

10 KEYS TO GREATER WICHITA SUCCESS

In considering sites for business growth and expansion, it's important to consider elements beyond the numbers. The greater Wichita region's economy benefits from key initiatives and organizations that drive cross-industry innovation and power progress in our communities. These are the elements that define us and make the greater Wichita region uniquely attractive for businesses of all kinds.



1 | We Build the World's Most Advanced, Complex Products

- Ranked as the most manufacturing-specialized region in the United States and home to the number-one skilled workforce, the greater Wichita region provides direct access to the most-trained and most-advanced workers in the world.
- Greater Wichita is where the leading edge of aerospace, engineering and materials development converge, making the complex, possible.
- As materials, processes and capabilities advance, all manufacturing-focused industries benefit. Today's workplaces are a far cry from 20th century factories, with modern facilities characterized by high-end, multimillion-dollar machinery, automated processes, strict adherence to efficiency and safety protocols, and a diverse highly trained workforce.
- The region boasts many exciting support efforts for training, continuing education and industry leadership with an ascending pipeline of talent ready to join, or rejoin, the workforce.





2 | We Are the Air Capital of the World

- Greater Wichita is one of five true aerospace clusters and, for generations, has been known as the Air Capital of the World. Aircraft and aircraft components have been built with Wichita expertise and craftsmanship for over 100 years, creating an embedded ecosystem of manufacturing innovation.
- The greater Wichita region is home to Textron Aviation which includes internationally known brands Cessna Aircraft and Beechcraft Corp. and Hawker; Airbus Engineering Design Center; The Boeing Company; ad Bombardier Learjet.
- Companies in the region deliver 35% of all general aviation airplanes built in the United States and accounted for 25% of global general aviation airplane deliveries. We directly manufacture, or provide critical components for over half of all general aviation, commercial and military aircraft.
- Located here is some of the most specialized equipment in the world for metal and composite material fabrication. Decades of aircraft production have built a comprehensive local network of over 350 precision machine shops, tool and die shops and other aerospace subcontract manufacturers, creating a robust, internationally-known supply chain.





3 | We Are a Center for Entrepreneurial Success

- The greater Wichita region is where entire industries take flight — from the original business aviation companies to pizza and hamburger franchises to modern plastics and composites. Today our region is home to a thriving, diverse community of creators and entrepreneurs, driven by robust industries such as information technology, and transportation and logistics.
- Koch Inc. and Cargill Protein – the top two largest privately held companies in the U.S. – are headquartered in Wichita. And, in addition to the starting place for many of the world's leading aviation companies, we are the birthplace of household brands Pizza Hut, White Castle and Coleman, as well as the future of promising new companies and brands launching from Wichita to the world.
- A spirit of entrepreneurism continues to fuel hundreds of start-ups in a city dedicated to big ideas. Entrepreneurs, community leaders, and volunteers contribute to the greater Wichita region's creative culture through makerspaces, an impressive craft brewing scene, and community pride.





4 | We Expect, and Get, More Out of Life

- The greater Wichita's region's low cost of living (11% below the national average) plus high quality amenities provide residents with the means to enjoy a vibrant, robust lifestyle. Simply put, you can experience and get more out of life here.
- Trendy downtown lofts, lakeside living, historic homes in charming neighborhoods, suburban dream homes, tiny homes, and big sky properties – the region offers infinite possibilities. Our median selling price for a single-family home is just $225,400, and apartment rental rates are more than 45% lower than the national average.



5 | We Are Where to Find the Largest Aerospace R&D Institution in America

- Wichita State University's National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) operates 2 million square feet of laboratory and office space across six Wichita locations, providing world-class research, testing and advanced manufacturing capabilities to industry and government partners.
- NIAR provides applied research for advanced materials and composites, 3-D prototyping, aerodynamics, aircraft aging, aircraft icing, crash dynamics and other fields critical to aircraft design and manufacturing.
- NIAR has been appointed by the Federal Aviation Administration as the lead institution of the Center of Excellence in Composites & Advanced Materials (CECAM), which has been designated by NASA and the FAA to develop national standards for aircraft composites.
- Wichita State University ranks No. 1 in the nation for aerospace engineering R&D and No. 2 for industry- and defense-funded engineering R&D, according to the latest National Science Foundation data.
- NIAR connects industry and government partners with world-class research, testing, certification and advanced manufacturing capabilities, strengthening Wichita's position as a hub for aerospace innovation.



6 | We Deliver World-Class Aviation and Advanced Manufacturing Training

- The National Center for Aviation Training (NCAT) is a 224,000-square-foot aviation and advanced manufacturing training facility providing industry-driven, hands-on education to support the region's skilled workforce pipeline. An 85,500-square-foot expansion is underway to meet growing workforce demands in aviation, advanced manufacturing and automation.
- The expansion will increase NCAT's annual training capacity by approximately 1,450 students and trainees, while creating new and expanded opportunities in aviation maintenance, advanced air mobility, industrial automation, professional pilot training, robotics, smart manufacturing and other high-demand fields.
- WSU Tech works directly with employers to align training with evolving industry needs, providing hands-on education using advanced equipment and technologies in aviation and manufacturing. NCAT also provides opportunities for industry partners to train and upskill their existing workforce.
- The NCAT-NIAR partnership allows NIAR to develop and certify new advanced materials and techniques in the lab, and then rapidly train production workers to utilize the new technology.



7 | We Are Innovators, Fostering a Design-Thinking Approach

- Wichita State University's Innovation Campus brings together industry, research, education and student talent, creating an environment where companies collaborate with faculty and students to solve real-world challenges, accelerate innovation and develop future talent.
- More than 20 national and international companies have a presence on the Innovation Campus, creating opportunities for industry to collaborate with students, faculty and researchers to accelerate innovation and product development.
- The Smart Factory @ Wichita, a collaboration between Deloitte and Wichita State, provides an immersive environment where companies can experience and explore advanced manufacturing technologies, helping accelerate the adoption of Industry 4.0 and smart manufacturing solutions.
- Located on Wichita State's Innovation Campus, the National Institute for Research and Digital Transformation, connects industry with research and expertise in digital transformation, cloud computing, software development, cybersecurity, cyber operations and systems engineering.
- The Innovation Campus connects companies with state-of-the-art research facilities, laboratories and makerspaces, along with more than 30 academic centers and institutes that support research, commercialization and industry collaboration.
- The Innovation Campus is home to advanced product development and manufacturing resources, including Dassault Systèmes' North American 3DEXPERIENCE Center, GoCreate — one of the nation's largest makerspaces — and capabilities in 3D printing, augmented reality, robotics and advanced manufacturing.

- The Innovation Campus continues to attract investment from leading technology and aerospace companies, including JetZero, which announced a Wichita engineering office in 2026 to leverage the region's advanced materials, digital engineering and certification testing capabilities.



8 | We Are Anchored by a Thriving, Revitalized Downtown

- At the heart of the greater Wichita region, downtown Wichita is the city's center for commerce, culture, entertainment and urban living. The core brings together major employers, locally owned businesses, residential neighborhoods, arts and cultural attractions and gathering spaces in a connected urban environment.
- Since the adoption of Project Downtown in 2010, more than $2 billion has been invested in downtown Wichita, transforming 6.3 million square feet across 119 completed projects. More than $800 million in additional projects are under construction or in the pipeline, continuing the momentum of investment in the urban core.
- Downtown Wichita is an employment and development hub, with more than 4 million square feet of occupied office space and more than 120 unique retailers. Since 2010, 1,935 new housing units and 1,350 hotel rooms have been added to the Project Downtown area.
- Downtown accounted for more than 90% of Wichita's office absorption from 2017 to 2024, totaling approximately 714,500 square feet and reinforcing the urban core's role as a center for employment and business growth.
- Released in 2026, the Downtown Wichita Action Plan builds on more than 15 years of investment with a new vision for the next decade, focused on creating a more connected, riverfront-oriented, well-designed and full-service downtown.

- A hub for social, professional and cultural experiences, downtown and it's surrounding neighborhoods are home to major destinations including INTRUST Bank Arena, the historic Orpheum Theatre, Equity Bank Park and a growing collection of arts, entertainment, dining and public spaces.



9 | We Are a Hub for National Security

- McConnell Air Force Base borders southeast Wichita with over 17,000 personnel and 2,838 active duty military. It is one of the main operational bases for the KC-46A Pegasus, key to recapitalizing the U.S. Air Force's tanker fleet. McConnell was the first base to take delivery of the KC-46A in January 2019. The KC-46A will provide next generation aerial refueling support to Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and partner nations.
- The 22nd Air Refueling Wing is the active-duty host unit at McConnell Air Force Base along with support from the 931st Air Refueling Wing, charged to develop and maintain the capability to conduct air-refueling operations supporting command objectives in any part of the world, in any condition or climate.
- The KC-135 Stratotanker has provided the core aerial refueling capability for the U.S. Air Force for more than 50 years. The KC-135 enhances the Air Force's capability to accomplish its primary missions of Global Reach and Global Power, and provides aerial refueling support to the Air Force and Navy.
- The 184th Wing of the Kansas Air National Guard is located at McConnell Air Force Base, employing about 1,300 Air National Guardsmen, most of whom are part-time and serve one weekend a month. These highly trained professionals develop and deploy strategic and tactical strength to U.S. troops around the world including mission support, battlefield intelligence, command and control, and cyberspace operations.



10 | We Offer an Unexpectedly Amazing Arts and Cultural Scene

- The greater Wichita region has a dynamic art scene bursting with emerging up and comers and experienced art veterans. These active and enthusiastic artists are constantly contributing to the identity of our region, making the area a more authentic, reflective, and beautiful place to live.
- Wichita's growing cultural and culinary scene continues to earn national recognition, including James Beard Award semifinalists in both 2025 and 2026. Our cultural gems include the state's largest festival, a nationally recognized performing arts scene, public art, Gallery Alley, more than 30 museums and a growing collection of craft breweries and locally owned restaurants.

Explore Key Industries

Learn how these dynamic organizations are complements to the growing key industries within the greater Wichita Region:

Advanced Manufacturing & Materials

Aerospace

Agriculture

Energy

Healthcare

IT Systems & Support

Transportation & Logistics



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The Greater Wichita Partnership stands ready to streamline your process by working directly with businesses and site selectors. Contact us directly for strategic solutions, incentives, presentations, and reports designed specifically for your situation.

Contact Andrew