



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

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**Gov. Pritzker and the State of Illinois Announce
IRONMAN will be Held in Rockford**

*IRONMAN's decision to move to Illinois was supported by the state's Tourism Incentive Grant Program;
2025 represents the first time the IRONMAN will be held in Illinois*

ROCKFORD – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), local officials and IRONMAN leadership today announced that Rockford will host the IRONMAN 70.3 triathlon beginning next year in 2025 through 2027. Supported by a \$800,000 grant to the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (Go Rockford) as part of the state's \$15 million Tourism Incentive Grant Program, this is the first time the IRONMAN will be held in Illinois. The race is expected to generate upwards of \$45 million in economic impact over three years.

"I'm thrilled to welcome the IRONMAN 70.3 triathlon to Illinois," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "My administration's Tourism Incentive Grant Program attracted this major event to Rockford, and we look forward to showcasing Illinois' natural beauty and world-class hospitality to the thousands of athletes and spectators that will join us over the next three years."

"Illinois is the perfect host for IRONMAN and we are thrilled to welcome the participating athletes!" **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton**. "Our stunning Rock River and scenic landscapes will challenge and inspire competitors, while our Midwest hospitality is ready and waiting with open arms. We're all set for an unforgettable race day, and I can't wait to cheer on the amazing participants!"

"We are excited to bring this new IRONMAN 70.3 event to this unique and beautiful area in northern Illinois," **said Eric Atnip, Race Director for the IRONMAN 70.3 Rockford-Illinois triathlon**.

"Rockford has shown itself to be a charming midwestern destination city with an abundance of outdoor recreation. We are excited to partner with Go Rockford to offer this exciting new option on the North American IRONMAN 70.3 circuit for our many dedicated athletes. We can't wait for athletes to come experience this welcoming community and see what makes Rockford so special in 2025."

The triathlon will consist of a 1.2-mile swim on the Rock River, a 56-mile bike loop that takes athletes through the area north of Rockford and a 13.1-mile run that will take runners from Davis Park on a two-loop journey on the east and west banks of the Rock River. The event is expected to draw in nearly 3,000

athletes and 15,000 visitors during each race. The race is also expected to fill an estimated 7,000-12,000 hotel room nights.

“The new Tourism Incentive Program is enabling Illinois to attract new high-profile events that generate millions in economic impact,” **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. “Attracting IRONMAN is a testament to all Illinois has to offer and increases our opportunity to show visitors from across the globe why Illinois is the best place to live, work and do business.”

The state’s \$15 million Tourism Incentive Grant Program was established to bolster tourism across the state by supporting the development and improvement of events, conferences, and trade shows – specifically designed to attract events that have not yet been held in Illinois. The \$800,000 grant provided to Rockford Area CVB was a key determining factor in IRONMAN 70.3 deciding to come here. The grant funds will be used to support race day operations.

Ironman is considered one of the most recognizable and respected global sports brands. The IRONMAN and IRONMAN 70.3 Triathlon Series is the world’s premier full--distance and half-distance triathlon series consisting of over 150 qualifying races in over 50 countries, regions and territories across the world. Hosting the IRONMAN 70.3 Triathlon will further cement Rockford’s position as the top amateur sports destination in Illinois.

“IRONMAN 70.3 athletes push themselves to continually improve, to be better each day, to not settle for less than their personal best. The city of Rockford is like that, too. Rockford is a city on the move and gaining speed all the time,” **said John Groh, president/CEO of GoRockford, the city’s destination marketing organization**. “We’re thrilled to partner with IRONMAN and look forward to welcoming their athletes and fans to our city.”

“The Illinois Tourism Incentive Grant is a game changer for destinations and the visitor economy,” **said Dave Herrell, Chairman, Illinois Destinations Association (IDA) and president and CEO, Visit Quad Cities**. “These strategic resources will provide the competitive advantage we need to bring more meetings, conventions, and sporting events to Illinois, and we are already realizing booked business and results.”

“Hosting the Ironman gives us the opportunity to show folks from near and far all the great things Rockford has to offer,” **said Sen. Steve Stadelman (D-Rockford)**. “This event will not only drive visitors to Illinois, but it will also boost our local economy.”

“We’re thrilled that Rockford has been chosen as the new home of the Ironman,” **said Rep. Maurice West (D-Rockford)**. “This is not only an enormous win for the Rockford, but for Illinois as a whole.”

“Attracting events like the Ironman is a massive win for Illinois’ tourism industry and economy,” **said Sen. Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago)**. “The Tourism Incentive Program is crucial to securing major events and investments, that help build on our record-breaking tourism momentum and increase opportunities for Illinois.”

“Securing an event like the Ironman is a true testament to what Illinois has to offer and our tourism industry's continued success,” **said Rep. Kim DuBuclet (D-Chicago)**. “Programs like the Tourism Incentive Program allow us to showcase our state's best, while helping grow our local economies.”

Illinois has seen tremendous growth in tourism over the last couple of years. Illinois welcomed a total of 111 million visitors who spent \$44 billion in 2022 (the latest data available) - representing 14 million additional travelers spending \$12 billion more than calendar year 2021. Additionally, in 2023 Illinois welcomed 2.16 million international visitors in 2023, reflecting a substantial 39% increase from the previous year, and a 47% increase in spending compared to the previous year.

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