

DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
of
Peoria

www.downtownpeoria.us

DOWNTOWN PEORIA

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021

DDC Activities

Looking ahead

Our board of directors will be reviewing the budget for 2022 that will be presented by the Finance Committee. As we enter into our ninth year, we are looking forward to lending our support in partnership with those who are advocating and promoting growth and expansion in downtown Peoria. As a non-profit organization, we continue to count on the support of our dedicated sponsors. **Thank you for your contributions!**

Downtown Development



On a daily basis, the DDC is working diligently to create a new and renewed downtown. Our board of directors listens to property and business owners on their needs and concerns and meets with developers interested in making a difference in our downtown.

Recently, the Peoria Journal Star featured an article about the lack of a

Warehouse District parking deck threatening development. Michael Freiling, DDC President/CEO, contributed to the article stating that the urgency for a parking deck is high with area developers waiting on a guarantee of more parking before moving ahead with some projects. **“I’ve got developers who want to proceed with development on these buildings, and we’re talking \$15-\$20 million in renovation costs on each of those buildings, and they will have residential units plus commercial space on them,”** Freiling said. **“But the developers are not going to proceed unless there is parking available. It’s still possible to get a parking project started and keep developers happy if a parking deck can end up in next year’s state budget.”** Freiling said that he will step up communications with city and state lawmakers to help find a parking solution in the Warehouse District.

OSF OnCall tour



In October, DDC board member Michael Maloof and staff member Debbie Dickerson attended the open house at the OSF OnCall building located at 330 SW Adams Street in Downtown Peoria.

State Rep. Ryan Spain, who is also a DDC board member and OSF Vice President, was on hand to welcome visitors. About 400 employees work in OSF HealthCare’s

new OnCall building, the former Caterpillar LD building. As a former Caterpillar employee who had attended meetings in the former LD building, Ms. Dickerson was pleasantly surprised to see the modern, bright updates. **“This is truly an upscale transformation with all the amenities employees need to be productive and to feel appreciated while on the job,”** she stated.

“Because these care programs provide all kinds of services to patients virtually, OSF’s OnCall building is essentially a hospital without walls,” said Michelle Conger, OSF HealthCare chief strategy officer and CEO of OSF OnCall.

Mr. Maloof was awed by the fact that the OnCall group answers around 800,000 calls a year! The facility will increase the foot traffic in downtown Peoria and, along with the OSF Headquarters building opening soon, downtown Peoria will come alive, spurring new business. Just Wow, OSF! We applaud your vision for our downtown!

Contributor Spotlight

Devin Birch, Austin Engineering Company, Inc.

Our contributor of the month is **Devin Birch** of Austin Engineering Company, Inc. (AECI), President & Principal, Professionally Licensed Engineer. AECI is a Civil Engineering Firm with a concentration in Land Development & Public Works Projects. They are also a full-service land surveying company and offer professional landscape architecture design as well.



In addition to Devin's professional engineering licensure, he is a licensed real estate broker with Buy A Farm Realty & Auction Company, which is owned by his father-in-law. He is also a partner in Waterfront Place Business Suites, which is located in the Waterfront Place Building at 311 SW Water Street on the Peoria Riverfront. He and his business partners own the second floor of that

building, which is where Austin Engineering's office is located, along with six other professional office spaces of various sizes that they lease out. Devin is a member of the DDC Planning Committee and a member of the Building Board of Appeals for Tazewell County Department of Community Development.

Austin Engineering Company, Inc. has been in Peoria since the 1930's. Originally located downtown, they moved to Pioneer Parkway from the 60s to 2015. Devin started at AECI in 2003 and became President/Principal in 2008, moving AECI back downtown to 311 SW Water Street in the fall of 2015. AECI has strong ties to the Peoria region, but they also work in all parts of the U.S. on development projects with clients who develop real estate on a national level. A more comprehensive summary of AECI is on their website at www.austinengineeringcompany.com. We have enjoyed having AECI as a dedicated sponsor over the past several years and had a few questions related to downtown development:

DDC: How have you/your business contributed to the DDC?

DB: I have been a member of the DDC Planning Committee since 2016 and served on the sub-committee to explore a Special Service Area (SSA) downtown as well. We try to be very active as a downtown business and as down-

town property owners and we offer help to the DDC wherever we can. Several times our land surveying business has been able to aide the DDC when they have purchased or sold properties.

DDC: What effect has the DDC had on downtown improvements and/or you and your business?

DB: In general, the DDC has been instrumental in pushing the importance of a strong downtown to our community and its leaders. We could not agree more with the vision of the DDC, and we firmly believe that a vibrant Downtown Peoria is critical for the future success of the entire Greater Peoria Region. We have also been fortunate enough to work on several downtown redevelopment projects that were assisted by the DDC, most recently the 812 Washington Street Apartments project.

DDC: What DDC accomplishment(s) are you most proud of, interested in, and/or are affected by?

DB: I am most proud to be on a committee that is “Pro-Business” and aims to be developer friendly and to act as a helping hand for anyone who wants to develop and improve Downtown Peoria. It is important that developers know they have someone in their corner that will help them make their projects a reality, whatever that takes. We are always asking developers what obstacles are in front of them, and then we do our best to try to remove those obstacles from their path to success in Downtown Peoria.

DDC: What do you think about the new development and new businesses opening in Downtown Peoria? How will that affect/benefit you and your business?

DB: My career has been primarily focused on land development, so I love to see all the projects happening Downtown. There are some great places to work, shop, drink and eat downtown; and the arts and entertainment options are great, too. In my opinion, any project or new business that brings more people Downtown benefits our community, and in turn makes for a more interesting place to work, shop and visit.

DDC: What improvements would you like to see in the downtown?

DB: We simply must get a parking deck built near our tallest warehouse buildings that are ripe for redevelopment. Without ample and convenient parking, there is no way for these projects to be successful. I would like to see all our one-way streets eliminated in favor of more pedestrian friendly and retail/restaurant friendly public ways. I would love to see the Madison Theatre come

back to life AND thrive. I think that we have plenty of public park/open space downtown along the Riverfront now, but it is under-utilized, in my opinion, and in need of a face-lift as well as more consistent entertainment programming and offerings.

DDC: What new businesses and services would you like to see in the downtown?

DB: There is so much opportunity for development and redevelopment in Downtown Peoria; the possibilities seem almost limitless to me. I hope that we can attract more out-of-town/state businesses to relocate to downtown Peoria so we get more people working and living downtown. I would love to see more specialty retail and consumer services/entertainment thrive downtown, but I believe that only happens when more people live and work downtown.

DDC: What is your vision for downtown Peoria?

DB: My dream for Downtown Peoria is to see all our existing buildings operating at their highest and best uses, full of businesses and residents, so fully occupied that we need to start focusing on the next area of Peoria that needs a “development corporation” to help it become all it can be.

Business Spotlight

Zion Coffee



It's official, Zion Coffee Bar has new owners!

Congratulations to **Savannah Hattan and Jared Jensen!** This popular coffee bar that Mike and Banu Hatfield started on the corner of Adams and Oak in Peoria's Warehouse District just a few short years ago will continue to brew up the best coffee in the area.

Zion coffee, direct from the farmer, is roasted fresh at the cafe in the historic Union Depot Hotel building at 803 SW Adams St. In addition to coffee, Zion offers fresh pastries, a toast bar, and artisan cocktails, beer and wine.

As a former Zion employee, Savannah is excited to take Zion to the next level. We wish Savannah and Jared well and know that Zion will do well with the experience they bring. As the cooler weather sets in, stop in at Zion Coffee Bar for a warm welcome and a cup of hot coffee! Be sure to follow them on Instagram and Facebook to hear about new offerings!

Business Spotlight

The Nest Coworking



Did you know that the Nest Coworking helps early-stage businesses in the Greater Peoria Area launch?

The Nest is a shared work environment for early stage entrepreneurs and independent professionals and host to startup programs and tech meetups.

Their startup membership tier is specifically designed to help your new business quickly achieve terminal velocity just like the SpaceX Falcon 9 rockets.

The Nest Coworking, located at in the heart of Downtown Peoria's Warehouse District at 820 SW Adams, Suite C, Peoria, IL, is your prototyping and experimental space where industry experts will work with you to gain a deeper understanding of the market and create experiments to validate your assumptions.

The Nest operates in a safe, clean environment. Learn more about this innovative work environment with so many benefits and amenities in downtown Peoria at <https://peoriacoworking.space/> or <https://www.facebook.com/TheNestPeoria>.

Be sure to follow them to keep up with the latest events, startup programs and social + business networking opportunities!

Property for Lease - Office Space



311 SW Water St.

Waterfront Place is a renovated four story loft building on Water Street. RC Outfitters is located on the first floor, and the second floor is office space.

Floors 3 & 4 are residential lofts.

Three office suites (631-3,773 SF) are available on the second floor. Unit 201 offers one of the nicest renovated loft spaces on Water Street with river views. It is currently set up with five private offices, a conference room, kitchen/break room and a large, open area in the middle. Unit 204 offers three private offices with an open area up front. Both have tenant controlled HVAC.

These offices are adjacent to Peoria Riverfront Museum & Caterpillar Visitor's Center, in the heart of the Warehouse District, promoting that vibe with exposed brick and timber with high ceilings.

A huge benefit is the free 2-hour parking right across the street. For information on leasing and incentives, contact Will Hayes at Joseph & Camper: E-MAIL: Willhayes@josephcamper.com | CELL: 309-643-0717

Downtown Activities

Shop Local!

Now is the Time! As you begin shopping for the holidays, remember to support local businesses. Downtown Peoria offers specialty retail shops as well as many service shops, such as screenprinting, craft experiences, hair stylists, artisans, etc., who are eager to gain new business. Eat, drink, and make merry at the many restaurants and bars in the downtown. Gift cards are always a good choice, offering flexibility for busy family members and friends.

Come downtown, enjoy your visit, and knock out some special gifts. Let's celebrate together as 2021 comes to a close!

Get Your Race On!

For details on the Chocolate Turkey trot on Thanksgiving Day, visit the Shazam Racing Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ShazamRacing/>. Dress warm and come on out to shake a tail feather!

Visit Peoria!

The DDC web site is a wonderful resource for things to do in Downtown Peoria. From markets to festivals to concerts and more, downtown Peoria has multiple offerings every month of the year. In collaboration with Peoria Riverfront Association, we keep an updated pulse on downtown activities. If you are looking for a fun escape, visit our web site at www.downtownpeoria.us/play.

Announcements

Light Up the Bridge!

It's been an entire year since we've been able to enjoy the glowing lights that adorn Murray Baker Bridge! We don't have an official list, but in that time it's been lit for holidays, festivals, collegiate sporting wins, national days, and several awareness campaigns.

There is still a long way to go to keep this project going and the region engaged, but we are so proud of this special piece of our communities. A visual connector to the people who live, work, and play here. Happy 1-year Anniversary to Murray and his spectacular lights! We can't wait to see what this will look like for the upcoming holidays!

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