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## JEDO BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, February 14, 2024 - 4:00 p.m.

Law Enforcement Center, Classroom A

320 S. Kansas Ave., Ste. 100

Topeka, Kansas 66603

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### JEDO BOARD MEMBERS

#### VOTING MEMBERS

Kevin Cook	Shawnee County Commissioner
Aaron Mays	Shawnee County Commissioner
Bill Riphahn	Shawnee County Commissioner
Michael Padilla	City of Topeka Mayor
Christina Valdivia-Alcala	City of Topeka Deputy Mayor
David Banks	City of Topeka Councilmember
Spencer Duncan	City of Topeka Councilmember

#### NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Karen Hiller	City of Topeka Councilmember
Sylvia Ortiz	City of Topeka Councilmember
Brett Kell	City of Topeka Councilmember
Marcus Miller	City of Topeka Councilmember
Neil Dobler	City of Topeka Councilmember
Michelle Hoferer	City of Topeka Councilmember

**PUBLIC COMMENT** from members of the public shall be entertained on each actionable agenda item and at the end of each meeting. Comment shall be limited to topics directly relevant to JEDO business. Members of the public wishing to speak must notify the County Counselor's Office (call 785-251-4042 or email [counselors@snco.us](mailto:counselors@snco.us)) before 3:00 p.m. on the date of the meeting. Members of the public will be allowed to speak one at a time in the order they signed up. Public comment shall not apply to items added during the meeting. Members of the public shall be given four (4) minutes to speak and must maintain proper decorum relating to public meetings.

**AGENDAS** are furnished at least five (5) business days prior to each meeting and posted on JEDO's website at <https://www.jedoecodevo.com/Meeting-Documents/>.

**JEDO BOARD MEETINGS** shall be open to the public, except for executive sessions pursuant to state law. Meetings shall be televised. View the meeting online at <https://www.topeka.org/communications/live-stream/> or at <https://www.facebook.com/cityoftopeka/>.

To make arrangements for special accommodations please call 785-368-3940. A 48-hour advance notice is preferred.

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. ACTION ITEM**

- A. APPROVAL of December 13, 2023 JEDO Board meeting minutes.
- B. REVIEW options for continued investment in the Astra Innovation Center.

**4. PRESENTATION**

- A. Go Topeka Quarterly Update – 2023 Q4

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**6. REMINDER: 2024 JEDO Board Meeting Dates per the JEDO Operational Rules:**

- Wednesday, May 8, 2024
- Wednesday, September 11, 2024
- Wednesday, December 11, 2024

**7. ADJOURNMENT.**



## *Agenda Item No. 3A*

**JEDO Board Meeting  
February 14, 2024**

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### **ACTION ITEM:**

APPROVAL of December 13, 2023 JEDO Board Meeting Minutes

**Joint Economic Development Organization Board Minutes**  
**December 13, 2023**

The Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) Board Members met at 4:00 p.m. in the Shawnee County Commission Chambers, Topeka, Kansas, with the following voting Board Members present: City of Topeka Deputy Mayor Neil Dobler, City of Topeka Councilmember Tony Emerson; and Shawnee County Commissioners Bill Riphahn, Kevin Cook and Aaron Mays - 5. City of Topeka Mayor Michael Padilla presided - 1. Absent: Councilmember Hannah Naeger -1.

Non-Voting Board Members: Absent: City of Topeka Councilmembers Karen Hiller; Christina Valdivia-Alcala, Sylvia Ortiz, Brett Kell, Spencer Duncan and Michelle Hoferer - 6.

Public comment for the meeting was available via Zoom or in-person. Individuals were required to contact the City Clerk's Office at 785-368-3940 or via email at [cclerk@topeka.org](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) by no later than 3:00 p.m. on December 13, 2023, after which the City Clerk's Office provided the Zoom link information and protocols prior to the meeting start time. Written public comment was also considered to the extent it was personally submitted at the meeting or to the City Clerk's Office located at 215 SE 7th Street, Room 166, Topeka, Kansas, 66603 or via email at [cclerk@topeka.org](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) on or before December 13, 2023.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by meeting participants.

**APPROVAL of the September 13, 2023 JEDO Board Meeting Minutes, was presented.**

Commissioner Mays moved to approve the minutes. The motion seconded by Deputy Mayor Dobler carried unanimously on roll call vote. (6-0-0)

**APPROVAL of the 2024 GO Topeka Budget (Attachment A) and Business Plan (Attachment B), was presented.**

Commissioner Cook moved to approve the 2024 GO Topeka Budget and Business Plan. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Emerson.

Josh Patterson, GO Topeka Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of the Operations and Administrative budget assumptions.

Councilmember Naeger entered the room.

Molly Howey, GO Topeka President, highlighted budget changes in the following departments:

- New Business & Retention/Expansion
- Innovation/Entrepreneurship/Small Business

- Minority Women Business Development (MWBD) Redevelopment
- Talent Initiatives
- General Economic Development & General Administration
- Special Initiatives

Josh Patterson continued to report on the Special Initiatives. He stated the total ongoing programming expenses has increased from \$2.76 million in 2023 to \$2.84 million in 2024. He noted departmental budgets increased 6.9% overall and payroll, shared departments, and general and administrative expenses decreased slightly by 2.1% over 2023.

Deputy Mayor Dobler asked where in the budget the \$500,000 earmarked for the MWBD Program Redevelopment would be located and how will it be spent.

Josh Patterson reported the MWBD Program budget was combined with the Redevelopment budget; however, both budgets are tracked separately. He noted if the \$500,000 was not spent it would be tracked and included in the annual cash carry-forward amount.

Molly Howey confirmed the \$500,000 MWBD Program funding was included as part of the cash carry-forward agreement request to be considered on the next agenda pursuant to the Interlocal Agreement.

The motion to approve the 2024 GO Topeka Budget and Business Plan carried unanimously on roll call vote. (7-0-0)

**APPROVAL of the 2024 Cash Carry-Forward Agreement in the amount of \$17,600,000 for the purpose of providing economic development services, was presented.**

Josh Patterson, GO Topeka Chief Financial Officer, provided the following financial breakdown of the requested 2023-2024 Cash Carry-forward amount:

2024 Carry-Forward Amount	\$17,600,000
2024 Budget Transfer Carry-Forward Amount	\$(5,967,601)
Restricted Uses by Contract	
• MWBD Program Carryover	\$(1,523,000)
Future Commitments	
• Committed Incentives	\$(4,304,304)
• Choose Topeka Incentives	\$ (111,632)
Reserves for Special Purpose	
• Ongoing Innovation Campus Support	\$ (743,428)
Remaining for Future Investment	\$4,950,305

Commissioner Cook asked if the \$4.3 million of Committed Incentive Funds includes the projected amount of incentives not being met by companies and why they need an additional \$5

million of economic development funds if they are requesting to carry-over \$4.9 million.

Josh Patterson reported the \$4.3 million amount does include projected incentives for 2024; and the \$5 million of economic development (deal making) funds are necessary to secure large projects as needed.

Deputy Mayor Dobler referenced the \$1.5 million of MWBD Program funding which was equivalent to approximately three years of earned revenue and asked why the program dollars are not being spent. He requested GO Topeka provide a detailed financial breakdown of where the dollars are being spent to the JEDO Board.

Molly Howey, GO Topeka President, confirmed the amount was equal to approximately three years of earned revenue for this slow building program. She reported the program reflects underspending in 2024 because they have not yet determined the best use of program funding until they strategically review the program in detail.

Deputy Mayor Dobler stated he looks forward to an update on the program funding fairly quickly.

Commissioner Mays moved to approve the 2024 Cash Carry-Forward Agreement in the amount of \$17,600,000 for the purpose of providing economic development services. The motion seconded by Councilmember Naeger carried unanimously on roll call vote. (7-0-0)

**PRESENTATION on the 2023 Growth Organization of (GO) Topeka 3rd Quarter Report, was presented.**

Molly Howey, GO Topeka President, referenced the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report included in the agenda packet and stated they have created a dashboard outlining year-to-date as of September 30, 2023 matrix numbers in a more simplified form.

Stephanie Norwood, Director of Entrepreneurship & Small Business Incentives, provided an update on the Small Business Incentives to include 68 initial applications and 28 completed applications resulting in the award of \$158,000 to 25 companies with 33 different incentives. She thanked Thomas Sidlinger with 6 Rings Media for helping to automate the application process. She introduced Jake Taylor with Curb Appeal Power Wash, LLC and asked him to provide comments on incentives they received.

Thomas Sidlinger, 6 Rings Media, commented on his collaboration with GO Topeka in automating the application process. He stated he was impressed with the holistic approach of GO Topeka staff members resulting in wide ranging community outreach efforts.

Jake Taylor, President of Curb Appeal Power Wash, LLC thanked GO Topeka for offering small businesses incentives as it has made a tremendous impact on his Christmas Light leasing business and allowed him to hire more employees and expand his business.

Mayor Padilla asked what process was being used to ensure it was equitable across the city.

Stephen Norwood stated they increased promotions by making sure they share their cold calling list as well as the outreach program which includes translation services and community locations that offer the necessary tools and resources for the application process.

Stephanie Moran, Senior Vice President of Innovation, introduced new Plug & Play employees Anne Gunden, Program Manager and Mark McAllister, Ventures Associate. She stated five new potential business startup visits resulted from the recent Silicon Valley Cohort Event. She commented on their partnership with Washburn University and stated she looks forward to continuing the collaboration.

Deputy Mayor Dobler inquired on the Return on Investment (ROI) for the Plug & Play Program as well as a program pro forma.

Stephanie Moran stated she would report back to the JEDO Board with the information; however, she believes there are some very strong potential partnerships as a result of the Program. She reported the Plug & Play Program would be considered a nonpaying partner and noted corporate partners pay for the hosting of the Plug & Play Vertical in Topeka. She also provided an **UPDATE on the Astra Innovation Center (Attachment C)**.

Commissioner Cook expressed his frustration with the lack of progress of the Astra Innovation Center project over the past two years. He suggested if they do not see real progress by the February 14, 2024, JEDO Board meeting they need to consider whether they want to continue doing business with Bio Reality, Inc.

Ashley Lehman, GO Topeka Director of Business Development, provided an update on the New Business Attraction Project Pipeline totaling 27 active projects trending in manufacturing, aviation, and office/data centers. She noted the majority of the projects are larger with three of the projects seeking operational buildings over 100,000 square feet; and four of the projects are seeking 100 acres with utilities in place. She stated they are in the process of implementing a software program that will help them seek out new businesses by category, region, type of facility required etc., along with a strategic economic development promotional program.

Commissioner Cook referenced the potential office and data center projects and asked what they are doing to attract more nonmanufacturing jobs.

Ashley Lehman reported the location of Topeka-Shawnee County, Kansas, was highlighted since it is located within 60 miles of four major universities as well as in the close proximity of a larger labor pool from nearby cities. She noted office and data based companies do not generate a lot of jobs or return on investment.

Commissioner Cook asked GO Topeka to work with local companies to increase white collar industry jobs.

Molly Howey reported they are concentrating on the aviation industry and the project pipeline was on par for the trends across the nation. She stated they are working with local employers to determine the amount of available Class A Office Space they would be willing to lease to tenants.

Mayor Padilla asked if aviation numbers are trending upward.

Molly Howey stated the numbers are growing slowly due to the lack of hanger space available; however, at this time the Topeka-Shawnee County area was being considered as one of the top two locations by an aviation company.

Councilmember Emerson inquired on the status of the Aviation Strategic Plan.

Molly Howey stated she could not speak to the strategic initiative outcomes that were decided upon as this was a Metropolitan Transportation Airport Authority initiative.

Israel Sanchez, Director of Equity & Business Development, provided an update on the outreach they are doing to ensure they are providing equity throughout community. He reported they partnered with the City of Topeka Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office to coordinate two outreach events resulting in the sign up of 60 individuals. He stated he looks forward to assisting minority business owners.

Mayor Padilla asked how they are providing support to the minority businesses to help them succeed.

Stephan Moran reported they follow up with each business owner and provide the necessary resources and tools to help them move forward in the process.

Deputy Mayor Dobler stated he understands they are taking a detailed look at the MWBD Program; however, the initiative has only spent \$38,000 of the \$500,000 allocated in 2023. He expressed the importance of providing the JEDO Board a detailed summary on how each dollar was being spent on the program, matrixes to include created and retained jobs as well as how many businesses are created.

Stephan Moran stated they would provide the information to the JEDO Board in approximately two months.

Trina Goss, GO Topeka Director of Business & Talent Initiatives, reported GO Topeka staff has been working to better connect with all of the surrounding universities as well as attending career fairs with local companies. She stated they would also provide a comprehensive workforce report at the next scheduled JEDO Board meeting. She provided an update on the Choose Topeka Telemundo Media Initiative and noted, it generated 5 million hits on TikTok and the marketing efforts generated visitors from across the nation as well as 7,000 new job seekers creating profiles on the Skillfit website. She also provided an update on the Childcare Innovative Communities



Grant program managed by Child Care Aware. She stated they are partnering with Topeka Community Foundation and creating a community fund for businesses and individuals to donate money for scholarships to fill financial gaps for parents who cannot pay for childcare. She noted the money would be paid directly to childcare providers. She stated they are in the process of building a website to assist with the program. She announced they will be launching the Women In Stem Economy (WISE) Program and noted, there are currently 20 young women enrolled in the program that will run from February-July with a mentorship being conducted in January.

**PUBLIC COMMENT was provided by the following individual.**

LaZone Grays distributed a handout and provided an update on the Microsoft TechSpark Program. He encouraged the City and County to get engaged in the process and support community organizations focused on creating economic opportunities through digital inclusion, skilling, transformation and ecosystem building.

Mayor Padilla announced the next JEDO Board meeting would be held on February 14, 2024.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

# Attachment A

## Budgeted Expenditure Summary

<u>GO Topeka Programs</u>	<u>Proposed 2024</u>	<u>Approved 2023</u>
Business Attraction & Retention	\$ 393,409	\$ 361,660
Small Business, Innovation & Entrepreneurial Development	240,136	247,604
Minority & Women Owned Business Support	244,014	298,814
Talent Initiatives	212,630	197,576
General Economic Development Activities	206,731	107,526
<b>Total Programming (excl salaries)</b>	<b>\$ 1,296,920</b>	<b>\$ 1,213,180</b>
Economic Development Salaries	853,124	910,263
Full-time equivalent headcount	8.00	8.75
Marketing/Communications Services	248,000	234,000
Finance/Administration/HR Services	337,000	262,000
General & Administrative Expenses	100,969	166,471
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,836,013</b>	<b>\$ 2,785,914</b>
Estimated % of countywide .5 cent sales tax	16.0%	15.4%
Large Business Incentives	2,779,152	3,097,999
Small Business Incentives	400,000	300,000
Special Initiatives	5,227,428	5,213,388
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 11,242,593</b>	<b>\$ 11,397,301</b>

## Budgeted Revenue Summary

	<u>Proposed 2024</u>	<u>Approved 2023</u>
Economic Development Sales Tax	\$ 10,985,862	\$ 11,157,970
Program Sponsorships and Other	39,093	51,707
Interest and Investment Income	54,352	53,935
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 11,079,307</b>	<b>\$ 11,251,112</b>

**Greater Topeka Partnership**  
**GO Topeka**  
 Budgeted Statement of Activities by Department - Public  
 As of December 31, 2024

\*Non-GAAP Reporting

	Business Attraction and Retention/Expansion December 31, 2024	Small Bus Dev/Innovation/Ent Dev December 31, 2024	WMBD December 31, 2024	Talent Initiatives December 31, 2024	General & Administrative December 31, 2024	Total On-Going Programming December 31, 2024	Special Initiatives December 31, 2024	ETLC December 31, 2024	Total December 31, 2024
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Summary	Summary	Budget	Budget	Summary
<b>Revenue</b>									
Event/program rev	0	0	19,651	0	19,442	39,093	0	0	39,093
Public revenue	3,172,561	664,101	438,769	212,630	1,471,009	5,959,070	5,026,792	0	10,985,862
Total Earned revenue	3,172,561	664,101	458,420	212,630	1,490,451	5,998,163	5,026,792	0	11,024,955
Other revenue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45,432	45,432
Interest revenue	0	0	0	0	8,500	8,500	0	420	8,920
Total Other revenue	0	0	0	0	8,500	8,500	0	45,852	54,352
Total Revenue	\$ 3,172,561	664,101	458,420	\$ 212,630	1,498,951	6,006,663	\$ 5,026,792	\$ 45,852	11,079,307
<b>Expenses</b>									
Payroll/benefits	0	0	97,148	0	749,896	847,044	0	0	847,044
Other compensation	0	0	800	0	5,280	6,080	0	0	6,080
Professional services	190,800	11,469	17,325	0	37,465	257,059	20,000	0	277,059
Other employee related costs	11,348	15,550	9,500	6,555	30,683	73,636	0	0	73,636
Shared services	0	0	109,000	0	476,000	585,000	0	0	585,000
Total Personnel expenses	202,148	27,019	233,774	6,555	1,299,324	1,768,819	20,000	0	1,788,819
Program/event expense	5,400	94,220	40,616	21,760	10,000	171,997	0	0	171,997
Sales travel	45,075	0	1,200	0	0	46,275	0	0	46,275
Hospitality	7,000	1,500	21,600	2,600	300	33,000	0	0	33,000
Grants/sponsor/contrib/scholar	42,200	82,500	127,002	163,565	3,000	418,267	224,992	0	643,259
Total Program expenses	99,675	178,220	190,418	187,925	13,300	669,539	224,992	0	894,531
Occupancy	0	17,136	6,799	0	47,212	71,147	64,680	0	135,827
Office expense	1,800	2,656	2,294	0	17,320	24,070	0	0	24,070
Dues/subscriptions	0	19,240	12,225	0	59,963	91,428	23,292	0	114,720
Advertising	89,786	13,000	12,250	18,150	48,000	181,186	0	0	181,186
Depreciation/amortization	0	6,830	0	0	17,627	24,457	0	105,069	129,527
Insurance/taxes/fees	0	0	660	0	4,705	5,366	0	12,540	17,905
Interest expense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	83,028	83,028
Total Operational Expenses	91,586	58,863	34,229	18,150	194,827	397,654	87,972	200,637	686,263
Total Expenses Before Incentives	393,409	264,102	458,421	212,630	1,507,451	2,836,012	332,964	200,637	3,369,613
Business incentives	2,779,152	400,000	0	0	0	3,179,152	4,693,828	0	7,872,980
Total Expenses	\$ 3,172,561	664,102	458,421	\$ 212,630	1,507,451	6,015,164	\$ 5,026,792	\$ 200,637	11,242,593
<b>Total Changes in Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>(8,500)</b>	<b>(8,500)</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ (154,785)</b>	<b>(163,285)</b>

# Attachment B

## Business Attraction and Business Retention/Expansion

### *Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)*

Topeka and Shawnee County's continued job growth and capital investment comes from its existing industries and businesses. Businesses thrive in environments that provide support and resources, as well as a balanced and consistent regulatory climate. GO Topeka continues its commitment to provide multiple means of assistance and support for existing employers by understanding and addressing their needs, while finding solutions to barriers that may keep business from thriving in the community.

- **Ensure support of employer needs related to retention, growth and expansion opportunities**
  - ◆ Develop and cultivate strong relationships with plant and general managers, and C-level executives of primary employers
  - ◆ Build relationships with headquarters of major employers
  - ◆ Conduct BRE visits and surveys to gather information on the existing business landscape and identify opportunities and gaps
- **Respond to expansion opportunities with appropriate support and incentives**
- **Respond to barriers with appropriate support**
  - ◆ Advocate for business-friendly policies when appropriate
  - ◆ Connect companies to and facilitate conversations with partner resources and organizations
- **Ensure maintenance of existing incentive contracts**

### *New Business Attraction*

The foundation of a successful business attraction program is the relationships formed with site selection consultants and corporate real estate executives. Building these relationships helps educate and keep the community in the front of the minds of the decision makers and individuals who influence the site selection process.

Marketing Topeka and Shawnee County nationally and internationally to bring awareness to the business assets the community has to offer helps attract new businesses to consider relocating or expanding in Topeka and Shawnee County. Through advertising, face-to-face interactions and involvement with partner organizations, GO Topeka strives to make Topeka and Shawnee County known as a great place to do business.

As the community grows, assessing the assets to further develop and market to companies looking to expand is key. GO Topeka forms partnerships to help proactively leverage assets and identify opportunities for improvement. Capitalizing on underutilized assets such as the airport and marketing our unique strengths to grow the wealth of our community and help create quality jobs will be the focus of our work in 2024.

- **Build awareness of Topeka as a top place to do business**
  - ◆ Develop and deploy annual marketing plan geared toward high-growth, high-wage companies and industries
  - ◆ Grow and maintain relationships with key regional commercial real estate executives and site location consultants to increase their awareness of the business assets in Topeka and Shawnee County

- ◆ Host commercial real estate executives and/or site consultants in Topeka for familiarization tours
- ◆ Strategically engage with new National site consultants or corporate real estate professionals
- ◆ Develop and maintain regional partnerships to leverage for new business attraction
  
- **Capitalize on opportunities to respond to requests for proposals from companies looking to relocate or expand**
  - ◆ Provide a thorough, accurate and timely response to all RFPs meeting strategic industry and/or company criteria
  - ◆ Leverage community partners to present the best possible proposal
  - ◆ Record RFPs and provide regular updates to the GO Topeka Board of Directors and JEDO
  
- **Develop strategies for potential commercial and industrial development and redevelopment location opportunities throughout Shawnee County**
  - ◆ Keep updated inventory of available sites and buildings
  - ◆ Gather knowledge and work to better position Topeka as a place for aviation and aerospace related business
  - ◆ Provide resources to assess viability of existing property for a variety of uses
  - ◆ Provide marketing resources to promote sites and buildings to developers and companies looking for space
  - ◆ Develop and maintain strong relationships with commercial brokers and property owners to create greater collaboration for economic development opportunities
  - ◆ Partner with the City of Topeka to aggressively pursue catalytic redevelopment opportunities
  
- **Provide comprehensive incentives to attract and retain primary employers**

## Committed and Pending Incentive Offerings

**Go Topeka, Inc.**  
**Committed/Pending Incentive Offers and Site Expenditures**  
**November 30, 2023**

	Incentive Orig. Date	Pymts to 12/31/2022	Payments 2023	Projected						Total Projected	Total Projected & Paid
				2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	THEREAFTER		
Cash:											
Committed - Performance Based:											
Advisors Excel	2019	692,900	268,000	-	268,000	261,100	-	-	-	529,100	1,490,000
Big Heart Pet 2015	2015	73,595	-	-	82,000	-	-	-	-	82,000	155,595
Bimini LLC	2020	14,400	3,400	-	3,400	3,400	400	-	-	7,200	25,000
Ernest Spencer	2021	21,500	11,700	-	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000	32,800	180,800	214,000
Futamura USA	2016	194,400	11,600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	206,000
Global Grain	2020	23,200	9,240	-	21,120	21,120	21,120	19,800	-	83,160	115,600
Goodyear	2022	-	-	-	234,000	117,000	117,000	117,000	-	585,000	585,000
Harris Fabrication (Project Kool-Aid)	2022	-	960	-	53,050	36,050	36,050	36,050	27,840	189,040	190,000
Hayden Tower Service	2020	-	-	-	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	94,000	234,000	234,000
Heinen Aviation	2021	3,980	3,970	-	23,800	23,800	23,800	23,800	15,850	111,050	119,000
Hill's Pet Nutrition Colony	2019	171,600	-	-	16,800	7,600	-	-	-	24,400	196,000
Hill's Pet Nutrition Plant	2020	190,200	-	-	85,800	42,900	22,100	-	-	150,800	341,000
HME	2020	136,800	51,600	-	154,600	154,600	154,600	154,600	40,200	658,600	847,000
HME (Cap X Amendment)	2021	19,190	6,681	-	34,129	-	-	-	-	34,129	60,000
Industrial Maintenance	2017	109,447	4,000	-	36,000	34,553	-	-	-	70,553	184,000
J6 Enterprises (THM)	2021	38,800	9,189	-	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	36,011	236,011	284,000
LifeTech Sciences	2020	1,940	2,758	-	4,700	1,700	14,300	14,300	36,802	71,802	76,500
Mainline Printing	2022	134,000	-	-	52,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	116,000	250,000
Mercury Broadband	2021	-	-	-	180,600	168,000	168,000	168,000	155,400	840,000	840,000
Midwestern Metals/Custom Dredgeworks	2020	-	-	-	28,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000	96,000	96,000
OneSource (Project Pages)	2022	-	-	-	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000	100,000
Polo Custom Products	2022	-	28,009	-	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500	44,891	70,891	98,900
Ryder	2022	-	60,500	-	171,333	100,833	43,334	-	-	315,500	376,000
SE2	2016	956,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	956,000
Topeka Foundry	2020	50,400	22,900	-	79,100	79,100	79,100	79,100	32,800	349,200	422,500
Topeka Foundry (Cap X Amendment)	2022	-	554	-	9,446	-	-	-	-	9,446	10,000
Torgeson Electric (Project Bolt)	2022	-	-	56,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	276,000	276,000
Wal-Mart	2019	3,520,000	-	-	780,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	130,000	1,450,000	4,970,000
<b>Total Committed - Performance Based</b>		<b>6,352,352</b>	<b>495,061</b>	<b>56,000</b>	<b>2,510,378</b>	<b>1,457,256</b>	<b>1,085,304</b>	<b>1,018,150</b>	<b>743,594</b>	<b>6,870,682</b>	<b>13,718,095</b>
Expected:											
Small Business Incentive Program		-	255,504	244,496	400,000	-	-	-	-	644,496	900,000
Workforce Barriers		-	-	-	25,000	-	-	-	-	25,000	25,000
Choose Topeka		357,750	74,750	167,500	-	-	-	-	-	167,500	600,000
Choose Topeka 2.0		-	25,571	5,283	222,784	111,362	-	-	-	339,429	365,000
Innovation Campus		278,770	281,305	4,567,497	100,000	102,000	104,040	106,121	331,267	5,310,925	5,871,000
<b>Total Expected</b>		<b>636,520</b>	<b>637,130</b>	<b>4,984,776</b>	<b>747,784</b>	<b>213,362</b>	<b>104,040</b>		<b>331,267</b>	<b>6,487,350</b>	<b>7,761,000</b>
<b>Total Committed and Expected</b>		<b>6,988,872</b>	<b>1,132,191</b>	<b>5,040,776</b>	<b>3,258,162</b>	<b>1,670,618</b>	<b>1,189,344</b>		<b>1,074,861</b>	<b>13,365,952</b>	<b>21,479,095</b>
Under Consideration:											
Land Acquisitions		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pending Cash Incentives		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Under Consideration</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total before MWBD</b>		<b>6,988,872</b>	<b>1,132,191</b>	<b>5,040,776</b>	<b>3,258,162</b>	<b>1,670,618</b>	<b>1,189,344</b>		<b>1,074,861</b>	<b>13,365,952</b>	<b>21,479,095</b>
MWBD Carryover										1,311,000	1,311,000
<b>Total</b>										<b>14,676,952</b>	<b>22,790,095</b>

## Small Business, Innovation, and Entrepreneurial Development

A high-performing innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystem drives the creation of new high-paying jobs, attracts investment, helps to fill gaps in the community and raises awareness of a district, city or region's brand nationally and internationally. Our approach to continue strengthening the Topeka and Shawnee County innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem is multi-faceted and includes development of resources for high-growth potential companies in the innovation and technology sectors, supporting the growth of existing businesses in Topeka and Shawnee County and generating startup businesses. The strides Topeka and Shawnee County have made to elevate our entrepreneurship ecosystem in the past several years show that this strategy falls on fertile ground here. With our early successes of launching the Plug and Play animal health/ag tech focused accelerator program in 2020 and taking first steps in launching the development of an innovation center, 2024 will be focused on finding new ways of turning opportunity into true economic impact.

In 2024, the small business, entrepreneurship, and innovation budget aligns with the GO Topeka strategic plan and includes the following highlights:

- **Establishing the physical and digital infrastructure to support business attraction opportunities generated by the Plug and Play program and by the establishment of the Topeka Region as a hub of innovation in the animal health corridor** "Place" is at the center or heart of our innovation strategy. By moving forward with the pre-leasing and construction of the Astra Innovation Center the infrastructure is established to provide a future home for innovators, entrepreneurs and startups within our community and throughout the world. The addition of New Market Tax Credits will help close the gap for an estimated Q2 2024 construction state date. The budget reflects costs associated with the innovation campus including marketing, legal fees, operating expenses as required by GO Topeka's stub lease, tenant lease and business incentive agreements. Digital infrastructure was also set in place in 2022 through the launch of the Kansas Innovation Dealroom platform. This platform tracks startup activity in Topeka and surrounding regions while also creating a database of angel and venture capital investors, corporate partners, local business partners and government/non-profit entities that are critical to the success of the ecosystem. Costs associated with management of the platform are accounted for in the budget.
- **Travel Scholarships for Plug and Play startups to host them in Topeka for Expo and Regional Visits.** Plug and Play Topeka hosts cohorts twice per year for a period of 3 months each. Each cohort consists of 8-12 startups from throughout the US and around the world. It is important to showcase the unique strengths of Topeka and the surrounding region by connecting these startups to local and regional partners. By utilizing partnerships such as K-State 105, Animal Health Corridor, Network Kansas, Angel Investors, VC's and other local resource partners we are creating a community for startup attraction, growth and expansion to drive economic prosperity for the community, region and state.
- **Elevate Topeka as a hub of innovation.** Building out the foundation of our ecosystem around our strategic initiatives of Investment, Education & Business Services, Talent Pipeline, and Community Engagement/Involvement further develops and promotes Topeka's value proposition as a hub for innovation. Hosting events such as Plug and Play Expo, Innovation Showcase events and trainings provides an opportunity to connect Plug and Play startups to local resources while also educating our community stakeholders on the importance of programming within the ecosystem. Create an equitable ecosystem by providing entrepreneurial opportunities and resources for youth, collegiate, minority and women as well as entry level, intermediate and advanced stages.

- **Programming.** We will continue to offer programs with successful track records, edit programs to meet the needs of the community and add several new programs to advance efforts to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem:
  - ◆ Propeller Mentoring Program to pair startups and small businesses with mentors who can provide guidance and connectivity to resources
  - ◆ FastTrac accelerator program to equip entrepreneurs with skills, tools and resources to grow their business
  - ◆ Support of the Washburn University Pitch Competition including winners attending Plug and Play Summit in Silicon Valley. Connecting Washburn Students to Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge as mentors for Middle and High School students.
  - ◆ Host the Small Business Awards with the goal of these businesses moving to the national competition.
  - ◆ Small business advocacy and communication through multiple channels including Shop Local, Shop Small Promotions to support our existing local businesses, Small Business Council sponsored networking events, educational opportunities, especially in collaboration with resource partners
  - ◆ Global Entrepreneurship Week (marketing and networking directed toward enhancing the Topeka/Shawnee County entrepreneurial ecosystem with the goal of building more GEW activities and focus on Topeka/Shawnee County over the next several years)
  - ◆ Continuing to build partnerships with SBDC, Shawnee County Startups, Omni, K-State Extension, Network Kansas and other local partners to collaborate on events, trainings, and other resources needed to support the small business and entrepreneurial community.
  
- **Small Business Incentive Program.** 2023 saw continued success with continued increase in applications and strong ROI from participating businesses. The outreach informational sessions and trainings in the Hispanic/Latinx communities is bringing not only an increase in applications but also stronger quality of applications. Transitioning the program to an online application and tracking system has improved the user experience and allowed the team to spend more time working with businesses. In 2024 the program will continue to offer incentives for innovation and commercialization that further development of Topeka's brand as a hub for innovation.
  
- **Continuously improve access to resources and service providers.** In order to support Topeka's entrepreneurs, it is important to provide easy access to local service providers that can help startups launch their businesses faster with a higher probability of success. We are committed to reviewing new technologies to make better use of startups time, improve access to resources and improve tracking of success metrics.

### *Kansas SBDC at Washburn University*

Serving nine counties in Kansas with offices in Topeka, Manhattan and Wetmore, the Kansas SBDC at Washburn University is a nationally accredited small business development center and is an indispensable partner in Topeka's entrepreneurial ecosystem. It offers free one-on-one consulting to more than 400 clients each year, covering assistance with issues related to business start, funding, management, growth, and succession planning or selling a business. GO Topeka partners with the SBDC to fulfill its mission of providing those support services to startups and small businesses.



# Minority & Women-Owned Business Development (MWBD)

## Minority & Women-Owned Business Development (MWBD)

2023 brought about collaborations internally and externally to promote accessibility, visibility, and sustainability within the small and minority business ecosystem. This new energy continues to foster growth in the underserved and marginalized communities and will cultivate impact on all levels. The year also closed with the retirement of a devoted leader and advocate, Glenda Washington.

2024 will bring about re-organization with the addition of Israel Sanchez as Director of Equity and Business Development. This role will serve as a peer and collaborate with the Director of Entrepreneurship and Small Business to assess the needs of the community and realign programming as needed. This will include working diligently with the leadership of East Topeka, Central Topeka, North Topeka and other LMI communities throughout Shawnee County, playing a key role in building an ecosystem that supports all entrepreneurs in our community.

All programming is currently under review to assess community needs, identify gaps and develop strategic programs that support economic prosperity, promote business and community growth that address the elimination of poverty and support a better quality of life. These may include but not limited to:

- ◆ Continue to work with community leaders to address disparities in LMI communities
- ◆ Support minority and women owned business startups by providing educational programs that sharpen their skills and provide access to opportunity
- ◆ Design and implement industry specific business trainings and events that will spur growth and highlight minority and women-owned businesses
- ◆ Minority and Women-owned business pitch contest opportunities to support at various stages of development and growth
- ◆ Continue to support access to funding through First Opportunity Fund and Empowerment Loans
- ◆ Monitor growth, cost, success, collaborations

Identify opportunities for minority and women owned businesses to meet with buyers of goods and services on a state, federal and local level

- ◆ Host annual events that will inform and elevate the status of women and the importance of developing strong women business owners, and collaborate with National events such as Minority Enterprise Development Week
- ◆ Promote and advocate for women and minority owned businesses on the local, state, and national level

## Talent Initiatives

Talent Initiatives focus on growing, retaining, and attracting talent, and educating our current community members to ensure a competitive future workforce for Topeka and Shawnee County. GO Topeka understands that to provide a quality workforce, focus must be placed not only on workforce development, but on talent attraction, employee retention, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will continue to develop and grow partnerships between community members, businesses, and schools, from early childhood education to post-secondary institutions; ensuring that education and training providers are well-aligned and have the resources they need to prepare the community's younger residents for college and careers. Because a diverse, well-educated workforce will produce the quality that employers need, focus will be placed on addressing 'talent pipeline' needs in the community.

- **Align the Talent Pipeline**
  - ◆ Work with workforce development partners to ensure collaboration between education partners and employers and foster communications between employers directly
  - ◆ Provide research support to assess the pipeline
  
- **Maintain and Grow Opportunities for College & Career Readiness**
  - ◆ Continue to oversee outcomes at the Washburn Tech East campus, in partnership with the Washburn Institute of Technology, ensuring programming is aligned to engage at-risk students and adults
  - ◆ Provide scholarships for high-growth, high-demand industry training at local educational institutions
  
- **Attract & Retain Talent**
  - ◆ Build relationships with area HR representatives to discuss barriers and opportunities regarding talent development, attraction, and retention
  - ◆ Convene and partner with community providers as it may relate to various workforce barrier issues, as assessed in the community, to ensure positive outcomes for employees and employers alike
  - ◆ Support workforce attraction and professional development for young professionals in Topeka and Shawnee County
  - ◆ Strategically market Topeka/Shawnee County as a place to live and work

# General Economic Development Activities

## *Economic Analysis*

Proprietary data and analyses are an integral part of strategic economic development. GO Topeka deploys a variety of tools to model scenarios in Topeka and Shawnee County and mine data to help guide decisions throughout the community.

- Modeling tool for economic impact analysis
- Cloud-based labor data tool
- Web-based survey system
- Data visualization tools
- Integrated statistical software
- Data modeling software
- C2ER Membership: Council for Community and Economic Research

## *Administration*

Administration expenses represent the necessary costs incurred to maintain the organization's daily operations. These expenses are not directly tied to any specific programs discussed above but are vital to the success of GO Topeka's economic development programs.

- Occupancy expenses such as rent, storage and parking
- Office expenses such as telecommunications, office supplies and postage
- Information technology expenses such as software subscriptions and IT services
- Administration/Finance/HR/Facilities support
- Depreciation
- Insurance and taxes

### **Astra Innovation Center – BioReality Project Update**

Tenant Pre-lease – 3 LOI's signed for a total of 25%

New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) with CDE's

- BioReality seeking \$20M in NMTC's to close the gap on construction cost increases
- They have received \$11-15M in verbal commitments from 2 CDE's
- Their consultant is projecting it could be 60-90 days before balance is awarded due to CDE filings for 2024 in progress simultaneously.
- There are 2 CDE's in the region that BioReality and local contacts are in conversation with

Backup Plan

- Reviewing options to Phase the project in with the reduced level of NMTC's
- Working with CRB and KBS on viable phasing plans; majority of project costs are tied to the center building due to HVAC, elevators, center entry for circulation between buildings.

Project Readiness/Key Agreements

- Property Tax Abatement - All project readiness efforts are currently on track to allow a construction start in late March 2024, except the property tax abatement. This is the primary focus pending the NMTC's.
- Finalize Lease Agreements
- Parking Agreement
- Incentives Agreement

City of Topeka & Shawnee County



## *Agenda Item No. 3B*

**JEDO Board Meeting  
February 14, 2024**

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### **ACTION ITEM:**

REVIEW options for continued investment in the Astra Innovation Center



Astra Innovation Center Request  
February 14, 2024  
Stephanie Moran, SVP Innovation

---

*Update*

We are at a junction point with the Astra Innovation Center. As presented in the September 2023 JEDO meeting, BioReality was in the process of applying for \$21M in New Market Tax Credits (NMTC's) to close the gap on increased construction costs for the project. To date, BioReality has secured \$11-\$15M in verbal commitments which still leaves a funding gap. The options at this point are to 1) continue to wait on the NMTC's which could be an additional 3-11 months with no guarantee, 2) to move forward with a phased approach with construction starting no later than 7/1/24 with current available investment of \$14.5M, 3) terminate the contract with BioReality which includes penalties for early termination and effectively re-starts this project to secure location, developer, financing, etc. A full presentation will be made at the GO Topeka Board meeting with additional details.

*Innovation Advisory Board Recommendation*

Based on increased construction costs and loss of anchor tenant, the Innovation Advisory Board is recommending moving forward with a phased buildout of the Astra Innovation Center with Phase 1 to begin construction on or before July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. This phased approach allows for construction to begin without meeting the original pre-lease thresholds. Phase 1 includes approximately 50,000 sq. ft. at an investment of \$14.5M.

City of Topeka & Shawnee County



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## *Agenda Item No. 4A*

**JEDO Board Meeting  
February 14, 2024**

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**PRESENTATION:**

Go Topeka Quarterly Update – 2023 Q4



**JEDO**  
**Quarterly Report**  
**2023 Q4**



# CONTENTS

Q4 2023

4

Business Attraction &  
GO Topeka Dashboard



5

Equity &  
Opportunity



9

Small Business



10

Workforce  
& Talent



13

Choose  
Topeka



14

GO Topeka  
Staff



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6

Entrepreneurship  
& Innovation



8

Small Business  
Incentives



11

Forge  
Young Talent



12

Choose Topeka  
Website Traffic



15

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)!



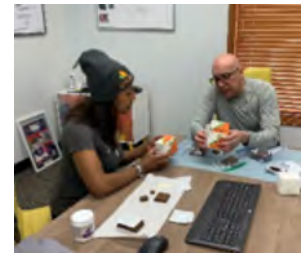
## Plug and Play Summit

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:

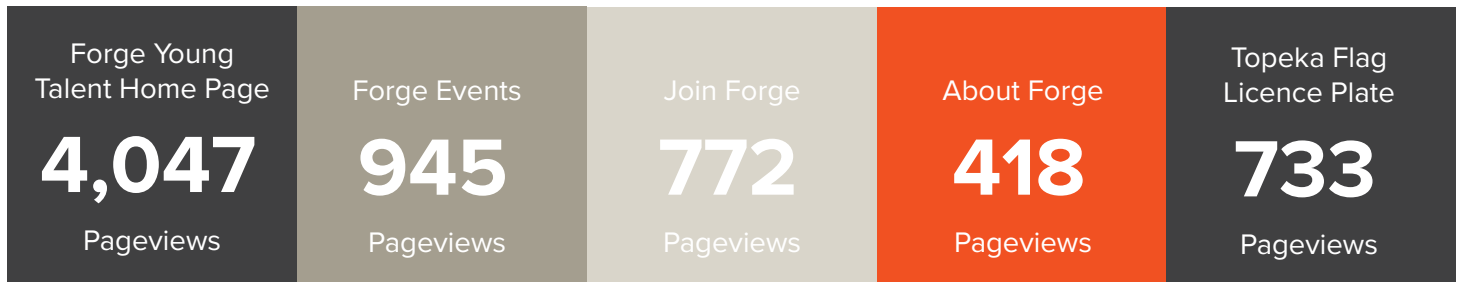
When evaluating website traffic, we looked at the top five pages of the Forge ecosystem within the GO Topeka website. Forge made a concerted effort to drive traffic back to the website during campaigns and event marketing to train members to check the website for event information. Website information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

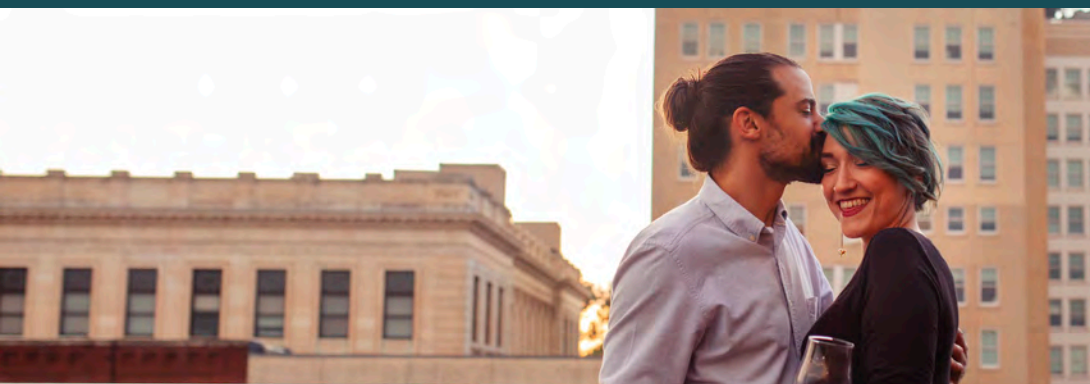
\$3,431,279  
RETURN ON INVESTMENT  
AFTER 5 YEARS

### \* 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