



# DOWNTOWN PEORIA NEWSLETTER

## NOVEMBER 2024

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### DDC Activities

**Big Changes are Here!** Last month, we reported that big changes would be coming to the DDC. We are delivering on that promise:

### It is Time to Say Goodbye



After 11 years at the helm of the DDC as President/CEO, Michael Freiling has elected to retire at the end of this year.

Back in 2013, as a start-up nonprofit, Michael explains, “When I was hired by the DDC as their President/CEO, the organization wasn’t more than a bank account with an article of incorporation and a few board members. With the assistance of the CEO Council, the City of Peoria, the DDC’s initial board members, Heyl Royster P.C., our funders, and the quality staff we eventually hired, the DDC has become one of the most impactful organizations in rejuvenating our greater downtown.”

“The job of the DDC is to aid developers in identifying the best properties for their needs; provide awareness of existing incentives, such as historic tax credits, TIF funds, and opportunity zone funds; facilitate getting buildings under contract; perform liaison services between the city and the developer; suggest and advocate for reasonable changes to the City of Peoria’s building codes; and remove all obstacles to ensure a smooth path to new development.”

“And it’s a job Michael Freilinger has done well. As we welcome Chris, we thank Michael for making the DDC what it is today and for the positive changes to the downtown that have been brought to fruition under his watchful eye,” Chairman Oyler said. “His leadership has facilitated key developments, most notably in the historic Warehouse District.”

Thank you, Michael!

## It is Time to Say Hello



In the wake of Michael Freilinger’s retirement announcement, the DDC Personnel Committee has worked diligently over the past several months to find a suitable replacement as President/CEO of the DDC.

After several interviews with very qualified candidates, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Chris Waible as our new President/CEO. An experienced leader in the real estate development, design, and construction industries, Waible brings a history of orchestrating transformative projects across the country. Having spent the past four years in the Madison, WI market, he now returns to his hometown.

“Chris’s experience uniquely combines real estate development, design, and construction; and he has shown the ability to connect stakeholders around significant projects,” said Zach Oyler, DDC Chairman of the Board. “Chris will be a huge asset to the DDC and the growth of the downtown as we continue our work to make it an exciting place to live, work, and play. We are excited to welcome him back to Peoria as President/CEO of the DDC.”

Waible earned an MBA and Master of Architecture degree from the University of Illinois and a B.S. in Architecture from Arizona State University.

Professionally, he has served on many economic development and real estate development-focused boards and advisory groups, most notably, Uptown Fitchburg Development, the CEO Council of Peoria, Peoria Riverfront Development, and as a member of the DDC Planning Committee.

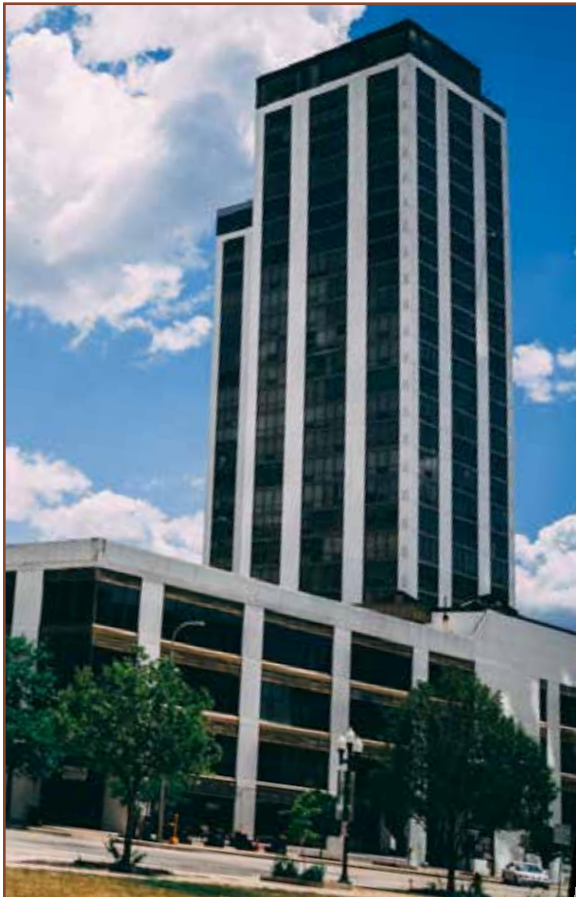
Chris previously worked as a regional director for Dewberry in Peoria and also earned the 40 Leaders Under Forty Award while in Peoria.

As he begins his new position, Waible says, “A strength of the Peoria area is its combination of beautiful open space and easy access to and from an urban city center. As the mix of downtown uses continues to evolve to meet today’s needs, it is a strength that should only shine brighter. Helping Peoria, a place that I love, to grow is an amazing opportunity which I’m very excited about.”

**Welcome, Chris!**

To learn more about the DDC, visit our website at [www.downtownpeoria.us](http://www.downtownpeoria.us).

## **DDC Office Relocation to Twin Towers**



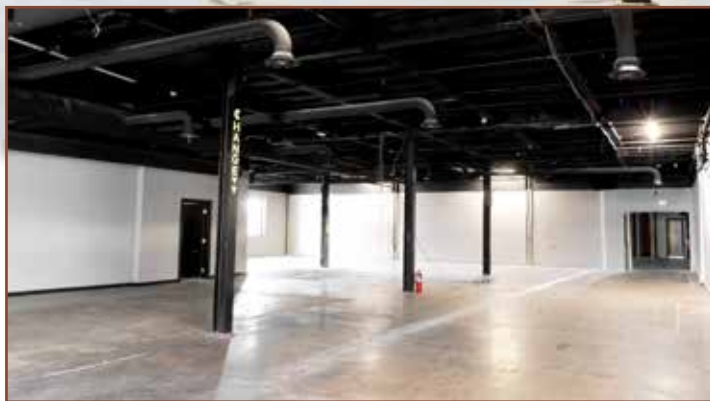
As we say goodbye to Michael Freiling and say hello to Chris Waible, we have another big change to announce!

We fondly say goodbye to our office location at 403 NE Jefferson Avenue, the historic Judge Jacob Gale House, where we were co-located with the Peoria Chamber of Commerce. We say hello to our new office location as we co-locate in the Twin Towers with the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau - Discover Peoria. We carry fond memories and thank the Chamber for their kind hospitality, as we look forward to sharing space with Discover Peoria at 456 Fulton Street, Suite 300. We believe our synergy with Discover Peoria will serve us well as we attract new developers and new businesses to downtown Peoria.

# Commercial Space for Lease

## The Block

1009 SW Washington St., Peoria, IL



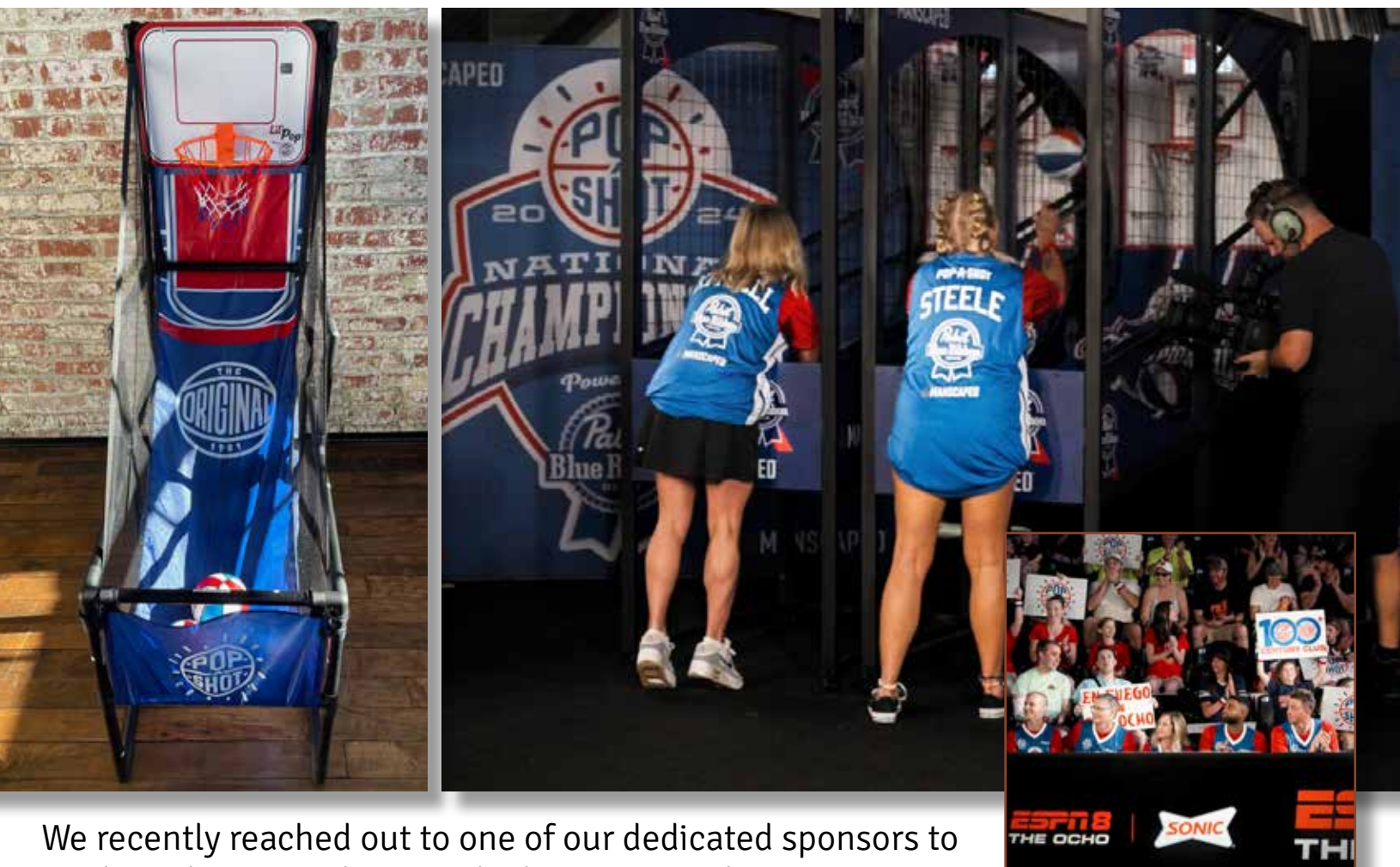
If you've been waiting for the right moment to jump on the Baldovin Development Group train, this is it! Suite 1009 is a 17,000 square-foot monster space that has all the hook ups for a proper kitchen and bar. And, if 17,000 square feet is too much, BDG can split this thing right down the middle. According to Casey Baldovin, "We're open to ideas of how to slice and dice this thing."

If you have been to the Warehouse District lately, you would know that huge things are happening on the 800 block of SW Adams Street. Adams & Oak and The Center are already home to upscale commercial businesses and 96 residential units, so your customer base is already there. You would be joining the newest and hottest space in town!

If you are interested in becoming part of the historic and iconic Warehouse District, email Baldovin Development Group at [baldovindevelopmentco@gmail.com](mailto:baldovindevelopmentco@gmail.com), via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/baldovindevelopmentgroup>, or call them at 437-0201. And hurry before this train leaves the station!

# Contributor Spotlight

## Pop-A-Shot



We recently reached out to one of our dedicated sponsors to see how they were doing in the historic Warehouse District. According to owner Tony Stucker, Pop-A-Shot is busy gearing up for its fifth holiday season since moving into its Peoria headquarters. But that's not all that is new:

- In August, Pop-A-Shot held its first national championship in more than 25 years, with live coverage on ESPN. They hope to have many more competitions in 2025.
- Pop-A-Shot is introducing Lil' Pop, a basketball game designed for its youngest (3-6 year old) players.
- And they have expanded their Warehouse District footprint! Having already filled up their main building (918 SW Adams) and the warehouse behind it (933 SW Washington), they recently demo'd some old offices on the first floor of 926 SW Adams. That space will be used for the development and testing of new games, including Pop-A-Shot's first coin-operated game in more than 25 years (coming to bars and arcades early next year).

Take a look at these photos and get your game on with Pop-A-Shot this holiday season. Locally manufactured. They really do Play in Peoria!

# City of Peoria Highlights

The City of Peoria is hiring!



**WE ARE  
HIRING!**

OPEN POSITION

Attorney I  
Building Inspector  
Electrical Inspector  
ECC Telecommunicator  
Equipment Mechanic  
Parts Technician  
Firefighter



**APPLY NOW**

PEORIAGOV.ORG

Open positions include:

Attorney I, Building Inspector, Electrical Inspector, ECC Telecommunicator, Equipment Mechanic, Parts Technician, Firefighter, and more!

If any of these positions are calling to you, visit their website to apply now: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/peoria>.

## Downtown Activities

### 7th Annual Thanksgiving Market



7TH ANNUAL

*Thanksgiving Market*

**RIVERFRONT MARKET**

Saturday, November 23 • 8:30am - 12:30pm

RiverPlex, 600 NE Water St.

Featuring fall produce, baked goods, cheese, popcorn, honey, and local arts & crafts. WATCH OUR FACEBOOK PAGE @PeoriaRiverfrontMarket FOR DETAILS!

Visit [DowntownPeoria.com](http://DowntownPeoria.com)

**Peoria Riverfront Association** is excited to welcome back many fan favorites to their Thanksgiving Market, Saturday, November 23, 8:30 – 12:30, indoors at RiverPlex. Featuring local fall produce, cheese, meat, eggs, honey, popcorn, coffee, jams, soup mixes, baked goods and more! A great opportunity to shop locally for the upcoming holidays! We applaud the Peoria Riverfront Association staff, the many vendors, and the many volunteers who make this such an outstanding Saturday morning destination!

## This is how the Peoria RiverFront Market wrapped up another record-breaking spring/summer season:

- 20 total Saturdays
- 4,500-7,000 attendance each week
- Highest # of vendors: 117
- Lowest # of vendors: 88
- 8 Corporate Sponsors
- 20 different musicians
- Hosted over 25 different non-profit groups
- Yoga each week by Soul Side Healing Arts
- Historical Society Tours
- 2 Children's Theater Group Performances
- Magicians
- Face Painting
- Balloons
- Feats of Strength Show
- Mariachi Band special appearances
- Hosted the Peoria Police Dept, Peoria Fire Dept, City of Peoria, Chiefs, Rivermen, Bradley Volleyball Team, Bradley Women's Basketball Team
- Distributed \$14,000 in Illinois Link SNAP dollars to be spent at the market.
- Distributed an additional \$13,500 in Double Value Matching Funds spent on local fruits and vegetables

Be sure to follow them on Facebook and Instagram @Peoria Riverfront Market and @Visit Downtown Peoria.

## 137th Peoria Santa Claus Parade



The Peoria Santa Claus Parade has such a rich history, reaching all the way back to 1887! The 137th Annual Parade in Downtown Peoria is taking place November 29th, 2024. This is the longest running Santa Claus Parade in the USA! Who needs Macy's in NYC when you can stay home and enjoy the efforts of local organizations?

A sneak peek at the floats on Facebook will get your face a-glowing. From Cinderella, to Minions and Whoville, we think Peoria has outdone themselves once again! Peoria Area Community Events (PACE) is hosting Peoria's beloved annual Santa Claus parade.

Come downtown Peoria around 9:15 a.m. on Friday, November 29th and make great memories with your family and friends. Remember, Santa Claus will be watching for you! <https://www.facebook.com/santaclausparadepeoria>.

## The Big Picture Peoria Film Festival 2024

**BIG PICTURE PEORIA TURNS DOWNTOWN P-TOWN INTO TINSELTOWN AT THE PEORIA RIVERFRONT MUSEUM'S GIANT SCREEN THEATER. The 2024 Big Picture Peoria Film Festival Builds Upon Our Community's Arts Assets To Become A National Arts Destination!**

On November 22nd and 23rd 2024, The Big Picture Peoria Film Festival will welcome local and regional filmmakers to Downtown Peoria.

This exciting, 2-day event includes panel discussions, content and idea exchanges, and film screenings and awards for best film submissions. Nearly 30 short-format films will be featured in the Festival, which aims to celebrate the visual arts and highlight Peoria's creative community and all our area has to offer to visitors and residents alike.

“Our Film Festival took a few years off as a result of the pandemic, and now it's back in a BIG way at the PRM's Giant Screen Theater,” said Doug Leunig, co-founder of Big Picture Peoria. “Our vision for the Festival goes beyond simply showing fantastic films; we want to do so much more, things like highlighting our local talent to a larger audience, encouraging amateur filmmakers to hone their visual storytelling talent, and boosting tourism dollars by bringing visitors to our local businesses. Our Downtown has so much to offer, and we are giving residents and visitors a reason to spend more time in Downtown Peoria, with a special emphasis on exploring the Peoria Riverfront Museum.”

The public is invited to the 2-day Big Picture Peoria Film Festival and the details are as follows:



You're invited to the...

# BIG PICTURE PEORIA

## FILM FESTIVAL 2024



# November 22 & 23

## JOIN US!

The Big Picture Peoria Film Festival is an opportunity for Midwest filmmakers to come together, screen their films, and celebrate their work. We would be thrilled to have you there with us to support Big Picture Peoria!

## LET'S CONNECT

Find us on Facebook for event details and ticket information!



Big Picture Peoria  
Big Picture Peoria Film Festival



@BigPicturePeoriaFilmFestival  
@BigPicturePeoria



<https://filmfreeway.com/BigPictureFilmFestival>



<https://309tix.com/categories/arts-entertainment>

## SCHEDULE

### FRIDAY

**6:30-9PM**

**Filmmaker Panel  
& Experimental Film  
Screening**

Distillery Labs - Free

### SATURDAY

**3-4:30PM**

**Student Film  
Screening**

The Peoria Riverfront Museum

**7-9PM**

**Film Screening  
& Award Ceremony**

The Peoria Riverfront Museum

Tickets \$15

**9:30-11:30PM**

**After Party**

ZION

Tickets \$10

# IT PLAYS IN PEORIA

# Peoria Riverfront Museum



## PEORIA RIVERFRONT MUSEUM

We want to give a shout out to Peoria Riverfront Museum for the many exhibits they have right now, especially the Jim Henson exhibition that is here through January 5, 2025.

Also, their **Christmas in the Village** holiday shopping event that takes place on December 6 and 7 is spectacular! Watch for their monthly Access for All Day, sponsored by the Art Bridges Foundation, where everyone can enjoy the museum for free!

With the giant screen theater, the planetarium, multiple exhibits, special events, classes and more, our museum is one of the best! To learn more about their many offerings, visit their website at [www.peoriariverfrontmuseum.org](http://www.peoriariverfrontmuseum.org).

## Visit Peoria!

As our Midwest weather turns cooler, remember to come downtown to play inside! With our great Civic Center, museums, art venues, restaurants, retailers, and bars that offer live entertainment, you can keep the party going all year round.

In collaboration with Peoria Riverfront Association, we keep a pulse on downtown development news and activities, and there are activities galore in Downtown Peoria! If you are looking for fun things to do with friends and family, make sure to visit our web site at <https://www.downtownpeoria.us/play> to plan your next outing. And follow our FaceBook page, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064639275934> where we like to share good news every day about our great downtown.

## Shop Local!

Remember to shop local this holiday season. It is so important for local retailers to have your business. The Warehouse District is growing, so take time to stroll around, especially on Small Business Saturday following Thanksgiving. Among the many established businesses on Water Street, Washington, and State, we would like to call your attention to new stores and restaurants in the 800 block of SW Adams Street. Doors will be open and shelves will be stocked. Come see what's new!



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

**Downtown Development Corporation of Peoria (DDC)**  
Chris Waible, President/CEO | e: info@downtownpeoria.us  
456 Fulton Street, Suite 300, Peoria, IL 61602



@Downtown Development Corporation of Peoria