



**REGULAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025
12:00 PM**

1. Call to Order

2. Approve Agenda

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. Minutes of the Regular EDAC Meeting on October 14, 2024

3.2. Minutes of the Regular EDAC Meeting on November 18, 2024

4. Public Input

5. Presentations and Reports

5.1. Staff Report

5.2. Greater Peoria EDC Report

6. Unfinished Business

6.1. Strategic Plan - Vision Statement

7. New Business

7.1. Meeting Schedule for 2025

7.2. Residential Remodeling Incentive Discussion

8. Any Other Business to Come Before the Commission

9. Executive Session

9.1. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) The purchase or lease of real property

10. Adjourn



City of Pekin

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF
PEKIN, ILLINOIS,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL
111 S. CAPITOL ST
ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2024 AT 12:00 PM**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee was called to order and all members were physically present. A quorum was declared by Chairperson Leman.

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
John Campbell	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Danielle Owens	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Absent	
Amy McCoy	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Absent	
Dennis Short	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Absent	
Jack Steger	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Drew Leman	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Liridon Rrushaj	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Patrick Taphorn	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Absent	
D. Neal Hanley II	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Roy Bockler	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Earl Riley	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Absent	
Caty Campbell	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon

Approve Agenda

B Hanley motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by C Campbell. Motion passed

by voice vote.

Approval of Minutes

3.1. Motion to Approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from September 9, 2024

L Rushaj motioned to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2024 meeting, seconded by J Steger.

Mr. Bockler suggested certain members should have abstained from vote on McDaniels Marketing vote, which was unanimous vote according to the minutes. He states that he was not in attendance for the vote as he exited the meeting early. He requests all future votes be done as a roll call vote.

Motion passed by voice vote; one nay – Mr. Bockler.

Public Input

None

Consent Agenda

5.1. Monthly Staff Report

Mr. Wray provides overview of the included monthly staff report and highlighted a few items:

Cullinan plans to release next tenant soon. There are two public right now; Maurices and Five Below.

The RFP process is complete on the sale of City property south of Hanna Drive. Mr. Wray will speak with City Council tonight in executive session. It will be an industrial park. For the 57 acres they are interested in, they estimate a \$550M valuation once complete.

Mr. Wray recently had a meeting with a local developer for a three-story apartment complex downtown that looks promising at this time. They would like to start this spring.

Mr. Wray completed business retention visits with Ms. McCoy at a few hotels, retailers, etc. The hotels are stating they are about 20% lower than last year, but tax revenue numbers seem to be where they were expected so far. Mr. Setti suggested looking at STAR reports from Greater Peoria to get an idea on maybe why this is. Mr. Bockler commends Mr. Wray and Ms. McCoy for doing retention visits and thinks they are much needed. He suggests seeing a standard matrix and questions that each location answers anonymously to gather data and help develop a more strategic plan.

Unfinished Business

6.1. Strategic Planning - Measureable Objectives

Mr. Wray reviewed the objectives that he put together and welcomes feedback. He notes that the default timeline would be five years unless it is otherwise noted.

Mr. Bockler asked for current data/point of reference/starting line to show comparison (example given is the number of homes currently to track how many are added). Mr. Leman agrees and adds that this would assist in building a dashboard. Mr. Wray states that he is working on this. The data was not readily available online, but he will work to gather the information.

Mr. Steger suggested updating some of the wording for the objectives. Example: instead of "add 100 homes" change to "net gain of 100 homes" to show growth and also include the consideration of any losses.

Mr. Bockler suggested identifying additional industrial park potentials. Mr. Wray explained there is an objective under Goal 2, Strategy 2 to complete a new comprehensive land use plan, which would aid in doing exactly that. He further added that there are parcels of land identified and annexed already just south of Pekin.

Mr. Wray noted the City is applying for DCEO grant for site readiness program, which is up to \$150K that could aid in Strategy 2, Objective 2.

Mr. Bockler asked how many acres the City owns and then requested a list of those properties, both residential and industrial/commercial.

Mr. Wray explained the reasoning behind Goal 3, Strategy 2, Objective 1, which is that adding more ZBA meetings would allow for quicker growth. Current state, due to deadlines for agendas and posting, one could have to wait about a month and a half if a deadline is missed.

Mr. Bockler pointed out that there have been studies done in the past and references a bike study and downtown development strategic plan, but then those died off. He suggests that any similar studies should somehow be incorporated into this strategic plan, if possible. Mr. Wray added that potentially there could be an exhibit of referenced studies. Mr. Steger agrees that this would be a good start to take a look back, but also cautions spending too much time as the focus is to move forward.

Mr. Bockler also suggested adding priorities to each of the objectives to show how work will be done to attain them, since this is a five-year plan.

Mr. Wray plans to clean up the document and bring it back to the committee. He asked that any additional feedback be sent to him so he can get this completed. He is hopeful to accomplish this prior to the next meeting.

New Business

7.1. Discussion on Retail Strategies

Retail Strategies is a company that the City has used in the past. It appears that they have not been retained or paid, but Mr. Wray plans to look into this to find out for sure. They recently provided a free Trade Area Analysis. Per their analysis, there is an opportunity gap of about \$676M, which is broken down by category. Mr. Setti asked if the report differentiated online purchases vs in-store, as online purchases would be more difficult to recapture. Mr. Wray confirmed that it does not differentiate between the two and then added that our sales tax does not spike during holiday season, so either people are shopping online or purchasing in other local communities. Mr. Wray explains that this information may be able to help inform potential policy changes. One example would be the policy regarding liquor to be sold at gas stations, as there have been interested companies that explained this was their barrier in the past. The Committee was agreeable to bringing Retail Strategies in, hearing their presentation, talking numbers, etc.

Any Other Business to Come Before the Commission

Mr. Wray notified the group that there will be a TIF Joint Review Board meeting on 10am on October 24 for the FY21 audit. The location is TBD as of now because there is a conflict in Council Chambers, but it will likely be at the Pekin Public Library.

The next regularly scheduled meeting for this committee is scheduled for November 11, which is Veteran's Day and City Hall is closed. There was a discussion about rescheduling. Mr. Bockler suggested having on November 12 and doing it in coordination with the high school as their culinary students make lunch that day, but there are multiple committee members out that day. The group was agreeable to having a future meeting there, and Mr. Leman asked Mr. Bockler to reach out to Ms. Owens and work out a date. After a brief discussion, it was agreed to move the next meeting to Monday, November 18 at 12pm in Council Chambers.

There was discussion about roll call votes per Mr. Bockler's earlier suggestion and if/when to do so.

Mr. Wray provided a copy of the Illinois Investment Guide to all members. He explained that we paid for an ad and ended up with the inside front cover, full-page spread. This goes to about 7,000 site selectors. Mr. Bockler praises the person responsible for making this happen.

Adjourn

J Campbell moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:06pm seconded by C Campbell. Motion approved by voice vote.



City of Pekin

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF
PEKIN, ILLINOIS,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL
111 S. CAPITOL ST
ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024 AT 12:00 PM**

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee was called to order at 12:00 PM. A quorum was not present.

Staff gave an informal update. No decisions made or actions taken due to lack of a quorum.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 13, 2025, at 12:00 PM (noon) in the City Council Chambers.

Approve Agenda

Approval of Minutes

3.1. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes from 10/14/2024

Public Input

Consent Agenda

5.1. Monthly Staff Report

5.2. Greater Peoria EDC Quarterly Report

New Business

6.1. Riverway Business Park Update

6.2. Budgeting for FY26 TIF Spending

Any Other Business to Come Before the Commission

Adjourn



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Agenda Date: January 13, 2025
To: Members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee
From:

AGENDA ITEM: Staff Report

DESCRIPTION:
Commercial

- Cullinan announced the addition of Marshall's, Ross, and Five Below to the old mall building. They are expected to be open fall 2025. They are also working with another large retailer (non-food goods) to potentially take the entire space next to TSC where the Mattress Liquidator currently is located. They report that this retailer has continued to show interest through initial talks and is coming soon to do a site visit.
- Bob Evans announced closure. Staff is working with a national restaurant chain to replace it.
- Buzz'n Bean Coffee opened at 1631 Broadway.
- Performance Battery opened at 2410 N 8th Street.
- Staff is nearing completion on a downtown area guide in consultation with Pekin Main Street.

Industrial

- The City Council meeting on Monday night includes an agenda item to enter into an option and sale agreement with Ambient Fuels to sell them 47 acres south of Hanna Drive along the railroad tracks for a new industrial development. Ambient is a green energy company that partners with carbon-fuel companies to make their processes and products as environmentally-friendly as possible.
- Staff has been made aware of an industrial company in Galesburg looking to expand their facilities, and we have reached out to them to discuss Pekin sites.

Residential

- Staff was made aware of a builder currently in the Bloomington-Normal market interested in Pekin, and we sent them information on two areas of privately-owned land available for purchase and development.
- Two additional lots have been purchased for new homes in the TIF districts.
- Hornecker intends to begin grading and site work on the 34-unit duplex development in the spring.

City Projects / Initiatives

- There are final touch-ups needed on Court Street, including replacing the manhole covers, that are being scheduled for completion.

- The City received a \$2.88 million grant from Tri-County Regional Planning Commission to pay for part of the mill and overlay of Broadway between Parkway and 14th Street. This will likely occur in 2027, and the estimated total cost is \$3.6 million.
- We are still waiting to hear back from DCEO about the downtown infrastructure and streetscape grant, which our lobbyist says should be out by early February now.
- The Zoning Board of Appeals has begun discussing tobacco / smoke shop regulations to try and limit the number of these shops in town as well as restrict what products they can sell to hopefully eliminate some of the dangerous substances being sold.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Quarterly Department Report - FY25, Q2

DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOSH WRAY

Activities Overview

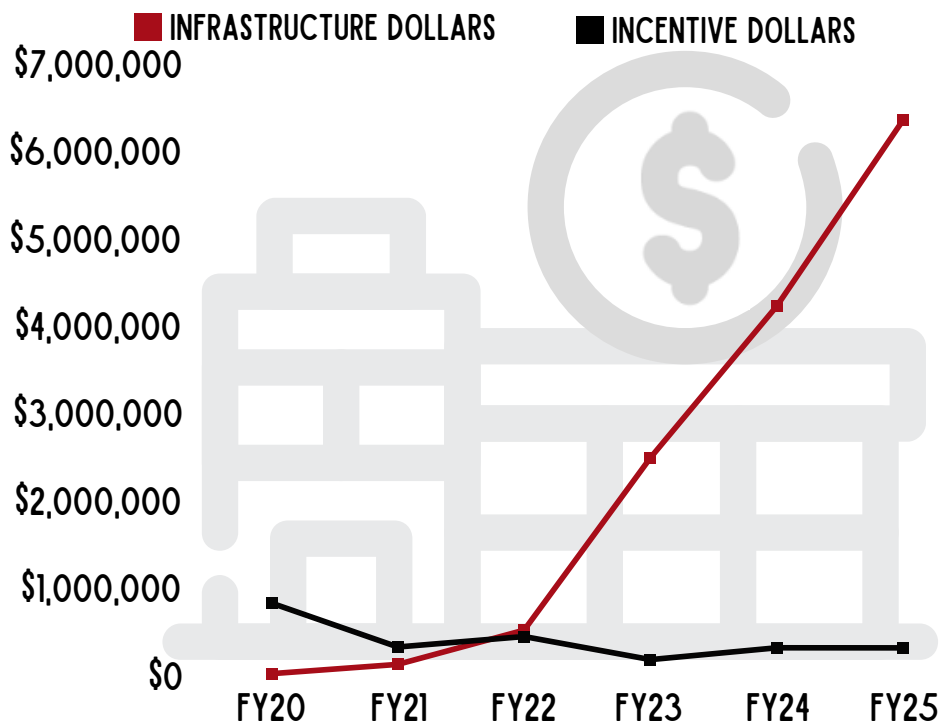
Regional

- Greater Peoria EDC completed a target industry analysis with site selection company, Newmark. The published study will be available soon.
- Attended meeting hosted by Greater Peoria EDC of German startup business delegation showcasing companies in AI, Smart Cities, and Sustainability.
- Attended the Illinois Municipal League (IML) Annual conference TIF seminar and various other learning sessions.
- Participated in Greater Peoria Career Spark to provide 8th grade students with hands-on activities to visualize their future and lay the foundation for high school studies, preparing them for a career path.

General

- 2 submittals to Intersect Illinois RFIs
- 12 contacts made with businesses/developers
- 10 follow-ups with businesses/developers
- 17 outside meetings and events attended

DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT SPENDING



*FY25 represents YTD totals (Quarters 1 and 2).

Tourism

6,700
DISCOVER PEKIN
WEBSITE HITS

\$2,117.60
TOURISM GRANT
DOLLARS SPENT

2
TOURISM GRANT
APPLICATIONS

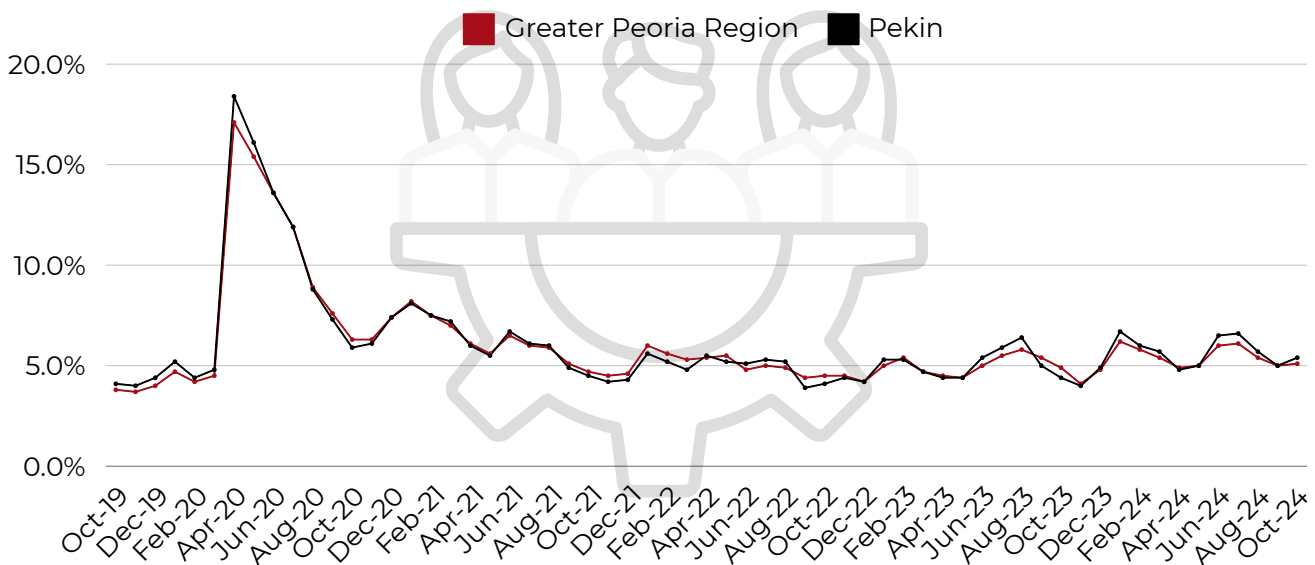
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CONT'D)

Quarterly Department Report - FY25, Q2

		August	September	October
HOUSING MARKET	ACTIVE LISTINGS	40	47	33
	Sale Price	HIGHEST	\$390,000	\$380,000
		MEDIAN	\$127,000	\$150,000
		LOWEST	\$13,000	\$41,500
	Days on Market	HIGHEST	71	124
		MEDIAN	5	3
		LOWEST	0	0
	Sale Price	HIGHEST	\$390,000	\$300,000
		MEDIAN	\$127,000	\$140,000
		LOWEST	\$13,000	\$29,900

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 5-YEAR COMPARISON

October 2019 - October 2024



RECEIVED
DEC 23 2024

December 2024

Dear Friends:

As we wind up 2024, I am pleased to share a brief report highlighting the progress we as a region have made towards the goals outlined in the Big Table Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2021-2025. That report is enclosed.

Through financial and programmatic support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the Greater Peoria EDC and its robust Strategy Committee develop and manages this five-year plan that outlines a set of strategies in four distinct but interrelated goal areas:

- Promote adaptive economic development that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, supports existing businesses, and attracts new employers.
- Develop a more resilient, robust, equitable talent pipeline in Greater Peoria.
- Foster diverse and inclusive communities where all residents and visitors enjoy active, secure, healthy, and fulfilled lives.
- Sustain and expand the economic value of the region's natural resources.

The Big Table CEDS also acknowledges the fundamental importance that economic success is only truly successful when experienced by all corners of our community.

While Greater Peoria EDC is responsible for the development of the CEDS, implementation is truly a group effort. When you review the enclosed report, you will see a variety of success stories, some completed by Greater Peoria EDC and many more undertaken by our outstanding community partners. The report is just the highlights – there is just too much to effectively fit into one document. I invite you to learn more about the Big Table CEDS at www.greaterpeoriaedc.org/ceds/.

I hope that you can see how your own organization – whether local government, nonprofit entity or private business – is reflected in and benefits from this work. I am proud of the progress accomplished over this past year. This next year marks the end of our current plan, and the hard work of writing a new plan will begin in the second half of 2025. My thanks to the financial supporters that make the CEDS possible and the implementation of its strategies a reality. Additional thanks to the Strategy Committee and GPEDC Board of Directors for their leadership, vision, and hard work.

Please feel free to contact me if you want to learn more about the Big Table CEDS, better understand how it impacts you and our region, or want to get more directly involved.

Sincerely,



Christopher Setti
Chief Executive Officer



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION



- **LGBTQ+ Community Support:** Central Illinois Friends acquired a building to establish Greater Peoria's first LGBTQ+ clinic and community center. A \$75K grant from the City of Peoria is funding critical renovations, paving the way for enhanced healthcare services and expanded community support for the LGBTQ+ population.
- **Minority Business Development:** The Minority Business Development Center hosted grant writing classes to empower individuals, businesses, and nonprofits to secure funding opportunities.
- **Women's Business Development Center:** The SBA launched a Women's Business Development Center in Peoria, providing resources and support for female entrepreneurs.
- **Transportation Pilot:** The Racial Justice & Equity (RJE) Commission designed a transportation assistance program to provide vouchers to individuals seeking higher paying jobs that was funded by the City of Peoria.
- **Public Feedback:** RJE Commission hosted public forums to solicit input and feedback.
- **South Side Redevelopment:** The demolition of Harrison and McKinley schools in Peoria marks a step forward in creating new development opportunities on the city's South Side.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE



THE BIG TABLE : COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

GREATER PEORIA REGIONAL PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

2024 Edition



This report highlights this year's progress in implementing *The Big Table: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*. It showcases the collective efforts of community organizations, businesses, individuals, and governments at the local, state, and federal levels in advancing the CEDS goals, fostering collaboration, innovation, and regional growth.

GOAL 1: ECONOMY & JOBS



- **Distillery Labs Milestone:** Opened as the first hub in the Illinois Innovation Network, serving as a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Economic Development Forum:** Hosted a high-impact forum featuring renowned site selector Jay Garner, who shared insights on positioning the region for investment.
- **Global Partnerships:** Strengthened international relations by hosting delegations from Germany, Brazil, Mexico, Canada, and Australia.
- **Business Outreach:** Broadened and formalized the Business Retention and Expansion program to connect with more companies, address challenges, and analyze economic trends.
- **ERC Fellow:** LEAD and GPEDC awarded an Economic Recovery Corps Fellow to expand rural business outreach.
- **Small Business Support:** Twelve partners served as Community Navigators and assisted 35 small businesses in securing \$660K in COVID relief through B2B New Business grants.
- **Economic Empowerment:** The Minority Business Development Center was selected as an Economic Empowerment Center to better support minority entrepreneurs.
- **Targeted Industries:** Completed a Targeted Industry Analysis (funded by EDA) to shape business attraction strategies.

GOAL 2: WORKFORCE

- **CareerSpark Initiative:** Facilitated a hands-on career experience for over 4,000 8th-grade students and the You're Hired virtual platform for over 5,000 high schoolers.
- **Lincoln CareerSpark:** The CareerSpark initiative expanded to Logan County in 2024 with a local program that served over 200 middle school students.
- **Workforce Strategies:** Utilized state funding to conduct a comprehensive Labor Shed and Workforce Development Analysis to inform workforce strategies.
- **Choose Greater Peoria:** Marketing efforts attracted over 3,500 leads from individuals interested in relocating to Greater Peoria. Launched Talent Concierge program.
- **Energy Transition Hub:** Heaven's View Community Development Corporation received a \$480K CEJA grant to serve as an Energy Transition Navigator hub.
- **Housing & Employment Support:** The Peoria Housing Authority secured funding to provide job training, placement, and education referrals for residents.
- **Employ Central Illinois:** Led by ICC, this initiative created pre-apprenticeship programs in collaboration with Peoria Public Schools, Pekin, and Illini Bluffs to support career readiness.
- **Workforce Legislation Advocacy:** The Community Foundation of Central Illinois and partners successfully advocated for the Workforce Development Through Charitable Loan Repayment Act.
- **Community-Based Childcare:** PCCEO launched a daycare center within the main bus transit center to address childcare needs for working families.



GOAL 3: QUALITY OF PLACE

- **OSF Cancer Healthcare Expansion:** Opened a state-of-the-art cancer therapy center featuring cutting-edge proton beam therapy.
- **Carle Health Expansion:** Opened Trillium Place, a comprehensive in- and out-patient behavioral health care center serving children and adolescents.
- **Substance Abuse Improvements:** Logan County increased substance abuse services, including needle exchange and narcan vending.
- **Play in Peoria Festival:** Weeklong celebration of Greater Peoria including Go Day 2024, a free celebration of the region's arts, sports, events, and dining offerings for the community.
- **Public Art Enhancements:** Increased public art installations across the region, featuring highlights like the Sculpture Walk and Big Picture projects.
- **Destination Commercial Series:** Discover Peoria completed a dynamic series promoting regional attractions, distributed across social and traditional media platforms.
- **Broadband Development:** Completed planning and feasibility studies for expanding broadband in Logan, Mason, and Tazewell Counties to improve connectivity.
- **Affordable Housing Investment:** City of Peoria awarded a \$1.25M HUD grant to the \$14M Churchview Garden Homes project on Peoria's south side.
- **Neighborhood Revitalization:** Peoria Housing Authority secured a planning grant for the Choice Neighborhood initiative, focusing on revitalizing Peoria's South Side.

GOAL 4: NATURAL RESOURCES

- **Environmental Grant:** Tri-County Regional Planning Commission secured a U.S. EPA Brownfields Assessment grant to support environmental revitalization efforts.
- **Illinois River Collaboration:** The Heart of Illinois Regional Port District is fostering stronger connections among stakeholders along the Illinois River to enhance regional logistics and trade.
- **AgTech Innovation:** AgTech Connect continues its Quarterly Convenings, driving collaboration and innovation in agricultural technology.
- **iFAB Biomanufacturing Leadership:** Built connections with iFAB in Champaign-Decatur, which was awarded a \$51M EDA Tech Hubs grant, which will help propel Central Illinois to the forefront of biomanufacturing excellence.
- **Carbon-Free Schools:** Ameren Illinois is providing schools with free Carbon-Free Assessments to promote sustainable practices and energy efficiency.
- **Placemaking Improvements:** The Audubon Society constructed a new trailhead in Chillicothe; Pekin and Germantown Hills developed new multi-use paths; multiple investments in downtown infrastructure across the region.

DECEMBER 06, 2024

GPEDC Weekend Update- December 6, 2024



Workforce Solutions Expo: On Thursday the Workforce team headed to ICC North to host the first ever Workforce Solutions Expo. This event is a sort of reverse job-fair: instead of setting up booths to attract potential candidates, employers were invited in to make their rounds and meet over twenty exhibitors that all offer some kind of workforce solutions. Most of the exhibitors were community organizations that provide things like essential skills training, employment support for underserved populations, or support for individuals with a disability. In addition, partners like Illinois Central College and intermediaries who can help with apprenticeships also showcased their services. The goal of the event was to help employers discover more resources and make partnerships with these awesome organizations to keep their pipeline of talent ready to meet their evolving needs.

Welcome to the Board: At our Executive Board meeting this week, **Brett Grimm**, the new Tazewell County board chair, was appointed to GPEDC's board of directors. Brett takes the place of Dave Zimmerman who had served on the GPEDC board, and on the Tazewell County board, for over a decade. Before serving as board chair, Brett was the

Tazewell County Auditor. But just as importantly, Brett is an entrepreneur and small business owner (actually, owner of multiple small businesses). GPEDC is blessed to be led by a really great board that represents the broad economic interests of the region. Brett's combination of public and private sector leadership will make him a great addition to our board.

Planning for Energy Energy Transition: GPEDC and the Illinois Waterway Ports Commission are hosting a presentation on solutions around aging public infrastructure and rising energy costs. Advances in technology, new incentives, and public-private partnership opportunities are allowing city and county governments to embrace creative solutions for facilities modernization that enhance quality of life for their communities. This presentation will be given by ENGIE Services US and discuss Smart City Energy Infrastructure Programs that offer a holistic, master-planned approach to citywide upgrades. These programs begin with a no-cost opportunity assessment of public buildings, water and wastewater systems, and transportation fleets to help local government officials develop phased modernization plans. This approach minimizes upfront costs, supports community health and resiliency, fosters energy independence, and creates local jobs. The meeting is Wednesday, December 11 at 11 am in the community room of the Pekin Public Library (301 S. 4th St., Pekin)—no need to RSVP. Come and engage the community to create local jobs and deliver positive change.

Ugly Christmas Sweater Networking Party: GPEDC is teaming up with Strictly Hip-Hop FM and Distillery Labs to bring you the Ugly Christmas Sweater Networking Party on Thursday, December 12 from 6 – 9 PM at Distillery Labs (201 SW Adams St.). This festive event is a perfect opportunity to connect with entrepreneurs, creatives, educators, and leaders across Greater Peoria. Enjoy tastings from the soon-to-open [Reservations](#) restaurant, live music, an open bar, and tours of Distillery Labs, the region's hub for innovation. Come in your ugliest holiday sweater and bring a \$5 entry fee or toy donation to support the "Toyz N Da Neighborhood" initiative, benefiting local children this holiday season. [RSVP](#) today to join us next week for an evening of networking, creativity, and holiday spirit!



Strategy Reports: Want to know more about the work GPEDC is doing? Check out the November strategy reports [here](#).

Have a great weekend.

Chris

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DECEMBER 13, 2024

GPEDC Weekend Update- December 13, 2024



IMA and Consul Visits: A big thank you to Ameren Illinois for inviting GPEDC to sit at their table at last week's Illinois Manufacturers Association annual meeting. IMA is one of the best advocacy groups in Illinois and a tremendous ally of economic development organizations. It was great to celebrate with a packed house in downtown Chicago.

Since I hate driving three hours each way for a two hour lunch, I took the opportunity of being in Chicago to schedule some other important meetings. I started my day meeting with the German American Chamber of Commerce, of which GPEDC is a member. The German Chamber recently brought a delegation of "smart city" startups to Distillery Labs and my visit was partly follow-up and partly planning for future opportunities, including a possible delegation visit from the Emden region. (Did you know we had our own Emden in Logan County? Named as such because of German immigrants from the original Emden.) I followed that meeting by reconnecting with my friends at the Brazilian consulate. I had a chance to share with them my recap of my Brazil trip and to do some early planning on a possible delegation visit in mid-2025.

I finished my day with my first ever meeting with the Indian consulate. Given the amazing Indian community in Greater Peoria there is a great opportunity to make more formal connections between Peoria and India. A day in Chicago makes me realize how great it is to live in Peoria, but also how nice it is to be so close to a city that has so many resources we can leverage.



Giving Back: Jeffrey, Melissa, Sara, and Courtney (plus the rest of the Inman family, Ashlie and Gavin) spent Tuesday evening cooking dinner for the families at the Ronald McDonald House in Peoria. Opportunities like this not only give back to a community

that gives so much to us, but also serve as a great team-building exercise—certainly, a nice way to kick off the holiday season.



Technical Working Group: We always combine our November and December Technical Working Group meetings into one early-ish December meeting. This Tuesday our group gathered to hear about the new Women Business Development Center. Gayle Ballard, the WBDC Executive Director, shared their model of working with entrepreneurs. You can learn more about them [here](#). Gayle and the WBDC program is a great addition to the Greater Peoria team and our startup ecosystem.

gBETA: Speaking of the startup ecosystem, the next cohort of gBETA startups is starting to form. This is a free, seven-week accelerator for entrepreneurs with scalable business ideas who are looking to refine their concept and prepare for pitching to investors. Please spread the word to your friends, family, colleagues and others who might have that great idea and wants to take the next step forward. Registration can be found [here](#).

Have a great weekend.

Chris

DECEMBER 20, 2024

GPEDC Weekend Update- December 20, 2024



CEDS Update: Each year we put together a recap of the highlights of progress towards the goals outlined in the Big Table Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This five-year plan is entering its final year, but 2024 saw a lot of great momentum including the opening of Distillery Labs, the 7th annual Career Spark, the award of a brownfield assessment grant, downtown and Main Street improvements, and so much more. While GPEDC is charged with developing and stewarding this broad plan, we are only a part of its implementation. So when you read the recap, you are going to see successes accomplished by a variety of partners but all working toward one set of goals. And the recap is just the highlights. Check it out [here](#).

EDA Reauthorization: Speaking of CEDS, GPEDC is able to do that work through financial support from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA). On top of the Partnership Planning Grant, EDA has invested over \$20 million in Greater Peoria in the past five years, including the IT Workforce Accelerator, Distillery Labs and ICC's Workforce Sustainability Center (just to name three). This week, EDA was reauthorized as part of the [Water Resources Development Act of 2024](#) – the first reauthorization of

the EDA in over 20 years. The bill and EDA's reauthorization received broadly bipartisan, and nearly unanimous, support including all of Greater Peoria's local legislators. Beyond reauthorization, the bill makes some great improvements and further investments. This includes greater funding levels for core EDA programs; increasing the baseline federal portion of grants to 60% (from 50%); and broadening EDA's ability to invest in broadband, workforce training, and pre-development projects. More details will emerge in the coming weeks and months, but this is great news for economic development in our region (and nation).

Giving Thanks: As the year wraps up, I wanted to take an opportunity to thank a few groups of people. First, if you are reading this and are an investor in this organization, we truly couldn't do this without you. When I took this job nearly 7 years ago, I didn't know exactly what I'd be getting myself into (even though I'd worked with GPEDC for the previous dozen years). But the support we receive from the community, both financially and otherwise, is simply amazing. Second, a big thanks to my Board of Directors. Drawn from our investor members, this group helps set the agenda and makes sure the organization keeps heading in the right direction. Finally, thank you to the amazing team here at GPEDC. I am blessed to be surrounded by a tremendous group of professionals, some with decades of experience and others just starting their career in this field. All are passionate and dedicated public servants. They make me look good every day and cover for my weaknesses as a leader.

However you might celebrate the end of the year, I hope you are surrounded by friends, family, laughter and peace. We look forward to picking up where we left off in 2025!



2024 office and Holiday shoot

Chris

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[+1 \(309\) 495-5910 info@greaterpeoriaedc.org](mailto:info@greaterpeoriaedc.org)

City of Pekin
Economic Development Advisory Committee
2025 Regular Meeting Schedule

Regular meetings will be held at 12:00 PM (noon)
in the Council Chambers at City Hall,
111 S. Capitol St. Pekin, IL 61554

Monday, January 13

Monday, March 10

Monday, May 12

Monday, July 14

Monday, September 8

Monday, November 10