

DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
of Peoria

www.downtownpeoria.us

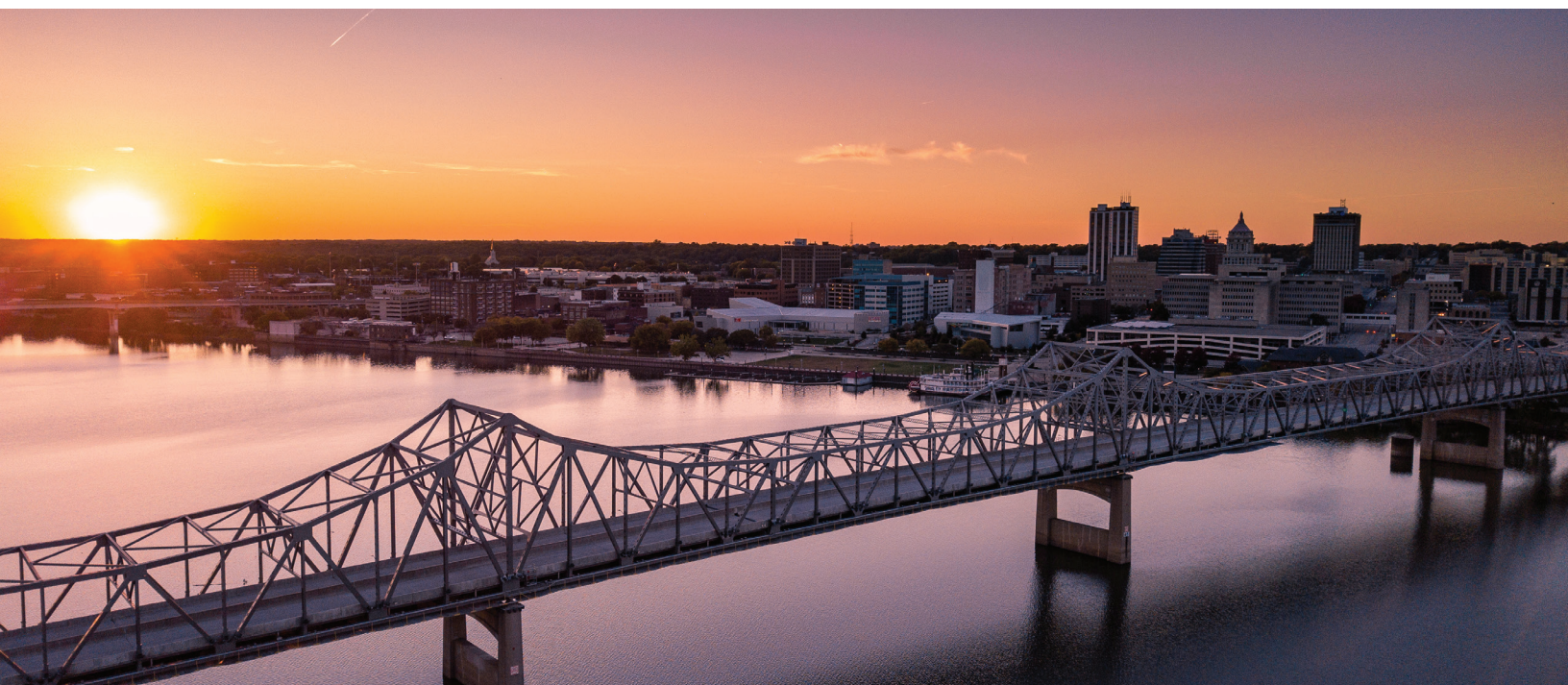
DOWNTOWN PEORIA NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024

DDC Activities

DDC/City of Peoria Collaboration

The DDC and City of Peoria staff are collaborating on a strategy to ensure that downtown Peoria puts its best foot forward in welcoming all to an exciting, vibrant downtown. As we work to ensure safety, beautify our city, and help promote commercial and residential growth, it is our partnership that makes it all work. Watch as we work together to grow downtown Peoria!



Historical Spotlight



G.A.R. Hall

At the corner of Madison and Hamilton Blvd. sits one of Peoria's last vestiges of history - the historic Grand Army of the Republic Greenhut Memorial Hall known as the G.A.R. Hall. The Hall has graced downtown Peoria since 1909 where it was a meeting place for over 100 surviving Civil War Veterans. Joseph Greenhut, who headed the Whiskey Trust and was a Captain in the Army, donated \$14,000 of the \$22,800 for construction of the Hall. An enterprising fellow, he came to Peoria in 1978 with \$50 in his pocket. He left twenty years later with ten million.

The brick two-story Beaux-Arts style building has Corinthian columns placed on stone and brick. The front entrance has decorative sculptured stone floral urns, wreath ropes and eagles with talons holding cannons. Outside, surrounding the Hall entrance, is a 7,000 pound muzzle-loading mortar. Inside at the top of the stairs is a life-size marble bust of General John A. Logan, sculptured by Peoria's Frederick Triebel. In the auditorium looking down from above are many patriots including President Abraham Lincoln, General George Sherman, and a Civil War Nurse, Lizzie Aiken. Visible from out front is a huge stained glass window with a representation of the G.A.R. fraternal badge. This window completes the symbolization of the patriotism of Union Veterans, their courage, love of country, liberty, and fraternity.

Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation (CILF) has been the custodian and owner of the Hall since 1972. The building is the signature "face" in the Greater Peoria Community of CILF's efforts on behalf of historic preservation.

The G.A.R. Hall is available to rent. Please contact garhallrentals@gmail.com to make arrangements for your wedding reception, birthday party, business meeting, or whatever. Please limit your attendance to about 150. We guarantee a historical event!

Community Spotlight

Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation



NOW MORE THAN EVER, Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation needs your support.

As their name implies, they are all about historic preservation in Central Illinois. Accomplishments include the Architectural Archives, saving the LeTourneau Steel House, promoting

healthy neighborhoods with Historical Home Markers, community events, lectures on local history, recognition for area leaders and more.

Maybe you have visited the Greenhut Memorial G.A.R. Hall in downtown Peoria. Since CILF was founded 50 years ago, they have championed this precious resource and fought for its survival. They have formally protected this spectacular Beaux-Arts building with National Register of Historic Places stature, but today they are struggling to keep it safe from the ravages of time. Years and the elements have taken a toll on the Hall. It needs tuck pointing, new heating and cooling units, roof work, a new entrance

door; and their ability to fund these basic necessities has been hammered by the pandemic, which almost entirely eliminated what had been a thriving rental business.

Members are working diligently with elected leaders and governments, foundations, businesses and like-minded organizations to find the resources to take the Hall out of danger. If you are already a member or would like to become a member, please think about offering a generous contribution in an effort to save the gem that the G.A.R. Hall represents and continue the mission of preserving, protecting and restoring the built environment of Central Illinois.

Contributions can be mailed to Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation, P.O. Box 495, Peoria, IL 61651.

Dining Al fresco!

Spring has arrived, and it is time to enjoy the outdoors after a long winter. Consider dining downtown al fresco at one of the many restaurants offering outdoor seating. Four businesses in downtown Peoria will be a part of a city-run pilot program geared toward growing outdoor dining options in downtown Peoria. Ardor Bread and Provisions on the corner of Liberty and Water Street, Kickback on Fulton, and the new Neon Bison location and Ulrich's Rebellion Room on Main Street have all been selected to participate in the program. Other options for outdoor dining are Jack's on Adams, Sugar, Thyme, and Kelleher's, all in the Warehouse District. You may even find a few food carts around the courthouse. For fresh food and fresh air, come downtown and support local!

Downtown Activities

Peoria RiverFront Market



May 18th is a big day in downtown Peoria! The 2024 Peoria 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! 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. The market is open every Saturday rain or shine, May 18 through September 24, 8 a.m. – noon, in the 200 block of Water Street. Come down to the market and take in our beautiful riverfront while supporting local vendors!

Historical Tours



The Peoria Historical Society is introducing a new venture on Saturday mornings this June: hop on history tours starting at the Riverfront Market! These 45-minute tours will run from 10:15-11 a.m. on June 1, 15, 22, and 29. No reservations are needed just show up, pay \$15 (cash only), and enjoy a journey into the past. Different tours—including “Up Main Street” and “Down to the Warehouse District”—will be offered on different days, with each highlighting past history as well as fun facts and latest developments. Look for the Discover Peoria bus at the Riverfront Market entrance and join us to learn more fascinating stories about Peoria.

Sculpture Walk 2024



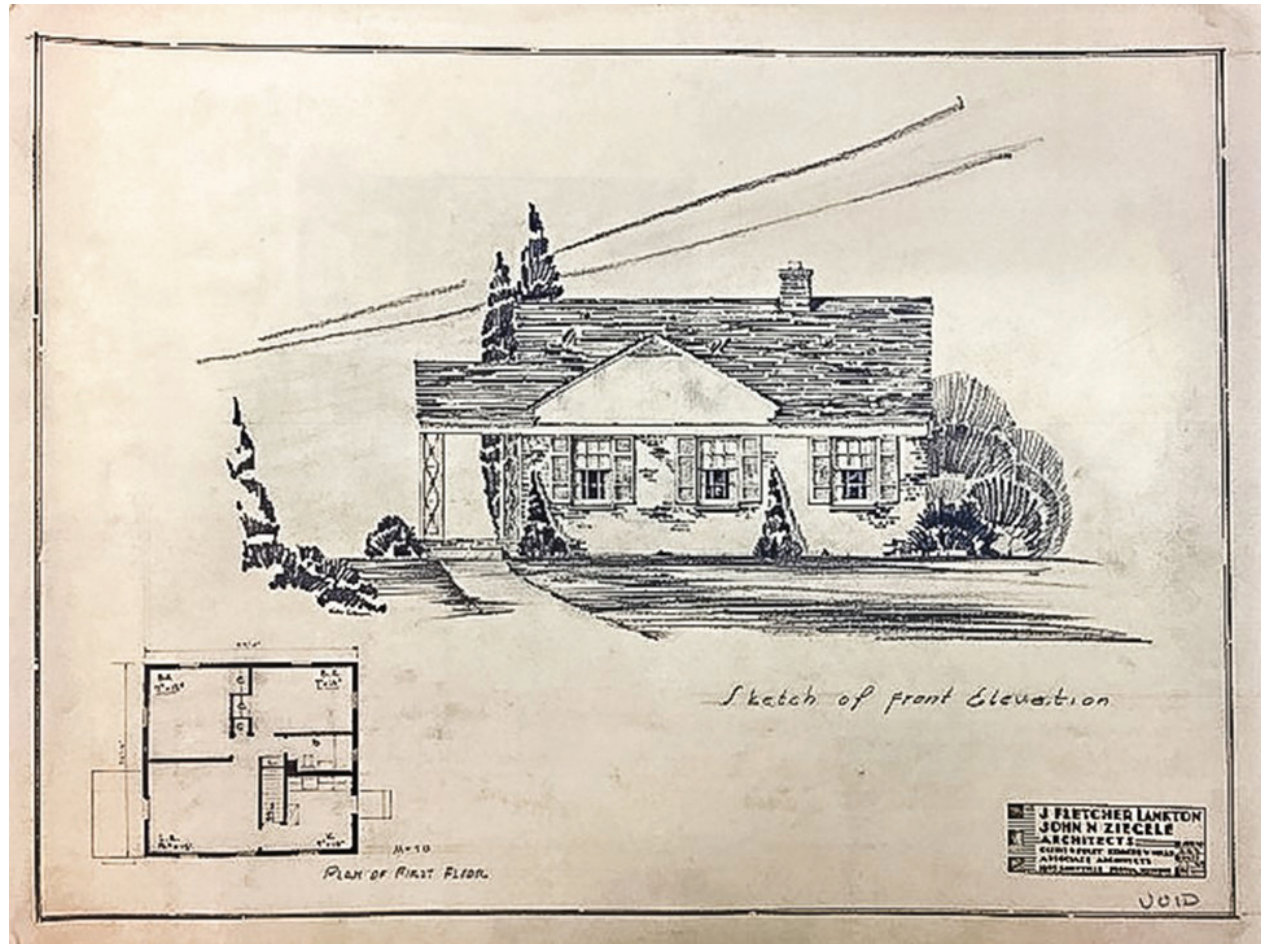
Also on May 18th, Sculpture Walk Peoria opens! The Opening Day Event will be held on at the Peoria Art Guild from 9-noon. You can join this free event to meet the artists, create art activities, Face Painting by Colin Abernathy, Balloon art by Steve Curtis and enjoy live music with Sarah Marie Dillard. Intuition Coffee and Juice and Tadoughs Donuts will be available for purchase.

The outdoor public art exhibit will feature 8 new sculptures installed along both sides of Washington Street from the Peoria Riverfront Museum to the Bob Michel Bridge. Shannon Cox, Executive Director of the Peoria Art Guild shares, **“The Peoria Art Guild is**

excited to be planning the 2024- 2026 Washington St. exhibition. We have sculptures from around the United States and one from Ukraine being placed for our community to enjoy for free for the next two years. We believe that public art is a source of happiness, hope, and inspiration, and we hope you enjoy it.”

After the sculptures have been set, the Guild will provide online video tours and free docent tours starting at the Peoria Art Guild every Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day. Local artist John Heintzman leads the tours. **“Artists featured in this year’s Sculpture Walk seek inspiration from arts, emotions, culture and society,”** says John of the pieces featured in this year’s exhibit. The public can view all 8 videos in the virtual tour by visiting <https://www.peoriaartguild.org/swp>.

CILF Archives on Display!



2024 marks the 40th anniversary of Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation's creation of the Architectural Archive. To celebrate this milestone, the Archives Committee will be hosting an exhibit of architectural drawings and ephemera from its collection. The committee has selected items showcasing Peoria's rich architectural history.

The display ranges from buildings we see every day to ones we have lost to history that now live only through photographs and documents. Take some time and stop by the Peoria Public Library's main branch in downtown Peoria during May and June to see some of the treasures. **For more information, contact Tim Hartneck at mot2@mtco.com.**

Visit Peoria!

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 <https://www.downtownpeoria.us/play>.

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.

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