awards

It was an honor to present awards at the 36th Annual Illinois Snow Sculpting Competition. We are so fortunate to have these amazing sculptors and the Rockford Park District who bring us this event. I look forward to it every winter!

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**Thank You for Your Support!**



A copy of our report is on file with the Winnebago County Clerk, 404 Elm St, Rockford, IL. Tom McNamara, Democratic Candidate for Rockford Mayor. Paid for by friends of Tom McNamara.

Send to Friends of Tom McNamara

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