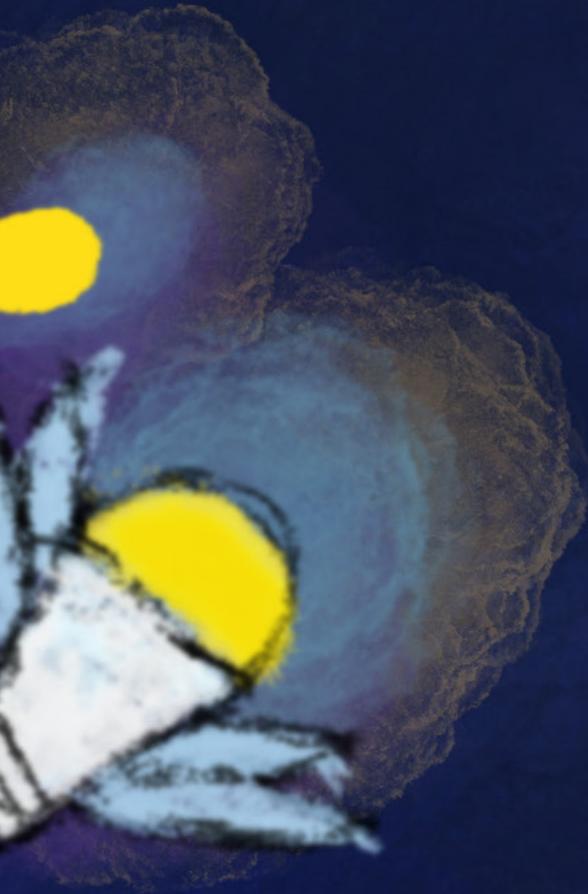


# Empowerment:

**Promoting Sustainability and Creativity  
within the Arts.**



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Appreciation



The Peoria Guild of Black Artists is a group of early career, Black creatives from within the Peoria, IL region. We aim to uplift black voices, advocate for creatives, and provide resources and educational materials to our community in an accessible manner.

We want to expose members to new experiences and opportunities so they can grow their knowledge and skills. Since we have started in 2020 we have had multiple collaborations to do just that! Our artists have worked with New Editions at ISU, University Galleries in Bloomington, the Peoria Parks District, and finally the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program.

We have grown so much in these two years and that is thanks to our community!



"Making Our Space: Members of the Peoria Guild of Black Artists"  
Curated by Jessica Bingham  
Photo by University Galleries



Peoria Art Guild Fine Art Fair, 2021  
Photo by Morgan Mullen



Google and Ameren Collaboration Billboard • Alexander Martin

**A Note From:**



**Energy Efficiency PROGRAM**



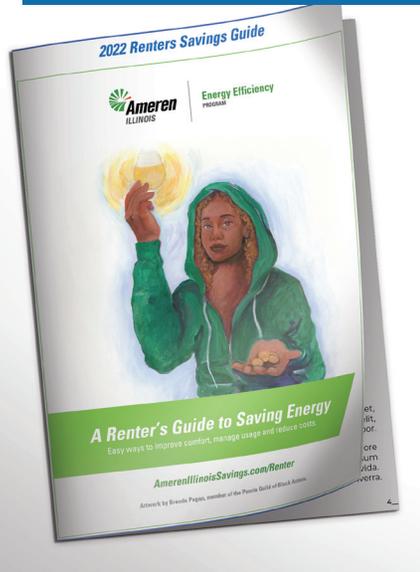
**Kristol Simms**  
Senior Director  
Energy Efficiency Policy & Implementation  
Ameren Illinois

2022 Renters Guide  
Cover Art

Brenda Pagan

2022 Ameren Illinois Virtual  
Business Symposium

Multiple Marketing Pieces  
Chantell Marlow



At Ameren Illinois, we are your trusted partner in energy efficiency. Since 2008, Ameren Illinois has delivered over \$1 billion in savings on energy costs to our customers. Our goal, in everything we do, is to help you increase comfort, manage your energy usage and reduce your costs.

The Market Development Initiative (MDI) was established in 2018 to ensure each and every Ameren Illinois customer has access to energy efficiency products and services. In the Market Development Initiative, we partner with community organizations to provide energy efficiency in an equitable manner to the communities we serve. Since 2018, we have partnered with over 40 community organizations and together we've reached over 300,000 customers with services and resources. These partnerships vary and include innovative opportunities such as:

- Funding apprenticeship positions with companies that deliver our energy efficiency programs;
- Teaching students about careers in energy efficiency;
- Supplying community partners with energy-saving kits to distribute to their customers;
- Partnering with community agencies to provide outreach and education about our energy efficiency programs;
- Joining forces with a community organization to host a community event that raises awareness, such as our mural partner East Bluff Community Center;

Back in 2020, this partnership was just an idea. We sat down and explored how we could collaborate with the Peoria Guild of Black Artists and the vision for this exceptional project was born. We commissioned three permanent placemaking murals throughout Central Illinois depicting racial justice, sustainability, and energy efficiency. All of our mural sites have also participated in energy efficiency projects to their facilities at no cost to them, upgrading areas such as lighting and HVAC to reduce their energy costs, minimize their carbon footprint, and allow them to use those saved dollars to invest back into their communities.

This mural project opened the door to other collaborations between PGOBA and Ameren Illinois. Guild members have an ongoing opportunity to provide input on marketing campaigns and creative collateral materials to ensure our messages truly reflect the communities we serve. You will see their artwork on billboards, our website, brochures, and more.

I am so proud of this collaboration. It is through partnerships like this that we continue the pursuit of energy efficiency for all.

# Location Significance

**The Peoria Guild of Black Artists (PGOBA)**, in collaboration with the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Program, has been working to bring art to the public in a big way and highlight the importance of sustainability and energy efficiency in the community. This project has taken the form of art created by PGOBA members of all different skill sets. This art has found its home in Ameren marketing initiatives and three murals in the city of Peoria. They are located at The East Bluff Community Center, House of Hope Peoria, and UFS Downtown Outlet Center.

Each of these murals were created by artists to highlight different aspects of sustainability, community, and life in our city. We chose locations based off of the mural concepts and what the artist envisioned for the audience to create a unified message. Location considerations were determined by the utility, the community, and visibility.

The locations selected had the opportunity to participate in the Ameren Illinois Energy Efficiency Business Program. Visit the links below to find out what your business qualifies for. You will work directly with an Energy Advisor who will help guide you through low-to-no cost upgrades that the program offers and what offerings are available to your business.

[AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/SmallBusiness](https://AmerenIllinoisSavings.com/SmallBusiness)

The locations for the murals had to cover multiple of the following qualifications to be selected as a mural location.

## People First

The mural should exist in a space that is frequented by people with plenty of room for them to interact with the mural.

## Representative of the Community

The figures in the mural are representative of the artists and the communities we want to serve. The mural should be where the community can really see themselves in it.

## High Visibility

The bold colors and message of the murals need to exist somewhere accessible where everyone can see it.

## Interactive

The location should be a space where the mural can be easily and safely interacted with.

## Inclusive

Locations that are intentionally inclusive and welcoming to under-represented & under-served residents.

## Community Centered

Should be somewhere communities can gather and celebrate the city we share.

## Neighborhood Based

A Location that has a balance of business and residential charm.





# Lightning Bulbs, 2021

East Bluff Community Center • 512 E Kansas St. Peoria, IL 61603

## Hannah Offutt & Brenda Pagan

This mural invites the viewer by invoking nostalgia, the wonder and curiosity of childhood, and especially the innocence of black childhood and there by inviting the viewer to what Ameren has to offer for them and their family.

Children play and explore, chasing lightning bugs in the shape of LED light bulbs. Children represent freedom and curiosity, while the lightning bugs represent sustainability. This mural also presents a fun photo opportunity for people to take photos "catching" one of the lightning bulbs. The visuals will consist of a painterly aesthetic with lively visible brushstrokes. The spirit of play in this peace embodies the hope we have for the future and the role that sustainability plays in securing a healthy future for children today.



### Hannah Offutt • Acrylic painting & Multimedia

"I wanted Chasing Lightning Bulbs to reflect the innocence of Black childhood. Reflecting on moments of childhood where we were in awe of something innocent and strange. I try to take the viewer away into some soft parts within themselves that perhaps they forgot existed. I seek to teach the viewer to find the awe in nature. Also, the interconnectedness of energy (light bulb) and nature (wings). Brenda magically brought to life my concept. I feel very honored to have been chosen for this piece and I love that it is in my neighborhood."



The original concept art by Hannah that inspired the final mural with the help of many guild members



### Brenda Pagan • Acrylic painting & Multimedia

"I sought to create a simple, flowing, and painterly final design for this mural that could: capture all the charming magic of Hannah's original sketch and concept; and naturally accommodate the different styles of brushstrokes of many artists in a cohesive yet lively manner. For reference images, one member even asked her four children if they could pretend that they were catching fireflies. It just makes for such a sweet and organic piece. It was beautiful to see Hannah's concept of chasing lightening bulbs come together on the wall by way of many hands and minds, and I love the way the final piece just Glows. (And like Hannah, I also appreciate that I live so close to this mural!!)"

# EMPOWER

Yourself & Your Community



The original concept for "Empower" by Alexander Martin



## Empower, 2021

House of Hope • 514 S Shelley St. Peoria, IL 61605

### Alexander Martin

This mural concept focuses on People first and is a way for the communities served to see themselves in art. The silhouettes utilized highlight members of the guild, community, and folks involved at Ameren. The silhouettes are dressed in brightly colored contemporary fashion. This not only makes the image bright and calls attention to the mural, but also helps accentuate the call to action. **EMPOWER** your community **EMPOWER** yourself. Change begins with you and having this message paired with relatable imagery promotes that.



**Alexander Martin** • Painting, Sculpture, Installation, Performance, and Printmaking.

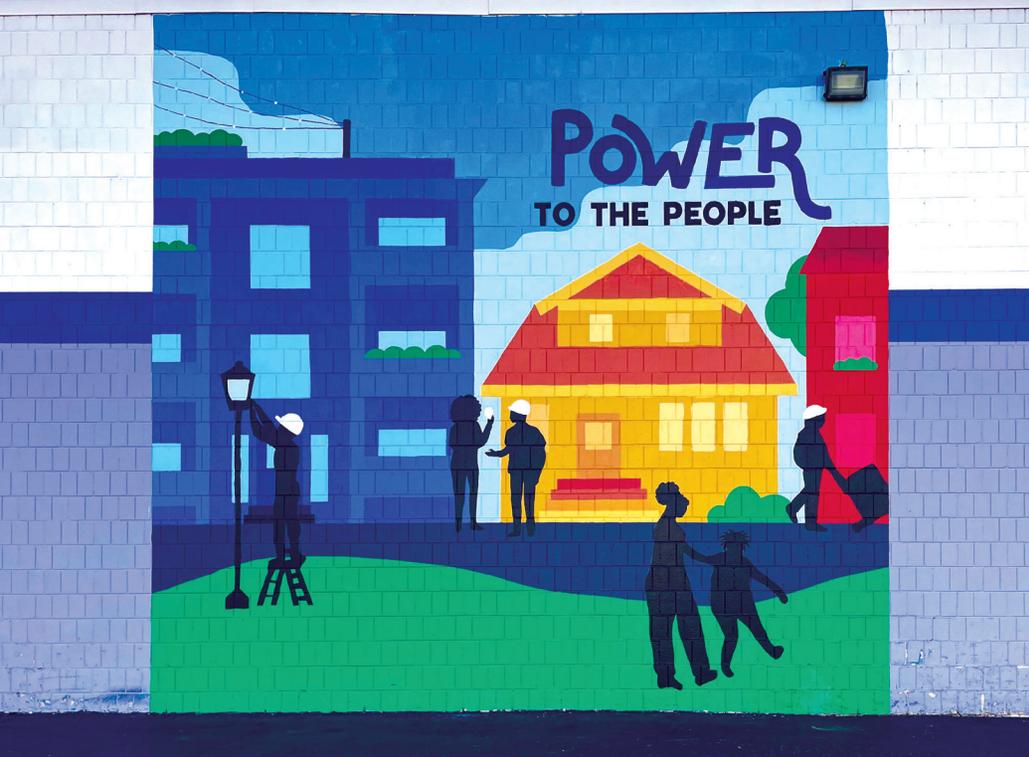
“I always think a people first approach to things is super important, and I wanted to do a design that highlights the community and the people in it. You can’t do outreach, you can’t do collaborations, you can’t provide services if you don’t have community! Artists and creatives are living and working within their community, working to empower themselves! That’s where the phrase and text came from. Empower yourself and your community. This is a call to action, a call to work together, to access resources, and to work towards living sustainably. With the energy efficiency program at Ameren Illinois, assessing these resources is a way to empower yourself, take control over part of your way of living, and be an example for your community! I wanted this design to highlight the wonderful range of folks living and working in the city, pursuing their dreams and goals, and making them happen!

To learn more about Ameren Illinois’ Energy Efficiency Program for residential, business, multifamily, or income qualified customers please visit, [AmerenIllinoisSavings.com](https://AmerenIllinoisSavings.com)

# POWER

## TO THE PEOPLE





**Chantell Marlow** • Digital & Graphic Design

“For this Power to the People mural, I wanted to show a glimpse into Peoria - streets alive with people and homes based on our local architecture. Bright colors reflect the vibrancy of our neighborhoods and simple energy efficiency measures are being implemented throughout the neighborhood. People often underestimate the power they gain in energy efficiency - power over their spending, over their comfort within their homes, and the power they have to impact generations to come. This mural reminds us that we have a say in how we use or conserve energy and calls us to imagine the difference that our collective power can make. I am excited to see this mural come to life, bringing more color and positivity to our community.”

## Power to the People, 2021

UFS Outlet Center • 1800 SW Adams St. Peoria, IL 61602

### Chantell Marlow

A stylized street view of Peoria is shown with silhouettes of people walking, exploring, and enjoying the city. Ameren Illinois employees are seen throughout the neighborhood, working on various projects. The homes and buildings are modeled after actual homes around Peoria.

Power to the people is a reclamation of power for the citizens of our city, a statement showing the ways in which Ameren can help folks get the resources they need. This message paired with the familiar imagery of our city feels like home and alludes to the resources available through programs from Ameren Illinois.

The original concept art by Chantell Marlow



# THANK YOU

**The Peoria Guild of Black Artists** would like to formally thank the community for their continued love that they have shared with us since the inception in 2020. Through the pandemic we have grown together collectively through the support and kindness we have received.

We want to thank the Peoria Art Guild, The YANI Collective, Big Picture Peoria, New Editions, University Galleries, Our House, and so many other individuals for always including us and inviting us to be a part of the art conversations in Peoria. Thank you to the many vendors and community organizations that have worked today for serving our community and helping bring this block party to life. We also want to thank all of our mural locations for their enthusiasm and trust in our vision for the murals and our artist's talents.

Last but not least, we would like to thank our Ameren Illinois partner, Angie Ostaszewski, for having the vision for this organic partnership. When we first began the guild she saw an opportunity for Ameren to be proactive and opened a line of communication for collaboration. She has shown a deep gratitude for the trust the Peoria Guild of Black Artists and our partner organizations has placed in her and Ameren Illinois and we are thankful that she has championed this work.

Thank You!

From,

**The Members of the Peoria Guild of Black Artists**

## Contributing Creatives

We couldn't have completed a project of this size a quality without the feedback, support, talent, knowledge, and labor from our members. Thank you all for your contributions from your art and voices to your hands and jokes. You all always come through in the end.

Aisha Dudley-Brown  
Alexa Cary  
Alexander Martin  
Aryelle Cook  
Asya Washum  
Autumn Cain  
Brenda Pagan  
Camryn Proctor  
Chantell Marlow  
Christian McKinney  
Chrystopher Wilson  
Emerson Brown  
Eric Williams  
Erick Minnis  
Hannah Offutt  
Justin Wilson  
Krystopher Dudley-Brown  
Kyle Hill  
Maria Lavender  
Morgan Mullen  
Rose Farrell  
Shakayla Thomas  
Shanice Bradley-Bey  
Tafi Brown  
Tayler Smith  
Teresa Gentry  
Tevin Quarles

