

MANAGEMENT REPORT

OCTOBER 2020



FROM THE DESK OF MATT PIVARNIK

Community Leaders,

I'd like to share a story from my younger days that has recently brought me some clarity on our current situation. As a boy, I hung on to every single word that ever came out of my Grandpa's mouth. Nothing he ever said got past me. Grandpa Jessie loved horses and everything about them. He talked about them and even sang about them.

One rainy, sloppy day as we were out taking care of some cows, he started talking about "mudders" in horse racing. He walked me through what a mudder is and then talked about the beauty of a horse that didn't care if it was raining, who powered through the mud and didn't mind that the track wasn't ideal for racing. I remember his explanation of the virtues of "mudders" like it was yesterday and have always had a strong admiration for the mudder in racing.

It came to me recently that our community has been running a race for several years now and we have a taste of what winning feels like. We were moving so fast we started turning our momentum into rapid acceleration. My adopted word going into 2020 was accelerate as momentum just didn't seem fast enough for me. The track was perfect for speed. But given all we've experienced and are continuing to experience, it's clear moving forward Topeka is going to have to keep digging deep. We will need to adopt the spirit of the "mudder."

We'll need to adapt to challenging, inhospitable conditions to be able to race towards our goals and future triumphs. We might even need to put on the blinders to block out some of the chaos we can't control. But when we reach the finish line we'll know that it was our grit and determination that got us through.



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EVERGY JOINS PLUG AND PLAY AS THIRD FOUNDING PARTNER

Evergy, an energy company serving more than 1.6 million customers across Kansas and Missouri, joins Hill's Pet Nutrition and Cargill as the founding partners in the new Plug and Play Topeka program. Evergy will be a great asset to have as Plug and Play's focus in Topeka will support innovation as the world shifts toward sustainable food production and consumption. Evergy already is a leader in clean energy, with more than 50 percent of the energy it provides coming from carbon-free sources.

"With such rapid gains in new technologies, it's vital for Topeka and the other communities Evergy serves to have innovative resources that create opportunities for businesses to evolve with those changes," said Jeff Martin, Evergy's Vice President of Customer and Community Operations. "Evergy's partnership with Plug and Play is a great way to combine our strengths for the community's benefit. Whether at home, at work or in agriculture, how we use energy is changing and we look forward to helping startups take advantage of those resources and grow their ideas."

PLUG AND PLAY TOPEKA LAUNCHES

Topeka celebrates the launch of Plug and Play Topeka this October. The animal health / ag tech focused accelerator program officially kicked off with the inaugural Selection Day, featuring ten early- and mid-stage 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, CA: harnessing the power of microbes to develop novel seeds for a regenerative agriculture revolution

Peeva – Buffalo, NY: universal pet identification and central database microchip company

Waggit – Boulder, CO: 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, CO: 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

FRIEDMAN NAMED DTI PRESIDENT

Rhiannon Friedman has been named as the new President for Downtown Topeka, Inc (DTI). 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 new businesses and attractions to Downtown Topeka. Friedman will officially assume her position as President of DTI on December 1, 2020. In the interim, she will be able to interact closely with Frye to ease the transition phase before fully assuming her new mantle of responsibilities.

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 in which she has lived.

GO TOPEKA RECOGNIZED WITH IEDC AWARDS

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.

MULTICULTURAL MURAL PROJECT

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.

[See details in the official press release >](#)

'SEAT AT THE TABLE' SERIES ANNOUNCED

The "Seat at the Table" community conversation series was announced in early October and is currently looking for hosts for these serialized events.

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.

[Learn more >](#)

NEW BUSINESS ATTRACTION

GO Topeka hosted a site visit in October with Project Victoria. Victoria is an international company looking to establish their first U.S. animal protein processing and pharmaceutical facility. During the site visit various meetings were held with community leaders, elected officials and utility partners, to name a few. Victoria plans to create 300 new jobs over five years in the community selected for development. The selection processes has narrowed down to two communities with plans for selection by the close of 2020. Not only would this project help create additional jobs in Shawnee County, it also aligns with our commitment to growth and innovation in the Animal Health sector.

VISIT TOPEKA CONVENTION & GROUP SALES

The month of October was a time for forging new relationships for the Visit Topeka sales team. The staff was proud to host our first in-person site visit since March. The three clients represented two national military reunions who are looking for host cities for the years 2022 and 2023. While on their two-day tour they had many compliments about our attractions, our venues, and community spirit. Their verbal commitment to Topeka and new relationship with our staff has already led to more doors in the SMERF market.

In the past 30 days, our team has turned one group to definite, entered in 4 new leads, hosted a site visit for two groups, and worked with multiple clients on their rebooking needs. While many groups are moving their 2020 plans to 2021, there is work involved with adjusting plans and following new protocols for the safety of their attendees. Our team is dedicated to working with those clients and our property team members to create a seamless transition for their reschedule or their new business to Topeka. One of these incoming groups is the Schipperke National Specialty arriving in April of 2021. Our staff has been assisting in finalizing their new plans for banquets and gatherings. Both our staff and the client's team are looking forward to a successful event in Topeka this coming spring!

Our convention and group business is making headway for a comeback with 42 leads in the pipeline for an economic impact of \$7.5 mil from overnight stays and dollars spent in our community.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The Greater Topeka Partnership received funds from the CARES Act/Spark Program to support small businesses. The funds will be used to assist businesses with preparing for emergency and disasters such as fires, pandemics, tornados, etc. Once the business has completed a Business Continuity Plan, they become eligible for up to \$5,000 to use toward COVID-19 related expenses.

TOTAL RESOURCE CAMPAIGN & SPONSORSHIPS UPDATE

Our team has been working very hard with our amazing team of volunteers on our Total Resource Campaign which ends on November 6. There is still time for your company to sponsor any of our public events such as Touch-A-Truck, our corporate events such as our Annual Meeting, our membership events such as our Golf Championship, or any of our Equity and Opportunity events, Government Relations events, our young professionals group, Forge, events.

If your company is looking for website presence or reaching tourists our Visit Topeka Visitor's Guide and ChooseTopeka.com website are also available. For more information reach out to Rosa Cavazos, VP of Resource Development and Events at Rosa.Cavazos@TopekaPartnership.com.

CHOOSE TOPEKA UPDATE

For the month of October, the Choose Topeka Relocation Incentive recorded:

- Over 4,200 submissions with resumes or questions;
- Over 1,800 calls (from candidates & employers);
- 23 employer matching funds candidates accepted;
- Over 30 remote worker submissions to date, reviews begin in 4th quarter;
- \$138,750 in matching JEDO funds committed.

KS PTAC UPDATE

This month the KS PTAC Topeka Subcenter:

- Guided 75 new small businesses through the process of becoming registered to do businesses in the federal market space.
- Held 406 hours worth of one-on-one counseling sessions with existing and new small businesses.
- Hosted 7 virtual training sessions, introducing businesses to federal contracting and requirements to be successful.
- Assisted KS PTAC Clients across the state with obtaining 1000 new Federal Contract Awards worth \$119.1 million.
 - o These contracts have been awarded between 2/01/2020 and 10/23/2020.
 - o Topeka Subcenter service area was awarded 118 of the contract awards worth \$7.8 million.
 - Shawnee County received 26 contract awards worth \$1.4 million.
 - o We're also continuing to provide coverage for the JCCC Subcenter as there is a vacant KS PTAC position.
 - JCCC Subcenter service area was award 882 of the contract awards worth \$111.3 million.

PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP

The Resource Development team was busy this month, welcoming new members and celebrating their membership through an official ribbon cutting facilitated by Partnership Ambassadors.

October Ribbon Cuttings:

Mike Rumford with Allstate

Daniel Rineberg with Colonial Life

Stormont Vail Health/Cotton O'Neil

Happy Basset Barrel House

The Big Biscuit

Welcome New Members:

Studio 1

Wings Etc

Nic Irick with Mutual of Omaho

Yes! Athletics

Speedy Brakes

DTI BOARD SUPPORTS BIKEWAYS CONNECTIONS TO DOWNTOWN

As part of the Downtown and Bikeways Master Plans, the City of Topeka and the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization have prepared a grant application to the State of Kansas for new bikeways projects that will connect Downtown to neighborhoods on the east, north, west and south. The DTI board voted in support of the proposed extensions to the current bikeway trails. A letter of support was submitted to the City. If approved, the new additions will represent phase four of the City's Bikeways Master Plan.

LOCAL CONSUMPTION & CONSUMER SPENDING

The current health and economic conditions are causing sharp, unpredictable swings in spending across multiple municipalities in the US. Data reported by the Kansas Department of Revenue is showing that local consumption in the City of Topeka and Shawnee County is increasing. When looking at the sales tax distribution from July 2020 to October 2020, and comparing it to the same period a year ago, we concluded that consumption increased by 5.2% in Shawnee County, and 3.9% in the City of Topeka. But this is not the case for all counties and cities across the state; Wyandotte, Douglas and Johnson County saw a decrease of 4.6%, 3.8% and 3.6% respectively in their total sales tax distribution for the same period.

Similar conclusions can be seen from other data sources. The Opportunity Insights not-for-profit organization located at Harvard University, estimates total consumption in Shawnee County is up 6.3% as of October 18, 2020, compared to January 2020.

FORGE EVENTS

To remain cautious, Forge continued to offer all October events virtually. However, this did not slow down the young talent here in Topeka! Herds have gotten creative in their approach to continue providing exciting events, meaningful initiatives, and informational content for the Forge demographic.

For National Mental Illness Awareness Week, the Health Herd launched a social media campaign and partnered with Valeo Behavioral Health Care to spotlight the importance of mental health and advocacy. This campaign reached nearly 2,000 people on Facebook alone and provided resources and tips each day of the week.

The Leadership Herd held their annual LeadCon event, virtually. Six area non-profit organizations spoke to the group about their missions, initiatives, and ways in which Forge members can volunteer or contribute in the community. Attendees were also able to interact with these organizations via a Q/A session.

“Trick-or-Treat on the Trail” is an annual event that usually brings in a crowd of nearly 200. However, to adhere to social distancing recommendations, the Inspire Herd partnered with the Topeka Housing Authority, and provided Halloween treat bags to be distributed in a drive-thru style trick-or-treat event.

TOPEKA YOUTH COMMISSION

With assistance from 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 16, 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.

Be on the lookout for updates on our social media and sign up to be a part of our email list!

VISIT TOPEKA LODGING PERFORMANCE

According to the September STR report, hotel occupancy came in at 50.16%, continuing the 4-month trend of occupancy at around 50%. A slight downtick in average daily rate to \$76.49 down from \$77.41 meant a corresponding dip in room revenue to \$3,054,429.

Compared to this time last year, Topeka’s lodging industry is down nearly 30% in revenue. Through September, Topeka hotels have generated an estimated \$23.5 million in sales. This is down from \$34.6 million in 2019.

There is some positive news regarding the transient guest tax (TGT). After several months of below-average collections, August and September both saw collections come in at 90.21% and 91.21% respectively. Both of these beat the lifetime average of 80% and are well above the incredibly low numbers posted this summer.

MILITARY RELATIONS COUNCIL

The Military Relations Council has been particularly challenged by COVID-19 as the group has heretofore primarily pursued its mission through in-person events. The group is reimagining its approach to 2021 by focusing on the value it delivers abstract of the format in which it is delivered. For example, the MRC will place a renewed focus on connecting civilian employers with armed services members who will soon be joining the civilian workforce, whether that entails an in-person summit, a virtual event or some other type of networking system. The MRC will also be collaborating with Visit Topeka to support military reunions and other events planned for Topeka in coming years.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Most of the benefits which Congress had extended to small businesses and others hit hard by the pandemic have expired. So, Congress has been under terrific pressure to pass a Phase Four relief package. The Chamber, in concert with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, has continuously urged Kansas' Congressional delegation to act, including enacting liability protections for businesses which have largely complied with health protocols and enlarging the scope of the Paycheck Protection Program to include all entities exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the federal tax code. (The GTP has not been able to take advantage of the PPP program because it is a 501(c)(6) corporation and only 501(c)(3) entities are currently eligible.)

Democratic House Leaders and Republican leaders in the Senate were not able to reach agreement before the elections. Whether a package can be passed before the end of the year or will have to wait until the new Congress takes office in early-January would appear to be entirely dependent on the outcome of the elections.

FORGE VOTER GUIDE

Forge is pleased to announce that the 2020 Interactive Voter Guide is now live! This online guide is a product of the Forge Your Future Herd, and provides candidate information for local elections. The information provided comes straight from the candidates themselves, as a way for Forge members to learn about each person running, and make informed voting decisions in November.

Check out the Voter Guide at www.forgevoterguide.com.

VISIT TOPEKA SPORTS SALES REPORT

October was a month of looking forward as summer sports have ceased and fall sports really starting play. Visit Topeka took the month to look forward by hosting a state event, sending out bids for future years, prepping for a site visit, and strengthening relationships for coming years. Currently, sports sales have 17 bids in the pipeline for 7000+ rooms worth \$7.4 Mil. in economic impact with bids reaching out to 2024.

USA Wrestling of Kansas hosted their fall annual meeting in Topeka this month at the Capitol Plaza Hotel. During a break in the program around 30 of the participants were treated to a private tour of the Stormont Vail Events Center. Many of the tour participants had not stepped foot into the facility since the 2019 Kansas Kids State tournament so it was quite a shock at what has been done thus far!

In October, Visit Topeka submitted two bids for national collegiate championships as well as assisted with a bid for a professional bowling event.

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (N.A.I.A) has received bid replies for their 2022 & 2024 Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving Championships as well as the 2022- & 2023-Men's Volleyball Championships. The decisions will come at the first of next year but with outstanding facilities in Topeka and a good relationship with the N.A.I.A.

A partnership with the local bowling proprietor has put Visit Topeka in a position to assist with a bid to bring the United States Bowling Congress (USBC) Men's U.S. Open to Topeka in 2022. This event would be held in the winter months and would put Topeka in the national spotlight as the finals are televised.

Visit Topeka staff is looking forward to a site visit in early November for the American Powerboat Association. This association holds powerboat races around the nation and is looking at Topeka as an expansion area in the Midwest. If chosen, Topeka could see horsepower like NHRA drag racing on the water!

METL UPDATE

The METL Coalition is planning a retreat in mid- to late-November to work on crystalizing its agenda for the 2021 legislative year. Issues such as Medicaid expansion, funding for economic development, transportation and workforce development will presumably take their customary place on the list of priorities. Naturally, such topics will be considered in the context of the state's recovery from COVID-19. METL is determined to lead the discussion around how businesses, governments, educators and others learn the difficult lessons this pandemic has taught and emerge even stronger than before.

SOUTH TOPEKA BLVD TASKFORCE

Kent Lammers, president of Custom Polo Products, is leading (and chairing) a group of phenomenal community and business leaders working with both public and private entities to improve the beautification and gateway along Topeka Avenue in South Topeka. They have developed a mission and vision and are getting ready to introduce a campaign to build greater interest, involvement and support. Their work to date includes South Topeka park improvement, bridge signage improvements, landscape beautification, and addressing business vacancies and development. There work is in response to objective: 2.3.2 MO22: *Continue to improve gateways into Topeka-Shawnee County, particularly those connecting the community to population centers.*

WU PITCH COMPETITION AWARDS \$25K TO STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS

Washburn University held its sixth pitch competition, sponsored by GO Topeka, for student entrepreneurs. The virtual competition gave the young entrepreneurs an opportunity to demonstrate their product or services and compete for part of a \$25,000 purse. The winners were announced on October 23. They are:

1st Place: \$8,000 - Fiona Cook

Big Picture Jobs: User-friendly search engine for people with disabilities seeking employment.

2nd Place: \$6,000 - Abigail McCrory

The Plant People: Dynamic live plant design and routine care.

3rd Place: \$4,000 - Callie Holthaus

AFO Brace Compatible Shoes: Shoes for people who wear AFO leg braces.

4th Place: \$2,000 - Raul Dicu & Taylor Keller

Atom 1: Electric bicycle in a shell.

5th Place: \$1,000 - Cecelia Caraccilo & Kendall Beemer

Brainstream: A monthly kid's subscription for stream activities.

6th Place: \$500 - Xavier De Leon, Michael Oyervides & Justin Armbruster

Trim Catcher: An electric shaver with a vacuum device added so there's no mess.

Top Freshmen Entry: \$1,000 - Trevor Estrada

Solar Powered Charging Bank: A charging bank powered with solar cells and can charge multiple devices.

Top Washburn Institute of Technology Entry: \$2,500 - Zerlina Lemon

Parenting Products: Safe baby products for all parents to buy.

BROAD-BASED AGENDA

The Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors is exploring a process for developing a broad-based public policy agenda in 2021. The effort would include educators, local governments and other organizations from across the county and Northeast Kansas who play a role in making the future more prosperous. By taking the time to gather a broad spectrum of perspectives and working to weave them into a shared set of priorities, the Chamber hopes to speak with an even louder voice in the future. This type of agenda-setting process would likely kick-off in the late-spring or summer and take place over a month or more.

EVERGY PLAZA WINTERIZATION UNDERWAY

The Evergy Plaza has shut down the Cross Roads Fountain to prepare it for winterization. Thousands of spectators enjoyed the fountains that are programmed to lights and music prior to their closing. Numerous events are still scheduled throughout the winter and can be viewed at www.evergyplaza.com.

EXECUTIVE IMMERSION SERVICES

Executive Immersion Services is a valuable opportunity to quickly engage and introduce your organizations new executive leadership into the community. Designed to quickly develop strategic, peer relationships, both personal and professional, resulting in strong attraction and retention for your company.

We would like to currently welcome Elizabeth Easter, with INTRUST BANK. We will be reaching out to key executives to begin her EIS process. Please help us welcome her to the community.

MOMENTUM 2022 UPDATE

Back2Momentum Survey

Momentum 2022 tracked over 1,950 submissions in October for the Momentum Community survey. The survey is available in both English and Spanish. We continue to make the survey available as we are working to reach our goal of 2,300 submissions. We ask everyone that is reading this management report to complete the survey, if you have not already done so, at topekapartnership.com/back2mo.

SMART Goals

SMART goals are currently being developed to better access key performance indicators to analyze strategic completion for each objective. The SMART goal statements will better determine objective priorities for the last half of this community strategy.

LEADERSHIP GREATER TOPEKA

Leadership Greater Topeka is currently in the selection phase and conducting applicant interviews. The selection of the 2021 class will take place November 24. The 2021 class will be announced on December 3.

The planning committee is in full force, with great optimism and scheduling the 2021 program. If your organization has interest in hosting the 2021 class at your place of business, contact Michelle at michelle.stubblefield@topekapartnership.com to discuss.

RIVERFRONT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETS FOR STRATEGIC SESSION

In October, the Riverfront Advisory Council met for a strategic planning session at the Great Overland Station. The group delved into the priorities and overall function of the five separate committees within the Council: Education & Environment; Funding & Finance, Development; Government, Management & Partnerships; and Access, Activities & Equity.

These committees are still in their earliest stages and will continue to evolve in the near future.

Details on this meeting's findings as well as the Council's finalized mission/vision statements and goals will be made public at a later date.

VISIT TOPEKA MARKETING

The Visit Topeka team has been attending the Kansas Tourism Conference virtually during the month of October. Tourism industry speakers have been the main feature with focus on recovery, economic impact, and data/research moving forward.

Visit Topeka is working on the 2021 Visitors Guide layout and content for release in the spring. The 2020 guide will be revised and updated with evergreen content that will be added/updated on VisitTopeka.com so that we can construct a 2021 advertising campaign that coincides with the guide content.

Visit Topeka e-news is going out at the end of every month and will begin gaining traction and subscribers as we start with a more clean list from the email platform transition. Sign up for the newsletter is available on VisitTopeka.com.

Visit Topeka completed a giveaway for Thunder Over the Heartland coming July 2021. Two adult passes were given away to one winner and both mailing addresses and e-mails were captured for future promotions and re-targeting campaigns.

REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT STATS

Out of all 389 metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) in the United States, 65% or 251 MSAs saw an over-the-year decrease in the nonfarm payroll employment for the month of September. Out of the largest 5 MSAs in the State of Kansas (Kansas City, MO & KS, Wichita, Topeka, Lawrence, and Manhattan), The Kansas City, MO & KS MSA saw the smallest dropped with a yearly change in employment of -3.9%, followed by the Topeka MSA with -4.0%. Manhattan reported the largest dropped in employment with a change of -7.1%.

OFFICE OF EQUITY & OPPORTUNITY WORKS WITH FOOD OASIS GROUP

The Equity and Opportunity Office is currently working with the Central Topeka Food Oasis Group as they seek to fill the void of being a food desert. According to the Feasibility Study produced earlier this year, the community grocery store will request a minimum 10,000-14,000 square feet.

Further details are forthcoming.

SHOP SMALL SATURDAY

Holiday shopping begins in November. We are gearing up for Small Business Saturday, November 28. Mark your calendar and plan to Buy Local and Shop Small this Holiday Season.

[Learn more about Shop Small Saturday >](#)

INCLUDED UPDATE

iINCLUDED will host the Greater Topeka Partnership's own Glenda Washington, Chief Equity & Opportunity Officer in December as we provide 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. Watch for more details from the partnership and join us on December 9 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom.

HR DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Staff engagement – The Culture Committee participated at the community Trunk or Treat event at the Vail, handing out candy bags with visitor guides. They also plan to partner with United Way and adopt three families for Christmas

HR completed the updates for the employee handbook and plans to review the changes with the executive leadership team (ELT) in November.

Leadership Retreat - The ELT is having an onsite retreat on November 4; they are going to spend time discussing the “Five Dysfunctions of a Team.”

We are planning an All- staff retreat via zoom on November 16 to review core values, mission and vision statements, and have a team building activity.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

The 2019 audits are wrapping up. The Partnership finance committee will meet next week to review the audit reports before they are finalized. The next step is to complete our organization’s seven 990 reports which are due November 15.

The 2021 budget is now top-of-mind. The finance department is working with each budget owner to development a balanced budget for next year.

PARTNERSHIP MARKETING VIDEO PROJECTS

If you’ve been reading our newsletters recently, you might have noticed that our Marketing team has been putting a tremendous amount of effort into video production.

From celebrating **the endeavors of the Topeka Youth Commission** to highlighting **how small businesses are pivoting their business during these turbulent times**, we’re trying our best to keep you up-to-date on what’s happening in the community.

Be sure to check out the exciting new videos we’re putting out nearly every week on **YouTube** and **Facebook!**

A big thanks to team members Jared Hitchens and Rhett Flood for their amazing video production skills and overall commitment to their craft.



HOST RELIEF FUNDS STILL AVAILABLE

The deadline for the **HOST (Helping Others Support Topeka) Relief program** is December 30. Funds are still available to assist small businesses. If you or someone you know needs support for your small business, please contact Glenda Washington at 785-246-6205 or Glenda.Washington@TopekaPartnership.com.