

Amy Salamon

From: Amy Salamon
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 4:07 PM
To: RPC - All Staff
Subject: R1 Jul/Aug Newsletter - Safer Streets Across the Region

The July/August newsletter is attached.



Solar Lights Up Rockford

First Regional Solar Expo Draws Strong Support

Local support for solar energy shone strong at the region's first Solar Conference & Expo, hosted by Sustain Rockford on July 18 at the Embassy Suites Rockford Riverfront Hotel.

Sustain Rockford is a nonprofit organization that champions solar energy production and other sustainable efforts to preserve the region's land, water, and air. Region 1 was a sponsor and helped plan the event, which drew more than 200 attendees, speakers, and exhibitors.



Solar Conference & Expo By the Numbers

- 158 attendees
- 46 sponsors
- 25 exhibitors
- 22 speakers
- 15 breakout sessions

"At Sustain Rockford, we feel a strong sense of urgency to ramp up our region's sustainability," says Brad Roos, president of Sustain Rockford. "Solar has never been cheaper, the financial incentives have never

been greater, and the need has never been more clear. The glass is, indeed, half full."

Attendees participated in expert-led sessions, getting insights into emerging trends and financial incentives for solar developments. Speakers and breakout sessions included information for all key stakeholders, including residential consumers, businesses, and the broader public sector. Additionally, more than a dozen companies and organizations displayed their services at the conference's vendor expo.

Top: *(left)* Attendees provided candid thoughts about solar energy's potential in the region. *(right)* Sustain Rockford volunteers check in over 200 participants at the Solar Conference & Expo.

Bottom: *(left)* The Illinois Solar Energy Association displayed their solar house, which is a demonstration lab for residential solar. *(right, top)* Vanessa Mauries and Juliana Charlebois-Berg (R1 Sustainability Research Analysts) were on hand to gather information on residents' energy needs which will then inform the Recuperat energy grid resiliency study. *(right, bottom)* Iconic Energy was one of 10 solar companies giving consultations. Attendees could leave the expo with an appointment for an in-home consultation and quote.

People We're Proud to Know

Jason Holcomb and Nicole Bennett were among this year's People You Should Know, announced in early summer 2024. Given by the Greater Rockford Chamber of Commerce, this award recognizes some of the brightest and influential people making their imprints across the Rockford area. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!



JASON HOLCOMB

He is always focused on the needs of the people he serves, and his ability to bridge differences and keep moving forward is why many value working with him.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY IMPACT



NICOLE BENNETT

She passionately advocates for social justice, empowerment, and social systems change - actively contributing to creating a stronger, more supportive community for everyone in Rockford.

**RI COMMUNITY IMPACT COORDINATOR
BOARD MEMBER, ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



Open for Public Comment

These projects are looking for your input. Each is linked below, or you can visit [Engage R1](#) for an overview of all R1's ongoing plans. When you share your perspective on any (or all!) of these topics, you will help shape these regional plans to ensure that they reflect the community's needs.

- [Boone County Traffic Safety Action Plan](#)
- [City of Rockford Traffic Safety Action Plan](#)
- [Winnebago County Traffic Safety Action Plan](#)

- [U.S. EPA Brownfield Site Cleanup Assessment](#)

Traffic Safety Action Plans Under Development



Serious injuries and fatalities on U.S. roads have steadily increased over the past decade, spiking in recent years. The Rockford region is no different.

R1 wants everyone on the roadways - riding, walking, biking - to arrive at their destination safely. This is why R1 is creating four traffic safety action plans that aim to reduce or eliminate serious vehicle crashes, with support from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads for All program. The Regional Traffic Safety Action Plan is comprehensive for the entire Rockford region. R1 is also developing plans for the City of Rockford, Boone County, and Winnebago County in coordination with their respective jurisdictions. This allows each jurisdiction to determine goals and strategies appropriate for their unique situations. Developing four separate plans also provides more opportunities for implementation funds to be distributed, including rural areas not in R1's coverage area.

Each of these safety action plans will:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of the state of traffic safety in that area
2. Identify local and regional trends through extensive data analysis

3. Establish a vision, goals, and strategies to significantly reduce or eliminate fatalities and serious injuries
4. Create a framework for activities that can be implemented to improve traffic safety.

The plans have completed several rounds of public feedback, involving the public, local traffic safety stakeholders, and each plan's steering committee. All four plans are wrapping up the data analysis process and will then begin to identify strategies for reducing and eliminating crashes that result in severe injuries or fatalities.

If you haven't completed the traffic safety survey, there is still time to do so at the links above.

NICNE Seeks Input on State of the Nonprofit Sector



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence

The Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE) is evaluating the regional nonprofit landscape and would like your feedback. If you're the head of a nonprofit organization in Northern Illinois, please fill out the survey linked below to provide your thoughts on leadership, staffing, fundraising, financial sustainability, and trends.

Your input is critical to understanding the sector's needs so NICNE can better advocate on your behalf.

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7897757/NICNE-Nonprofit-Survey>

Who should complete this survey?

- Nonprofit organizations in Boone, Ogle, Stephenson, Winnebago Counties
- Executive Director/CEO/President of the nonprofit organization, or their designee.

All responses are anonymous and the survey will be open through August 31. For more information, contact Pam Clark Reidenbach, CEO of NICNE, at pclark1@niu.edu. NICNE is issuing this survey in partnership with R1.

Employee Spotlight



Sarah Renicker
Grant Compliance Specialist

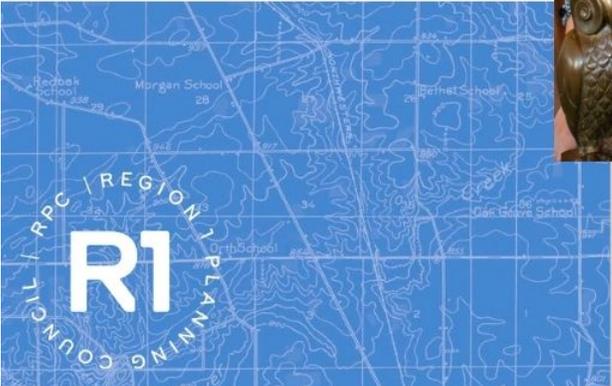
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Sarah Renicker joins R1 as a Grant Compliance Specialist. Grant compliance is a career shift for Sarah, after working for many years in early childhood education, and higher educational degrees

in Psychology and Program Administration. A longtime Rockford resident, Sarah is eager to work with R1 employees and stakeholders to help grow and develop the community she calls home, as well as help them navigate the complexities of the grant reporting process.

Maria Tiongco
Data Analyst

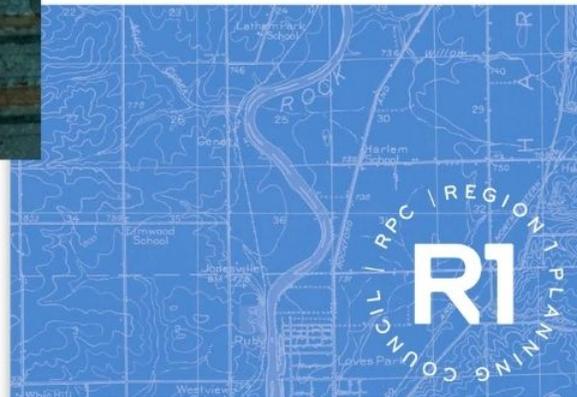


Maria Tiongco joins the Community Impact team as a Data Analyst, specializing in the Python programming language. She is a former astronomy researcher, making a career change to data analytics. She grew up in Michigan, lived in Indiana during graduate school, and moved to Rockford two years ago. She is excited to work on projects like data analysis and visualizations for the WCCMHB.



Gracey Garner

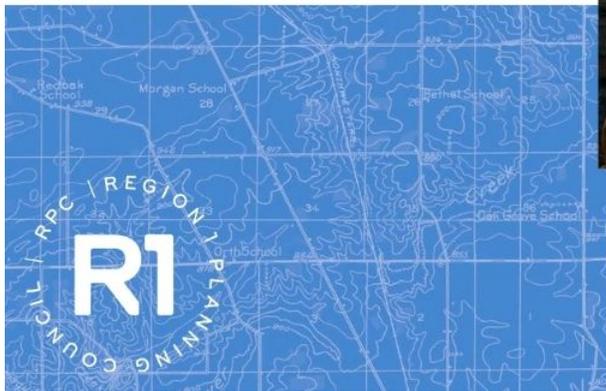
GIS Associate



Gracey Garner joins the team as a GIS Associate. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater graduate with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science, emphasis in Geoscience and certification in GIS. She worked for Fehr Graham Engineering, conducting Phase I and II environmental site assessments, well and leachate testing, and odor monitoring for the Winnebago County and Rochelle landfills. She also worked at Risseeuw Concrete cutting and tying rebar, as well as finishing and removing concrete. Returning to her GIS skills, she will be making beautiful maps of all shapes and sizes for R1.

Hailey Blanchard

Research Analyst



Hailey Blanchard joins the Economic Development team as a Research Analyst. She is a Southern Illinois University graduate, with a bachelor's degree in Political Science/Sociology and a master's degree in Public Administration and Policy Analysis - all while competing in Division 1 soccer for the university. After graduation, Hailey spent her time as a Legislative Affairs intern with the Illinois State Board of Education and also interned with the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, handling public relations and policy analysis. She will provide the numerical support needed for R1's economic development grant applications and planning documents.

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127 N. Wyman St., Suite 101, Rockford, IL 61101

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