

Rockford

REGIONAL OVERVIEW



Rockford
ILLINOIS ✶ USA

ROCKFORD AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

WELCOME TO ROCKFORD

AT THE TOP IN ILLINOIS

The Rockford region is at the top in Illinois. Bordering the Illinois/Wisconsin state line with tremendous and easily accessible transportation points for the Midwest and home to industry-leading clusters such as aerospace, advanced manufacturing, automotive, and more, this region is rich in opportunity. Here you'll find a robust logistics ecosystem, strategic partnerships that assist in development, strong regional education opportunities and talent pipelines, and a low cost of living that makes learning, growing, and playing ideal for employers and employees.

Leading higher-education institutions prioritize STEM degrees while also connecting students to certification and training that gets them on the job quickly. Community partnerships provide numerous options for students seeking to pursue higher education and/or earn certificates and/or real-world opportunities, filling the talent pipeline for industries in the region.

Utility costs are low and advances in green energy allow businesses here to plan for the future. Located near four interstates, four class-one railroads, one intermodal facility, the Chicago Rockford International Airport - one of the top cargo airports in the world - and three international airports within 60-90 minutes, the Rockford region has logistics and distribution capabilities to get your products to market quickly and efficiently.

The Rockford region is a great place to locate or expand your business, and we invite you to learn more in this regional overview about how we can help your business grow.



Rockford's Landmark "The Symbol"
Photo by GoRockford



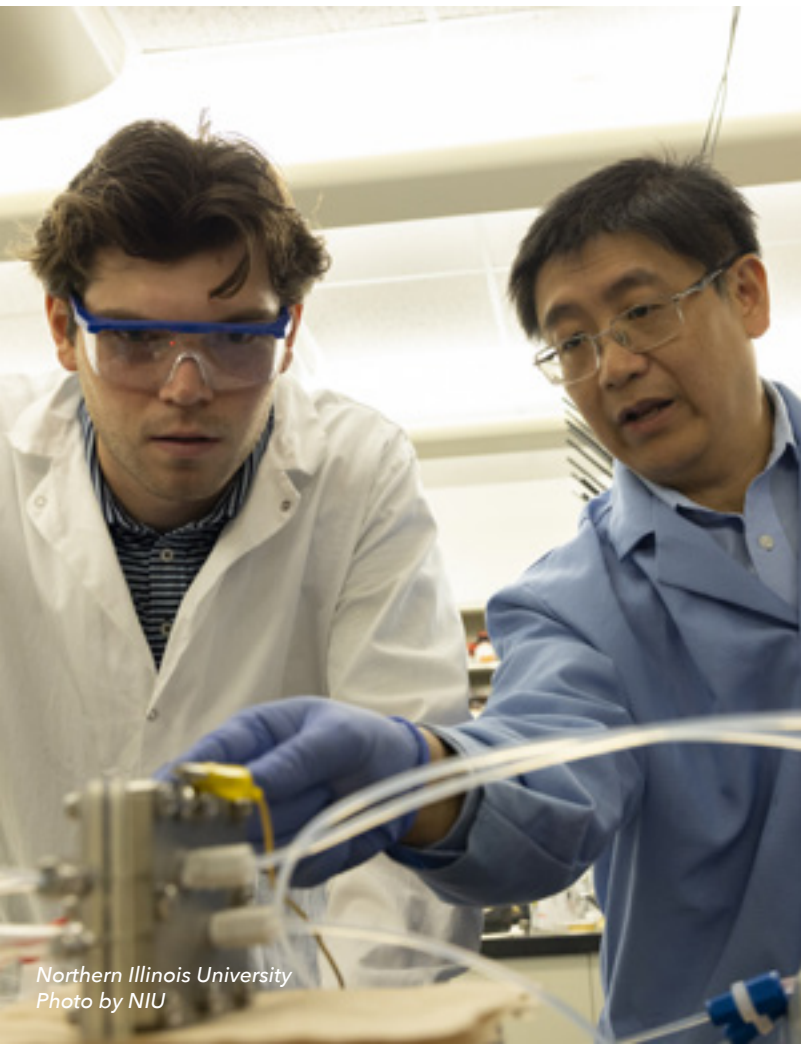
Anderson Japanese Gardens
Photo by GoRockford



Coronado Performing Arts Center
Photo by GoRockford



*Aldeen Golf Club
Photo by GoRockford*



*Northern Illinois University
Photo by NIU*



*Tuesday Evenings in the Gardens
Anderson Japanese Gardens
Photo by GoRockford*



MINNESOTA

WISCONSIN

IOWA

ILLINOIS

INDIANA

MISSOURI

MINNEAPOLIS

GREEN BAY

MADISON

MILWAUKEE

LAKE MICHIGAN

ROCKFORD

CHICAGO

AURORA

4.75 HOURS

INDIANAPOLIS

7 HOURS

KANSAS CITY

4.5 HOURS

SPRINGFIELD

ST. LOUIS

5 HOURS

1.5 HOURS

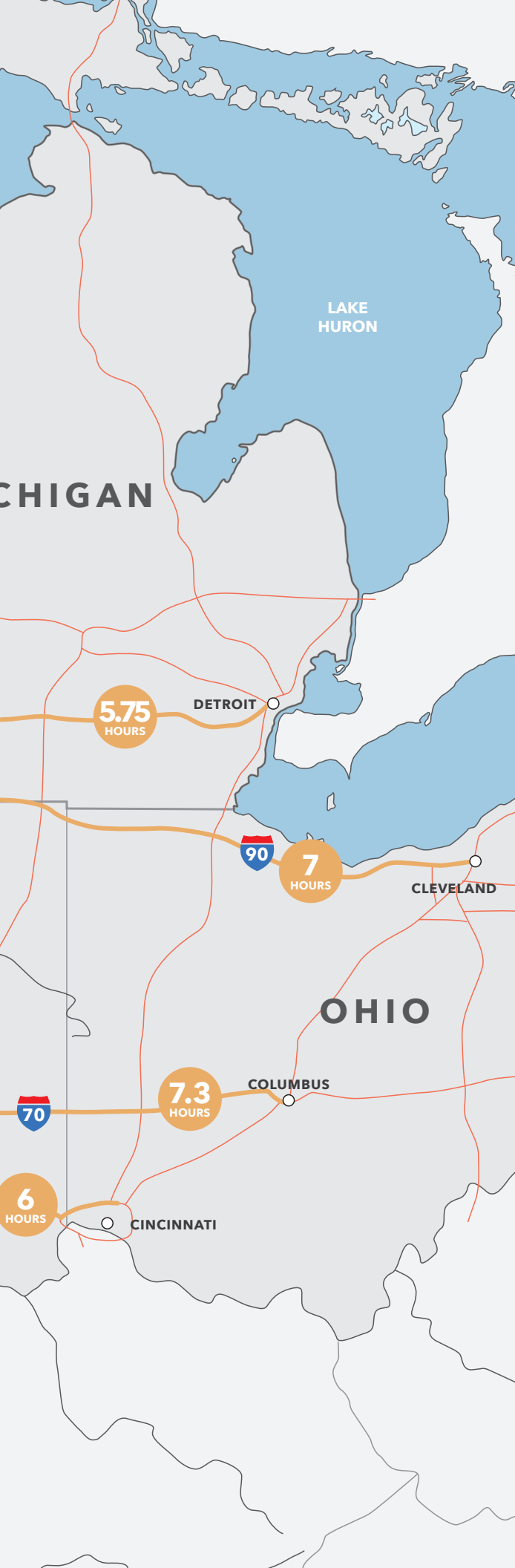
1.5 HOURS

80

39

90

70



OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

Components of Rockford's supply chain work together seamlessly to support a business-friendly environment for manufacturers. Companies continue to choose the Rockford region because of its strengths in location, logistics, and labor. Additionally, educational opportunities fill a talent pipeline that keeps the region's robust supply chain functioning.

LOCATION

Rockford is within an 8-hour drive from the 10 largest cities in the Midwest. That's a population of more than 45 million people.

LOGISTICS

Rockford has a sophisticated and efficient logistics and distribution network that is capable of getting products to market quickly. Rockford is located near four interstates, four class-one railroads, one intermodal facility, the Chicago Rockford International Airport and three other international airports within 60-90 minutes.

LABOR

The Rockford region's two-county MSA has a labor force of 156,600 people. Rockford's secondary labor shed extends even farther, with 1.6 million workers within a 60-minute drive.

LEARNING

The region also prioritizes and collaborates with local organizations and institutions to provide relevant certifications and apprenticeships that benefit our residents and our businesses.

TOP INDUSTRIES

THE ROCKFORD MSA HAS A WIDE RANGE OF INDUSTRY CLUSTERS, SUPPLY CHAINS, AND A SKILLED WORKFORCE TO SUPPORT THESE INDUSTRIES.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

The region has a strong history of manufacturing and has continued to progress from furniture building to advanced manufacturing. We are known for our strength in machining, automation, and metal work.

25,000

PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED IN MANUFACTURING

21.67%

OF BUSINESSES IN THE REGION ARE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

10% Illinois | **9%** National



Photo by Ingersoll Machine Tools

LOGISTICS

The region is a catalyst in logistics and provides organizations with options to enhance their operations and workflows through well-run rail, interstate, and air offerings. Companies are within miles of four interstates and four major railroads, and close to several airports, including the Chicago Rockford International Airport (RFD). RFD is the 13th largest cargo airport in the U.S. for landed weight, and is home to the second-largest UPS hub in North America and a major base of operations for Amazon Air. With proximity to these major distribution resources, companies can transport their products with speed and efficiency.

COMPANIES CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IMPORT AND EXPORT BENEFITS BY PARTICIPATING IN FOREIGN TRADE ZONE #176.



3.4 Billion

POUNDS OF CARGO HANDLED AT RFD IN 2022

85

FLIGHTS DAILY IN/OUT OF RFD

4

INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS GRANT THE REGION ACCESS TO **75** PERCENT OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN A **24-HOUR** TRUCK DRIVE.

Prime Air



THE REGION IS WITHIN AN

8-HR

DRIVE TO THE **10 LARGEST CITIES** IN THE MIDWEST.



Photo by Collins Aerospace



GE Aviation



Collins Aerospace

AEROSPACE

Our aerospace cluster has several tier-one aerospace suppliers, including Collins Aerospace, Woodward Inc., and GE Aviation. Rockford's unique strength is the presence of diverse companies at all levels of the supply chain, including assembly, inspection, testing, repair, and software. Companies in the cluster serve industry leaders like Boeing, Airbus, and the U.S. Government.

EVERY COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT IN THE AIR HAS A COMPONENT OR SYSTEM THAT WAS DESIGNED IN THE ROCKFORD REGION.

LIVE, LEARN, WORK, GROW, & PLAY IN ROCKFORD

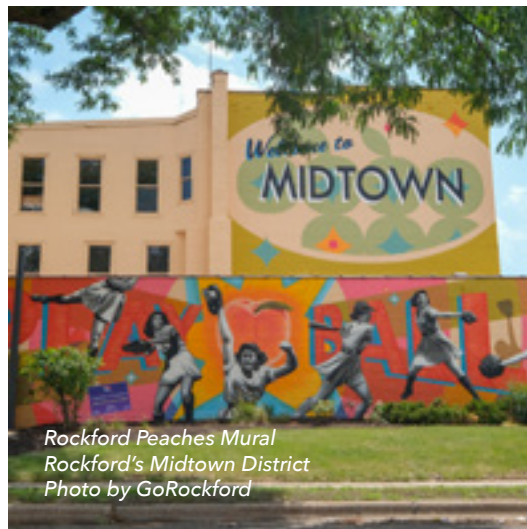
The Rockford region is rich in opportunities for people to live, learn, work, grow, and play. A low cost of living and a wide-ranging job market is complemented by access to educational institutions with strategic partnerships to recruit talent and provide training. Rockford is known for its parks and recreation, community events, dining, and shopping, which all provide entertainment and fun for the people and families who call Rockford home.



Photo by NIU



Burpee Museum
of Natural History
Photo by GoRockford



Rockford Peaches Mural
Rockford's Midtown District
Photo by GoRockford



Photo by NIU



Photo by West Rock Wake Park



Photo by UIC College of Medicine - Rockford



Rockford Dance Company
Photo by GoRockford



Prairie Street Brewing Co.
Photo by GoRockford



Photo by Contry Homes Group, LLC



Photo by West Rock Wake Park



Woodward, Inc. 2023, used with permission



View of Downtown Rockford
Photo by GoRockford

LIVE

(DEMOGRAPHICS)

TOP 15: BEST PLACES TO MOVE TO IN THE NATION

Source: Reader's Digest

TOP 130 BEST PLACES TO LIVE

U.S. News & World Report



Rockford City Market
Photo by GoRockford

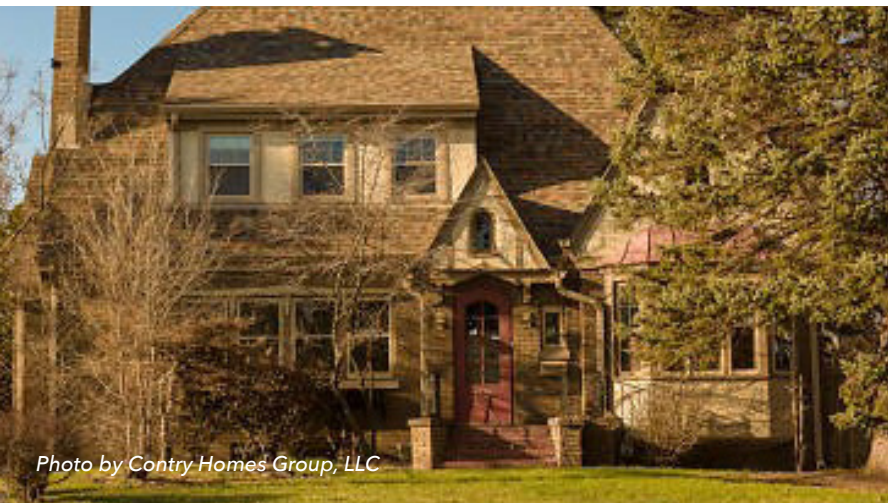


Photo by Contry Homes Group, LLC

WINNEBAGO COUNTY POPULATION DATA

283,119

POPULATION

115,768

HOUSEHOLDS

159,500

LABOR FORCE

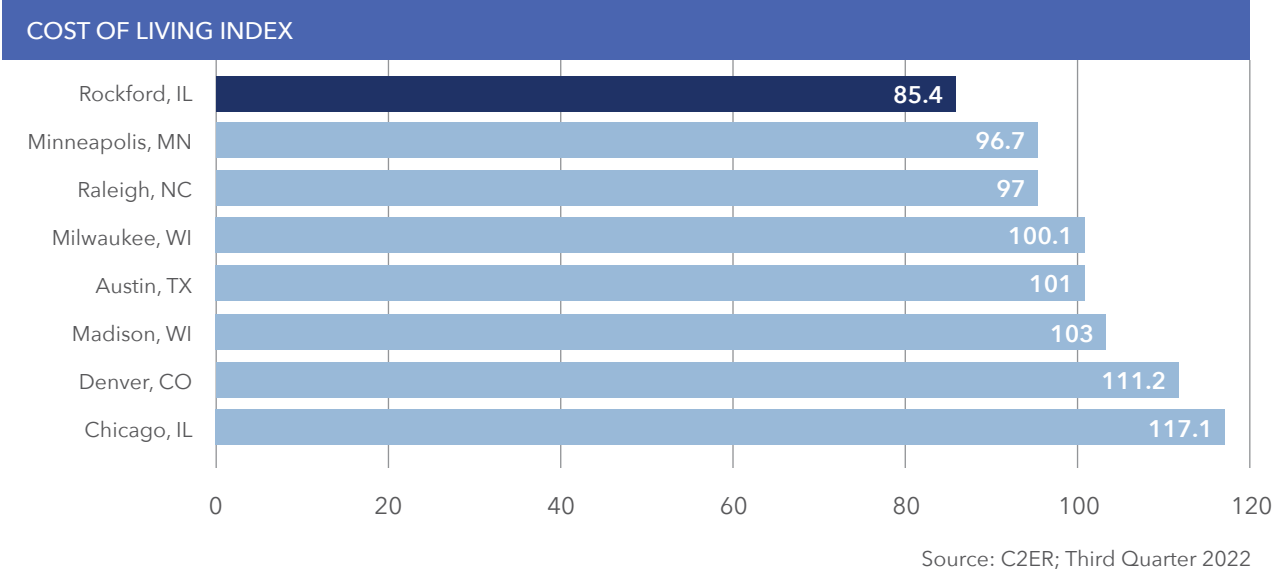
27,070

POST SECONDARY
ENROLLMENT

NO. 4 HEALTHCARE ACCESS & HOME AFFORDABILITY

(FOR 3 STRAIGHT YEARS)

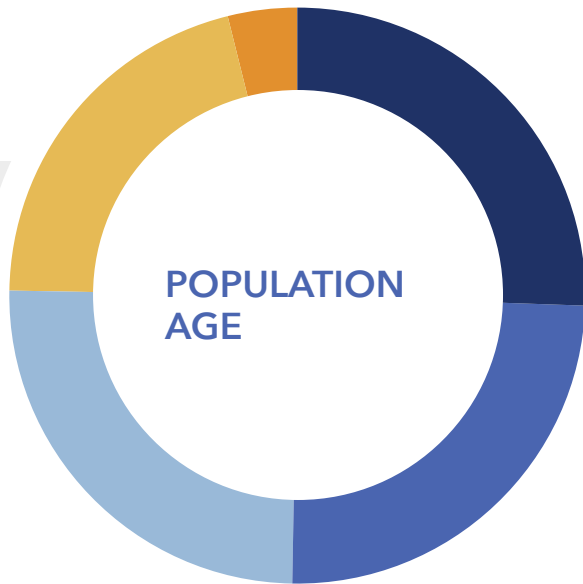
Source: Reader's Digest



MEDIAN AGE **36.5**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Winnebago County; 2021



COMMUTE TIMES **28.3** MEDIAN MINUTES

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$56,132
WINNEBAGO COUNTY

\$56,746
ROCKFORD MSA

\$64,994
NATIONAL

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; 2021

LEARN

The Rockford region is home to education institutions that are affordable and accessible to students as well as intentional in their support for companies in the region.

They are proactive in implementing programs that lead to degrees in STEM, and provide certifications and training so students can be on the job quickly. Rockford-area education partners are innovative in their support for companies in need of a trained workforce.

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES	ENROLLMENT
Northern Illinois University	10,473
Rock Valley College	5,415
Kishwaukee College	1,811
Highland Community College	1,730
Beloit College	1,402
Rasmussen College	1,049
Rockford University	948
Judson University	856
Rockford Career College	408
University of Illinois - College of Medicine	230
St. Anthony College of Nursing	73

STEM DEGREE ATTAINMENT	COMPLETIONS
Science	222
Technology	165
Engineering	272
Mathematics	60

NIU @ ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE

NIU Engineering @ RVC brings NIU's top-ranked engineering program to Rockford, allowing local students to earn an ABET Accredited bachelor's degree in engineering and technology without leaving the RVC campus.

TOP 50 IN THE NATION

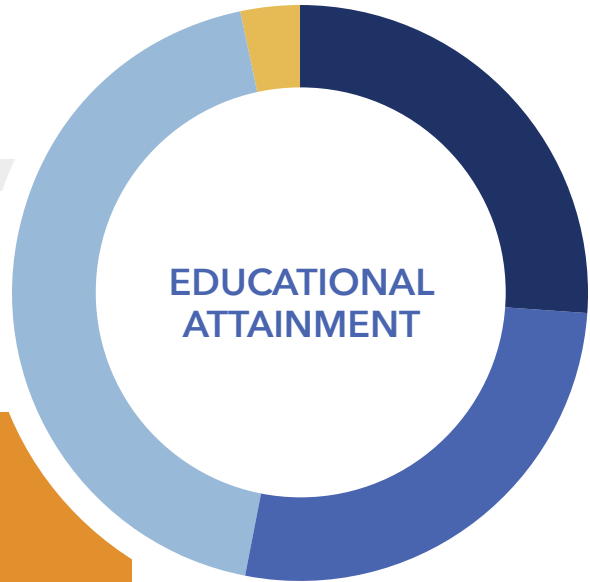
U.S. News & World Report (2019)



ROCKFORD PROMISE

Rockford Promise is a non-profit organization that believes education is an economic driver. Through donations and civic partnerships, the location-based organization offers full-tuition scholarships to Rock Valley College, Rockford University, and Northern Illinois University to qualifying graduates of Rockford Public Schools District 205.

33%	High School Diploma Equivalency
34%	Associates/Some College
55%	Bachelor's or Higher
4%	Apprenticeship



APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

Apprentices in Illinois-based, labor-management apprenticeship programs are, on average, required to take over 7,000 hours of classroom and on-the-job training before completing their program. This is roughly 30% more than what is required at a typical four-year university in Illinois.

JOURNEYMAN APPRENTICES

3.7%	Minority
1.2%	Female



WORK

Companies in the Rockford region take advantage of the opportunities provided here, including talent pipelines that generate skilled workers, an impressive transportation corridor, innovative logistics leaders, and industry clusters in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, food processing, automotive and more.

Original equipment and original suppliers succeed here, billions of pounds of cargo are moved through the area, and billions of dollars of goods are manufactured and exported across the globe. The Rockford region has a rich history in hard work, skilled labor, and productive solutions – and companies who invest or expand here are reaping the benefits of a storied past in building and growing businesses.

#8
BEST CITIES FOR BLACK AMERICANS' CAREER GROWTH
 Travel Noire

#4
BEST PLACES TO WORK IN MANUFACTURING
 Industry Week

#1
BEST CITY IN ILLINOIS FOR NEW HOMEOWNERS
 Insurif

TOP INDUSTRIES

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING
 LOGISTICS
 AEROSPACE

TOP EMPLOYERS	INDUSTRY	EMPLOYEES
Collins Aerospace	Aerospace	2,000
Woodward	Aerospace	2,000
UPS	Logistics	2,000
PCI Pharma Services	Packaging & Labeling	1,885
Amazon	Logistics	1,535
Danfoss	Manufacturing	600
General Mills	Food Processing	550
Bergstrom, Inc.	Manufacturing	450
TH Foods	Food Processing	400
Rockford Tool Craft	Manufacturing	380

ILLINOIS TAX INFORMATION

4.95%
 INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX

9.5%
 CORPORATE INCOME TAX

6.25%
 SALES TAX

NO INVENTORY TAX

NO PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX



Woodward, Inc. 2023, used with permission



Photo by RFD

GROW

INFRASTRUCTURE

THE ROCKFORD REGION IS WELL SERVED BY RAIL

- ★ Illinois R Passenger Stations
- Illinois RR Future Passenger Routes

Illinois Railroads

- Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF)
- Canadian National (CN)
- CP Rail Systems (CPRS)
- CSX Transportation, Inc (CSXT)
- Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Ry, Co (EJE)
- Kansas City Southern Ry (KCS)
- Norfolk Southern Ry (NS)
- Union Pacific RR (UP)
- Other Railroads



Source: Illinois Department of Transportation

CHICAGO ROCKFORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



Photo by RFD

- An AAR Corp. maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility
- 10,000 and 8,200 feet of hard surface runway capable of landing any aircraft operating today
- Foreign Trade Zone benefits (FTZ #176)
- 24/7 customs, federal inspections
- CES (Centralized Examination Station)
- Multiple FBOs - full spectrum aviation services

GROW

UTILITIES

Rockford is desirable for its competitive utility costs and ample capacity. Along with abundant fresh water, Illinois is also ranked 3rd in the country for grid modernization, 10 spots ahead of our closest Midwest neighbor in terms of electricity. Illinois' industrial and commercial prices are among the lowest in the Midwest and compare favorably with other key states.

WATER & SEWER

The region is considered attractive for its water capacity, quality, and service.

The production of biogas during the wastewater treatment process allows Four Rivers Sanitation Authority to become self-sufficient, utilizing up to 71 percent of the energy produced to run the treatment plant.

ELECTRICITY

Multiple utility companies allow low power prices, industry-leading performance, reliability, and access to renewable energy options throughout the region.

32%

THE AVERAGE INDUSTRIAL RATES ARE 32 PERCENT LOWER THAN RATES IN THE TOP 20 LARGEST U.S. METROPOLITAN AREAS.

CLEAN ENERGY

Companies can get 100 percent clean energy in the Rockford region using solar panels and wind turbines to generate electricity. The Exelon - Byron Generating Station produces up to 2,347 megawatts (MW) of zero-emissions energy, powering more than 2 million homes.

Winnebago County has access to eight interstate natural gas pipelines and additional storage fields to incorporate natural gas into a clean and affordable energy economy.

SMART CITY

The City of Rockford is working with SiFi Networks to construct a state-of-the-art citywide fiber optic network, bringing faster connectivity to every home and business in Rockford.



"This private, \$200 million investment in our City is a true game changer bringing stronger, faster, fiber optic network to our community. This agreement also has the potential to help us fulfill our goal of bridging the digital divide which was illuminated as we have fought the pandemic and worked to attract more high-tech business to our community."

- Rockford Mayor
Tom McNamara

INTERNET & BROADBAND

The Rockford region's existing IT infrastructure can provide up to 10 gigabit-per second broadband service, for both business and residential use; it is directly connected to the Greater Chicago Regional Area Network. The Rockford region is served by looped fiber optic lines for redundancy. Additionally, customers can be served by more than one broadband provider, providing further redundancy.

PLAY

In Rockford, life is affordable and convenient. A low cost of living makes creating an enjoyable and comfortable life here an easy choice for employees, families, and companies. While it has an expansive footprint, the Rockford region is easy to navigate. Drive times are minimal; often times destinations are less than 15 minutes away. Trading in windshield time for activities with friends and families is a valuable perk for those who live and work in the Rockford region.

Rockford's urban environment is bustling with a small business scene that includes craft breweries, a unique restaurant scene, coffee shops galore, and local boutiques that make Rockford a shopping destination.

Cultural institutions - including theaters, museums, dance studios, and music venues - brighten the list of affordable things to do throughout the region.

Meanwhile, entertainment is complemented by recreation, including water sports on the Rock River, world-class golf courses, a robust park district, sports venues, and state parks.

**THE ROCKFORD REGION INVITES YOU TO
COME LIVE, LEARN, WORK, GROW, PLAY
- AND ENJOY.**

#7 BEST CITIES TO LIVE IN OUTSIDE OF CHICAGO

- Livability



Rockford IceHogs, Professional Hockey League
Photo by GoRockford



Rockford's Peace Plaza
Photo by GoRockford



WNIT at UW Sports Factory
Photo by Rockford Park District



Stroll on State
Photo by GoRockford

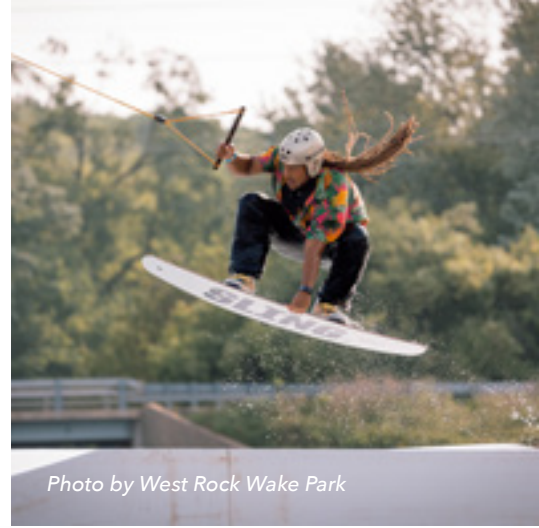


Photo by West Rock Wake Park



Cheap Trick
Photo by GoRockford

**ARTS, CULTURE
& THEATRE**

**OUTDOOR
SPACE**

FOREST PRESERVE/
CONSERVATION ACRES

**17,209+
ACRES**

PARKLAND ACRES

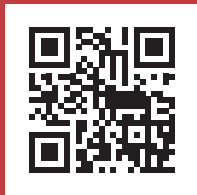
**8,629+
ACRES**



Photo by West Rock Wake Park



Photo by GoRockford



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www.rockfordil.com

2023

Rockford
ILLINOIS  USA

ROCKFORD AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



Photo by GoRockford