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## **Karters invited to ‘Return to The Rock’ Sept. 3-4, 2022**

ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS — As the Covid pandemic hopefully moves into the rear-view mirror, the Xtream Rock Island Grand Prix, the world’s largest go kart street race, is preparing for its 27<sup>th</sup> year by inviting kart racers to “Return To The Rock.”

“If you’ve raced with us before, we’re inviting you to return to what we hope will be a special post-pandemic year. If you’ve never raced “The Rock” before, we invite you to check it off your bucket list,” said Grand Prix president Roger Ruthhart. The dates for this year’s races are Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 3-4.

Ruthhart said the event had solid support from race teams and a solid rebound in spectator numbers in 2021 despite Covid limitations.

“The atmosphere and energy in the downtown are what has historically brought race teams to Rock Island and provided the experience to keep them coming back,” Ruthhart said. “Last year, in the shadow of Covid, we were happy just to be able to hold the race. We know downtown businesses and vendors were struggling to hire workers and stay open. While that is still a challenge, things have improved and this year we are working hard to make sure the experience for racers will be much better.”

The city of Rock Island recently announced a multi-year, \$7 million plan for a major redesign and renovation of its downtown area known as The District. Once renovations have been completed, plans call for creation of a downtown management organization and a Special Service Area to provide revenue for ongoing maintenance and additional work.

“The grand prix kart race was created for the benefit of the downtown,” said Ruthhart. “We are happy to see the city and the Quad City Chamber of Commerce come together behind this plan. I hope the state and the downtown property owners will step up and support it as well so the positive energy

downtown can continue long into the future. That would be huge for the future success of the race. I certainly believe things are headed in the right direction, but all the pieces need to come together.”

Race organizers have already approached the city about street repairs in several key locations on the track and improvements have been promised.

Also in 2022, members of the Black Hawk Pipes and Drums of the Quad-Cities will perform during Opening Ceremonies on Sunday, Sept. 4, a truly unique experience for a major kart race.

“In the Covid, Amazon/online shopping, Zoom- meeting era, all downtowns and businesses need to have a forward-looking plan that is worked on every day. This blueprint can provide that,” said Ruthhart, stressing he was only speaking for himself and not his not-for-profit race organization. “The downtown provides the heartbeat of any community. If the downtown thrives, so does the entire city. But you need the city, businesses and property owners to have complete buy-in. If not, the other option is landlords with empty buildings, businesses that fail, and declining tax revenue for the city. In that scenario the Grand Prix will not survive either.”

A vibrant, safe, walkable downtown is important to the people who live there, work there, visit there and race there, he said, adding he is hopeful other festival events, outdoor concerts and individual business promotions will be successful this year to provide the energy to push plans in a positive direction.

The race program will again feature a wide range of classes for 2-cycle, 4-cycle, vintage and shifter karts, including the two “King of The Rock” pro classes for 100cc 2-cycle and Briggs & Stratton 206cc 4-cycle engines, and the iconic “King of the Streets” race for the nation’s top shifter drivers. All three races will pay \$1,000 to win and pay back 5 places. A complete list of all classes to be featured and rules and other details of the race weekend will be announced soon. National Karting Alliance rules and supplemental Rock Island rules will again be used with few changes over 2021. Registration will open this summer. All Rocks, trophies and checks and other awards will be presented at the Sunday night Awards Ceremony at the Rock Island Holiday Inn ballroom. A room block for racers has been set up at the Holiday Inn in Rock Island, the official host hotel for the races.

The easing of pandemic restrictions including the closing of the Canadian/US border and other health-related travel restrictions, should make it much easier for racers to “Return To The Rock,” Ruthhart said. Each year the race attracts more than one hundred race teams and thousands of spectators and has had competitors from 9 foreign countries. Watch the Xstream Rock Island Grand Prix website, [racerockisland.info](http://racerockisland.info), and social media for more details.

The Grand Prix is the biggest weekend event of the year in Rock Island. Rock Island is located in an area known as the Quad-Cities, straddling the Mississippi River equally divided between Illinois and Iowa, with a metropolitan population of 400,000. It is home to the Rock Island Arsenal military base and corporate headquarters for John Deere in Moline, Ill. It is served by the Quad-City International Airport and is at the intersection of Interstate highways 80, 74, 88 and 280.

**Sponsors for the event include:** Mediacom, Briggs & Stratton Racing, Bally’s Quad-Cities Casino & Hotel, Hoosier Kartsport/ Margay Racing, O’Reilly Auto Parts, Gett Industries, Modern Woodmen Financial/ Joe Schurr agent, Miller/Coors, RLV Tuned Exhaust, CBS TV4 / Fox 18 and CW, the local iHeart radio stations: Q106, Fox Sports QC, WOC and WLLR, Schurr Power Racing Engines, Sunbelt Rentals, Johannes Bus Service, The Law Centre, Holiday Inn Rock Island, eKartingNews.com, Courtesy Car City, Gas & Electric Credit Union, Rogan Scale, Triple E Sales, Brenny’s Motorcycle Center, Hakuna Matata Charters,

Transmission Plus, Downtown Rock Island, Hiland Toyota, Quad City Camaro Club and Harden Motorsports.

For more information on the race, please visit [racerockisland.info](http://racerockisland.info)

