



**JEDO**  
**Quarterly Report**  

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**2023 Q4**

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GO Topeka  
Staff



GO Topeka  
785.234.2644  
GOTOpeka.com  
719 S Kansas Ave. Ste.100  
Topeka, KS 66603

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2023 GO Topeka  
Board of Directors



# Business Attraction

GO Topeka works continuously to bring awareness of the business assets in Topeka and Shawnee County to site selectors and companies looking to relocate or expand. Currently, the new business attraction portfolio holds 27 active projects in various industry sectors: 13 manufacturing, six aviation, two R&D and distribution, four general office/data center, and one bioscience.

## 27 ACTIVE PROJECTS



Manufacturing

13



Aviation

6



R&D & Distribution

3



Office

4



Bioscience

1

## New Business · Retention & Expansion · Small Business · Women & Minority · Choose Topeka YTD as of 12/31/23

<b>190</b> New Projects	<b>86</b> Completed Projects	<b>66</b> Active Projects
<b>83</b> New Jobs	<b>736</b> Retained Jobs	<b>262</b> Training Investment (number of people impacted)
<b>430</b> Outreach/Assisted (number of companies/ individuals)	<b>\$6,330,898</b> Capital Investment	

### Please Note:

232 people specifically reached out in response to the Telemundo special.



# Equity and Opportunity

## Looking Ahead

### Athena Leadership

GO Topeka is gearing up for the 2nd cohort of the Athena Leadership Program! Designed to empower and uplift women leaders, Athena provides a unique platform for professional growth and mentorship.

Applications are now open, so pass this opportunity along to women in the Topeka & Shawnee Country area to join a community of dynamic women, break barriers, and soar to new heights in their leadership journey.

Website:

<https://www.gotopeka.com/becomingathena/>



## Equity & Opportunity Business Pitch Competition

Eleven entrepreneurs and new business owners participated in the Equity & Opportunity Business Pitch Contest. Taking home first place was Chef Lamona Scroggins, who pitched her frozen gumbo product that will soon be offered in local grocery stores. Chef Lamona is well known for her gumbo and will offer chicken and sausage gumbo; a shrimp, chicken and sausage option; as well as a vegetarian option. Her frozen gumbos may be taken home and prepared according to directions, making her coveted creole cuisine even more accessible. Scroggins secured \$15,000 from the pitch contest to make that expansion into stores possible.

The following pitch contest winners were also recognized:

**2nd place** – The Grind Coaching & Consulting, Fatima Luthi for a new mobile app (\$10,000)

**3rd place** – Paletas Royale ice cream, Esteban Polanco (\$8,000)

**4th place** – Topeka Treats, Jaime Davis (\$5,000)



## Hispanic Outreach

### How to Start A Business Workshop

The "How to Build a Business" workshop which was presented by a collaborative effort of GO Topeka, US Bank, and the Small Business Development Center, offered aspiring entrepreneurs a comprehensive guide to navigating the complexities of starting and growing a business successfully. About 30 people attended the event.



# Innovation & Entrepreneurship

## HLEC

On October 11th, 2023 members of the K-State 105 partnership testified at the House Committee on Labor and Economic Development in the support of Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation programs to drive economic growth throughout the state of Kansas. Representatives from Kansas State University, GO Topeka, Network Kansas, State of Kansas SBDC, Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center, Startup Hutch and others walked through existing programs, partnerships and opportunities throughout the state. [House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development 10/11/2023 - YouTube](#)

## Media Coverage

Program related press releases gained over 32,000 views (not including local/Topeka outlets)!



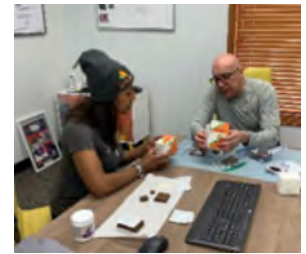
## Plug and Play Summit

Plug and Play Summit was held at the Plug and Play Tech Center in Silicon Valley December 5th – 7th. Several members from the Topeka community including GO Topeka staff, Corporate Sponsors, Bimini Pet Health and Hills Pet Nutrition. This year Go Topeka sponsored Washburn Students Nick Petrella and Peyton Price who placed 1st and 2nd in the Washburn University Pitch Competition. These students had the opportunity to interact with startups at the Demo tables and Networking Events as well as attend Pitches and Industry sessions to experience the next level of entrepreneurship in their individual journeys.



## Program Highlights - Topeka Visit

Five startups from the cohort made the post-Summit trip from Sunnyvale, CA to Topeka, KS, where they took part in a round table with Kansas State University faculty, toured the Capitol building (with state legislator Brenda Dietrich), KSU's TDI facility, and Hill's Small Paws Innovation Center, participated in a pitch practice workshop with Ed Reggi, and pitched to a small group of local investors.



### Batch 6 Program Stats

**33**  
VC/Mentor  
Intros

**11+**  
Startup-to-Startup  
Intros

**8**  
Verticals  
Accessed

### Batch 8 Program Stats

**15**  
VC/Mentor  
Intros

**17+**  
Startup-to-Startup  
Intros

**8**  
Verticals  
Accessed

### Business Development & Opportunities

**25**  
Corporate  
Intros

**19**  
NDA's

**10**  
Pilots/POCs

**40**  
Corporate  
Intros

**2**  
NDA's

**1**  
Pilots/POCs

\*More are in talks, just not confirmed

### Satisfaction Score

**10%**  
Will Not  
Recommend

**0%**  
Likely to  
Recommend

**90%**  
Definitely  
Recommend

**0%**  
Will Not  
Recommend

**10%**  
Likely to  
Recommend

**90%**  
Definitely  
Recommend

**100%**  
Interested in becoming  
an alumni member

**100%**  
Interested in becoming  
an alumni member

### Elite Characteristics

# of Startups	Avg. Age of Startups	Unique Countries	Most Common Stage
<b>10%</b>	<b>3 yrs</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Pre-Seed</b>

# of Startups	Avg. Age of Startups	Unique Countries	Most Common Stage
<b>75</b>	<b>5.5 yrs</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>Seed</b>

### Interest Area Breakdown

Livestock	15%	12
Biotechnology	14%	11
Animal Health	11%	10
Artificial Intelligence	10%	7
Diagnostics	7%	5
Sustainability	7%	5
Sustainable Packaging	7%	5
Alternative Ingredients	5%	3
Pet Food	5%	3
Digital Health	4%	2
Pet Marketplaces	4%	2
Pet Nutrition	3%	2
Automation	1%	1
Food Safety	1%	1
Manufacturing Digitization	1%	1
Medical Devices	1%	1
Pet Retail	1%	1
Vet Tech	1%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>73</b>

Biologicals	13%	10
Agrifintech	12%	9
Automation	11%	8
Digitalization	9%	7
Precision AG	9%	7
Sustainability	9%	7
Deep Tech	7%	5
Genomics	5%	4
Remote Monitoring	5%	4
Marketplaces	4%	3
Vertical Farming	4%	3
Fertilizers	3%	2
Microencapsulation	3%	2
Predictive Analytics	3%	2
Diagnostics	1%	1
InsureTech	1%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>

# Small Business Incentive Program

## Incentive Types

**Construction**

**29**

**Marketing**

**28**

**Architecture  
& Design**

**7**

**Equipment**

**32**

**Proof of Concept**

**3**

**Professional  
Services**

**2**

**PREAPPROVAL  
2023**

**97**

**Incentives  
Totaling**

**\$542,447**

**LIFE OF PROGRAM**

**676**

**Incentives  
Totaling**

**\$2,926,472**

\*Some companies may have been awarded more than one incentive.

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF APPLICATIONS IN PROCESS

**29**

Minority Owned

**41**

Women Owned

**7**

Veteran Owned

**4**

Disabled Owned

**1**

SBA 8(a)- Certified

## Small Business Incentives, Spanish Speaking Outreach

On October 3, we held our third and final information session where we presented on the Small Business Incentives in Spanish to the community; this session was held at the Oakland Community Center. Following the information sessions, we held a workshop in the level 2 Tech Center at the TSCPL, where we were able to assist applicants through the process of applying and with their additional required documents. Translation services were provided by members of our team, the City of Topeka, and community volunteers.

## Small Business Incentives Application Window

The Fall Small Business Incentive window closed and the committee approved to award almost 198k to 27 different companies, covering 35 different incentive projects. The Winter 2024 window is open, where applicants can continue to use our new automated system for ease and convenience. In this window, we saw success as a few of the participants from our translation sessions applied and were awarded. In November, our SBI program was part of a presentation at a Lenders Luncheon, sharing the opportunity with our banking community so they can better help serve their clients and share the opportunity.





# Small Business

## Washburn Pitch Competition

Washburn University held their annual pitch competition from October 18 to November 1st, 2023. This competition featured students from their School of Business and Entrepreneurship Class and clubs. Over 50 students began the competition, which was narrowed over the course of 3 rounds. Ultimately top competitors walked away with cash prizes ranging from \$1,000 to \$8,000 and the chance to attend the upcoming Plug and Play Summit in Silicon Valley. Go Topeka was the presenting sponsor for this event and was involved in various support roles throughout the competition.



## Global Entrepreneurship Week

We celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week from Nov 13-17th with great events hosted by Go Topeka as well as several of our community partners. Firstly, Washburn held an IChabod's of Industry featuring a downtown business owner and entrepreneur, Ken Schmanke. That evening, we invited our network to join us at Business Unwind, celebrating WIBW's 70th anniversary. On Wednesday, we supported the Women in Business Conference hosted by the Kansas Chamber, where we were able to fill a table with a group of women that are anywhere from aspiring business owners to those actively on that journey. On Thursday, we held our Propeller End of Year Celebration, bringing back the participants of the mentorship program through the year, along with the small business council and those interested in participating in propeller in the future. Here, we held the Small Business Saturday Proclamation with Mayor Padilla, and listened to Tara Dimick as our keynote on her journey of mentorship and growth as an entrepreneur. Later that evening, we held the Equity and Opportunity Pitch contest.

## Small Business Council Training Series

On December 14th, the Small Business Council hosted their bi-monthly training. This month featured Martha B Piland as she presented on Networking 101. This engaging session allowed participants to listen, learn, and practice skills to better help them in personal and professional networking opportunities. Following the session, guests stayed to make new connections and learn more about the programs and resources available through Go Topeka and the Greater Topeka Partnership.



Next Training



# Workforce & Talent

See attached documents for full Workforce Report

## 2023 Q4 Workforce Data

**Total Working Age Population**  
(16 YEARS AND OVER)

**98,420**  
TOPEKA

**138,728**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 2,282,642  
US 267,818,000

**Labor Force Participation**

**63,397**  
TOPEKA

**91,794**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 1,515,705  
US 167,471,000

**Employment**

**61,540**  
TOPEKA

**89,310**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 1,475,992  
US 161,527,000

**Jobs**

**89,332**  
TOPEKA

**104,527**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 1,518,696  
US 163,330,410

**Average Wages**

**\$56,059**  
TOPEKA

**\$56,012**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS \$57,592  
US \$70,318

**Labor Force Participation Rate**

**66.41%** TOPEKA

**66.20%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 66.40%  
US 62.53%

**Employment-Population Ratio**

**62.53%** TOPEKA

**64.40%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 64.66%  
US 60.31%

**Unemployment Rate**

**2.9%** TOPEKA

**2.7%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 2.6%  
US 3.5%

\*Total Civilian Non-institutionalized Population

# Forge by the Numbers

See attached documents for full EOY report for Forge

## FORGE WEBSITE TRAFFIC:

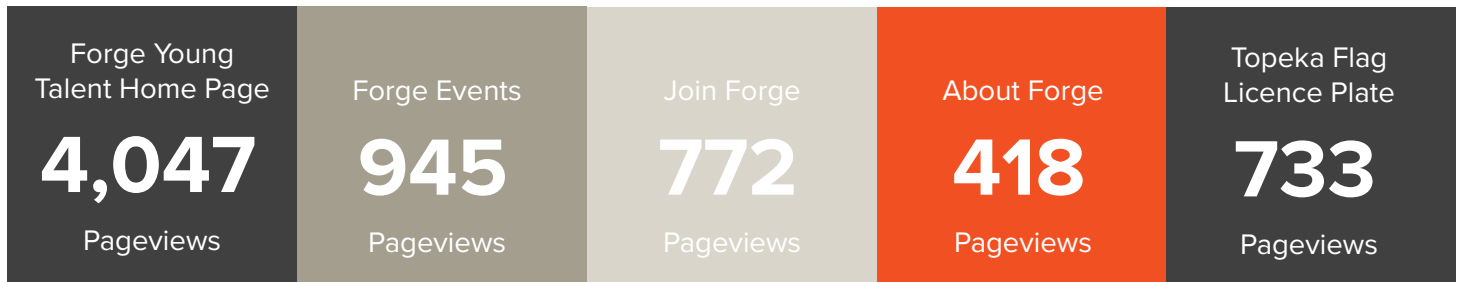
When evaluating website traffic, we looked at the top five pages of the Forge ecosystem within the GO Topeka website. Forge made a concerted effort to drive traffic back to the website during campaigns and event marketing to train members to check the website for event information. Website information is below.

## TOTAL TRAFFIC OF TOP 5 PAGES:

# 6,915

PAGEVIEWS

### The Breakdown



## ENEWS

Enews is one of our main channels of communication along with our social media accounts and website. Our enews list distribution list is about 1500 Forge members, and we primarily include Forge events and programming, community events geared toward young professionals, and other news from around the community that would be relevant to our audience. In 2023 we sent a total of 45 enews out with opens totaling 24,891 which led to a total of 1,011 unique link clicks. For the year we averaged a 40.25% open rate.

# 40.25%

OPEN RATE

## TOPCITY INTERN WEBSITE TRAFFIC:

When evaluating the website traffic for the TopCity Interns program we looked 2 webpages. These webpages were the only pages that focused on the TopCity Interns program. 1 page focused on program information and a form for employers to inquire about the program or sign up and the other page included a form to sign up interns from those participating employers. Website information from the TopCity intern webpages is below.

# 15,686

TOPCITY INTERN HOME PAGE  
& EMPLOYER FORM PAGE VIEWS

# 1,178

INTERN SUBMISSION FORM  
PAGE VIEWS

# By the Numbers

## TELLING TOPEKA'S STORY

In 2023, we shared some of Topeka's story with the world, landing features and mentions in outlets like Forbes, NBC, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Telemundo, Business Insider, and more! Covered topics ranged from talent attraction and economic development to real estate, Plug and Play, diversity efforts and beyond!

**6B**

AUDIENCE REACH

**191**

PIECES OF NATIONAL &  
INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE

**99.1M**

ESTIMATED VIEWS

### Choose Topeka Website Traffic:

When evaluating website traffic, we looked at the top five pages of the Choose Topeka website. Website information is below.

### TOTAL TRAFFIC OF TOP 5 PAGES:

**562,769**  
PAGEVIEWS

### The Breakdown

Home	Apply	En- Espanol	Employer Guidelines	Choose Topeka
<b>73,319</b>	<b>234,889</b>	<b>97,221</b>	<b>82,762</b>	<b>733</b>
Pageviews	Pageviews	Pageviews	Pageviews	Pageviews

# Choose Topeka 2.0 Relocation Incentive

## \$184,500

IN TOTAL COMMITTED FUNDS  
\$164,500 EMPLOYER MATCH FUNDS  
\$20,000 BOOMERANG FUNDS

### 40

APPROVED  
FAMILIES

### 19

RENTING

### 21

PURCHASED  
HOMES

### 15

# OF STATES  
MOVED FROM

### 17

EMPLOYER  
MATCHED

### 4

BOOMERANG

### 9

UNIQUE  
EMPLOYER  
SUBMITTALS

### 9600+

PROFILES  
CREATED ON  
SKILLFIT

## ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

## \$87,454

TOTAL AVERAGE SALARY  
\$85,175 EMPLOYER MATCH  
\$89,732 BOOMERANG

## 14.7x

\$669,125  
RETURN ON INVESTMENT  
IN YEAR 1

## 75.7x

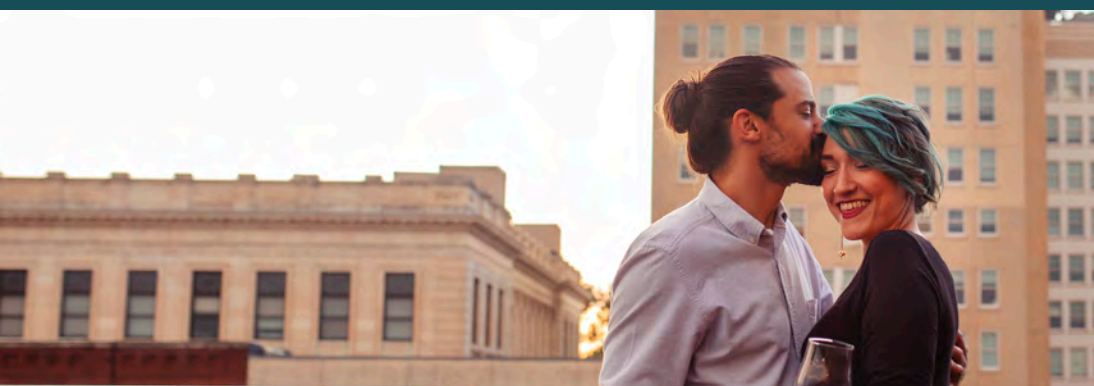
\$3,431,279  
RETURN ON INVESTMENT  
AFTER 5 YEARS

### \* INTERESTING FACT \*

One of the participating employers relocated their business from Colorado to Topeka, and moved three of their key team members to Shawnee County utilizing the Choose Topeka Program.

## CHOOSE IN THE NEWS

GO Topeka uses several public relation tools and have cultivated relationships with regional and national media to help maintain brand awareness through earned media. In 2023 we secured the New York Post, Wall Street Journal, NBC News, Telemundo, Telemadrid, and more. This totals an earned media value of \$14M since 2019.



# GO Topeka Staff

**Molly**

**Howey**



President,  
GO Topeka

**Stephanie**

**Moran**



SVP  
of Innovation

**Trina**

**Goss**



Director, Business &  
Talent Initiatives

**Rhett**

**Flood**



Executive Director of  
Forge Young Talent

**Ashley**

**Lehman**



Director of Business  
Development

**Israel**

**Sanchez**



Director of Equity &  
Business Development

**Patrick**

**Altenor**



Economic  
Advisor

**Stephanie**

**Norwood**



Director of  
Entrepreneurship  
& Small Business

**Erin**

**Young**



Marketing  
Project Manager

**Manuel**

**Castro**



Executive  
Coordinator

**Michelle**

**DeWeese**



Executive  
Coordinator

**Matt**

**Pivarnik**



CEO, Greater Topeka  
Partnership



# Meet Michelle DeWeese

Executive Coordinator

Michelle has a Bachelor of Science in Family Studies and Human Services from Kansas State University and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Rochester Community and Technical College. Michelle has worked at Core First Bank & Trust for the last ten years in the Trust department. Michelle has been described as hardworking, positive, dedicated, and trustworthy; she will be a great addition to the Partnership Team!





HERE.  
GREAT  
GROWS  
SMO

**Positioned as an industry leader, the new GO Topeka will strive to innovate, collaborate and boldly move Topeka and Shawnee County into the future.**

**Great. Grows. Here.**

**Visit [GoTopeka.com](http://GoTopeka.com)**





# 2023 Go Topeka Board of Directors

## Elected Directors

Linda Briden	Sunflower Association of Realtors
Kevin Rake	HME, Inc
Sara Girard	Central National Bank
Dr. Rob Kenagy	Stormont Vail Health
Martha Piland	MB Piland
Tammy Dishman	Capitol Federal Foundation
Dan Foltz	KBS Constructors
Calla Haggard	Community Bank
Shane Hillmer	Southwest Publishing
Kurt Kuta	CoreFirst Bank & Trust
Jeff Russell	Reser's Fine Food
Daina Williams	L&J Building Maintenance
Dr. Sam Al-Murrani	Strategic Business Consultant
Scott Hunsicker	Kansas Financial Resources
Cassandra Taylor	HTK Architects
Doug Wolff	Security Benefit
Jim Klausman	Midwest Health
Jacob Wamego	Prairie Band, LLC
Jeff Martin	Evergy
Chris Faulk	McElroy Electric, Inc.
Paul Bossert	Premier Staffing
Manny Herron	Haus Property Partners
Travis Morris	Summit Materials

## Directors Appointed at Large

Michael Odupitan	Omni Circle
Dr. Kevin Hahn	BioTopeka
Linessa Frazier	American Century Investments
Marvin Spees	Capital City Oil
Neal Spencer	Ernest-Spencer
Joe Caldwell	Bartlett & West
Troy Simoneau	Kansas Gas Service

## Directors By Virtue of Position Held

Michael Padilla	City of Topeka, Mayor
Aaron Mays	Shawnee County Commissioner
Neil Dobler	City of Topeka, Deputy Mayor
Curtis Sneden	MTAA
Marshall Meek	Washburn University
Richard Nienstedt	City of Topeka, Interim City Manager



# go >topeka

A Greater Topeka Partnership Organization

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



Accredited Economic Development Organization



Prepared for JEDO  
Joint Economic Development Organization