Partnership Annual Meeting: A Vision for Wichita's Future

By: Emily Younger Barnwell

Unleashing tomorrow, today. The Partnership's Annual Meeting was an unmatched event, giving guests a futuristic look into Wichita's remarkable progress and unstoppable potential.

From the moment attendees walked through The Hudson doors, they were greeted with original music –composed by Wichita native Alex Wakim – to represent the city's transformational development projects and their connectivity to Wichita's vibrant downtown and riverfront.

Partnership co-Chairs Charlie Chandler and Aaron Bastian opened the evening with inspirational remarks – noting the Partnership's incredible success in 2023.

"We are a city that is experiencing transformational progress, and your investment is driving the diversification of our

region's industries, mega economic development projects and strategic talent initiatives," shared Bastian.

"We are a destination city. We must be bold and aspirational in everything we touch and that includes executing excellence in the projects before us," noted Chandler.

The pipeline of projects the Wichita region is a finalist or awaiting announcement for is the most robust to date with $5.3 billion in investment. The Annual Meeting served as a celebration of this progress and as an opportunity to showcase the emerging distinction.

"We are amid an incredible moment where we are witnessing a remarkable vision come to life in our city and our core," explained Partnership President Jeff Fluhr. "The projects presented tonight represent the strategic investment in Wichita's vibrant future."

- **EP2 Initiative**: Exploration Place's $22 million EP2 Initiative includes a fully funded riverfront amphitheater, an age-progressive Destination Playscape and a new education center. The project will elevate Wichita's status as a regional tourism destination and be a catalyst for further economic development throughout the downtown river corridor.

- **Ballpark District**: EPC Real Estate will construct an upscale hotel, residential units and a supporting parking garage in the lots adjacent to and near Riverfront Stadium. The $110 million investment project will serve as a southern anchor to Wichita's riverfront and complement Exploration Place's EP2 Initiative enhancing the walkability and connectivity of the area.

- **TKAAM**: The Kansas African American Museum has launched a $6 million campaign to fund its new location at 201 N. Main St. in downtown Wichita. The renovated building will provide twice the space for programming exhibitions and research, further developing the storytelling opportunities of the cultural assets of our community.

- **Wichita Biomedical Campus**: As one of the largest single investments in downtown's history, the estimated $302 million Wichita Biomedical Campus will create a healthcare corridor in Wichita's downtown leading to advanced medical care, fostered innovation and new academic and business partnerships. The addition of 3,000 students and 200 faculty and staff will lead to a continued resurgence of downtown and add to its vibrant environment.

- **Project Downtown 2035**: Building upon the transformational success of Project Downtown, Project Downtown 2035 is a 10-year vision plan to drive catalytic investment in Wichita's core. Through action-oriented strategies and research, the plan will cultivate an environment for continued public and private sector investment, build upon the existing assets to leverage infill development opportunities, further the connection of downtown assets, and assist in the identification and realization of current and future growth possibilities.

The Partnership's Annual Meeting was a testament to the public and private sector's continued investment to drive industry diversification and cultivate a distinctive, global city Wichitans are proud to call home.

The evening concluded with a final message: We ALL build Wichita.

A Growing Wichita Region

Thanks to the aspirational leadership and continued support of our investors, the Wichita region witnessed transformational progress and remarkable achievements in 2023.

2023 Partnership Annual Report