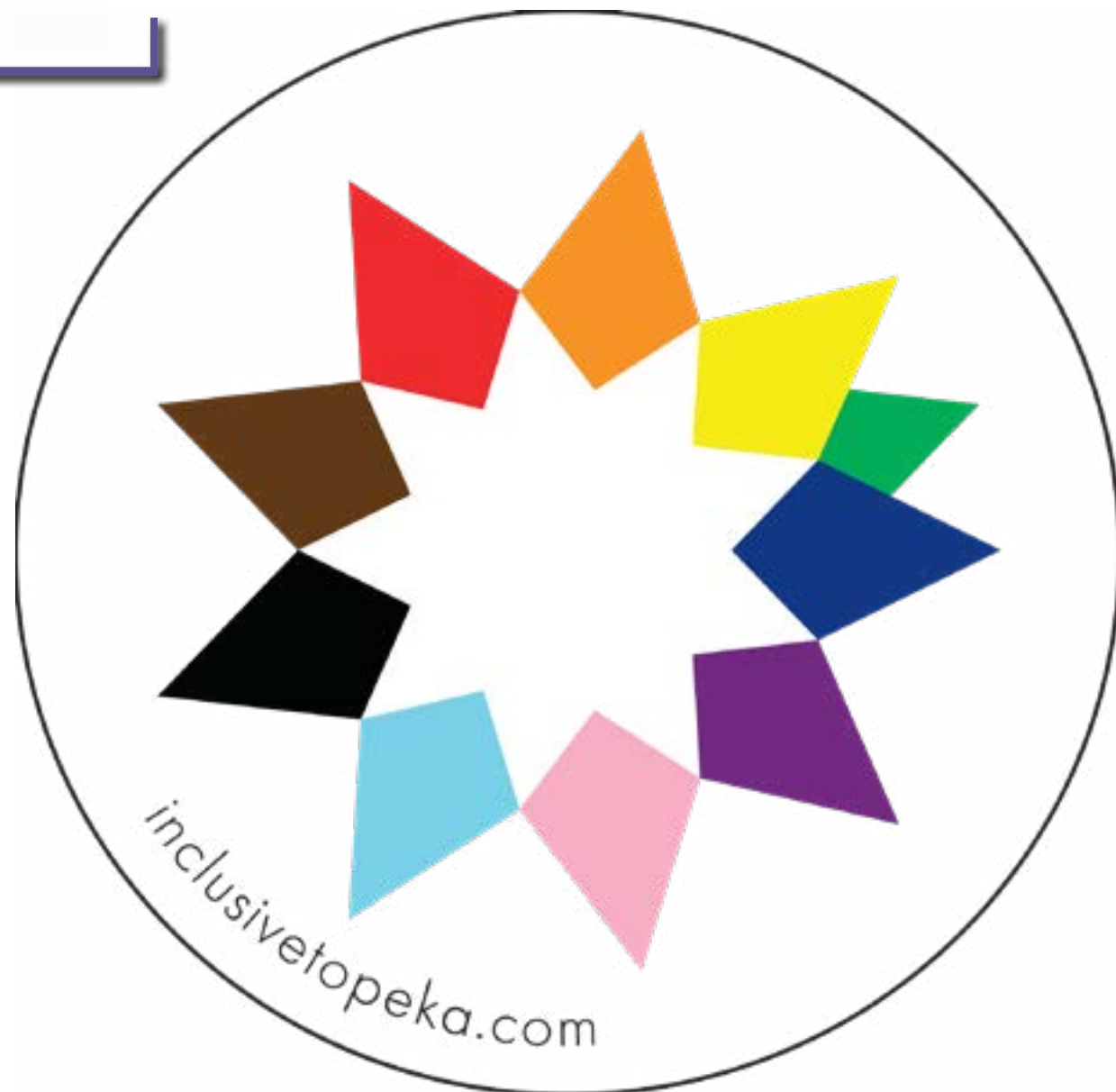


MANAGEMENT REPORT

MAY 2021



PRESENTED BY





FROM THE DESK OF MATT PIVARNIK

Community leaders,

Our first priority has always been our community and ensuring that those who live, work and play here are excited about the new strides taking place. Our increased Net Promoter Score is a great example of this surge in public pride we're experiencing. But after making sure our community is covered, we make it a priority to focus on how the region, the nation and globe are viewing our progress.

I tell you this, to give you the insider exclusive about an upcoming BBC News feature that will cover Topeka's pride in community as well as our many new and upcoming achievements. Our staff took this BBC reporter, a global citizen herself, on a city-wide tour to get an up-close and personal view of Topeka & Shawnee County. The hidden gems, the new developments and the progress that is currently in the works, including NOTO's live music scene, Kay's Garden and Advisors Excel's expansion into Gage Center. And, let me tell you, she was captivated by what she saw. Perhaps because she had no idea what Topeka had in store, or perhaps it wasn't what she had envisioned when her mind went to the Capital City of Kansas and the center of the Midwest.

I'm very proud of this reaction, and I'll tell you why. From Lawrence to London, it's important that we're known within our region and beyond. If we can get our local and regional neighbors excited about what we're doing, then what's stopping us from drawing the attention of people from all around the world? Nothing but the inability to dream big. And here in Topeka in the year 2021, we're dreaming huge.

Let's go big, Topeka!

Thank you to HTK Architects for sponsoring this Management Report!



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Forge



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PRESENTING STRONGER TOGETHER: EXPEDITION NWA

In a historic turn of events, the Greater Topeka Partnership and the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce announced their first joint inter-city visit to Northwest Arkansas (NWA), a regional collective composed of Rogers, Springdale, Bentonville and Fayetteville.

This “Stronger Together: Expedition NWA,” trip allows community leaders from the public, private, educational and nonprofit sectors in both the Topeka and Lawrence area to gain knowledge about innovative ideas and programs in Northwest Arkansas. The visit will also provide an opportunity for interaction among city leaders and facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned between the visiting cities and the destination cities.

[Learn more about this inter-city visit >](#)

[Watch press conference video >](#)

CUEVAS-STUBBLEFIELD SELECTED FOR ACCE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Michelle Cuevas-Stubblefield, SVP of strategy, Greater Topeka Partnership, was selected by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) this month to participate in a unique leadership development opportunity with nine other chamber of commerce professionals from communities throughout the United States.

The Chamber Leadership Diversity Program is an immersive executive development program that provides chamber of commerce professionals with education and networks to advance their careers, contribute to the future of the industry and create meaningful change in their communities.

[See official press release >](#)

INCLUSIVE TOPEKA DEBUTS

Ahead of Pride Month and Juneteenth, Visit Topeka held a special press conference at The Burger Stand in the Brookwood Shopping Center to announce a new decal for local businesses to display in their window to denote their dedication to inclusivity. “Inclusive Topeka” decals are free for businesses and available at [visittopeka.com/inclusive-topeka/](https://www.visittopeka.com/inclusive-topeka/). To purchase a decal for personal use, contact [**Sandy.Tucker@VisitTopeka.com**](mailto:Sandy.Tucker@VisitTopeka.com).

[See official press release >](#)

PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

Please welcome our newest members:

Trammell Media Group
K1 Hospitality
Unique Solution Services
Classi Management Services
Business Brokers, LLC

We celebrated the following businesses with Ribbon Cuttings:

Paradise Puppy Wash & Grooming
Lean Kitchen
TLC Pet Nursing Hotel One Year Anniversary
Scooter's Coffee New Location celebration

Our special member events included:

Momentum 2022 Investor's Meetings
Ambassador's Monthly Meeting at the Viking Grill
Downtown After Hours with Kansas Commercial Real Estate
Business Unwind at Schendal Lawn & Landscape

JEDO APPROVES UP TO \$5.8M INVESTMENT IN TOPEKA INNOVATION CAMPUS

JEDO's approval of up to \$5.8M on May 12 is a significant milestone in the launch of the Topeka Innovation Campus. Under the guidance of the Innovation Advisory Board and after approval of the GO Topeka Board of Directors, GO Topeka has entered into a partnership with BioRealty, a nationally recognized developer specialized in life sciences buildings, to develop phase 1 of the campus. The site identified for this development is located in downtown Topeka. Total estimated project costs are between \$12M-\$13M for the preparation of a total rentable square footage of approximately 63,700 sq. ft.

"This is a historic day for our community. The vote to support funding for an innovation campus in Downtown Topeka will secure this city's role as a leader in animal health and startup entrepreneurship for years to come," said Michelle De La Isla, Mayor of Topeka. "The effort is truly bold and visionary. I firmly believe in 20 years we will look back on this project and see that it was the beginning of a transformative era for business and innovation in the Capital City."

APRIL STR REPORT

As we've continued to reopen following the worst months of the pandemic, our year-over-year hotel statistics have begun to skyrocket. April room demand was up about more than 130% from 2020 – a staggering increase from March. All other metrics followed this trend. The overall occupancy rate jumped past 50% to end the month at 51.26%. ADR for April was an estimated \$78.53 (up from \$64.07 in 2020), placing monthly hotel revenue at an estimated \$3,213,029 (up about 180 percent from 2020).

SMALL BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

This month, the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Council and GO Topeka's Minority & Women Business Development program presented awards of merit and distinction at the 2021 Small Business Awards! This year we recognized local small businesses, a nonprofit agency and an entrepreneur for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the Topeka & Shawnee County community.

Congratulations to the 2021 Small Business Awards winners. They include the Capper Foundation, Dialogue Coffee, Dare to Dream, Inc., TLJ, Everygy Plaza and Dobski & Associates.

[Learn more >](#)

AIRBNB TEAMS WITH CHOOSE TOPEKA TO OFFER PROFS FREE

In early May GO, Topeka announced that its [Choose Topeka Relocation Initiative](#) has partnered with Airbnb, the online marketplace for lodging, to provide potential new residents with free opportunities to visit the city. Choose Topeka provides up to \$15,000 for people that relocate to the Kansas capital.

[Learn more >](#)

BRING BACK THE BOULEVARD RECEIVES \$5K FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES

To date, a taskforce under the Momentum 2022 strategy, "Bring Back the Boulevard," has received \$5,000 in donations from South Topeka businesses who are in support of the initiative and progress put forth by the group. Donations were made to Bring Back the Boulevard's Keep America Beautiful 501c(3). Donor businesses include Heartland Motorsports Park; JC Entertainment, LLC; Thunder Over the Heartland, LLC; SunFlower Paving; and Vaerus Aviation, Inc.

[Learn more >](#)

METL COALITION

The Manhattan, Emporia, Topeka, Lawrence Coalition (METL) expressed its points of view on important issues throughout the 2021 legislative session. As the sessions draws to a close, METL expressed its gratitude to the 28 legislators in its area; delivering to each a unique and highly functional reverse-opening umbrella emblazoned with a sunflower underneath. Not every legislator agrees with METL on every issue, but all are committed to moving the Northeast Kansas region forward. And for that, we thank them.

FORGE

Forge is pleased to be back to in-person events and programming! Earlier this month, the Health Herd (committee) had a “Mimosa Yoga on the Terrace” event at the Foundry Event Center. Attendees were able to partake in bottomless bubbly while getting yoga instruction from the Topeka Yoga Network. It was a beautiful evening with blue skies and sunshine, and each attendee left with a complimentary souvenir tumbler. Be on the lookout for more Health Herd events in Q3 and Q4, as the group is already hard at work planning a possible sunset kayaking night and much more!

For more information about Forge, or how to become a member or sponsor, please contact Kelli Maydew, Executive Director, at Kelli.Maydew@TopekaPartnership.com.

PARTNERSHIP MEDIA COVERAGE

Courtesy of Violet PR:

In May 2021, the Greater Topeka Partnership earned:

- 17 Pieces of Earned Media
- 52.9M Online Readership
- 585 Social Shares
- 121K Estimated Coverage Views
- 24.5K Estimated Advertising Rate (USD)

Prime initiatives covered were Choose Topeka and the Innovation Campus announcement.

LET RESILIENCE RING ANNOUNCED

This month, Stormont Vail Health announced a special event, Let Resilience Ring, with the support of the Greater Topeka Partnership. This event was characterized as a moment of reflection and healing.

The ceremony, previously scheduled for Memorial Day, was to include speaking segments from Dr. Robert Kenagy, president and CEO of Stormont Vail Health, Curtis Sneden, president of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, Topeka Mayor Michelle De La Isla and other community leaders. At the close of the speaking segments, there would be a moment of silence during which community institutions (churches, schools, etc.) would be asked to chime bells for the duration of two minutes in recognition of the event. The community was invited to participate by chiming a bell, sounding a horn, playing a ringtone at the moment of solidarity from around the city.

Due to poor weather, the event was delayed. The new date is TBD.

TOPEKA MUSIC WEEK & COUNTRY KICKOFF ARE COMING

In a joint press conference, Visit Topeka and Evergy Plaza officially announced the upcoming live music events: Topeka Music Week and Country Kickoff, respectively. [See official press release >](#)

Topeka Music Week, June 18-26, will take place at multiple venues throughout the Capital City; these include Jayhawk Theatre, Red Bud Park at NOTO Arts & Entertainment District, White Concert Hall at Washburn University, Celtic Fox and Happy Basset Barrel House. **Country Kickoff**, the official pre-event to KICKER Country Stampede, will feature live country music acts, vendors and more, taking place on June 23, 6-9 p.m., at Evergy Plaza in Downtown Topeka.

EVENTS AT EVERGY PLAZA PICKED UP IN MAY

Evergy Plaza Downtown Weekly Activities:

Evergy Plaza Splash Pad officially opened May 3 and will run through September.

Sunday: 12 – 5 p.m.

Monday: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Tuesday: 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Wednesday: 4 – 9 p.m.

Thursday: 12 – 3 p.m.

Hours may vary pending weather and private events.

Eats & Beats kicks off on Thursday, June 3rd at Evergy Plaza bring back live music and food trucks to Downtown Topeka from 6:30pm – 9pm every Thursday evening through August.

Eats & Beats, brought to you by Envista, will spread the capacity of Evergy Plaza and will include music on Cap Fed on 7th Stage, food trucks and beer gardens surrounding the event. The goal of this event is to bring back traffic to downtown Topeka in a safe and fun environment to promote community pride to help make Topeka more vibrant and feature downtown as the center for fun and safe activities for everyone.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Two brand new expansion projects were approved by the JEDO board most recent quarterly meeting. Both of these incentives would go to aid in the expansion of two businesses within Topeka & Shawnee County: Mercury Broadband and J-Six Enterprises, the Parent organization of Fairview Mills. Combined these two projects are expected to bring in over 200 new jobs; over \$10M in capital investment; and over \$670 million in economic impact over the coming years.

Learn more about the [Mercury Broadband expansion](#) AND the [Fairview Mills Expansion](#).

FINANCIAL RESULTS

The team completed the first quarter forecast revision in early May. The primary changes consisted of additional funds as a result of PPP, the CRM project and timing of our events. The organization continues to trend on pace with expectations. April results came in slightly better than budget due a couple of invoice payments crossing over into May.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & EVENTS UPDATE

VP of Resource Development and Events Rosa Cavazos attended the Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas and Oklahoma Conference in Branson, Missouri. While there she attended sessions related to member retention, member prospects, certificates of origin, new member on-boarding, shifting events and diversity and inclusion.

Our team also welcomed Erin Young, our new Resource Development Manager. Erin's role includes welcoming new members, scheduling ribbon cuttings, commercials for our new members, supporting our Ambassador's and our Total Resource Campaign, and assisting in marketing of our member events. For a little background, Erin earned her BA in Graphic Design from Tabor College and her master's in Marketing from Washburn University. Please help us welcome her to the team!

A big congratulations to Director of Events Stephanie Wilhelm Norwood, who married her best friend, Matt, this month in a beautiful ceremony at the Ted Ensley Gardens. Congratulations to the both of them!

KDHE LABORATORY

For weeks, the legislature has been discussing the future of the KDHE laboratory currently housed on Forbes Field. The lab is badly in need of a new home. Following a proposal to put the lab out for bid to communities across Kansas, lawmakers ultimately agreed that, wherever the new lab ends-up, it must be built within eight miles of the Kansas Statehouse; thus ensuring it will remain in Shawnee County. The Chamber and DTI fought hard to keep the lab and its 80 jobs, arguing the agency itself did not want to move and that Kansas communities should not be pitted against one another when they ought to be fighting together to bring new jobs and investment into the State. The Shawnee County delegation was very helpful in making sure leadership understood the importance of keeping KDHE here. This outcome is a definite win for Topeka and Shawnee County.

TOPEKA PITCHES PLUG AND PLAY STARTUPS

Plug and Play's Focus Week is part of the accelerator curriculum for every cohort. Topeka took the opportunity to directly introduce 10 resources Topeka and the Animal Health Corridor have to offer in a virtual resource expo event on May 6. The following organizations presented in this first round:

- KC Animal Health Corridor
- Kansas Department of Agriculture
- Network Kansas
- Washburn SBDC
- Topeka & Shawnee County Library
- University of Kansas/BTBC
- K-State Innovation Partners
- K-State Technology Development Institute
- Quantum Alliance
- GO Topeka

Feedback was positive and we look forward to continuing the conversations with our startups and partners! All resource pitches will be available on the GO Topeka Innovations website shortly so any entrepreneur can access them directly.

ONE TOPEKA VOICE

A special task force of the Chamber Board of Directors has begun planning the new broad-based agenda setting process called One Topeka Voice. Throughout the summer and fall, engaged thought-leaders from across the community will convene to sift through myriad topics and ultimately settle upon a set of public policy positions they all agree will help move the community forward. If people and groups across Topeka have a unified message for elected officials at the federal, state and local level, their one voice will be louder and clearer than ever before.

CONVENTION SALES REPORT

Pipeline: 28 leads, 16,500 room nights, \$4.7 Mil economic impact

This past month saw an uptick in convention business as state associations and locally based organizations are actively meeting. Visit Topeka staff assisted with the American Legion of Kansas Annual Meeting that brought in over 200 room nights and the 190th Air Refueling Wing's Top Eye event which brought in military from around the U.S. for training and ended with a graduation ceremony. In addition to working with events that were in house, Visit Topeka staff is coordinating assistance with future clients for their upcoming events, such as the Kansas Funeral Directors, BioKansas Board Meeting & Golf Tournament, Kansas Lions Club, Kansas Grain & Feed and many others for their summer and fall events.

DOCKING STATE OFFICE BUILDING

The legislature also debated what to do with the Docking State Office Building, which currently stands largely vacant at the corner of 10th and Topeka Blvd. The Governor had proposed several alternatives which included removing some of upper floors and renovating the lower levels into conference space and, perhaps, the new home of the KDHE laboratory. While generally supportive of the initiative to rehabilitate that corner of downtown, DTI and the Chamber expressed their clear and strong position that, whatever the State did, they must be careful not harm developers who have invested heavily in providing downtown office space to state tenants. In the end, following multiple iterations of the final language, lawmakers agreed that as much as \$120 million should be spent renovating Docking Building but they left avenues open for returning Docking to its important place in the Capitol Complex while not necessarily building a great deal of unnecessary new office space in downtown.

TOPEKA VISITS MANHATTAN TO SCOUT AVAILABLE RESOURCES

With the launch of Batch 1 of the Plug and Play cohort, the need for connectivity with regional resources is more important than ever. A group of 10 Topeka community representatives, including City Council, Plug and Play, the Innovation Advisory Board and the Partnership, met with our partners in Manhattan on May 20 for a day of introductions, discussions and learning. There is a genuine interest in collaboration with Plug and Play and Topeka. Clearly, Manhattan, KS, is home to many leading organizations in agriculture, animal health and research: Kansas Department of Agriculture, KSU College of Engineering, College of Agriculture, College of Vet Med, Greater Manhattan Chamber, K-State Innovation Partners, K-State Research Team, and NBAF. We look forward to cultivating these connections and thinking of new ways to help our entrepreneurs and innovators succeed together.

JEDO SMALL BUSINESS GRANT

Launched in May to assist those businesses still feeling the pain of the pandemic, the JEDO Small Business Grant swiftly surpassed the first issuance of funds. To date, more than 70 businesses from across Topeka have applied to receive support.

EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY

Minority and Women Business

At the May JEDO meeting, Minority and Women Business Development (MWBD) introduced a request for funding to support efforts building and rehabbing homes in the Hi Crest Community was approved. The vote was passed by unanimous consent.

Minority Business Survey

The pandemic uncovered many disparities for business owners, especially minority businesses owners. Nationally, as of February 2021, more than 400,000 minority businesses did not survive the pandemic. In June, the Minority and Women Business Development Division will conduct a survey that will begin to track the loss/survival of local businesses, identify their needs, and create a stronger safety net of support. A separate survey for women business owners will be conducted later this year.

DEI Focus Group

The Equity and Opportunity Division will host a focus group on June 10. This focus group will help uncover the needs of the diversity, equity, and inclusion of practitioners actively leading their company's employees. From the results of the survey the Equity and Opportunity Office will work toward fulfilling the needs gap.

CHOOSE TOPEKA INCENTIVE UPDATE

Employer Matching Funds Option:

Over 5500 resume & interest submission
30 candidates
\$180,000 matching funds

Remote Worker Option:

Over 400 applications
19 Candidates
\$145,000 funds committed

Totals:

49 Candidates
\$325,000 committed
\$275,000 available in second round of funds

Economic Impact - Updated Analysis:

49 candidates
Average salary \$87K
1.4.6X ROI
\$3.9M economic impact, year one

STRATEGIC PLAN FINALIZED BY LGT ADVISORY COUNCIL

In May, the strategic plan was finalized by the Leadership Greater Topeka (LGT) Advisory Council. Below you will find segments from the strategy.

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP: Educate and apply adaptive leadership concepts.

- Provide opportunities to educate and engage with adaptive leadership concepts and dimensions.
- Empower leadership to be innovative, forward thinking and purposeful.
- Mobilize others to engage when making progress on adaptive challenges.

COMMUNITY: Build inclusive and diverse community leadership engagement.

- Create a community willing to be vulnerable and build trust.
- Work across factions toward change.
- Appreciate all voices and empower all individuals to realize their ability to lead.

ENGAGEMENT: Inspire and equip leadership to engage when challenges arise.

- Address systematic challenges through adaptive leadership.
- Realize historical challenges and gaps that effect today and the future.
- Lead from a position of respect and openness.

AUDIT

GO Topeka and Visit Topeka audits are complete. Work continues on the Partnership's consolidated audit, but we are just a few days away from a draft report for the Partnership audit as well.

SPORTS SALES

Pipeline: 15 leads, 7,846 room nights, \$3.1M economic impact

Sports are alive and well in Topeka and a few of the events which took place in May were, K.C.A.C. Tennis Championships, Governor's Cup Soccer, KSHSAA state championships: Swimming and Diving, Girls Soccer and Boys Tennis. These events showcased our outstanding facilities Kossover Tennis, Sunflower Soccer, and Hummer Sports Park.

Currently, the pipeline has 15 leads with 7,846 room nights representing \$3.1 million in economic impact with notable additions for the utilization of the Washburn University indoor track and field facility. Visit Topeka did have one event turn definite for 800+ room nights for the month.

Unfortunately, Topeka lost three events bids totaling 3,150 room nights representing \$4 million in economic impact. Two of the three events were collegiate national championships while the other was a nationwide competition.

LEADERSHIP GREATER TOPEKA EVENTS UPDATE

CLASS OF 2020

Due to Covid and the desire to not celebrate virtually, the graduation of the Class of 2020 was delayed. The class was finally able to graduate with a special celebration at the Evergy Plaza. It was a great evening for the class members' friends, family and employers to reconnect and celebrate the class' accomplishments.

A special thanks for Security Benefit for sponsoring this event!

CLASS OF 2021

The Class of 2021 recently completed - Session 2: Philanthropy and Corporate Giving; The Giving Challenge; Session 3: Leadership in Local Government - Mayor Michelle De La Isla, City of Topeka and Commissioner Kevin Cook, Shawnee County; learn about the Downtown Master plan from Bill Fiander, Planning Director, City of Topeka and with able to hear from Governor Laura Kelly on "Leading through Covid."

KS PTAC APRIL UPDATE

Fiscal Year 2021 began Feb 1, 2021. Update on progress towards FY21 goals.

NEW CLIENTS - Guided 23 new small businesses through the process of becoming registered to do businesses with the federal government.

COUNSELING - Held 199 hours of one-on-one counseling sessions with existing and new small businesses.

EVENTS – Held five training events the topic covered, Introduction to Government Contracting. These sessions have been held virtually.

VALUE - Assisted KS PTAC Clients across the state with obtaining Federal Contract Awards worth \$5.9 million. These contracts have been awarded between 2/1/21 – 5/24/21.

KS PTAC provides assistance working in the government market space. Currently, KS PTAC is providing on-demand learning options through our network partners for those interested in Government Contracting. If interested please register to work with KS PTAC at www.KansasPTAC.org.

MOMENTUM 2022 ADDITIONAL UPDATES

MOMENTUM 2022 is currently reviewing potential strategic partnership for the next five-year strategic plan to be underway by January 2023.

Michelle Stubblefield recently spoke with Downtown Rotary sharing the community survey and information about MO22 future.

Objective Updates:

2.2 MO22 Develop a Dynamic Regional Core – The Riverfront Advisory Council partnered with the City of Topeka in celebration and Ribbon Cutting of Phase 1 of the Weir Project.

2.1 MO22 Optimize Tools and Programs to Improve Quality of Place - Affordable Housing Trust Fund approved.

2.3 MO22 Invest in Infrastructure that Enhances Quality of Place – Clean up days where conducted along 37th to 45th and Topeka Boulevard by the Bring the Boulevard Back team.

FREE FORGE EVENTS

Next month, there are three FREE events planned, each from a different herd!

Attendees can have their resume reviewed by local HR experts, while also brushing up their skills with mock interviews.

1. VIP Tour @ Evergy Plaza | June 16 | 5:30 p.m. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Get a behind-the-scenes look at this new Topeka venue and hot spot! Afterward, join us at Iron Rail – your first drink is ON US!

2. “Topeka’s Past-Port” Event – Forge Your Future Herd | June 9 – July 9

3. Resume Building Workshop – Leadership Herd | Late June

Take a month-long historical tour around TopCity and learn about Topeka’s past! Submit your virtual passport for a chance to WIN a \$50 downtown gift card!

If you are planning to attend **Tap That Topeka** downtown on June 12, or the **Kicker Country Stampede** in late June, please stop by the Forge tent! We would love to see you!



POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (PAC) interviewed candidates for City Council in early June and is announcing those it has chosen to endorse in the upcoming municipal elections. The PAC was established in 2018 to support candidates for state and local office whose policy views align with the objectives and priorities of the Topeka Chamber of Commerce. The PAC’s campaign contributions are funded entirely through donations from business members of the Greater Topeka Partnership or their executives. The seven-person board is chaired by Natalie Haag.



TOPEKA TOUR SALES REPORT

Pipeline: 4 leads, \$15K economic impact

The travel industry is seeming to resurface with multiple tour groups hitting the streets in Topeka. The Visit Topeka staff greeted many happy travelers this past month and help coordinate stops at various locations in the community. Some stops included Kays Garden at the Topeka Zoo, Moburt’s for a spice class, Evergy Plaza for live music, The Beacon for a tour, Burger Stand Topeka and Josey Baking Co. for meals, and multiple other locations. Along with day trips, the staff is also assisting with the coordination of three multi-state tours out of Nebraska that each have overnight stays in a local hotel. The economic impact of travelers has a great impact on our city, and it is exciting to see the enthusiasm to travel once again.



PARTNERSHIP EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The Partnership's HR Team has launched an anonymous Employee Engagement Survey to help it understand what's working and what could be improved to keep building the best possible culture at the Partnership. Staff is being asked to assess how their role drives the Partnership's mission, whether they have the support they need to succeed and the depth of the Partnership's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. By mid-June, the Executive Leadership Team will be reviewing the results of the survey and developing action plans to address patterns which come through in the data.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

In collaboration with Downtown Topeka and Visit Topeka, planning is underway to host a small group of site selectors in Topeka for a familiarization tour in June. Focus will be showing off the recent successes in both business expansions and quality of place investments like Downtown. The tour will also provide small group discussions with business leaders who can help make the business case for why their company continues to invest and grow in Topeka. These opportunities help Topeka stand out in the site selection process.

SUPPORT THUNDER OVER THE HEARTLAND

Thunder Over the Heartland, the biggest airshow to hit Topeka in the last 25-odd years, is coming June 26-27. Heart-pumping, high-flying events like these don't happen every day. That's why we encourage the community to get out during the weekend to show support for this truly unique event.

For tickets and more info, visit <https://visit.topekapartnership.com/events/festivals/thunder-over-the-heartland/>

VISIT TOPEKA MARKETING MAY UPDATE

Visit Topeka placed featured advertising in **Pride Journeys**. This website will be printing a publication piece as a supplement this year and Topeka's equality house will be featured in that printed piece.

Visit Topeka has partnered with AHRMA for the Classic MotoFest in the Heartland at Heartland Motorsports Park Memorial Day Weekend. The event also includes a kickstart party in partnership with Everygy Plaza, vintage racing motorcycles on display at participating hotels, and a partnership with Harley Davidson to give away a gift card at the event.

Tap That returns to Topeka, and advertising has gone so well that VIP tickets sold out within a day or two of ad launch. GA tickets are still available and selling well. Watch the new promo video here - https://youtu.be/wyBsoh_f_0s

Visit Topeka, Evel Knievel and the Topeka Zoo partnered together to create billboards for the 2021 season! Nine billboards have been placed across the state to promote the two attractions and the city of Topeka as a destination as people are traveling into Kansas

CRM

The CRM project has moved from the discovery and design phase to the build phase. The team has weekly touch-base calls with the implementation group to discuss progress and begin to peek under the hood of our new system. Last week the team got its first look at the prospect lead-to-member conversion cycle. It is exciting to begin to see tangible progress. We have begun to shift the focus over to the Salesforce to Intacct connection and are solutioning out our integration path.

THA INCUBATOR LAUNCHED

The Topeka Housing Authority and GO Topeka's Minority and Women Business Development opened the doors to a unique collaboration in early May. The program participants involved in the collaboration have been provided the opportunity create, innovate, and provide products and services to the community. As a result of this unique partnership, a small bakery, daycare, home repair and kids' fun zone will be added to the business count and serve new assets to the East Topeka community.

SHAWNEE COUNTY'S LABOR MARKET

The County's labor market is continuing to show signs of improvement. Labor statistics reported by the Kansas Department of Labor showed that the County's unemployment rate (UR) was 3.1% in April 2021. This is half of a percentage point lower than in Mar 2021 (3.60%) and 9.80 percentage points lower than in April 2020 (12.90%)

The number of employed workers in the County increased by more than 400 workers since the last month, and by more than 10,000 workers since last year. The pool of available workers also increased, which is indicative of more people willing to enter the labor market for various reasons.

While seasonally adjusted employment in the entire State of Kansas decreased by 1,400 workers from March 2021, the State's economy is also showing significant improvements. Kansas seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in April 2021 was reported at 3.5%, a meaningful decrease from a 3.7% in March 2021; the most recent unadjusted UR for the State of Kansas is 3.4%.

Local Area Unemployment Statistics			
Region	Unemployment Rate		
	Apr-21	Apr-20	YoY Δ
Shawnee County	3.10%	12.90%	-9.80%
Kansas	3.40%	12.50%	-9.10%
USA	5.70%	14.40%	-8.70%

Wages are also increasing at a good pace. The last quarter of 2020 showed a 4.5% increase in the average wage for all workers in the County, right below the State of Kansas at 5.0%. Most the growth in the County's average wage came from the finance and insurance industry growing at 8.1% annually.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages				
Region	Average Wages			
	2020Q4	2019Q4	YoY Δ	YoY Growth Rate
Shawnee County	\$48,577	\$46,480	\$2,097	4.5%
Kansas	\$50,473	\$48,060	\$2,413	5.0%
USA	\$62,597	\$59,209	\$3,388	5.7%

We are also seeing in real-time that employers are looking for workers. Prior to the pandemic and the economic recession, we used to see between 3,500 and 4,000 online job-ads in Shawnee County, now there are more than 6,800 available positions. Most of them are in computer science and in business occupations, such as: software and website developers as well as management and business analyst.

SOC	Occupation	Total Ads	%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	968	14.2%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	785	11.5%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	748	11.0%
11-0000	Management Occupations	708	10.4%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	555	8.2%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	493	7.2%
	All Other Occupations	2,549	37.5%