



heartland**visioning**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**November 19, 2008**

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Heartland Visioning is a community-wide initiative to develop and implement a shared strategic vision for what we want our community to be in 5, 10, or 20 years. Our community is defined as Shawnee County which includes: Auburn, Rossville, Topeka, Silver Lake, Willard, and unincorporated Shawnee County.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1. Call to Action .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. We Need Change .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Growing Community</b>	
A. Retiree Replacement	
B. Regional Population Growth	
C. Attracting and Training a Creative, Highly Skilled Workforce	
D. Retaining and Attracting Young People	
E. Converting In-Commuters to Shawnee County Residents	
F. Knowledge Corridor	
G. Kansas Small County Migration	
H. Unemployment Rate	
<b>Prosperous Community</b>	
<b>Dynamic Community Core</b>	
A. Redeveloping Downtown Topeka	
B. Topeka Riverfront Development	
C. Older Neighborhoods in East, North, South and Central Topeka	
<b>Trusting Community</b>	
<b>3. Moving Forward .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4. Long-Term Strategic Plan .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Core Values</b>	
<b>Vision</b>	
<b>Key Benchmarks</b>	
<b>5. Mid-Term Strategic Plan.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Education .....</b>	<b>18</b>
A. Skills Training and Lifelong Learning	
B. Birth to Pre-K	
C. Pre-K-12	
D. Higher Education	
E. General	
<b>Quality of Life .....</b>	<b>21</b>
A. Recreation, Arts and Culture	
B. Public Health	
C. Sense of Community and Image	
D. Social Services	
E. Family and Youth	
F. Public Safety	
G. Seniors	
H. Inclusive Community	

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Mid-Term Strategic Plan (continued)</b>	
<b>Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>24</b>
A. Downtown and Riverfront	
B. Neighborhoods	
C. Growth Management and Planning	
D. Environment and Natural Resources	
E. High Speed Communication	
F. Transportation	
G. Beautification	
H. Historic Preservation	
I. Water, Sewer and Other Utilities	
J. Housing	
<b>Economic Development</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Government</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Private Sector Leadership</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>6. Glossary</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>7. Developing the Strategic Plan</b> .....	<b>34</b>
A. Phase I - Plan Development	
B. Phase II - Collaborative Implementation	
<b>8. Invitation to be a Vision Partner</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>9. Task Force Members &amp; Steering Committee</b> .....	<b>39</b>
<b>10. Process Funding Partners</b> .....	<b>40</b>

# 1. CALL TO ACTION

We are more than 5,000 citizens from throughout our community who have volunteered time and effort to the Heartland Visioning process. We want a growing, prosperous, dynamic and trusting community with a rich quality of life.

We are in a race. As other communities move ahead, we stand still.

Our population ages. As people retire, we do not attract enough new and young workers to replace them. Without new workers, we won't grow. Those of us who remain will pay more in taxes. Even now we must choose what we give up rather than what we can add to make this a better community.

If we are to win this race, we need our community to be so vibrant and so dynamic that people choose to live here.

We must increase the size of our workforce. We must retain our existing workforce and become a place new workers begin and grow careers. We must become a place where new workers thrive and prosper.

By making our community attractive to new workers, we will grow business and our economy, expand our tax base and provide ALL citizens with a growing, prosperous, dynamic and trusting community where ALL citizens enjoy a rich quality of life.

We must change. We believe that change MUST begin now. This is our plan for change.

This is your strategic plan. It has been created by you, it is about you and for you; it is the future of our community. The time to act is now.

## 2. WE NEED CHANGE

Unless we take dramatic steps toward lasting and meaningful change, our community will not keep pace with our changing society. A growing community is vital to attracting young people and to building a creative, highly skilled workforce. Unless we have a prosperous community, our quality of life – indeed our standard of living – is at risk. Much of this needed progress depends on preserving, rebuilding and revitalizing our older core communities that provide the foundation for a successful future throughout the entire county. An overriding goal of this process is to build a trusting community.

The Heartland Visioning volunteers identified and tackled these challenges. This diverse group of 5,000 citizens from throughout Shawnee County studied the statistics and offered suggestions on how we address these challenges under the six foundations that make up this strategic plan: education, quality of life, infrastructure, economic development, government and private sector leadership. The following data and citizen comments summarize the overwhelming evidence for the need to change.

### GROWING COMMUNITY

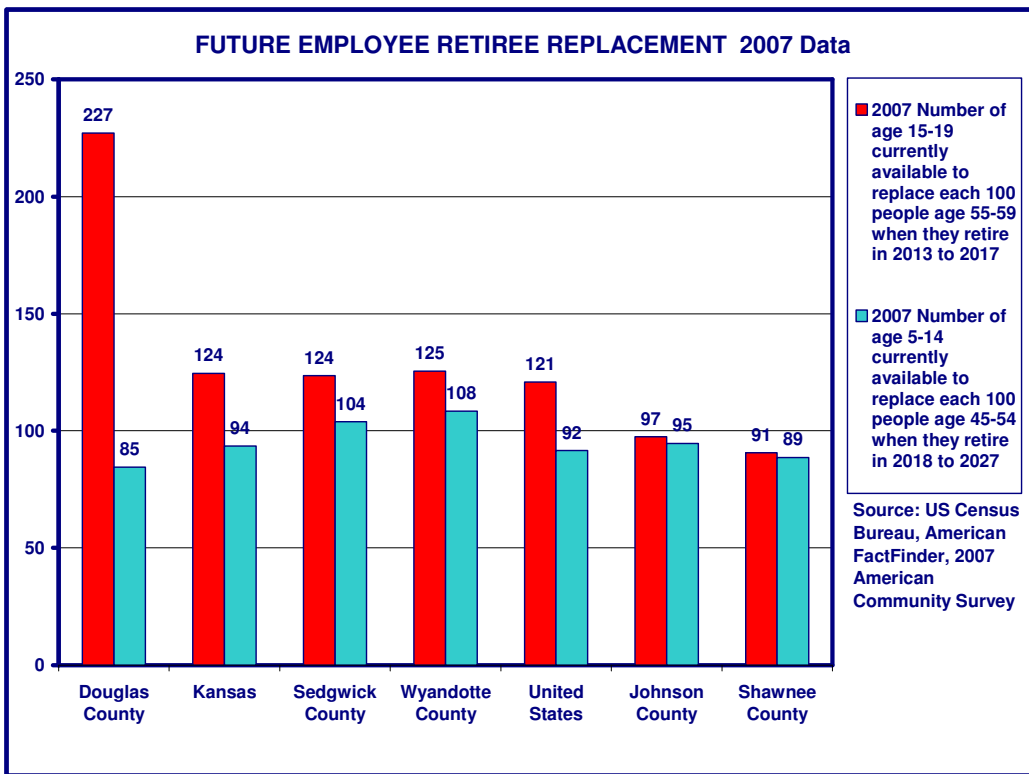
**Becoming a growing community is essential to ensure:**

- **Attracting and maintaining a creative, highly skilled workforce to eliminate an existing gap.**
- **Retaining Shawnee County young people and attracting other working age adults to relocate to Shawnee County to replace the retirement age workforce.**
- **Converting in-commuters to Shawnee County residents.**
- **Maintaining Shawnee County as the hub of its five surrounding counties (Douglas, Jackson, Jefferson, Osage and Wabaunsee).**

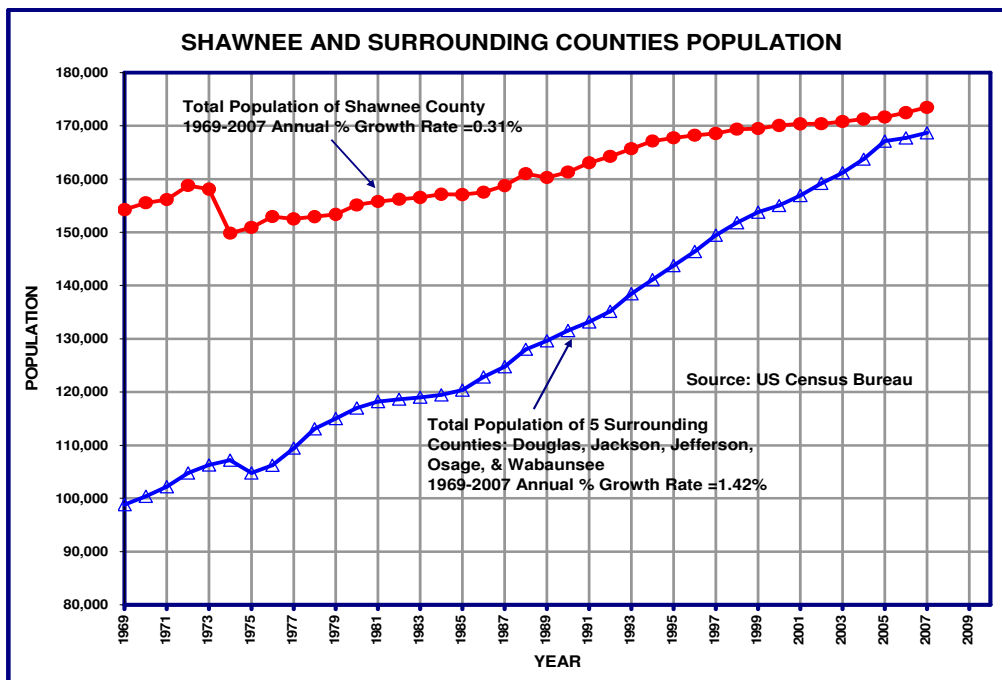
**Large companies can use a regional employee management strategy from Manhattan to Kansas City and offset the Shawnee County skilled workforce gap. However, small companies may have increasing difficulty managing their skilled workforce needs.**

#### **A. Retiree Replacement**

A critical Shawnee County problem is replacing future retirees. In 2007, there were only 91 age 15- to 19-year olds in Shawnee County to replace every 100 people age 55 to 59 as they begin to retire in the next five years. This 91 includes the highly educated young people who will elect to move to another area after college. This compares to 121 for the United States and 124 for Kansas. In 2007, there were 89 age 5-14 in Shawnee County to replace each 100 people age 45-54 as they begin to retire in ten years (see Exhibit next page). **The inability of Shawnee County to replace its retirees will require an increase in in-commuters (see section D).**



## B. Regional Population Growth



- Between 1969 and 2007, Shawnee County population increased 0.31% annually or 506 people per year.
- By comparison, the five surrounding counties' population increased at 1.42% or 1,838 people per year (see exhibit above). Kansas' population increased 0.57% or 14,210 per year, and the United States' increased 1.07% or 2,640,083 per year.
- Shawnee County has tremendous assets including the Capitol, I-70, the Knowledge Corridor which includes KU, KSU and WU, and being adjacent to the Kansas City Metro Area, etc.

### **C. Attracting and Training a Creative, Highly Skilled Workforce**

Based on public input from over 800 people in May and June 2008, Shawnee County's most critical problem is attracting a creative, highly skilled workforce.

Typical comments received included:

- Lack of a skilled workforce is our biggest impediment to job creation.
- We need to be bold in addressing and creating a globally-competitive workforce.
- Our challenge every day is to attract educated professionals. We locate them where they want to live from Manhattan to Kansas City and then learn how to manage them.
- Our biggest challenge is to attract young people as employees. We must attract and retain young people.
- My fellow graduates are selecting a city and moving there and then finding a job. Our community is not a desirable place for young professionals.
- When we hire professionals they are making the choice to live in Lawrence (approximately 90%) because of better zoning, focused areas of entertainment, more activities and better quality of life.
- My company has problems attracting young professionals (engineers and accountants) to our community.
- Our search firm doesn't want us to house prospective employees in Topeka. They want them in Lawrence or Kansas City hotels and then bring them to our office on a very carefully selected route.
- Major requirements to keep our young people
  - entertainment
  - recreation and leisure
  - quality education
  - exceptional quality of life
  - high self-image
  - high quality jobs
  - high speed communication access anywhere, anytime
- I can't get a plumber to come to my house for two weeks (shortage of skilled workers).
- I can't get an appointment with a dentist to fill my tooth for three weeks.

**Many strategies throughout the six foundations address changes required to increase the highly skilled workforce.** Some of these are pointed out throughout the section "We Need Change". Economic Development strategy #5 calls for an aggressive program recruiting highly skilled adults to relocate to Shawnee County (page 27).

### **D. Retaining and Attracting Young People**

In 2006-2007, there were 1,824 Shawnee County high school graduates and 48% indicated they plan to attend a four-year college. A large number of these graduates may elect to live outside Shawnee County.

As many as 400 of these young people will leave for college and may not return to Shawnee County after graduation. This is not only a loss of knowledge and family connectivity, but a financial drain.

Public and private expenditures (age 0 to 21) for each 21-year-old college graduate are estimated at over \$300,000<sup>1</sup>, or \$120 million per year for 400 young college graduates. **A plan to attract some of these young people and attract other young people to remain in Shawnee County should provide an excellent return on investment.**

**E. Converting In-Commuters to Shawnee County Residents**

In-commuters are those who live in another county and work in Shawnee County.

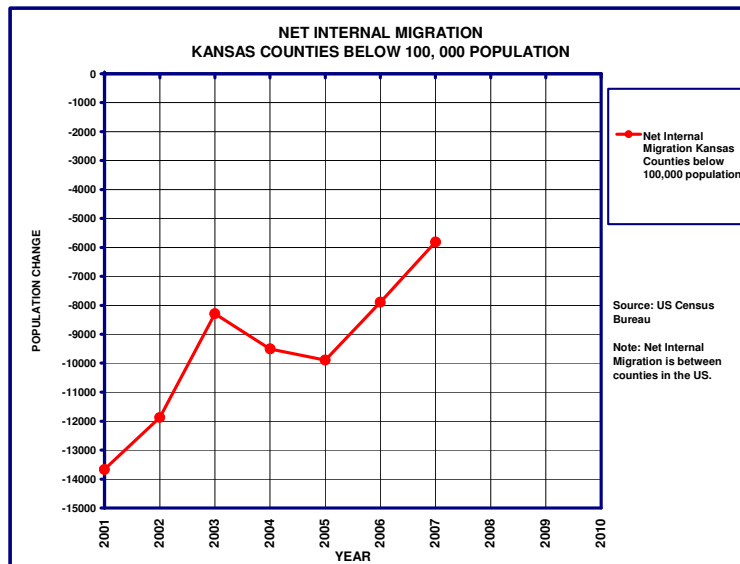
In the 2000 Census, there were 17,198 in-commuters to Shawnee County. This is up from 13,160 in 1990. This is an increase of 404 in-commuters per year during the 1990's. **If these in-commuters had elected to live in Shawnee County, it would have resulted in an additional Shawnee County population increase of about 600 per year.**

**F. Knowledge Corridor**

In the corridor from Manhattan to Lawrence, there are over 60,000 students in major universities including KU, KSU and WU. Retaining some of these students presents an opportunity for Shawnee County. Taking action to implement the **Heartland Visioning** strategies will provide the infrastructure and quality of life to attract these students. **They will only come to our community if we give them a reason to come.** Education strategy D.2 is an example (page 19).

**G. Kansas Small County Migration**

Between 2001 and 2007, the 100 Kansas counties below 100,000 populations had a cumulative net internal migration of -66,930 people. This means 66,930 more people moved out of these counties than moved in from the other counties in the United States. The trend is improving as the annual migration varied from -13,668 in 2001 to -5,815 in 2007 (see exhibit below). **However, there is probably still an opportunity to attract people from these Kansas counties to Shawnee County.**



<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that middle income families in the urban Midwest will spend over \$167,400 for the first 17 years of each child's life, born in 2003 (not including inflation). Public expenditure of \$6,000 per year for 12 years of school is \$72,000. Four years of living and college expenses estimated at more than \$15,000 per year is \$60,000. This makes the total private and public cost of a 21-year-old college graduate approximately \$300,000.

## H. Unemployment Rate

Since July 2007, Shawnee County unemployment rates have been below the U.S. rate every month. In June 2008, the U.S. unemployment rate was 5.5% and Shawnee County was 4.7%.

**This is an indication that, even with training, the highly skilled workforce gap would still exist.**

**The success of Heartland Visioning depends on achieving the Growing Community Key Benchmark (see pages 16).**

## PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY

**Our relative standard of living and thus our prosperity declines when our annual earnings per job growth rate is less than the U.S. rate of growth (see exhibit below). This earnings growth can occur by a) increasing the productivity of existing employees and b) increasing the number of higher paying jobs.**

**Higher earnings per job will help:**

- **increase the prosperity and wealth of our residents.**
- **retain our most skilled and educated young people.**
- **attract highly skilled working age adults.**
- **pay for the investments required to increase and become a growing community.**
- **increase career advancement opportunities.**



- Between 2000 and 2006, the Shawnee County earnings per job increased 3.2% or 0.1% below the U.S., but above Johnson and Wyandotte Counties (see chart above).

- In 2006, Shawnee County's earnings per job, including benefits, were \$40,813 or 86.3% of the U.S. at \$47,286, and 103.2% of Kansas' at \$39,533. Part of the gap with the U.S. can be accounted for by a lower Shawnee County cost of living.
- In 2006, there were 117,239 full- and part-time jobs in Shawnee County. This includes wage and salary compensation, proprietor's employment and benefits as estimated by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (USBEA). A high priority is increasing the earnings per job of these existing jobs. This requires increasing worker productivity through investment in equipment, machinery and infrastructure, skills training, management improvements, etc.
- Addition of higher paying jobs through relocation of new employers, the expansion and retention of existing employers and the creation of new local businesses is also a high priority. Each net new high-paying job results in the creation of service oriented jobs that frequently pay lower earnings per job. Therefore, it is important to focus job creation efforts on higher paying jobs that bring new money into our community.
- In the exhibit on the next page, only five job sectors with 14.8% of the jobs in Shawnee County have average earnings per job above the U.S. average earnings per job for that sector. **This is an indication that an adequate supply of skilled workers currently does not exist in Shawnee County to attract higher paying jobs.**

**The success of Heartland Visioning depends on achieving the Prosperous Community Key Benchmark (see page 16).**

Many strategies in the six foundations\* address these issues. However, the skills training strategy A.1 in Education is the highest priority strategy in Education (page 18). The aggressive higher paying job creation strategy is the highest priority strategy, and the regional competitiveness strategy is the second highest priority strategy in Economic Development (page 27).

**\* The six foundations are: education, quality of life, infrastructure, economic development, government and private sector leadership.**

## 2006 EARNINGS PER JOB AND JOB CONCENTRATION

**All full-time & part-time jobs by place of work...earnings include wage and salary compensation, proprietorship earnings and benefits**

Job Sector <sup>2</sup>	Shawnee Average Earnings Per Job	US Average Earnings Per Job	Shawnee County Earnings per Job as a % of US Earnings per Job	Shawnee County Jobs	Percent Job Distribution in Shawnee County	Percent Job Distribution in U.S.	Job Concentration Index= Shawnee % /US %
<b>Total by place of work*</b>	<b>\$40,954</b>	<b>\$47,286</b>	<b>86.6%</b>	<b>117,239</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	1.00
Management of companies, enterprises	\$104,581	\$100,050	104.5%	389	0.3%	1.1%	0.27
Wholesale Trade	\$71,281	\$67,687	105.3%	4,004	3.4%	3.7%	0.92
Manufacturing	\$63,123	\$70,956	89.0%	7,062	6.0%	8.3%	0.72
Transportation & warehousing, Utilities, Forestry, Fishing, etc.	\$62,674	\$53,856	116.4%	5,198	4.7%	4.1%	1.14
Finance and insurance	\$58,157	\$77,501	75.0%	7,508	6.4%	4.7%	1.36
Mining	\$51,589	\$120,859	42.7%	219	0.3%	0.5%	0.60
Government and government enterprises	\$50,420	\$57,889	87.1%	23,494	20.0%	13.5%	1.48
Information	\$47,440	\$82,715	57.4%	2,747	2.3%	2.0%	1.15
Professional, technical services	\$40,898	\$68,877	59.4%	5,730	4.9%	6.6%	0.74
Construction	\$40,163	\$47,439	84.7%	6,169	5.3%	6.5%	0.82
Health care, social assistance	\$40,027	\$44,604	89.7%	16,532	14.1%	9.9%	1.42
Administrative & waste services	\$26,843	\$29,598	90.7%	4,986	4.3%	6.0%	0.71
Other services, exc. public admin.	\$26,770	\$23,807	112.4%	6,874	5.9%	5.7%	1.04
Retail Trade	\$22,456	\$27,715	81.0%	12,394	10.6%	10.8%	0.98
Farm *	\$18,330	\$13,591	134.9%	907	0.8%	1.6%	0.50
Real Estate and rental and leasing	\$16,741	\$26,111	64.1%	3,777	3.2%	4.3%	0.74
Educational services	\$14,991	\$30,256	49.5%	1,180	1.0%	2.1%	0.48
Accommodation and food services	\$13,887	\$19,576	70.9%	6,450	5.5%	6.7%	0.82
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	\$8,559	\$24,091	35.5%	1,619	1.4%	2.0%	0.70

\* In 2006, the Kansas average income per farm was \$18,330 (Source: 2008 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Kansas Field Office, 2008 Kansas Farm Facts Publication). This revision to farm earnings since the draft increased total Shawnee County Average Earning Per Job by \$141. The director of the Kansas Field Office believes this is a more accurate estimate of farmer's income in Shawnee County than the USBEA data. This farm earnings include full-time farmers and many part-time farmers.

Range of Shawnee County Job Sectors with Earnings per Job as a % of US Earnings per Job	Number of Sectors	Number of Jobs
<b>Above 100%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17,372</b>
<b>90-100%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4,986</b>
<b>80-90%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>65,651</b>
<b>70-80%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13,958</b>
<b>50-70%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12,254</b>
<b>Less than 50%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3,018</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>117,239</b>

<sup>2</sup> Source: US Department of Commerce, US Bureau of Economic Analysis

Note; Transportation and Warehousing, Utilities, and Forestry, Fishing, etc. is a combination of three job sector. The data was suppressed for these three individual sectors.

# DYNAMIC COMMUNITY CORE

**The public input in May-June 2008 indicated overwhelming support that revitalizing the community core is the key to retaining young people and attracting a highly skilled workforce. This will include revitalizing:**

- **Downtown Topeka**
- **Topeka Riverfront master plan area**
- **Older neighborhoods in north, east, south and central Topeka**

## **A. Redeveloping Downtown Topeka**

Typical comments:

- We are our own worst critics. We need to be more positive and redevelop downtown.
- We need a destination downtown.
- We must stop talking and redevelop downtown.
- Downtown is our core and the capital is there. It must be redeveloped now.
- We need economic development downtown and make the inner city more appealing.
- The highest priority from the high school focus group was redeveloping downtown.
- If you want to attract young people, we must have a downtown entertainment district.
- I am 26 and most of my friends have moved away. We need:
  - Entertainment
  - Walking district
  - Cultural opportunities
  - Cool places to hang out
- Revitalizing the downtown area with lofts, dining, entertainment, and shopping choices and preferring urban development over continuing the suburban flight will require less commuting miles and less cars on our roads.

## **B. Topeka Riverfront Development**

Typical comments:

- Focus on the redevelopment of the Riverfront on both north and south but make sure that it ties visually and physically to downtown. Create a strong tie between the two areas (living and entertainment/shopping) so that they are mutually supportive.
- Redevelop downtown and riverfront.
- The riverfront development will unify west and east Topeka.
- Revitalization of downtown is necessary and beautifying the riverfront would do wonders for Topeka.
- Pursuing the riverfront development & downtown baseball park will provide urban entertainment & recreation options.
- Attractive entrances, riverfront and other amenities would help.
- A Kansas riverfront that is developed to serve a variety of commercial, cultural, educational and recreational purposes for residents and visitors.
- Focus on the redevelopment of North Topeka and the Riverfront, but make sure that it ties visually and physically to downtown.

### **C. Older Neighborhoods in East, North, South and Central Topeka**

Typical comments:

- We need to start with a selected area and upgrade one small neighborhood at a time in the high-risk areas; consider tax-increment financing and private assistance in these areas.
- The problem is the people on the west side of our community have a negative and wrong idea of the disadvantaged areas. There is no trust in these areas that they will be treated fairly. There is a bypass route around these areas.
- Redevelopment will give people an area pride, hope and trust. Government needs to take a stronger role in redevelopment. This will pay off in increased real estate tax base.
- Effective community engagement at the neighborhood level, including developing the community's confidence, knowledge and skills.
- The 25-year plan for Topeka calls for redevelopment of East Topeka. The government needs to implement their plan in partnership with the private sector.
- The city does not mention the areas east of Branner.
- Immigrants work all over Topeka but go home to the east side and are forgotten.
- The Falley's Market grocery store closing will cause a real problem for those who have to walk to buy their groceries.
- We need investment in east, north and south Topeka. There will be a positive return on investment in this area.

**The success of Heartland Visioning depends on achieving the Dynamic Downtown Key Benchmark (see pages 17).**

Quality of Life strategy A.1 including the entertainment district was voted the highest priority Quality of Life strategy (page 21). Also, Infrastructure Downtown A.1 was the highest priority Infrastructure strategy (page 24).

## **TRUSTING COMMUNITY**

**The issue of trust was heard constantly during the public meetings.**

**In this Strategic Plan, the first Core Value is trust. However, trust must be earned and we believe Heartland Visioning can help in the process of increasing trust.**

Typical comments:

- More trustworthy.
- Consider how to support the core value of TRUST in the implementation of the Vision Strategic Plan. Specifically, we should look for ways to improve communications between diverse groups of people, which builds/improves relationships, breaks down barriers and builds TRUST.
- Creating trust a major part of this should be the committee's ability to keep the public informed – in a manner the public will welcome and understand.
- If "Trust" is a key element then shouldn't new voices be heard instead of the same old "men in suits over 55"?
- Identify and explain briefly what human behaviors can increase trust among persons and organizations in the Shawnee County Heartland Community.

### 3. MOVING FORWARD

The purpose of **Heartland Visioning** is to create and implement a Community Strategic Plan that the majority of our citizens endorse. The first step in creating the Strategic Plan was to listen to public input in May-June 2008. The second step was for the Vision Task Force to create this draft Strategic Plan. The third step was for public review and input between August 25 and October 28, 2008.

The fourth step was for all of the input to be carefully considered and the appropriate changes made within a) the context of the Strategic Plan document with its interdependent elements; and b) the volunteer nature of the future Collaborative Implementation Process.

**Heartland Visioning** has developed a community strategic plan that has long-term and mid-term strategies and the strong support of the community. Such a plan must receive the voluntary commitment of public and private organizations required for implementation over the next five to 20 years.

**The Implementation Process will be an open and collaborative process with accountability. This will help create trust as all sectors of our community see the result of strategies being implemented that impact their sector.**

There will be regular reviews of the benchmarks and strategies and an annual meeting to report on progress.

When the results are positive there will be a celebration, and when the results are negative the best option is for the volunteer implementing organizations to “review, revise and refocus” and be innovative in their Action Steps (see pages 34-38 for more detail on the process).

# 4. LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN

## CORE VALUES

Core values are character traits that guide in daily decisions. These Core Values were identified through a series of balloting among all members of the Vision Task Force.

Trust	Innovation	Positive Attitude	Integrity	Faith in God
Excellence	Creativity	Responsibility	Accountability	Inclusion

## VISION

### Shawnee County will:

- Promote development of broad based skills to prepare students for lifelong learning that is globally competitive: intellectually, socially, economically, culturally and personally.
- Be a safe and caring community with vibrant arts, cultural entertainment and recreational activities for all.
- Build a community infrastructure that promotes learning, health, safety and growth for all residents through long-term planning and best practices.
- Create a positive attitude about economic development that attracts and retains individuals and companies who are globally involved.
- Have government, which includes employees and elected officials in Shawnee County, that leads the community with a collective attitude toward creating and moving us from a good to great community.
- Have private sector leadership (for profit and not-for-profit) that inspires our citizens, organizations and governments to achieve a bold and courageous future.

## KEY BENCHMARKS

The Key Benchmarks for Shawnee County will be the driving force for the Heartland Visioning process and will be used to measure our progress annually. To achieve these benchmarks, residents of Shawnee County will need to work together in unprecedented ways on the strategies in each of the six interdependent foundational areas: Education, Quality of Life, Infrastructure, Economic Development, Government and Private Sector Leadership.

The benchmarks below will provide us with a way to measure our success. We expect that increase will be gradual as the plan is implemented. Each year when we are successful, we can celebrate. Or, when we fall short of the benchmarks, the Vision Partners will review, revise and refocus their action steps to achieve the benchmarks in future years.

### Growing Community

- Future Shawnee County population will increase 1% annually for 10 years and 1 ½ % annually for the next 10 years.

### Prosperous Community

- Future Shawnee County average earnings per job will increase each year at 0.75% above the U.S. average.

## **Dynamic Downtown Topeka**

- Invest an appropriate amount of public and private sector funds in downtown and the riverfront on the north and south sides of the river each year to provide the iconic focus for our community that drives the implementation of Heartland Visioning. The annual amount will be determined during the first year of implementation of Heartland Visioning.

## **Quality of Life**

- Arts, Culture and Leisure Activities

The Topeka Metropolitan Statistical Area<sup>3</sup> (MSA) will be in the upper 25% of the "Cities Ranked and Rated" score before 2028 for arts and culture (includes media/libraries, performing arts and museums) and leisure activities (includes dining and shopping, entertainment and outdoor activities).

In 2004, the Topeka MSA<sup>4</sup> had a score of 54 in arts and culture and 52 in leisure activities. The scoring is from 100, the best, down to zero. Therefore, the Topeka MSA is in the top 50% of both measurements.

- Public Safety

Shawnee County will be the safest county with a capital city above 100,000 in the United States.

In 2006, Shawnee County had 6,568 Modified Index Crimes per 100,000 population. This ranked Shawnee County as 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 31 counties with capital cities over 100,000 in population. Modified Index Crimes include: murder, rape, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft and arson. (Source: FBI Crime Reports.)

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<sup>3</sup> We are evaluated on quality of life by MSA. Our MSA includes five counties: Jefferson, Jackson, Osage, Shawnee and Wabaunsee.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Cities Ranked and Rated, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2004

# 5. MID-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN

## EDUCATION

### VISION

Shawnee County will promote development of broad based skills to prepare students for lifelong learning that is globally competitive: intellectually, socially, economically, culturally and personally.

### STRATEGIES

#### **A. Skills Training and Lifelong Learning**

- 1. Provide<sup>5</sup> skills training required to increase employee and management productivity and meet the needs of our employers and employees that must compete in a global business market for high paying jobs. For employers considering relocation, retention or expansion of high paying jobs in Shawnee County, this would include competitive skills training for their new employees. Expand and improve Kaw Tech and collaboration with other schools to ensure a qualified, well educated workforce that meets specific trade skills needed by employers and eliminates the skilled workforce gap.**
2. Provide mentoring for young people after high school and adults with disabilities.
3. Encourage employers to provide incentives for employee workforce training and education.
4. Provide opportunities to improve entrepreneurial skills and learn how to create jobs beginning in elementary school.

#### **B. Birth to Pre-K**

- 1. Expect that every child enters kindergarten ready to learn at grade level.**
- 2. Provide access to early childhood education for all children.**
3. Identify special needs early in child's life.

#### **C. Pre-K-12**

- 1. Expect every student to graduate from high school with the skills required to immediately go to work, go to technical school or a university. Increase proficiency expectations for all students.**
- 2. Expect every student to perform at grade level each year.**
- 3. Increase parent involvement. Help parents to attain the subject matter skills required to help and encourage their children in their education.**
- 4. Promote technology training as a viable and profitable opportunity for many of our young people. Begin promoting at least by 8th grade.**
- 5. Decrease high school dropout rate.**
- 6. Place an emphasis on all aspects of fitness, exercise, wellness and prevention of disease.**
7. Focus on fundamentals of reading, writing, arithmetic, science and technology.
8. Improve the collaboration between WU and Shawnee County high schools including opportunities for high school students to receive college credit for course work.
9. Provide necessary tools required to lead a successful life as a citizen of the community like: resume writing, balancing a checking account, handling credit, budgeting, personal responsibility and communication skills.

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<sup>5</sup>The highest priority strategies are in bold.

10. Provide mentoring and tutoring for those students who need outside help. Encourage business, government and not-for-profits to provide the volunteers required.
11. Encourage Shawnee County schools to create partnerships with businesses and other organizations to help student learning.
12. Create enthusiasm and provide an opportunity for students to be exposed to technologically and science driven agricultural careers in Shawnee County.
13. Start foreign language learning early in life.
14. Increase active learning in the arts and music that will increase quality of life.
15. Encourage programs that provide assistance for economically disadvantaged and to succeed in developing workforce skills or life skills.
16. Encourage a collaborative approach in education for all schools in Shawnee County. Increase school attendance and decrease truancy.
17. Respect teachers and provide incentives for people to enter the teaching profession.
18. Provide opportunities for high potential students in every school.
19. Support student independent work outside of the classroom.
20. Increase the percentage of high school students who go on to further education.
21. Provide more specialized magnet schools.
22. Provide opportunities for quality work study or internship programs.
23. Prepare students who plan to attend college for the transition from high school to college academics and activities.

#### **D. Higher Education**

- 1. Enhance collaboration with KU, KSU and WU that results in more educational and research opportunities and high technology job creation in Shawnee County.**
- 2. Encourage the community to actively assimilate and encourage college age people in the “Knowledge Corridor” to establish an emotional connection with the community. This could include local businesses offering incentives to college students such as coupons.**
3. Establish programs for economically disadvantaged young people to have the opportunity of a higher education based on their meeting academic standards through high school.
4. Encourage college age people to be more involved in the community.
5. Increase job opportunities for people with graduate degrees.
6. Increase graduate program opportunities and the number of students in existing graduate programs as needed by the marketplace.
7. Increase the size of Washburn University.
8. Increase job placement services for students.

#### **E. General**

1. Provide adequate funding for all schools.
2. Address the basic needs of students and their families that results in a home and school environment that is favorable to learning.
3. Encourage the library to act as convener to bring all entities together who serve children and families to develop a community system that graduates literate, healthy kids positioned to be lifelong learners, skilled workers and ready to compete in a global economy.

4. Provide all students with an education in critical thinking and career education.
5. Think in future terms about education to enhance recruiting and retaining bright minds.
6. Improve governance of schools.
7. Encourage and teach entrepreneurship.
8. Provide parent/family education.

# QUALITY OF LIFE

## VISION

Shawnee County will be a safe and caring community with vibrant arts, cultural entertainment and recreational activities for all.

## STRATEGIES

### **A. Recreation, Arts and Culture**

- 1. Develop and implement interdependent county-wide comprehensive master plans for recreation, entertainment, arts and culture that serves as a focal point for our community. Determine a required level of service for each element that results in meeting our Key Benchmarks. Determine the gap between existing facilities and this level of service and eliminate the gap within ten years while at the same time providing for annual growth as it occurs. Ensure that all facilities are staffed and maintained for high quality service. When developing levels of service for each element, ensure that proper consideration is given to age, income level and life style. Consideration will also be given to use of these facilities by Shawnee County visitors and tourists and becoming a regional attraction. The master county-wide plans will include sections for creation of events and programming, promotion, marketing and calendars of activities. The plans will include but not be limited to the items below:**

#### **a) Entertainment**

- i. Downtown entertainment district (town square concept).**
- ii. Main street farmers market.**
- iii. Expand the music festivals.**
- iv. Retain and expand entertainment venues and events.**

#### **b) Arts and Culture**

- i. Enhance arts programming and groups that promote the arts.**
- ii. Venues for musicians to perform.**
- iii. Economic impact study.**
- iv. Develop arts district(s).**

#### **c) Recreation**

- i. Create a county-wide system of trails for walking and biking.**
- ii. Attract and promote sporting events.**
- iii. Ensure that activities are available for youth in their neighborhoods.**

### **B. Public Health**

- 1. Provide equitable, quality and affordable healthcare when needed for all Shawnee County residents.**
  - a) Opportunities for individuals, students and small business owners to participate in a group insurance plan.**
  - b) Promotion of already established community programs that provide health care for single adults, such as HealthWave and HealthAccess at the Shawnee County Health Agency.**
  - c) Enhance the cooperation among our medical and healthcare providers.**
  - d) Focus on prevention and wellness programs.**
  - e) Mental health, dental and optical services available for all ages.**
  - f) Recruit doctors, dentists, psychiatrists, nurses and other healthcare professionals.**

- g) **Expand health care clinics in Shawnee County neighborhoods where needed.**
  - h) **Provide incentives to young medical professionals to practice in Shawnee County.**
  - i) **Encourage physicians to accept medicare patients.**
2. Make the region aware that we are a regional center for world-class health care.

### **C. Sense of Community and Image**

- 1. **Commit as a community to have a positive attitude where we live, work, learn and play.**
- 2. **Create a “welcoming” image whenever possible, including beautiful corridors into the city, improved customer service, a visitors welcome center either downtown or at some point off of I-70.**
- 3. **Develop and implement a national campaign to brand and communicate the excellent quality of life our community offers in the arts, entertainment, recreation, health care, community services and employment.**
- 4. **Commit to keeping our young people in our community.**
- 5. Create a sense of place and identity that is sustained by support of local institutions and businesses and the heritage of the community.
- 6. Promote the diversity of Shawnee County through advertisements that include persons of color and varying abilities.
- 7. Take pride in our local educational systems.

### **D. Social Services**

- 1. **Create an understanding of the culture of poverty and seek to remove the impediments to meaningful employment, including: transportation, child care, access to job availability, skills training, assistance for substance abuse and mental illness. Remove barriers to employment for people returning from prisons, jails and institutions.**
- 2. Ensure that all residents in need have the basic necessities of life.
- 3. Expand volunteerism.
- 4. Diverse representation on social service boards.
- 5. Ensure that all residents know and understand real-life fundamentals such as balancing a checkbook, budgeting, grocery shopping skills, etc.
- 6. Identify and develop strategies to address gaps in social service needs.
- 7. Provide proactive prevention services (such as pregnancy, adoption, foster care, abuse, abandonment & neglect) for our community as a whole.

### **E. Family and Youth**

- 1. Encourage collaboration, cooperation, coordination, common sense, commitment, accountability and strategic planning for all organizations serving family, youth, disabled, economically disadvantaged and the elderly.
- 2. Encourage employers to provide living wages with benefits; part-time, three-quarter time and flextime positions; on-site daycare, bring your baby/toddler to work programs to help bring up healthy, happy kids with involved parents.
- 3. Teach kids to be civic minded.
- 4. Provide affordable and safe childcare.

## **F. Public Safety**

1. Reduce crime so that Shawnee County is the safest county with a capital city in the United States above 100,000 population.
2. Concentrate on reducing/eliminating drugs and drug trafficking!! Drugs and drug-related problems cross every line and affect everything we're concerned about.
3. Maintain building code requirements that enhance the safety of our residents.
4. Provide police substations under the control of a police major, each having two to four detectives and a proportional number of patrol officers (for very visible areas of the neighborhood communities).
5. Prosecute all property crime to serve as a deterrent to violent crime.
6. Invest in educating and exposing low income areas to the benefit of reporting crime.
7. Increase public safety through a comprehensive disaster and emergency preparedness plan.
8. Make the public aware of the comprehensive disaster and emergency preparedness plan including persons with special needs.
9. Encourage the consideration of community service as part of normal sentencing for non-violent crimes.
10. Create, instill and expect a community culture of trust and safety where crime is unacceptable and peace is promoted in our neighborhoods.
11. Promote public safety by providing programs/resource opportunities for incarcerated populations to become responsible, accountable citizens of the community.

## **G. Seniors**

1. Increase community-based services for the elderly and disabled on par with the same access as in nursing facilities and institutions.
2. Value our senior population as strong contributors to the economy who do not require jobs.
3. Use the knowledge and skills of our seniors.
4. Encourage the development of attractive retirement communities through all levels of care.
5. Enhance quality of life services for seniors.

## **H. Inclusive Community**

1. Promote a community-wide atmosphere that is inclusive and promotes understanding, harmony, mutual appreciation and encouragement for every person regardless.

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## VISION

Shawnee County will build a community infrastructure that promotes learning, health, safety and growth for all residents through long-term planning and best practices.

## STRATEGIES

### **A. Downtown and Riverfront**

1. **Develop and implement a downtown master plan as Heartland Visioning's flagship project that includes the riverfront and North Topeka areas and links with the corridor to Washburn and the Expocentre. Elements could include:**
  - a) **an entertainment district**
  - b) **parks**
  - c) **green spaces and landscaping**
  - d) **satellite college campuses**
  - e) **canal from the riverfront into downtown, with water parks**
  - f) **downtown housing for diverse income levels**
  - g) **more services, public safety, gathering and socialization spaces**
  - h) **technology park/incubator**
  - i) **viable, attention-getting attractions such as Winter Wonderland, regular festivals, ballpark and other community events**
  - j) **give proper consideration to age, lifestyle and resource level**
  - k) **redevelop existing buildings**
  - l) **image altering projects for downtown**
  - m) **make downtown pedestrian and bicycle friendly**
  - n) **attractive gateways into downtown**
  - o) **grocery and convenience stores**
  - p) **farmers market in an open air facility**
  - q) **state and federal resources for development**
  - r) **parking**
  - s) **Watertower District**
  - t) **public safety**

### **B. Neighborhoods**

1. **Provide the infrastructure and implement a comprehensive plan required for revitalizing north, east, south and central Topeka. The revitalization should result in higher real estate taxes and reduce costs resulting from crime and thus provide a positive return on investment. Expand, empower and improve Neighborhood Improvement Associations (NIAs). Link community centers, schools, and churches in neighborhoods with a provision for social services, after school training activities for children and parent education. Require low income multi-family housing units to provide programs and activities for children and parents that improve the quality of life, safety and educational opportunities for residents. This may require public/private investment in infrastructure and facilities such as community centers.**
2. **Develop an attractive boulevard corridor from downtown to Washburn University including walking and biking trails and large parks.**
3. **Develop a plan for a walkable community and have sidewalks in all neighborhoods, including east Topeka.**
4. **Re-introduce the neighborhood watch program.**

## **C. Growth Management and Planning**

- 1. Implement a coordinated county and cities comprehensive plan and infrastructure plan with Heartland Visioning (HV) as the vision and foundation for the plans. The plans will include the following elements: natural resources, transportation (roadway, air, bicycle/walking), water, sewer, parks, recreation, and arts and entertainment (see Quality of Life strategy #4), downtown/riverfront, solid waste, economic development, housing, government facilities, schools, communications, religious institutions, environment, open space and electric. The planning elements will support HV Key Benchmarks and include the following as well as other components relevant to our community:**
  - a) Commitment by city and county governments to produce comprehensive plans that guide the growth and development of our community.**
  - b) Enforcing the plans through zoning and support for the planning departments.**
  - c) Enforcement of ADA accessibility standards.**
  - d) Consistently implement code enforcement across the community to ensure safe, healthy and reasonably attractive housing and other facilities.**
  - e) Implement laws and ordinances that encourage the removal of obsolete buildings that have no historical value, and that require other buildings and landscaping to be appropriately maintained.**
  - f) Increase street lighting where needed.**
  - g) Streamline all permitting processes coordinating with municipalities and county.**
  - h) Keep new construction areas safe.**
  - i) Develop the area around Washburn to be more attractive to college students with Wi-Fi hot spots and student friendly businesses.**
  - j) Expect local governments and utilities to be business friendly.**
  - k) Adopt Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices. CPTED is the design and effective use of the built environment which may lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime and an improvement of the quality of life.**
  - k) Adopt best practices that encourage growth through mixed land use, unobtrusive building design, create walkable neighborhoods, transportation choices, sense of place and strengthen existing neighborhoods.**
  - l) The county-wide plan (including county and cities) will include a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that uses innovative funding for all infrastructure development.**

## **D. Environment and Natural Resources**

- 1. Adopt green environmental practices, increase recycling, ensure proper disposal of dangerous waste such as computers, etc and encourage the use of the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) guiding principles for LEED certification in new buildings demonstrating the owners' commitment to environmental sustainability, stewardship and social responsibility.**
- 2. Recognize and encourage farmers and ranchers to continue to practice good stewardship for a diverse wildlife population and habitat.**
- 3. Enact non-smoking ordinances in businesses.**

## **E. High Speed Communication**

1. **Provide globally competitive, state-of-the-art high speed communications for data, video and voice throughout the county.**

## **F. Transportation**

1. **Enhance public transportation with centralized hubs and expanded bus service beyond 6:00 p.m., and promote ridership.**
2. **Maintain streets and roads to increase productivity and decrease damage to vehicles.**
3. Provide affordable and accessible transportation for people with disabilities.
4. Provide effective snow removal.
5. Increase the productivity of the transportation systems through traffic light coordination and timing.
6. Enhance Amtrak service and enhance the train station.
7. Assure that all parts of the community are connected by a comprehensive transportation system and traffic corridors.
8. Assess air transportation needs.

## **G. Beautification**

1. **Create beautiful, well maintained entrances to our community.**
2. Unify the grassroots community to beautify all neighborhoods.
3. Provide a public arts administrator to coordinate art projects and oversee beautification projects.
4. Beautify the bicycle and walking paths.
5. Expect state and local government agencies to pick up trash and maintain trees and other landscaping on major entryways and thoroughfares.
6. Expect all citizens to properly dispose of trash in public and private areas.
7. Improve, update and maintain existing parks.

## **H. Historic Preservation**

1. Encourage development of historic districts and renovation of historic sites and landmark structures.
2. Place historical markers and monuments at appropriate places throughout the county as part of promoting community culture and history.
3. Connect people interested in restoring historic sites/buildings with financial resources.

## **I. Water, Sewer and Other Utilities**

1. Improve the infrastructure in east Topeka including water and sewer.
2. Increase the amount of street lighting and proper maintenance as a way to improve public safety.
3. Require underground utility lines in all future developments.
4. Protect the community's investment in flood plain development and planning by using sustainable design techniques and standards.

## **J. Housing**

1. Ensure safe and affordable housing for all income levels.
2. Provide educational opportunities for first time home buyers on buying, maintaining a home and prevention of foreclosure.
3. Provide safe, affordable, quality housing for college students.
4. Educate landlords regarding responsibilities for their rentals.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## VISION

Shawnee County will create a positive attitude about economic development that attracts and retains individuals and companies who are globally involved.

## STRATEGIES

1. **Develop and maintain an aggressive economic development program that creates higher paying primary<sup>6</sup> jobs through relocation of jobs to Shawnee County, expansion and retention of jobs by existing employers and creation of new enterprises. Shawnee County, all municipalities and the private sector will cooperate proactively with a united private/public partnership for the good of Shawnee County. Develop partnerships with economic development organizations in the region, State of Kansas, nationally and globally to assist in creating higher paying jobs.**

**Maintain a list of targeted job sectors that will sharpen our economic development focus on higher paying jobs and result in meeting our Key Benchmarks.**

**Recognize that economic development in a global business environment is contingent upon the speed of technological change and the cultivation of the creativity and innovation of the knowledgeable worker while maintaining a business friendly environment. Success on this strategy will require success on other strategies in economic development and on strategies in the five other interdependent foundations: Education, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, Government and Private Sector Leadership (because of this interdependence, strategies in these other foundations will not be repeated in economic development.)**

2. **Develop a regional competitiveness center that provides a globally competitive workforce, entrepreneurial incubators and technology parks so that research from KU, KSU and beyond can be commercialized in Shawnee County.**
3. **Maintain a competitive and business-friendly environment for existing and new businesses including the following areas: incentives for high paying jobs, tax structure, permitting and regulatory environment, etc.**
4. **Develop a county-wide “brand” for internal and external marketing. The brand will reflect the thinking within Shawnee County and its municipalities; a unified leadership, that projects a positive, progressive image. Ensure that the “brand” has meaning, can be widely embraced by our community and speaks courageously about ourselves.**
5. **Develop an aggressive marketing program to encourage creative, highly skilled adults of all ages to move to Shawnee County to work, live, learn and play. Incorporate this program in all job relocation and visitor marketing, hospitality employees job training, employee newsletters and recruiting packages.**

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<sup>6</sup> In every area, there are primary jobs that add value for export of goods or services outside the region to the rest of the U.S. and the World. Export of services includes non-residents bringing their cash dollars to the region as conventioners, tourists, students, medical patients or as the back office operation for major financial organizations. These primary jobs produce the cash income for the county that provides the opportunity for jobs that are internally focused. These internally focused jobs are either 1) local personal type jobs like barbers, accountants, lawyers, teachers, government workers and bankers or 2) jobs that sell products primarily produced elsewhere such as cars, appliances or clothes. Both of these internally focused job types rely on cash income from outside the region.

6. **Encourage entrepreneurs who are creating higher paying primary jobs and provide support required for development and growth.**
7. **Provide special emphasis in the high risk neighborhoods for employment and economic opportunities.**
8. **Recognize the privilege of being the state capital of Kansas by extending warm hospitality to state legislators, state visitors and other people doing business with the state.**
9. **Support small business development and expansion of the Washburn Small Business Development Center.**
10. **Encourage the State of Kansas to consolidate state offices into existing Topeka (Shawnee County) office space.**
11. Collaborate with KSU and other resources to expand and enhance production and specialized, competitive and innovative agriculture and look for ways to expand their economic role in a growing global food market.
12. Encourage local farm based development of value added products to meet the local and global foods needs of a growing population.
13. Maintain competitive internship programs to develop job skills and enhance a sense of community for our students.
14. Encourage development of retail and restaurants in east and southeast Topeka.
15. Develop job sector teams that provide an opportunity for sharing information, best practices, etc. The information technology cluster is an example of a group that can greatly benefit from this type of team.
16. Accelerate development of Forbes Field for its highest and best use.
17. Promote purchasing from local businesses.
18. Use all the resources available from the state and federal government such as empowerment zones and hub zones to encourage job creation.
19. Encourage conventions, visitors and tourists to come to our community.
20. Provide apprenticeship training for young adults.
21. Recruit high income retirees.
22. Promote and attract green businesses, alternative fuel production and businesses that use waste products to create a viable product.

# GOVERNMENT

## VISION

Shawnee County will have government, which includes employees and elected officials in Shawnee County, which leads the community with a collective attitude toward creating and moving us from a good to great community.

## STRATEGIES

1. **Expect all elements of government in Shawnee County to endorse Heartland Visioning; adopt the strategies from all six foundations that are uniquely a part of their mission, purpose and scope of operation; and implement the strategies. (Government elements include all elected officials, government staff, departments of government including education.)**
2. **Develop a strong public/private partnership to implement Heartland Visioning.**
3. **Develop an annual legislative agenda based on input from public, not-for-profit and for-profit sectors that will help advance Heartland Visioning.**
4. **Encourage local, state and federal governments to work cooperatively.**
5. **Encourage citizens to be more informed about candidates, their government, elected officials and their position on Heartland Visioning.**
6. **Expect effective, efficient and accountable government.**
7. **Create Trust (a repeated pattern of expected behavior)**
  - Increase transparency.**
  - Build relationship between governmental and private sector organizations and individuals.**
  - Improve communications about governmental actions.**
  - Have intra county visits.**
  - Increase representation from all demographic groups.**
  - Expand community dialog.**
  - Create trust through respecting each other.**
  - Create trust by following through on commitments.**
  - Citizens and elected officials will respect one another.**
  - Engage in healthy conflict resolution.**
8. Encourage elected officials and their staff to participate in training to improve their effectiveness.
9. Recognize the difficulty and responsibilities of being an elected official. Respect and support our officials even when we disagree with their actions, rather than engaging in personal attacks.
10. Maintain a website that includes each elected official's voting record.
11. Increase opportunities for citizen input.

# PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP

## VISION

Shawnee County will have private sector leadership (for profit and not-for-profit) that inspires our citizens, organizations and governments to achieve a bold and courageous future.

## STRATEGIES

1. **Encourage all not-for-profit and for-profit organizations to endorse Heartland Visioning and adopt and implement strategies.**
2. **Encourage business to promote and support our community and develop a strong public/private partnership to implement Heartland Visioning.**
3. **Expand the number of people involved in leadership training and development each year. Recruit people who are not already considered to be leaders and expand youth and young people involvement.**
4. **Provide appropriate mentoring programs.**
5. **Develop and maintain positive attitudes and pride about our community and its image.**
6. **Encourage the media to carefully consider the impact of their coverage on our community.**
7. **Encourage employers to provide opportunities for their young employees to be involved in the community. This could include providing time off from work to serve.**
8. **Create Trust (a repeated pattern of expected behavior)**
  - Increase transparency.**
  - Build relationship between governmental and private sector organizations and individuals.**
  - Improve communications about governmental actions.**
  - Have intra county visits.**
  - Increase representation from all demographic groups.**
  - Expand community dialog.**
  - Create trust through respecting each other.**
  - Create trust by following through on commitments.**
  - Citizens and elected officials will respect one another.**
  - Engage in healthy conflict resolution.**
9. Embrace leaders in the agricultural community.
10. Encourage employee commitment to the community and their employers.
11. Encourage businesses to create or become a part of leadership training programs for their employees.
12. Encourage citizens to run for elected office. Provide training for people who consider running for elected office. This would include how to overcome the obstacle of fundraising.
13. Encourage personal interaction and connections between citizens from different geographic areas, cultures and backgrounds of our community.
14. Maintain an appropriate number of small business owners on the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce Board.
15. Advance leadership/youth council programs with high school students.
16. Increase the opportunities for involvement for our young people.

17. Increase the use of technology to involve and communicate all youth.
18. Encourage servant leadership.
19. Dramatically increase the assets of the Topeka Community Foundation.
20. Encourage representative involvement and benefit to Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in leadership positions.

## 6. GLOSSARY

### Our Long-term Strategic Plan

10 to 20 years

- **Visions for each of the interdependent foundations for a comprehensive Community Strategic Plan**
  - + **Education**
  - + **Economic Development**
  - + **Infrastructure**
  - + **Quality of Life**
  - + **Government**
  - + **Private Sector Leadership**
- **Core Values**
- **Key Benchmarks**

### Our Mid-term Strategic Plan

5 to 10 years

- **Strategies for each of the six foundations**
- **Priority Strategies**

### Our Short-term Implementation Plan

1 to 5 years

**Developed and implemented by Strategic Alliances and Vision Partners for individual strategies beginning in November 2008**

- **Strategy Benchmarks**
- **Action Steps**

### **DEFINITIONS OF ABOVE TERMS:**

**Foundations** – Basic framework that will provide a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the community in the following interdependent areas: Education, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, Government, and Private Sector Leadership.

**Vision** – A Vision defines what the community wants to be in the future in each of the six Foundation areas.

**Core Values** – Character traits that guide our community's daily decision-making.

**Key Benchmarks** – Annual measurements of the community's progress towards achieving its long-term Strategic Action Plan. This will require positive results from the six *interdependent* Foundations and provide accountability for the process.

**Long-Term Strategic Plan** – Includes the Vision for the six Foundations, Core Values and Key Benchmarks.

**Strategies** – A verbal picture of the future in a specific part of a particular Foundation. Twenty to thirty strategies in each Foundation will provide a more detailed definition of each Foundation Vision. There are priority strategies for each Foundation. The strategies are ranked within Foundations and sub-sections of Foundations. An example of a strategy is "*Increase the graduation rate.*"

**Vision Partner** – Any organization, business, civic group, government entity, houses of worship, etc. that has volunteered to collaborate with other community members to implement the Strategic Action Plan. Vision Partners are the organizations who take responsibility for making individual strategies reality.

**Strategic Alliances** – Two or more Vision Partners who work together to implement a specific strategy because of their experience, strengths and synergy from combined efforts. The Vision Partners in the Alliance will elect a chair to be responsible for providing leadership. Alliance Benchmarks and Action Steps will be developed for the Strategic Alliance. The Vision Partners will then assume responsibility for the Action Steps that fall within their own scope of operations.

**Strategy Benchmarks** – Annual measurement of the progress of a specific strategy that provides accountability for the process on an annual basis for three to ten years. *Example: Increase the graduation rate 2% per year for ten years. The Strategy Benchmark should be developed by the Vision Partner before the Action Steps.*

**Action Steps** – What the Vision Partner is going to do to implement a strategy. A series of projects or events developed by the Vision Partner to meet the Strategy Benchmark for a specific strategy.

# 7. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

## A. Phase I - Plan Development

1. Two years ago (November 2006) a group of government and private sector representatives came together to talk about the direction our community was going. They agreed that as a community we had difficulty focusing and reaching consensus on community priorities. Many of this group had experienced visioning projects in the past and in other places and agreed this made sense for us. A meeting with elected officials, city and county staff, Chamber and GO Topeka representatives, and the Community Foundation decided the Topeka Community Foundation was the best organization to start the visioning project. The Topeka Community Foundation began fund raising and was successful in acquiring \$700,000 in pledges and in-kind donations to invest in our community vision project.
2. A request for proposal (RFP) was sent out for vision planning contractors. After interviewing several, Luke Planning, Inc. was hired in March 2008 to facilitate our project. In April a staff was hired and the Shawnee County and Topeka visioning project "Heartland Visioning" began. With the involvement of the community, Heartland Visioning has been getting results toward making ours an exceptional community.
3. A diverse 40-person Steering Committee, representative of the community, was selected to guide the process.
4. Henry Luke and the Heartland Visioning staff interviewed over 200 individuals in Focus Groups during May and June 2008.
5. Over 600 people attended the Community Meetings on June 16, 17 and 19, 2008. The results from 24 breakout groups were the identification of 759 unique issues for the Vision Task Force to consider. The issues were summarized and ranked by the groups, then combined to produce the top ten priority issues. The participants also selected 24 additional members for the Vision Task Force.
6. The Steering Committee selected a diverse Vision Task Force from all sectors and geographic areas of Shawnee County from persons nominated by the Steering Committee, Focus Group interviewees, Community Meetings participants, self nomination and the individuals selected at the Community Meeting.
7. In July 2008, the 196-member Vision Task Force used their knowledge and wisdom, the public input and scenarios to create the draft Strategic Plan. This draft was edited at a joint Steering Committee meeting on August 21, 2008. They reached consensus on the draft vision plan with 140 strategies, which was distributed, August 25, 2008 – October 28, 2008 for public input and comments. The draft was widely distributed to the public by the media and by presentations to organizations by Vision Task Force members.
8. Over 3,000 people attended 128 presentations on the draft document. The Topeka Capital Journal distributed 44,000 copies of the draft as an insert on September 5, 2008 and over 1,300 commercials played on Cumulus Broadcasting Stations of Topeka. On October 28, 2008, over 60 county citizens attended a final Community Meeting for a final opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft Heartland Visioning Strategic Plan. Over 550 comments were received for the Editing Committee's review.
9. After considering all the input received, the Steering Committee approved the revised Strategic Plan and printed copies for distribution on November 19, 2008.

## **B. Phase II – Collaborative Implementation**

1. The Heartland Visioning Steering Committee will continue to be diverse and community-based to provide leadership, accountability and communication during the implementation process.
2. Private and public sector organizations of all kinds and individuals will be asked to endorse the Strategic Plan and become Vision Partners. (Begin November 2008)

Vision Partners who endorse the Strategic Plan will be asked to identify strategies they can incorporate and effectively implement within their normal mission, purpose and scope of operations or in strategic alliances with other organizations. Each Vision Partner or Strategic Alliance will establish Strategy Benchmarks to facilitate annual measurement of progress and develop Action Steps for the specific strategies they adopt. Action steps will include identifying the problem and opportunity then pull together all resources required for implementation. The Steering Committee will approve all Strategy Benchmarks before their adoption as official Heartland Visioning Benchmarks.

3. Strategy identification and acceptance by Vision Partners will be reviewed by the Steering Committee to ensure that the priority strategies are being implemented on a timely basis. Progress on every strategy cannot begin immediately, but will be phased in over a five-to-ten year period as applicable.
4. Progress on strategies will be communicated on a regular basis.
5. There will be an annual update of the Key Benchmarks measuring progress for the strategies adopted by Vision Partners and Strategic Alliances.
6. Heartland Visioning will provide staff, management support, communication and coordination for at least five years during implementation.

# 8. INVITATION TO BE A VISION PARTNER

## What is a VISION PARTNER?

A Vision Partner is any organization, business, civic group, government entity, house of worship, individual etc. that volunteers to collaborate with other community members to make the Strategic Plan reality. **Vision Partners are the organizations responsible for making individual strategies reality.**

What are the Vision Partners' responsibilities?

Become a supporter of the Heartland Visioning process by endorsing the Strategic Plan. A Vision Partner will:

- Adopt strategies
- Set a Strategy Benchmark, develop Action Steps with deadlines to accomplish the strategy and meet the Strategy Benchmark
- Provide resources to implement Action Steps
- Form Strategic Alliances where appropriate
- Generate progress reports
- Include affiliation with Heartland Visioning in printing and advertising material, and create links to the Heartland Visioning web-site
- Review, revise and refocus Action Steps when progress reports are negative  
*(Foundation Teams and staff will be available to assist.)*

---

Yes, please include us as a VISION PARTNER of Heartland Visioning  
Organization/ Business/Agency/ Club/ House of Worship/Individual

---

Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

William Beteta  
Executive Director  
Heartland Visioning  
120 SE Sixth Street, Suite 110  
Topeka, KS 66603  
785-231-6066 or 785-234-8656 (fax)  
info@heartlandvisioning.com



**STEP 1: IDENTIFY A STRATEGY**  
**Vision Partner Strategy Adoption Form**

Organization:	
Representative:	
Address:	
City:	State, ZIP:
Phone:	Fax:
E-Mail Address:	
Authorizing Signature:	

As a Vision Partner, our organization/business/group supports Heartland Visioning and the future it describes for Shawnee County. How to adopt a strategy? It's easy...follow the steps below.

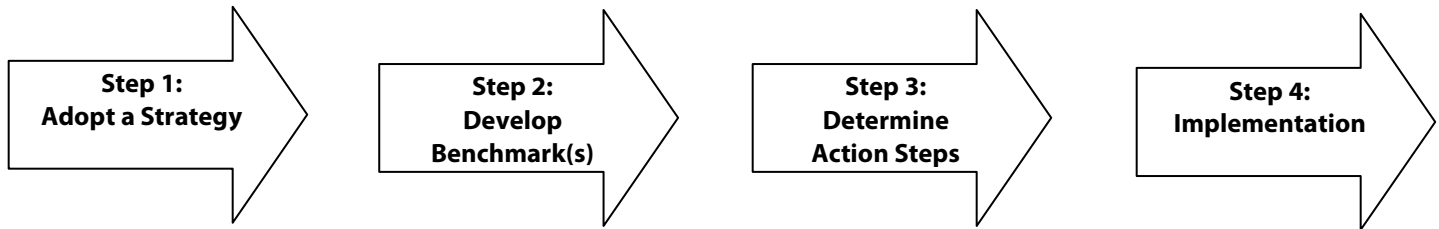
Step #1: Select one or more strategy(ies) from the Heartland Visioning Strategic Plan (i.e. Education A1, etc.) and, if appropriate, list an other organization(s) you believe you could work with in an alliance in accomplishing the strategy(ies). *Attach additional sheets if necessary.*

<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Strategy (Number and Summary of Verbiage)</b>	<b>Proposed Alliance Team Members (Name of Organization &amp; Contact Name &amp; Number)</b>
For example (Education)	A1. Provide skills training required to increase employee and management productivity and meet the needs of our employers and employees that must compete in a global...	Best Trade School, XYZ School, John Doe, XXX-XXXX

**Send this form when STEP 1 is complete to:**

**HEARTLAND VISIONING** - William Beteta or [info@heartlandvisioning.com](mailto:info@heartlandvisioning.com)  
 120 SE 6<sup>th</sup> St., Ste 110 • Topeka, KS 66603 • 785.231.6006 • fax 785.234.8656 • [www.heartlandvisioning.com](http://www.heartlandvisioning.com)

As a vision partner Step 2 through Step 4 will be completed for you adopted strategy(ies). Please send progress updates on your strategies for the quarterly newsletter and annual report (by October 15th of each year).



## STEP 2: HOW TO DEVELOP A BENCHMARK

Identify a benchmark or outcome to measure your annual progress. At the yearly community meeting, we as community citizens, will review all outcomes and celebrate our successes and progress.

1. Discuss within your organization which strategy(ies) you desire to adopt. You may want to take the strategy to your organization's board/executive committee for their review and endorsement.
2. Identify the opportunity or problem presented by the strategy. Do not change the strategy.
3. Establish a measurable benchmark for your strategy(ies). Remember, we want to measure our progress annually and when successful we will celebrate, and if not we will review, revise and refocus our efforts in order to be successful.

## STEP 3: DEVELOP ACTION STEPS

Then think about the action steps that would have to occur in order for your organization to be successful in meeting the benchmark.

### Action Steps:

- a. Identify the problem(s) causing the gap; determine the reasons for the problem(s).
- b. Develop action steps that will eliminate the problem(s) and will meet the annual benchmark.

## STEP 4: IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION STEPS

### Implementation:

- a. Implement the action steps.
- b. Analyze the results on a regular basis and make any necessary changes. Compare the results to the strategy benchmark annually and report to the community. If benchmark results are negative, review, revise and refocus the Action Steps.
- c. We will be persistent and stick with the process until there is success.

# 9. TASK FORCE MEMBERS & STEERING COMMITTEE

Co-Chairmen Dr. Jerry Farley and Bill Moore  
Vision facilitation by Henry Luke, Jacksonville, FL  
Executive Director William Beteta

\*Steering Committee members are shown in bold

Aldridge, Erin  
Alexander, Jack  
Altman, Joanne  
Anderson, Vann  
**Atwood, Erin**  
Austin, Andrea  
Barnard, Barbara  
**Bartlett Piland, Martha**  
Bell, Michael  
Benaka, Tom  
Bergman, Billie Jean  
Bertels, Terry  
Bevens, Matthew  
Bey, Adrian  
Billinger, Amy  
Bisnett, Lacey  
Blair, Ben  
**Bonaparte, Norton**  
Bowen, Brock  
Breeding, Juanita  
Briman, Steve  
Brokke, Ryan  
Bronson, Shawnette  
Brown, Ron  
Brown, Gary  
Bruns, David  
Bruns Works, Pam  
Buchele, Ana  
Buckner, Mike  
**Buhler, Shelly**  
**Bunten, Mayor Bill**  
Burke, Kelly  
Burns, Amy  
Canady, Linda  
Caruthers, Gary  
Caspers, Eileen  
**Cervantes-Reed, Rio**  
Chaika, Jason  
Clarke, Heather  
Coller, Pamela  
**Cushinberry, Dale**  
**Cushinberry, Garry**  
DeBacker, Jeff  
Defries, Lucky  
Deines, Jim  
Dick, Verla  
**Dicus, John**  
**Dietrich, Brenda**  
Dilione, Art  
**Dobler, Neil**

Doran, Patrick  
Douglas Jr., Joe  
Downes, Stephanie  
Downing, Shaye  
DuBoise, Glenda  
Dyer, Ryan  
**Eckert, Rich**  
**Ellis, Tom**  
Enslie, Steven  
Escalante, DeAnn  
Escalante, Tom  
**Fager, Beth**  
**Farley, Jerry**  
**Feaker, Barry**  
Flanders, Morgan  
Flowers, Scott  
Flynn, Konni  
Frye, Vince  
Garcia, Elias  
Gassie, Samantha  
Gerstner, Andrew  
Gibson, Jeremy  
Gigous, Ryan  
Gigous, Gwen  
Giles, Howard  
Golubski, Kate  
Gordon, Lana  
Gray, Jack  
Grieves, Kevin  
Gross, Carrie Jo  
Gutierrez, Al  
Guzman, Rudy  
Hall, Stephan  
**Harrison, Alonzo**  
Haynes, Venita  
Hearrell, Kristen  
Heeney, Marjorye  
Heit, David  
Hennessey, Olga  
Hicks, Joan  
Hicks, T.D.  
Hill, Jennifer  
Hughes, Amanda  
Hunter, John  
Jackson, Tessa  
Jackson, Angela  
Jenkins, Steve  
Johnson, Sandra  
Johnson, Eric  
Johnson, Nancy  
**Kelly, Laura**

Kerns, Ashley  
Kerr, Frank  
**Kinsinger, Doug**  
Koker, Andrea  
Koupal, Carl  
Krehbiel, Miriam  
Lambert, Willie  
Lechner, Marcy  
Lemon, Onis  
Lewis-Childs, Angela  
Lyons, Jocelyn  
Maag, Jim  
**Mahoney, Susan**  
Marling, Mark  
Marquardt, Christel  
Martin, Quentin  
**Martinez, Fred**  
Mays, Doug  
McCarthy, Peg  
**McCullough, Ann**  
McFalls, Vern  
**McGee, Chris**  
Miller, Ron  
**Millsap, Gina**  
Moore, Roger  
**Moore, Bill**  
Nesbett-Tucker, Janlyn  
Nichols, Rocky  
Noble, Tom  
Nolle, David  
**Ogle, Jim**  
**Oliverius, Maynard**  
**Overstreet, Glenda**  
Padilla, Mike  
Parks, Blanche  
**Parrish, Jim**  
**Patton, Fred**  
Perez, Manuel  
**Perry, Nancy**  
Pettit, Jancy  
Pezzino, Gianfranco  
**Philippi, Whitney**  
Powers, Ramon  
Prichard, Jenny  
Rees, Riley  
**Ribelin, Kim**  
Robuck, Charlene  
Romero, Angel  
Ross, Elizabeth

Ross, Bill  
Rubio, Luce  
Rutherford, Janie  
Salvatore, Laura  
Satter, Gary  
Saylor, Mark  
Scheid, Tamra  
Schrader, Michael  
Schultz, Kim  
Scott, Debra  
Serrano, Ed  
Seymour, Kaelyn  
Sharafy, Azyz  
Shaughnessy, Nancy  
Shaver, Michaela  
**Sheahan, Marsha**  
Sheley, Alissa  
Sheley, Brandon  
Sherrod, Ehren  
Smith, Kathy  
Smrha, Charles  
Sodergren, Chuck  
Stone, Joshanna L.  
Stubblefield, Michelle  
Swank, Deborah  
**Swank, Tom**  
Teeter, Stanley  
Tenpenny, Ben  
Tipton, Danette  
Urbom, Kathleen  
Utemark, ReAnne  
**Viola, Roger**  
Walker, Dona  
**Walsh, Denise**  
**Watson, Phillip**  
**Waugh, Steve**  
Weingartner, Alice  
Weishaar, Martin  
Wenrich, Ryan  
Wethington, Dana  
**Wiggins, Barbara**  
Williams, Doris  
Williams, Kathleen  
Williams, Errol  
Woods, Patrick  
Works, Gracie  
Wright, Dawn  
Wright-Powers, Melissa  
Zellers, Sally

## 10. PROCESS FUNDING PARTNERS

Bartlett & West	M-C Industries, Inc.
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas	Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority
Bonaparte, Norton & Santa	Parrish Hotel Corporation
Capital City Bank	Saylor, Mark & Nancy
Capitol Federal Foundation	Security Benefit
City of Rossville	Shawnee County
City of Silver Lake	St. Francis Health Center
City of Topeka	Stormont-Vail HealthCare
Community National Bank	Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library
CoreFirst Bank & Trust	The Topeka Capital-Journal
Cumulus Broadcasting of Topeka	Topeka Community Foundation
Downtown Topeka, Inc.	United Way of Greater Topeka
FHLBank Topeka	US Bank
Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce	USD 321 Kaw Valley
Heartland Park Topeka	USD 345 Seaman
Hill's Pet Nutrition, Inc.	USD 437 Auburn-Washburn
Kansas Development & Investment Co.	USD 450 Shawnee Heights
Kansas Health Foundation	USD 501 Topeka Public Schools
Kaw Valley Bank	Visit Topeka, Inc.
KTKA-T.V., Inc.	Washburn University
Lindyspring Water Systems	Westar Energy
Lockner, Allyn O.	WIBW-TV
Martin Tractor Company, Inc.	Williams, Doris

Heartland Visioning is organized as a 501 (c) 3 under the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Operational funding is held at the Topeka Community Foundation.

Heartland Visioning is a community-wide initiative to develop and implement a shared strategic vision for what we want our community to be in 5, 10, or 20 years. Our community is defined as Shawnee County which includes: Auburn, Rossville, Topeka, Silver Lake, Willard, and unincorporated Shawnee County.