



# CITY OF ROCKFORD NEW BUSINESS PACKET

The mission of the City of Rockford is to maintain its community charm and promote a high quality of life through service, commitment and cooperation,



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## Description of City

The City of Rockford offers a unique blend of residential, retail and commercial development. Located just 15 minutes north of Grand Rapids, Michigan in Kent County. Rockford is a full service community with small town charm and the amenities of a large City.

The residential growth of the area is tremendous. Kent County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state with northern Kent County representing the fastest growing area within the County with no decrease in sight. The City of Rockford offers residential homes in the older and charming downtown area as well as in new residential developments.

The City has both strong commercial and industrial developments. Rockford's largest employer is Wolverine Worldwide (best known for Hush Puppies, Merrel, Saucony and CAT shoes). Rockford is home to their corporate headquarters. The Byrne Industrial Park is home to Byrne Electrical Specialists, Grand Rapids Controls, Inc, The Materials Group, Riverview Products, Advanced Fabricating Technology, Integrated Packaging Machinery, General Motivation, Alloy Exchange, Universal Products and others.

The downtown is the heart of the retail district and includes unique shops and boutiques as well as a wide variety of restaurants. The four corners of 10 Mile and Wolverine Blvd are also the home to many retail and commercial enterprises such as a grocery store, dry cleaners, health club and professional offices.

As you will discover, the City of Rockford is a vibrant, dynamic and growing community offering big city amenities while respecting the tradition and charm that have preserved the quaintness of our small town.



# Building/Zoning Permits

Any remodeling or new construction requires building and zoning permits. Your first stop should be at City Hall to start your permit process. All building permits, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical permits for the City are issued through Professional Code Inspectors (PCI). PCI is located at 1575 142<sup>nd</sup> St., Dorr, MI 49322 and can be reached at 1-800-628-3335. PCI will notify each applicant of the amount of the permit fees after a review of the permit application. Checks should be made payable to the City of Rockford, but sent to PCI for processing. Zoning and Soil Erosion permit applications can also be obtained at City Hall.

## Zoning

Zoning information can be found on the City's website at [www.rockford.mi.us](http://www.rockford.mi.us) Should you have any zoning questions or issues, contact Thad Beard, City Manager at 616-866-1537 as he also serves as the City's Zoning Administrator.

## Business License/Registration

The City of Rockford does not require a business to be licensed within the City; however, we do require businesses to be registered with the City and they must meet the zoning requirements for its location. Therefore, we ask that you contact the City Manager prior to opening your business to make sure the location is zoned properly for your business.

You may register your business at City Hall during normal business hours. There is a \$20 registration fee.



## Signs

A sign permit is required prior to any new sign being placed or when modifying an existing sign within the City limits. Each zoning district has specific requirements with regard to signs. A copy of the sign permit and ordinance can be obtained at City Hall or online at [www.rockford.mi.us](http://www.rockford.mi.us) There is a \$50.00 fee for permanent sign permits. Temporary sign permits will be allowed under special circumstances for a fee of \$30.00. If no permit is secured prior to placement, a \$100.00 fee may be levied. Please contact City Hall (616-866-1537) before erecting any sign within the City limits.

## Outdoor Display/Sale and Storage

The outdoor display and/or sale of products and merchandise is prohibited within the Downtown district. However, it can be approved as part of a Special Events Permit. The Chamber of Commerce organizes several events throughout the year where "sidewalk sales" are allowed. Please contact City Hall if you have any questions about the Special Events process. Outdoor storage of any kind in any zoning district is also prohibited.

## Outdoor Furniture & Eating Areas

The use of outdoor eating areas is allowed inside the city limits, only after an approved Special Land Use Permit. Please contact City Hall to obtain a Special Land Use Permit application.

The Planning Commission requires all outdoor furniture to be black. This is to maintain the Rockford brand.



# Public Safety Department

The Rockford Department of Public Safety is dedicated to a Community Policing Model that combines Crime Prevention with Fire and Life Safety. Crime prevention in your business starts with good communication between the Public Safety Department and the local business.

Time sensitive information for local businesses and residents is usually passed along through popular social media channels. You can subscribe to receive text and email messages or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

## Business Watch

The Business Watch program helps Rockford merchants work together to prevent crime. The Business Watch provides a forum for businesses to communicate suspicious or criminal activity to other local businesses. Business owners can be notified about important information through email. This helps to reduce the risk of additional businesses becoming victimized. If you are a business owner and would like to join the Business Watch program and start receiving email alerts, please contact PSO Ian Graham at [igraham@rockford.mi.us](mailto:igraham@rockford.mi.us) or (616) 866-9557.



## Knox Box

The Knox-Box Rapid Entry System is a secure emergency access program developed for property owners and first responders. The Public Safety Department uses the Knox-Box Rapid Entry System to prevent costly entry damage while protecting property and lives. When a fire breaks out or there is a medical emergency, the Knox Box allows immediate entry into buildings and property without forced entry damage or delay. Property owners store entrance keys, access cards and floor plans in high-security Knox-Box key boxes mounted near building entrances. If you would like to install a Knox Box at your business contact Police Chief Dave Robinson at (616) 866-9557 or at [grobinson@rockford.mi.us](mailto:grobinson@rockford.mi.us).

## Fire Inspections

The Public Safety Department conducts annual fire inspections of all City businesses. For more information or questions, please call 616-866-9557.

## Text Message Alerts

The City of Rockford uses a text message alert program called Text My Gov to communicate important information to citizens such as road closures, hydrant flushing, public safety concerns, etc. To subscribe to text message alerts, text "ROCKFORD" to 91896.

Citizens may also use text messaging to report issues they see in town, such as downed tree limbs, pot holes, water issues, etc. For more information on how to report issues via text message visit the City's website at [www.rockford.mi.us](http://www.rockford.mi.us) or text "HI" to 616-691-6706 and follow the prompts.



## Snow Removal

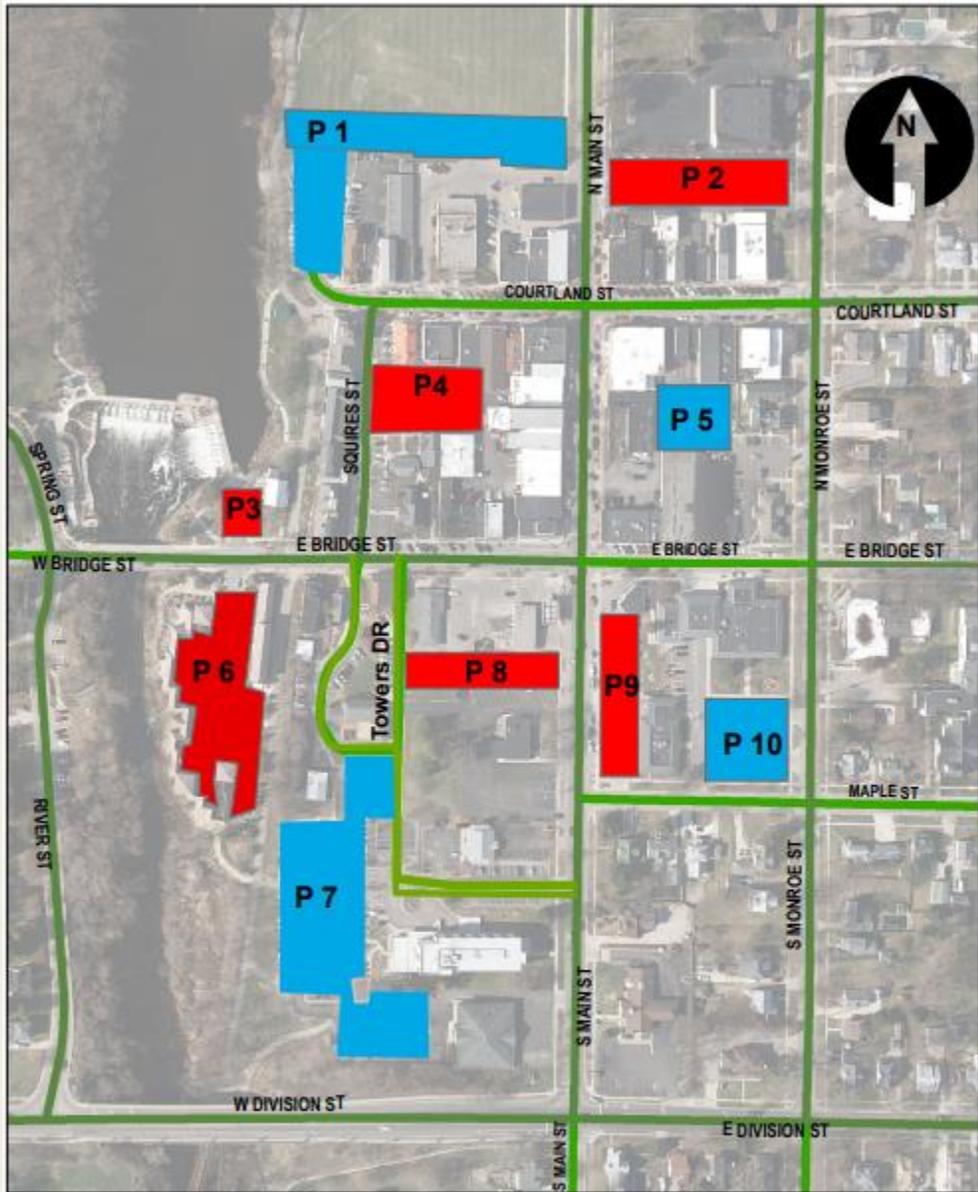
The City's Department of Public Services is responsible for snow removal on City streets. Their first priority is to clear heavily traveled roads and then secondary roadways. Property owners are responsible to keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice including those within business districts. The City assists with the initial clearing of the sidewalks in the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) district, which encompasses downtown using a small sidewalk plow. However, snow/ice removal still remains the property owners ultimate responsibility.

## Employee Parking Downtown

The City of Rockford has a parking order prohibiting any employer or employees from parking on the street in the Central Business District, as defined as zone C-2, in the City. The order also restricts parking in the parking lot adjacent to the Rockford Dam, the parking lot on Squires St. adjacent to the Welcome Center, the Promenade parking lot, Courtland (P2) parking lot, on-street parking, and the parking lots on either side of Main St. between Bridge St. and Maple St. This order does not apply to private parking or handicapped parking spaces. The order is not enforced when City parking lots are closed for special events. The goal of this order is to keep a healthy business environment for you and make a visitors experience to Rockford pleasant. It is a benefit to all businesses to have adequate parking that turns over frequently for customers. See page 8 for Public Parking Map.



# Downtown Parking Map



<u>Lot Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
P1 Garden Park	35 Courtland
P2 Courtland	114 N. Main
P3 Overlook Park	9 E. Bridge
P4 Welcome Center	8 N. Squires
P5 Monroe	13 N. Monroe
P6 Promenade	0 E. Bridge
P7 South Squires	51 S. Squires
P8 Main Street West	11 S. Main
P9 Main Street East	12 S. Main
P10 City Hall	7 S. Monroe

**PARKING**

 Customer only

 Customer and Employee



## Water/Sewer

The City owns and operates its own well system that provides water to all residents and businesses. Contact Rockford City Hall at 616-866-1537 to have water/sewer services placed in your name. The City sends out water/sewer bills bi-monthly on even months. Payment is due on the last business day of the month. If you experience any problems with either water or sewer service, contact City Hall or 616-866-9557 during evenings or on weekends for emergency situations.

## Trash Removal

For businesses in the downtown district, the City has several municipal owned dumpsters available for use and is billed to businesses on a bi-monthly basis. Businesses are billed according to their size using a 5-tiered system. Prices start at \$20 per month.

There are a few businesses who have on-site dumpsters and these businesses are not included in the municipal dumpster program.

Any business outside of the downtown district can use any trash service they prefer.

## Social Media

In addition to the City's website [www.rockford.mi.us](http://www.rockford.mi.us) the City of Rockford has an active Facebook page @CityofRockford-CityHall and an Instagram page @CityofRockfordMI Follow both for up to date information pertaining to the City.



# Chamber of Commerce

The Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce is located at 17 S. Monroe, Rockford, MI 49341. The Chamber can be contacted by phone at 616-866-2000. The Chamber offers various levels of membership. The Chamber services its members by opening doors through education, events, leadership and networking. For details on the opportunities available to Chamber members call the Chamber direct or see their website [www.rockfordmichamber.com](http://www.rockfordmichamber.com) The Chamber coordinates several advertising campaigns throughout the year and hosts many of the downtown events and festivals.

Follow the Rockford Chamber of Commerce on Facebook @RockfordMichiganChamber or Instagram @RockfordMIChamber

## Special Events

The City, especially the downtown district, is home to many special events throughout the year. The largest event is the Start of Summer Celebration on the second full weekend in June. Several downtown streets and parking lots are closed during this festival along with several other festivals throughout the year. See the City's website for a list of current events. Contact City Hall with any questions regarding any City event.



# Heart of Rockford

The downtown shopping district is known as the Heart of Rockford. The City and the Chamber have formed a partnership through the EDC and DDA to promote this area through various marketing efforts.

One of these marketing pieces is a website directory at [www.heartofrockford.com](http://www.heartofrockford.com) as well as a Facebook page @HEARTofRockford and Instagram page @HeartofRockford

## Branding Strategy

Research and studied observation has revealed that Rockford offers a quaint environment, decidedly distinct from larger-scale shopping centers or districts. It is well suited for casual wandering and browsing, as well as experiencing a range of other activities (festivals, entertainment, leisure activities, etc.)

The dominate attributes of the Rockford brand are:

- Quaint
- Friendly, personal interaction
- Slower paced
- Natural
- Unique
- Idyllic community, think Hallmark movies

Rockford is not only about commerce, it's about lifestyle. If someone wanted "power shopping" they would go elsewhere. Time spent in Rockford, is not just about shopping, it's about living. Rockford is not just a place to go, but a place to be.



# Fees, Rates & Charges

Building Permit	Contact PCI 1-800-628-3335
Business Registration	\$20
Fire Suppression System (connection)	\$2,500 includes inspection of fire suppression system
Garbage/Rubbish License	\$100/yr. + \$50/truck
Lawncare License	\$100/yr. + \$25/truck
Redevelopment District Liquor License Application	\$200
Sign – Permanent	\$50 (\$100 fee if no permit secured)
Sign – Temporary	\$30
Snow Plowing License	\$100/yr. + \$25/truck
Zoning Permit	\$50

Please contact City Hall for a full list of fees, rates and charges.



# City Directory

## Rockford City Hall

7 S. Monroe St.  
Rockford, MI 49341  
616-866-1537

[www.rockford.mi.us](http://www.rockford.mi.us)

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs: 7:30am-5:30pm, Fri: 7:30am-12pm

Public Safety Non-Emergency: 616-866-9557

## City Council

Mayor	Ed Ross	<a href="mailto:eross@rockford.mi.us">eross@rockford.mi.us</a>
Mayor Pro-rem	Tammy Bergstrom	<a href="mailto:tbergstrom@rockford.mi.us">tbergstrom@rockford.mi.us</a>
Council Member	Terry Konkle	<a href="mailto:tkonkle@rockford.mi.us">tkonkle@rockford.mi.us</a>
Council Member	Cheryl Scales	<a href="mailto:cscscales@rockford.mi.us">cscscales@rockford.mi.us</a>
Council Member	Dale Dalman	<a href="mailto:ddalman@rockford.mi.us">ddalman@rockford.mi.us</a>

## City Staff

City Manager	Thad Beard	<a href="mailto:tbeard@rockford.mi.us">tbeard@rockford.mi.us</a>
Finance Director	Linda Lehman	<a href="mailto:llehman@rockford.mi.us">llehman@rockford.mi.us</a>
City Clerk	Chris Bedford	<a href="mailto:cbedford@rockford.mi.us">cbedford@rockford.mi.us</a>
Deputy Treasurer	Deb Brunett	<a href="mailto:dbrunett@rockford.mi.us">dbrunett@rockford.mi.us</a>
Deputy Clerk	Kris Murphy	<a href="mailto:kmurphy@rockford.mi.us">kmurphy@rockford.mi.us</a>
Utility Billing Clerk	Erika Ward	<a href="mailto:eward@rockford.mi.us">eward@rockford.mi.us</a>
Assessor	Lisa Verburg	<a href="mailto:lverburg@rockford.mi.us">lverburg@rockford.mi.us</a>
Assessor	Debbie Rashid	<a href="mailto:drashid@rockford.mi.us">drashid@rockford.mi.us</a>
Police Chief	Dave Robinson	<a href="mailto:grobenson@rockford.mi.us">grobenson@rockford.mi.us</a>
Fire Chief	Jamie Davies	<a href="mailto:jdavies@rockford.mi.us">jdavies@rockford.mi.us</a>
Public Services Dir.	Jamie Davies	<a href="mailto:jdavies@rockford.mi.us">jdavies@rockford.mi.us</a>
Building Inspector	PCI	1-800-877-2000

## Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce

616-866-2000