

Press Release | January 14, 2021

Contact | MacKenzie Taylor, 309.282.3287

## Discover Peoria Announces Appointment of Two New Board Members and Hire of Director of Experience & Sponsorship

**Peoria, IL-** The Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (Discover Peoria) announces the appointments of **Julie Enzenberger, CV** and **Stephen Kouri, Esq.** as new **Discover Peoria Board Members** and the hire of **Elle Benway** as **Director of Experience & Sponsorship**.

“The new additions to our board and staff are a great start to the new year for Discover Peoria,” said **J.D. Dalfonso, President/CEO of Discover Peoria**. “Discover Peoria’s focus for the next year is to support our communities and locally owned businesses as they rebuild and recover in innovative and creative ways after an incredibly challenging 2020. There is no doubt that our new board members provide perspective and expertise to help guide our mission and staff in the year ahead.”

In December, the PACVB Board officially voted in two new members to fill vacant seats on the board. Julie Enzenberger and Stephen Kouri were added for their tremendous dedication to the Peoria region.

“I wanted to become a member of Discover Peoria’s board because I have never fallen more in love with a city than I have with Peoria,” said **Enzenberger**. “I live just a few blocks away from two of the major downtown hotels in Peoria and I run into visitors every day. Anyone who knows me, knows I talk to everyone and many of the visitors ask me what there is to do in this area. St. Mary’s Cathedral downtown gets over a quarter of a million visitors a year and many of those visitors stay at hotels and eat at local restaurants but are not sure what else this area offers. It is my dream to be able to help inform people who visit the Peoria Civic Center, museums, churches and other businesses in this area everything there is to offer so they keep returning.”

Born in Chicago, Enzenberger worked a multitude of jobs before she was Consecrated and married Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church on August 12, 2006.

Currently, Enzenberger works for the Catholic Diocese of Peoria where she is the Administrator of the Archbishop Fulton Sheen Foundation, works for the Dept. of Evangelization and Faith Formation, the Dept. of Development and Stewardship and Catholic Charities. Enzenberger also helps with the website and manages all the social media for the Diocese of Peoria and the Archbishop Sheen Foundation. Along with managing the website for the Cathedral of St. Mary, Sacred Heart, St. Bernard and St. Joseph churches of Peoria. She is also a Board Member of the Sister City Commission for Peoria.

Born and raised in central Illinois, Kouri is the son of Judge Steve Kouri. Born with cerebral palsy, a neurological disorder affecting 764,000 people, the 32-year-old Kouri graduated from Richwoods High School and the University of Illinois and then received a law degree from Florida Coastal School of Law in Jacksonville. Currently, Kouri is the solo practitioner of his law firm, Steve Kouri at Law. Though confined to a wheelchair, that hasn't stopped him from contributing to the betterment of the central Illinois community. Out of more than 2,000 volunteers, Kouri was named the Illinois High School Association March Madness Volunteer of the Year. Following graduation from law school, he worked as an Assistant State's Attorney for Jerry Brady. A member of the Peoria Liquor Commission, Kouri was recently elected chairman by fellow commissioners and has also served on the Peoria Zoning Board of Appeals.

"It is a huge honor to be appointed a member of Discover Peoria's board," said **Kouri**. "I'm passionate about helping Peoria's business community flourish and I look forward to helping Discover Peoria facilitate its mission and making our community stronger."

"Over the last few months I've gotten the opportunity to get to know Julie and Stephen both on a personal level and I have no doubt that they will help champion the Peoria area as Discover Peoria board members," said **Dalfonso**. "Both are extremely involved in the community and both bring a level of expertise and diversity to the board."

"As Chair of the Discover Peoria Board of Directors, I'm excited about these new additions to our board and staff," said **Dan Kouri, Board Chairman of Discover Peoria**. "Our board's job is to help support and facilitate Discover Peoria's mission of making the Peoria area one of the most desired regions in the country for wholesome, memorable experiences and the appointments of Julie and Stephen will only propel that mission forward."

As Director of Experience and Sponsorship, Elle Benway will focus on developing exceptional experiences and partnering opportunities that captivate the central Illinois community. From concept to activation, Benway will monitor each creative step, ensuring partnerships are respected, memorable opportunities are produced and objectives are delivered.

“I was born in Peoria, and I’m excited to be returning to my family’s stomping grounds with the humble ambition to develop the Peoria area into a destination in which local businesses and the community are proud to call home and visitors are eager to return,” said **Benway**.

Prior to joining Discover Peoria, Benway spent 15 years in marketing, event management and hospitality for some of the world’s most celebrated gatherings, including organizing sponsorship execution and brand activation for Super Bowls, Olympic Games, Oscars, World Series, World Cups and Formula-1 seasons.

“Like many area businesses, 2020 was hard on Discover Peoria and we had to, unfortunately, make reductions in our staff and programs,” said **Dalfonso**. “Elle is our first hire since then and with the success of this past December’s Christmas on Court in downtown Pekin, it was evident that focusing on community engagement and quality of life needed to be at the forefront of our mission moving forward. I’m confident that Elle will be able to successfully facilitate that mission and I am particularly excited for our region to see what she has in store.”

###