



DOWNTOWN PEORIA NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2023

DDC Activities

Meet our new board member!



At our March 2nd board meeting, **Pam Howe**, Executive Vice President at Commerce Bank, was appointed to the DDC Board of Directors, filling the Banking & Financial Services seat vacated by Jon Williams. We are excited to welcome Pam to the DDC board and would like to thank Jon Williams for his years of dedicated service, especially as Treasurer and Chair of our Finance Committee. We wish him well in his new position at Caterpillar Inc., and we look forward to working with Pam. With her vast experience in the banking industry, she will be an important asset to our team.

Voice in the Community

The DDC is a trusted advisor for the downtown community. Our board members are asked for their input by city leaders and local media on important matters regarding new business and development. As we begin to see development start up again following the recent COVID 19 pandemic, we are on the ground seeking out opportunities to expand and enhance development. Watch for exciting changes, especially in the Warehouse District and Central Business District in the coming year.

DDC Planning Committee

The DDC Planning Committee continues its work with city and community leaders to make downtown the robust, vibrant city center it once was. Plans are in the works to collaborate on an effort to revitalize the downtown, especially the Central Business District. Our downtown is the cog in the wheel to attract people to the Peoria region. Renewed energy equals renewed growth, and our Planning Committee is committed to making things happen in the downtown.

Contributor Spotlight

Red Hat Enterprises

Red Hat Enterprises, Inc. isn't a corporate giant. They are a small company with big dreams. All it takes is a dream to start. In 2017, owners Sara and Matt Ruder opened Gone in 60 Escape Games, followed by Gone Axe Throwing in 2019 and Gone Mad Rage Room in 2020. At their location in the Warehouse District at 1001 SW Washington Street, the dream just keeps growing. Along with axe throwing, escape games, and a rage room, they have added pinball machines, skeeball, and a punching bag machine. And if that's not a great pull right there, you will be glad to know they have a full bar and kitchen, offering up a wide selection of food and drink along with live music events monthly.



Gone Axe Throwing is Peoria's first and only indoor axe throwing venue and bar that makes you feel right at home in their cozy lodge-like space right in the heart of the Warehouse District. Co-owners Matthew and Sara Ruder's vision is all about creating unique experiences for people to have fun. Their goal is to make you feel safe and comfortable while of course having an amazing experience.



Long before opening and launching their entertainment experiences, Matt and Sara spent hours researching and learning all they could from friends in the industry. The story of how they began is an interesting read at <https://redhatenterprises.com>. They put their heart and soul into their business, with safety a top concern. Everything is monitored for a safe experience. According to Sara, **“It is important to go the extra mile; we wanted to add ambience using elaborate sets and décor that would be welcoming but also challenging. We wanted people to be able to put themselves into a different realm to escape reality for a little while.”**

The space is so popular that corporate groups on occasion rent the entire facility for teambuilding or to simply reward employees. Families with teenagers (having out-grown Monkey Joe's!) find the games a wonderful outlet to spend time together having fun. Sara also tells us, **“We have many guests from out of town, for example, the quad cities, Chicago, Champaign, and Springfield. Some of those towns have similar offerings but they really like what we have to offer in the setting that we have. That makes us feel very good.”**

Coming up on April 4-9 are customer appreciation nights with special activities taking place. Spring Axe Throwing League starts and live music will be going on and maybe a special Easter egg hunt! Other exciting announcements are coming in April as well, so mark your calendar to come down to Red Hat Enterprises in the Warehouse District where you can throw axes, solve escape games, play arcade games, and rage on! Post COVID, this is a great place to let it all loose! We love having Red Hat in our historic Warehouse District where, according to Sara, **“There’s nowhere else that matches our unique brand so well.”** To get your game on, visit <https://www.redhatenterprises.com>.

Space for Lease

MAXAM Building, 316 SW Washington St.





Creative loft-style commercial spaces for lease in downtown Peoria on the edge of the Warehouse and Riverfront Districts and adjacent to the Peoria Riverfront Museum and the Caterpillar Visitor Center. Located in the MAXAM Building, a six-story commercial and residential condo building.

The entire 2nd floor is 19,429 SF and is available for lease as a full floor for a single tenant use or as individual spaces. The floor is set up with a common hallway with access to the two passenger elevators, common men's and women's ADA accessible restrooms, and the building's freight/service elevator.

The Liberty Suites consist of two private suites that are 299 SF & 368 SF. Individual offices also available for lease ranging from 163 SF up to 511 SF.

The Distillery Suite is a 5,492 SF true loft-style space with exposed brick and timber, tall 14' ceilings, and natural light from its large arched window line. This space is in the part of the MAXAM Building that was built in the late 1800s by the Oakford and Fahnstock Company.

The Washington Suite is a 3,242 SF of carpeted finished space accentuated by mushroom columns, brick and finished walls, and abundant light from the room length industrial style windows.

The Waterhouse Suite is an 8,537 SF open floor plan with 15' ceilings, abundant light, an indoor balcony with a beautiful view of downtown Peoria, and an exclusive outdoor balcony with stunning views of the Illinois River.

Contact agent Will Hayes | 309-643-0717 | Willhayes@josephcamper.com for rental rate information for different units.

Space for Lease in Twin Towers Mall



If you are looking for a turn-key restaurant space right across from the civic center, near hotels, and major employers, look at the space recently vacated by the Creve Coeur Club in the Twin Towers Mall at 456 Fulton Street. This elegant restaurant is an ample 4,854 square feet with a parking deck onsite. **For information on this primo dining space, contact Erik Reader at (309) 495-5976.**

Community Outreach Spotlight

Salvation Army



The Peoria Salvation Army is extremely grateful after a successful Tree of Lights Campaign which raised money to support their efforts to help people in the Peoria area who are struggling to get by. Because of the community's generosity, the 2022 campaign in Peoria raised \$2,110,483.44, exceeding their goal for the year.

“We are very blessed to be able to help our neighbors who can't put food on their tables; who have nowhere to lay their head at night; and who can't make ends meet,” said Major Heath Sells, Peoria Area Commander for The Salvation Army. **“We can only do this work because of the generous support given by those individuals and businesses who join us in doing the most good.”**

The money raised during the annual **Tree of Lights Campaign** stays in the community and is used to provide food, shelter, childcare, emergency assistance and case management services to help people break the cycle of poverty. As the need continues to grow in the Peoria area, support from the community allows The Salvation Army to be there 24 hours a day, seven days a week for people needing assistance. The Salvation Army in Peoria has seen an overall increase in services requested this past year. During 2022, The Salvation Army provided food for 6,100 people through their Food Pantries, which was a 123% increase over the number assisted in 2021. Thirty-seven percent of these households were seeking help for the first time. When looking at their Family Shelter, in 2022, they provided 9,070 nights of lodging, assisting 115% more families and 73% more children than in 2021.

“Our goal of raising \$2 million this year reflected the total money needed to provide the vital services that we do each day,” continued Major Sells. **“The poverty rate in Peoria is higher than the national average – and 15.6% of the children who live here face food insecurity. The need is great in our community and the contributions we have received will have a direct impact on people in need right here in the Peoria area.”**

There are many ways to make a difference for people in need.

- You can donate to The Salvation Army and ask for the money to go for the greatest need.
- You can donate food for the food pantry to help The Salvation Army provide groceries for people who would otherwise go without.
- You can volunteer your time. help in the food pantry; help in the kitchen; help with a youth class.
- For more information on how to support The Salvation Army or to volunteer, go to www.SAPeoria.org or reach out to Tri-County Development Team at (309) 655-7220.

Let's Get Rowing with CREW309!

Have you heard about CREW309?



It is a nonprofit group and rowing team supporting patients and survivors of breast cancer. They have recently relocated their operation to the growing Warehouse District in downtown Peoria. Their mission is to empower women to lower their breast cancer risk through the sport of rowing. While most of the women on the team have battled breast cancer, they also welcome women with high-risk genetic mutations, called previvors, to join their ranks and lower their risk of developing breast cancer in the future. Nearly all of the members have never rowed before joining the team, so they welcome survivors and previvors of all ages and abilities.

Their member testimonies for CREW309 and for their new location in the Warehouse District are so inspiring:



Stefanie: CREW309 has given me an opportunity to be a part of something larger than myself. We are a sisterhood through a dark and menacing and scary disease, yet this sisterhood provides us an Avenue to battle and defend ourselves against it physically with exercise, mentally with group challenges such as meter challenges, and strengthens our bonds with activities that allows us to give back to our community. The new space is a more centralized location to better serve our members.

Terri: There is a recommendation that 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical aerobic activity each week lowers your risk of many ailments including the recurrence of breast cancer. I am not by nature an exerciser and had a hard time getting motivated. After having breast cancer, I had a wakeup call to become more proactive in my health. I heard about CREW309 from a friend and thought to give it a try. I love rowing with my fellow breast cancer survivors. Participating gives me the benefits of the physical aspect but also sharing in the commonality we have, the friendship, the encouragement, and support. Our new space at the Contemporary Art Center building is so inviting but also gives me that similar feeling that we have finally grown up into the adult world and moved out of our childhood home into a space we can call our own.



Jennifer: I love our new space! It allows us to become a “neighbor” to the many businesses in the area. We support the local shops in and around Water St. It also gives us more exposure to the community to learn about us. CREW309 has helped me do strong things, like row for 30 minutes! We all come together to work on our physical activity to maintain our health. Our summers are very special! As we row on the river, it’s so empowering to see us grow and get stronger and row further each time! We can do hard things!!

Mary: CREW309 is a sisterhood of cancer survivors who lift each other up whenever we are together. The trainers have taught me how to row on an erg with the goal of rowing on the water this summer. Everyone is supportive, and we encourage each other. We are a unique group, and I’m forever grateful for this opportunity so close to home. I love our new place on Water Street!

Since membership is free, all of their programming relies strictly on donations. They have enjoyed partnering with many small businesses, raising awareness and funding for the team while supporting the local community. If you are interested in learning more about CREW309 or partnering with them for a fundraiser, visit their website at <https://crew309.org/about-us/>. For more information on how to join or support the team, visit <https://crew309.org/contact-us/>.

Downtown Activities

Visit Downtown Peoria!

It's March! Spring into activities in downtown Peoria! 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 <https://www.downtownpeoria.us/play> to plan your next outing.

Announcements

Peoria Magazine

The March 2023 issue of Peoria Magazine is dedicated to “Reviving Peoria’s Downtown.” With stories featuring downtown businesses, future plans, and commentary from community leaders, we are very hopeful for the future of our downtown.

Our very own DDC president/CEO, Michael Freilinger, 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 their website at www.peoriamagazine.com/. We applaud Peoria Magazine for the great work they do to promote downtown Peoria and the entire region.

Bob Michel Bridge Upgrade Schedule

Have you heard?

The Bob Michel Bridge is getting an upgrade! Construction starts March 13th, so the bridge will close to vehicles but remain open to pedestrians and cyclists through November 2023. We reported on this bridge upgrade in collaboration with IDOT in our February 2022 newsletter. Learn more about the history of the bridge and this project at <https://bit.ly/3lu8afj>.



www.downtownpeoria.us

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