

# MANAGEMENT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2020





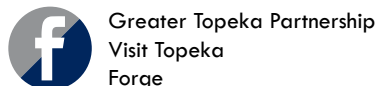
# FROM THE DESK OF MATT PIVARNIK

Community Leaders,

None of us could have ever predicted that the halfway point of Momentum 2022 would hit us right between the eyes during such a momentous year as 2020. We always had a keen eye on doing a mid-course review with tweaks and corrections in the second half of 2020 and I challenge that our circumstances support that now more than ever. I think we will all agree that our pride and momentum was at an all-time high going into this year and that we can be equally proud about the way our community has handled the past eight months. The work has already begun to “Get Our Momentum Back” and we will get to the point where we are “Accelerating our Momentum.” In order to do this we need to roll up our sleeves and do some work, but we can’t do it without you.

Lend your voice to the community and help guide our vision through the Back2Momentum Survey.

**[Take survey >](#)**



## HILL'S NAMED AS SECOND FOUNDING PARTNER

Hill's Pet Nutrition will serve as the second founding partner for Plug and Play's newest location in Topeka. Hill's joins Cargill to work with startups that are creating ideas to transform animal health and agriculture.

"We are delighted to be partnered with Hill's Pet Nutrition in Topeka to foster a culture of innovation and change across the animal health space. We look forward to further nurturing and connecting the local ecosystem with our global network of startups and corporations," said Saeed Amidi, Founder and CEO of Plug and Play.

Twice a year, Plug and Play will accept eight to 10 startups for this program to work one-on-one with their partners in the Animal Health industry. Starting in October of this year, Plug and Play Topeka will run its first virtual accelerator in Topeka. The three-month program will focus on business development, mentorship, and networking. Corporations and startups interested in Plug and Play's Animal Health program in Topeka can apply at [www.plugandplaytechcenter.com/join/](http://www.plugandplaytechcenter.com/join/)

For decades, Hill's Pet Nutrition has been a cornerstone in the Topeka business community. They continue to be at the forefront of innovation and are a key driver in Topeka's role in the animal health corridor. "Plug and Play will provide a paradigm shift to research and development. Hill's has a rich innovation pipeline and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with startups to accelerate the delivery of breakthrough innovation for pet nutrition," said Dave Baloga, Vice President of Science and Technology at Hill's Pet Nutrition.



## CHOOSE TOPEKA ANNOUNCES RELOCATION INITIATIVE

The Choose Topeka Talent Relocation Initiative has been successful in so many ways since the announcement after the December 2019 JEDO Meeting. To date, over 3,800 resumes and interest submissions have been received. Employers have submitted 22 candidates to the program, and \$133,750 has been encumbered of the \$300,000 to be allocated.

From the information we've gathered, remote work candidates are expressing an interest in choosing Topeka to live, with their remote employer's interest and support. Existing local employers recognize that this can be beneficial to them, with trailing partners and the continued benefit of bringing qualified candidates to the community that they could potentially hire in the future.

JEDO approved allowing up to 40% (\$120,000) of the currently allocated funds (\$300,000), to be used for a remote worker relocation option. The incentive amounts are based upon the candidate's salary; candidates are also required to provide other criteria prior to distribution.

**[Learn more about the initiative.](#)**

Questions? Email [ChooseTopeka@TopekaPartnership.com](mailto:ChooseTopeka@TopekaPartnership.com).



## BAILEY NAMED 2020 YWCA WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE HONOREE

Andrea Bailey, the Greater Topeka Partnership's VP of Administration, was named one of the YWCA's 2020 Women of Excellence. This award recognizes the contributions of women in the community who "get up and do the work."

"As far as I'm concerned, Andrea is the embodiment of this award," said Matt Pivarnik, CEO of the Greater Topeka Partnership. "Her hard work and leadership is an inspiration to the entire team."

Andrea is a Topeka native and a true guiding light at the Partnership, where she has worked since January 2012.

The Women of Excellence Award ceremony took place on September 16.

**[Learn more about the event and honorees.](#)**



## HILL'S & MIDWESTERN METALS TO EXPAND IN TOPEKA

In September, JEDO provided agreement approval for two business retention and expansion projects. An outline of the projects are below.

### **Hill's Pet Nutrition** - "Project Prince"

This project is expected to produce up to 33 new full-time jobs, with an average yearly wage of \$56,000 plus benefits, over the next five years. Capital Investment from this expansion will be \$31.4M. **The total economic impact over the next 10 years is expected to be \$495M.** The performance-based incentive for this project will be up to \$341,000. Hill's expansion consists of an onsite wastewater treatment facility, followed by a new diet-making system.

### **Midwestern Metals/Custom Dredge Works**

- "Project Oyster"

This project is expected to produce up to 17 new full-time jobs, with average wages of \$43,000 annually plus benefits. Capital investment from this expansion will be \$3.5M, with **a total economic impact expected in the next 10 years of \$69M.** The performance-based incentive for this project is up to \$96,000. This expansion includes the development of five new buildings; these will house a sand-blasting and paint department as well as a dredge assembly department.

## THUNDER OVER THE HEARTLAND

Vaerus Aviation and Country Stampede announced today its **"Thunder Over the Heartland"** airshow, scheduled for the weekend of June 26-27, 2021. The airshow will take place over Topeka Regional Airport during both days and will feature a special night show on Saturday, June 26, during the Country Stampede, an outdoor country music and camping festival held at Country Stampede Festival grounds. Airshow performances will include military displays from the 190th Air Refueling Wing. Thunder Over the Heartland is a joint venture of Vaerus Aviation and the Country Stampede.

"This large-scale airshow will be a sensational display of aviation. Spectators of all ages will enjoy this special showcase from the 190th and other North American units," said Brooks Pettit, president of Vaerus Aviation. "Vaerus Aviation is overjoyed to be able to partner with the Country Stampede to bring Topeka its biggest airshow in 30 years."

The nature of the event also allows for public health procedures to be carried out to decrease the spread of COVID-19. "Attendees can feel secure knowing that they will have ample space to social distance during this outdoor event," said Pettit.

## TOPEKA WINS 2020 INSURIFY SAFEST CITIES AWARD

**Topeka has been found to have some of the safest drivers in the nation by Insurify.**

Winning cities were home to the lowest share of residents with a prior traffic violation statewide.

The Greater Topeka Partnership sees this recognition as a major lure to visitors and talent looking to move to the area.

"'Getting there' is half the battle when it comes to travel and tourism," said Sean Dixon, president of Visit Topeka. "If we can promise our visitors a safe and relaxing commute, we'll have greatly impacted their overall satisfaction with their trip to Topeka. And with a good impression fresh in their minds, they are far more likely to return."

"When people consider relocating to a new city, the topic of safety is a key concern," said Barbara Stapleton, vice president of business retention and talent initiatives, GO Topeka. "Earning the award of 'Safest Driving City in Kansas' serves as a great selling point for many looking to escape the often frequent, and perhaps unsettling, hassles of daily commutes. As more people relocate to Topeka & Shawnee County, through talent recruitment programs like Choose Topeka, they will appreciate advantages like this."

## BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

In September, JEDO provided agreement approval for two announced BRE projects (Project Prince and Project Oyster; see the previous page for details), as well as funding approval for two new BRE projects (Project Vita and Project Vertical) totaling \$7.1M in capital investment and adding 47 new full-time jobs.

Project Vita is a life sciences company that will be adding 7 new jobs over the next five years with an average wage of \$85K annually plus benefits, along with a capital investment of \$1.5M in facility improvement expenditures and equipment purchases. The approved incentive of \$76,500 provides a total (10Y) economic impact of \$40.5M, along with a return on investment of 396%.

Project Vertical, a manufacturing company, will invest \$6.6M in capital investment and add up to 40 new jobs with an average wage of \$43K annually plus benefits. The approved incentive of \$234,000 will provide a total (10Y) economic impact of \$200M, along with a return on investment of 780%.

## DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

The City Planning and Development Department is in the final stages of a new master plan for downtown that will set the stage for the next ten years of downtown development. It will build on the efforts of the 2019 Downtown Market Study by creating a series of specific plans based on the districts identified in the market study. Each specific plan will include a set of recommendations for the future with regards to land use, zoning, streetscape improvements, and design. The plan will allocate the Market Study's recommendations for new/rehabbed housing units, new or rehabbed office uses, retail, and hotel beds. The plan can be viewed at [topeka.org/planning/downtown-master-plan/](http://topeka.org/planning/downtown-master-plan/).

## FINDINGS FROM AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

In September 2020, the U.S. Census released the 2019 1-year estimates for the American Community Survey. This dataset includes information related to demographics, housing and economic and social characteristics for Shawnee County and Topeka.

In terms of population, we noticed a minor decrease in the county's total population of less than half a percent (-0.35%) between 2018 and 2019. Topeka's total population remained statistically the same.

Fortunately, not all news was bad news. Median household income increased by more than 14% for those living in the county and in the city. The largest percentage change for the county came from those households making more than \$200K with a 31% increase, and those making between \$50K-\$75K with a 24% increase. For Topeka, the largest change came from those making between \$50K-\$75K with a 34% increase, and those making between \$150K-\$200K with a 19% increase.

In terms of educational attainment, it was also noticeable that the total number of those persons 25 years and over with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 3% for those living in the county and 8% for those living in the city.

## TOTAL RESOURCE CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The Total Resource Campaign is in full swing for our 2021 sponsorships. Our 21 volunteers have been setting meetings and working with our generous sponsors from 2020 for our 2021 events and programs. We have been meeting weekly to share their progress in helping us reach our goal. If you have not been in touch with one of our amazing volunteers, please reach out to Rosa at [Rosa.Cavazos@TopekaPartnership.com](mailto:Rosa.Cavazos@TopekaPartnership.com). Here is the team of volunteers:

**Chair:** Martha Bartlett Piland

**Team Captains:** Lisa Stubbs, Jim Rinner, Craig Heideman

**Volunteers:** Alex Oreal, Debbie Schwartz, Kim Konecny, Marc Shephard, Roger Montgomery, Jamie Hornbaker, Jared Beam, Kyle Mead, Shannon Nichol, Stacy Ricks, Amber Beckley, Andrew Gutierrez, Joanne Morrell, Kim Gronniger, Tracey Stratton and Zach Snethen.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES COMPLETING A BUSINESS CONTINUITY GRANT

As we enter into the recovery phase of the pandemic, small businesses must have the ability to quickly come back online after a major business interruption. The Shawnee County Board of Commissioners approved a grant request in the amount of \$367,500 of the Community Based Programs funding through the Shawnee County CARES Act funds for a Business Continuity Aid Program. The grant is a part of the Shawnee County CARES Funding and will be used to conduct A Business Continuity Program. The grant will cover 60 businesses as they participate in the program. The intention is to guide business owners in writing a Business Continuity Plan. Upon completion of the Plan, the business owner will be eligible for up to \$5000 in reimbursement for COVID-19 related business expenses. The Program will begin October 25 and end December 30.

For more information contact Glenda Washington at 785-506-7768 or [Glenda.Washington@topekapartnership.com](mailto:Glenda.Washington@topekapartnership.com).

## KS PTAC UPDATE

In September, the KS PTAC Topeka Subcenter:

- Guided 68 new small businesses through the process of becoming registered to do business in the federal market space.

- Held 371 hours of one-on-one counseling sessions with existing and new small businesses.

- Assisted KS PTAC Clients across the state with obtaining 814 new Federal Contract Awards worth \$105.5 million.

- o These contracts were awarded between 2/01/2020 and 9/29/2020.

- o Topeka Subcenter service area was awarded 103 of the contract awards worth \$6 million

Shawnee County received 23 contract awards worth \$1.4 million

Next class is October 7 virtual 9 - 11:30 a.m. This is our introductory course on federal contracting. Please register in advance to receive login requirements.

Please check out our upcoming events and register to attend a session if this is market space you would like to learn more, visit <https://www.wichita.edu/research/kansasptac/ptacevents.php>

## PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP

Our Partnership membership is growing and our team has been busy with multiple ribbon cuttings. This month we celebrated six new member ribbon cuttings and two newly remodeled businesses. These include The Vintage Fox, Mardel Christian Book Store, Topeka ER & Hospital, Lighthouse Day School, Townsite Café, Dillon's in North Topeka, McDonald's Office & Training Center, and Colonial Life with Daniel Rineberg. We had three new businesses join the Partnership that include North Star Steakhouse, Right Way Solutions and TopCity Nutrition.

Our Sales Manager, TJ McDonald, is meeting with many business owners in the community to help the Partnership continue to grow. If you know of a business that isn't a member, please contact TJ at 785-215-8580 or [TJ.McDonald@topekapartnership.com](mailto:TJ.McDonald@topekapartnership.com).

## SHOP SMALL - BUY LOCAL - MADE IN TOPEKA

To aid small businesses in the recovery process, it is critical that everyone begins to shop small, buy local and shop for items made in Topeka. The Partnership will begin three marketing campaigns to drive locals to support the small business community.

Beginning in October, three separate marketing campaigns will be conducted to push for the patronage of local businesses: including retail, service business, manufacturing, distribution and general small businesses. There will also be a special campaign to promote buying items Made in Topeka.

The more we spend our dollars locally, the quicker our businesses come back to a healthy state. Make a pledge to support a small business at least once a week from now until December 31.

## EVERGY PLAZA OFFERS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

The final addition to the Plaza is now complete with the Crossroads Fountain delighting audiences with its spectacular music and light display. Movies, concerts, yoga, dance recitals and other events have attracted many to the Plaza while still practicing safe distancing requirements. New tables, chairs and umbrellas will soon be added for convenience and comfort. For more information about the Evergy Plaza, go to [www.evergyplaza.com](http://www.evergyplaza.com).

## FORGE

Forge hosted its first ever movie event at the beautiful Energy Plaza downtown. Several Forge herds joined forces to provide the community with a free showing of *Akeelah and the Bee* on the impressive 60-ft screen. Donations were accepted and delivered to the YWCA's Center for Safety & Empowerment.

All September, the Forge Health Herd provided free, virtual yoga classes for its members. Registration was as easy as a few clicks, and attendees were sent a zoom link to the yoga session(s) of their choice.

As a way to promote and support local businesses, Forge held a Business Recovery Week in mid-September. Participants were encouraged to shop and eat local for a chance to win a \$50 gift card to a locally-owned establishment. Be on the lookout for another BLITZ Week later this winter!

The Forge Inspire Herd made a presence at the 2020 United Way Day of Caring event in Topeka. The volunteers joined hundreds of others to help pack BackSnacks for the upcoming school year at Harvesters. This initiative provides a weekly backpack filled with nutritious child-friendly food for schoolchildren to take home over weekends.



## TOPEKA YOUTH COMMISSION

The involvement and outreach committees have recently completed creating cat toys for the Humane Society. The members have worked hard on bring their own ideas and projects into this committee and currently working on a backpack drive to help the foster kids, and bringing more attention to human trafficking. The big project that we are focusing on these next few months is about mental health in the youth population; we have started creating videos about different ways to improve mental health and different types of mental health ranging from depression and anxiety to how to support a loved one going through a hard time. We are currently putting out a mental health series on our social media and YouTube, with our first video emerging the first week of October.

The social media and government subcommittees are producing a series of informative bios about the candidates in the upcoming election. The series will also promote youth voting in Topeka.

The finance committee has been busy working on two exciting new projects. First off, we are partnering with Housing Credit and Counseling Inc. to film a financial planning series. These short videos will be posted on social media for teens to view at their convenience when curious about important financial literary subjects that are not in the high school curriculum, yet vital for adulthood. Secondly, the Topeka Youth Commission is teaming up with the Topeka Community Foundation to offer youth in Topeka \$10,000 to fund youth-led projects focused on enticing youth in the city. The applications for the grant, deemed Stay785, will open on November 16.



## LEADERSHIP GREATER TOPEKA

LGT is in the application phase of the selection process for determining the 2021 leadership class. Applications are due October 9, followed by an interview. Selections take place in November and applicants will be notified if selected for the 2021 class in December. If you are an LGT alumni and interested in helping with interviews or serving on the planning committee, you are encouraged to contact [Michelle.Stubblefield@topekapartnership.com](mailto:Michelle.Stubblefield@topekapartnership.com)

The planning committee is currently working to develop new curriculum to adapt to new learning methods in response to COVID-19.





## CARES ACT

The Greater Topeka Partnership received authorization from the Shawnee County CARES Committee to proceed with its proposed Business Continuity Aid program, a specialized set of classes designed to help small businesses in Shawnee County become more resilient. Attendees will learn about and then develop their own continuity plans which will help them better withstand a future disruption, whether due to a pandemic, natural disaster or other unexpected cause. Sixty established local businesses that complete the course and present their plans will be eligible for reimbursement of up to \$5,000 of expenses they have incurred in dealing with COVID-19. This program and the accompanying grant will prove lifesaving to many of those businesses which have been brought to their knees by the pandemic and related business restrictions. Funding came through the county from the federal CARES Act and must be expended by the end of 2020.

## SPARKS

The state SPARKS committee was convened to oversee distribution of Kansas' share of federal CARES Act dollars. It established a suite of grants for businesses recovering from COVID-19. Both the Partnership and Visit Topeka applied for and received working capital grants and PPE grants to offset costs each have incurred as a result of the pandemic. Like so many small businesses, the Partnership has been very challenged by COVID-19. However, unlike their for-profit counterparts, corporate entities, like the Partnership, which are organized under 501(c)(6) of the federal tax code have never been eligible to receive Paycheck Protection Program loans. The organizations are very grateful to receive these grants. Like all CARES Act funding, these grants will need to be expended by the end of 2020 but that will present no problem as the company will primarily be seeking reimbursement for expenses it has already incurred since the pandemic began.

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

As part of Hispanic Heritage month, the Pew Research Center released an [article](#) demonstrating key facts about the U.S. Latino population, which sheds a light on the current statistics regarding the age, geography and origin groups of this collective.

Some important statistics include:

- The U.S. Hispanic Population reached 60.6 million in 2019, up from 50.7 million in 2010.
- College experience is increasing, with about 41% of U.S. Hispanic adults ages 25 and older obtaining college experience in 2018.
- Four in-five Latinos are U.S. citizens.
- A record 32 million Latinos are projected to be eligible to vote in 2020, up from 27.3 million in 2016.

For more information, read the article, "[Key facts about U.S. Latinos for National Hispanic Heritage Month.](#)"

## VISIT TOPEKA SPORTS SALES

Current pandemic restrictions in Shawnee County have made sporting event organizers adjust their operations however sports are still happening in Topeka. However, Visit Topeka continues to work with local partners to land events and prepare bids for the future.

Heartland BMX was the site of the Kansas State Championship weekend which drew riders from all corners of Kansas to compete for titles in their respective divisions. This event kept the track busy but as mentioned was not the only event during the weekend.

Rueger Softball Complex was the host site for the USA Softball Men's D Northern National tournament. The Championship, in the second year of a three-year commitment, is produced by USA softball through a partnership with Visit Topeka and Shawnee County Parks and Recreation.

Another bright spot is tennis being played at Kossover through the month of September with several tournaments being held and more to come in October.

Current restrictions did force the cancellation of the premier racing event in Topeka, NHRA drag races. This annual event had been postponed from the original dates and finally cancelled early in the month. In addition to NHRA the Jayhawk Collegiate Bowling tournament which was to be held in November had to cancel with imposed restrictions for colleges and their student athletes.

During September Visit Topeka was able to partner with the Topeka Horseshoe Club to land the bid for the 2021 and 2022 State Horseshoe tournament held annually over Labor Day weekend.

Currently, Visit Topeka has 23 leads in the pipeline from 2021 through 2024 representing 8,000+ rooms and \$9.9 million in economic impact.

## CHAMBER PAC

Following two days of interviews in September, the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce's Political Action Committee announced its endorsements of candidates for the 2020 state and local elections. The endorsements can be found [here](#). Formed in 2018, the Chamber PAC seeks-out and supports candidates for state and local election whose views align most closely with the Chamber's agenda. The PAC is affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce but is distinct from it. No member of the current PAC Board simultaneously serves on the Chamber Board or any other GTP governing body. Curtis Sneden provides staff support for the PAC but has no vote on it. No other GTP staff are involved. Among the most important strategies for increasing prosperity in Shawnee County is electing excellent leaders.

## DTI PRESIDENT SEARCH UNDERWAY

The Partnership will be spending more time celebrating the accomplishments of Vince Frye as we get closer to his retirement date, but know right now we have him in our clutches and won't let go until the time is right. In the meantime we are working with DTI leadership to conduct a thorough widespread search for Vince's replacement. The Partnership seeks to succeed Vince with a professional who understands community development, economic development, re-development and success strategies for downtowns. Our goal is to name DTI's new president by the end of 2020. Thanks to Lisa Stubbs and Scott Gales, chair and chair-elect of DTI, for their teamwork in this endeavor.

## PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

September is usually one of our busiest months in the events division at the Partnership as we typically have Touch-A-Truck, Jazz and Food Truck Festival and Tap That Topeka, but this month was a bit different.

As we've come to know during these unprecedented times, it is quite hard to predict where we will be weeks or months from now. Therefore we explored many options to be able to bring these events to the community that loves and supports them but ultimately did not feel as if we could provide a truly safe experience for our attendees and those involved.

Instead, we spent this time exploring how to evolve and adapt our future events to be sure that we can provide everyone with the best event experiences moving forward.

## MOMENTUM 2022 UPDATE

All workgroups have met and are engaging with their respective objectives within the strategy to determine next steps. Each objective is currently being reviewed to confirm its status, and current relevance.

### Back2Momentum Survey

The community survey is currently being conducted. To date (9/24/2020) we have received over 800+ submissions. The survey will run through Friday, **October 9, 2020**. We invite everyone to share the community survey link - <https://www.topekapartnership.com/back2mo/> with their network. It is vitally important that we receive submissions representative of the diversity within our community. This survey was originally conducted in 2016 to help formulate the objectives. This same survey will be used to see measured change of perspectives and areas of interest and opportunities as we progress through the strategy.

## GOOGLE WORKSHOP - GET YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS ON

Learn about Google My Business, a free tool for local businesses who want to connect with customers on Google Search and Maps. In this session you'll learn how to: (1) Create or claim your Business Profile on Google (2) Manage your business info across Google Search and (3) Maps Use Google My Business to connect with potential customers. Create a free website using the info from your Business Profile. The workshop is scheduled for October 21, noon – 1 p.m. Central Time.

Registration Link: [attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8551266276720892429](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8551266276720892429)

## TOPEKA CHAMBER PARTICIPATES IN CONFERENCES

### **ACCE Conference**

Chamber President Curtis Sneden participated in a 3-day virtual summit presented by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. Sneden and Partnership CEO Matt Pivarnik, who is joining the ACCE board in 2021, heard thought-provoking keynote presentations on courageous conversations around race and the post-COVID economy, among others. They also attended sessions about government advocacy in the virtual environment, the future of meetings and gatherings and keys to developing better strategic plans. ACCE is the nation's premiere trade association for chambers of commerce.

### **US Chamber LEAD Conference**

Chamber President Sneden attended the United States Chamber of Commerce's 3-day virtual LEAD Conference in September. The LEAD conference brought together chamber and trade association leaders from across the nation and addressed complex and timely business issues such as advocating virtually, generating new revenue sources and adding value to memberships and restoring tourism and travel. These were informative, vital discussions during an unprecedented time for the entire business community.

## STRATEGIC PROCESS

Partnership staff has reengaged its process of reviewing each of the organization's many activities and events to ensure the company's resources are targeted on endeavors which are most calculated to advance its mission and return good value. The Partnership's Executive Leadership Team is methodically considering which activities are most on-mission and which of those are either (i) currently a good investment of company time and resources or (ii) could be modified to make them so. This ongoing process of strategic progression will help the Partnership deliver fresh value and greater excellence to its members and the community.

## CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE

Both the House and Senate have been under intense pressure to pass a Phase Four COVID relief package but have thus far been unable to reach agreement. The imminence of the general elections and, now, the process of confirming a successor to Supreme Court Justice, the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, have left little bandwidth for lawmakers to iron-out the importance differences in their proposed approaches to further COVID relief. Among the issues outstanding is modification of the CARES Act to enable 501(c)(6) entities to participate in the PPP program, extension of the December 30 deadline by which all CARES Act grants are to be expended and extension, in some form, of direct aid to Americans who have lost their incomes as a result of the pandemic. Along with its allies at the U.S. Chamber, and the METL Coalition, the Topeka Chamber continues to push hard for prompt resolution of these issues.

In early-September, Chamber President Curtis Sneden joined U.S. Senator Jerry Moran for a tour of the control tower at Forbes Field. The pair learned about the important role Forbes plays in the management of air traffic into and over the region which includes Shawnee County.

## VISIT TOPEKA MARKETING

2021 Visitors Guide planning has begun, including updated features, changes to layout and more. The guide will go through multiple stages of planning and will reflect branding style updates. Content will then be added/updated on the website and used as part of Visit's 2021 advertising plan for digital and/or social ads.

Visit is working with the Topeka Zoo in order to promote Topeka as a winter destination via the website, social share and e-news. The Topeka Zoo is hosting their Zoolights event and have partnered with TARC to include Winter Wonderland in their promotions; Visit is working to determine other partnerships that could be beneficial with local hotels and restaurants.

### Featured Topeka (Travel & Tourism) Articles:

<https://www.artisticfuel.com/public-art/topeka-murals/>

<https://www.artisticfuel.com/architecture/modern-design-home-topeka/>

<https://www.rediscoveramerica.com/stories/uncover-the-arts-culture-of-topeka-kansas/>

<https://www.simpleviewinc.com/blog/stories/post/destination-qa-topeka-partnership-encourages-locals-to-travel-together/>

<https://www.myrcma.org/news/topeka>

## 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.

## RIVERFRONT COUNCIL

This month, the Riverfront Advisory Council met to finalize its mission/vision statements as well as its priorities. During this meeting, the Council also discussed proposed "action" committees and goals for 2021.

Before the year is out, the Council plans to meet to draft and finalize its strategic plan. Once this plan is finalized, the Council will formally release its mission/vision/goals and strategic plan to the public.



## 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](mailto:Glenda.Washington@TopekaPartnership.com).