



ANNUAL REPORT

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Dear Topeka,

It's truly difficult to put a cap on a year as challenging and unpredictable as 2020. During this year we faced a global pandemic and took a long overdue look at systemic racism and social injustice. These obstacles may have changed our projected course for the year, but they did not change our purpose. The mission of the Greater Topeka Partnership has always been about overcoming the odds, pursuing prosperity, and fighting for equity and opportunity for all. If anything, the challenges we faced revealed our resilience and demonstrated our ability to come together. Over the year, the Partnership successfully fought for what we believe in by innovating new platforms for economic security, fighting for new business and talent, and boldly articulating a message of anti-racism. Though we may never look back on 2020 with fondness, we can look back on our response to that year with pride. We faced adversity, and we persevered. That is the power of the Partnership.

1854

EST

TOPEKA KANSAS

As the year unfolded, our organization shifted quickly to “how can we help” mode. As early as March of 2020, we launched two important resources: Support Topeka and the HOST Relief Program. The Support Topeka campaign provided needed crisis communication at a critical time. A new website, videos and print material allowed the public to receive updated information on safety and health protocols, various relief programs, state re-opening plans, and more. One of the first programs to live on the website was the HOST Small Business Relief Program, or Helping Others Support Topeka. This innovative effort provided needed private and public relief funds to reach Shawnee County businesses who were suffering from the effects of the pandemic.

As our community transformed before our eyes, we also received national media coverage for our many economic development pursuits. These include Choose Topeka, our popular talent recruitment initiative, the construction of Walmart’s largest distribution center in Kansas, and the arrival of Plug and Play Topeka, officially launching with its first selection day event. Additionally, the Partnership made headway in its other areas of focus. We fought to show our region how tourism can resume safely through our Travel Together partnership with the Lawrence visitors bureau, and continued to celebrate the rebirth of Downtown Topeka with the opening of Evergy Plaza.

In 2020, Topeka & Shawnee County adapted like no other year in history. We showed true grit in the face of unexpected hardship and we will continue to do so in the years to come. Thank you to staff, elected leaders and volunteer leadership who served as a beacon of strength for the entire community through these difficult times

Keith A. Warta

Keith Warta

Matt Pivarnik

Matt Pivarnik



Keith Warta
Chair's Council Chair



Matt Pivarnik
President and CEO

HOST Relief Program

HELPING OTHERS SUPPORT TOPEKA

Emergency Funding Supports Community Recovery

On Saturday, March 21, small business owner Scott Hunsicker came to Partnership CEO Matt Pivarnik with a plan. The following Monday GO Topeka and the Greater Topeka Partnership put the plan in motion so that the rubber could meet the road.

In late March 2020, amid the stay-at-home orders, closures and general uncertainty permeating the air, private sector leaders stepped up in a big way to support small businesses in Shawnee County. The HOST (Helping Others Support Topeka) set out to provide an economic stimulus for businesses and workers affected by COVID-19. Relief took on two forms: private sector donations which provided immediate relief to small businesses, through the purchase of gift cards, and public emergency grants powered by the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) and GO Topeka. The gift cards purchased from small businesses were subsequently gifted to Shawnee County workers furloughed, laid off or otherwise displaced by the pandemic.

The program, facilitated by GO Topeka and the Greater Topeka Partnership, was quick to get relief dollars into the hands of small businesses, with the first recipients receiving a HOST donation the week following the announcement. Within the first month, over 70 Shawnee County Small Businesses had received relief funding.

On April 1, JEDO held an emergency session to approve \$1 million in public grants to compliment the HOST program by providing sustainable support and capital to local businesses.

At the time of the public grant announcement, Glenda Washington, chief equity and opportunity officer for the Greater Topeka Partnership remarked, "For weeks now we have been fielding calls from small businesses in the area. Anxiety is high right now, and many are struggling to meet day-to-day expenses. So, you can imagine what these additional funds will mean to the small businesses in our community. It affords them not only monetary relief but also additional confidence that they will be able to make it through this crisis."

On July 9, HOST donated gift cards to each Shawnee County Staff member of the following first responder organizations: Topeka Fire Department, American Medical Response Team, Shawnee County Sheriff's Office and the Topeka Police Department.

At year's end, \$706,310 in private relief has been spent purchasing gift cards at 171 local establishments, and these cards have been delivered to 2,615 families. Additionally, \$537,000 in public relief has been distributed to area small businesses. In total, \$1,243,310 in small business relief has been dispensed through the HOST program in 2020.

DONORS

Advisors Excel
Alma Creamery
Bartlett & West
Capital City Oil
Capitol Federal®
Capitol Strategies
Creative One
Curtis Sittenauer
David and Danielle Byers
Don and Nancy Daniels
Eaton Roofing & Exteriors
Ed Eller Inc.
Eric and Maggie Hunsicker
Edward Jones Associates of Shawnee County
Everygy
FHLBank Topeka
Gary and Carol Hunsicker
Gary Woodland
Innovation Design Group
Jeff Martin
John and Michelle Peterson
Jared and Lisa Anderson
Kansas City Life
Kansas Financial Resources
Kansas Secured Title
KBS Construction
Kevin and Nancy Alexander
Kirk and Trudy Kelly
Lance Sparks Trust
Magellan Financial
Mark and Aron Krueger
Mark and Lisa Heitz
Mark and Sandy Ruelle
Market Synergy
MCP Group
McElroy's
Mike and Gina Miller
Nancy Daniels
The Jim and Marilyn Nellis Family
The Reser Family Foundation
Schendel Lawn and Landscape
Security Benefit Group
Silver Lake Bank
TBS Electronics
Todd Hansen
Vaerus Aviation
Vision Bank



“With the HOST Relief Program, we’re trying to inject some needed capital back into local companies to get them through this difficult time. We hope this program also provides some aid to workers displaced by COVID-19. In a lot of other communities, there are people calling up local agencies, like the Chamber of Commerce, asking, ‘What can you do for me?’ In Topeka, we’re asking, ‘How can we help?’ This is what sets Topeka apart from so many other communities – its altruistic spirit.”

SCOTT HUNSICKER

Lead HOST organizer and owner and president of Kansas Financial Resources



Small Business Initiatives

SMALL BUSINESS INCENTIVES

In 2020, \$425,945 in incentives were distributed to small businesses in Topeka & Shawnee County. Funds went to assist businesses in the purchase of important equipment and other prominent needs.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The Greater Topeka Partnership received funds from the CARES Act/Spark Program to support small businesses in October 2020. The funds are meant to assist businesses with preparing for emergency and disasters such as fires, pandemics, tornados, etc. As a means to help our local businesses think about their plan to weather whatever storm comes their way, GO Topeka offered small businesses an informative two-part Continuity Plan Zoominar facilitated by GO Topeka. As part of this effort, small businesses that submitted a Business Continuity Plan for this event were eligible to receive up to \$5,000 to put toward COVID related expenses. A total of \$299,703 was distributed to small businesses through this effort.

SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF FUND

In December, Greater Topeka Partnership announced the creation of its Small Business Relief Fund, an ongoing funding effort directed at area small businesses facing unanticipated hardships. It was also announced that Lewis Toyota will be the first to donate to this fund, pledging \$25,000 in relief. Topeka & Shawnee County small businesses will be able to apply to receive relief funds in January 2021. For more information, visit topekapartnership.com/small-business-relief-fund/ or email Glenda Washington at Glenda.Washington@TopekaPartnership.com.



‘SHOP SMALL, BUY LOCAL, MADE IN’ CAMPAIGN

In November, just before the pique of the holiday shopping season, GO Topeka’s Women and Minority Business Development program launched a campaign to push business to all sectors of our small business community. The “Shop Small, Buy Local, Made In” Topeka campaign is an effort to continue to promote the importance of supporting all businesses. A microsite was launched for the campaign on GO Topeka’s website featuring important shop small messaging and small business directories courtesy of WIBW and the Topeka Capital Journal. Other key assets such as shop small blogs, videos and emails were created to aid in the effort.

FAST TRAC CLASS

Amidst the Pandemic, Fast Trac continued its position as a catalyst for entrepreneurial education and support in Shawnee County - this time through the medium of Zoom. With a single session occurring in the spring, 10 individuals took part in this entrepreneurial training program. Fast Trac graduated 10 participants in 2020.

COVID-Relief Response for Businesses

Acting with the Topeka business community's best interest in mind, the Greater Topeka Partnership and many of the professional entities therein launched an all-in mission to shed some light on a dark situation. By partnering with local and federal leadership, as well as private partners, staff was able to aid in the relief efforts of our local businesses, bring assistance to displaced workers and facilitate the philanthropic efforts of locals looking to give back to those suffering from the economic decline brought on by the pandemic.

THE PARTNERSHIP'S BUSINESS RELIEF RESPONSE INCLUDED:

Engagement with federal officials negotiating multiple COVID relief packages

- Assisting local businesses in understanding new programs such as Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and existing programs such as EIDL loans.
- In October, the Partnership hosted a Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness workshop. Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) borrowers may be eligible for loan forgiveness if the funds were used for eligible payroll costs, payments on business mortgage interest payments, rent, or utilities during either the 8- or 24-week period after disbursement. A borrower can apply for forgiveness once it has used all loan proceeds for which the borrower is requesting forgiveness. Borrowers can apply for forgiveness any time up to the maturity date of the loan. If borrowers do not apply for forgiveness within 10 months after the last day of the covered period, then PPP loan payments are no longer deferred, and borrowers will begin making loan payments to their PPP lender.

Engage with county officials to spread CARES Act dollars to small businesses

- In 2020, the federal CARES Act distributed billions of dollars throughout the U.S. economy, one of which was distributing it to state and local governments. As a member of Shawnee County's CARES Act committee, the Partnership worked with the committee to help develop the best ways to best allocate this funding. Some of the Partnership's main priorities were to work diligently to formalize ideas to use some portion of these funds to assist local small business, displaced workers and Topekans with sub-optimal Internet access.
- See Business Continuity Plan on page 6.

Engage with state officials implementing SPARKS grant programs

In September, the state SPARKS committee was convened to oversee distribution of Kansas' share of federal CARES Act dollars. It established a suite of grants for businesses recovering from COVID-19.

Engage with the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) to formulate and implement local HOST relief programs

For details see page 4.

Engage with private philanthropic interests eager to help their struggling peers in the business community

- See HOST Program on page 4.
- See Small Business Relief Fund on page 6.

Assistance to local businesses in accessing all of the above



PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) made by local vendors may also be found on SupportTopeka.com.

Support Topeka

Also available en español @Apoyar Topeka, SupportTopeka.com/Espanol.

In late March 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greater Topeka Partnership's Marketing and Communications Team partnered with Sprout Creative to give the Topeka & Shawnee County community a reliable resource from which they could draw upon for their new-found needs, providing assurance and dependable information in the face of an unfathomable crisis. In addition to print materials, videos and more, the Support Topeka Campaign also provided a website that acted as a platform for all forms of community COVID-response updates and resources. SupportTopeka.com offers information for residents, visitors, businesses and job seekers. Offerings include information on restaurants and eateries offering drive-thru, carryout and curbside pickup options; virtual entertainment options, as well as updates on attractions' new COVID protocol practices; local shops with online "storefronts"; and open job listings for those in need of employment.

Support Topeka also housed one of the Partnership's largest small business relief efforts to-date: the HOST (Helping Others Support Topeka) Program. This locally organized effort provided both private and public relief funding to Shawnee County businesses impacted by COVID-19. (For more information on this effort see pg. 4.) Other resources available to small businesses include federal resources, re-opening guidelines for the State of Kansas, Small Businesses Association toolkit and tips, grants and loan information, and labor and unemployment information provided by the Kansas Department of Labor.

In addition to reinforcing COVID safety protocols put forward by the Shawnee County Health Department, Support Topeka also gave updates on the recovery efforts made by community members and area businesses. The website's Economic Recovery Dashboard provides the public with important economic information, such as unemployment statistics and trends.



SUPPORT TOPEKA CAMPAIGN WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

It was announced in December 2020 that the Support Topeka COVID-19 response campaign was named as the recipient of MarCom's Platinum Award for Crisis Communication. This award recognizes the campaign's outstanding contributions to crisis communications.



The Topeka Promise badge is featured on businesses that pledge to enact COVID health-safety protocols (including the enforcement of social distancing, mask-use, employee handwashing, frequently sanitized surfaces and the provision of hand sanitizer for public use). Businesses can apply to receive the badge on SupportTopeka.com/Promise.



Choose Topeka

The Choose Topeka talent initiative found its stride in 2020. Having announced the incentive portion in December 2019, the initiative grew long legs in terms of its media influence in its first full year. In total, the program received 30 pieces of coverage, 4.25M in estimated coverage views and 46,726 social shares. As of this report, staff has received over 4,600 submissions with resumes or questions from interested parties and fielded over 1,800 calls from applicants and employers.

For a quick refresher, Choose Topeka supports employers and their recruitment efforts by providing a community site to share with candidates. In addition, talent candidates from local employers may be approved for the Choose Topeka incentive program and may receive up to \$15,000 in relocation incentives. Incentives are matching with the employer in the first option, and performance based, after the employee has moved and resided in the community for a year. For primary residences only, the home purchase or rental agreement incentive ranges from \$2,500 to \$15,000 and matches of the employer's commitment with JEDO (Joint Economic Development Organization) funds.

Important 2020 benchmarks include:

- 24 candidates accepted, 27 employer submissions
- 13 employers have matched
- \$138,750 in matching JEDO funds
- Participants from 14 states
- Generated over 4,500 applications



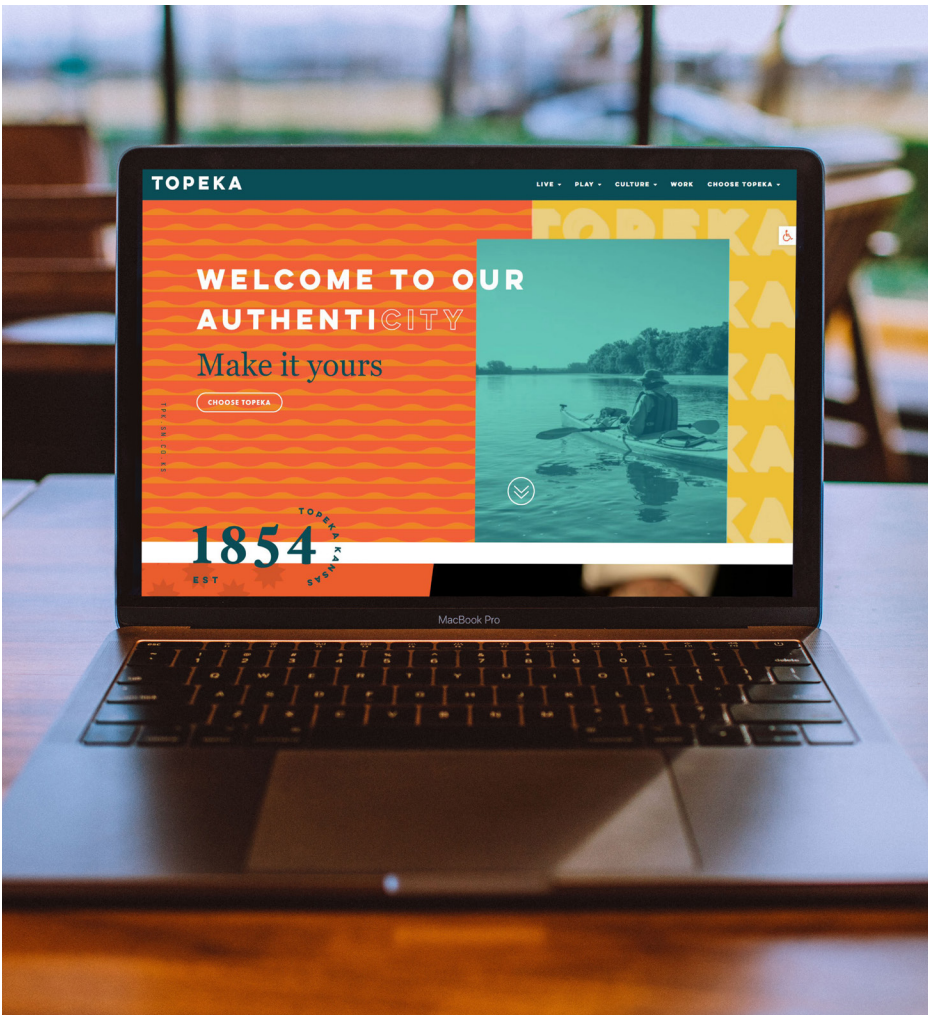
REMOTE INITIATIVE

In September, GO Topeka announced the approval of the Choose Topeka Relocation Incentive option for remote workers, which allows candidates working remotely to receive an incentive up to \$10,000 to move to Topeka/Shawnee County. The official approval for this initiative came at the September 9, 2020 JEDO meeting.

Based upon verified salary, potential candidates for this initiative may receive up to \$10,000 for a home purchase or rehab; and up to \$5,000 toward a minimum one-year lease, both for primary residence only. Funding comes from current allocations for the traditional relocation program approved in December 2019 and is an added remote worker option. Guidance within the remote option still includes documentation verifying proof of prior residency, rental or agreement/home purchase and proof of salary/benefits package, in addition to including guidance for remote workers with a limit of one relocation incentive per household, a minimum three-month waiting period for incentive, and the employer providing remote employment must be located outside of Shawnee County.

Important 2020 benchmarks include:

- Over 80 submissions
- 5 candidates accepted (additional interviews in process)
- \$45K encumbered
- Submissions from 17 states and counting



SPECIAL NOTE

GO Topeka received an Award of Excellence for their economic development efforts for the Choose Topeka Initiative at the International Economic Development Council's 2020 Excellence in Economic Development Awards Program. Learn more about this and GO Topeka's other IEDC award wins on pg. 57.

Equity & Opportunity



WASHINGTON NAMED CHIEF EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY OFFICER

Glenda Washington, previous senior vice president of GO Topeka's Women & Minority Business Development program, takes on a new role within the Greater Topeka Partnership

In June, GO Topeka and the Greater Topeka Partnership announced that staff member Glenda Washington had been named to the position of Chief Equity & Opportunity Officer. Washington previously held the position of Senior Vice President of Women & Minority Business Development, a program of GO Topeka. Washington has been a member of GO Topeka's executive leadership team for over six years.

"I am honored to be able to serve the community under this position," Washington said. "Now more than ever, we need to reexamine the societal barriers that have caused some people and businesses to receive every opportunity to succeed while others have few to none. Through this new role I hope to explore what new opportunities there are to ensure that equity, equality and equal opportunity is established, maintained and fostered throughout."

In addition to her past efforts which center on small business advocacy and support, with an emphasis on women and minority business development, Washington's new position will focus on ensuring equity for marginalized business owners.

Washington began work at GO Topeka in October 2013. She possesses over 25 years of small business and procurement experience.

Prior to joining GO Topeka, Washington worked with the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce (Jacksonville, Florida) as the director of small and minority business development. Following six years in the banking industry, she returned to the Chamber as the senior director of economic inclusion in 2003. In addition to this role, she also served as the Procurement and Technical Assistance Center specialist. Prior to leaving Jacksonville, Glenda was the Multicultural Accounts Director for Visit Jacksonville.

Washington received a Bachelor of Science in Workforce, Education, and Development from Southern Illinois University, a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a master's in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. Washington was recognized as one of North America's Top 50 Economic Developers of 2020.

MULTICULTURAL MURAL ANNOUNCED

The Greater Topeka Partnership's Office of Equity and Opportunity will be collaborating with the community to produce a new multicultural mural in the North Topeka (NOTO) Arts District. The mural, which will be located on the west-facing wall of the Topeka Habitat for Humanity building, will have three separate sections which will pay homage to Topeka's diverse heritage as well as the history of three foundational, historically marginalized, minority groups. Conveying art through the lens of the Black, LatinX and Native American perspectives will be three artists, who represent these respective backgrounds.

The artists assigned to this project will be announced in early 2021. The project is expected to be completed in spring/summer of 2021.



SEAT AT THE TABLE

In October, the Office of Equity & Opportunity announced the new community conversation series, "Seat at the Table." This series on equity and inclusion serves to educate and connect a diverse group of Shawnee County citizens during three or more ongoing, in-depth group discussions, in the form of lunch or dinner sessions. While several conversations have taken place in 2020 and more are scheduled for 2021, Greater Topeka Partnership is currently inviting community and business leaders to host these ongoing conversations. These meetings may be held in person or via Zoom. This series is facilitated by the Greater Topeka Partnership.

Series description: A Seat at the Table is a concept that creates a safe place to talk about racial equity, inclusion, or the tough topics of the day. It's a place where everyone's voice is heard, where barriers come down so the collective soul of our community can find its voice and its way; a place where we can discover how the gifts we've been given can help transform our community and ourselves. A Seat at the Table is about real people and real conversations that eliminate the barriers that hinder us all. Individuals from across the community will be hosting dinner events with a small group of people from different backgrounds, sharing the struggles and joys of who they are and getting to know each other on a deeper level.

INCLUDED

The iINCLUDED program has continued to adapt amid the pandemic to hold thoughtful and informed conversations via Zoom. In August, iINCLUDED hosted a conversation facilitated by Kathleen Marker, YWCA CEO and Marty Hillard, community activist and YWCA Advocacy committee member. Together the group explored the four levels of racism, how they stand alone, and how they interact with each other. In December, guest speaker Glenda Washington, chief equity & opportunity officer, Greater Topeka Partnership, led an information session on what the Partnership and the greater community has been and can continue to do as we develop our organizations and our community around diversity, equity and inclusion.

Innovation Topeka

2020 was filled with pivotal next steps, especially when it came to the development of Topeka's innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem. During this year, Plug and Play Topeka hit the ground running in more ways than one. While setting the stage to provide a successful environment for the acceleration of animal health and ag tech startups, the innovation platform also announced its first three Founding Partner Organizations: Cargill, Hill's Pet Nutrition and Evergy. Midyear saw the commencement of an official innovation campus assessment, led by two nationally recognized real estate developers, Clark Enersen/MAG Partners and BioRealty/CRB. Finally, local partners, as well as a global audience of corporate executives, witnessed the official launch of Plug and Play Topeka as eager animal health and ag tech startups presented at the program's inaugural Selection Day.



PLUG AND PLAY INNOVATION SUMMIT

Plug and Play hosted its first Innovation Summit in Topeka in February 2020 at Security Benefit campus. Titled "The Future of Animal Health and Ag Tech," the event hosted 200 industry leaders, startups and investors in the Capital City for a day-long discussion on the region's animal health and ag tech industry, anchored by the KC Animal Health Corridor. This Summit allowed Plug and Play to work toward fostering the local innovation ecosystem by collaborating with participants from the region to identify key industry challenges in animal health and ag tech.

WHEELHOUSE INCUBATOR

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 disruption, the spring cohort of the Wheelhouse Incubator program graduated in July. Eight local small businesses have been working with their assigned mentors to target one specific goal that helps their business reach the next level of growth.

The program had suspended the cohort sessions for two months but restarted on June 22 helping the cohort members reposition their businesses for success as they ramp up again with COVID-19 restrictions being lifted. In true entrepreneurial fashion, the program pivoted to a virtual format to achieve the same results.



| Kanza Education and Science Park


| River South

INNOVATION CAMPUS ASSESSMENT KICKOFF

To support Topeka's growth as a hub of innovation powered by Plug and Play, GO Topeka has kicked off two viability assessments for the future Topeka Innovation Campus in July 2020. Two nationally recognized real estate developers, Clark Enersen/MAG Partners and BioRealty/CRB have been contracted to lead the assessments; they are expected to present their findings in winter/spring 2021. River South Area in downtown Topeka and the Kanza Education and Science Park have been named as potential sites for the innovation campus. The information yielded from the viability assessments will help determine the right course of action to properly leverage our existing innovation assets, create new growth and, in turn, propel Topeka's status as the hub of innovation in the Midwest. The assessments have been sponsored in part by Evergy through their local partner program.

ANIMAL HEALTH VIRTUAL SUMMIT

In August, GO Topeka actively participated in the annual animal health industry flagship event, the Animal Health Investment Forum. Normally held in Kansas City, the event was hosted on a virtual platform. This event afforded our Innovation Team the opportunity to talk about the progress it has made in its partnership with Plug and Play and we'll be able to forge even more relationships with industry players that will be important in the success of the program which will start its rollout in fall of this year.



PLUG AND PLAY TOPEKA FOUNDING PARTNERS ANNOUNCED

From summer to fall, three separate corporate organizations with close ties to innovation and technologies stepped forward as the Founding Partners of Plug and Play Topeka. These organizations are Cargill, Hill's Pet Nutrition and Evergy.



PLUG AND PLAY TOPEKA LAUNCHES WITH 'SELECTION DAY'

Topeka celebrated the launch of Plug and Play Topeka in October. The animal health / ag tech focused accelerator program officially kicked off with the inaugural Selection Day, featuring ten early- and midstage startups from numerous U.S. states, Australia, Spain, the U.K. and Sweden pitching to an audience of corporate executives, venture capitalists and media at the fast-paced online demo day on October 21.

Presenting companies have developed a variety of innovative products for the animal health and ag tech industry. These include smart health and GPS tracking software for dogs, smart ear tags for livestock and a universal pet identification microchip. Startups selected for the program receive benefits including office space, mentorship, business development, pitch polishing and potential investment.

Presenting companies included:

Ceres Tag (Queensland, Australia)

Smart ear tags for livestock

RAPiD GENOMICS (Gainesville, Fla.)

DNA genotyping and genetic analysis company

Andes Ag (Emeryville, Calif.)

harnessing the power of microbes to develop novel seeds for a regenerative agriculture revolution

Peeva (Buffalo, N.Y.)

universal pet identification and central database microchip company

Waggit (Boulder, Colo.)

smart health and GPS tracking for dogs

Volta Greentech (Stockholm, Sweden)

battling global warming by reducing methane emissions from cows

Pitpat (Cambridge, U.K.)

dog activity monitor and fitness tracker company

Bond Pet Foods (Boulder, Colo.)

biotechnology company creating animal-free and protein-rich pet food

ProAgni (New South Wales, Australia)

sheep and cattle nutrition products that are antibiotic and ionophore free

Dinbeat (Barcelona, Spain)

wearable technology to monitor pet health in real time

Business Retention & Expansion

Despite what you might think, many local businesses did continue to grow in 2020. Throughout the year, GO Topeka continued to advocate for the interests of businesses aiming to expand by creating new jobs, professional training programs, and new equipment and facilities. The capital investment put into these expansion projects allows for a significant projected economic impact for the community (as you will see below). A total of six incentive projects were approved this year by the Joint Economic Development Organization with the intent to grow businesses and yield a stronger economy for Topeka & Shawnee County.

\$54M

TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT



PROJECT PRINCE

33

JOBS

AVG WAGES: \$56K

CAP X: \$31.4M

INCENTIVES: \$341,000

ANNOUNCED:

HILL'S PET NUTRITION

PROJECT SPARK

167

JOBS

AVG WAGES: \$40K

CAP X: \$6M

INCENTIVES: \$847,000

ANNOUNCED:

HME, INC

PROJECT BOND

75

JOBS

AVG WAGES: \$45K

CAP X: \$5M

INCENTIVES: \$422,500

ANNOUNCED:

TOPEKA FOUNDRY



The construction of the Topeka Walmart distribution center made major progress in 2020. The largest of Walmart's Kansas distribution centers, the facility contains more than 1.8 million square feet with a 35' clear stacking height. This investment will create 300 full-time jobs over the next five years with competitive salaries. The new center is expected to have an economic impact of \$635 million over the next 10 years.

339

NEW JOBS

\$1.412B

ECONOMIC IMPACT OVER 10 YEARS

PROJECT OYSTER

I7

JOBS

AVG WAGES: \$40K

CAP X: \$3.5M

INCENTIVES: \$96,000

ANNOUNCED:

**MIDWESTERN METALS/
CUSTOM DREDGE WORKS**

PROJECT VITA

7

JOBS

AVG WAGES: \$85K

CAP X: \$1.5M

INCENTIVES: \$76,500

ANNOUNCED:

LIFETECH LLC

PROJECT VERTICAL

40

JOBS

AVG WAGES: \$43K

CAP X: \$6.6M

INCENTIVES: \$234,000

ANNOUNCED:

HAYDEN TOWER

Business Attraction

Although 2020 was challenging for some areas of business, GO Topeka continued to work strategically to attract new businesses and jobs to Topeka & Shawnee County. We saw a record number of projects with a total of 10 in Q3 and a year-to-date total of 37 projects with 33 in the pipeline. GO Topeka also hosted seven site visits YTD in 2020.

During 2020, GO Topeka experienced an influx of food processing and distribution projects brought to the table to help meet the increased demand of goods centralized within the US. With great highway connectivity and a centralized location, Topeka is an attractive option to projects within these industries. Industries tend to create hubs where they can take advantage of skilled workforce in the community as well as access to an existing supply chain.

We have also seen an increase in the amount of animal health sector projects that are looking at Topeka. The focus that has been placed on this sector and our strategic location within the center of the Animal Health Corridor is being noticed both nationally and internationally. This is a trend that will only continue to grow.



Topeka Employers May Now Offer Workforce Transportation Services through JEDO Incentive

The Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) board approved a \$100,000 transportation services incentive at its quarterly meeting on December 9, 2020. Originally a recommendation from the Workforce Transportation Taskforce, the purpose of this incentive is to aid employers in the creation of added workforce transportation options.

"The transportation needs of our workforce are definitely diverse," said Molly Howey, president of GO Topeka, an organization with the Greater Topeka Partnership. "More and more we're seeing the need for alternative commuting options, employee shuttles and more."

Howey continues, "With this incentive JEDO, will be able to provide a 100 percent match in funding starting at just \$1,000. Because funding is matched, employers that choose to participate will be able to stand up a resource quickly, ensuring that no gap in coverage need occur."

"The Transportation Services Incentive recognizes the need in our community to help bridge the gap that many face in having reliable transportation to work. This incentive builds upon the prior NETO and SOTO programs and expands the opportunity for transportation assistance to a wider range of employers and number of employees," said Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook.

This is a transportation incentive designated for workforce transportation (to and from an employer) outside regular working hours and/or the geographic service area of the Topeka Metro. If you are an employer, service provider or entrepreneurial organization that would like to know more about transportation services incentives, please contact Barbara Stapleton at Barbara.Stapleton@TopekaPartnership.com.

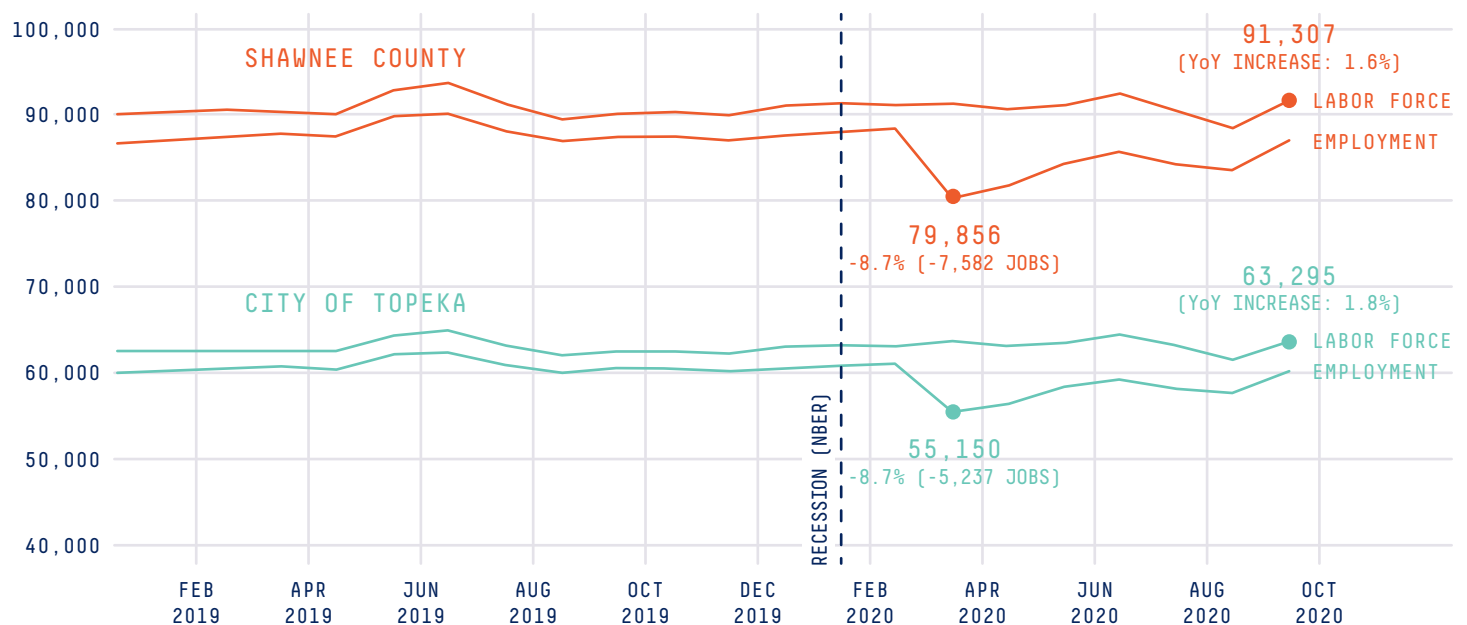
"We know that there may be barriers to employment for residents in the community, and this gives more residents the opportunity to obtain well-paying jobs that are available by minimizing transportation as one of those barriers."

MICHAEL PADILLA
City of Topeka Councilman
for District 5

Economic Outlook

As an overview of the 2020 economic climate, we have gathered the following findings on the job market, the housing market and projections for the future given the data provided. This research comes from GO Topeka's Senior Economic Advisor, Freddy Mawyin.

LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

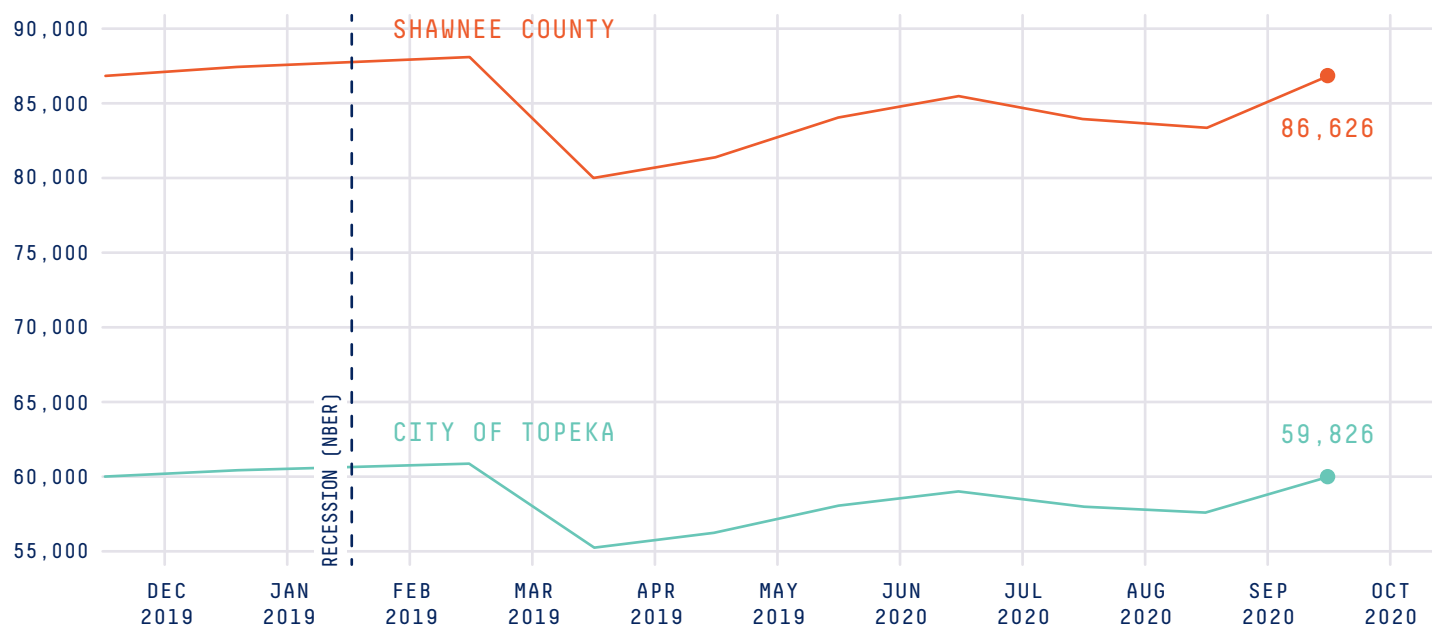


SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS AND KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

For all 2019 and most of 2020, we saw that, generally speaking, the labor force in Topeka & Shawnee County remained relatively steady. Comparing the labor force (the pool of workers) between October 2019 and October 2020, we witness a small increase in the pool of workers of 1.6% in Shawnee County and 1.8% in the City of Topeka. Regarding employment, there is a more significant decline in April 2020 with a decrease of 8.7% for both Shawnee County and the City of Topeka, compared to April 2019. This means that in April 2020, SNCO lost more than 7,500 jobs from the previous year.

EMPLOYMENT

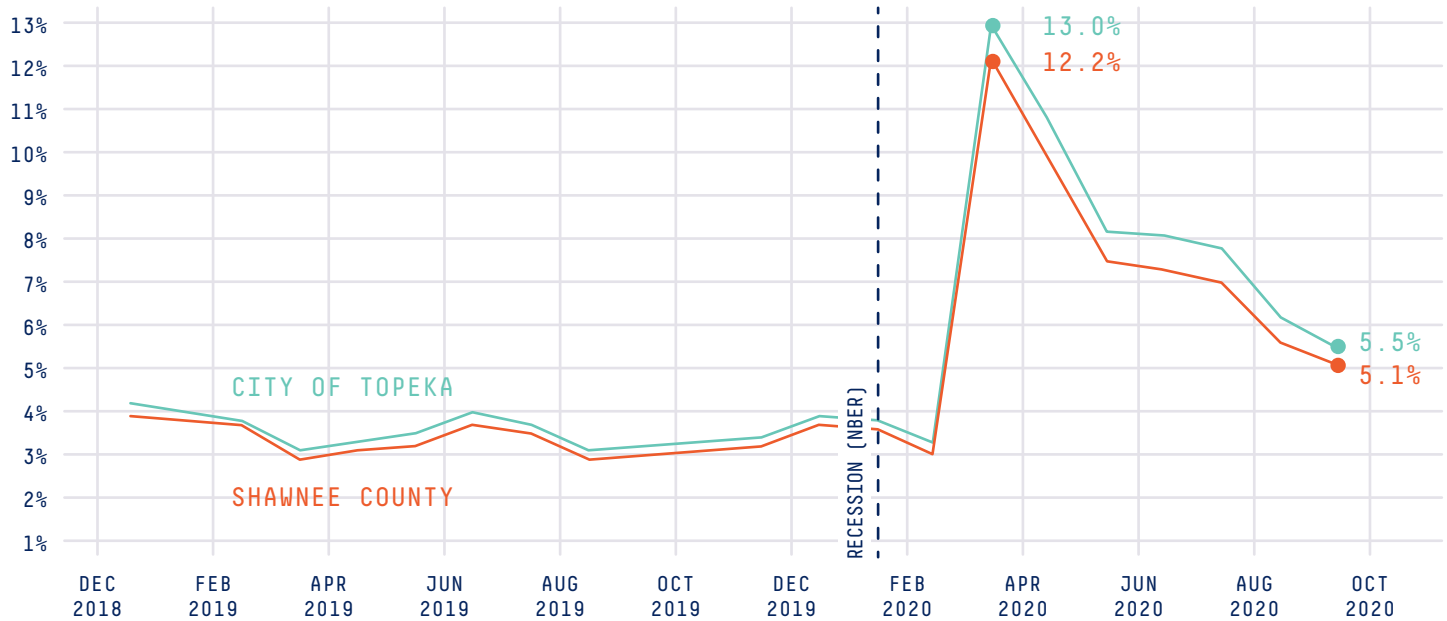


SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS AND KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

EMPLOYMENT

To focus on the local change of employment, from what we have witnessed employment is moving in a positive direction, perhaps not at the pace we all would like to see, but nevertheless is slowly improving. There is more work that needs to be done, especially since we haven't recovered all the jobs lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The difference between our pool of workers and how many people are employed give us the total workers that are currently employed and, subsequently, our unemployment rate.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

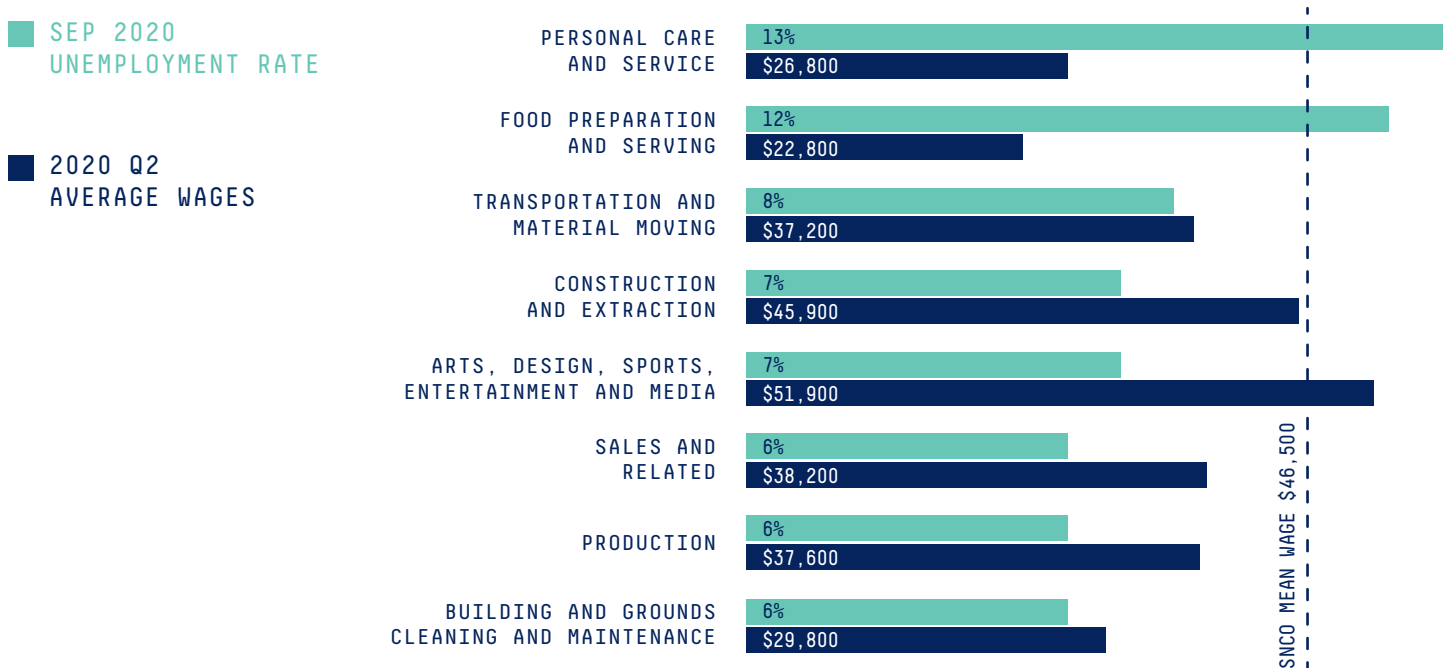


SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS, KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, GREATER TOPEKA PARTNERSHIP AND JOBS EQ

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

In April 2020, the unemployment rate increased to unprecedented levels, but since, we saw it drop and move in a positive direction; however, it remained significantly high at 5.5% for the City and 5.1% for the County. At this point, one could assume a somewhat positive picture of the labor market; where the unemployment rate is decreasing and both, the pool of workers and those employed, are slowly increasing. But we need to look a bit closer. We need to break down those who are unemployed to better understand where the need lies.

EMPLOYMENT RATE BY OCCUPATION

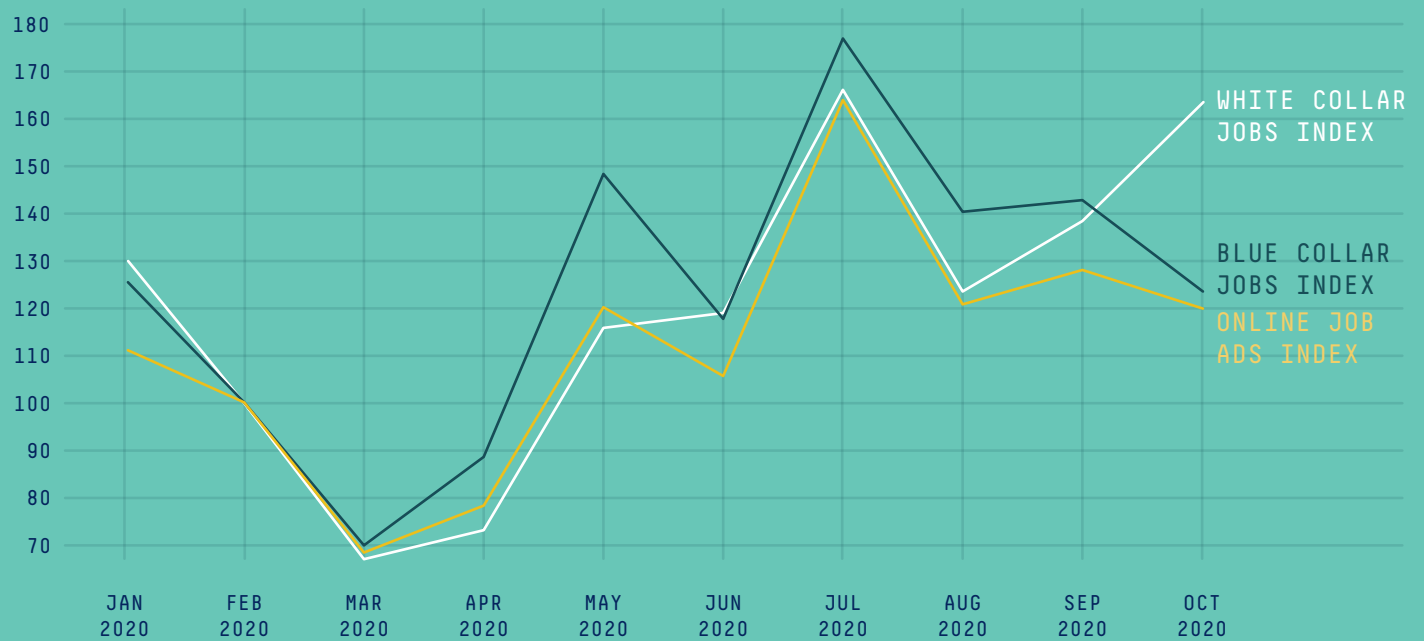


SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS, KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, GREATER TOPEKA PARTNERSHIP AND JOBS EQ

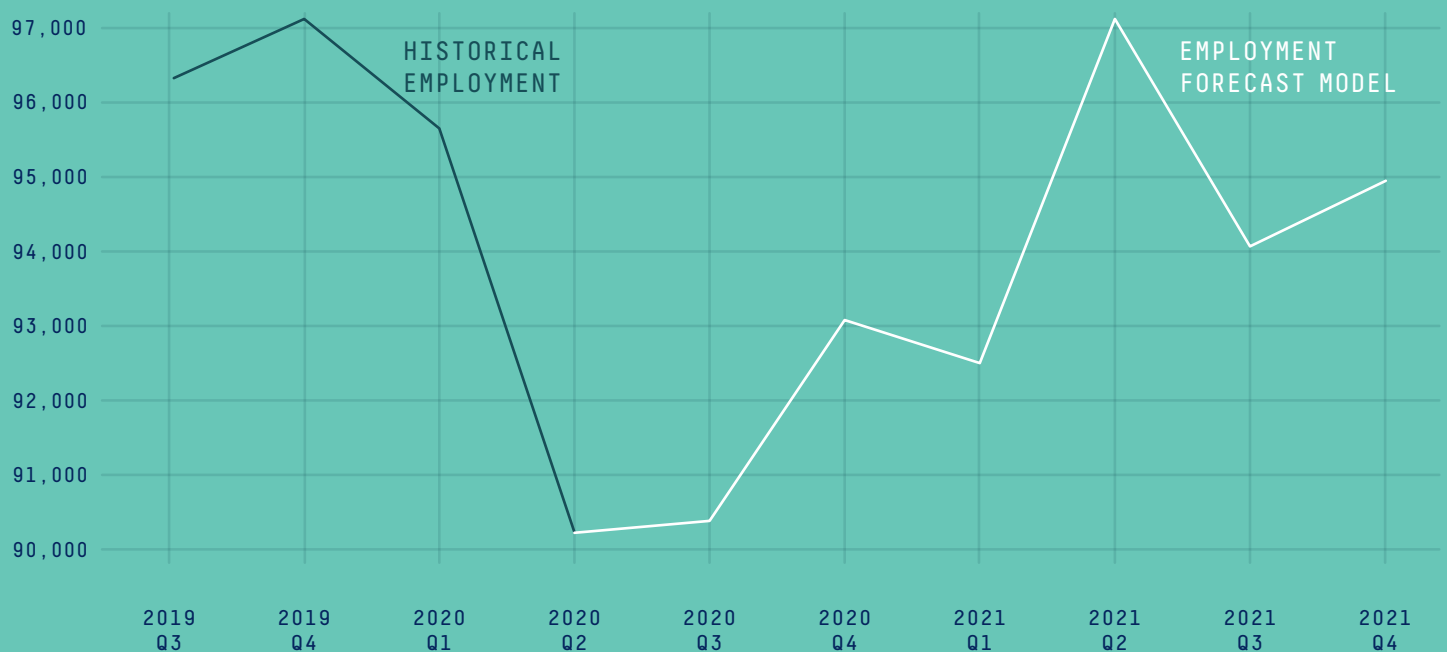
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY OCCUPATION

Reflected are the top eight jobs with the highest unemployment rate. Including the average wage for those jobs, we see that most all these jobs have an average annual salary below \$46,000, which is the latest average wage for the entire county. Therefore, people in these occupations were hit the hardest and, in most cases, they are in the lowest income bracket.

ONLINE JOB ADS



POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY



SOURCE: JOBSEQ, GREATER TOPEKA PARTNERSHIP

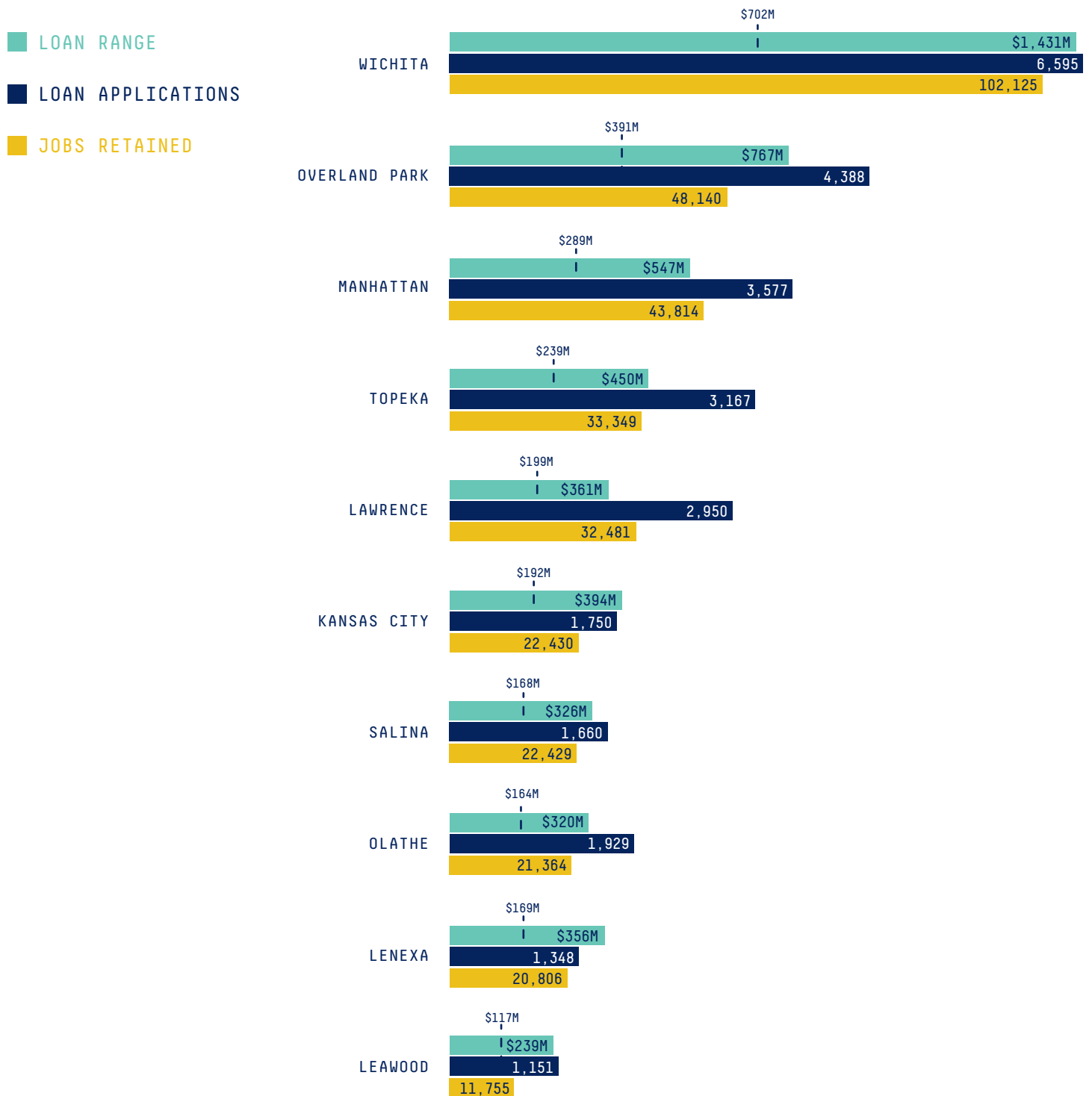
ONLINE JOB ADS

So, the question now is where are we heading? We can take a look at trends to determine how, if any, the labor market shifted during 2020. And determine where demand is increasing or decreasing. For this section, we looked at the online job ads between January 2020 and October of the same year, compared them to the prior year, and use February 2020 as our index, to simplify the comparisons. Initially, we see that all new job-ads plummeted in the first quarter of the year. By the end of the first quarter we saw a 40% drop in volume. But there is also a variation between skill sets and education. Blue collar jobs (we are defining those as occupation that in general do not require a college degree) rebounded at a faster rate, while white collar jobs had a slower recovery. However, lately the demand for these types of workers is increasing. There is a significant high demand for healthcare workers, such as: RNs, LPNs, healthcare support and specialized medicine. There is also high demand for transportation and warehouse workers. This is perhaps due to how the pandemic changed consumption. E-commerce is booming, people are spending more money in online shopping. In general, people are preferring the convenience of having goods and services delivered right to their house.

POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY

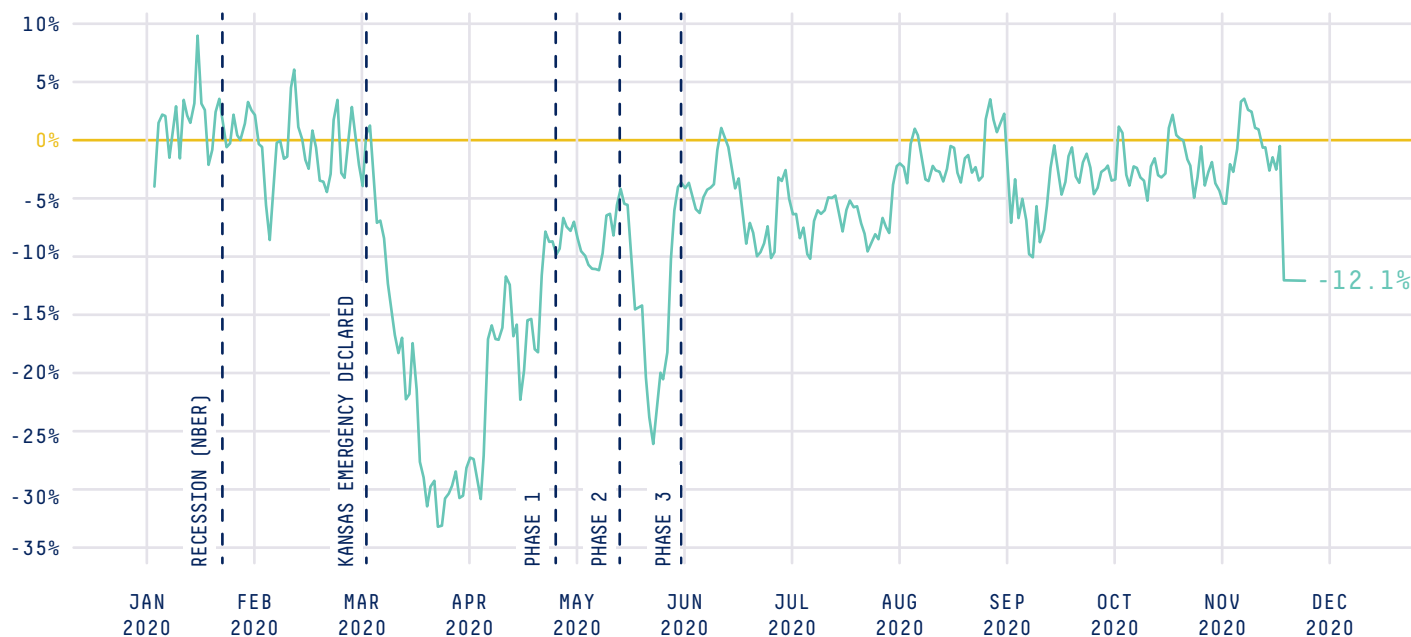
In terms of a recovery, a rebound is projected between the second and the third quarter of 2021. But one thing one needs to keep in mind is this could radically change if different policies are implemented at the Federal and/or State level. We would like to see additional relief and stimulus. The relief would provide support for those who are following public health guidelines that would require them to stay home and most likely lose employment. Think of small businesses having to stop operating, those businesses and those workers need financial relief, otherwise they are likely to go under. On the other hand, the stimulus would provide incentives for people to spend more in the economy. The two combined would support our local businesses, our local government and our community.

WHERE DID THE BIGGEST PPP LOANS GO?



SOURCE: SBA PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM LOAN LEVEL DATA

CONSUMER SPENDING IN SHAWNEE COUNTY



SOURCE: OPPORTUNITY INSIGHTS - ECONOMIC TRACKER ([HTTPS://TRACKTHERECOVERY.ORG](https://tracktherecovery.org))

WHERE DID THE PPP LOANS GO?

One way to determine the impact of Federal and State support is to look at the effects of the SBA Paycheck Protection Program (or PPP). This chart shows where most of the PPP funds went in Kansas. Topeka businesses received between \$239 and \$450 million in PPP loans. The variation comes from the fact that at the time of the research loans above \$150,000 were given a range, instead of an exact amount. We can also see that we had 3,167 loans, and those funds retained more than 33,000 workers. This represents that almost 1 out of every 3 jobs in Topeka & Shawnee County were retained due to the program. Some of our small local retail shops, as well as our restaurants, are having a difficult financial time. This creates pressure not only to those businesses but also to those workers, who are members of our community. But we are hopeful that our Federal Government will provide some type of economic relief in the near future.

CONSUMER SPENDING IN SHAWNEE COUNTY

For measuring real-time data on consumer spending, we use the data provided by the "Opportunity Insights, Economic Tracker" this is a partnership of Harvard University, Brown University and the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation. The data tells us that consumer spending in Shawnee County is down by 12% compared to January 2020. While we saw a significant improvement between April and September, followed by a flattening in October, the month of November showed a decline. We could potentially see additional decline in consumption as COVID-19 cases accelerate and additional economic relief stalls.

Kansas PTAC* Topeka Subcenter

2020 NUMBERS FROM THE KANSAS PTAC SUBCENTER:

89

**NEW SMALL BUSINESSES
WERE GUIDED THROUGH
THE PROCESS OF BECOMING
REGISTERED TO DO
BUSINESSES IN THE FEDERAL
MARKET SPACE.**

517

**HOURS' WORTH OF
ONE-ON-ONE COUNSELING
SESSIONS WERE HELD
WITH EXISTING AND
NEW SMALL BUSINESSES.**

9

**VIRTUAL TRAINING
SESSIONS WERE HELD
INTRODUCING BUSINESSES
TO FEDERAL CONTRACTING
AND REQUIREMENTS TO
BE SUCCESSFUL.**

1,092

**NEW FEDERAL CONTRACT
AWARDS WERE OBTAINED
BY PTAC CLIENTS ACROSS THE
STATE, WORTH A TOTAL OF**

\$156.6M

- These contracts have been awarded between 2/01/2020 and 12/17/2020.
- Topeka Subcenter service area was awarded 158 of the contract awards worth \$17.4 million. Shawnee County received 31 contract awards worth \$1.7 million
- The Subcenter also continued to provide coverage for the JCCC Subcenter as there is a vacant KS PTAC position. JCCC Subcenter service area was award 934 of the contract awards worth \$139.2 million.

**Procurement and Technical Assistance Center*

Topeka Youth Commission

This year may have not been what the Topeka Youth Commission (TYC) expected, but it still managed to accomplish many of its goals. Please read on to learn about some of the TYC's top accomplishments of 2020.

TYC PARTNERS WITH TOPEKA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GRANT

Through its partnership with the Topeka Community Foundation, the Topeka Youth Commission is administering the first annual Topeka Youth-Led Granting Initiative. The Topeka Youth-Led Granting Initiative will provide \$10,000 in funding to several projects led and directed by youth in the Topeka and Shawnee County Area.

Starting November 2020, youth under the age of 21, accompanied by a local organization, may apply for up to \$2,000 in funding for a project of their choice that falls under the specified theme.

Awards will be determined by the quality and strength of the project presented for the identified theme. The theme for the 2020-2021 Youth Development Fund is Stay785. This theme focuses on improving the community by intriguing and keeping youth in Topeka. Youth in Topeka constantly express their dismay and disappointment of the city due to the lack of fun things for the younger generation to do. The goal of Stay785 is to give youth in the community an opportunity to choose what they wish to see in Topeka and bring their vision to life. Examples include, but are not limited to, murals, beautification projects, local events, modernization of attractions, etc.



| Election volunteers



ADDITIONAL TYC ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Commission partnered with Housing Credit and Counseling Inc. to film a financial planning series. These short videos were posted on social media for teens to view at their convenience when curious about important financial literacy subjects that are not in the high school curriculum, yet vital for adulthood.
- The social media and government subcommittees are producing a series of informative bios about the candidates in the general election. The series promoted youth voting in Topeka.
- A video series was created to address mental health in the youth population. These videos delve into diverse ways to improve mental health, the different types of common mental illnesses, ranging from depression and anxiety, and the ways you can support a loved one going through a hard time. These videos were posted on YouTube and Social media during October, Mental Health Awareness Month.
- The involvement and outreach committees created cat toys for the Helping Hands Humane Society.
- TYC is partnering with the City of Topeka to have a Youth Summit in the summer of 2021 that would bring youth from all around the nation to talk about topics such as mental health, suicide, gun violence, and other topics pertinent to youth.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black blazer over a black and white patterned top and black pants, is sitting on a large stone sculpture of a bull's head. She is smiling at the camera. The background shows a modern building with large windows and a glass door.

FORGE WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In August, GO Topeka and the entire Greater Topeka Partnership family welcomed Kelli Maydew onboard as the new Executive Director of Forge Young Talent.

Maydew comes to the Partnership from National Association of Trailer Manufacturers, where she served as Membership and Events Director. She brings to her new role a strong background in membership services, educational programming, event planning, sponsorships/fundraising, politics and governmental affairs. She received her BA from Winthrop University.

Forge Young Talent

FORGE ADAPTS TO VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

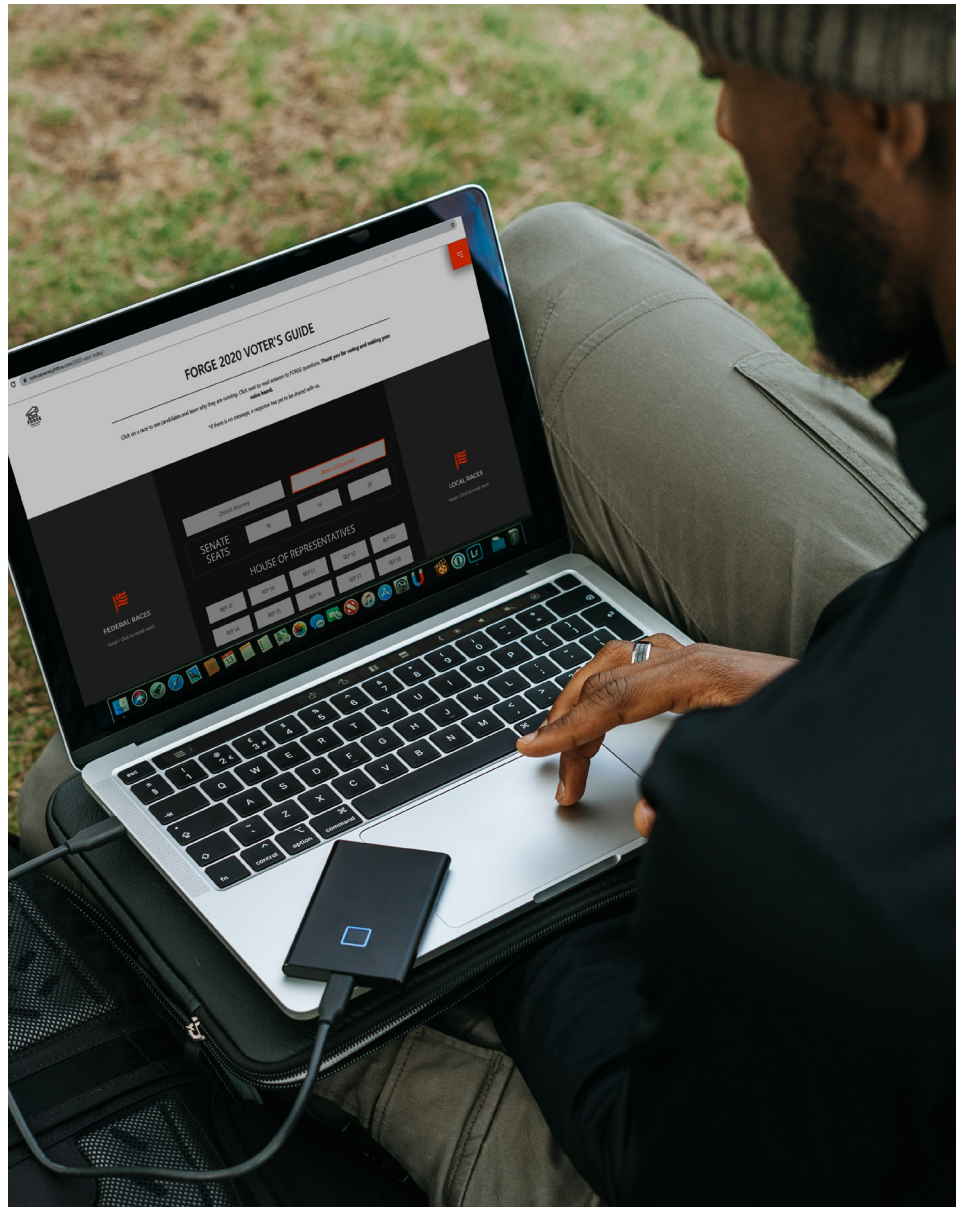
Throughout 2020 numerous organizations had to rethink their event offerings in favor of a safer virtual option, and Forge was no exception to this. There were Zoom leadership meetings, virtual ongoing learning opportunities such as Forge Leadership Academy 101, online yoga classes, and numerous events:

- How to Lead in a Crisis
- LeadCon
- Business Recovery Week
- Virtual Socials
- Random Acts of Kindness Day

For its in-person events, Forge strove to ensure that masks and social distancing were enforced. These events included Forge Movie on the Plaza, featuring Akeelah and the Bee, and the United Way Day of Giving.



| Forge Movie on the Plaza

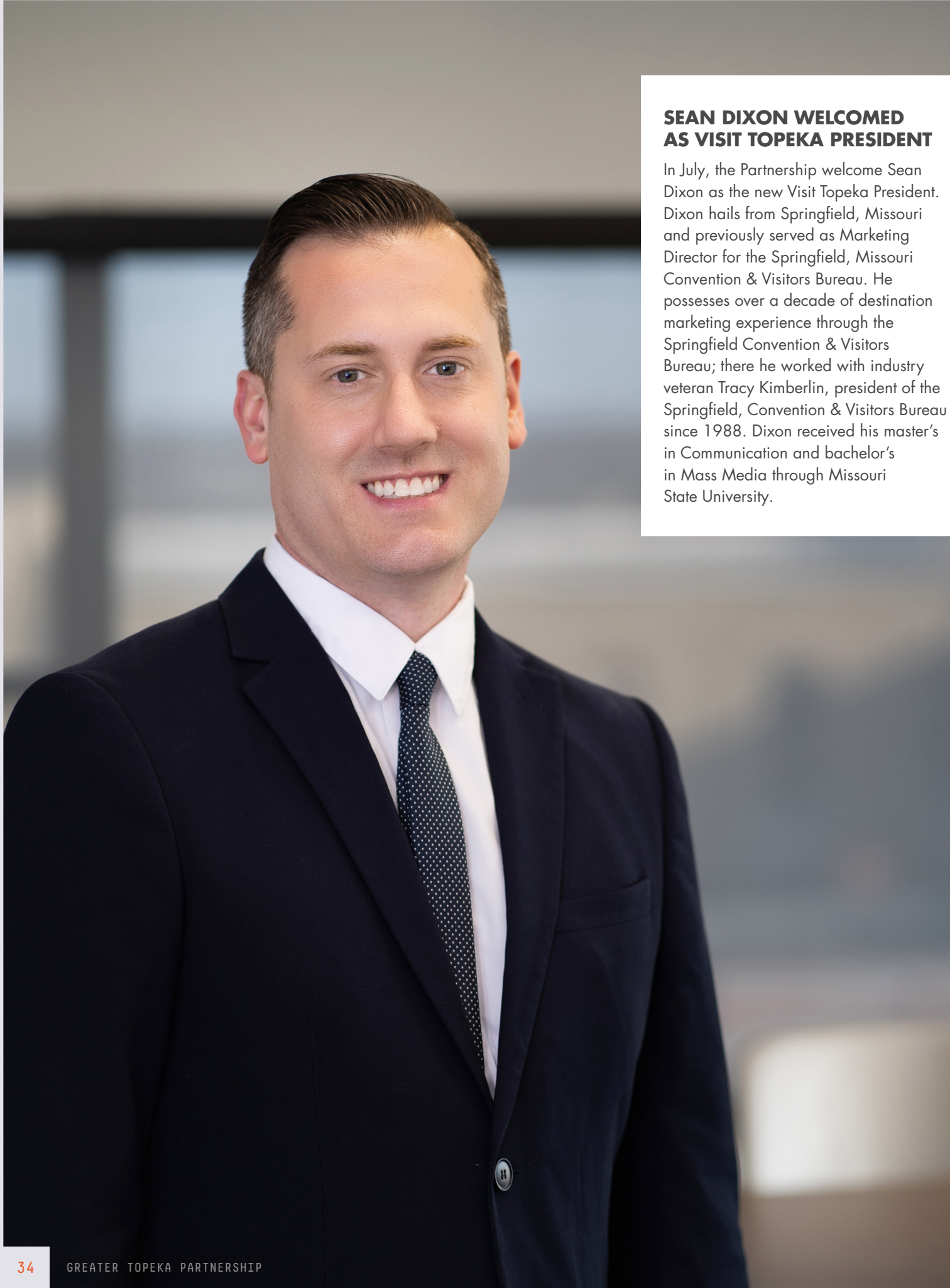


FORGE VOTER GUIDE

The month prior to the general election, Forge launched its digital Voter Guide to help inform and empower young voters as the general election grew near. The Guide, presented by Federico Consulting, featured general voter information, including dates, times and additional information from the Shawnee County Elections Office, as well as information

on the candidates running for federal, state and local offices. Candidate information was provided voluntarily by each candidate's office. This initiative was organized by Forge's Forge Your Future Herd.

The Voter Guide may be found at ForgeVoterGuide.com.



SEAN DIXON WELCOMED AS VISIT TOPEKA PRESIDENT

In July, the Partnership welcome Sean Dixon as the new Visit Topeka President. Dixon hails from Springfield, Missouri and previously served as Marketing Director for the Springfield, Missouri Convention & Visitors Bureau. He possesses over a decade of destination marketing experience through the Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau; there he worked with industry veteran Tracy Kimberlin, president of the Springfield, Convention & Visitors Bureau since 1988. Dixon received his master's in Communication and bachelor's in Mass Media through Missouri State University.

Visit Topeka COVID-19 Adaptations

2020 was without a doubt a year that encompassed adaptation. From the way we worked to the way we had fun, everyone had to learn to go about life a little differently. This included the way our hospitality industry and small businesses conducted themselves. Visit Topeka is tremendously proud of its restaurants, retail stores, attractions and hotels that worked tirelessly to adapt, overcome and remain flexible throughout 2020.

Here are some examples:

- Topeka Zoo – Created Zoo Lights, new outdoor socially distanced event, pushed out virtual options including live videos, educational session, and virtual fundraising events.
- Kansas Children's Discovery Center - Created educational videos for families at home.
- Evel Knievel Museum – Provided virtual tours on digital platforms and creation of Evel Knievel mask memorabilia.
- Hotel adaptations for socially distanced meetings and virtual site visits. Some introduced room rentals for office space, others created special experiences like drive-through weddings.



| Topeka Zoo Lights



| Drive-through wedding at the Cyrus

VISIT TOPEKA COVID-19 ADAPTION PROGRAMS

Topeka Promise

Along with many other Topeka small businesses, our tourism partners also “made the promise” to uphold COVID safety codes and regulations put down by the Shawnee County Health Department. These procedures include mandating mask-use, social distancing assurances, sanitation of frequently touched surfaces (door handles, countertops, tabletops, self-serve screens, food-prep surfaces, etc.). If you see the Topeka Promise badge on the window of any of our Topeka small businesses, be sure to stop on by.

Travel Together Program Successfully Launches

Topeka and Lawrence united to promote safe regional travel options with Travel Together, a program which offered either city's residents special discounts to restaurants, breweries, attractions, hotels and other businesses. Visit Topeka partnered with Explore Lawrence on this program to support economic recovery through regional tourism while also promoting either city's premier attractions, signature restaurants and other special offerings. Travel Together also offered visitors guidance on safe shopping options available to them. Lawrence and Douglas County residents received discounts during their visit to Topeka the weekend of July 25-26; whereas, Topeka and Shawnee County residents received discounts in Lawrence August 7-8.



| Kansas Shrine Bowl 2020



| USA Softball Championships 2020

Promoting Travel & Tourism

The Visit Topeka team always kept in mind that while the travel and tourism industries slowed, they would never completely halt. That is why Visit Topeka continued to strive to promote Topeka's successes, support its travel and tourism partners and sell Topeka as a destination. Some relevant bragging points are the following:

CONFERENCE AND EVENTS BOOKINGS/REBOOKED

- Balloon Federation of America National Conference rescheduled from 2021 to 2022
- African American Travel Conference rescheduled from 2020 to 2022
- Thunder over the Heartland airshow 2021
- Heartland Stampede to Country Stampede 2021
- NHRA rescheduled for 2021

EVENTS HELD WITH COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

- Kansas Shrine Bowl 2020
- USA Softball Championships 2020 (2)

TOPEKA VENUE/MEETING SPACE OPENINGS

- Every Plaza Opening
- Washburn's Indoor facility opening
- Stormont Vail Events Center Exhibition Hall
- Springhill Suites
- LEAP Family Entertainment
- NOTO Bistro
- Jong's Thai Kitchen

2020 LODGING INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on the tourism industry around the world. According to STR, demand for hotel room in Topeka fell nearly 25% from 2019. Paired with a significant decrease in average daily rate, down to \$73.33 for the year, overall revenue came in at just over \$31,400,000 — down more than \$14 million from 2019.

CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP:

- Travel Industry Association of Kansas (TIAK)
- Northeast Kansas Travel Coalition
- Flint Hills Tourism Coalition
- Tour Kansas
- SportsKS
- Sports ETA
- Destinations International



| LEAP Family Entertainment



600+

VISITORS GUIDE REQUESTS
AND LAUNCHED VIRTUAL
VERSION OF THE GUIDE



Thunder Over the Heartland Airshow Announced

Flyboys and flygirls should look to the skies in the summer of 2021 for the biggest airshow to hit Topeka in the last 30 years. In September, Vaerus Aviation and Country Stampede announced its "Thunder Over the Heartland" airshow, scheduled for the weekend of June 26-27, 2021. The airshow will take place over Topeka Regional Airport during both days and will feature a special night show on Saturday, June 26, during the Country Stampede, an outdoor country music and camping festival held at Country Stampede Festival grounds. Airshow performances will include spectacular military displays from the 190th Air Refueling Wing.

Topeka Travel & Tourism Marketing Updates

WEBSITE ANALYTICS + DIRECTION 2020

- While the Visit website traffic and engagement are significantly down from 2019 due to the lack of advertisement placements, the COVID pandemic, and changes in marketing, we were able to attract new site visits and users.
- [VisitTopeka.com](https://www.visittopeka.com) took things virtual: visit.topekapartnership.com/travel-awaits/.
- Topeka Promise was featured heavily throughout the site to promote safe travel.
- Blogs were written to increase fresh content as COVID affected travel and its economic impact on the city.

SOCIAL ANALYTICS + DIRECTION 2020

- Social Media focused on #TravelAwaits and promoted safe travel opportunities along with Topeka Promise and virtual options.
- Traffic and engagement significantly down from not placing ads for events, campaigns, etc. The social channels have also fluctuated in use from staff changes, separation of use, and changes in marketing/digital agencies.
- Audiences are still very locally focused and will need outward growth moving forward.

OVER

283K

SESSIONS

OVER

485K

PAGE VIEWS

FACEBOOK

REACH

379K

FOLLOWERS

11.6K

46%

MOBILE TRAFFIC – WE SAW MORE DESKTOP TRAFFIC THIS YEAR DUE TO COVID AND PEOPLE BEING HOME WITH HOME OFFICES, LAPTOPS, ETC.

OVER

223K

USERS, WITH OVER 220K BEING NEW USERS. THAT IS ABOUT 88% NEW TRAFFIC.

INSTAGRAM

REACH

11K

FOLLOWERS

3.1K

TWITTER

IMPRESSIONS

85K

FOLLOWERS

6.4K



Polk-Quincy Viaduct

In May, a \$234 million reconstruction project of the Polk-Quincy Viaduct in Downtown Topeka was announced during the Kansas Department of Transportation's Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program (IKE) announcement, made by Governor Kelly and KDOT Secretary Julie Lorenz. This project was among the first of 40 IKE's major highway expansion and modernization projects for the development pipeline to be announced. During the announcement, Gov. Kelly said, "A robust development pipeline will help jump-start our economic recovery by creating jobs and allowing the state to take advantage of potential federal stimulus dollars. I'm thankful to the Legislature for passing IKE, a critical employment tool that will help put more Kansans back to work."

The viaduct construction project had been in the planning stages for over a decade. The viaduct is a 2-mile stretch of Interstate 70, from SW MacVicar Avenue to SW 4th Street in downtown. An expected outcome of the project is to convert the viaduct to a six-lane freeway. KDOT also plans to move much of I-70, 200 feet to the north to flatten the sharp curve at 3rd Street. This design will enhance safety and help maintain posted interstate speeds. As of July 2020, the project is moving forward in the design phase.

"It's always an excellent feeling to see a long-term project come to fruition," said Topeka Mayor Michelle De La Isla. "There are so many key players within the City, County and the State that made this possible. We also can't forget our volunteer leadership and community partners that devoted their time to this crucial upgrade to our highway transportation system."

As this rebuild was a main priority to Downtown Topeka, Inc. and the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, these Greater Topeka Partnership entities praised the effort.

"This is an exciting win for Topeka, for Northeast Kansas and for the entire State which is served by Interstate 70. We are very grateful to Secretary Lorenz and her team, especially Deputy Secretary Lindsey Douglas, for shepherding this fair and methodical process," said Curtis Sneden, president of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce. "Of course, we are thankful to Governor Kelly for her leadership and support for this hugely important transportation project. This is an example of state government working and working well."

Sneden continued, "This outcome would not have happened without the focused efforts over many months of the group we came to call 'TEAM Topeka.' This band of champions included Mayor De La Isla, our county commission, especially Commissioner Mays, staff from the City, especially City Manager Brent Trout and the County, our City Council, especially Councilwoman Hiller and Councilman Dobler, our Chamber Board leadership Gary Yager, Mark Rezac, Terry Neher, our special consultant, Joe Ledbetter and many others who played key roles in making the case for the Polk-Quincy Viaduct throughout last summer and fall. Even our colleagues in the METL communities (Manhattan, Emporia, Topeka and Lawrence) weighed-in throughout the process in support of the Polk-Quincy Viaduct. This proves what this community can accomplish when we set our sights on a goal and go after it together."

"We are elated with this development," said Vince Frye, past president of Downtown Topeka, Inc. "We have waited years for the improvement of the Polk-Quincy Viaduct. It will enhance the safety of those traveling through along I-70. It also allows for the downtown redevelopment efforts to continue in an area that has been in limbo as we waited for this project to be approved."



NEW DTI PRESIDENT

In November, Rhiannon Friedman was named as the new President for Downtown Topeka, Inc. The search for the leadership position has been underway since former DTI president, Vince Frye, announced his retirement in early September 2020. Within her new position, Friedman hopes to bring about new businesses and attractions to Downtown Topeka. Friedman officially assumed her position as President of DTI on December 1, 2020.

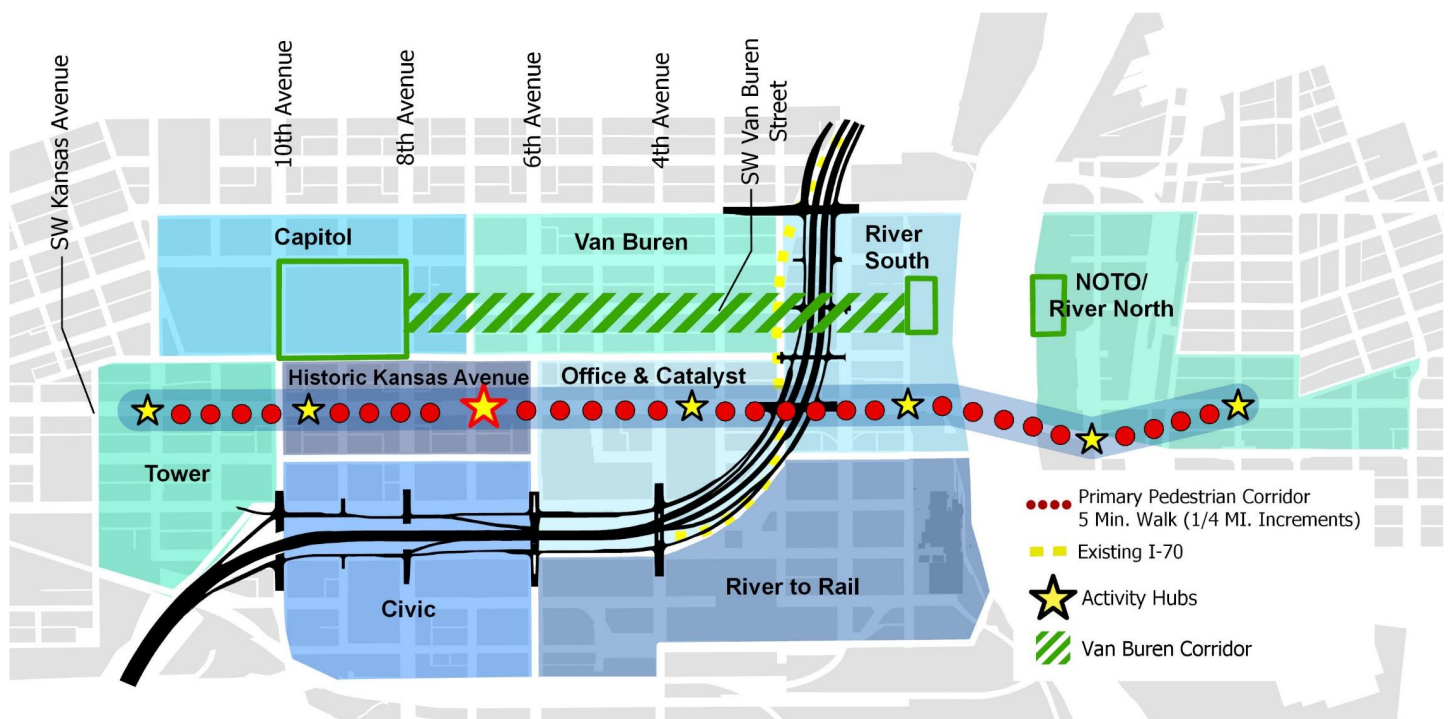
Friedman joined GO Topeka in January 2019, her eventual role being the Vice President of Business Development. She is a graduate of Kansas State University where she received her bachelor's degree in Political Science. Prior to working for GO Topeka and the Greater Topeka Partnership, Friedman was the Director of Business Development and Sales for K Strategies Group in the Dallas/Fort Worth Area. Friedman brings experience creating partnerships with large firms, small and local business, and government agencies to develop and improve the communities she has called home.

Downtown Topeka

In 2020, Downtown Topeka was met with both success and adversity. While long-term achievements realized, like the completion of Every Plaza, many businesses struggled to keep their foothold amidst a rampant recession brought on by the pandemic. There were accomplishments, there were difficulties and sometimes even losses. But the Downtown community pulled together on more occasions than is even mentionable. Thanks in part to the HOST Relief Program (see pg. 4), many businesses were able to pay rent, employees and stay afloat – and that’s something to celebrate.

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

In the final quarter of 2020, the City Planning and Development Department was in the last stages of a new master plan for downtown that will set the stage for the next ten years of downtown development. It will build on the efforts of the 2019 Downtown Market Study by creating a series of specific plans based on the districts identified in the market study. Each specific plan will include a set of recommendations for the future with regards to land use, zoning, streetscape improvements, and design. The plan will allocate the Market Study’s recommendations for new/rehabbed housing units, new or rehabbed office uses, retail, and hotel beds. The master plan is set to go in front of city council for final approval in April 2021 after the close of public comment. The plan can be viewed at topeka.org/planning/downtownmaster-plan/.







EVERGY PLAZA LIVES

Construction on Evergy Plaza was officially completed in March 2020. The grand opening had been planned for April 29 but due to COVID-19 the grand opening was pushed back. The first unofficial event was held on June 2 as hundreds of peaceful protesters gathered at the Plaza to raise awareness for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Located in the heart of downtown, Evergy Plaza was built to bring locals together. The new large outdoor venue has many different features that will allow for a variety of events to take place, as well as many different activities for individuals to take part in while visiting Downtown Topeka.

With the large size of the Evergy Plaza it has the opportunity to hold various events like concerts, food truck festivals, movies on the digital screen, picnics and many more events. The size of the Evergy Plaza allows for many different event opportunities and allows growth and changes for future events.

Some of the amenities at Evergy Plaza include:

- Capitol Federal Stage
- 30ft Digital Screen
- Corn Hole
- Picnic Tables
- 10ft Fire Pit
- 3 Large Pavilions
- Water Fountains

NEW BUSINESSES TO THE HIT DOWNTOWN:



- ASH Boutique



- Axe and Ale



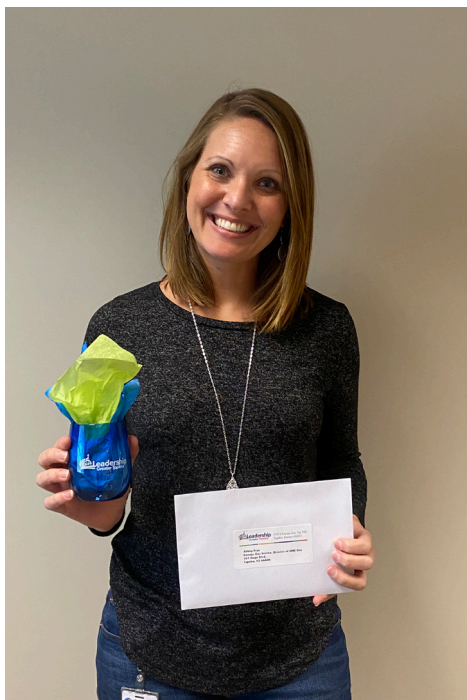
- Los Mandiles Rojos

Leadership Greater Topeka

The 2020 Leadership Greater Topeka Class – “The Best and Most Resilient Class Ever” – was met with its fair share of difficulties; however, the group persevered to make the most change they could while enhancing their leadership competencies. While the class started its term off in person with an in-person retreat in January and several in-person classes January through early March, they had to quickly adapt to an online format, which they did with gusto. They also achieved many of their goals and successfully graduated from the program (virtually) in the spring. The Leadership Greater Topeka program, itself, also worked tirelessly to adapt and contribute to leadership endeavors occurring within the state.

NOTEWORTHY SUCCESSES

- Leadership Greater Topeka received for the second year, the Kansas Leadership Center Transformation Grant for individuals in the community to take part in adaptive leadership training in building one’s capacity to lead in their community. Receiving 60 in-kind training opportunities to share with the community.
- Leadership Greater Topeka worked in partnership with the Kansas Leadership Center to hold a virtual meeting on Equitable Broadband access across the State of Kansas and the need for greater collaborative leadership. Over 150 leaders from across the state took part.
- The 2020 Class raised over \$8,500 dollars for the Kansas Children’s Discovery in their class project.



2020 CLASS LIST

Carmen Anello

Bajillion Agency

Teresa Benson

The Topeka Capital-Journal

Patrick Biggs

Seaman High School

Megan Bottenberg

Cox Communications

Thomas Bronaugh

Shawnee County Sheriff's Office

Travis Buchanan

Capitol Federal Savings Bank

Kevin Burton

Topeka Civic Theatre

Robert Bush

*The University of Kansas Health System
St. Francis Campus*

Thomas Carmona

Schwerdt Design

Denise Cyzman

Community Care Network of Kansas

Alex Delaney

Sunflower Soccer Association, Inc.

Kristy Druse

Security Benefit

Barbara Duncan

Clayton Wealth Partners

Ron Ekis

City of Topeka Police Department

Andrew Fry

Topeka Metro Transit Authority

Abbey Frye

*Kansas Gas Service,
Division of ONE Gas*

Jessica Horton

Sprout Creative

Austin Jackson

Stormont-Vail Health

Trevin James

Federal Home Loan Bank Topeka

Chris Kuwitzky

Washburn University

Kelm Lear

Topeka High School

Brett Martin

United Way of Greater Topeka

Michelle McCormick

YWCA Northeast Kansas

TJ McDonald

Brandon Aldridge State Farm

Mackenzi Mondesir

U.S. Bank

Rockell Otero

Prairie Band LLC

Nicole Revenaugh

Irigonegaray, Turner & Revenaugh, L.L.P.

Cherie Sage

Safe Kids Kansas, Inc.

Johnnie Sanders

Topeka Public Schools/Pine Ridge Prep

Jennifer Sauer

Shawnee County

Tobias Schlingensiepen

First Congregational Church

Jammie Serrano

Advisors Excel

Deborah Stanton

Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library

Brian Thurlow

Reser's Fine Foods

Tara Wallace

Tara Wallace, LLC

Marcy Weekley

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas



Momentum 2022

At the midpoint in our momentum, Momentum 2022 strove to look inward this year while its leadership and workgroups continued to focus on its main objectives. We asked our community to give us feedback on our progress and help refocus our vision with our Back 2 Momentum Survey. Over 2,000 community members weighed in; the public will hear the results of these findings in early 2021.

2020 OUTCOMES IN RESPONSE TO STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

IN RESPONSE TO ... 2.2.5 M022

ACTIVATE THE KANSAS RIVER AS A DESTINATION AND RECREATIONAL AMENITY

Riverfront Advisory Council was established with core principles, mission and vision, and strategic action in place to move long term initiatives forward to develop the Kansas river and along the north and south side for commercial, residential and business development.

IN RESPONSE TO ... 5.2.3 M022

CREATE AN ANCHOR-BASED COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING (CWB) INITIATIVE TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES AND BUILD WEALTH IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

The Empowerment Project was created in partnership with Topeka Housing Authority and funding through JEDO to deliver.

IN RESPONSE TO ... 2.1.4 M022

CREATE A COMMUNITY-WIDE LOAN PROGRAM TO INCENTIVIZE NEW AND EXISTING HOMEOWNERS TO REHAB HIGH-QUALITY HOUSING STOCK IN NEED OF REPAIRS AND UPDATES

The Housing study was recently completed and will provide foundation for moving housing initiatives forward within the community.



COVID COMMUNITY RECOVERY TASKFORCE

In response to COVID-19, over 74 individuals came together through the taskforce and committees to identify and provide consult toward addressing issues of concern during the COVID-crisis. Resulting in Covid-19 communication, promotion of safety protocols, social service collaboration, food distribution, community response and economic support. The taskforce continues to stay intact as the need arises to manage through this crisis.

IN RESPONSE TO ... 2.2 M022 DEVELOP A DYNAMIC REGIONAL CORE

The City is near completion of a Master plan for the downtown district.

IN RESPONSE TO ... 5.2.4 M022 ADOPT A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO PUBLIC SAFETY

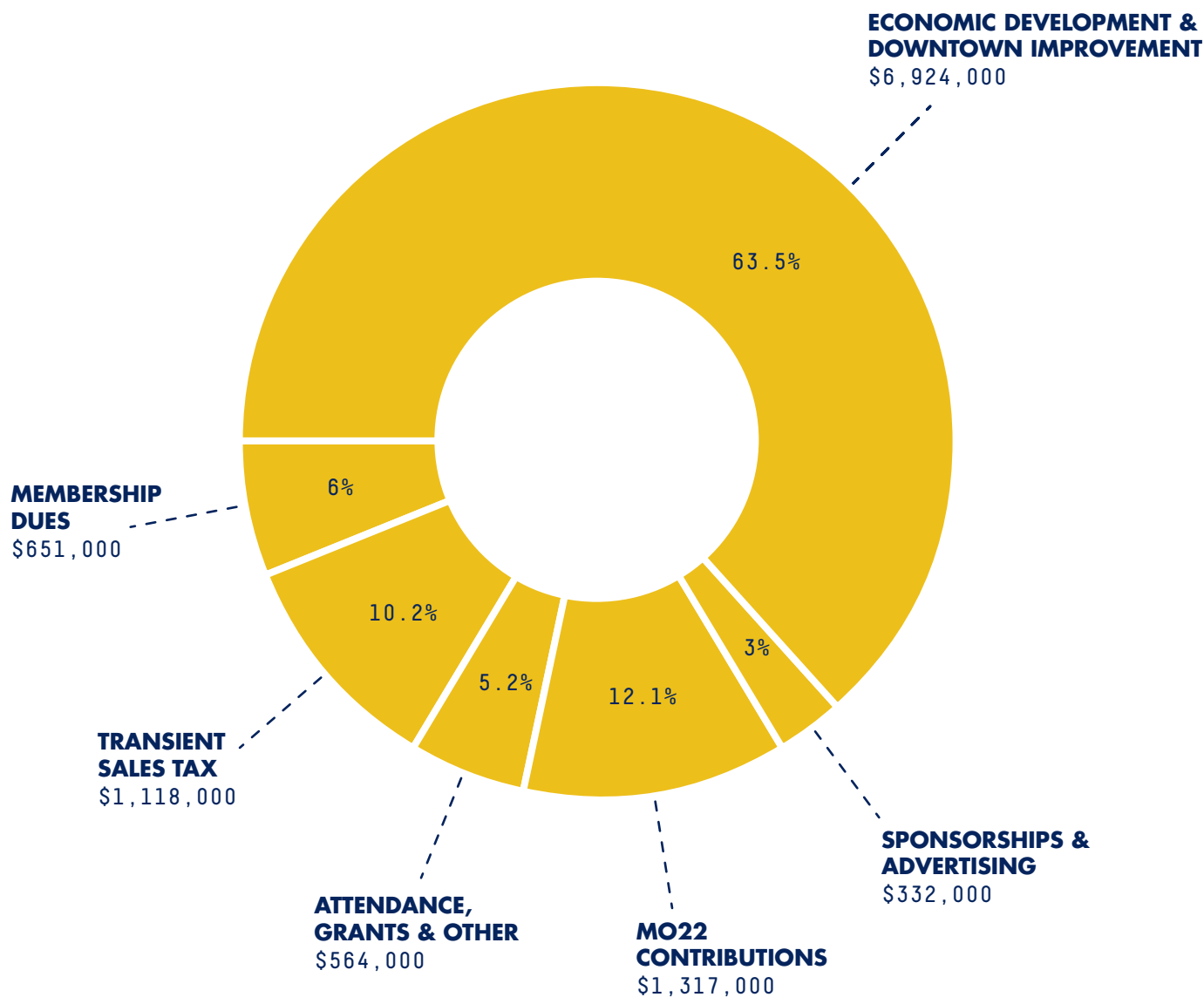
The S.A.V.E Strategies Against Violence Everywhere – a group violence initiative – was awarded funding, established and will be staffed by the SNCO District Attorney's Office.

IN RESPONSE TO ... 2.3.2 M022 CONTINUE TO IMPROVE GATEWAYS INTO TOPEKA- SHAWNEE COUNTY, PARTICULARLY THOSE CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO POPULATION CENTERS

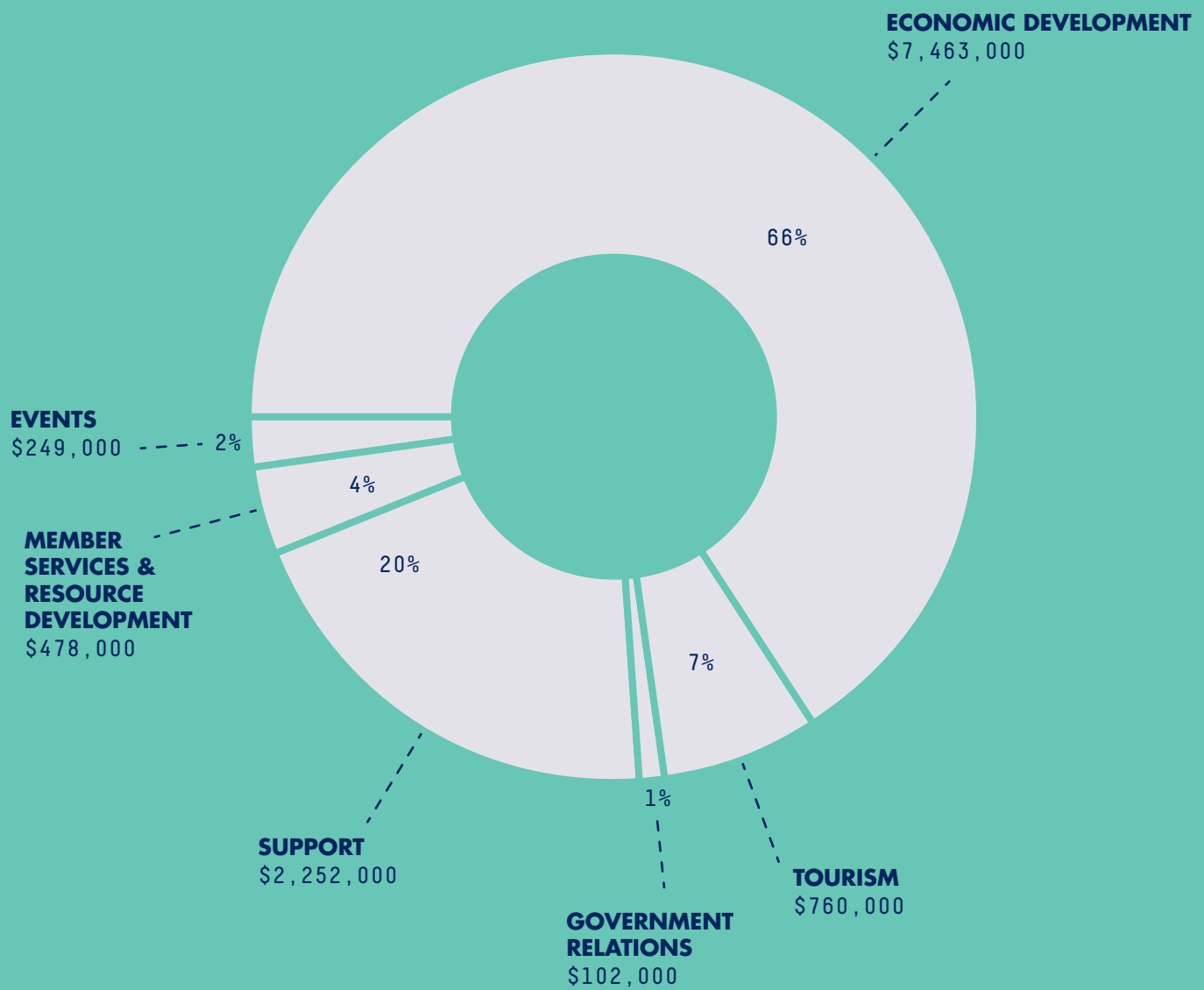
South Topeka District – Bring Back The Boulevard has been established to reenergize, beautify and help develop and support businesses in South Topeka and improve this gateway into Topeka.

2020 Financial Data

2020 ESTIMATED REVENUE



2020 ESTIMATED EXPENSES





| The Big Biscuit



| Happy Basset Barrel House



| Omni Circle



| Clad Astra

Membership

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS WHO JOINED IN 2020!

Ahava Consulting	Lighthouse Day School LLC
Ardiah Managed Services	Lilly Grace
Ash Boutique	Mardel Christian Book Store
Atlantic Signal	Mike Rumford - Allstate
Axe and Ale	Mutual of Omaha
Bobby's Food Company	Naly's Lawn & Landscape, LLC
Breakaway TMS & Psychiatry	North Star Steakhouse
Clad Astra	Nothing Bundt Cakes
Cohort Digital	Omni Circle Group
Cornerstones of Care	Otentic Global LLC Breakaway
Creative Signs & Design, Inc.	Restore Physical Therapy
Daniel Rineberg Colonial Life	Right Way Solutions
Designer Shoe Warehouse	Round Table Bookstore
Dialogue Coffee	Specks Bar & Grill
Dick Sporting Goods	Speedy Brakes
Dickey's Barbecue Pit	Studio 1
Eaton Roofing	TFI Family Services
Every Plaza	The Big Biscuit
Gabriel O'Shea - Edward Jones	The Milestone Market
GreatLife Golf & Fitness	The Vintage Fox
Green Pest Solutions	TLC Pet Nursing Hotel
Happy Basset Barrel House	TMS & Psychiatry
Haus Property Partners	Top Teer
Heart and Home Design	TopCity Marathon
Jeff Biggs - Farm Bureau Financial Services	TopCity Nutrition
Joseph Reid - Edward Jones	Topeka ER & Hospital, LLC
Kalos Print Services	Topeka Lifestyle Magazine
Kaw River Rustics	Wings Etc.
LEAP Family Entertainment	Yes! Athletics
Leonard Meat	



| Cruisin' the Capitol

Partnership Events

There was, perhaps, no other team at the Greater Topeka Partnership that had to change and adapt as much as the Events Team during the pandemic. While many of our signature events had to be postponed or cancelled to better preserve the safety of our community, 2020 wasn't an entire loss. On the whole, it was a learning experience. What couldn't be adapted virtually was meticulously planned out in collaboration with the Shawnee County Health Department. In all, for its signature, in-person events, the team was able to successfully implement COVID protocols (social distancing, mask enforcement, temporal temperature scans, etc.) while also retaining the integrity of the events. We thank our staff, volunteers and sponsors for making these events possible.

CRUISIN' THE CAPITOL, PRESENTED BY HOMESTEAD OF TOPEKA

A warm Saturday brought out 250 cars to the 8th Annual Cruisin' the Capitol Car Show, presented by Homestead of Topeka, on August 8. Car exhibitors lined the streets surrounding the Capitol to show off their remodeled and revamped rides as attendees enjoyed the scene and treats from a few local favorite food trucks.

WOMEN'S FORUM

Held virtually, the 2020 Women's Forum featured special guest speaker Secretary of Kansas Department of Administration Dr. DeAngela Burns-Wallace. She provided guests with insights on what it is like leading through a pandemic. Participants also heard from Wendy Doyle, president & CEO of Women's Foundation, as she discussed the Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Women. Doyle also announced the Women's Foundation the launch of the Interactive Online Dashboard Demonstrating Impact of COVID-19 Crisis on Women in Missouri and Kansas.

PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

The Partnership hosted our Members' Championship Golf Tournament at the Topeka Country Club where two rounds of 18 teams played for the traveling trophy, ultimately claimed by Sprout Communications.



| The Foulston Siefkin Team



| State of the Community

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY

In August, the Greater Topeka Partnership hosted the 2020 State of the Community at the Stormont Vail Events Center. The event was available to attend both in person and via livestream. Speakers, Topeka Mayor Michelle De La Isla and County Commissioner Bill Riphahn, addressed the ongoing needs, changes and goals of our community during the pandemic. Glenda Washington, chief equity & opportunity officer with the Partnership, led a presentation on areas of equity and inclusion in Topeka & Shawnee County with the help of five local speakers who represented different voices in the community.

This year's State of Community also marked the introduction of COVID-19 safety protocols for all on-going large, enclosed events hosted by the Greater Topeka Partnership. The event utilized temporal temperature checks, sectioned seating for social distancing and other health/ safety measures as prescribed by the Shawnee County Health Department.

EMPOWHER

Held virtually in early December, the inaugural Partnership Women's Conference, EmpowHER, endeavored to inspire by female leaders in our county, region and the local community. It featured a live keynote speaker focusing on helping women become the best versions of themselves, two recorded segments from the 2019 Leadercast conference and a panel of local leaders.

Keynote speaker was Tara Renze. She is an entrepreneur, speaker, inspirer, blogger, thought-leader, wife, and mother, and is redefining how we unleash purpose and create sustainable happiness and success in life.

MIRACLE AROUND THE STATEHOUSE (REVERSE) PARADE PRESENTED BY FRITO-LAY

Thousands of people took to their cars in early December for the Miracle Around the Statehouse Parade, presented by Frito-Lay. Previously called Miracle on Kansas Avenue, was held on Saturday, December 5. Organized by the Greater Topeka Partnership events team, the event operated as a "reverse parade" to best execute COVID-19 safety protocols, meaning parade onlookers observed sedentary floats and other displays located around the grounds of the Kansas State Capitol Building from their cars. Through this event, the Partnership was able to provide over two tons of food to Harvesters' food bank, thanks to generous donations from attendees.

The Grand Marshal and Junior Grand Marshal for the 2020 Miracle Around the Statehouse Parade were Vince Frye and Jasmine Villalobos, respectively.

Resource Development

TOTAL RESOURCE CAMPAIGN

In August, the Total Resource Campaign kicked off with a lively group of 20 volunteers and an extremely dedicated internal team of three. After wrapping up the Campaign in November, the Resource Development Team reported that the group had surpassed their goal. There was 100% participation from the volunteers, seven new businesses joining through the campaign, new businesses sponsor events and several seasoned business partners, doubling their total sponsorships for 2021. The team chalked it up to an overwhelmingly successful Campaign year.

CHAIR:

Martha Bartlett Piland

TEAM CAPTAINS:

Lisa Stubbs

Jim Rinner

Craig Heideman

VOLUNTEERS:

Alex Oreal

Debbie Schwartz

Kim Konecny

Marc Shephard

Roger Montgomery

Jamie Hornbaker

Jared Beam

Kyle Mead

Shannon Nichol

Stacy Ricks

Amber Beckley

Andrew Gutierrez

Joanne Morrell

Kim Gronniger

Tracey Stratton

Zach Snethen

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT TEAM WELCOMES NEW STAFF



TJ McDonald is the Partnership's new Membership Sales Manager. Before joining the Partnership, he worked in insurance for a little over 7 years with Brandon Aldridge State Farm and Farm Bureau Financial Services. TJ has been in sales going on 11 years. He was born and raised in Topeka and is very passionate about the Capital City.



Ashley Lehman is the Partnership's new Resource Development Manager. Before joining GTP, she was a Project Manager at Ima makers in Wamego, KS. Prior to joining the IM team, Ashley worked at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. She started in Membership Finance and soon joined the Marketing Communications department where she managed corporate advertising campaigns and event sponsorships. Ashley is a lifelong Topekan.

Team Development

In November 2020, the Partnership team put in the work to develop a more cohesive team with a virtual staff retreat, facilitated by Leo Presley, Presley & Associates. The retreat took a deep dive into the “3 Virtues of a Team Player,” workshopping individual goals for the upcoming year and bringing staff members together to better get to know one another. Experiences like these are an invaluable part of our staff’s development, as well as our professional and personal growth.

Continued from page 11.



OCTOBER 2020

GO TOPEKA WINS MULTIPLE IEDC ACCOLADES

GO Topeka won six awards for their economic development work on three different projects at the International Economic Development Council’s 2020 Excellence in Economic Development Awards Program. The honor was presented earlier in October at an awards ceremony during the IEDC Annual Conference.

GO Topeka received awards for their work on the Choose Topeka talent relocation initiative, the HOST (Helping Other Support Topeka) Program and the Washburn Tech East Campus. Choose Topeka won awards in three different categories: Special Purpose Website, Paid Advertising Campaign and Print Brochure. Washburn Tech East won awards in the Talent Development and Retention category as well as the Economic Equity and Inclusion category. The HOST Program also took home an award in the Economic Equity and Inclusion category.

