

Press Release | October 13, 2020

Contact | MacKenzie Taylor, 309.282.3287

Discover Peoria Announce the Black-Owned Peoria Project

The project highlights 21 Black-owned businesses around the Peoria region and their impact on the community

Peoria, IL- Discover Peoria (the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau) is excited to announce its new campaign, **Black-Owned Peoria**. This campaign features 21 Black-owned businesses located in the Peoria area that focus on tourism and/or the hospitality industry.

“Customer satisfaction is at the forefront while passion and family values are at the core, that’s why Peoria’s Black-owned businesses are essential cornerstones of central Illinois’s unique business and hospitality landscape,” said **JD Dalfonso, President/CEO of Discover Peoria**. “We want to aid in bolstering Peoria’s Black-owned businesses so everyone has an opportunity to thrive and to help play a stronger role in the recovery of our local economies.”

“Providing a platform for these businesses to showcase their impact on the community is vital as we continue to look at ways to improve the quality of life in our community,” said Dalfonso. “And, we already have our sights on creating campaigns that highlight all of the great diversity in our communities. Our diversity is a strength that must be showcased for everyone to see and experience. Black-Owned businesses have already received increased sales because of their partnership with Discover Peoria. We invite you to watch Discover Peoria select and highlight other Peoria communities in the future.”

“This project is the result of Discover Peoria’s 2019 self-assessment and our desire to become more known, available to and supportive of Black-Owned businesses. Our focus is not how we represent diversity as we see it today, but how we can showcase what we see our community becoming,” said **Daurice Boneta, Community Engagement Coordinator of Discover Peoria and facilitator of the Black-Owned Peoria campaign**. “To promote all of Peoria is our goal and the right thing to do.”

“By supporting Black-Owned businesses we are promoting the very best of who we are as a community,” said Boneta. “All of our featured businesses can be described as brilliant - multifaceted and high quality using high standards.”

The 21 Black-owned and tourism-related businesses consist of:

- Page 1 of 3

- **1 Hundred Degrees Fashion Wear:** Focuses on selling New York style streetwear for both male and female audiences, owned by Bryan and Josh Cannon.
- **Angel's Place:** Provides various types of affordable women's apparel and accessories with occasional men's items, owned by Angel Kyle.
- **ART Inc.:** A non-profit organization focusing on venues for community events, entrepreneurs, businesses and artists, co-founded by Jonathan and Nikki Romain.
- **BBQ Smoke Wagon:** A barbeque restaurant featuring an assortment of smoked meats with options for take-out or drive-in, owned by Henry Marizetts.
- **Blown Away Balloons:** Specializes in designing and coordinating balloons for events and also provides drop-off and pick-up services, owned by Shatiya Alexander.
- **Janet's Just for You:** Offers both women and men's exclusive dress wear and accessories, owned by George and Janet Davis.
- **Jr's Kitchen:** A premier restaurant offering a wide variety of wing flavors and specialty sandwiches, owned by Elbert Nickerson Jr.
- **Knockout Kings Boxing:** Focuses on boxing classes for kids and young adults to positively discipline the physical and mental state, owned by Robert Bell.
- **Mo Tru Travels:** Specializes in planning and providing affordable family travel both domestically and internationally, owned by Arien "Mo" Wallace.
- **Que For You:** A dine-in and takeout barbecue restaurant with a wide range of delectable rib dishes, owned by Dan Ruffin.
- **Relaxed N Refreshed:** A business specializing in massage therapy to relieve the body, mind and spirit, owned by Virginia Clark.
- **Riley's Vegan Sweets and Eats:** Focuses on creating customizable 100% vegan sweets from scratch, owned by Riley Greenwood.
- **Rumbergers:** Specializes in gourmet wings cooked from original recipes, owned by Tremayne Branch and managed by KeKe Odom.
- **SLE Sexy Little Eatery:** An American styled restaurant that also offers a buffet-style meal, owned by Michael Little.

- **Smo-King Pit:** Serving quality hickory smoked barbeque and ribs, owned by Micheal and Michelle Citchens.
- **SweetCakes by Rachael:** A small bakery focused on custom cakes created specifically to the client's liking, owned by Rachael Parker.
- **Triple Dipple:** Home of the Sweet Tater Cheesecake, committed to creating triply delicious treats and delicacies from scratch, owned by Herrold Webster.
- **Uniquee Tees Inc.:** Specializes in custom embroidery and screen printing owned by Shundra Parker.
- **Wing Work:** Specializing in traditional & boneless wings, buffalo fries and chicken tenders, owned by Azadia and Alicia Boyd.
- **World On Wheels:** Focuses on fun segway transportation matched with historical and current-day information from a tour guide along the Peoria Riverfront, owned by Lynette Lee.
- **Young's Popcorn Heaven:** Offers non-GMO whole grain kernel popcorn, made with real ingredients varying from classic, savory, sweet and mixed choiced flavors, owned by Gregory and Joann Young.

All 21 Peoria Black Business owners utilize word-of-mouth advertising with at least 18 owners citing it as their primary, or preferred form of communication. Seven businesses are women-owned while seven are owned by Black couples. Additionally, 19 businesses are brick and mortar while two operate online.

Discover Peoria has created a featured section on its website dedicated to the Black-Owned Peoria campaign. All 21 interviews, photos and business listings can be viewed at discoverpeoria.com/black-owned-peoria. The Black-Owned Peoria campaign was headed by Discover Peoria's Community Engagement Coordinator, Daurice Boneta and all photographs and videos featured within the campaign were taken by local photographer, Chris Khoury.

The campaign will continue indefinitely, with highlighted elements taking place throughout 2020-2021 to help bring awareness to Black-Owned Peoria throughout the year.