

CHAMBER REPORT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE PEORIA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

www.peoriachamber.org



WINTER 2022

Vol.27 Issue 1



UNCOVERED THE KEN BURNS COLLECTION

EXPLORE AMERICAN QUILTS LIKE
YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE

MARCH 5 - JUNE 5, 2022

PEORIA RIVERFRONT MUSEUM

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"Uncovered: The Ken Burns Collection" is organized by the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska—Lincoln.



PEORIA
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WELCOME NEW CHAMBER MEMBERS

Ambit Energy: www.SaveMoney4U.myambit.com

Bella Rose Studio LLC: www.facebook.com/memoriesbybellarose

Catrina's Express

CMFS Group: www.cmfs.net

Fox Pest Control: www.foxpest-bloomington.com/service-area/peoria/

Gallery Homes Real Estate: www.galleryhomesusa.com

Gateway Foundation: www.gatewayfoundation.org

Genghis Grill: www.genghisgrill.com

NEXTAFF: www.nextaff.com

Oak Street Health: www.oakstreethealth.com

Peoria Army Recruiting Station: www.goarmy.com

Pringle Robotics: www.pringlesoft.com

Pure Oasis Hair & Beauty Salon: www.pureoasis.com

Soulful Odyssey: www.soulfulodyssey.com

Southside Community Center: www.southside-cc.com

Springfield Clinic: www.SpringfieldClinic.com

State Farm Insurance—Randy Reiman: www.randyreiman.com

Sun Collectors: www.solar-oasis.com

Surestay Plus Hotel by Best Western: www.sbest-western.com

That Guy's Secret: www.thatguyssecret.com

United Rentals: www.unitedrentals.com

VelocityLabs, LLC: www.velocitylabs.com

EVENTS CALENDAR

Visit PeoriaChamber.org
for More Details & Updates

Upcoming Events

February

•Annual Membership Drive - 2/7-2/11

•Business After Hours - 2/10 - 4:30pm

*Peoria Civic Center

•Business Before Hours - 2/22 - 7:30am

*Family House

March

•Business After Hours - 3/10 - 4:30pm

*Barrack's Hospitality Group

•Business Before Hours - 3/22 - 7:30am

*Bleeding & Clotting Disorders Institute



UNCOVERED

THE KEN BURNS COLLECTION

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YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE

MARCH 5 - JUNE 5, 2022

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:

Happy New Year! Typically, at this time of year, we are all making resolutions for things that we hope to accomplish in the year ahead. Some people (myself included) are hoping to burn off some of those pandemic pounds and will resolve to hit the gym more frequently; some will set new financial or personal goals. However, you choose to approach this new year, I wish you the greatest success and continued wellness this year.

Our business community is also setting goals around this time; many of us hoped that by the time 2022 arrived, COVID would be a thing-of-the-past, and we could focus our businesses on getting back to "normal," however we define that word. The reality though, is that we continue to deal with COVID-19, and like the virus, its impact on our business community has many variants. I hoped that by now I wouldn't even have to mention COVID in my column, but we must be realistic, and it's still a very real part of our world.

This reality may have made setting goals for your business difficult, we are in an unpredictable environment after all. I remain impressed by the resilience of our businesses both large and small, and your commitment to this region. Whether its supply-chain issues or workforce shortages, we have many lingering challenges to work through this year. As we press ahead, I'd like to offer you our New Year's resolution in the form of a commitment to you. As you work

through all the challenges ahead, your Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to staying in the fight with you. We will be the leading voice for business in the Peoria Area. We commit to doing more than ever before to support, advocate, align and strengthen the business community in the Peoria Area in 2022. We will be more visible, present and vocal as we fight to ensure that no matter how many things beyond our control may impact us, we remain resilient as a community. We will continue to offer the quality events and programming you love, while adding additional valuable programs to keep our members connected and informed. We will be the Chamber this region needs.

We hope that you will also resolve to stay in the fight with us. We are a strong region, and we made it through 2021 together. I believe that 2022 can be our best year yet, and if there is more that we can do to serve you, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Here's to an amazing and prosperous 2022 for each of you.



Joshua Gunn
President and CEO
Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce & CEO Council



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS *Legislation to Watch*

These are bills that have been tracked by the Chamber and marked as significant. More information and updates: Illinois General Assembly Legislation – ilga.gov/

Chambers All In for Economic Recovery releases its 2022 platform below.

The overarching message is the same as previous: economic recovery must be a top priority for the business community. As we approach the second anniversary of the pandemic's declaration with continued efforts against COVID-19, unintended consequences for the effort to stop the spread of COVID-19 have surmounted and they risk permanently stunting the prosperity of Illinois' businesses.

If enacted, the following items will help bolster a business bottom line and allow for continued growth and investment in Illinois.

Utilize American Rescue Plan Act funding to help replenish the unemployment trust fund alleviate the impending financial drain from the state's businesses.

Provide legal protections to employers who follow the CDC established safety guidelines from claims that COVID-19 was contracted at the place of business.

Restructure the Minimum Wage Credit's incremental phase out to allow small businesses to capture the original intent of the credit.

Extend the EDGE credit sunset clause out for another ten years and utilize the tax credit as an incentive to attract new businesses to the state and allow for the growth and development of existing companies.

In addition to the items above, Chambers All In for Economic Recovery calls for collaborative solutions to the state's ongoing workforce challenges. The coalition recognizes the importance of having a ready, willing and skilled workforce for the future of our state's economy. We call on the state to develop innovative programs, support pilot programs, invest in K-12 career awareness programming and assist in scaling successful workforce programs for other communities and industries. We urge Illinois legislators to create an environment and funding models that allow the private sector to drive the training demand for employers.

Chambers All In for Economic Recovery will monitor legislative activities for items that specifically support economic recovery or may hinder ongoing recovery efforts. The coalition may act in such cases to bolster support or join in opposition.

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RIBBON CUTTINGS



Club Carwash celebrating the Grand Opening of their 3rd Peoria location on West Holiday Drive.



Founding Females celebrating their new Chamber membership! Congratulations Francie!



N & Out Market celebrating their Grand Opening. Check out this locally owned store—groceries and so much more!



NEXAFF celebrating their new location. Welcome to the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce, Tom, Stephanie and crew!

RIBBON CUTTINGS

7



The Noshery celebrating their Grand Opening. Congratulations to new Chamber members, Becky and Darren Frye of The Noshery—Peoria's most unique eatery!



Purify Colonics & Wellness is celebrating their Grand Opening! They offer holistic detoxifying therapies for improved health and wellness. The only one of its kind in the Peoria area. Congratulations, Cari! Welcome to the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce!



Raber Packing celebrating their much-anticipated return to West Peoria! Congratulations to Buddy, Julie and the entire team! Welcome to the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce!



Solvera Healthcare Center celebrating their Grand Opening. All the care you need...under one roof! Welcome to the Chamber!

news - awards - recognition

Basic ITS is pleased to announce two additions to its leadership team: Jim Burwitz as Vice President of operations and Greag Lara as Director of Business Development.

The Center for Prevention of Abuse (CFPA) is teaming up with popular local coffee shop and roastery **CxT Roasting Company** in honor of Human Trafficking Awareness Month this January to educate community members about labor and sex trafficking in Central Illinois. Throughout January, all coffee and tea drinks at CxT locations featured a unique custom coffee sleeve, with myth-busting facts about human trafficking, as well as, information about CFPA services and the crisis hotline. CxT Roasting Company plans to donate a generous portion of proceeds from every cup of coffee, sold in January, to CFPA to support their mission of helping all people live free from violence and abuse.

The City of Peoria has been awarded \$1.2M as part of the **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)** Rebuild Distressed Communities (RDC) grant. Born out of a need to assist small businesses and communities impacted by civil unrest, funds from the RDC will help small businesses that were directly impacted while also assisting cities in improving commercial corridors that were affected by these activities. The State of Illinois, along with Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Chicago and the Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives determined the recipients of the funding. Out of \$9.2M allotted for the state, the City was awarded \$1.2M that will help fund the current Western Avenue project with pedestrian accommodations, including retaining walls, sidewalk

installation and upgrades, bike path accommodations, lighting, and pedestrian crossing upgrades.

City of Peoria Mayor Rita Ali was joined with community leaders to provide updates on passenger rail to Peoria. The City, in conjunction with the **Illinois Department of Transportation**, has released a public survey to gauge interest in passenger rail service to Peoria. The public is encouraged to take the survey and provide input on passenger rail in our community. This 10-question survey takes 2 1/2 minutes but provides the committee with a wealth of information. The survey is available electronically for all who live, work, and visit Peoria. The public can access the survey at <https://s.surveypal.com/egj49vjq>.

City of Peoria Fire Chief, James Bachman announced he will be retiring on March 18. Chief Bachman began his career with the Peoria Fire Department on May 9, 1994. He has served the community as a Firefighter, Engineer, Captain, Battalion Chief, and Division Chief of Operations. He was promoted to Fire Chief in May 2021. He is state-certified as a Hazardous Materials Technician A and B. A graduate of Northern Illinois University, he holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. He also attended ICC and received his Associate Degree in Business Administration and received an Associate Degree in Fire Science from John Wood Community College. He and his wife, Joan, have 3 children. The City plans on doing a national search for the next Fire Chief.

CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA), one of the leading professional services firms in the United States, announced the career advancements for professionals and new hires across the firm, including five in Peoria and one

in Bloomington. Congratulations to the following individuals who have reached new stages in their chosen career paths: Brian Mateas, Director, State and Local Government; Craig J. Ruffolo, Principal, CLA Wealth Advisors, LLC; Mike Sheets, Senior; Susan Jasinski, Principal, Manufacturing and Distribution; and Aleka Seneca, Senior, Agribusiness and Cooperatives. CLA is also pleased to announce the following new hire to the Peoria office: Jacob Riggs, Associate.

Crafted DIY Studio & Bar thanks their patrons for showing up. Fifty cents of every drink they sell goes to rotating local charities. Throughout the year of 2021, they were able to donate over \$3,000 to charities like **JOLT Harm Reduction, Easterseals Central Illinois, Illinois CancerCare, OSF Children's Hospital and more.**

Cullinan Properties, Ltd. announced the appointment of Matthew Beverly as Chief Executive Officer for the company. He succeeds Christopher M. West, a partner in the company, who will transition from CEO to Sr. Advisor/Partner for Cullinan Properties. Cullinan Properties, Ltd. is a leading national provider of real estate services specializing in commercial and mixed-use developments and acquisitions.

Fritch Heating & Cooling would like to thank Lennox for the high efficiency furnace donation for the annual Feel the Love free furnace giveaway. They are proud of their crew members that donated time to help a Peoria family in need.

Howard & Howard Attorneys, a leading business law firm, has named Joseph B. VanFleet as office managing attorney of the law firm's Peoria office. Incoming firm President and Chief Executive Officer Jon Kreucher

made the announcement.

Illinois American Water welcomes Jennifer Morrison to its leadership team. She has been named Program Director of Supplier Diversity and Community Outreach.

Illinois Central College proudly names Arnitria Shaw as its Vice President of Workforce and Diversity. Shaw most recently served as the College's Dean of College and Career Readiness. Her appointment as Vice President fills the position held previously by Dr. Rita Ali who retired from ICC after being elected Mayor of the City of Peoria in 2020. ICC was recently awarded a 2021 GMC Sierra, 2020 Chevrolet Blazer, and 2020 Cadillac XT5 from General Motors through their corporate donations program that assists institutions within The GM Training Network. The General Motors GM ASEP (Automotive Service Educational Program) curriculum incorporates advanced automotive technical training with a strong academic foundation of math, reading, and electronics, and both analytical and technical skills.

Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) began a centralized contact tracing system to address the high volume of COVID-19 cases. Positive cases will receive a text message from IDPH and individuals must answer the text to opt into the state contact tracing system to receive a return to work letter. Local health departments are waiting for additional details from IDPH regarding the changes to follow-up in the contact tracing system. With the currently high volume of cases and with the shortened isolation and quarantine periods, a positive individual &/or close contact may not receive a return-to-work letter before their quarantine/

isolation periods are finished and they can return to work. Businesses need to be prepared for a possible delay or stoppage of return-to-work letters from contact tracers. (Example: An employee may not have a letter available to present to employer to prove that isolation/quarantine is over.)

Junior Achievement of Central Illinois is pleased to announce it has received a \$7,500 grant from the Community Foundation of Central Illinois to support financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and work/career readiness programs for K-12 students in the greater Peoria area during the 2021-22 school year.

Pearl Technology is pleased to announce that Anthony Mini, Senior Vice President of Security and Operations at the company, has been recognized as one of the top leaders under 40 in Central Illinois.

The year 2021 was another record-breaking year for home sales in the Peoria area. **The Peoria Area Association of REALTORS®** reported that 7,634 homes were sold in the Peoria area last year, topping the 2020 total of 6,798 homes sold. In 2021, homes sold totaled over \$1.1 billion, topping the billion-dollar mark for the first time in PAAR history. The average sale price for homes sold in the Peoria region last year was \$154,338, up from \$147,380 in 2020.

The Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (Discover Peoria) is excited to announce the Illinois Office of Tourism (IOT) has named four small businesses, or 'Makers' located in Greater Peoria to the Illinois Made program. The four businesses that were named to the Illinois Made class from the Peoria area are: **Mackinaw Valley Vineyard** – Mackinaw; **Riley's Vegan Sweets & Eats** – Peoria; **The Nut House** –

Peoria; **Trefzger's Bakery** - Peoria Heights

Peoria Civic Center celebrates their 40th Anniversary in February at a regional Business After Hours in collaboration with Greater Peoria region Chambers of Commerce.

The **Peoria City Council** has designated the **Peoria Historical Society's** Pettengill-Morrison House Museum as a Peoria Historic Landmark. The unanimous vote came upon recommendation by the city's Historic Preservation Commission. The Second Empire-style mansion at 1212 W. Moss Ave. was built in 1868. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as a "contributing property" for the West Bluff National Register Historic District and is open for guided tours. Peoria attorney Gale Thetford recently joined the Peoria Historical Society Board of Trustees. President Zach Oyler appointed Thetford to a partial term that ends in May. Thetford, a former Peoria City Councilwoman, also serves on the **Illinois Central College** Board of Trustees and is vice president of the **Heartland Health Services** Board of Directors.

Changes to transform a century-old recreation center in South Peoria are expected to include an esports suite, a dedicated dance studio, air conditioning and an expanded weight room. Those are some of the plans the **Peoria Park District** has for the Proctor Recreation Center, which will see about \$2 million in improvements in a plan to be considered by the park board. The money is half of about \$4 million of state funds coming to Peoria as a result of state Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth's efforts. The other portion is going to a full-scale rehab of Glen Oak Park on Peoria's East Bluff.

Peoria Riverfront Museum

became the first to land "Sharks," the new international blockbuster exhibition making its touring debut in 2024. With more teeth than T. rex, the massive exhibition features 500 shark species and sets the record straight about the much-maligned shark, which is critical to ocean ecology and older than dinosaurs.

Savant Wealth Management, a nationally recognized, fee-only registered investment adviser (RIA) with nearly \$12 billion in assets under management (AUM), announced plans to acquire Filbrandt Wealth Management, a Madison, Wisconsin-based RIA firm that works exclusively with university leaders and their families to achieve financial independence in retirement. Filbrandt, with approximately \$1.8 billion in assets under advisement, represents Savant's largest acquisition to date and is the firm's third acquisition this year.

Simantel is proud to announce they will be celebrating their 40th Anniversary in 2022.

The **SureStay Plus Hotel by Best Western Peoria** has completed a more than \$1 million renovation and opened its doors in Peoria, Illinois, inviting travelers to experience one of the newest hotel brands in the industry – the SureStay Hotel Group®, which was rated #1 in Guest Satisfaction among Economy Hotel Chains in both the 2020 and 2021 J.D. Power North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Studies.

Trailin' Smoke BBQ is now an approved caterer for events held at Wildlife Prairie Park.

UnityPoint Health - Central Illinois and **OSF HealthCare** are Seeking Donations Amid Critical Blood Shortage. Hospitals nationwide are experiencing the impacts of a critical blood

shortage, and **UnityPoint Health - Central Illinois** and **OSF HealthCare** are asking the community to help by donating blood. An increased demand for blood, coupled with a decrease in donations during the pandemic, has led to major shortages in our region. Blood donations are needed now to avert the need to postpone potential lifesaving treatments for our patients. Due to the blood shortage, we are implementing internal changes to how we use and store blood products to ensure we have enough to support our most critical patients. We are confident in the care we provide, and these actions are intended to adapt to the blood supply shortages, while maintaining the highest possible quality for the patients we serve. **OSF HealthCare** and **UnityPoint Health - Central Illinois** are joining together to urge eligible, healthy individuals to make an appointment to donate blood today. Visit www.bloodcenterimpact.org to find an available appointment near you.

UnityPoint Health is excited to announce Mary Sparks Thompson has been named President of **UnityPoint Health - UnityPlace**. Mary will lead the health care organization's collective behavioral health and addiction services, effective January 24, 2022.

Swapna Asuthkar, PhD, assistant professor with the **University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria**, received a two-year \$55,000 grant from William E. McElroy Research Foundation for her lab team's study "Activation of TRPM8 channel suppresses Prostate Cancer Growth and Progression."



AMEREN NEWS

LED Lights Steal the Show at Peoria Civic Center

From country crooner Blake Shelton to local talent like the Peoria Rivermen Hockey Club, the Peoria Civic Center offers an array of world-class entertainment. Lighting helps create a mood to match every performance.

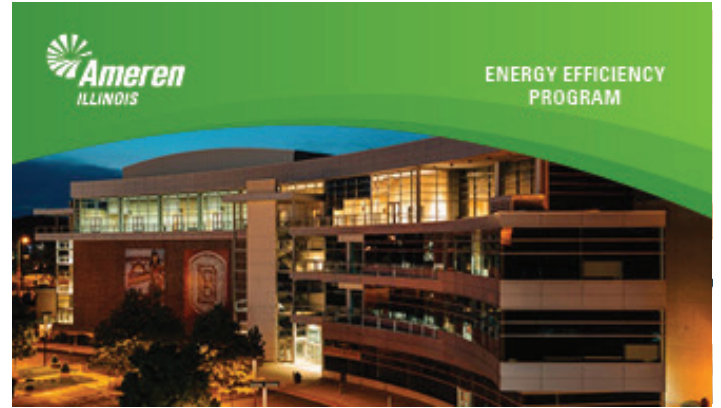
In the mood to reduce the facility's energy costs, civic center management put two major LED lighting projects center stage. The Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program provided more than \$152,000 in cash incentives that covered more than half of the city's project costs.

"Ameren Illinois offers incentives for a lot of things I wasn't aware of," says Will Kenney, Director of Operations at the civic center. "The application process was easy and the transition [to new lighting] was smooth."

Working with Ameren Illinois Energy Advisors and Oberlander Electric Company, Kenney first targeted the 11,330-seat Carver Arena, replacing a mix of metal halide and incandescent lighting that dated back about 20 years. Next, LED lighting was installed in more than 110,000 square feet of exhibit space.

As a result, the Peoria Civic Center reduced its annual energy costs by an estimated \$67,000 and created a safer, more appealing environment for patrons. New LED lighting controls allow staff to easily adjust lighting levels to accommodate different events.

"Along with a decrease in utility costs, the light quality is definitely better than before. We've received a lot of positive feedback," says Kenney. "I highly recommend the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency



Program. The Ameren Illinois team made it very easy to follow through."

Thanks to that follow through, the Peoria Civic Center is now more inviting than ever — whether you're a music or sports fan. But when it comes to energy savings, LED lighting steals the show.

Flip the Switch on Energy Waste

Lighting accounts for as much as 50 percent of the average business' electricity consumption — but it doesn't have to! If your organization is ready to shine a light on savings, visit AmerenIllinoisSavings.com or call 1.866.800.0747 to learn more.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS OF GREATER PEORIA

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Blood Drive

March

*Check peoriachamber.org/events for upcoming events



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IN MEMORIAM OF MR. AL HOOKS



1947-2022

On behalf of the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce and The CEO Council, I would like to extend our sincerest condolences to the Hooks family in the passing of a true community hero, Mr. Al Hooks. There are few people that I can genuinely say have made such an impact on me in such a short time. I only had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Hooks for one year, but he's left an indelible impact on my life. He quickly became someone that I knew I could trust, and someone who's wise counsel was extremely helpful in navigating sometimes complex situations. Mr. Hooks was a true community servant, someone who placed the needs of others above his own, and who's genuine spirit, compassion and dedication to Peoria filled every room he entered. A joy to be around, while also making sure business got

handled in a highly professional manner. Mr. Hooks was an inspiration to me, and to so many others in this community, and truly an example that we should all aspire to. Peoria has lost a giant, and my prayer is that we can all honor his memory by continuing his tradition of service to Peoria, and his fight to create a more inclusive and equitable community for all people. May the Hooks family find peace and strength at this time, and may we all give gratitude to Mr. Hooks for all that he's done to make this place even better.

Joshua Gunn
President and CEO
Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce &
CEO Council



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