

# MANAGEMENT REPORT

AUGUST 2020





# FROM THE DESK OF MATT PIVARNIK

Community Leaders,

I like to say to those who've never had the chance to visit Topeka & Shawnee County that our community is filled with outstanding individuals who possess steadfast resilience and unwavering grit. And when they're met with a problem, you can bet they'll be attacking it head-on to find the best solution.

Yes, when adversity arises, like it has at present, those who are resilient are able to regroup and brainstorm innovative and creative ways to combat the challenges they're faced with - because that's what it means to persist.

There are so many examples of resiliency within this community already to draw from: whether it be the way local businesses have reworked their business models after taking hits from the COVID recession (a perfect example being Onyx Salon & Spa's new wellness cafe) or the new ways we've started holding events with coronavirus protocols in mind (see how the Partnership did just that for the annual State of the Community on the next page).

When there are problems, we are always resolute to find solutions. We are Topeka & Shawnee County and we are determined to press on!



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## MAWYIN SELECTED FOR ACCE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FELLOWSHIP

Freddy Mawyin, Senior Economic Advisor for the Greater Topeka Partnership and GO Topeka, has been selected by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) to study economic recovery and resilience strategies with 41 other chamber of commerce professionals from communities throughout the United States.

The Fellowship for Economic Recovery is an immersive executive development program that provides chamber of commerce professionals with education and tools to improve the post-COVID-19 pandemic outcomes in the communities they serve.

**[Access official press release >](#)**

## STATE OF COMMUNITY INFORMS COMMUNITY ON PROGRESS; EVENT UTILIZES NEW SAFELY STANDARDS

On Thursday, August 27 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 these unusual times. 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.

Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Everage, and our host sponsor Spectra Venue Management.

## PARTNERSHIP KICKS OFF TOTAL RESOURCE CAMPAIGN

Our Total Resource Campaign, chaired by Martha Piland of MP Piland Advertising and Marketing, began on August 10. The Campaign has three Chairs: Lisa Stubbs, Security Benefit; Jim Reiner, Bartlett & West; and Craig Heideman, Kaw Valley Bank. The Chairs will be leading a group of 20 amazing volunteers. These volunteers are securing the resources necessary through sponsorship for the Partnership's programs and events. If you or your company is interested in learning more about our Total Resource Campaign, please reach out to your Resource Development Team.

For additional information on the Total Resource Campaign, contact either Rosa Cavazos, at [rosa.cavazos@topekapartnership](mailto:rosa.cavazos@topekapartnership), or Ashley Lehman, [ashley.lehman@topekapartnership.com](mailto:ashley.lehman@topekapartnership.com).

## ANIMAL HEALTH VIRTUAL SUMMIT

For many years, GO Topeka has actively been participating in the annual animal health industry flagship event, the Animal Health Investment Forum in Kansas City starting on August 31. This year, the event is different, but not only because the conference is entirely virtual. It is also the first time that “Plug and Play Topeka” is jointly participating as a bronze sponsor. The event is very timely as it will give us the opportunity to talk about the progress we have made in our 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.

## DOWNTOWN TOPEKA SUBJECT OF REGIONAL CONFERENCE

“Building Momentum: How Alternative Delivery and Public- Private Partnership Revitalized Downtown Topeka” was the title of a presentation by Vince Frye, DTI President and Jim Rinner Design Build Manager for Bartlett and West Engineers on August 26. The presentation was made to the Design Build Institute of America’s Annual Midwest Conference. The presentation covered the redevelopment project from the community’s selection of a revitalized downtown as its priority in the 2008 visioning process, the City Council approval of funding for improved infrastructure in 2012, the private sector fundraising campaign to enhance the City’s project to completion of the construction project in 2016. The conferees included engineers, developers, investors and builders.

## SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL SHARES FINDINGS OF NSBA COVID-19 ‘PATH FORWARD’ SURVEY RESULTS

**The following is the results from National Small Business Association (NSBA) Survey on COVID-19 & The Path Forward survey:**

The third in NSBA’s COVID-19 survey series showing how relief programs have helped small business as well as workplace and business operations changes, economic outlook, small-business owner confidence and much more. This most recent COVID-19 survey from NSBA shows many indicators—including small-business confidence, economic outlook and overall impact of the pandemic—have improved in the last two months.

Among the key takeaways from this survey:

- Today, while the majority of small businesses (69%) say they are very concerned about the coronavirus, that number is down from 85% two months ago;
- Two-in-three small-businesses say they are still experiencing reduced customer demand, however that is down from 80% in April;
- Just one-third of small businesses are very confident they will fully recover from the pandemic and economic downturn;
- One-in-four small-business owners report they have not yet been able to fully re-staff their business; and
- 82% of small businesses made workspace changes as a result of the pandemic, and the average initial set-up costs were \$11,729 with ongoing monthly costs averaging around \$1,800.

Small-business owners are inherently optimistic and confident in their ability to run their business, however economic insecurity can become an insurmountable hurdle for many. If small-business owners have little faith in the ability for our country to recover, they will be hesitant to grow, invest in their businesses and create jobs. Absent a clear path forward, we could see a notable reversal of the more positive small-business outlook we’re seeing now.

## BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION 2020 YRD UPDATES

Multiple Business Retention & Expansion projects continue to move forward in 2020. Two (2) projects have been added in the month of August alone, and year to date, ten (10) projects totaling \$50.5M in capital investment have been received. All those projects represent an addition of 316 new jobs with an average wage across the projects of \$54K to the community. Project types vary across industries, including biosciences, manufacturing, professional services, manufacturing, construction and fabrication.

## COUNTY ECONOMIC RECOVERY NUMBERS

Shawnee County and its local economy is continuing to move forward toward a brighter future. The Kansas Department of Labor reported that Shawnee County's unemployment rate fell for a fourth consecutive month to 7.27%. This figure still represents that almost 6,700 local workers and residents of the county are out of work; which is devastating for those families and their wellbeing. Although, the average weekly earnings rose by 2% from the previous month, it remains lower compared to last year.

The pandemic and the recession are hitting low-wage workers the hardest, this can be seen by creating clusters of our displaced workers. The Hospitality & Tourism cluster has almost 1,500 workers unemployed, with an estimated unemployment rate of 15%. A cluster related to education shows that almost 80% of our displaced workers have less than an associate's degree.

Weekly online job postings are increasing at a decent pace. In the week of August 17, there were approximately 700 new online job postings, this is 4% more jobs than the previous week, and 40% more jobs than the previous year.

The economy is improving for some, but at the same time, is leaving many local families behind.

## HOTEL MARKET PERFORMANCE - STR REPORT

The July STR Report shows a continued upward trend in overall occupancy, average daily rate and revenue. While year-over-year performance remains poor, the market does show some signs of returning to decent health following a dismal second quarter. One concern we are tracking are the monthly Transient Guest Tax (TGT) collections. July is the third month in a row with below average collection rates compared to STR revenue estimates. This trend can also be seen in state-wide reporting and is certainly not limited to Topeka.

### Topeka STR July 2020

- Occupancy - 53.0 down 10.7%
- ADR - \$78.37 down 5.6%
- Demand - 42,388 down 12.8%
- Revenue - \$3,321,972 down 17.7%

### Topeka TGT July 2020

- STR Estimate - \$232,538
- TGT Actual - \$150,738
- Difference - 64.8%

### Topeka STR YTD July 2020

- Occupancy - 43.2 down 23.1%
- ADR - \$76.18 down 10.2%
- Demand - 229,062 down 29.1%
- Revenue - \$17,449,887 down 36.3%

### Topeka TGT YTD July 2020

- STR Estimate - \$1,221,492
- TGT Actual - \$899,623
- Difference - 76.4%

**ADR** - Average Daily Rate, **Demand** - Total Rooms Occupied

## PARTNERSHIP AUGUST EVENTS SUMMARY

### A summary of our August events:

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. Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Homestead of Topeka, as well as our other event sponsors and DTI sponsors.

The Everygy Plaza was the venue of choice for our movie night on August 14 as 250 socially distanced viewers were able to spread out to enjoy *Jurassic Park* at Movie on the Plaza. With their newly installed sound system and LED screen, every spot at the plaza is the best spot to watch or see a show. Thank you to Everygy Plaza, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, 785 Magazine, and Schendel Lawn & Landscape for their sponsorships to this event.

On Monday, August 17 we 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.

Ending our busy month, the State of the Community on August 27. (See full description on pg. 3 of this report.)

Through all of these events, safety precautions were a prominent concern as plans were set in place to encourage social distancing, mask wearing and preventative measures were put in place.

## VISIT TOPEKA SPORTS SALES REPORT

Topeka continues to host sporting events all the while ensuring that participants are safe and complying with COVID safety protocols. During the month state tournaments were held in softball, both youth and adult leagues, as well as regional and national tournaments. In addition to softball, Topeka hosted a BMX event at Heartland BMX, after a postponement due to weather which the new track owners viewed as a success.

The optimism for the continuation of sports is evident in conversations Visit Topeka staff has with rights holders. During the month, the sports pipeline grew by 21 events from varied disciplines. These events represent over 7,000 room nights and over seven million in economic impact. Of course, not all may be realized in the coming months but at least Topeka is in the running for the events and the optimism among these planners is still strong.

## KS PTAC UPDATE

Current number of contract awards is 1,028 worth \$83.6 million! Out of that total, 17 contracts, worth \$1.3 Million have specifically gone to Shawnee County based businesses. We have held several training classes this past month including our Introductory to Federal Contracting course and our "How to Market to Federal Agencies – Writing your Capability Statement" course.

For further details on upcoming training please check out our events section and sign up for any applicable training.

For more information, see [www.wichita.edu/research/kansasptac/ptacevents.php](http://www.wichita.edu/research/kansasptac/ptacevents.php).



## PARTNERSHIP RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & EVENTS UPDATE

The Resource Development and Events Team has been busy celebrating new members, working to ensure events are taking all available safety precautions and kicking off our Total Resource Campaign.

We had six ribbon cuttings this month, Naly's Landscaping, Digital Cohort, Topeka Dentistry, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Axe & Ale and Ash Boutique. The Partnership welcomed eight new members: Greatlife Fitness, Creative Signs and Designs, Ash Boutique, Axe and Ale, The Vintage Fox, Lighthouse Day School, LLC., Speck's Bar & Grill and Topeka ER & Hospital. We also hosted our monthly Ambassador meeting at Juli's Coffee & Bistro.

With the kickoff of the Total Resource Campaign in early August, the Resource Development team is working closely with campaign volunteers to secure partners for 2021 sponsorships.

Our Events Team has done an amazing job following all the safety precautions at our August events and continues to work hard for our upcoming events, including Business Expo, EmpowHer and even Annual Meeting.

## VISIT TOPEKA CONVENTIONS & GROUP SALES REPORT

The same as many destinations around the country, Topeka has been hit with quite a few cancellations or postponements of convention and group business due to the pandemic. The cancelled business report from March 1 of 2020 shows a loss of \$16,134.917 in economic impact, which derives from 17,201 lost hotel rooms and 11,500 attendees not visiting due to their event being cancelled. While these numbers are staggering, all is not lost. The sales team currently has 30 leads for convention sales and seven for tour travel sales in our pipeline. A focus has been put on rebooking the postponed business and finding new leads to continue to fill our pipeline and impact the economy for Topeka. For example, one new piece of business is a national animal health conference that was looking for a Midwest meeting location. The team expects more leads similar to this one who are searching for new meeting spaces as they look towards rebooking in the future.

## NEW PLANTINGS FOR DOWNTOWN CORNER LANDSCAPE BEDS

The Downtown Topeka Foundation and the Downtown Business Improvement District have partnered to underwrite the cost of new perennials and limestone blocks in each of the 16 downtown corner landscape beds between 6th and 10th on Kansas Avenue. The City of Topeka was not able to fund the corner beds this year. Rather than have them sit empty, the Foundation and BID hired Schendel Lawn and Landscape to add the plantings to the beds. Each bed has been adopted by a downtown business to help monitor and maintain the beds.

## ELECTIONS

Eleven seats in the Shawnee County legislative delegation are being contested in the November general election, including three state senate seats and 8 house of representative spots. County Commission District 2 is also in play. The Chamber is working to develop a virtual forum whereby each candidate entertains questions along with his or her opponent in an online format. The public will be able to watch these segments live or in archives. Now more than ever excellent public leadership is critical to our recovery and continued growth.

## LEADERSHIP GREATER TOPEKA UPDATE

The LGT 2020 class was finally able to complete the program in August, after experiencing delays caused by COVID-19. The 2020 class representatives selected to serve on the LGT Advisory Council are: Brett Martin, United Way Topeka; Debbie Stanton, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, and Tara Wallace, Tara Wallace, LLC.

LGT is currently accepting nomination for the 2021 program. This 38 year program will selection 36 aspiring and established leaders to train on 21st century leadership skills and community trusteeship. Nomination are being accepted through September 18, 2020 at <https://leadership-topeka.topekapartnership.com/about-lgt/2021-nomination-form/>

In partnership with the Kansas Leadership Center, The Greater Topeka Partnership through Leadership Greater Topeka, conducted a zoom event on August 20 on Equitable Broadband Access in Kansas. This was a Statewide conversation with over 250+ registered to participate. The purpose of this event was to advance discussion about the need for improved broad band infrastructure, digital equity, federal funding opportunities and to build statewide awareness.

## MOMENTUM 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

We reached the half way point of the community strategy in June of 2020. After suspending movement due to COVID-19, it is time to get our MOMENTUM back! The works groups began meeting again to get back to work, and beginning September 8 we will be asking the public to complete an online community survey. This survey was originally conducted in 2016 to better understand the needs, wants and opinions of stakeholders in Topeka & Shawnee County. We are conducting this survey again to assess response to the changes and efforts initiated throughout the community, but we need input from all segments of the community. We ask businesses and community leadership to encourage their staff and members to complete the survey.

The survey will be available in the near future at [Topekapartnership.com/back2mo/](https://Topekapartnership.com/back2mo/).



## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Each of the four Partner organizations has adopted the GTP Uniform Bylaws Provisions. These provisions govern such routine matters as board nominations, officer elections and director indemnity. Their adoption will streamline the management of the boards while ensuring each group retains its own unique features. Attention now turns to the various groups operating within the Partnership with the goal that, as applicable, each of them will also move towards uniform operational rules and procedures.

## METL UPDATE

The METL Coalition is working to remove obstacles to a possible food security program conceived in response to COVID-19. The group is seeking a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to enable local restaurants to sell directly to grocers without the necessity of obtaining a food manufacturing license. Since the restaurants already follow sanitation protocols, the extra license does not, as a practical matter, enhance food safety for the consumer. It is hoped that the requested waiver will enable local restaurateurs to serve customers despite COVID-related constraints on their usual business models.

## CARES ACT

The State of Kansas has launched several grant programs to provide some measure of relief to businesses and non-profits across Kansas impacted by COVID-19. The state is receiving hundreds of millions of dollars in federal CARES Act funding for this purpose. The GTP and Visit Topeka have applied for working capital grants from the state, as well as, grants to offset some of the groups' expenses in purchasing PPE and otherwise coping with the transition to remote work. The Partnership is also seeking a portion of the \$5.5 million in funding Shawnee County has allocated to local COVID-19 community programs. All of these funds must be expended by the end of 2020.

## NEW BUSINESS ATTRACTION

GO Topeka is working closely with an international company focused on animal health and pharmaceuticals to find a location for their first US facility. Project Victoria came to Topeka through our relationship with the KS Department of Commerce international team. Project Victoria is still exploring options in a handful of communities however has stated that our regions commitment to growth and innovation in Animal Health and Ag Tech has given Topeka a competitive edge.

## CITY LAUNCHES LOAN PROGRAM

The City of Topeka received approval to move forward with a new small business grant program in late August. The funding, provided through HUD's Community Development Block Grant program, will offer grant support to small businesses been impacted by COVID-19. Some small businesses could be eligible for grants up to \$20,000. The program will be live on October 1.

For more information, please contact [SWilson@Topeka.org](mailto:SWilson@Topeka.org) or (785) 368-3711.

## WOMEN'S FORUM SPEAKER ANNOUNCES RESOURCE FOR WOMEN

On August 20, at fall Women's Forum, speaker Wendy Doyle, Women's Foundation President & CEO, announced the Women's Foundation Launches Interactive Online Dashboard Demonstrating Impact of COVID-19 Crisis on Women in Missouri and Kansas.

"This data tells the story of how women in Missouri and Kansas will be especially hard hit by this virus and its economic impacts," said Doyle. "Women make up the majority of family caregivers, health care workers, and service-sector employees – putting them on the frontlines of this pandemic and its economic fallout. These numbers underscore the urgent need for proven solutions like guaranteed paid family and medical leave, gender pay equity, and reduced red tape for small business owners. As policymakers continue to manage the immediate effects of this crisis and develop solutions to mitigating its devastating economic impact, prioritizing the needs of women and families will be critical to our recovery."

For a summary of key finding and policy recommendations, [\*\*follow this link.\*\*](#)

## HUMAN RESOURCE UPDATE

Human Resources welcomed the new FORGE Executive Director, Kelli Maydew. Kelli first day with GTP was August 10th. Kelli brings a strong background in membership services, educational programming, event planning, sponsorship, and fundraising. The entire Partnership team is excited to have Kelli onboard!

HR is working together with the executive leadership team to accomplish success plans for new staff, and mid-year evaluations. Human resources has also completed the new job description for VP of Administration, and Human Resources.

Current HR projects include, evacuation plan, internship program, updating employee handbook, ADA and leave of absence forms.

## FINANCE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

In August, the Finance Department wrapped up the GO Topeka audit. The Visit Topeka and consolidated Partnership reports are nearing completion and should be wrapped up in the next couple of weeks.

The 2021 budget work has picked up considerably and Finance is working diligently to understand what impact COVID-19 will have on the 2021 year. We also continue to monitor the 2020 impacts in order to identify the organization upcoming financial needs and make necessary adjustments to our forecast.

## RIVERFRONT COUNCIL MEETS TO FINALIZE MISSION/VISION/VALUES

On August 19 the Riverfront Advisory Council met to finalize its mission/vision statements as well as its core values; these initial drafts came from the group's retreat in July.

The Advisory Council will make these guiding principles known to the public in September.