



# DOWNTOWN PEORIA NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024

---

## DDC Activities

### Annual Meeting Coming Up!

This is always an exciting time of year for the DDC as we prepare for our annual meeting in May. We will be reappointing a few of our directors whose 3-year terms are up and appointing new officers, specifically welcoming a new Chairman of the Board as Bob Anderson's term as Chair expires. Our new Chair will appoint committee members as well as committee chairpersons.

We look forward to introducing our new officers to you next month. Their leadership will ensure continued growth for downtown Peoria.

## Special feature:

### Bob Michel Bridge – Peoria to East Peoria

As the Bob Michel bridge connects Downtown Peoria to East Peoria, we offer our perspective on how complementary the communities are to each other. Rather than a contrast and comparison, the communities meld together to offer a fulfilling plethora of amenities. Let's take a quick look:

# Living Options



While Downtown Peoria has seen tremendous growth in residential living spaces that boost the economy on both sides, East Peoria is beginning to build up. Luxury apartments are going up fast in the Levee District and will offer upscale amenities along with covered parking, all within walking distance to shops and restaurants.

Meanwhile in Peoria, condos and apartment complexes abound. While the Central Business District is home to the Twin Towers condo complex, Civic Center Plaza, Sandmeyer Flats, and Marquette Apartments, the burgeoning Warehouse District offers Persimmon Lofts, Murray Place, Cooperage 214, Winkler Lofts, 401 Water, and Adams & Oak, leasing this June. And, 500-800 more units will be opening within the next few years as we continue to redevelop historic buildings!

All Peoria Downtown properties are within walking distance via the Bob Michel bridge to East Peoria!

## Hotels



Whether you are in town for a conference, a sporting event, or visiting the area, you can find accommodations within close proximity to your event. While Embassy Suites rises on the East Peoria side along with Fairfield Inn, Residence Inn and Holiday Inn Express (full-service), Downtown Peoria offers the iconic Peoria Marriott, Pere Marquette as well as Four Points by Sheraton, both full-service hotels, as well as Staybridge Suites.

All are within walking distance to the Peoria Civic Center and Dozer Park. Other hotels exist farther out in both communities; however, the aforementioned are within 1-2 miles of event centers.

## Shopping



While Downtown Peoria offers locally owned specialty shops, within walking distance across the bridge, East Peoria offers national stores, most notably Target, Kroger, Aldi, Ross, Ulta, and Costco.

Whether shopping for everyday sundries at the big-box stores or unique gifts and apparel, both can be found within a few miles from each other.

In the Riverfront and Warehouse District in Downtown Peoria, you will find locally owned RC Outfitters, Fiber Universe, and Rambler, offering quality products, as well as Sous Chef, which offers freshly prepared to-go meals as well as locally grown produce, meats and more.

## Restaurants/bars



Many chain restaurants populate the Levee District in East Peoria while locally owned restaurants populate Downtown Peoria. If you are looking for a unique dining experience and/or entertaining nightlife, Downtown Peoria offers both. Many bars and restaurants complement each other with their own style and offerings in the Central Business District as well as the Warehouse District, most notably Ardor Bread & Provision and Saffron Social, both recently receiving national recognition and awards. The restaurant/bar scene downtown is conveniently walkable!

## Coffee shops



Who doesn't like a great cup of coffee? Downtown Peoria offers up popular coffee shops, such as Zion, Intuition Coffee + Juice, and CxT Roasting Company, to name a few, while East Peoria has the convenience of drive-throughs, such as Starbucks and Panera Bread.

# Libraries



We are very fortunate to have public libraries on both sides of the river with access to information at our fingertips. Visit the Peoria Public Library on Main Street in Peoria and the Fondulac Library in the Levee District in East Peoria to take advantage of their many resources and free programs.

## Physical fitness



Gyms abound all around! From EastSide Centre and Planet Fitness in East Peoria to Winks Iron Lot, RiverPlex Recreation Center, CrossFit, First Ascent, River City Crossfit and Soulside Healing Arts in Downtown Peoria, we've got you moving! In addition to gyms, both riverfronts offer scenic walking and biking paths!

## Events & Activities



Almost too numerous to mention, arts, events and activities are happening all the time on both sides of the river. We have an extensive music scene! While bars and restaurants offer indoor entertainment, we especially love our outdoor stages in the spring and summer. In addition, the Peoria Riverfront Association holds a farmers market every Saturday, May through September, along the iconic riverfront while East Peoria holds a weekly evening market at the Levee District. For the holidays, tradition brings out the East Peoria Festival of Lights Parade while Peoria boasts the Santa Claus Parade, the oldest in the country! Carle Clinic sponsors the largest-in-Central-Illinois July 4th fireworks display to be enjoyed by all on both sides of the river.

Unique to East Peoria is the Par-a-dice Casino for those of you who like to try your luck on the docked gambling boat. The Par-a-dice Hotel is on the same property, offering a full restaurant as well.

## Arts & Culture



Peoria is an art lover's paradise. Downtown Peoria is home to the Contemporary Arts Center, a cultural hub that features the innovative artwork of living artists at the forefront of today's art scene in three galleries as well as live music. The CAC is home to renowned artist Preston Jackson. In addition, the Peoria Art Guild presents a diverse array of fine art, offers an art and music summer camp as well as annual memberships and a litany of art classes. The Guild also hosts a spectacular fine arts fair every September along the riverfront. On May 18th, the Guild will have a grand opening for the Sculpture Walk Peoria, a biennial, juried, outdoor exhibit offering sculptors opportunities to showcase and sell their creations, while enhancing the cultural environment of Peoria and providing opportunities to educate the public. Downtown has also been home to Wheel Art Pottery studio for many years now, where folks of all ages get to experience making pottery first hand through many beginners and intermediate classes, events, and field trips including kids and teens summer camps! The Peoria Symphony offers yet another way to take in and appreciate the arts!

## Amenities



Downtown Peoria is proud to be the home of many amenities that serve not only the Peoria area but also the entire region!

Among the many things you will find to do is the Peoria RiverFront Market from May through September plus extra seasonal markets; Dozer Park, home of the Chiefs baseball team; Peoria Civic Center, offering year-round entertainment from national touring musicians and artists to the Peoria Rivermen hockey team and Bradley Basketball; Peoria Riverfront Museum, hosting spectacular art exhibits and featuring a world-class planetarium and giant-screen theater; and Caterpillar Visitors Center, THE place to experience the largest construction equipment in the world—Go, Big Yellow!

## Worship



We would be remiss if we failed to mention the many places of worship in Downtown Peoria and in East Peoria. People of all faiths can find spiritual fulfillment at our many worship centers dotting the skyline with their beautiful spires and symbols.

## Employment



Last but certainly not least, are places of employment. Our two largest employers, Caterpillar Inc. and OSF Healthcare, span both sides of the river and branch out in many other areas both near and far. OSF Healthcare has the biggest presence in Downtown Peoria, recently moving their headquarters to a newly renovated, historic building in the Central Business District and has opened a state-of-the-art call center just down the street from it as well as their new OSF Cancer Care Center in the Medical District. Carle Clinic is the other imposing medical complex in Downtown Peoria, employing hundreds. In addition, both Downtown Peoria and East Peoria offer large- and small-business employment opportunities. Several innovative, incubator facilities are available to help jumpstart new business ventures for budding entrepreneurs.



We hope you find this snapshot not only helpful but exciting and encouraging! The DDC is proud to work alongside many not-for-profit organizations and government entities to continue to develop our side of the river as East Peoria endeavors to develop theirs. We would like to give a shout out to our dedicated sponsors who make our work possible. When you have a chance, take a walk or bike ride across the Bob Michel bridge to do your own “complementary” tour. [Discover Peoria and East Peoria!](#)

## Downtown Activities

### Peoria RiverFront Market



Opening day is May 18th! The 2024 RiverFront Market opens Saturday, May 18th, at 8:00 a.m. for another fantastic season with over 100 vendors selling a variety of local produce, food, flowers and art!

The RiverFront Market is excited to welcome several new vendors this year along with many of your favorites. Peoria’s RiverFront Market is a producers-only market, so all items are grown, made or created by the person selling it and what this means for you is a different market each week as the growing season moves along.

A special thank you to the 2024 sponsors: Health Alliance, Camp Bow Wow, Leaf Filter, Nelson Chiropractic, OSF Healthcare, nuEra, Renewal by Andersen, and US Cellular.

The market is open every Saturday, May 18 through September 24, 8 a.m. – noon, in the 200 block of Water Street. Hope to see you there!

# Play Ball!



Peoria Chiefs are in full swing so take in a ballgame on a sunny, spring day. Visit their website at <https://www.milb.com/peoria/news/peoria-chiefs-release-2024-home-schedule> for a full schedule. Dozer Park will host 66 home games in 2024.

# Visit Peoria!

**VisitDowntownPeoria.com**

Looking for something to do?

Dining, Nightlife, Art, Shopping,  
Calendar of Events and  
Entertainment

In collaboration with Peoria Riverfront Association, we keep a pulse on downtown activities, and there are activities galore! Venture downtown this spring and check out the many music venues, such as the CEFCU Center Stage on the riverfront, the Civic Center, Contemporary Arts Center, and many fine restaurants and bars. Also, Chiefs tickets are now on sale so take the family out to the ballgame! And don't forget to visit the Peoria Riverfront Museum where there is something new and exciting every week! For more details, visit our web site at [www.downtownpeoria.us/play](http://www.downtownpeoria.us/play).



[www.downtownpeoria.us](http://www.downtownpeoria.us)

**Downtown Development Corporation of Peoria (DDC)**

Michael J. Freilinger, President/CEO | e: michael@downtownpeoria.us | m: 309.369.6038  
403 NE Jefferson Ave, Peoria, IL 61603-3725



@Downtown Development Corporation of Peoria