JOPLIN AREA CHAMBER / MOKAN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE
Q1 2024

The City of Joplin's investment enables the Joplin Area Chamber to increase capacity regarding promotion of the city as a place to do business, as well as to live, work and raise a family to potential workers. It also expands opportunities for more access to state and national resources, leaders and markets through conferences, mission trips with the Missouri Partnership and advertising mediums. Activities carried out in the past 90 to 120 days included:

Amy Kauffman was introduced as the new Director of MOKAN on January 2

- Amy had been with the MOKAN organization from mid 2021 until April of 2023 and then left to lead the Cherokee County Economic Development Corporation

BUSINESS ATTRACTION:

RFI's

- 13 RFI's received since previous report
- 1 RFI's submitted on behalf of City of Joplin
- 2 RFI's submitted for MOKAN region

Projects Submitted

Project Romaine

- company that produces green vegetables looking to build a new facility
- 12 to 15 employees
- 5 to 10 acres or 5,000 sq ft building
- Submitted Crossroads site

Active Projects

Project Buffalo

- Initial phase would include the addition of approximately 80 employees with high potential for future growth
- 25 to 30 acres
- $50,000 avg wage
- $15 million capital investment
- Crossroads site being considered

Project Hydra

- Data center operation
- 100+ employees
- 35 acres

- $50,000 avg wage
- $60 million capital investment
- Electric rates are critical to this project and prospect is currently making application with Liberty
- Wildwood Ranch site being considered

EXPANSION & RETENTION

- Attended the Ribbon Cutting ceremony for La-Z-Boy in Neosho
  - This project has been in the works since 2019 and features a 30,000+sqft Parts and Distribution Warehouse, and an additional 60,000 sq ft addition to the existing footprint.
  - This expansion is due to the closing of a LZB plant in Redlands, CA and the existing capacity is absorbed by the Neosho and Siloam Springs LZB plants. In the end it will account for about $37M in capital investment ($31 in construction and $6-7 in furniture).
  - A health clinic is included in this expansion that will provide primary care for employees and their families.

- **Business Retention & Expansion**
  - In Q3 2023 we conducted a total of **41 BRE visits**
    - most of which resided in the Crossroads Business Park
  - In Q4 of 2023 we conducted a total of **33 additional BRE Visits**
    - these visits were conducted with mostly large employers not located in Crossroads
  - Companies included Able Composites, Amcor, CFI, Gilster-Mary Lee, MAPP Technologies, Jasper Products, Modine, Owens Corning, Refresco, Schaeffler, Arrow Box and many others

- We have hired a **Workforce Development Manager** who will begin in mid-February
  - The purpose of this position will be to focus on supporting the largest employers with two BRE (Business Retention Expansion) visits per calendar year, conducting quarterly surveys with those large employers and serving as the connective tissue among K-12 and Secondary education institutions, government agencies, industries and the local community.

EVENTS ATTENDED:

- **Economic Issues Summit** **Jefferson City - January 29 & 30**
  - Hosted by the Missouri Economic Development Council
  - Purpose is to bring economic developers together to hear, share and discuss proposed legislative issues for the current legislative session.

- **Southeast Kansas Economic Outlook Conference** **Pittsburg KS – October 10**
  - Hosted by Wichita State University's Center for Economic Development & Business Research
  - Purpose is to review local and state economic outlooks, establish relationships with other attendees

- **Hawthorn Foundation Annual Meeting** **St. Louis – November 9**
  - Hosted by the Hawthorn Foundation
  - Purpose is to update the partners of the previous quarter's business attraction efforts along with the MO Partnership organization
  - At this meeting the inaugural Hawthorn Award of Excellence was presented to Mr. Rudolph Farber of Neosho

- **Hawthorn Review of Gov. Parson's State of the State Address** **Virtual - January 25**
  - Attended virtually – Highlights of specific initiatives that will be focal points this year

- **Business Forecast Luncheon** **Rogers Ark – January 26**
  - Hosted by University of Arkansas College of Business Center for Business & Economic Research
  - Purpose is to gain perspective of what's going on in the world, national and local/regional economy and to review recent trends and present forecasts for the next 12 months

MARKETING & PROMOTIONS OF JOPLIN ACTIVITIES:

- **Alyssa Brown** from the Chamber marketing team is now splitting her time and work between Chamber and MOKAN
  - Alyssa brings marketing experience and expertise to the MOKAN organization that, to my knowledge, the organization has never had before
  - Alyssa's compensation will be split between the two entities
  - Her primary duties will be:
    - to market the region by creating content that will be shared on the website and Linkedin pages and can be pushed out directly to prospect businesses and site selection consultants via email or printed materials
    - Update the website and all property listings

- **Choose Joplin Website**
  - Oct 1 – Dec 31:
    - 980 visits
    - 1,392 sessions
    - Avg duration spent on site = 3 minutes and 25 seconds

- **Livability**
  - Livability is a company that specializes in attracting workforce and talent who are actively looking to relocate via their website www.livability.com
  - They create content for communities that highlight the best of what they have to offer and then publish and promote articles digitally
  - Additionally, the local community can then use the articles to promote as well and add to its website and social media platforms

- The reporting mechanism, measuring traffic and engagement, will provide insights into the effectiveness of the campaign. Leveraging Livability.com's large digital footprint among the 25-44 age demographic, and maintaining a gender-balanced readership, the strategy aligns well with attracting a diverse and dynamic pool of individuals who are vital for economic growth and community development.
- These written pieces are scheduled to go live on the Joplin page located on Livability.com in mid-March. Below are the topics that will be covered in the 2024 calendar year.
    - Joplin is Perfect for Families
    - I came to Joplin for college and stayed for my career
    - Why I moved Back to Joplin to Plant Roots
    - Why I built my business in Joplin and you should too
    - How I got connected to my community
    - 5 Things to do after work in Joplin
    - Must-attend events and festivals in and around Joplin
    - Joplin: Live Like a Local
    - Discover Joplin neighborhoods
    - The arts are flourishing in Joplin

- **Billboards**
    - We continue to promote positive vibes and awareness of the Joplin community to passers-by on I-44 with 2 billboard ads along I-44; facing opposite directions to capture both sides of traffic
    - One ad featured The Wall Street Journal ranking as the #2 best place for remote workers
    - A second ad featured the 4 college institutions we have in Joplin

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND NEW BUSINESS START-UP ACTIVITIES:

The Joseph Newman Innovation Center (the NIC) celebrates another year of success in fulfilling its mission as Joplin's premier business incubator and allows start-up businesses a lower entry point for office space and support than the traditional marketplace.

Tenant Businesses

- Expanded
    - KSS Cleaning Service
    - Began with 2 employees at move in Aug 2023
    - Has since expanded to 13 total employees

- New
    - 1 new tenant businesses launched since previous report (7 in all of 2023)
    - Bookkeeping AOE

- Graduated – none since previous report

- There are 12 current tenant businesses employing 31 people (26 in previous report)

MISCELLANEOUS

- Travis emcee'd Governor Parson's expansion announcement at **Boyd Metals** in Joplin (9/21) and the Governor's visit to Joplin for the celebration ceremony of the **Rangeline bridge replacement** (12/8).

- **Joplin YPN Summit**
  - The first ever YPN summit will be held February 9 at the Cornell Complex
  - The event has more than 70 registered attendees to date and will feature 4 speakers along with breakout sessions

- **Economic Growth Tour on October 20**
  - The Chamber gives an annual introductory/familiarity bus tour of the most recent projects and economic development related activities
  - There were approximately 40 participants from the community
  - Stops included the Pennington Building downtown, the Historic Family Y and the Olivia, the Schifferdecker and Zelleken Homes, KCU-Dental School, Arrow Box Company of Joplin, Midcon Cables Company and a drive through of the Crossroads Business Park highlighting the new Don's Cold Storage Warehouse and Road Ranger

- **Joplin Regional Technology Summit on November 3**
  - 220 in attendance
  - Hosted at James River Church in Joplin
  - 4 tracks; Business Advisors, AI/Innovation, Cyber Resiliency, and Automation, Robotics and Drones

- **ATTC**
  - Crowder College will be vacating the ATTC as they have purchased a 70-acre site across from the Menard's development
  - They have an existing lease to occupy the ATTC through the end of the summer 2024