

Connor, Maloof waltz toward job

By SCOTT WILLIAMS
of the Journal Star

If power is where power goes in Peoria, then City Hall and the new administration of Mayor Jim Maloof are poised for a windfall.

David E. Connor, the lame-duck chief of Peoria's largest bank, has offered his services to the Maloof administration, possibly for the specific purpose of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the city's economy.

The mayor approached Connor about a week ago, and Connor agreed to get involved in City Hall after he vacates his post at year's end as chairman of Commercial National Bank.

"I don't really know what the mayor's got in mind," Connor said Tuesday. "But what I do know is I'm all for him, and I want to help in any way I can."

Maloof said he envisions Connor undertaking a study of Peoria's most serious economic issues and then drafting a plan for how the city administration ought to address those issues during the next five or 10 years.

Considering Connor's expertise in finance and economics, coupled with his established position in the city's power structure, Maloof said, Connor has the ability to chart the city's course to long-term economic recovery.

However, Maloof stressed that Connor's specific role in City Hall is far from defined at this point, and several more discussions will take place before any concrete plans are made.

Maloof said he is trying to lure Connor into taking an active role in the city government not only because of the city's need for long-term economic planning, but also because it is important to keep Connor and his expertise in Peoria.

"David Connor has been such a strong asset to this community in so many ways. I don't want to see a man with that talent wasted," the mayor said.

As a leading Peoria bank execu-



DAVID CONNOR

tive, Connor has come to be regarded as one of the community's most influential figures.

Last month, however, he lost a hard-fought power struggle and was ousted as chairman of the Midwest Financial Group, the institution he founded in 1983 and built into one of the state's largest bank holding companies.

At 59, he can hardly be considered retirement age. He has indicated publicly that he intends to seek new professional challenges.

He emphasized Tuesday that he has no plans to leave Peoria and said he is considering several alternatives for the future.

But he said he still will take Maloof up on the offer to enter City Hall. And he is willing to consider the economic study that Maloof proposes.

Connor headed a similar study for the Illinois Chamber of Commerce during the late 1970s. He said Tuesday the same sort of project could be initiated at the local level.

"If it turns out that that is what Jim wants me to do, I am willing to take a look at it," he said. "I am going to get back to my first love, which is the development of Peoria."

Maloof said he hopes to meet
Please see CONNOR, Page A9