



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J.  
Morrissey*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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### **CITY OF ROCKFORD ENHANCES SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH**

Rockford, IL. – The City of Rockford announced today the addition of two social media tools to their communications platform: Nextdoor and a more extended use of Nixle. The social mediums will go live on Tuesday, July 15, 2014.

The city's social media strategy has focused on Facebook and Twitter accounts while the Rockford Police Department has used a limited version of Nixle as a notification tool for the past four years. Audiences and users for the mediums have grown since staff began posting but many citizens asked for a means of receiving notices that would not require signing up for a public site or to rely on monitoring Twitter. "They were asking for simple, private and to the point," Mayor Morrissey said. "The design of a broader social network will allow us to meet their needs and to communicate, inform and share information with as many of our citizens as possible."

With Nextdoor, Rockford residents can join private neighborhood websites to share information, including neighborhood public safety issues, community events and activities, local services, and even lost pets. City staff, including police and fire, will be able to post information, such as important news, services, programs, public events, and emergency notifications to Nextdoor websites within the city.

Aldermen will also have the ability to post on their various neighborhood groups via NextDoor. Third Ward Aldermen Thomas McNamara whose ward includes six different neighborhood groups is excited to find simple, private tool to share information with his residents. "Rockford is fortunate to have many dedicated and involved residents who help our numerous neighborhood associations thrive. NextDoor gives me the ability to communicate with each association and its members on a regular basis to share City information and discuss

upcoming Council votes which may have an impact on their neighborhoods,” Alderman McNamara pointed out.

Nextdoor is free for residents and the City. Each Rockford neighborhood has its own private Nextdoor neighborhood website, accessible only to residents who verify that they live in the neighborhood. Neighborhoods establish and self-manage their own Nextdoor websites and the City and Police Department will not be able to access residents’ websites, contact information, or content. Information shared on Nextdoor is password protected and cannot be accessed by search engines.

Those interested in joining their neighborhood’s Nextdoor website can visit [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com) and enter their address. If residents have questions about their Nextdoor website, please visit [help.nextdoor.com](http://help.nextdoor.com).

The Nixle Community Information Service will allow city staff to create and publish messages to be delivered to subscribed residents instantly via cell phone text message and/or email. Notifications can also be accessed online at Nixle’s web site at [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com).

Messages may include notifications of traffic delays or water service interruptions or notices from the Rockford Police or Fire Department. Assistant Deputy Chief Patrick Hoey, who acts as the Public Information Officer for the Rockford Police Department pointed out: “NIXLE has been a valuable tool to alert the public to weather emergencies, power outages; especially when they affect traffic signals. It has also been a vital tool in informing the public of law enforcement operations of significance or special public safety initiatives.”

The messages can be sent specifically to residents registered within a ¼ mile radius from the address the user enters, giving them the opportunity to receive trustworthy information relevant only to their neighborhood. Residents decide from which department they want to receive information and they can also choose the way in which alerts are received, whether it is by email, text message, or over the web.

Residents of the City of Rockford and those in neighboring communities can immediately begin receiving pertinent information via text message, email, and web by registering at [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com).

“We are committed to utilizing communication tools that will help us inform and engage our citizens,” Mayor Morrissey stated. “We will continue to focus on building a communication strategy that allows for greater accessibility to information and creates a more transparent government,” the Mayor concluded.

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