



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
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PRESS RELEASE

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ROCKFORD-ETSY PARTNERSHIP RECOGNIZED AS A REMARKABLE INTERNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF REGIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS AND PLACE MARKETING

*It will receive an award during the Place Marketing Forum 2014
in Aix-en-Provence, 16th and 17th October 2014*

Rockford, Il. October 1, 2014 – The Craft Entrepreneurship Program between the City of Rockford and global online marketplace Etsy was short-listed as one of nine notable achievements showcased and awarded during the Place Marketing Forum, the largest conference in France dealing with territorial marketing. The conference will take place in Aix-en-Provence on October 16-17, 2014.

At the end of a three-step selection process, which identified approximately thirty cases among more than 400 achievements in key areas of place marketing (economic development, tourism, residential, urban regeneration projects, cultural, sporting events, etc.) within European and American continents, the selection committee identified the Craft Entrepreneurship Program. The selection included an analysis of a detailed narrative about

the program, the media outcome surrounding it and its ongoing development. The program was chosen as the Place Marketing Award 2014 laureate on the theme of Place Attractiveness, Partnership, Collaborative and Responsible Marketing.

"We're thrilled to be selected for this prestigious international award," stated Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey. "I'm proud that from the very challenges our community has suffered in unemployment and poverty, we're building partnerships that support our citizens from all economic backgrounds to create a long-term, sustainable economic future. I'm particularly proud of the fact that our partnership with Etsy and the Rockford Housing Authority is built on our history as a community of craft makers and manufacturers. Ron Clewer and the Rockford Housing Authority have done outstanding, innovative work with the team at Etsy to lead this effort. While our work is still at the early stages, the national and international recognition we have received demonstrates the profound positive impact we can have as we move forward."

Etsy is the world's most successful platform connecting buyers and sellers of craft-made and vintage goods. Begun as a startup business in 2005, Etsy experienced a record \$1.3 billion in global sales in 2013. Rockford's work with Etsy began through a Tweet from Mayor Morrissey to Etsy CEO Chad Dickerson in the Fall of 2012, which was documented by local filmmaker, Pablo Korona (see ourcityourstory.com/episode/15.)

"From the minute we visited Rockford to explore a partnership, we knew we were on to a special, unique initiative that had potential to empower the city of Rockford. As a result of the pilot program in Rockford, we have launched Craft Entrepreneurship programs in 10 cities now, providing entrepreneurship education and opportunities to earn supplemental income to students in the US and UK," said Dana Mauriello, Director, Human Scale Labs, Etsy. "We are thrilled to see all of the hard work from Mayor Morrissey and his team get the recognition it deserves."

The Rockford-Etsy partnership was lead locally by Rockford Housing Authority Director, Ron Clewer. Mr. Clewer and his team worked with Etsy to create the pilot training program for its residents to become Etsy entrepreneurs. Just two years later, the effort has become known as the Craft Entrepreneurship program and has grown to major cities across the United States and even one international city.

"The Craft Entrepreneurship program leverages the creative and innovative talents of our residents," stated Mr. Clewer. "Too often in the past, our poverty support efforts have had the unintended effect of reinforcing an individual's failures and insecurities. The Craft Entrepreneurship program focuses instead on our residents' interests, talents, and passions. The possibilities are truly endless. Our Rockford Public Housing residents are growing personally, contributing economically, and helping to lead a community renaissance."

Rockford-Etsy's application successfully met the excellence criterion set ahead of the conference in terms of innovation and results and was recognized as a visionary example

highlighting the advent of a new form of endogenous place marketing - business-friendly, citizen-centered and highly collaborative.

The Place Marketing Forum is an international conference hosted every year by the Regional Attractiveness & Place Marketing Chair. The aim of this major conference is to present, share and reward the best place marketing practices worldwide. Thirty French and international leading experts and professionals of place marketing will take part in the 2014 Forum, which will gather more than 400 professionals from public, private and non-profit organizations committed to advance knowledge in the area of regional development and place marketing. The forum will last two days and will take place at the Congress Center of Aix-en-Provence.

As underlined by the selection committee of the Place Marketing Forum 2014:

From a simple conversation on Twitter, the mayor of Rockford (Illinois), a city of 150,000 inhabitants, heavily affected by the industrial crisis and unemployment, offers Etsy, leading online marketplace for homemade goods, the idea of a unique "win-win" partnership to develop an "Etsy Economy" on its territory. The Craft Entrepreneurship program, resulting from this public-private collaboration, has significantly helped to shape a new narrative for the city and allowed for every stakeholder involved to plant the seeds for future growth.

The eight other laureates of the Place Marketing Forum 2014 are:

- Greater Miami's innovative quality of life and citizen involvement approach (US)
- Connect Ireland's peer marketing and digital program (Ireland)
- Start-Up Chile's top talent attraction program (Chile)
- Amsterdam Marketing's integrated business plan (Holland)
- The Futuroscope leisure park of Poitiers (France)
- Saint-Etienne's urban transformation and new city attractiveness (France)
- Val Thorens Ski Resort's global marketing strategy (France)
- Helsinki World Design Capital's successful program (Finland)

The nine best cases were selected by the forum's experts, based on Territorial Benchmarking, a permanent monitoring platform of best territorial marketing practices worldwide, operated by the CoManaging consultancy in partnership with the Regional Attractiveness and Place Marketing Chair of Sciences-Po Aix.

"To be recognized as one of only nine cases worldwide is an incredible honor," stated Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau President, John Groh. "We are extremely excited to be working with the City and our other partners to support the new narrative underlying the Craft Entrepreneurship program through marketing and tourism product innovation. Our citizens from every walk of life have the opportunity to participate in the new world of makers and manufacturers. We see this program and our local maker community as a huge opportunity for expanding our quality of life, expanding tourism into new areas, and growing our local economy."

In addition to Place Marketing Forum recognition, Mayor Morrissey was invited to discuss the Craft Entrepreneurship program at a manufacturing break-out session during the Clinton Global Initiative in 2013. He presented the program at a breakout session of the 2013 Techonomy Detroit Conference. He also joined Etsy CEO Chad Dickerson to present the program to over 3,000 participants at the 2013 Brooklyn Beta Conference. In June of this year, Mayor Morrissey was invited to participate and discuss the program in a roundtable discussion at the first ever White House Maker Faire. He has also been invited to present the program at a session during the International Economic Development Council's winter conference in January 2015. (A list of news stories discussing the program, which was included in the Place Marketing Forum Application, is attached for reference.)

As another sign of progress in economic development, earlier this year Rockford was selected through a competitive process as a Strong Cities, Strong Communities site. As part of this White House Initiative, a federal, inter-agency team will support Rockford's Craft Entrepreneurship program, as well as other significant components of the Mayor's economic development strategy.

"We're seeing the lines blurred between traditional economic development efforts and traditional poverty reduction efforts," added Rockford Area Economic Development Council President Michael Nicholas. "As the Mayor has said, we can't hide our challenges, and we can't ignore our citizens in need. We need to support economic opportunities for all by supporting every individual's interests and skill set. Entrepreneurship at all levels is a relatively untapped opportunity to support job growth and prosperity for our community. The RAEDC Leadership Council invested this year in the Rockford Maker Network to support these types of entrepreneurial efforts, and we look forward to continuing to support this important work."

For additional information on the Place Marketing Forum, contact David Aboulkheir at aboulkheird@gmail.com or place-marketing-forum.com.

For local information about the RHA Craft Entrepreneurship program, contact Ron Clewer at rclewer@rockfordha.org. For additional information on the Craft Entrepreneurship program, contact Nikki Summer at nsummer@etsy.com or craftentrepreneurship.com.

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