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# DOWNTOWN PEORIA

## NEWSLETTER

### April 2021

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

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## DDC ACTIVITIES

### New Board Member

The DDC welcomes new board member, Zach Oyler, who will be replacing Sid Ruckriegel. Zach Oyler, a City Council Member At-large, will replace Mr. Ruckriegel in one of the City of Peoria's three founders' seats. We would like to thank Mr. Ruckriegel for his leadership for the past three years and wish him well. **Welcome, Zach, to the DDC board!** We look forward to working with you.

### Property Exchange with the City of Peoria

The DDC and the City of Peoria have exchanged property in the Warehouse District. The exchange was made to aid the City with adding parking in the Warehouse District and to help further development on SW Adams Street. The DDC was in possession of 807 SW Washington Street, while the City owned the lot at 225 SW State Street. The DDC will be offering the State Street property for sale for new development.

## LOFTIE Spaces & Events

Developer Larry Winkler recently finished a project named WINKLER PLACE with 36 loft apartments, and approximately 12-13 thousand feet of retail space. The business, located at 709/725 South Washington has leased and renamed the building “LOFTIE Spaces & Events and is owned by AIRBNB specialist Tia Bailey from Seattle, Washington.



Last month, the DDC staff had the opportunity to tour the new development. Ms. Bailey led us on a tour of the space that includes a combination of short-term rental lodging, event venue, dog friendly coffee shop, a private conference room, as well as a selfie station “fun” room for photos, a boutique and more. We welcome LOFTIE to the Warehouse District. Watch our newsletter for more about LOFTIE’s proprietor, Tia Bailey, and the grand opening slated for this spring.

## Warehouse District Expansion

Michael Freiling, President/CEO of the DDC, recently spoke with the Peoria Journal Star regarding future expansion of the Warehouse District in downtown Peoria. As the Warehouse District and nearby Water Street have developed in recent years, the post office area at 95 State Street also has emerged as prime real estate. City officials have asked lawmakers for help in securing \$10M to relocate the post office. Proximity to the river and the Warehouse District makes the site appealing for apartments or condos.

According to Freiling, “Rehabilitation of historic buildings is the focus of the Peoria Warehouse District, but there also appears to be interest in newly constructed housing there. We’re not in any big hurry on this. We’ve got plenty of time. This is a long-term strategic move.” The entire article about the possibility of moving the post office and long-term plans for the property on State Street was published in the Peoria Journal Star.

# Housing Growth in Downtown Peoria

Despite challenges posed by the pandemic, Downtown Peoria will see residential growth in 2021. Michael Freilinger, executive director and CEO of the Peoria Downtown Development Corp. (DDC), said an additional 146 housing units are expected to hit the market this year, with 120 of them located at the former Builders Warehouse location, 812 SW Washington St., that's expected to start leasing this summer. **“That will put the number of residential units in Downtown Peoria at 516 by the end of the year,”** said Freilinger. That's a 138 percent increase in downtown units since Freilinger took over at the DDC six years ago. Read more of Mr. Freilinger's interview with Peoria Public Radio at [www.PeoriaPublicRadio.org](http://www.PeoriaPublicRadio.org).

## NEW BUSINESS

### Smiley Graphix + Wild Routed Mercantile

Everyone needs a reason to smile these days, and one local business gives you two good reasons to do so!

**1. Smiley Graphix Studios:**

an experienced branding and development company and

**2. Wild Routed Mercantile:**

a new passion project. Both are located at 820 SW Adams Street, Suite C in Downtown Peoria's Warehouse District.



Smiley Graphix is ready to help your business succeed! Co-owners John and De Ingles and their team of experts are ready to listen first, build second and become an extended part of your trusted team when creating a custom website, brand identity, or eco-friendly package design. Their strategic approach to visual communication will help express your company's unique brand, with the result being a comprehensive marketing solution that connects you to your customers. **“We help strengthen growing companies and re-imagine established brands,”** explains brand identity specialist De Ingles. **“Above all, our joy is in helping clients tell their brand stories in a way that is delightfully memorable.”** Check out their site at [www.sgraphix.com](http://www.sgraphix.com).

John and De also co-own Wild Routed, an online e-commerce store. “This business is a passion project and it allows us to give 10% back to our National Park Service through the sale of our merchandise,” says De. “Growing up in the Midwest found us trekking through the woods, spending time in the garden with family, and of course, sharing stories around a cozy campfire. These are some of our fondest memories. Each hand-drawn design is a visual reflection of precious time spent with the people we love and the beautiful outdoor places we wander.” For graphic tees and hoodies, stickers, corporate gift packages or reunion tees with designs to connect us to each other and nature, visit the web site at [www.wildrouted.com](http://www.wildrouted.com). You may just find your wings, too!

## PROPERTY FOR SALE

### 724 SW Adams Street

Originally built as the Mitchell Hotel, this 18,000 SF, 3-story building built in 1895 has also been known as the Julian Hotel, Ray Hotel, and Grace Hotel.

This property is available for vertical development in the heart of the historic Warehouse District with many restaurants nearby. Best of all, it is located across the street from Dozer Park, home of the Peoria Chiefs, and is just two blocks away from the Peoria Riverfront.



The building features many historic architectural details, such as original exterior/interior brick surfaces, one-over-one wood sash windows, central bay windows grouped together under one lintel. The central bay has a parapet with a rectangular inset and concrete scrolled caps which are repeated at the roofline’s corners of the building. The building boasts a cornice of low-relief brick modillion blocks above the third floor; above this row are dentils; above this is a brick soldier course at the roofline. Historic Tax Credits would be available for redevelopment of this historic icon. The asking price is \$200,000. For more information on this property, **contact Michael J. Freilinger | (309) 369-6038 | michael@downtownpeoria.us.**

## 726 SW Adams Street

Adjacent to the property for sale at 724 SW Adams Street, this property is currently used as a surface parking lot in the historic Warehouse District.

The approximate size of the property is 0.250 acres, dimensions are 60' X 181', with 25 parking stalls (including 1 handicap stall).

Located at the NE corner of SW Adams and Oak Streets, this is a prime piece of real estate surrounded by retail stores, restaurants, Dozer Park, and the historic Peoria Riverfront, and is available for vertical development.

The asking price is \$200,000. For more information on this property, **contact Michael J. Freiling | (309) 369-6038 | michael@downtownpeoria.us.**

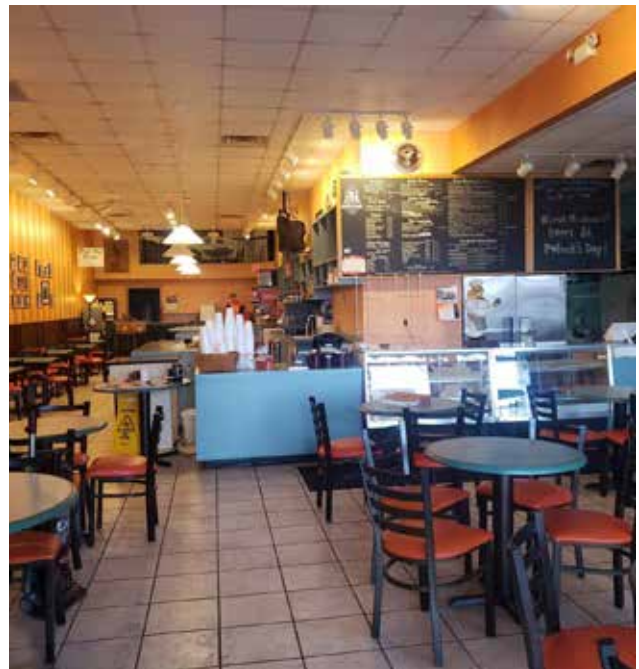


## 107-109 SW Adams Street

Home of Adams Street Cafe, an iconic cafe loved by all who live and/or work downtown Peoria.

The building is 3,224 Sq. Ft. (two storefronts) and is conveniently located across the street from Peoria County Courthouse, Caterpillar and OSF Healthcare offices.

All FF&E included. The asking price is \$409,000. To revitalize this popular cafe or make it brand new, **contact Michael O'Bryan, RE/MAX Unlimited Commercial | 309-635-8901 michaelobryan@remax.net.**



# PROPERTY FOR LEASE

## Adams & Oak NMTC

The DDC is assisting Baldovin Construction/Development in getting funding for their Adams & Oak project, located at 800 and 810 SW Adams Street, and 810 SW Adams Street. This is a strategic property for the Warehouse District because of its scale and location, on the corner of SW Adams & Oak Street, kitty-corner to Dozer Park.



Baldovin has an opportunity to get New Market Tax Credits (NMTC), which are the best type of federal incentives a project can get, making the project financially feasible and allowing them to pass more incentives to their tenants. If they are successful in getting this funding, it will allow for faster completion of this project. To strengthen their case for inclusion in the Community Development Entity's (CDE) NMTC portfolio, it would be helpful, if not essential, to have a healthcare operation as a tenant in their building.

According to Roxanne Ibe at Baldovin Development, "We have a fresh food market and a fitness studio interested, but we need an additional medical/clinic tenant to further strengthen our chances for the NMTC. The exact use doesn't have to be anything specific; it just has to fall under the 'healthcare/medical umbrella'. It could be a small private practice, women's clinic, low-income clinic, etc. Cosmetic-related services like plastic surgery and chiropractic practices would not work. Because this healthcare-related tenant would help us obtain these funds, we would be able to give them a substantial break on the rent rate, help with their build out, pass more incentives to all our tenants, etc. Obtaining these funds could really be the push we need to move the project forward."

**Contact Roxanne Ibe, Baldovin Construction Co., Architectural Designer,  
Cell: 309.696.4745 | Office: 309.437.0201 | 810 SW. Adams St. | Peoria**

# NEW DEVELOPMENT

## 700 Main Street

Has anyone noticed the huge hole in the ground at 700 Main Street? Once a bank building and then as an extension of First United Methodist Church (FUMC) of Peoria, the building has come down, leaving a large piece of potential for downtown Peoria. According to Dan Philips, Director of Community Ministries and Missions at FUMC, “We had improved the building half a dozen years or so ago for a tenant and they stayed for a couple years, but they were then bought out by a bigger company that closed out the Peoria location. We advertised it for lease for a number of years but didn’t get any response. We also offered it out to different agencies but did not find any interested takers. We were paying for insurance and utilities on an empty structure so we decided to take it down to be good stewards of our money.”

Dan says that as of this time they are exploring options and have a small group carefully looking at the future of this location. They plan to do some landscaping to bring green space to Main Street as well as provide an outlet for local sculpture artists. First United Methodist Church has Foster Gallery of Fine Arts within the church, and participates in the First Friday gallery walks.

The church hopes to resume their Morton Square Soccer Ministry this year (their 23rd year), bringing back a free quality recreational program to the near north side for kids 5 - 12 from early June through late July. FUMC had several outdoor services last year (when indoor was not possible) and may do this again both in their parking lot and possibly offsite where they can reach out to their neighbors with both an outdoor service and public picnic afterwards (socially distanced and following Covid guidelines). To learn more about FUMC, 116 NE Perry Avenue, Peoria, IL and their ministries and outreach programs, visit their web site at: [www.fumcpeoria.org/](http://www.fumcpeoria.org/).



# Downtown Resident Spotlight

## Sally Stevenson

Meet Sally Stevenson, who currently lives at Marquette Place, located at 701 Main Street in the heart of the city of Peoria. Marquette Place is a beautifully restored historic building constructed in 1924 with all of the modern day amenities, including stunning views of downtown Peoria and the riverfront. Originally from Kansas City, Sally works as an Advocate Supervisor for CASA of the Tenth Judicial Circuit, an organization that improves the lives of children in the court and social services system in surrounding counties by pairing them with volunteer Advocates.



Sally has lived and worked downtown Peoria for two and a half years. When asked what brought her to downtown Peoria, she replied, “I had completely purged all of my worldly goods and didn’t want the hassle of home care anymore! My job is at the courthouse, and the thought of walking to work was exciting to me. I am living my life backwards. I got married young and never had the experience of living in the city or an apartment. I found the thought exciting!”

Sally said that she came across Marquette Place while browsing online and definitely likes older buildings because they have so much charm! As far as affordability, she says that she found downtown living options to be about the same as the prices of places located in North Peoria.

When asked about a sense of community in the downtown, Sally states, “Since the past year, I have been working and living in my apartment, so community life has been halted. However, the year before it was fun to be able to walk out my door and go get something to eat or meet a friend for a drink. Having the Riverfront is fun as well. I am looking forward to no floods and no COVID to enjoy the festivals and music again.”



Sally states that she plans on staying downtown and looks forward to businesses opening back up. She would like to see more food and entertainment options downtown. When asked about new development in the Warehouse District, she replied, “I hope it continues to bring in more businesses and places to eat, drink, dance and listen to music.”

We at the DDC agree with Sally that the downtown needs more businesses, and we are continually advocating for that. We also agree when she says, “I like the feel of when things are busy!”

## HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT

Photos and article - courtesy of Peoria Public Library

### The Federal Building

The Federal Building is a structure that many Peorians and visitors to the city pass by frequently. When constructed, it housed the U.S. Post Office on the first floor and other federal governmental agencies throughout the rest of the building, with the U.S. District Court being the other most identifiable component. It was completed in 1938 and was built in an architectural style that was described as contemporary or modern at the time. Today, it would be identified as Moderne. The 1938 Federal Building replaced a structure known as the “Government Building” and was constructed in 1885.



When constructed, both the exterior and the interior of the Federal Building would have appeared not only modern, but almost palatial with a generous use of fine construction materials. A description from 1938 describes the building as thus, “A contemporary style of architecture is used with limestone exterior except the alley elevation which has a facing of gray brick. A polished granite base extends around the building on all three street fronts. The entrances are designed with doors and ornamental grills in bronze. The Monroe Street entrances lead into large vestibules with direct

access to a Post Office lobby which is 20'-2" wide and 180' long. The Main and Hamilton Street entrances lead into public lobbies at the east and west ends of the building. Passenger elevators and stairs give direct access to the other Governmental Departments."

The interior of the building, a total 36,917 sf, was also fitted with facings of rose marble covering the walls of first floor lobbies and corridors at the cost of \$30,000 in 1938 dollars. Perhaps the most striking features of the Federal Building's exterior are the four sculptural relief panels sculpted by artist Freeman L. Schoolcraft that represent the postal service, agriculture, industry and Peoria's Native American heritage. The cost of the Federal Building in 1938 dollars was close to \$1.2 million, which included the cost to purchase additional parcels of land for an enlarged footprint over the previous Government Building. The \$1.2 million price tag would be equivalent to \$22 million today.



The Federal Building ceased to house a U.S. Post Office in 1981 when the Peoria's new State Street post office opened. It was relocated to the new location because of space limitations, lack of parking and some obsolete systems. The change in location was received by many citizens unfavorably at the time. Today there is some discussion of once again moving the location of the U.S. Post Office. If this occurs, it is likely that the current post office will be razed to make way for new development.

The opening of the new post office in 1981 caused the 1938 building to sit mostly vacant for several years until the late 1980s when it was refurbished for expanded use by the courts and other governmental agencies. Although the interior of Peoria's 1938 Federal Building is not as easily accessed today as when it was a U.S. Post Office, the exterior is well maintained and available for public inspection at the corner of Main and Monroe. Next time you are in the area, take the time to admire this excellent example of Moderne architecture in Peoria's downtown.

# DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES

## Peoria Riverfront Market

OPENING DAY for **Peoria's RiverFront Market, Saturday, May 22, 8 am - noon**, along Peoria's beautiful RiverFront, 200 block of Water Street. Vendors old and new are signing up so look for your favorites! Follow the market on their Facebook page and let the countdown begin!



## First Ascent

If you know someone who hasn't tried First Ascent Climbing yet in downtown Peoria, check out their guided sessions with one of their expert guides that includes a free 1-week membership! Visit [www.faclimbing.com/peoria/first-visit/new-climbers/](http://www.faclimbing.com/peoria/first-visit/new-climbers/).



## The Cornerstone Moonlight Market

Beginning this spring, Obed & Isaac's will host the Cornerstone Moonlight Market adjacent to the Beer Garden at the corner of Monroe and Spalding in Downtown Peoria. The reoccurring evening event will run monthly on the **first Thursday of each month** from May 6th through October 7th and will feature local arts, crafts, and products in a street fair, open-air environment. The market will support local charities by donating all vendor fees to a chosen not-for-profit organization. Call 217-522-3123, ext. 1007 or visit [www.obedandisaacs.com](http://www.obedandisaacs.com) for more information.

