



Take Your Cocktail for a Walk in Downtown Rockford

New Open Container Entertainment District Begins Tonight

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Rockford, IL – Late for a game at the BMO Center? Need to meet up with friends down the street? Want to sip your wine during your salon appointment? Now in downtown Rockford you can take your drink to-go when purchased in a designated cup from one of 14 bars and restaurants.

Under the new program, created through a partnership between the River District Association and the City of Rockford, **residents and visitors aged 21+ can conveniently purchase and carry beer, wine, or cocktails from participating bars and restaurants**, utilizing branded cups within a designated geographic area in downtown Rockford. Patrons are allowed to carry their drinks in branded cups **into participating retail, service and entertainment businesses** within the district.

The two entities worked to implement the entertainment district as part of efforts to provide patrons additional options while boosting economic activity and vibrancy, following successful models seen in cities nationwide. The newly designated Downtown Entertainment District goes into effect today, Friday, December 1, at 4 p.m. This initiative represents one of the first Entertainment Districts in the State of Illinois, providing an additional amenity for socializing and shopping.

“The River District Association works to create an environment in downtown Rockford where businesses thrive, and people want to be. Looking at the success of these districts in cities across the country, it seemed like a no brainer to make it happen in downtown Rockford. So, we worked to learn about best practices and partnered with the City of Rockford to make it happen,” said **John Groh, River District board president**. “I have to say, working with Mayor McNamara and his team on this new idea was a great experience – they saw the vision and were open to our feedback as the ordinance and program guidelines were developed. We also appreciate the City Council’s approval of this new program; their willingness to try new ideas demonstrates the type of forward-thinking leadership that will help the community grow.”

“I have seen programs like this firsthand in other communities, and I’m excited for it to launch here in Rockford,” says **Mayor Tom McNamara**. “Downtown is filled with many incredible businesses and business owners, and this program gives our residents and our visitors just one more reason to visit the area and enjoy all it has to offer.”

“Partnering alongside a multitude of businesses, the City continues to work hard on the core of our community. While every downtown is unique, we know that the heart of the City is its downtown. By adding an Entertainment District, we will build on making our downtown a destination to live, work and play,” says **3rd Ward Alderman Chad Tuneberg**. “As we roll out this program, we will continue to monitor its effectiveness and impact and make any necessary adjustments.”

MAP & DETAILS: A map of the district and detailed information on the district is available at www.riverdistrict.com.

Entertainment District Is in Effect the Following Days and Hours

- Monday through Friday: 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. *
 - Saturday & Sunday: 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. *
- *Alcohol will stop being served in designated cups by 10:30 p.m.

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To-Go Cups Sold at the Following Participating Locations

- Abreo
- Ambiance Cuisine Cocktails & Catering
- District Bar & Grill
- Embassy Suites Rockford Riverfront – The Top Rooftop Bar & Lounge and Tower Restaurant
- J.R. Kortman Center for Design
- LimaMar Restaurant & Cocktail Bar
- Magpie
- Mo's Coffee & Cafe
- Octane
- Prairie Street Brewing Company
- Social Urban Bar & Restaurant
- Taco Libre
- Wood & Brick Tavern

Beverages Welcome at the Following Participating Locations

- Elora Home Interiors
- Lucette Holistic Salon and Boutique
- Maze Books
- Rockford Art Deli
- Salvaged by Sonya
- S'mores Collectibles and Vintage
- TNT Funnel Cakes
- Veterans Memorial Hall

SIGNAGE: Participating businesses located within the Entertainment District **should display signage at entrances and exits** to their business indicating their level of involvement. The appropriate sign will need to be posted as follows:

- **Green:** Beverages Sold Here, designates bars and restaurants selling drinks in approved carry-out cups.
- **Blue:** Beverages Welcome is for businesses that welcome patrons to carry an approved drink into their establishment.
- **Red:** Please No Beverages designates a business that does not want patrons carrying in open containers with alcohol.



-The River District and City of Rockford encourage all patrons to drink responsibly and observe program boundaries and rules.

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About: The River District Association (RDA) is a private, 501(c)3 not-for-profit, membership-based organization that advocates for and works to create an environment in downtown Rockford where businesses thrive, and people want to be. The association is supported through membership dues, donations, sponsorships, grants and fundraisers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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