



**JEDO**  
**Quarterly Report**  
**2024 Q1**

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2024 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 35 active projects in various industry sectors: 15 advanced manufacturing, seven aviation and aerospace, four R&D and distribution, two general office/data center, three bioscience/technology, and four not given.

## 35 ACTIVE PROJECTS



Manufacturing

15



Aviation

7



R&D & Distribution

4



Office

2



Bioscience/Tech

3

Other

4

## New Business · Retention & Expansion · Small Business · Women & Minority · Choose Topeka YTD as of 3/21/24

88

New Projects

19

Completed Projects

62

Active Projects

7

New Jobs

98

Retained Jobs

95

Training Investment  
(number of people impacted)

102

Outreach/Assisted  
(number of companies/  
individuals)

\$386,588

Capital Investment



# Equity and Opportunity

## Asset Mapping Project Update: SourceLink Collaboration

We are pleased to report that the Asset Mapping project, in collaboration with SourceLink, has successfully commenced. Our initial meeting with the core team took place earlier this month, setting a strong foundation for the project. To maintain momentum and ensure continuous progress, weekly tasks will be assigned to all team members involved.

A significant upcoming event is the Resource Partner Workshop, scheduled for June 11th. This workshop will be a pivotal gathering, as all resource partners will convene in person. The main objective of this workshop is to collectively identify and leverage our strengths within the Topeka and Shawnee County entrepreneurial ecosystem. This initiative is a critical step towards enhancing our collaborative efforts and maximizing the impact of our local resources. Organizations providing Entrepreneurial or Small Business support can contact [Israel.Sanchez@TopekaPartnership.com](mailto:Israel.Sanchez@TopekaPartnership.com) for more information.

## FastTrac Collaboration with Omni Circle

We recently collaborated with Omni Circle on the FastTrac courses. Through this alliance, budding entrepreneurs were equipped with the essential knowledge and skills necessary for success in their ventures. The comprehensive curriculum covered a spectrum of topics vital for entrepreneurial endeavors, ranging from strategic planning to financial management. Participants emerged from the program with a deepened understanding of market dynamics, effective business strategies, and the tools needed to navigate the competitive landscape.

The graphic features the Omni Circle logo on the left and the Kauffman FastTrac logo on the right. A QR code is positioned in the top right corner. The main text reads: "You have an idea for a business. Now what?" followed by "The idea. That's where it starts." Below this, it asks, "Now, what do you do with the idea? You could start a business - but could you start a viable business? Find the answer with FastTrac®." A small paragraph describes the course as a flexible framework for starting a business. The background shows a woman in a classroom setting. At the bottom, an orange banner states: "This immersive course is designed to provide you with relevant content and tools as you think about your business idea."

## Spanish Language Efforts

Our outreach to the Latino community has been bolstered by our commitment to inclusivity, exemplified by the translation of membership documents and other collateral materials into Spanish. By ensuring accessibility to vital information in their native language, we've bridged linguistic barriers and extended our services to a broader audience.



# Innovation & Entrepreneurship

## K-State 105

The K-State 105 team has started the year off strong with several events. GO Topeka is a key stakeholder in this initiative as the urban pilot partner along with Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center are the rural partner and Network Kansas, K-State Research and Extension as the statewide partners. The team visited Topeka on January 25th to learn more about our small business, entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem and to identify additional collaborative opportunities. There was also a Partner Convening meeting held at K-State on February 13th where Stephanie Moran, SVP of Innovation participated in the partnership panel. Finally the K-State Day at the Capitol took place on February 21st in Topeka with formal remarks from Kansas State University President Richard Linton, interactions with legislators and information booths set up throughout the rotunda.



## Plug and Play Selection Day

Following an in-person pitch event at Plug and Play Headquarters in

Sunnyvale, CA, Plug and Play Topeka has announced the 16 Animal Health startups and 11 Agtech startups that were selected for the newest batches of the Animal Health and Agtech accelerator programs. The program aims to foster innovation within those two industries, both of which have a significant impact on the region. The chosen startups will participate in a series of business development

webinars, mentor sessions with industry experts, and projects with the programs' corporate partners (many of which have bases in the Midwest).

This year's cohort comprises companies from 10 different countries—and 10 different states within the United States. Their technologies seek to address a variety of different problems within the two industries: from precision farming, digitalization, and automation in the Agtech space to diagnostics, alternative ingredients, and pet marketplaces in the Animal Health space.

Andria Beal, one of the founders in the new group, said, "EpiPaws is very excited for this opportunity to be in the Plug and Play accelerator! We are eager to learn, expand our network, and hopefully forge

some new partnerships that will help us reach our goals for this year." Beal will be participating in the virtual program from Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

CAMSENS, another startup participating in the program, is based in Schleusingen and Bremen, Germany. Chief Business Development Officer Erika Barreto, said, "It feels surreal to be accepted to the Plug and Play Accelerator Program. Running a Start-up can be overwhelmingly challenging, filled with uncertainty and moments of doubt. To pitch in Silicon Valley and then be chosen by corporate partners for the program is a leap of faith. It is a 'green light' that we are on the right path with our innovative solutions. This opportunity is a significant chance to learn and advance our company CAMSENS toward success. We are now more hopeful than ever that this year will be our breakthrough – 'Auf ein erfolgversprechendes Jahr!'"

This will be just the second batch for program manager Anne Gunden to lead. "I enjoyed every second of the last program,



so I am thrilled that the time has finally come to get the next batch started! I feel incredibly lucky that my job involves interacting with and learning from passionate startup founders—people who are trying to change the world for the better. My goal is to support these companies in any way I can as our team provides them with access to resources, mentors, and the greater Plug and Play ecosystem. We want to do everything we can to help them impact their respective industries.”

Lindsay Lebahn, who will now serve as Director in addition to her Partner Success Manager role for Plug and Play Agtech and Animal Health, is looking forward to hosting the graduation event in Topeka once again. “We are so lucky to have this program based here in Topeka. There’s something so special about the Midwest; we know it as a team, and the startups feel it when they get to experience the region firsthand. We want to continue to collaborate creatively to continue the momentum that has been built over the last three years. We’re excited for others to witness the technologies these startup founders have developed at our Expo in June.”

Official program events have already begun, with orientation having taken place last Thursday. The program will run for approximately twelve weeks, with its culminating event set to take place in Topeka, KS on June 6. That event, which is co-hosted by Go Topeka, is open to the public.

Stephanie Moran, Senior Vice President of Innovation for Go Topeka, is looking forward to connecting another group of startups with the local ecosystem. “Having the startups pitch in person to be part of the accelerator program has been a beneficial twist this year! It’s allowed all of the partners to spend time meeting and getting to know startups prior to final selection and has initiated strong collaborations early in the process. We’re looking forward to hosting the startups in Topeka, so we can showcase what our region has to offer those in the Animal Health and Agtech industries.”

### **Animal Health Startups**

Arch Pet Food  
Athian  
CAMSENS  
CheckForPet  
Dog Child  
EpiPaws  
Friends & Family Pet Food Company  
GenoTwin  
Isomark  
Lampovet  
Livestock Labs  
Organicin Scientific  
Planet Sustainable Technologies  
Poultry Patrol

### **Agtech Startups**

Agrigator  
Athian  
DigiFarm  
Gårdskapital  
LandPrint  
Mapana  
Oaken  
RawData  
RealmFive  
Terra  
TRIC Robotics



**PLUGANDPLAY**  
ANIMAL HEALTH

**PLUGANDPLAY**  
AGTECH

**go**  
**>topeka**

**TOPEKA**

# EXPO DAY

**JUNE 6, 2024**

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## OUR PARTNERS



**SAVE THE DATE**

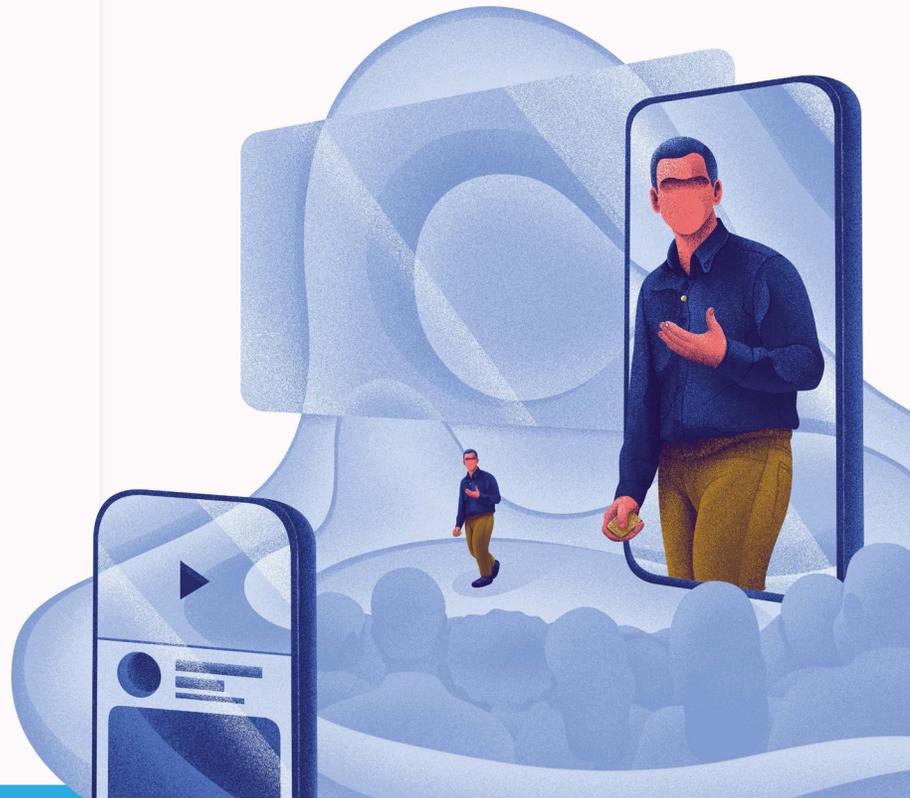
## Join our Agtech and Animal Health EXPO Day!

Whether you're an industry expert, an entrepreneur, or someone interested in the growth and development of our region, you won't want to miss this event.

Join us for a day of innovation, comprising pitches from a diverse group of startups focused on disrupting the Agtech and Animal Health industries, keynotes from industry experts, and a variety of networking opportunities.

**We're looking forward to seeing you there!**

Register [here](#).



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Stephanie Myran - [stephanie.myran@topekapartnership.com](mailto:stephanie.myran@topekapartnership.com)

Anne Gunden - [a.gunden@pnptc.com](mailto:a.gunden@pnptc.com)

Lindsay Lebahn - [l.lebahn@pnptc.com](mailto:l.lebahn@pnptc.com)

# Workforce & Talent

See attached documents for full Workforce Report

## 2024 Q1 Workforce Data

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

**98,420**  
TOPEKA

**138,728**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 2,277,349  
US 267,712,000

**Labor Force Participation**

**63,802**  
TOPEKA

**92,405**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 1,502,788  
US 167,224,000

**Employment**

**61,752**  
TOPEKA

**89,618**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 1,475,903  
US 160,440,000

**Jobs**

**87,354**  
TOPEKA

**102,112**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 1,439,208  
US 155,140,683

**Average Wages**

**\$57,088**  
TOPEKA

**\$57,056**  
SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS \$57,958  
US \$71,767

**Labor Force Participation Rate**

**64.83%** TOPEKA

**66.60%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 65.99%  
US 62.46%

**Employment-Population Ratio**

**62.74%** TOPEKA

**64.60%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 64.02%  
US 59.93%

**Unemployment Rate**

**3.2%** TOPEKA

**3.0%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 3.0%  
US 4.1%

\*Total Civilian Non-institutionalized Population



# Small Business Incentive Program

## Incentive Types

**Construction**

5

**Marketing**

6

**Architecture  
& Design**

0

**Equipment**

10

**Proof of Concept**

1

**Professional  
Services**

2

PREAPPROVAL  
2024

24

Incentives  
Totaling

\$118,400

LIFE OF PROGRAM

700

Incentives  
Totaling

\$3,044,872

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

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF APPLICATIONS IN PROCESS

3

Minority Owned

8

Women Owned

0

Veteran Owned

0

Disabled Owned

0

SBA 8(a)- Certified

## Community Outreach: Small Business Incentives

During the first quarter of the year, our community outreach for the Small Business Incentive program involved engaging with various groups of small business owners and supporters. We met with the NOTO board to discuss our incentives and programs tailored for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Additionally, we connected with merchants at Fairlawn Plaza and collaborated with the team at TopCity Realty to spread awareness about our initiatives, programs and resources.

## Small Business Incentives Application Window

The Winter Small Business Incentive window closed and the committee approved to award almost 120k to 17 different companies, covering 24 different incentive projects. The Spring 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.



# Small Business

## Spring Women's Forum

On February 8th, we celebrated Women's History month with a packed house at the spring Women's Forum. Attendees joined us at Hotel Topeka for a morning of inspiration and skill building – they learned how psychological safety plays a huge role in personal and professional development, tactics in negotiating, and mentorship strategies for growth. Thank you to our Presenting Sponsor Envista Credit Union.



## Small Business Council Training Series

On Feb 8th, the Small Business Council hosted their bi-monthly training. This month featured Matt Deutsch and Becky Shaw of BT&CO as they presented on Taxes and Payroll for Small Businesses. This engaging session allowed participants to listen, learn, and practice skills to better help them prepare for the upcoming Tax Season and learn to how set themselves up for success moving forward. 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.



## 43rd Annual Small Business Awards

The 43rd Annual Small Business Awards is quickly approaching on May 9th, 2024. We are excited to honor our finalist and winners at the luncheon event, emceed by WIBW's Melissa Brunner, with an appearance by Mayor Padilla. Nearly 300 nominations were submitted and were considered in the selection process, leading to the 20 finalists that will be honored and then the 7 that will take home the overall for their categories.

Finalist Include:

### Emerging Innovation

Bloomfield Physical Therapy  
LifeTech Sciences  
Love Lifesciences

### Women Owned

CoHort Digital  
Onyx Salon  
The Brownstone

### Manufacturer

Automation Controls  
Stevenson Company

### Micro Enterprise

AO Nola Praline Candy  
Flying Fish Divers  
Whaynes Herbs and Natural Products

### Minority Owned

King Auto Glass  
Milk & Honey  
Patterson Family Child Care Center

**Top City Business of the Year will chosen from the winners of each category.**

### Young Entrepreneur

Circle Coffee Co.  
EcoFresh Power Wash  
H&H Designs

### Veteran Owned

8 Iron Therapy  
Curb Appeal  
Once Upon a Party KS



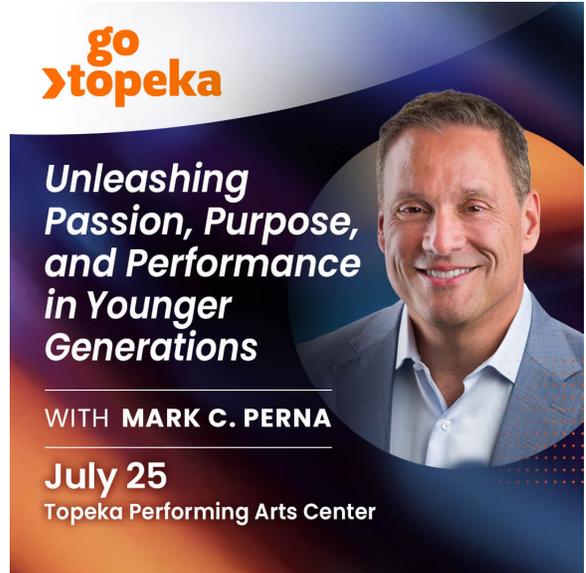
# Coming Up

## EDUCATION & INDUSTRY SUMMIT

Join us on July 25th from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm (doors open at 8:30 am) for an enlightening journey at our Education and Industry Summit.

Our keynote speaker, Mark Perna, will unravel strategies to navigate the evolving landscape of work and education, empowering the next generation to soar to their highest potential. Perna is a renowned generational workforce expert and Forbes contributor, this summit promises insights that will reshape your approach to education and workforce development.

In the afternoon, dive deep into relevant topics with engaging breakout sessions tailored for all attendees.



**go topeka**

*Unleashing  
Passion, Purpose,  
and Performance  
in Younger  
Generations*

WITH **MARK C. PERNA**

**July 25**  
Topeka Performing Arts Center



**Education & Industry Summit**

**SAVE THE DATE**

JULY 25, 2024

# Choose Topeka 2.0 Relocation Incentive

## \$237,750

IN TOTAL COMMITTED FUNDS  
\$217,750 EMPLOYER MATCH FUNDS  
\$20,000 BOOMERANG FUNDS

### 52

APPROVED  
FAMILIES

### 26

RENTING

### 26

PURCHASED  
HOMES

### 19

# OF STATES  
MOVED FROM

### 48

EMPLOYER  
MATCHED

### 4

BOOMERANG

### 22

UNIQUE  
EMPLOYER  
SUBMITTALS

### 10,500+

PROFILES  
CREATED ON  
SKILLFIT

## ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

## \$103,260

TOTAL AVERAGE SALARY

\$110,025 EMPLOYER MATCH  
\$89,732 BOOMERANG

## 14.7X

\$1,517,992  
RETURN ON INVESTMENT  
IN YEAR 1

## 75.7X

\$7,816,782  
RETURN ON INVESTMENT  
AFTER 5 YEARS

### \*INTERESTING FACT\*

Topeka is now a pilot community for the statewide boomerang talent attraction program launching this summer. We expect to see an increase in boomerangs moving back to Topeka.

## 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.



# Forge Young Talent

## 2024 Q1

We have also been busy in Q1 of 2024 and have really kept the momentum from last year going. In Q1, we've hosted 4 major events – Forge 25th Anniversary Gala, 2nd Annual Kansas Young Professional Day at the Capitol,

a sold-out cooking class, and a 2024 kickoff social. Forge has averaged 81 young professionals in attendance through our first four major events! We are also launching a couple of new programs this year that are getting close to rolling out.



## FORGE ON BOARDS

In an effort to get more young people on community boards we have launched a new program to help achieve that. The Forge on Boards Program will help pair young professionals with community boards that are looking for young professionals to fill seats and contribute to their organization. You can see a preview of the website here: <https://www.gotopeka.com/forge-on-boards/>

## TOPEKA FLAG LICENSE PLATE

Since the passing of the Topeka Flag License Plate bill, Forge has worked with the KDOR and Shawnee County Motor Vehicles to get the Topeka Flag License Plate available for purchase for Kansas residents. Forge will be promoting the Topeka Flag License Plate to increase community pride and spread positivity about Topeka throughout the state. <https://www.gotopeka.com/topeka-license-plate/#>

[Click here to read the press release](#)



# 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

**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





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)**



# 2024 Go Topeka Board of Directors

## Elected Directors

Scott Hunsicker	Kansas Financial Resources
Chris Faulk	McElroy Electric, Inc.
Jim Klausman	Midwest Health
Cassandra Taylor	HTK Architects
Jacob Wamego	Prairie Band, LLC
Doug Wolff	Security Benefit
Jeff Martin	Evergy
Paul Bossert	Premier Staffing
Martha Piland	MB Piland
Sara Girard	Central National Bank
Manny Herron	Haus Property Partners
Dr. Rob Kenagy	Stormont Vail Health
Kevin Rake	HME, Inc.
Travis Morris	Summit Materials
Troy Simoneau	Kansas Gas Service
Dr. Sam Al-Murrani	Bimini
Daina Williams	L&J Building Maintenance
Scott Campbell	The University of Kansas Health System St. Francis
Kurt Kuta	CoreFirst Bank & Trust
Shane Hillmer	Southwest Publishing
Calla Haggard	Community Bank
Joe Caldwell	Bartlett & West
Tammy Dishman	Capitol Federal

## Directors Appointed at Large

Michael Odupitan	Omni Circle
Dr. Kevin Hahn	Tri-Source Pharma
Linessa Frazier	American Century Investments
Marvin Spees	Capital City Oil
Neal Spencer	Ernest-Spencer
Ashley Bettis	PTMW, Inc
Joe Hishmeh	Fellowship Bible Church

## Directors By Virtue of Position Held

Michael Padilla	City of Topeka, Mayor
Kevin Cook	Shawnee County Commissioner
Rich Eckert	Shawnee County Councilor
Neil Dobler	City Council Member
Curtis Sneden	MTAA
Marshall Meek	Washburn University
Richard Nienstedt	City of Topeka, City Manager
Lt. Col. Chris Hill	190th Refueling Wing

# go topeka

A Greater Topeka Partnership Organization

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



Accredited Economic Development Organization



Prepared for JEDO  
Joint Economic Development Organization