

# MANAGEMENT REPORT

JULY 2020



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plaza



# FROM THE DESK OF MATT PIVARNIK

Community Leaders,

Long time, no see. Right? Well, at least in this format anyway.

With everything that has happened to us in the last six months, the Partnership has prioritized regular communications with its members, partners and the community. We also endeavored to share and create resources to serve our small businesses, employees, visitors and residents. Even as we strived to step into the role of a communications and recovery resource, we took proactive approaches to keep the momentum going. Needless to say, we're busier than ever, which is just the way we like it.

In July, we made headway with previous projects, such as the upcoming Innovation Campus, and launched brand new efforts such as Travel Together. We've paid it forward with programs like the HOST Relief Program. And, of course, we've adapted in an innumerable amount of ways.

Welcome back to the Management Report!



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## PLUG AND PLAY ACCELERATOR ANNOUNCES CORP PARTNERSHIP

GO Topeka is proud to announce that Cargill is the first of 5 corporate founding partners of the Plug and Play animal health/ag tech accelerator program that has officially signed on to the program. With three additional corporate partners in final contract negotiation stage, Plug and Play is getting ready to kick off the animal health/ag tech accelerator program in Topeka this summer. This will open up the application period for startups to become part of the first cohort starting in the fall.

Cargill has made significant investments in innovation throughout Kansas over the last decade and we are thrilled to collaborate with this organization and help shape the future of agriculture for our State. Cargill's 155,000 employees across 70 countries work relentlessly to achieve our purpose of nourishing the world in a safe, responsible and sustainable way. Every day, they connect farmers with markets, customers with ingredients, and people and animals with the food they need to thrive. Cargill combines 155 years of experience with new technologies and insights to serve as a trusted partner for food, agriculture, financial and industrial customers in more than 125 countries, building a stronger, sustainable future for agriculture.

## VISIT TOPEKA ANNOUNCES TRAVEL TOGETHER

Visit Topeka partnered with Explore Lawrence on Travel Together, which is a program that offered either city's residents special discounts to restaurants, breweries, attractions, hotels and other businesses. The purpose of this program is to support economic recovery through regional tourism while promoting either cities premier attractions, signature restaurants, and other special offerings. Lawrence and Douglas County residents received discounts during their visit to Topeka on July 25-26. Visitors saw discounts such as a free admission at the Topeka Zoo, \$1 pints at Happy Basset, special menu item at Burger Stand, and special offers at Cyrus Hotel and the Hyatt Place, plus many more!

"As many of us gradually return to travel, it's important to know that excellent options might not be as far away as you think," Jessica Schenkel.

Shawnee County residents receive their discounts in Lawrence on August 7-8. To learn more about Lawrence offerings: <https://unmistakablylawrence.com/travel-together/>

## 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. 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 fall/winter 2020. 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. Thank you, Evergy!

## PARTNERSHIP WELCOMES NEW VISIT TOPEKA PRESIDENT

This month, the Partnership welcomed new Visit Topeka President Sean Dixon to the team. Sean 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.

"We continue our momentum in Topeka & Shawnee County and adding Sean to this community team will only accelerate our efforts. Sean's background in the destination development arena will allow him to make an immediate impact," said Matt Pivarnik, CEO of the Greater Topeka Partnership. "He is highly respected in his industry and will bring many fresh perspectives while partnering with the Visit Topeka Board, the Topeka Lodging Association, our forward-thinking elected leaders and his peers and partners within the Greater Topeka Partnership."

## HOST PAYS IT FORWARD TO FIRST RESPONDERS

As part of the HOST Relief Program, a HOST Donor recognition and First Responders event occurred in July, announcing over \$1M in relief funding to 285 small businesses in Shawnee County and providing gift cards, purchased from HOST Relief recipients to over 2,300 workers in Shawnee County who were impacted by furloughs, reductions in hours or layoffs. In thanks and recognition to first responders in the community, the HOST program donated gift cards to each staff member of the following first responder organizations: Topeka Fire Department, American Medical Response, Shawnee County Sheriff's Office and the Topeka Police Department.

Hosted talent initiatives convening related to early childhood and childcare needs impacted by the pandemic.

## CAVAZOS NAMED TO ACCE EVENTS BOARD

Rosa Cavazos, vice president of Resource Development and Events, was named to the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives' Events Board this month. This spring, Cavazos was promoted to VP of Resource Development and Events after more than 8 years with Visit Topeka and extension the Greater Topeka Partnership. Rosa is excited to begin her duties as a board member.

## EVENTS OCCUR SUCCESSFULLY WITH NEW REGULATIONS

Several annual sporting events have successfully occurred in Topeka under new health and safety guidelines. Two such events were the 47th Annual Shrine Bowl, which took place at Hummer Sports Park on July 18, and the USA Softball Fast Pitch Girls B 16U and 18U National Championship, at Shawnee North Sports Complex on July 23-26. Both events adhered to new guidelines created by the Shawnee County Health Department to slow the spread of COVID-19. New procedures included the use of masks, social distancing for both athletes (off the field) and fans, as well as new rules for drinking sources.

Both sporting events went off without a hitch, allowing players, staff and fans to stay safe and healthy while enjoying the game.

## GRANTS AND INCENTIVES

The Pandemic has challenged the small businesses community. However, Greater Topeka Partnership stood up two programs that provided direct support and assistance to small business owners. The HOST Public and Private Gift Card and Grant programs have been a great representation of support to the small business community. The private HOST program provided support to more than 2300 employees across Shawnee County, while simultaneously purchasing gift cards from more than 175 small businesses or \$1,000,000.

The public has resulted in participation from 150 small businesses in Topeka/Shawnee County. The grants have served as lifelines to some and provided additional financial resources. To date, GO Topeka has issued approximately \$500,000 in grants. There are still funds available to aid your business. If you haven't taken advantage of this program, please visit [www.supporttopeka.com](http://www.supporttopeka.com) and apply for the HOST Grant.

## DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN TAKES SHAPE

The Dynamic Core Master Plan continues to take shape. The City Planning Department presented the latest update to the Downtown Topeka, Incorporated board at their July meeting. The presentation included plans for the Tower District which is bounded by Jackson Street on the west and I-70 on the east and 10th to 13th on the south. Once complete, the plan will be presented to the public for input and review. The plan can be viewed on the City website at [www.topeka.org](http://www.topeka.org).



## SECOND COHORT OF WHEELHOUSE INCUBATOR PROGRAM GRADUATES

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 disruption, the spring cohort of the Wheelhouse Incubator program graduated in July. Seven 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. For the time being, GO Topeka will continue to offer relevant programming in a way that is safe and at the same time effective for participants and program managers – virtually.

## NEW DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

Two new businesses have announced their openings in July in downtown. Ash Boutique has relocated their store to 921 S. Kansas Avenue. Axe and Ale has opened at 115 SE 6th in the former Hilmer Leather Shop. They join two other recently opened businesses in downtown. Top City Shakes is located at 929 S. Kansas Avenue and Los Mandiles Rojos restaurant at 10th and Quincy. Welcome to these new downtown businesses!

## PARTNERSHIP WELCOMES NEW STAFF

In addition to a new President of Visit Topeka, the Partnership welcomed several other new staff members to the team in July.

**Matt Purvis**, Visit Topeka's new Sales Manager, was raised in Topeka. He pursued his post-secondary education at Kansas State University, where he received a degree in Hospitality Management with a specialty in Event Planning. Matt started his professional career at Prairie Band Casino and Resort as an Executive Casino Host.

**TJ McDonald** is the Partnership's new Membership Sales Manager. Before joining the GTP, 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 Imagemakers 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 life-long Topekan.

## FEDERAL COVID-19 RELIEF

Congress has returned to Washington DC to finalize its next COVID-19 relief package, referred to by some as “Phase Four.” The House passed its \$3 trillion plan in May but the Senate has now proposed a more modest package. The Senate bill: contains liability provisions to protect businesses against unwarranted lawsuits based on the coronavirus; expands the scope of the Payroll Protection Plan to include qualifying 501(c)(6) tax-exempt entities like the Greater Topeka Partnership and trims back the soon-to-expire \$600 weekly top-up laid-off workers had been receiving in addition to their state unemployment benefits.

## EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY

As the Country continues its conversation around the urgency of equality, fairness and inclusion, the Greater Topeka Partnerships’ Small Business Council and Women and Minority Business Councils worked to create inclusion statements that represent their respective entities. The statements speak to how essential it is to not only practice these behaviors individually, but to actively drive them in every aspect of their business and personal lives. As the Partnership moves forward with a commitment to diversity and inclusion on all levels, each department will be asked to produce a statement that demonstrates their dedication to equitable practices. This is a first step to what will ultimately result in creating a community where everyone is valued.

## MOMENTUM 2022 UPDATE

It’s time to continue building Momentum – Plans are underway to re-establish MOMENTUM 2022 strategic planning efforts and reengage MO22 workgroups to adapt, respond and continue addressing the five-year strategic planning objectives. Prior to the Covid-19 crisis, plans were being developed to assess the status of strategic accomplishments. In March, the MO22 efforts was suspended to directly respond to COVID-19 issues effecting the community.

The MO22 Executive team has developed a strategy to reinstate MO22 efforts August to include reengaging the workgroups to review both the five-year strategic plan and the COVID-19 Community Recovery recommendation developed in response to COVID as well as implement a community survey to assess community impact. This response will advance the good work that has been accomplished by the community as we adapt in times of COVID and continue work to realize the community’s goals.

# ECONOMIC RECOVERY TASKFORCE

As we all continue to move forward toward a brighter future, the Economic Recovery Task Force is focused on developing recommendations that would support local businesses and residents of Shawnee County. Approximately, four months into the COVID-19 crisis, many residents have lost their jobs and/or livelihoods, and many local businesses are in financial hardship. As of June 2020, 6,720 Shawnee County workers were unemployed; although this was an improvement from April 2020, where 11,056 workers were unemployed, our unemployment remains significantly high.

The Economic Recovery Task Force would like to recommend financial assistance to low income families, especially those with food insecurity, reduce broadband deserts in parts of our community, and support local businesses with grants.

See Economic Recovery Dashboard: <https://supporttopeka.com/economic-recovery-dashboard-2/>

# MARKET PERFORMANCE STATISTICS FROM SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH (STR)

Visit Topeka has obtained the first six months of data from STR for our destination as well as statewide information from the State of Kansas. The June report shows that a rebound has started since the lowest points of late March and early April. While a 50% occupancy is not ideal for June in Topeka our market is ahead of the statewide average. Topeka is also in a favorable position for recovery, currently, in relation to other cities in the region who are experience devastating losses in occupancy and revenue.

## Topeka STR June 2020

- o Occupancy- 50.9 down 26.7%
- o ADR- \$74.16 down 19.7%
- o RevPar- \$37.76 down 41.1%
- o Demand- 34,738 down 37.0%

## State of Kansas STR June 2020

- o Occupancy- 44.1 down 32.8%
- o ADR- \$74.79 down 17.6%
- o RevPar- \$32.97 down 44.6%

## Topeka STR YTD June 2020

- o Occupancy- 41.6 down 25.3%
- o ADR- \$75.62 down 11.2%
- o RevPar- \$31.47 down 33.7%
- o Demand- 185,249 down 32.5%

## State of Kansas STR June 2020

- o Occupancy- 38.8 down 30.6%
- o ADR- \$77.71 down 12.5%
- o RevPar- \$30.13 down 39.3%

**ADR**-Average Daily Rate, **RevPar**-Revenue Per Available Room, **Demand**-Total Rooms Occupied

# KS PTAC UPDATE

It's been an extra busy year for the KS PTAC program, current number of contract awards is 401 worth \$63Million! Out of that total, 13 contracts, worth \$1.2Million have specifically gone to Shawnee County businesses. On July 21st we held a virtual Industry Day featuring representatives from the Mission Installation Contracting Command (MICC) at Fort Riley, Fort Leavenworth, and Fort Leonard Wood. The presenters reported on anticipated forecast opportunities for Fiscal Years 2020-2022. A recording of the event is available for the next 14 days via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/FrLLAPBI>

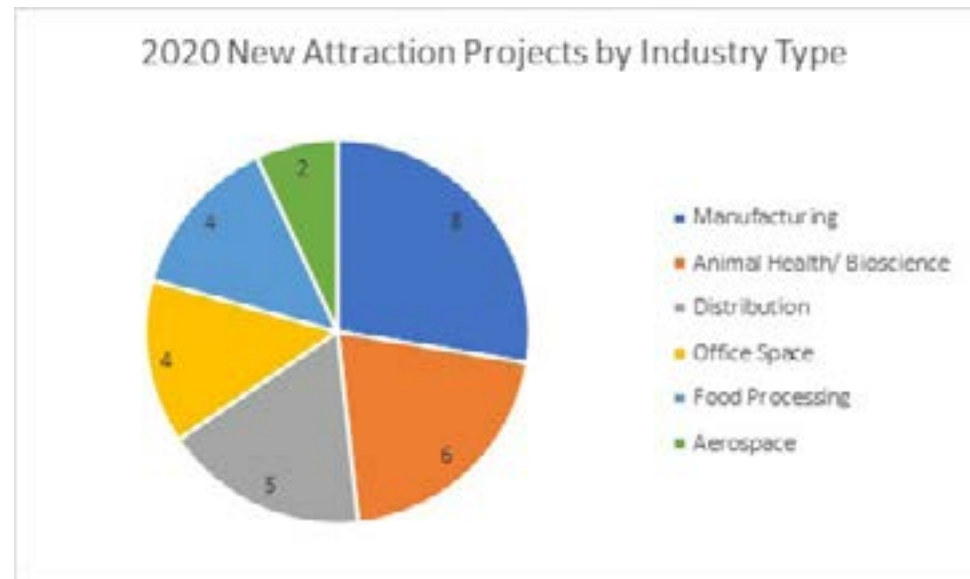


## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND EVENTS

The Partnership is excited to have the Resource Development Team in full swing and in full capacity. The team is working to make our membership grow, enhancing our member experience and member retention. They are hard at work on our upcoming Total Resource Campaign that kicks off in August with our first Captains and Chair meeting the end of July. We are working on sponsorships, rescheduling events and working through the Shawnee County COVID-19 guidelines to make our events safe for our members.

## NEW BUSINESS ATTRACTIONS

In 2020, GO Topeka has and will continue to make a concerted effort to focus on attracting business related to Aerospace and Animal Health and Bioscience. Below is chart that helps to illustrate the increased project activity in these targeted industries.



## CHOOSE TOPEKA UPDATE

13 employers have submitted 21 candidates to the Choose Topeka talent relocation initiative, totaling \$106,250 in relocation incentives for workforce growth and support in the community. Over 3,600 submissions with resumes/questions have come in since inception, along with over 1,575 calls. We continue to receive steady, continued interest, with approximately 25 resume/interest submissions every week and several calls throughout each week.

## LEADERSHIP GREATER TOPEKA PROGRAM

Leadership Greater Topeka (LGT), a program of the Greater Topeka Partnership, will begin accepting nominations for the 2021 program on August 3, 2020 through September 18, 2020. This 37-year old community leadership program identifies outstanding leaders from the community and teaches the participants aspects of leadership. Visit [LeadershipTopeka.com](http://LeadershipTopeka.com) to submit your nomination

## SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL NAMES INCOMING CHAIR

The Small Business Council has selected Amber Beckley as the incoming chair of the 2020 Small Business Council. Dr. Beckley is the owner of Beckley Chiropractic Clinic and has served on the Council since 2018.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Boards of Directors of the four base Partner organizations are all considering the adoption of a set of Uniform Bylaw Provisions. Each organization retained its unique corporate identity and bylaws after it joined the Partnership. To streamline the governance of those groups, the GTP has developed a set of uniform provisions which address generic activities such as officer elections, nominating committees and basic meeting parameters. Once adopted, these provisions will enable the seamless management of routine corporate functions while preserving the unique facets which make each group a special part of the overall Partnership. The Partner boards are also wrapping-up the election of their 2021 rosters, having kept a close eye on diversity across a range of dimensions as they sought-out the most talented volunteers to lead them into the future.

## METL UPDATE

In July, the METL Coalition discussed combined forces to advocate for reforms to address diversity, equity and inclusion across Northeast Kansas. From expanded programs to assist minority-owned businesses to criminal justice reform to broader education about the causes and impacts of systemic racism, the METL Coalition is committed to being a meaningful voice in the effort to eradicate injustice, defy discrimination, and dismantle the platform of racism as all the citizens of Topeka and Shawnee County seek a more prosperous future.

## CARES ACT

The federal CARES Act has disbursed billions of dollars throughout the U.S. economy via a number of different mechanisms. One of those mechanisms is funding for state and local governments. Kansas received roughly \$1.25 billion of CARES Act funding and is in the process of distributing those funds to local units of government struggling to cope with COVID-19. The GTP is a non-voting member of Shawnee County's CARES Act committee and is helping develop the best plan for allocating \$36.7 million in first round funds and as larger, those less-defined, sum in round two. These funds must be used to address the impact of COVID-19 in new ways and, crucially, must be spent by the end of this year. GTP staff and the Economic Recovery Task Force have been working 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.

## 'PLUG AND PLAY TOPEKA' TO SPONSOR SUMMIT

For the first time, "Plug and Play Topeka" will be a sponsor of the Animal Health Corridor Summit industry flagship event Aug 31-Sep 2. For more information and to register to this virtual event, please go to <http://kcanimalhealth.thinkkc.com/events/animal-health-summit>. GO Topeka is also supporting the event and the KC Animal Health Corridor community by providing coaching to competing animal health startups to prepare them for virtual pitches to investors and strategic partners.

## INCLUDED

iINCLUDED will host the next virtual iINCLUDED Meeting, Racism 101 on August 12, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. [Join us for an online presentation](#) and conversation facilitated by Kathleen Marker, YWCA CEO and Marty Hillard, community activist and YWCA Advocacy committee member. Together we'll explore the four levels of racism, how they stand alone, and how they interact with each other.

Follow the Partnership social media for Zoom registration information.

## RIVERFRONT COUNCIL HOLDS RETREAT

The Riverfront Advisory Council held a retreat on July 17 via Zoom to brainstorm and connect on meaningful objectives related to the group's overall Mission and Vision.

The results from this retreat will be available in August.

## FORGE DIRECTOR NAMED

Kelli Maydew was named the Executive Director of Forge Young Talent. Kelli comes to the Partnership from National Association of Trailer Manufacturers, where she served as Membership and Events Director. Her strong suits include in trade associations, membership services, educational programming, event planning, sponsorships/fundraising, politics, and governmental affairs. She received her BA from Winthrop University.

Kelli will begin her position in August.

## TOPCITY INTERNS CONCLUDES WITH FINAL EVENT

In July, TopCity Interns hosted the final event of a virtual Financial Lunch & Learn. While our 2020 events looked different than past TopCity Interns programming, we had a successful set of events and even got to include some fun with a TopCity Bingo competition to encourage interns to explore our city, while taking pictures of doing activities in the bingo boxes and posting on social media.

## PARTNERSHIP FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT

The Partnership continues to monitor and respond to the financial challenges of today's economy. We were quick to respond in early April, developing a detailed plan to respond to the immediate challenge. As a result, the Partnership implemented our crisis plan which included expense reductions as well as compensation reductions ranging anywhere from 10% to 40% in order to respond to the projected revenue shortfalls. Every Partnership employee responded to the challenge and have done a great job at stepping up and adjusting to the crisis strategy in a way that has allowed the Partnership to stay on track. Our original crisis plan focused on the immediate three months, May-July. We have now refreshed the forecast through the end of 2020. At the last finance committee meeting we discussed what the next 6 months will bring and outlined the opportunities the Partnership has at its disposal to ensure the financial health of the Partnership remains sound so that we can continue to provide our community with the services it needs.

## FEATURED EVENTS

## CORPORATE EVENTS

August

8 - [Cruisin' the Capitol](#)

14 - [Movie on the Plaza - Jurassic Park](#)

September

26 - CoreFirst Bank & Trust Jazz and Food Trucks Festival  
(TENTATIVE)

October

9 - [Kansas Chocolate Festival](#)

Please note that all public events are pending at this time.

INCLUDED Virtual August Meeting

August 12 | 11 a.m.

[Register >](#)

Partnership Member Golf Tournament

August 17 | 11:30 a.m.

[Register >](#)

Virtual Women's Forum

August 20 | 4 p.m.

[Register >](#)

State of Community

August 27 | 3 p.m.

Stormont Vail Events Center

[Register >](#)



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