



DOWNTOWN PEORIA NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2023

DDC Activities

Peoria Magazine

The DDC is a proud contributor to Peoria Magazine. The March issue was dedicated to “Reviving Peoria’s Downtown,” which is essentially what we do! DDC president/CEO, Michael Freiling, is featured in the spotlight article, “The Captains Behind the Curtain” on page 52. He explains how the DDC acts as a “quick reaction force” for getting things done in the city’s center. To read this issue (and others) online, visit the website at www.peoriomagazine.com. Watch for our full-page ads in upcoming issues of Peoria Magazine, as well as their Community Impact Guide special edition. We applaud Peoria Magazine for partnering with community organizations to promote downtown Peoria and the entire region.



Wayfinding

We are excited to announce a press conference/media release on April 18th at 1:00 p.m. at the Creve Coeur Club of Peoria for the dedication of two prototype Wayfinding signs in downtown Peoria. The DDC, in collaboration with the City of Peoria, Discover Peoria, Downtown Advisory Commission, Peoria Riverfront Association, and community leaders will dedicate these prototype signs as the first step of a Master Wayfinding project for the entire downtown. A Wayfinding Prototype Committee was established in 2021, and we are very happy to see these prototype signs installed. The signs are located on Main Street, one near the Caterpillar Visitors Center and the other near the Marquette Building on the 700 block of Main Street.

Business Spotlight:

Creve Coeur Club



As you may have heard, last month the Creve Coeur Club moved from the Twin Towers Mall to their new, historic location on the riverfront at 212 SW Water Street, Unit 3, formerly known as The River Station Restaurant. The restaurant shares the building with Martini's on Water Street and the Blue Duck Barbecue Tavern. The Club is still our community's oldest private business and social club, but today's version is refreshing and new! Among the many offerings are daily lunch specials, soon-to-be a new dinner menu, exclusive societies for club members including Wine & Champagne,

Cigar, and Bourbon Societies, private event spaces for as little as two or up to 200 guests, special holiday parties, and much more! Special dinner events are frequent and range from casual Bradley Basketball pre-game buffets to multiple course fine dining prior to a show or the symphony. Last month, the amazing Chef Andrea and her staff whipped up an enchanting St. Patrick's Day buffet. The Club also hosts the annual George Washington Day Banquet, bringing national guest speakers to Peoria for over 100 years.

This year the Creve Coeur Club celebrates 129-years and will have a **Founder's Day Celebration** on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, with keynote speaker Devon Harris, member of the first Jamaican Olympic Bobsled team that inspired the movie, "Cool Runnings," hosted at Bradley University. The Creve Coeur Club recently announced their new General Manager, Tricia Custer, and are also excited to share the news of Executive Chef Leo Carney joining the team. These appointments along with the move to the iconic riverfront location has opened up many new opportunities for the club. The space accommodates larger crowds, and the extended kitchen space is a dream come true.

To find out how you can become a member of the oldest but newest private club in town, visit the website at www.crevecoeurclub.org. Follow their amazing events on Facebook: @Creve Coeur Club at the River Station.

Property for Sale

Condo for Sale

401 SW Water St., Unit 404



Industrial meets chic inside this luxury condo with river views and custom design. You will love the vibe at 401 Water, one of the most upscale urban living options in Central Illinois!

This condo has been meticulously maintained and the pride of ownership shines bright! Rustic hard wood floors throughout this 2300 sq. ft. open floor plan with a slate tiled kitchen floor, amazing master suite and ensuite, 50 ft. wall with nearly floor-to-ceiling oversized windows, exposed brick, high ceilings, ample natural light, TWO private balconies, and so much more! The list of custom features is long, and the kitchen is in a class of its own, all of the appliances stay with the sale of the home. Laundry in unit.

Come see why so many are investing in Peoria's Downtown Riverfront & Warehouse District, you will love everything this area offers, just steps away! Listed at \$394,900, 2 bed/2 bath. To make your move to a luxury condo downtown, contact Jared O Brien, (309) 256-4374, www.obrienteam@malooftrealty.com.

Community Outreach Spotlight

Peoria Rescue Ministries



Peoria Rescue Ministries is more than a mission. It is a gospel-centered ministry of mercy that creates pathways out of poverty

through Jesus with their neighbors in need. Peoria Rescue Ministries has been serving the poor and those in need since 1955. Through their five areas of ministry, they provide food, shelter, clothing, counseling, pregnancy & parenting services, and renewal programs to the people of Central Illinois. Based in downtown Peoria at 1119 SW Adams Street, they are community-minded, looking beyond their own ministry to the community at large.

One of their special ministries that interested us this spring is their pallet recycling and wood mulch enterprise. As part of their long-term recovery program, residents provide a valuable service to the community by recycling thousands of tons of wood annually. Through the program, men and women gain job experience and a small financial allowance as they work to repair reusable pallets, dismantle pallets for parts, build pallets, and grind unusable material for landscaping mulch. This work program also gives the participants the opportunity to contribute to ministry while helping the environment, learn marketable job skills, enhance self-esteem, develop a work ethic, and obtain life skills. You can help support the men and women in the long-term recovery program by



purchasing your landscape mulch from their enterprise venture, Peoria Mulch. To learn more about this service, visit the website at www.peoriamulch.com.

To make a donation to this essential non-profit service organization and to learn more about their vision, mission, and all five areas of ministry, visit the Peoria Rescue Ministries website at www.peoriarescue.org. The breadth of services offered is incredible and very much appreciated!

Feature Article

Peoria Park District Events: Behind the Scenes



The Peoria RiverFront properties are owned by the City of Peoria and are managed and programmed by the Peoria Park District under an intergovernmental agreement that dates back to the 1990's.

The Peoria Park District has an **Events team** that consists of four full-time staff members, plus various seasonal employees, as well as a **Park Maintenance team** that consists of a full-time RiverFront Park Manager and support staff. The Park Maintenance team is responsible for the day-to-day tasks within the Park such as mowing, trash removal, snow removal, and beautification, among many other duties. The Events Team oversees all programmed activity that occurs within the RiverFront's various properties. Each of these teams are responsible for the behind-the-scenes work to get the space ready for events, oftentimes, days in advance, and late into the evening and early morning hours after the events' conclusion.

RiverFront's Spaces

RiverFront Park has various spaces within the park that have the ability to host events of all different sizes.



- **CEFCU Center Stage at the Landing** is the most heavily used area and features an Amphitheatre-like setting with the Illinois River serving as a backdrop. With a capacity of 2,200, this space hosts various concerts, private events, and is utilized for the majority of festivals.



- **Festival Park** is aptly named as the host for annual festivals such as Peoria Irish Fest, Oktoberfest, and Peoria Blues and Heritage Festival. Festival Park is the largest event space and stretches from the Gateway Building north to the RiverPlex. The Festival Park lawn has also played host to various concerts over the years that require additional space beyond what the CEFCU Center Stage provides.



- **Marshall Plaza** encompasses the area underneath the Gateway Building archway and includes the former Fountain area.

- **Liberty Park** is located at the foot of Liberty Street along the Illinois River, this space transformed when the gazebo was removed in 2017 and is much smaller.



- **RiverFront Village Park** is the “green space” where RiverFront Village once stood. It provides an excellent viewpoint for the annual Red, White, and BOOM 4th of July fireworks and clear views across the Illinois River.

Event Structures

As the park district looks to put together the yearly Events calendar, many different things go into the planning process. Their goal is to provide a diverse and affordable line-up of events each year that contributes to the vibrancy in Peoria, specifically the downtown region.

We are fortunate to have annual festivals and events such as Red, White, and BOOM, Fiesta en el Rio, River City Soul Fest, India Fest, Peoria Irish Fest, Peoria Heritage and Blues Fest, Oktoberfest, and the Fine Art Fair. Many of these festivals (with the exception of Peoria Blues and Heritage Fest, which belongs to Jay Goldberg Events & Entertainment) are produced in partnership with local societies and/or volunteer committees.

The planning process for each of these typically starts in the fall shortly after that year's events conclude. These cultural festivals are the core of their programming, as each highlights different cultures within our diverse community that is generally not reproduced within other events. Building out the rest of the schedule starts from there as the park district works with promoters and other clients to fill concert dates. From there, they look to book a number of their own concerts at the CEFCU Center Stage each year. RiverFront concerts range from national acts to tribute acts to local bands across many different genres.

Pre-COVID, they looked to fill every Friday and Saturday from Memorial Day through September with some sort of event. According to Nick Conrad, Supervisor of RiverFront Events, **“As we look ahead to the 2023 season, and beyond, we are shifting focus towards events that we think will have the most impact. Events are not immune to inflation and rising expenses are a major component we evaluate during the planning process for each event. Our team will continue to follow industry trends and aims to be creative in compiling event schedules on the RiverFront for the community to enjoy.”**

One such event is Park-A-Palooza

June 8-10

New in 2023, Park-A-Palooza will feature three main components – the Guinness Book of Records' World's Largest Bounce House and The Giant Obstacle course, a Drone Light Show and a concert with Grammy Award winning artist, Ashley McBryde, featuring Chase Wright!

This event, which is possible due to grant funding secured by Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth, will feature two new attractions to the region in the World's Largest Bounce House and the Drone Light Show. **“Our planning team spent several meetings throughout the summer and fall (of 2022) vetting different ideas and concepts for the event. We wanted to focus on aspects that could drive visitors to downtown Peoria, including from outside the region, and thought that the conglomeration of each of these activities could do just that. We feel strongly that the Bounce House from**



Big Bounce America and Drone light show are unique and are hoping this will help drive people to the RiverFront in early June. These are often attractions seen in major cities such as Chicago and St. Louis, and we are excited to bring them here to Peoria at very reduced prices (or FREE for the Drone Show)", said Conrad. An event of this nature will require several agencies working together with the Park District from Police, Fire, Public Works, as well as hundreds of volunteers!

Event information can be found by visiting www.peoriaparks.org/pap.

For additional information and/or to ask about volunteer opportunities, call 309-682-1200, visit the Peoria Park District website at www.peoriaparks.org or follow them on Facebook for the most up-to-date calendar/event information @Peoria RiverFront Events/CEFCU Center Stage at the Landing.

Downtown Activities

Peoria Art Guild

Peoria Art & Music Camp, June 26-30: Introduce your child to a lifelong love of visual art and music in this fun-filled week-long camp for young creatives. The first-ever Peoria Art & Music Camp is a great way to introduce students age 6-13, entering grades 1-8, to all that music and visual arts have to offer. Ignite their creativity and strengthen academic skills with a wide variety of fun activities including an introduction to musical instruments, movement, painting, clay, drawing, printmaking,



collaborative projects, STEM activities, museum exhibits, planetarium experience, and more.

Each day will begin and end at the Peoria Riverfront Museum, with students traveling from the museum to the Peoria Symphony Orchestra and the Peoria Art Guild to get a studio experience. The camp will culminate in a Camp Showcase, held on the final Friday afternoon of the camp week.

All are welcome and there's no experience necessary to join in the fun! This camp experience will start kids off on a creative journey in art and music that will last a lifetime. To see a sample day schedule and to register your child for this enriching opportunity, visit the web site at <https://www.peoriaartguild.org/peoria-art-music-camp>.

Visit Peoria!

April showers bring May flowers but also tons of activities in downtown Peoria, both inside and out! We have museums, axe throwing, escape rooms, arcade games, rock climbing, several gyms, hotels with pool party accommodations, music and art events, and more!

In collaboration with Peoria Riverfront Association, we keep an updated pulse on downtown activities. If you are looking for fun with friends and family, make sure to visit our web site at www.downtownpeoria.us/play to plan your next outing.

Update

In last month's newsletter, we featured a DDC contributor, **Red Hat Enterprises, Inc.**, locally owned and operated by Matt and Sara Ruder. Their downtown venue provides entertainment and amusement, doing business as Gone In 60 Escape Games (2017), Gone Axe Throwing (2019), and Gone Mad Rage Room (2020). These collective businesses located at 1001 SW Washington St. and are now known as **Gone Social!**

GONE SOCIAL

Red Hat has created these unique businesses for everyday fun, whether it be date night, family fun, or team building. It's been Red Hat's goal to be a "one-stop shop" since combining Gone Axe Throwing and Gone In 60 Escape Games into one location during the COVID pandemic shutdown. "It (the idea) just sort of came to us out of necessity - the need for one location, one name," says Matt Ruder.

The owners have been working hard to bounce back after the COVID pandemic shutdowns and add more fun things for customers, including adding two more axe lanes and Virtual Reality Escape Games, both opening sometime this month. "With everything in one place and with one goal (to have fun), it just makes sense to have one name," says Sara Ruder. So, go social with Gone Social in the Warehouse District at 1001 SW Washington St.

Peoria Chiefs at Dozer Park

Play Ball! For baseball enthusiasts, here is the 2023 schedule for the Chiefs at Dozer Park. Take in a game or two to show your support for our local team. For more information, visit their website at https://www.milb.com/peoria?fbclid=IwAR0AFLhLQK-MTkwLhI8EsDb6ej9N0fcGGTxDIQwZxbe9cy3-2GpN_0t2ZAU8





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