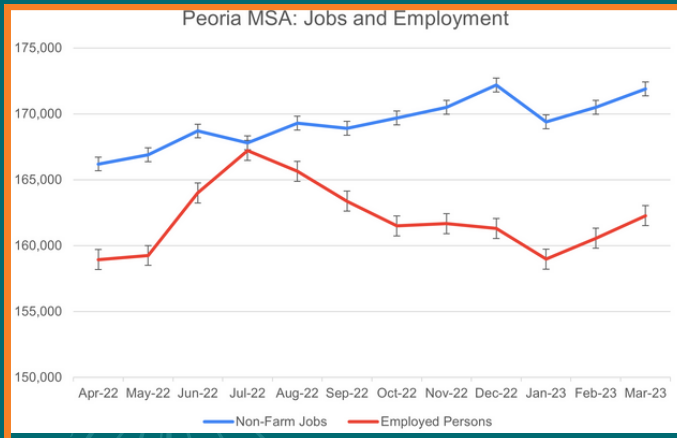


## GPEDC PARTNERS TO BRING FUNDS TO THE REGION

Our Office of Rural Outreach and Development has been actively working with Mason, Peoria, and Tazewell Counties to submit Phase 1 applications for funding to Illinois DCEO's Energy Transition Community Grants program. This program aims to support communities impacted by coal power plant retirements. Thanks to our efforts, our region was allocated over \$2.5 million in grants from the program, part of the statewide distribution of \$40 million. We are currently working with units of local government to prepare for phase 2 applications due on May 30. Our goal is to continue leveraging these grants to support our region's economic development and create a more sustainable and equitable future for our communities.

## MEASURING EMPLOYMENT AND JOBS DURING THE PREVIOUS YEAR



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# QUARTERLY REPORT

January - March 2023

[www.greaterpeoriaedc.org](http://www.greaterpeoriaedc.org)

## GPEDC HELPS EXPAND INCENTIVES

The Peoria Urban Enterprise Zone (PUEZ) continues to grow! With the support of our Business Assistance Director, Sally Hanley, the PUEZ boundary is expanding to create more opportunities for development. PUEZ Amendment #8, which adds approximately 530 acres and 97 parcels while removing one, will include areas along major roads such as MacArthur Highway, Knoxville Avenue, and Allen Road in the City of Peoria and Peoria County, as well as other parts of neighboring areas. The expansion is part of the Illinois Enterprise Zone Program, which aims to drive economic growth and revitalization in underutilized areas through tax incentives and regulatory relief.

## GPEDC PROMOTING THE REGION TO GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

Lenora Fisher, our Director of Business Attraction, recently represented Greater Peoria in Austria and Southern Germany with the Transatlantic Business & Investment Council (TBIC) to engage with advanced manufacturing companies. She discussed the benefits of doing business in the US and shared the advantages of a Greater Peoria business location with leaders from ten companies. This recruitment trip was significant given Europe's current energy crisis and these companies' interest in the energy stability of Central Illinois. Creating and nurturing relationships at home and abroad is a key tactic of our business attraction strategy.



## GPEDC CONNECTS LOCAL STARTUP WITH FOREIGN PARTNER

Pierre Paul, CEO and Founder of We Hear You, has partnered with Doğuş Teknoloji, the technology arm of the Doğuş Group in Turkey, to improve their AI-based sign language translator. The Office of Innovation and Startups played a vital role in connecting the two companies. We Hear You's innovative technology operates on any camera device, and partnering with Doğuş Teknoloji will help them develop and improve their software. This partnership has the potential to benefit the wider community by enabling greater accessibility to sign language interpretation services.

## A NOTE FROM OUR CEO - CHRIS SETTI

I am happy to share with you a brief recap of our work in the first quarter of 2023, building on the success and momentum of the past year. While the economic impacts of COVID are waning, we are still working to support economic sectors that were impacted, including partnering with Illinois DCEO to help businesses connect with relief. Thanks to the investment of our public and private partners, we have leveraged our assets to drive targeted initiatives and programs designed to move our regional economy forward. While we celebrate our strong job numbers, we know there is still work to be done towards equitable, sustainable and resilient growth. I invite you to take a look at just some of the highlights of the last three months in this report.

## GPMN QUARTERLY MEETING SPARKS COLLABORATION

In March the Greater Peoria Manufacturing Network (GPMN) held its quarterly meeting at Morton Industries. Mark Denzler, President of the Illinois Manufacturers Association, delivered the keynote address, providing attendees with a comprehensive legislative update, including information on recently enacted and pending legislation. Mr. Denzler's presentation, along with those from Chris Ober of Morton Industries and Kristy Johns from IMEC, sparked meaningful conversation and networking among attendees. The Network's mission is to advocate for and provide resources to manufacturing members, as well as to promote their capabilities both within and beyond the Greater Peoria area. Through networking sessions, several Network members have found opportunities for collaboration, further strengthening the region's manufacturing industry.

## GPEDC AND JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT LAUNCH DIGITAL JOB FAIR

GPEDC and Junior Achievement of Central Illinois collaborated to launch the second year of CareerSpark: You're Hired, a digital job fair that has attracted almost 5000 students from nearly twenty high schools. The platform features prominent companies such as PNC, Accenture, and OSF and will continue to host speaker sessions until the end of June, providing students with valuable insights and knowledge about potential career paths. CareerSpark: You're Hired is a game-changing approach to connecting students with organizations in the region and offers a glimpse into the future of career fairs.

