REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

STRATEGY

REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR THE GREATER WICHITA REGION

Submitted by Market Street Services, Inc.
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MARKET ST

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Cover photos sourced from the Greater Wichita Partnership website

OVERVIEW

The 2015 BREG (Blueprint for Regional Economic Growth) initiative was spurred by the understanding that the ten counties in the greater Wichita region are not only economically interconnected but stand to benefit from an intentional and collaborative approach to regional economic development. The collaborative effort was originally developed by the Greater Wichita Partnership (the Partnership), Wichita State University (WSU), City of Wichita, Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber), Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP), Wichita Downtown Development Corporation (WDDC), and Sedgwick County.

Having initially identified eight clusters (since consolidated to seven) with corresponding action plans and a series of "cross-cutting initiatives" that span all clusters, the Greater Wichita Partnership (the Partnership) is now looking to evaluate the state of cluster development and 2015 BREG implementation, examine successful cluster development efforts from around the country, and use this information to create the 2018 Regional Growth Plan upon the foundation of the 2015 BREG cluster framework and corresponding strategic recommendations. It is expected that the Regional Growth Plan will help the greater Wichita region and its component cities and counties achieve heightened economic growth and prosperity through increasingly refined and targeted economic development activities.

The 2018 Regional Growth Plan development process is occurring at an important time for the greater Wichita region. Most importantly, it is complemented by **Project Wichita**, a strategic initiative whose development is concurrent with the creation of the Regional Growth Plan. Project Wichita is a community engagement process to identify the region's desired future and the steps necessary to achieve it. In addition to a regional vision, the process will produce an action plan focused on the next ten years.

Planning Process

Understanding that leaders in the greater Wichita region are seeking to use the foundation of the 2015 BREG cluster framework and corresponding strategic recommendations to create the 2018 Regional Growth Plan, the nine-month process included two in-depth research phases followed by the development of an updated Regional Growth Plan and complementary Implementation Guidelines. Market Street does not intend to duplicate recently-completed, pre-existing research or stakeholder input that was used to develop and implement the 2015 BREG Plan, but rather, hopes to leverage any such research to inform the 2018 efforts.

The 2018 Update process benefits from funding support from key partners across the greater Wichita region. Entities contributing resources to the initiative include: Butler County, City of El Dorado, City of Wichita, Greater Hutch, Greater Wichita Partnership, Harvey County Economic Development, and Sedgwick County.

2018 REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN SPONSORS

PROJECT OVERSIGHT AND STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

The **Strategic Advisory Team (SAT)** that has been convened to help guide the Partnership and its strategic planning efforts related to regional economic development was the foundation of a project oversight group that was instrumental in guiding the process and making key decisions about the region's strategic economic direction over the next five years.

Members of the SAT team included:

David Alfaro, Butler County

Paul Allen, Allen, Gibbs & Houlik, L.C. and Partnership Executive Board Member

Jeff Blubaugh, City of Wichita Councilman

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade, Westar Energy

David Dennis, Sedgwick County Commission Chairman

Jeff Fluhr, Greater Wichita Partnership

Jeff Lackey, TranSystems and BREG Transportation & Logistics Co-Chair

Keith Lawing, Workforce Alliance and Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP)

Bob Layton, City of Wichita Manager

Steve Martens, NAI Martens

Andrew Nave, Greater Wichita Partnership

Lynn Nichols, Yingling Aviation and Partnership Executive Board Member

Karyn Page, Kansas Global Trade Services

Marlin Penner, John T. Arnold Associates

Gary Plummer, Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce and Partnership Executive Board Member

Scot Rigby, City of Wichita Assistant Manager

John Rupp, J.P. Weigand & Sons

Andy Schlapp, Wichita State University

Gary Schmitt, INTRUST Bank and Partnership Executive Board Member

Michael Scholes, Sedgwick County Manager

Scott Schwindaman, Lubrication Engineers and Partnership Executive Board Member

Steve Sharp, Spirit AeroSystems and BREG Aerospace Cluster Co-Chair

Beth Shelton, Harvey County Economic Development Council

Don Sherman, Westar Energy

Tom Stolz, Sedgwick County Deputy Manager

Debra Teufel, Hutchinson/ Reno County Chamber of Commerce

Ron Weddle, Weddle Consulting and BREG Advanced Manufacturing & Materials Cluster Co-Chair

Bill Wood, Foulston Siefkin LLP and Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce Chair

Market Street would also like to thank SAT members and Greater Wichita Partnership staff **Jeff Fluhr**, President, and **Andrew Nave**, Executive Vice President, Economic Development, as well as Partnership staff **Adrienne Korson**, Economic Development Specialist, and **Evan Rosell**, Vice President of Projects, for their important guidance and support during the Regional Growth Plan development process.

STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC INPUT

A series of **cluster-based focus groups** with representatives from each of the BREG clusters was convened to solicit feedback about opportunities and challenges specific to their sectors. Additionally, a focus group was held with stakeholders of the Regional Economic Area Partnership of the greater Wichita region. Nearly **20 individual and group interviews** were held with key community leaders and economic development practitioners to gain their feedback and subject matter expertise. Over 50 face-to-face touchpoints with key leaders were ultimately leveraged. Finally, an in-depth **targeted survey** of BREG partners, public and private sector stakeholders, and local and regional economic development professionals was distributed for three weeks in May, garnering a total of 233 responses. This feedback complimented the perspectives gleaned from focus groups and interviews.

CLUSTER ASSESSMENT

The first phase of research – the Cluster Assessment –sought to leverage pre-existing and new quantitative and qualitative research to:

1. **Summarize key high-level trends and conditions** (economic and workforce composition, national projections, site location factors, etc.) for the ten-county greater Wichita region;
2. **Briefly assess cluster development activities** implemented since the 2015 BREG launch, including successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement; and

3. Compare **cluster performance in the greater Wichita region to three benchmark regions** with which Greater Wichita shares similarities. The regions: Grand Rapids, MI, Greenville, SC, and Mobile, AL.

Quantitative research and key takeaways from the qualitative input:

1. Informed potential revisions to the BREG cluster framework that are incorporated into the Regional Growth Plan, including a greater focus on opportunities for specialized niches that better differentiate the region

2. Identified and recommended new sectors that merited strategic attention

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The second research phase – the Organizational Assessment – built on the Cluster Assessment by evaluating the implementation of the 2015 BREG initiative in the context of local and regional economic development entities, partnerships, communications, and collaboration. Analysis included perspectives on the activities related to cross-cutting initiatives recommended in the 2015 BREG process.

Roles, responsibilities, and relationships among various local and regional partners – including but not limited to the Partnership, the South Central Kansas Economic Development District (SCKEDD), the Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP), and the Wichita Independent Business Alliance (WIBA) – were profiled per qualitative feedback.

Organizational dynamics and capacity related to cluster-focused regional economic development was also compared to four best practice regional economic development organizations (EDOs). Learnings will potentially inform strategic opportunities for structuring regional economic development that would be proposed later in the Regional Growth Plan development process.

THE REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

Leveraging the findings of the Cluster and Organizational Assessments, the Regional Growth Plan reflects a reimagining and refocusing of the 2015 Blueprint to establish the greater Wichita region's strategic economic priorities for the coming five years. Tactical activities incorporate under a single framework what were separate "Cluster Plans" and "Cross-Cutting Initiatives" in the 2015 BREG process.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

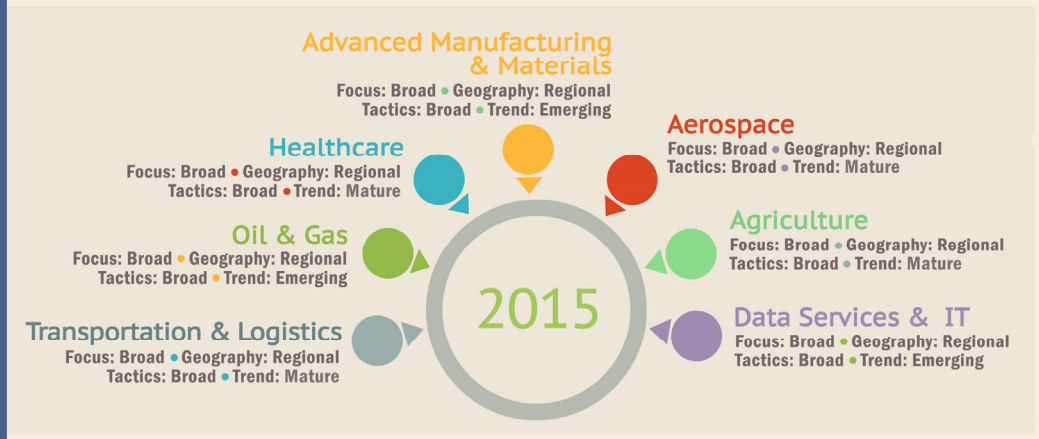
While the Regional Growth Plan represents ***what*** the greater Wichita region will pursue in the next five years to develop its regional economy, the Implementation Guidelines detail ***how*** the Partnership and its various implementation partners can advance efficient and effective implementation. Market Street will look at the Partnership's structural alignment to determine if any adjustments need to be made to accommodate Regional Growth Plan responsibilities. Importantly, this will also include how 2018 Regional Growth Plan implementation fits into a broader regional planning and strategic context exemplified not only by the Regional Growth Plan, but also Project Wichita.

Implementation dynamics related to the potential recommendation of a new regional economic development framework will also be explored in terms of how this program will function in the context of existing and potential partnerships. Resource issues and formal and/or informal roles and responsibilities will be detailed in the context of best-practice models explored in the Organizational Assessment, complemented by extensive public input conducted for the Regional Growth Plan.

Target Sector Framework

Based on an extensive analysis of the greater Wichita region's economic composition and assets, Market Street recommended adjustments to the original seven target sectors for the community to pursue to grow and attract jobs and investment in the next five years. Though the targets from 2015 remain priorities in 2018, much has changed from the first BREG process to this 2018 process. As seen in the graphic on the following page, greater specificity and clarity have been provided in the form of focused sub-sector opportunities, identified geographic concentrations, and tactical priorities informed by recent growth trends and future projections. The 2018 Regional Growth Plan sectors represent an evolution of the 2015 BREG process rather than an overhaul. Refinements will come from differentiated strategic tactics to grow targets and sub-sector niches based on investment return and potential to build wealth and improve economic diversity. This perspective acknowledges that different strategies are required to drive growth based on the relative maturity of the sector/niche, the greater Wichita region's competitive position, and the complementary capacity provided by partners such as Wichita State University and others.

BREG Target Sector Framework



2018 framework descriptions in color represent research-driven ADVANCEMENTS from 2015 clusters

Four primary factors were used to better differentiate the 2015 BREG clusters from the target sectors proposed in 2018:

- **Focus:** This represents key sub-sector opportunities identified in nearly every target to better direct growth strategies.
- **Geography:** Distinctions were made based on mapping of the sector/niche's relative dispersal to highlight whether employment was spread regionally or concentrated in one or more sub-regional communities. This information will inform lead and support implementation roles as well as partnerships between local and regional economic development entities.
- **Tactics:** Each target and niche will be grown using different strategies. Determining whether these tactics comprise existing business support, external marketing and attraction, and/or entrepreneurship will help focus expenditures of time and money and maximize the value of public and private investments.
- **Trend:** Assessing the recent and projected growth dynamics of each target and niche helps identify and confirm the tactical priorities incorporated into the Regional Growth Plan's Implementation Guidelines.

In the context of the "trend" component, slower-growth, mature sectors/niches will require a stronger focus on existing business services to ensure that these industry segments can remain competitive. Emerging sectors/niches, on the other hand, will benefit from existing business support but also provide more viable opportunities for prospect attraction and entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

What is clear from discussions with stakeholders involved in the development and initial implementation of the 2015 BREG initiative was the positive impact the process had on regional collaboration in the ten-county greater Wichita region. Nearly everyone who spoke of this time noted that BREG accomplished one of its key goals: to bring constituencies to the table to discuss and act on regional growth and development that had not come together before or not collaborated to this degree. This lasting legacy of improved regional partnerships enabled the 2018 Regional Growth Plan to launch from a greater position of strength than the 2015 BREG effort. These new and renewed relationships, coupled with the work (either initiated or ongoing) done to implement the plan, raises the bar for opportunities and expectations of the Regional Growth Plan development process.

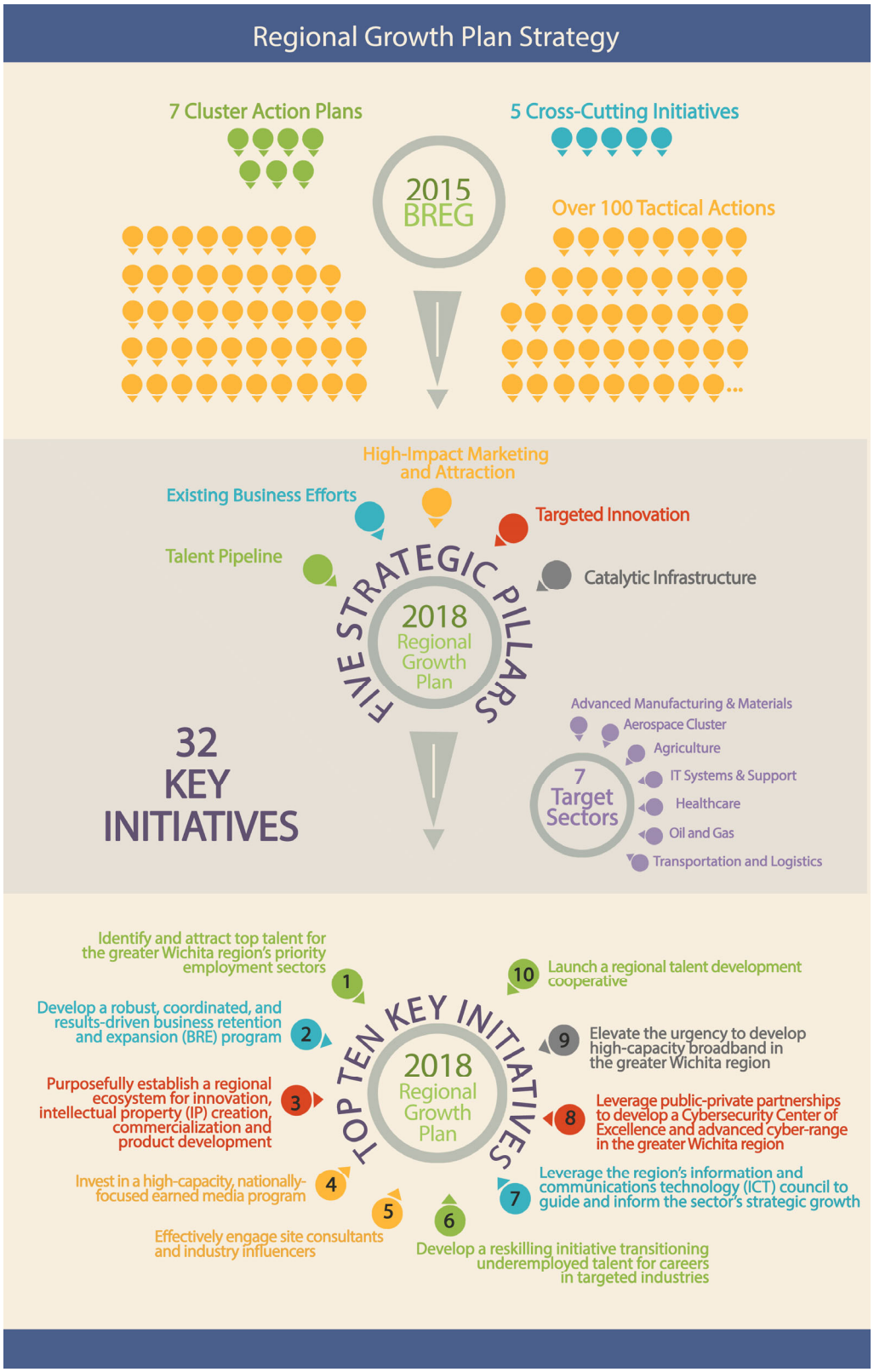
The groundwork laid by the 2015 BREG initiative and the key learnings from its implementation activities formed the basis of the 2018 Regional Growth Plan. Most research conducted for the initial process is still relevant and ongoing tactical activities to advance its strategic priorities still viable for incorporation into the 2018 plan. Feedback from hundreds of regional stakeholders and existing and new quantitative analysis have informed updated strategies and implementation dynamics to continue the greater Wichita region's positive momentum and trajectory from the 2015 process.

The 2018 Regional Growth Plan is comprised by high-level priority STRATEGIC PILLARS that are each comprised of KEY INITIATIVES broken into Multi-Sector and Sector-Specific sections. Strategic Pillars include:

- ✓ **Strategic Pillar I:** **Talent Pipeline**
- ✓ **Strategic Pillar II:** **Existing Business Efforts**
- ✓ **Strategic Pillar III:** **High-Impact Branding, Marketing, and Attraction**
- ✓ **Strategic Pillar IV:** **Targeted Innovation**
- ✓ **Strategic Pillar V:** **Catalytic Infrastructure**

Tactical strategies in the Regional Growth Plan incorporate under a single framework what were separate "Cluster Plans" and "Cross-Cutting Initiatives" in the 2015 BREG process. Market Street believes this new structure will help reduce the redundancy and potential for confusion and disconnection that were reported as issues by implementers of 2015 BREG. Success in developing priority targets and building clusters in these sectors and niches will thus be contingent on effectively addressing challenges and opportunities in the Strategic Pillars and Key Initiatives, either from a multi-sector or sector-specific perspective.

The following graphic demonstrates the evolution from the 2015 BREG process to the 2018 Regional Growth Plan and the resulting narrowing of focus on the region's highest priority strategic opportunities.


Regional Growth Plan Strategy
7 Cluster Action Plans
5 Cross-Cutting Initiatives
2015 BREG
Over 100 Tactical Actions
High-Impact Marketing and Attraction
Existing Business Efforts
Targeted Innovation
Talent Pipeline
Catalytic Infrastructure
FIVE STRATEGIC PILLARS
2018 Regional Growth Plan
32 KEY INITIATIVES
Advanced Manufacturing & Materials
Aerospace Cluster
Agriculture
IT Systems & Support
Healthcare
Oil and Gas
Transportation and Logistics
7 Target Sectors
TOP TEN KEY INITIATIVES
2018 Regional Growth Plan
1 Identify and attract top talent for the greater Wichita region's priority employment sectors
2 Develop a robust, coordinated, and results-driven business retention and expansion (BRE) program
3 Purposefully establish a regional ecosystem for innovation, intellectual property (IP) creation, commercialization and product development
4 Invest in a high-capacity, nationally-focused earned media program
5 Effectively engage site consultants and industry influencers
6 Develop a reskilling initiative transitioning underemployed talent for careers in targeted industries
7 Leverage the region's information and communications technology (ICT) council to guide and inform the sector's strategic growth
8 Leverage public-private partnerships to develop a Cybersecurity Center of Excellence and advanced cyber-range in the greater Wichita region
9 Elevate the urgency to develop high-capacity broadband in the greater Wichita region
10 Launch a regional talent development cooperative

Though the Regional Growth Plan is in and of itself holistic in focus, it must also be seen in the broader context of **Project Wichita**, the potentially transformational strategic initiative spanning the full breadth of the region's competitive challenges and opportunities. As goes Project Wichita, so goes the Regional Growth Plan and other initiatives like it that are dependent on a globally competitive workforce, dynamic quality of place, and visionary attitudes towards progressive change and the resource commitments necessary to achieve it. This is because organizations like the Greater Wichita Partnership that are charged with selling the greater Wichita region outside the region ultimately depend on the quality of the community "product" they are marketing to determine whether companies will want to invest.

It must be also be stressed that this Regional Growth Plan is designed as a **collaborative effort** among partners across the ten counties of the greater Wichita region. **It is not the plan of any one organization but will require coordinated and collaborative implementation from organizations spanning the private, public, institutional, and non-profit sectors**.

The potential for enhanced regional cohesiveness and collective action to improve economic, demographic, and community trends is an overarching theme spanning not only the Regional Growth Plan, but Project Wichita and other major current and future regional initiatives. Only by 1) acknowledging the primacy of the ten-county employment and labor shed, and 2) partnering to effectively enhance its prospects will the greater Wichita region be able to truly achieve its long-term vision.

As the maps in the Cluster Assessment highlighting the geographic dispersion of Regional Growth Plan target sectors demonstrated, the region's target cluster (Aerospace) and six target sectors impact all ten greater Wichita region counties. While some are more concentrated in the region's core, others feature greater intensities of employment in adjacent counties. **The multi-sector Key Initiatives and associated tactics in the Regional Growth Plan are designed to positively impact the growth of all targeted industries and niches**. While multi-sector activities will not affect all targets equally, they are nevertheless intended to address competitive challenges and opportunities in each sector and all ten greater Wichita region counties.

A matrix displaying all multi-sector Key Initiatives and their anticipated impact on the 2018 BREG target cluster and sectors can be found in Appendix A of this Update Strategy.

For certain actions in the Regional Growth Plan, Market Street has identified a best practice effort that can provide context for the greater Wichita region's pursuit of this recommendation. Elements of the plan with an associated best practice in ***Appendix B*** *have been identified by a* **BP** *included parenthetically after the key initiative.*

TOP 10 KEY INITIATIVES

The following components of the Regional Growth Plan were selected by the SAT team and economic development leaders as the most impactful, highest priority activities for the region to pursue through implementation. They are the "biggest rocks" that will cause the widest ripples across the greater Wichita region's economy.

Listed in order of priority, the initiatives include:

1. **Identify and attract top talent for the greater Wichita region's priority employment sectors**
2. **Develop a robust, coordinated, and results-driven business retention and expansion (BRE) program**
3. **Purposefully establish a regional ecosystem for innovation, intellectual property (IP) creation, commercialization, and product development**
4. **Invest in a high-capacity, nationally-focused earned media program**
5. **Effectively engage site consultants and industry influencers**
6. **Develop a reskilling initiative transitioning underemployed talent for careers in targeted industries**
7. **Leverage the region's information and communications technology (ICT) council to guide and inform the sector's strategic growth**
8. **Leverage public-private partnerships to develop a Cybersecurity Center of Excellence and advanced cyber-range in the greater Wichita region**
9. **Elevate the urgency to develop high-capacity broadband in the greater Wichita region**
10. **Launch a regional talent development cooperative**

While these strategic initiatives will derive the greatest return on investment for local resources, they are still supported by the full breadth of tactics and actions in the Regional Growth Plan. However, it is also acknowledged that the catalytic effect of the strategic priorities will improve the likelihood that associated activities across the entire strategic plan will be successfully advanced.

Strategic Pillar I: Talent Pipeline

The greater Wichita region will not be able to reach its full economic potential without a competitive, sustainable, adaptable, and skills-rich workforce. Unfortunately, feedback during the 2015 BREG process and this Update have found that the region is facing existing and projected labor shortages that threaten the viability of its global cluster – aerospace – as well as other priority drivers of local employment. This is not a challenge unique to this region. In fact, nearly every community in the U.S. and most other industrialized nations are facing critical knowledge gaps that have them scrambling to attract skilled talent and effectively train eligible workers. This reality makes it incumbent on the greater Wichita region's education and training community and its partners in government, industry, and economic development to maximize the value of its "cradle to career" training pipeline and aggressively attract top talent from external markets. This will not be easy; that is why the Project Wichita initiatives focused on making the greater Wichita region a more dynamic and competitive location for talent will be essential to addressing the region's workforce issues.

Fortunately, the community is pursuing these challenges from a position of relative strength. Institutions like Wichita State University, Friends University, Newman University, WSU Tech, Butler Community College, and Hutchinson Community College produce thousands of graduates every year with the potential to be absorbed by local firms. The region's aerospace cluster is among the most dynamic in the world. And established and emerging industrial strengths in cybersecurity, data analytics, value-added agriculture, plastics and composites, and petroleum-based products hold promise to provide compelling landing pads for local and non-local talent alike. Effectively connecting jobs and talent will therefore be one of the most important priorities to emerge from this Regional Growth Plan strategy.

MULTI-SECTOR

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Effectively leverage and support the region's existing career-focused education and training programming***

Home to multiple colleges and universities, well regarded public and private school systems, and entities like the Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas and Kansas WorkforceONE, the region has strong resources in place to prepare students and adults for local careers in demand. The Business and Education Alliance (BEA) of the Greater Wichita Partnership has brought together businesses, public and private school districts, non-profits, and regional colleges and universities to look holistically at the "cradle-to-career" training continuum. Determining how best to leverage existing capacity and connections to address critical workforce needs across multiple sectors will be a major focus of the Regional Growth Plan.

- Through the Workforce Alliance, Kansas WorkforceONE, and the BEA, the greater Wichita region education and training entities and partners should continue working to improve the connectivity of the cradle to career continuum to ensure it is a seamless system supporting local employers and workers.
- If determined to have long-term benefit, the BEA should strongly consider joining the Strive network to capitalize on their cradle to career organizational expertise and support.

- Cradle to career training entities should consistently catalogue and assess all career and industry-specific student programming to maximize awareness and participation in programs including Wichita Public School's Aviation Pathway Program, Mock Job Interview Day, the Youth Employment Project, the Kansas Advanced Manufacturing Program (KAMP) targeted training grant, and other efforts.
- Customized occupation and industry-specific training at the National Center for Aviation Training (NCAT) and WSU Tech must be incorporated into the cradle to career network and continuously optimized through focused partnerships between employers and training entities facilitated by schools, workforce development entities, and economic development organizations.
- The Career Pathways online data tool should continue to be updated throughout the year with current job posting data and a summary of industry hiring trends, adjusted based on the guidance of industry experts, and actively promoted to all potential users.
- Key regional partners across the entire public-private spectrum should actively and aggressively promote the Wichita Promise program as a regional talent retention opportunity.

KEY INITIATIVE: Develop a managed clearinghouse to connect employers and applied learning candidates (BP1)

Even with the greater Wichita region's strong training capacity, employers and other stakeholders reported that retaining new graduates and top talent has been challenging. Data from the July 2018 presentation by James Chung of Reach Advisors reported that the region is also only gaining a small share of graduates from Kansas State University and the University of Kansas. Internships are a proven strategy to effectively attract and retain college students, providing opportunities to immerse students in local professional networks and help them build community attachments outside of school. A clearinghouse of experiential learning opportunities provides a "one-stop shop" for employers and prospects to connect. A 2017 Internship & Co-op Survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) reported that of the 67.1 percent of interns offered full-time positions, 76.4 percent accepted.

- Leaders should research top existing models from across the country to inform the development of the greater Wichita region's clearinghouse tool.
- The clearinghouse should serve as a key online resource connecting companies offering job shadowing, internship, and apprenticeship slots with interested students and graduates.
- Recent capacity developed by the state of Kansas to support the promotion and coordination of applied learning capacity should be leveraged for the greater Wichita region's clearinghouse.
- User-friendly processes should be developed to enable employers to manage applied learning postings and remove slots that have already been filled.
- The clearinghouse should be actively promoted by education and training entities, economic development organizations, social services agencies, and other partners with access to potential employer and talent users.

KEY INITIATIVE: Launch a regional talent development cooperative

An entity proposed in the 2015 BREG plan remains valid today as the greater Wichita region continues to struggle meeting labor demands in targeted employment sectors. A talent development cooperative would serve as a hub of regional job training efforts by integrating providers and programs in a central database of information for employers looking for project-specific or more general training resources. The cooperative would not only connect employers to existing programs but also help inform new degree programming and credentialing needs for potential development.

- Options should be explored to effectively create a new organization or leverage an existing entity to create a neutral exchange to match companies seeking qualified employment candidates with training programs and/or providers that can fulfill their needs.
- Assistance could be provided on a project-by-project basis or continuously with employers who agree to a long-term agreement with the cooperative organization.
- Applicable content from statewide sites KSDegreeStats.org and KSCareerNav.gov could serve as potential resources and models for the greater Wichita region's cooperative.
- Analysis of usage and trend data from the online training hub could be used to inform development of new degree programming and credentialing needs.

KEY INITIATIVE: Identify and attract top talent for the greater Wichita region's priority employment sectors

In recent years, the labor force in the greater Wichita region has declined and employers have reported a shortage of skilled workers. At the same time, stakeholders from the region's higher education institutions stated that their degree output is limited by the number of students that enroll. Given that the availability of skilled labor is a top site selection component that is driving company location decisions, greater Wichita will need to take a more focused and targeted approach to attracting outside talent in order to make a significant impact its workforce supply. A targeted talent-attraction strategy (Talent Blueprint) is currently being developed that will identify key markets to prioritize for identification and pursuit of talent-recruitment prospects.

- Implementation of the Talent Blueprint currently under development by Development Counselors International to inform the greater Wichita region's talent marketing and attraction programming will serve as the basis for identifying, engaging, and recruiting talent to the region.
- Efforts should continually ensure that talent attraction programming is focused on skill sets in greatest demand and highest value target markets.
- The approved multi-media talent attraction campaign should be integrated as applicable with existing and future programs promoting the greater Wichita region's quality of life assets and desirability as a place to live and work.

- Alumni networks of Wichita State University, Friends University, Newman University, WSU Tech, Butler Community College, and Hutchinson Community College should be utilized to identify external talent attraction prospects with existing relationships to the region.
- Identification of local high school graduates who matriculated to colleges and universities outside the greater Wichita region should be pursued in the creation of talent attraction prospect databases.
- The Wichita Promise Move relocation scholarship program should be leveraged as a key asset in talent marketing and attraction efforts.

KEY INITIATIVE: Develop a reskilling initiative transitioning underemployed talent for careers in targeted industries (BP2)

As the economy evolves and technology advances, ensuring that the greater Wichita region workforce has the skills to succeed in the region's targeted industries will be an important component to improving wealth and prosperity. By upskilling current workers and encouraging underemployed individuals to further their education and gain in-demand skills in fields such as aerospace, manufacturing, and IT systems and support, the greater Wichita region can improve its workforce competitiveness. Because occupations in maturing regional industries have overlapping skills with faster-growing positions, identifying talent who can benefit from additional training and employers to hire them upon program completion will help address key shortages.

- Program design should be informed by best-practice models and include assessments of regional hiring trends and the occupations with the greatest potential to "crosswalk" (reposition) talent for in-demand positions.
- Existing training curricula and programs should be leveraged for the reskilling initiative, with capacity gaps addressed in collaboration with colleges, universities, and other training partners.
- Public and private employers should be actively engaged at all stages of program development and implementation to ensure that reskilling efforts accurately reflect current and projected hiring demand.
- After completion and launch, the reskilling program should be aggressively promoted to all eligible companies and talent.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND MATERIALS

KEY INITIATIVE: Create a graduate certificate program in Additive Manufacturing and Design at Wichita State University

Additive technologies such as 3D printing are transforming factory floors and reshaping supply chains and production processes. As technologies like additive manufacturing disrupt business operations, local companies will need to embrace these new technologies in order to successfully compete in today's economy. Creation of a streamlined, focused graduate certificate program in additive manufacturing and design will provide opportunities for professionals to develop or expand their skill sets in these technologies and support existing businesses and entrepreneurship in the region.

- Key private sector and organizational partners should continue complement expertise at National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) and other campus units as the certificate program is designed.
- The certificate should be aligned with regional employer needs while also providing guidance on creating new enterprises in additive manufacturing.
- Offering the program online could provide flexibility to potential applicants already in the workforce.

HEALTHCARE

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Continue expanding the region's training capacity for graduate physicians***

As the demand for healthcare grows, ensuring that the greater Wichita region has a sufficient supply of practicing physicians will be an important component ensuring the sustainability of this sector. Because graduate physicians often choose to practice in the communities they select for residency, increasing the slots in existing programs and creating capacity in new specializations can help bolster the region's talent supply. Similarly, post-residency fellowship programs attract a potential workforce in specialized medical practices that require additional training.

- Existing residency and fellowship slots across the greater Wichita region should be inventoried to determine existing graduate physician training capacity.
- Based on the inventory, outreach should be conducted with healthcare employers and professionals to determine specializations with the highest potential impact to pursue for development.
- Resource development to accommodate development of the highest priority new residency and fellowship slots should be coordinated across multiple partners to identify and pursue local, regional, statewide, and federal funding sources.

IT SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Program and launch a Cybersecurity and Information Technology Boot Camp in Greater Wichita (BP3)***

Training "boot camps" are increasingly being utilized by communities and companies to address skills shortages in targeted occupations. These boot camps are typically short, intensive programs where students are immersed in courses that cover the knowledge, skills, and tools qualifying them for a variety of in-demand occupations. A Cybersecurity Boot Camp in the greater Wichita region would provide a useful tool to increase the supply of entry-level IT and cybersecurity talent to meet employer demands in this targeted industry and leverage recently created degree programs at Wichita State University, Friends University, WSU Tech and Butler Community College.

- The intensive, multi-week online or in-person immersive training program would deliver skills and real-world experience for locally in-demand cybersecurity careers.

- Though the boot camp could be administered by WSU's growing Cybersecurity Hub, curricula design and development could be informed by partners including Friends University, Newman University, WSU Tech, Butler Community College, Hutchinson Community College, and others.
- The boot camp should be promoted extensively in collaboration with regional institutions and employers.

KEY INITIATIVE: Develop stand-alone higher education degree programs in Data Science and Analytics

Data scientists and analysts are in high demand, with jobs projected to grow rapidly over the next decade. They also bridge talent demands of all seven Regional Growth Plan target sectors. The addition of new education and training programs in Data Science and Analytics would not only help train incumbent workers, but also attract new students interested in these careers. As occurred for cybersecurity when multiple institutions in the greater Wichita region added training capacity, the region's two- and four-year schools could coordinate efforts to develop complementary data science programs. Wichita State University is currently working on a data science and analytics degree and could be joined by additional schools in the region.

- New programs could span associates to doctoral degrees and even shorter-term graduate certificates or credentials.
- Curricula should be broad enough to provide skills applicable to multiple local employment sectors but also incorporate applications in aerospace, agriculture, materials science, supply chain management, and finance as is feasible.
- Programs should be designed as multi-disciplinary resources for mature and emerging the greater Wichita region industries.
- After launch, new data science training capacity should be promoted through economic development marketing and public relations channels.

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

KEY INITIATIVE: Promote and subsidize local training for receipt of commercial driver's licenses (CDLs)

Across the nation, there is a shortage of truck drivers, including in the greater Wichita region. As older truck drivers retire, companies large and small are struggling to find enough CDL drivers to meet their workforce needs. Additionally, a strong economy and growth in ecommerce are projected to drive additional activity in the trucking market, which will further aggravate workforce constraints. Locally, stakeholders from several industries that depend on the transportation and logistics sector reported challenges in training and retaining truck drivers to meet the region's workforce needs.

- Existing CDL training capacity should be researched and recorded to populate a database of current programs and providers.

- Consensus should be reached among Transportation and Logistics firms in the greater Wichita region on the benefit of capitalizing a tuition-reimbursement fund to incentivize pursuit of CDL licensure.
- Based on employer outreach, resources should be solicited to sustainably fund the program, promote it through all necessary channels and partners, and direct applicants to the most appropriate training.

KEY INITIATIVE: Position the greater Wichita region as a national hub for pilot training.

According to a recent article in Forbes, a looming pilot shortage threatens the future of global aviation; the gap between projected demand and supply is already large and continues to rise. Boeing has projected that aviation will need 790,000 new pilots by 2037 to meet demand[1]. With its globally competitive aerospace sector and existing supply of pilot-training facilities and programs, the greater Wichita region has the opportunity to position pilot training as a "traded" employment sector by aggressively working to recruit new training entities to the region and support the growth of existing firms.

- Key stakeholders including flight school owners and leaders in the local aviation sector should be leveraged to inform a growth strategy for pilot training in the greater Wichita region.
- Partnerships could be developed with commercial airlines, air freight companies, and other large consumers to contract out pilot training using the greater Wichita region-based facilities and programs.
- Consideration of how McConnell Air Force Base could be integrated into the strategy relative to its pilots transitioning out of the military and former personnel living locally and outside the region.
- Procedures could be established to fast-track certification processes with the FAA for entrepreneurs looking to start local flight schools.
- Promotion of the greater Wichita region as a preferred location for establishment and growth of flight schools could be integrated into external marketing campaigns.

[1] Source: https://www.forbes.com/sites/marisagarcia/2018/07/27/a-perfect-storm-pilot-shortage-threatens-global-aviation-even-private-jets/#3a31f8971549

Strategic Pillar II: Existing Business Efforts

About 80 percent of jobs are created by employers already located in the community. Therefore, ensuring that these companies receive the necessary support to sustain and expand their businesses is a critical component of comprehensive economic development programs. Every existing job lost is the equivalent of a new positioned gained through outside firms moving to the community.

As the Regional Growth Plan Cluster Assessment found, much of the greater Wichita region's targeted employment is housed in mature sectors and niches with less potential for attraction of outside firms. Growth opportunities for these firms are therefore tied to improving their competitive standing and market reach by incorporating established and emerging technologies into their products and services. This will require sustained, customized, professional assistance to connect companies with the expertise and vendors necessary to adapt new technologies into their operations. With world-class existing research and innovation at Wichita State and NIAR as well as new capacity proposed in this Regional Growth Plan strategy, the greater Wichita region economic development officials have a rich source of cutting-edge technologies to introduce to targeted local businesses. Capitalizing on these opportunities will require seamless cooperation and coordination between local and regional staff and officials in order to maximize the value of support resources and the time commitments of busy employer representatives.

MULTI-SECTOR

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Develop a robust, coordinated, and results-driven business retention and expansion (BRE) program (BP4)***

While it is laudable that key volunteers dedicate time and effort to conducting existing business calls, these programs must be professionally staffed. Each visit must be meticulously planned, conducted, and leveraged to maximize the time value of staff and employer representatives. Not only can retention and expansion calls help local companies enhance their competitive position and create jobs, they can also serve as key inputs for external marketing efforts through identification of buyers, suppliers, or networked businesses for attraction to the greater Wichita region.

- Local and regional economic development professionals should partner to design and implement an effective, targeted call program linked to the greater Wichita region's priority target cluster and sectors.
- The program's customer resource management (CRM) survey instrument should be designed to support talent retention/acquisition, identification of buyer/supplier attraction prospects, resolution of expansion challenges, and the capturing of key growth opportunities.
- In partnership with innovation experts, institutional researchers, state industry support staff, and key employers, existing business practitioners should facilitate the application of emerging and cross-sector technologies into local firms.

- With appropriate privacy and proprietary controls, a shared project management database populated by the CRM software should be utilized by local and regional economic development partners to optimize the regional calling program.
- The business calling program should fully leverage existing industry-specific advocacy and support organizations across the greater Wichita region's target cluster and sectors to leverage and inform pro-competitive policies, programs, and advocacy.
- Business retention and expansion staff should partner with Kansas Global Trade Services to ensure that information and support provided during business calls is consistent with the directives of the Regional Export Plan.
- Kansas Global staff and officials from locally based foreign consulates and embassies should be utilized to increase the global fluency of regional employers and optimize access to state and federal export-support services.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND MATERIALS

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Create a Task Force for Manufacturing Innovation in the greater Wichita region (BP5)***

Manufacturing is a lynchpin of the greater Wichita region's export economy, a source of thousands of well-paying jobs, and a key driver of the region's logistics sector. Nearly every occupation in Advanced Manufacturing and Materials is increasingly becoming a technology job as innovation pervades the production floor, robotics assumes a larger role on the assembly line, and smart infrastructure wirelessly connects machines across networks of sensors and cloud-based systems. In order to survive, U.S. producers have constantly streamlined operations and innovated processes to remain competitive in the global market. Because many of the greater Wichita region's manufacturers are small- to medium-sized employers lacking the awareness or wherewithal to capitalize on advanced technologies, they would benefit from the collective wisdom of industry experts with experience innovating to remain globally competitive.

- The Task Force should consist of subject-matter experts, researchers, educators, government and economic development personnel, and firms of all sizes engaged to develop a road map for integration of production innovations like additive manufacturing/3D printing, composites, robotics, and other technologies into local firms.
- The Task Force should be leveraged to capture and connect multiple next-generation manufacturing discussions and research taking place in the region and determine how best to leverage technology to maximize the competitive position and output of the greater Wichita region's production sector.
- Task Force discussions should be facilitated and coordinated with WSU research centers and programs and local and regional existing business, entrepreneurship, and workforce development efforts.

HEALTHCARE

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Formalize an action plan to expand digital health in the greater Wichita region's rural communities (BP6)***

A key theme of the Regional Growth Plan development process with healthcare sector stakeholders was the region's largely untapped opportunity to greatly enhance its capacity in telemedicine to both improve rural health outcomes and create new jobs. As rural hospitals either close or see their service capacity reduced, it becomes more difficult to position their communities as competitive destinations for jobs and talent. Especially in a region as expansive geographically as the greater Wichita region, the potential to use video-enabled telemedicine to bridge the distance between rural care facilities and hospitals in the core is strong.

- An oversight committee for the telemedicine initiative should be empaneled from local and regional healthcare networks and providers, the University of Kansas Medical Center, associations and advocacy organizations, local governments, and community and social services personnel.
- The committee should oversee the development and approval of an action plan to optimize telemedicine capacity in the greater Wichita region and establish a framework to continuously enhance these services as technologies and procedures evolve.
- Key potential action plan components could include identifying sustainable funding; providing sufficient infrastructure; improved telehealth reimbursements; and fostering user acceptance and confidence in telehealth.
- An entity to coordinate implementation of the telemedicine plan should be identified and confirmed.

IT SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Leverage the region's information and communications technology (ICT) council to guide and inform the sector's strategic growth***

Most regions the size of the greater Wichita region have some type of established organization representing its ICT companies and professionals. While there had been notable efforts to bring this sector together in Greater Wichita and the broader region, they fell short of the staffed, programmatic entities that typically characterize these models. In response to this deficit, the ICT community in the greater Wichita region has recently announced the formation of the Kansas Technology Council (KTC), a Wichita-based organization representing the region's ICT sector. KTC can serve as the standard bearer for the creation of a strategic action plan to enhance and leverage information and communications technologies in the greater Wichita region. This would include the most promising emerging technologies (e.g., blockchain, artificial intelligence, Big Data, virtual/augmented reality, etc.) to prioritize for growth and investment in the region.

- Local technology leaders should continue to develop and evolve the KTC as an ICT advocacy organization based on proven technology council models, many of which include membership-driven funding, active governance, outreach and advocacy, and a suite of programs designed to expand the regional technology workforce and economy.

- After it has gained traction in the community, the KTC should be charged with coordinating the development of a strategic roadmap for ICT in the greater Wichita region.
- The ICT action plan would engage key individuals, organizations, and companies to assess the region's competitive position and establish strategic priorities driving the sector's sustainable growth.
- The action plan's research phase should include a salary survey of ICT occupations in the greater Wichita region benchmarked against peer communities.

KEY INITIATIVE: Launch a campaign to expand local back office operations of the greater Wichita region corporations

Often, large employers with a presence in multiple communities locate some or all of their back-office operations in a single market to improve efficiencies, save money, capitalize on a business-friendly economic climate, or all of the above. With is competitive business costs, proven workforce in business-support occupations, Central Time location, and strong complement of diversified multi-national corporations – either headquartered or with a strong local presence – the greater Wichita region has the potential to promote its competitiveness for back-office operations to its incumbent employers.

- The region's business calling survey should incorporate queries on existing companies' operations that could be relocated to or consolidated in the greater Wichita region.
- Leads derived from BRE discussions should be pursued through the region's economic development marketing and attraction program, leveraging existing employers as emissaries and advocates as necessary.
- The campaign could also pursue identification and attraction of federal agency divisions with the potential to relocate to lower-cost markets per recent Trump Administration directives.

Strategic Pillar III: High-Impact Marketing and Attraction

Economic development is a relationship-based profession. Identifying and communicating target-specific assets to potential investors can increase the likelihood of prospect companies and their proxies selecting the greater Wichita region as a destination for expansion or relocation. Because the global economy is so competitive and marketing resources scarce, the region's economic developers and their community, industrial, and organizational partners must prioritize outreach based on events and markets with the strongest potential for return on investment. Resources and personnel capacity to promote the greater Wichita region externally were bolstered by the recent merger of Westar Energy and KCP&L to form Evergy. The Regional Growth Plan target sectors and component niches have established parameters for marketing the community nationally and internationally.

A key component of that marketing will be the brand association with the greater Wichita region as a differentiated economic region as well as opportunities to highlight top global existing or emerging clusters with unique graphical and textual identities. Multiple stakeholders noted during the Regional Growth Plan development process that the Wichita region must confirm and/or refresh its "Air Capital of the World" branding or potentially create a new identity that reflects the breadth of regional opportunity and diversity in its ten counties and seven target sectors. As the Cluster Assessment showed, while aerospace is a true global cluster, the dispersal of employment directly related to the sector is strongly concentrated in Wichita and Sedgwick County. A new regional brand could still incorporate an aerospace theme but also integrate key strengths found largely in the area's less populated counties.

MULTI-SECTOR

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Develop or confirm a compelling economic development brand for the ten-county the greater Wichita region (BP7)***

Multiple stakeholders noted during the Regional Growth Plan development process that the Wichita region must confirm and/or refresh its "Air Capital of the World" branding or potentially create a new identity that reflects the breadth of regional opportunity and diversity in its ten counties and seven target sectors. As the Cluster Assessment showed, while aerospace is a true global cluster, the dispersal of employment directly related to the sector is strongly concentrated in Wichita and Sedgwick County. A new regional brand could still incorporate an aerospace theme but also integrate key strengths found largely in the area's less populated counties.

- The first step in this process should be to develop consensus on the potential value of developing a new regional economic development brand.

- Based on the expressed desire of local and regional leaders to revisit "Air Capital of the World," a thorough, consensus-based process to assess the current brand and determine opportunities for a new scheme should be pursued.

- A confirmed or newly developed brand should be promoted through a distinctive online and promotional presence and incorporated into the identities of all local economic development partners and governments.

KEY INITIATIVE: Implement a comprehensive outbound marketing program that maximizes investor value

It is critical that communities maintain an external marketing presence to demonstrate they are actively seeking investment and building relationships with potential investors and their proxies. The greater Wichita region actively promotes its globally-competitive opportunities in aerospace at venues across the world. The 2018 Regional Growth Plan development process refocused the region's priority target sectors and proposed "niche" sub-sectors under each target that further differentiated their growth opportunities. Identifying cost-effective, high-value events to attend in its key emerging niches and technologies could build awareness of these assets and seed relationships with experts in these fields.

- Regional economic development entities should reassess their external marketing programs based on the priority target sectors and niches confirmed during the Regional Growth Plan development process.

- Industry trade shows, corporate real estate association meetings, and other outbound marketing engagements in the current and previous budget year[2] should be analyzed to determine the value derived from new relationships developed, leads identified, prospects generated, and, ultimately, jobs created directly from activities at these events.

- Based on the program assessment, opportunities to invest in attendance at external events in emerging target niches[3] should be vetted in the context of recent performance.

- Consideration should also be given to the benefit of reallocating budget monies for aviation trade show attendance to accommodate a presence at an event focused on the maintenance, repair, and overhaul niche.

- Recent mission trips to targeted geographies should be vetted similar to event-based marketing to optimize the region's travel schedule based on confirmed and projected return on investment.

- Outbound marketing trips should include local and regional partners and investors as is feasible and leverage the Kansas Department of Commerce's domestic and international marketing budget whenever possible.

[2] Events were inclusive of aviation tradeshows in Farnborough or Paris as well as the National Business Aviation Association meeting, among others.

[3] Emerging target niches include: Machinery and Metalworking; Plastics and Composites; Value-Added Agriculture Products; Petroleum-Based Products; and Network Systems and Cybersecurity.

- Opportunities to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) should inform all international marketing activities and capitalize on FDI leads derived from the existing business calling program.

KEY INITIATIVE: Leverage best-in-class multi-media communications tools and materials

Today's corporate relocation and site selection professionals typically complete their community assessments well before short listing and contacting the finalists. It is therefore essential that online marketing tools provide opportunities to access and customize data in downloadable formats, geocode that data to mapping outputs, and list all relevant information on development sites and buildings. Staff contact information is a desired element that site selectors often have to hunt to locate. Data and information must be updated regularly in order to remain viable. Online media is also an important tool for communicating target-sector-specific assets, information, and investment opportunities.

- Regional and local economic development entities should ensure that marketing websites, electronic and social media, and digital promotional materials consistently reflect industry-standard design, content, interactivity, and technology.
- Marketing websites should provide user-friendly and target-specific data and information for site consultants and other influential constituencies, including a constantly updated, searchable site and building database with mapping capacity in downloadable formats.
- Local economic development partners should continually seek to incorporate and prominently display regional branding, messaging, and marketing content on their websites and promotional materials.

KEY INITIATIVE: Engage site consultants and industry influencers

Because economic development is a relationship-driven business, maintaining strong contacts with professionals who assess sites either at a company or for a company is an important marketing strategy. Because site selectors are busy people, providing compelling propositions for them to visit your community is key; so too is determining the highest-value corporate real estate meetings and conferences to attend. Marketing trips should always be programmed with appointments to visit site selectors if possible. In addition to these generalists, the greater Wichita region would benefit from engaging national and international specialists in its target sectors and niches to inform marketing strategies, relationship-building, and cluster-development tactics.

- Regional economic development entities should continue to identify compelling, high-profile opportunities to host site selectors and corporate relocation professionals in the greater Wichita region to demonstrate the region's competitive assets and introduce these influencers to local business executives, elected officials, innovators, education and training personnel, and other top leaders.
- As with industry trade show attendance and external marketing trips, travel to corporate real estate, asset management, and relocation professional meetings should be based on cost-benefit analyses of previous events and detailed tracking of leads, prospects, projects, and announcements generated by each engagement.

- To complement outreach to site location professionals, the greater Wichita region economic development entities should identify top national experts in its highest-impact target sectors and niches to inform and support regional target development efforts.
- Engagements with industry experts could take multiple forms, including capacity assessments, development and/or review of target-specific strategic action plans, service on panel discussions at conferences and meetings, one-on-one work with existing businesses, contractual industry consulting, and others.
- Determination of target niches with the greatest potential benefit from working with outside industry experts and identification of appropriate individuals to pursue for these partnerships should be based on discussions with local public and private leaders in these fields.

KEY INITIATIVE: Invest in a high-capacity, nationally-focused earned media program (BP8)

The most effective publicity a community can receive is not "paid" (advertising) or "owned" (websites, newsletters, magazines, etc.) but "earned" from respected, impartial media sources. A positive story in the Wall Street Journal or New York Times can prove invaluable to a region seeking to build awareness of its strengths, assets, and identity. However, these pieces do not happen by accident; they are cultivated by communications and public relations professionals, either at an organization or through a contracted professional or agency. Smart earned media strategies have redefined national narratives about formerly polluted industrial towns like Pittsburgh and Chattanooga and helped put Des Moines, Iowa on the map as a desirable location for companies and talent. The greater Wichita region must also achieve greater national media penetration to create (or change) perceptions about its destination appeal.

- The determination should be made whether to contract with a proven national economic development public relations firm or develop in-house capacity to coordinate the greater Wichita region's earned media program.
- Once resourced, staff should conduct direct outreach to media purveyors or supply their contracted agency with regular information on local assets, activities, innovators, companies, place-based and quality of life developments, and other compelling story ideas.
- The earned media program could be coordinated as necessary with destination marketing and talent campaigns to ensure that messaging is consisted and coordinated and all opportunities to seed positive stories are capitalized on.
- Earned media efforts should include regular hosting of media familiarization tours to highlight regional activities, entities, assets, and individuals of national interest.

KEY INITIATIVE: Partner on efforts to attract forums, conferences, annual meetings, and other events in the greater Wichita region's targeted sectors to the region

A key outcome of 2015 BREG implementation efforts was the hosting of a manufacturing innovation summit in Wichita. Attempts were also made leverage the region's aerospace strengths to attract a federal meeting focused on on-demand mobility (ODM). The greater Wichita region's presence and prominence in its targeted sectors could be further enhanced by continuing to forge partnerships to attract events in established and emerging technologies to the region. Public-private coalitions built to attract these events in the past have demonstrated that partners can come together around high-value opportunities as they arise. These partnerships should continue to be leveraged to position the region as a regular and popular destination for events in the greater Wichita region's cluster and targeted sectors.

- External marketing, outreach, and relationship-building efforts can help identify and secure opportunities to attract high-profile events in targeted industries to the region.
- Work being done by the Wichita Convention and Visitors Bureau to position the region as a competitive location for major meetings and conferences provides a strong base to expand these efforts to include sector-specific opportunities.

KEY INITIATIVE: Empanel a regional Incentives Task Force

Though controversial at times, incentives are a necessary part of a competitive economic development climate; relocation decisions in most major projects are ultimately swayed by incentives deals. As such, the greater Wichita region communities have – and should continue – offering incentives tools that provide fair value to the company and to taxpayers. Though their perspectives on incentives differ, elected officials, city and county staff, and economic development professionals would all like to see policies and processes made more consistent, transparent, collaborative across geographies, and data-driven.

- Consensus on local and regional incentive policies should be reached through a collaborative, facilitated process bringing public and private partners together to assess current policies, competitor tools, and opportunities for inter-governmental incentive awards.
- The panel should determine the data necessary to make informed decisions on public awards and build appropriate "but-for" analysis models confirming project eligibility for statutory incentives.
- The work of the Task Force could result in the development of model procedures and criteria for use by local jurisdictions to optimize incentives policies across the greater Wichita region geographies.

KEY INITIATIVE: Establish formal operational protocols and non-compete agreements between local and regional economic development organizations (BP9)

One of the most lauded effects of the 2015 BREG process was the improved relationships between local and regional economic development partners. Across the board, stakeholders said the greater Wichita region is ready to take the next step in regional economic development by formalizing these partnerships through agreements – potentially contractual – between entities to improve prospect and project management and eliminate any potential "poaching" of employers from one regional community to another. More transparent

and formalized protocols would appeal to most site selectors who prefer working with communities with well aligned regional economic development systems. Similarly, non-compete agreements by localities pledging to only recruit extra-regionally and not from other the greater Wichita region counties would send a message to consultants, prospects, and other constituencies that it is truly a new day for collaboration in the region.

- A collaborative approach should be taken to establish effective protocols for receipt and distribution of prospect leads from a regional entity to local partners.
- Upon confirmation of the regional lead-distribution, prospect-, and project-management systems, this information should be communicated to the Kansas Department of Commerce.
- The potential could be explored to pursue an official agreement such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or other tool to formalize the region's economic development system.
- Local governments should vote to sign an official resolution developed by REAP (with staff support from WSU's Public Policy and Management Center) pledging to act in good faith to abide by principles of regional economic development including not competing for firms in other the greater Wichita region counties, respecting prospect non-disclosure agreements, and other key tenets.

AEROSPACE

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Leverage a unique multi-platform brand celebrating and promoting the greater Wichita region's diverse aerospace sector***

The greater Wichita region currently manages a proprietary domain – www.aircapitaloftheworld.com – that promotes the region as a top global aerospace hub. The site contains information on multiple aspects of the region's competitiveness in this sector. As aerospace matures, however, it may benefit the greater Wichita region to hone its message to focus on opportunities in commercial and military aviation as well as the maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) niche identified in the Cluster Assessment. Emerging technologies such as unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and on-demand mobility (ODM) could also be included.

- Regional marketing professionals should partner with aerospace companies, leaders, educators, and researchers to customize a high-profile, multi-media, multi-platform campaign highlighting the greater Wichita region's global presence in aerospace.
- The campaign could include employer, researcher, trainer, and worker testimonials and feature regularly updated information on local expansion announcements and other newsworthy material.
- Components of the program should highlight opportunities to leverage aerospace technologies for innovative growth in other regional target sectors and niches.

IT SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Customize a brand identity and messaging campaign to build awareness of the greater Wichita region as an emerging cybersecurity hub***

Cybersecurity represents the greater Wichita region's most promising opportunity to capitalize on a transformational emerging technology to complement the region's strength in aerospace. With key federal and institutional cybersecurity assets and an established base of finance and analytics firms, the region can develop a compelling multi-media value proposition for employers looking to leverage these technologies.

- A stand-alone web domain as well as differentiated media and promotional materials should accompany the development of the cybersecurity brand and messaging framework.
- Key cybersecurity assets at Wichita State University and McConnell Air Force Base's 184th Intelligence Wing should be highlighted and leveraged in the campaign.
- The campaign should acknowledge and promote training capacity at WSU's Hub for Cybersecurity as well as recently developed degree programs at Friends University, Newman University, and WSU Tech.
- It will be critical to detail and promote complementary strengths in financial services, data analytics, healthcare, and aerospace that advance regional cybersecurity efforts.
- Promotional efforts should be coordinated with the proposed regional information and communications technology council and development strategy (see Strategic Pillar I: IT Systems and Security).

Strategic Pillar IV: Targeted Innovation

It has been said that research universities are the "steel mills of the 21st Century." Regions like Silicon Valley, Pittsburgh, Raleigh-Durham, Austin, Ann Arbor, Boston, San Diego, and many others have demonstrated that a world-class research institution focused aggressively on developing new innovations to seed local firms and attract outside investment can be transformative for the local economy. In Wichita State University, the greater Wichita region has an institution that has established a global reputation for aerospace research and is seeking to expand the breadth of its innovation to a more diverse array of technology categories. The University's Innovation Campus is a bold attempt to create a nationally and internationally recognized hub for discovery, public and private investment, and lifestyle amenities that will draw the best and brightest talent from across the globe. Market Street feels that the continued evolution of Wichita State into a top-tier institution for applied research is one of the greater Wichita region's top strategic priorities. This would be complemented by efforts to build public-private innovation capacity across the region.

Developing critical mass for transformative innovation will require levels of investment, advocacy, outreach, and promotion well beyond what the region has yet dedicated to this purpose. As James Chung has noted in his Focus Forward analysis, greater Wichita must significantly enhance its level of public, private, and philanthropic investment in its competitive assets to reestablish a growth trajectory that meets and exceeds top Midwestern and national benchmark communities.

MULTI-SECTOR

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Purposefully establish a regional ecosystem for innovation, intellectual property (IP) creation, commercialization, and product development (BP10)***

While research, licensing, and commercialization activity at Wichita State University is undeniably the driving force behind the creation of an innovation ecosystem in the greater Wichita region, advancing innovation from discovery to commercialization involves multiple players from small businesses, investors, and private industry to economic development entities, industry groups, and governments. Innovation developers benefit from connectivity with industry receptors because market viability is often a key stimulant for privately sponsored research, IP licensing, and bridging of the so-called "Valley of Death" from proof of concept to market absorption. A complex interplay of relationships across the innovation spectrum helps ideas transverse the "valley" to reach their commercial potential. These include formal collaboration tools such as non-disclosure agreements and MOUs, allowing research faculty to take sabbaticals to start companies or enter into consultant agreements with companies, and creation of centers of excellence and research institutes. The creation of WSU Ventures with the purpose of assisting WSU faculty, staff and students with commercialization and intellectual property and a goal of linking industry, entrepreneurs, and investors with university resources and technology was a major step in the development of a regional innovation ecosystem. But it will take a concerted, coordinated, aggressive, and sustained effort among all necessary local and regional partners to elevate the greater Wichita region to the level of a true destination innovation ecosystem.

WSU's Innovation Campus can serve as the locus of this ecosystem. The Campus has already attracted the presence of Airbus, Dassault Systèmes, and Spirit AeroSystems, among other private-sector partnerships. Proximity to the National Institute for Aviation Research, the 3D Experience® Center, and other WSU innovation assets is a powerful draw for firms in aerospace and other industries looking to leverage these resources. In, NIAR, the region has an established, world-class model for creation of a sector-based innovation ecosystem that could serve as a blueprint for expansion to the larger economy.

- WSU Ventures should be considered the principal entity to expand the region's commercialization ecosystem by formalizing processes to guide researchers and startup enterprises along the path to market.
- Local and regional economic development partners should work with WSU Ventures to determine how they can best support the goal of identifying potential industry receptors and private capital to connect with university researchers to foster IP licensing and technology commercialization, including through FDI strategies.
- Ecosystem partners including e2e, Wichita Technology Corporation, Entrepreneurship Task Force, Startup Wichita, devICT, Open Wichita, Shift ICT, Labor Party, GO Create, and others should also foster strong connections to WSU Ventures to connect talent, local and external capital, business development expertise, mentors, networking opportunities, and potential corporate partners to enterprises spun out from WSU-affiliated research.
- The buildout of the Innovation Campus Master Plan should be acknowledged as a key priority in the expansion of the region's innovation ecosystem, with economic development partners working with WSU to help market the multi-sector, interdisciplinary, and advanced technology investment opportunities at the Innovation Campus.
- The NIAR model could be applied to additional industry sectors through investments to develop testing and demonstration capacity (including what is proposed in the Regional Growth Plan) to support new product development and enhancement of existing technologies to advance their path to market.
- WSU Ventures and its regional partners should consistently explore – and potentially visit – top innovation and commercialization ecosystems to identify tactical opportunities to grow the greater Wichita region's model.

KEY INITIATIVE: Create an industry-focused Center for Applied Interdisciplinary Research (BP11)

A lynchpin of Wichita State University's contributions to an enhanced regional innovation and commercialization ecosystem would be the development of a new Center focused on multi-dimensional innovation, technology transfer, and commercialization capacity for many of the proposed Regional Growth Plan target sectors. In this way, the model established by NIAR for aviation could be expanded to additional regional target sectors through the creation of technology demonstration facilities, product testing, evaluation, and qualification processes and equipment, co-location of engineering, libraries, and specialized centers, and other functional components.

While the creation of WSU Ventures to manage technology exchange and transfer agreements, form R&D partnerships, and oversee pooled intellectual property portfolios was a key outcome of 2015 BREG, the strategy's vision of a multidisciplinary innovation and commercialization center did not advance past the theoretical stage. Though an entity of this type would be very cost-intensive and require the addition of world-class researchers across multiple disciplines and new state-of-the-art laboratory space and testing equipment, the Center's potential benefit for innovation ecosystem expansion would be immense.

- Design for the precompetitive, collaborative, industry focused research and development Center should be informed by the NIAR model and other top facilities across the nation and world.
- A technology exchange and development partnership for shared should be developed between targeted industry and regional users and managed by Center staff.
- Funding and support to develop, operate, and leverage new and expanded laboratories to perform applied R&D, product prototyping and testing, and contract service delivery for regional sectors of strength should be aggressively pursued.
- The Center could program and host showcase events in multiple target sectors to highlight the greater Wichita region's innovation ecosystem and foster connections between outside researchers, investors, and companies with local faculty, startups, and established firms.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND MATERIALS

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Create an inter-disciplinary Materials Science department in WSU's College of Engineering***

Advances in materials science from innovation in chemical engineering and other disciplines has the potential to support multiple advance manufacturing sub-sectors, including additive and 3-D printing technologies. Identifying new structural and chemical properties for advanced manufacturing inputs and outputs would not only benefit manufacturing broadly across the greater Wichita region, but could be quickly tied to applications in aerospace. Existing expertise in these fields can be found at Wichita State University across multiple existing departments in the College of Engineering. Similar to programming the university developed for supply chain management, Wichita State officials could assemble talent from across the college – and potentially other campus units – into a newly formed Materials Science department in the College of Engineering.

- University leaders and College of Engineering administrators should assess the viability and benefit of leveraging existing faculty and facilities to create a new Department of Materials Science.
- The new department could be "virtual," with faculty and staff remaining in their current departments and locations, or actual, with cross-college and interdisciplinary researchers permanently assigned to a stand-alone Materials Science unit.
- Based on a go-forward determination, a strategic plan for full buildout of a top level Materials Science department should be developed, including analysis of existing and necessary capacity in personnel, equipment, facilities, and resources.

- The Department of Materials Science could serve as an initial building block in a longer-term initiative to create a competitive innovation and commercialization ecosystem in these technologies across the greater Wichita region.

AEROSPACE

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Fund and launch an Advanced Aircraft Sustainment Center at NIAR (BP12)***

While growth prospects in general aviation are projected to remain relatively flat for the foreseeable future, commercial aviation is seeing the opposite trend: increased demand to the point that order backlogs for new jets are in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Because of chokepoints in the delivery of new aircraft, desires of carriers to manage costs, the explosion of e-commerce and order fulfillment using commercial-grade jets, the growth of discount airlines, the sale of used aircraft and maintenance, repair, and overhaul of existing planes is a fast-growing business segment of aviation. There are also high-value applications for military aircraft. Though the greater Wichita region is not known for aircraft maintenance or refurbishment like Tulsa, Oklahoma, the niche is nevertheless growing in the region. By committing resources to build innovation capacity in advanced aircraft sustainability, Wichita State University and NIAR could leverage their proven model to expand into the fast-growing maintenance, repair, and overhaul segment and significantly enhance the greater Wichita region's competitive position for firms in this space.

- NIAR should work collaboratively with schools, departments, and faculty across the university to explore opportunities to apply its research and development model to aircraft sustainment technologies.
- Research, development, and deployment of advanced aircraft sustainment innovations could serve as a compelling tool to retain and expand existing greater Wichita region producers and attract new firms to the region.

IT SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Develop a public-private Cybersecurity Center of Excellence in the greater Wichita region (BP13)***

Of all the potential complements to aerospace to differentiate the greater Wichita region's industrial brand, local leaders feel cybersecurity has the greatest opportunity to carve out a niche in the global market. Though cybersecurity is one of the most competitive technology segments on the planet right now, the greater Wichita region can rightly claim a competitive base of assets. These include the 184th Intelligence Wing's main complex at McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita, current and planned research capacity at Wichita State University, and recently created cybersecurity programs at WSU, Friends University, Newman University, Butler Community College, and WSU Tech. Staking a claim to global prominence with the development of a Cybersecurity Center of Excellence – perhaps following the established NIAR model – could distance the greater Wichita region from many of its competitor regions.

- Ongoing momentum to explore research center models and apply learnings to Greater Wichita opportunities should be captured and advanced.

- The most appropriate, feasible, impactful, and sustainable development model for the region should be confirmed, with funding needs and opportunities identified and addressed.
- A public-private coalition to resource, design, program, and construct the center should be assembled and leveraged.
- Cybersecurity Center efforts could potentially align with the proposed development of advanced cyber-range (see Strategic Pillar V: Catalytic Infrastructure)
- The Center should be utilized to attract national and international cybersecurity meetings, forums, conferences, and symposia
- Aggressive promotion of the Center to national and international corporations, individuals, and equity investors will be necessary to maximize its value and impact.

Strategic Pillar V: Catalytic Infrastructure

The greater Wichita region's priority target sectors require the necessary capacity to move goods, people, and information. The first two categories have long been the focus of state and local governments and the organizations charged with planning, constructing, and maintaining critical road and highway infrastructure and developing sites to accommodate industrial expansion and relocation. The movement of information, while also a long-held concern of telecommunications providers and utilities, has taken on new primacy with the internet age and revolutionary impact of information and communications technologies on the global economy. Today's communities must now offer broadband connectivity speeds fast enough for companies and talent (who can now locate virtually anywhere and work remotely) to compete with firms across the world. The greater Wichita region's high-speed broadband connectivity was said to be anti-competitive by multiple Regional Growth Plan development process respondents.

Though a priority of the 2015 BREG process, demonstrable improvements in this issue struggled to move past the analysis phase. Conflicting perspectives on the region's capacity were offered by service providers, companies, institutions, and governments. However, feedback from IT firms on projects lost because of inferior connectivity speeds and ongoing urgency from Wichita State officials and others advocating state government for greater investments in broadband capacity make it clear that top leaders in the greater Wichita region feel the region is at a crisis point.

As the greater Wichita region must continue to invest in the infrastructure necessary to support shipping, mobility, and economic development, it must redouble efforts to deliver competitive broadband speeds to all ten counties in the region. This will also contribute to the growth potential of cybersecurity, one of the region's most dynamic target sector niches.

MULTI-SECTOR

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Elevate the urgency to develop high-capacity broadband in the greater Wichita region (BP14)***

For several years, high-speed broadband has been cited as one of the biggest challenges affecting the greater Wichita region's economic competitiveness. This is especially true for target sector companies in rural communities where broadband connectivity is weakest. Because it was a Cross-Cutting Initiative in 2015 BREG, efforts were made to assess and enhance broadband capacity in the greater Wichita region. However, despite broadband-focused outreach, meetings, a white paper, a comparative analysis from WSU's Center for Economic Development and Business Research, and state-level advocacy a "burning platform" was never created to advance the issue past the discussion stage. Because local and regional capacity will be affected by state-level policy and resources, the greater Wichita region must build a powerful coalition of public and private constituencies to lobby for state support to either build a state-of-the-art broadband network or have the freedom to resource and construct a local system. The region's future competitiveness in cybersecurity and any technology- and communications-intensive sector or niche will be dependent on internet connectivity speeds available to governments, companies, and talent.

- Top regional leadership should be presented with a compelling case statement to communicate the urgency of capacity enhancements in broadband connectivity across the greater Wichita region.
- As key public and private leaders commit to promoting the urgency of regional broadband expansion, a speaker's bureau could be assembled to leverage these individuals to spread the message to elected councils and commissions, boards of directors, companies, education and training institutions, industry associations, community groups, and other important constituencies.
- Speaker's bureau outreach should support advancement of state and local legislative priorities informed by analysis of efforts to date to assess the region's broadband capacity, needs, and enhancement opportunities.
- The greater Wichita region's efforts could be informed by discussions with and visits to communities that have developed high-speed municipal and regional broadband networks.

KEY INITIATIVE: Continue advocating for funding and construction of high-priority local and regional transportation projects

BREG Input stakeholders from across the greater Wichita region lauded governments' increasing willingness to work across political boundaries to plan and develop transportation infrastructure. A regional approach to long-range planning and shorter-term prioritization and funding of high-impact projects must continue if the greater Wichita region is to successfully attract the dollars necessary to construct new roads and highways and maintain/expand existing infrastructure. These processes and decisions should be strongly informed by the needs of targeted industries for systemic and site-specific capacity enhancements.

- Working with city and county governments, the Greater Wichita Partnership, the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, REAP, SCKEDD (South Central Kansas Economic Development District), and other key partners, the Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO) should continue to assess and incorporate regional transportation and mobility priorities into long-range planning and annual prioritization of transportation-improvement projects.
- Local and multi-government project priorities should continue to be reflected in regional state and federal advocacy efforts.
- The potential to develop short-term public-private coalitions to promote approval and/or passage of transformative mobility projects should be explored and pursued.

KEY INITIATIVE: Ensure a competitive supply of local economic development sites

Maintaining a diverse portfolio of available sites to market to existing and prospect companies is a key component of a holistic economic development program. For companies looking to get a new facility up and running quickly, a "shovel-ready" site can shave months off construction time and accelerate the company's speed to market. As such, many communities seek a "certified site" designation to better market and promote their development product. At the very least, site certification can help communities understand the multiple criteria necessary to ensure a site is market-competitive. Local governments and regional agencies must

continue to ensure that economic development product needs are considered when planning for infrastructure development and upgrades.

- Regional economic development officials should continue to work with local governments, agencies, and organizations to assess current site availability, determine needed enhancements, and secure resources to facilitate site expansion, development, and provision of necessary infrastructure.
- Localities should work with the Kansas Department of Commerce and regional economic development entities to engage in shovel-ready certification processes for high-profile sites, then leverage these exercises to inform elected officials and other influencers about the requirements to make sites competitive for top employment prospects.
- Data and specifications on new, enhanced, and certified sites should continuously be added and updated on local, regional, and state-level economic development websites.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND MATERIALS

KEY INITIATIVE: Pursue construction of speculative manufacturing buildings

The lack of available buildings with specifications accommodating modern manufacturing processes was cited as a weakness in the greater Wichita region. Stakeholders reported an insufficient supply of spaces with high enough ceilings and sufficient clearances to accommodate modern equipment. Attracting the construction of speculative manufacturing space can be a challenge in today's risk-averse market. Demonstrating provable demand, connecting anchor companies with developers, or identifying public resources to support construction of modern spec buildings are options for government and economic development officials looking to upgrade the region's supply of prospect-ready facilities.

- Local and regional economic development officials should work together to inventory the greater Wichita region's current supply of manufacturing buildings based on suitability criteria for multiple manufacturing sub-sectors and project types to determine existing competitive conditions.
- Buildings with redevelopment potential to meet current standards should be noted along with obsolete facilities that would either need to be reconstructed or positioned for non-production sectors.
- Discussions concurrent with the building inventory should assess past project demand for modern facilities, including prospect feedback (if available) related to reasons cited for site unsuitability.
- Based on the supply/demand assessment, officials should estimate potential market demand for redeveloped and new facilities if current trends hold.
- Analysis data should be used to develop case statements and marketing materials promoting opportunities to refurbish and/or develop speculative prospect-ready buildings.
- In addition to opportunities to develop spec buildings with public monies, the potential to incentivize private investment in turnkey facilities should be explored and pursued.

AEROSPACE

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Assess existing and necessary hangar space to accommodate growth in the region's maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) niche***

New aviation operating models have forced a rethinking of conventional approaches to construction of maintenance hangars. More than just a covered work space, hangars designed for MRO operations must consider how best to integrate process, facility, and organizational needs, accommodate scheduled and non-scheduled activity, and reflect the often time-critical nature of aircraft sustainment. Interiors must be able to house a full range of widebody aircraft in either a tail-in or nose-in position. Production facilities supporting the greater Wichita region's core strengths in business and personal jets and commercial aircraft components are not optimal for the MRO sub-sector. To determine the region's capacity to competitively support MRO growth, a detailed assessment of current and required hangar space should be conducted.

- Study parameters and objectives should be informed by example processes from other communities.
- The study should result in projections of optimal facility needs and actionable recommendations to develop new capacity, either through hangar retrofits or new construction.
- Assessment findings and data on the greater Wichita region's MRO sub-sector trends should be leveraged to promote speculative hangar development.

IT SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Develop an advanced cyber-range in the greater Wichita region (BP15)***

An advanced cyber-security testing and training environment is a critical growth criterion for cybersecurity in the greater Wichita region. Cyber-ranges are used to conduct cyber-security exercises and offer a real-world training environment for current and future cybersecurity professionals. Cyber-ranges also allow partner organizations to test and develop new technologies or processes. Though resource-intensive, a state-of-the-art cyber-range is a necessarily investment if the greater Wichita region is to compete for cybersecurity firms and innovation.

- To inform cyber-range development opportunities in the greater Wichita region, an assessment of development processes for cyber-ranges in comparison communities should be completed, including the identification of funding sources, site preferences, development partners, regulatory requirements, and timeframes for completion.
- Based on the assessment of existing cyber-ranges, local entities should partner on a development plan for a greater Wichita region facility that prescribes location and funding options, a development timeline, and potential partnerships to resource, design, construct, and program the cyber-range.
- Consideration should be given to opportunities to align cyber-range development with the creation of the proposed WSU Cybersecurity Center of Excellence.

TRANSPORTATION AND LOGISTICS

KEY INITIATIVE: ***Commission a study to assess and confirm the required infrastructure to optimize the region's movement of goods***

Exports are a major driver of the greater Wichita region's economy. A recent export plan and regional FDI strategy have helped the region diversify its exports and assisted smaller businesses with increasing international trade. Stakeholders from the region's Transportation and Logistics community believe that identification, funding, and construction of priority infrastructure projects will be critical to ensuring that goods movement in the region is competitive with, and even exceeds, its peers. While acknowledging that their sector was hindered by the lack of a high-capacity facility to move goods among different transportation modes (truck, air, rail), industry stakeholders believe assessment of the demand for and benefits of a transload facility should be conducted in the context of a broader study that looks holistically at the sector's needs across all infrastructure categories.

- A Logistics Infrastructure Study in the greater Wichita region should leverage the expertise and perspectives of public and private leaders to design the study parameters, issue a request for proposals, select a winning firm, and oversee the development and implementation of the study.
- After priorities are identified, they should be referenced against and incorporated into existing and future regional transportation and comprehensive planning processes and funding requests.
- Aggressive advocacy should be pursued to ensure necessary funding for priority infrastructure projects is approved and appropriated.

CONCLUSION

The 2015 Blueprint for Regional Economic Growth was a watershed process that paved the way for the establishment of the greater Wichita region as a unified economic region with shared target sectors and cross-cutting competitive challenges and opportunities. By learning from the design and implementation of the initial 2015 BREG strategy, the Regional Growth Plan takes the 2015 BREG process to the next level by improving target sector focus and better aligning cluster development strategies with competitive issues and challenges. This is accomplished through the prioritization of Strategic Pillars and Key Initiatives that cut across multiple industries and geographies yet still identify necessary sector- and community-specific initiatives.

Effective implementation of the Regional Growth Plan will require additional public and private resources and greater collaboration and coordination between public, private, civic, and institutional entities and constituencies in the greater Wichita region. Again, the lessons of 2015 will be helpful in designing and advancing strategic partnerships that are feasible and sustainable to achieve the Regional Growth Plan priorities.

It was noted previously in this report but bears repeating that the Regional Growth Plan alone will not enable the greater Wichita region to take advantage of its world-class assets and great potential to develop a competitive workforce and achieve more diverse, equitable, and long-term job and wealth creation. Multiple components of the region's competitiveness for companies, talent, and innovation will be the purview of Project Wichita and other local and regional processes that enhance the greater Wichita region's built environment, quality of life and place amenities, culture of inclusion, arts and recreation amenities, and attitudes around investment in and service to community.

The stars are aligning in the greater Wichita region with the concurrent development of the Regional Growth Plan, Project Wichita, the Talent Attraction Blueprint, and other initiatives building off recent momentum to raise the region's competitive profile in today's knowledge and innovation-driven economy. This confluence of strategic activity offers the opportunity to design, launch, and sustain a collaborative public-private framework for strategic implementation that connects key partners across the entire spectrum of activities necessary to take the greater Wichita region to the next level.

When James Chung of Reach Advisors concluded the June 2018 presentation culminating his firm's multi-year Focus Forward analysis of Greater Wichita, he challenged the attendees to transform the community so the next time he reports on the region's progress, the news will be universally positive. With the Regional Growth Plan and complementary initiatives across the region, the time is now for the greater Wichita region to prove that this visionary future is within its grasp.

APPENDIX A: MULTI-SECTOR KEY INITIATIVE MATRIX

The following matrix represents Market Street's attempt to demonstrate the benefit to the greater Wichita region's target cluster and sectors from implementation of the "multi-sector" key initiatives in the Regional Growth Plan. While anticipated impacts are estimates, the matrix nevertheless shows that activities in all the region's target categories will be supported by 2018 Regional Growth Plan implementation.

The color coding in the matrix is based on anticipated impact of each key initiative by sector.

GREEN = Highest impact

YELLOW = Medium impact

RED = Lowest impact

Key Initiative	Advanced Manufacturing & Materials	Aerospace	Agriculture	Healthcare	IT Systems & Support	Oil & Gas	Transportation & Logistics
Strategic Pillar I: Talent Pipeline							
Effectively leverage and support the region's existing career-focused education and training programming							
Develop a managed clearinghouse to connect employers and applied learning candidates							
Launch a regional talent development cooperative							
Identify and attract top talent for S. Central Kansas's priority employment sectors							

Key Initiative	Advanced Manufacturing & Materials	Aerospace	Agriculture	Healthcare	IT Systems & Support	Oil & Gas	Transportation & Logistics
Develop a reskilling initiative transitioning underemployed talent for careers in targeted industries							
Strategic Pillar II: Existing Business Efforts							
Develop a robust, coordinated, and results-driven business retention and expansion (BRE) program							
Strategic Pillar III: High-Impact Marketing and Attraction							
Develop or confirm a compelling economic development brand for the ten-county greater Wichita region							
Implement a comprehensive outbound marketing program that maximizes investor value							
Leverage best-in-class multi-media communications tools and materials							
Engage site selectors and industry influencers							
Invest in a high-capacity, nationally-focused earned media program							

Key Initiative	Advanced Manufacturing & Materials	Aerospace	Agriculture	Healthcare	IT Systems & Support	Oil & Gas	Transportation & Logistics
Partner on efforts to attract forums, conferences, annual meetings, and other events in SCK's target sectors							
Empanel a regional Incentives Task Force							
Establish formal operational protocols and non-compete agreements between local and regional economic development organizations							
Strategic Pillar IV: Targeted Innovation							
Purposefully establish a regional ecosystem for innovation, intellectual property (IP) creation, commercialization, and product development							
Create an industry-focused Center for Applied Interdisciplinary Research							
Strategic Pillar V: Catalytic Infrastructure							
Elevate the urgency to develop high-capacity broadband in the greater Wichita region							
Continue advocating for funding and construction of high-priority local and regional transportation projects							

Key Initiative	Advanced Manufacturing & Materials	Aerospace	Agriculture	Healthcare	IT Systems & Support	Oil & Gas	Transportation & Logistics
Ensure a competitive supply of local economic development sites							

APPENDIX B: BEST PRACTICES

Market Street maintains an extensive library of best practice programs, processes, organizations, and efforts for application to key competitive opportunities and challenges identified through our comprehensive research process. Best practices recommended to inform the Regional Growth Plan were selected based on their specific relevance to actions and efforts the community can pursue. Ultimately, local leadership should use these best practices as guidelines and potential programmatic models to inform strategic efforts custom-tailored to the greater Wichita region.

BP1: GREATER GRADS (OKLAHOMA CITY, OK)

greatergrads.com

Greater Grads is an initiative of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's Education and Workforce Development division. It launched in 2006 to build Oklahoma City's talent base by connecting talent – specifically college graduates – with employers in the Oklahoma City region.

The program consists of three parts:

- InternOKC summer program: Interns can be enrolled in this four week series that includes a kick-off session and four lunch sessions that highlight the benefits of living and working in the Oklahoma City region. This fosters peer networking and provides resources to help students transition from college to career.
- A Greater Grads Career Fair is held each spring with more than 100 recruiters from local companies. A link on the Greater Grads website provides attendees with resume and interviewing tips to maximize their success and efficiently utilize the time of participating employers.
- Website for graduates and employers: This website focuses on promoting Oklahoma City to recent college graduates and young professionals and connecting them with jobs available at local businesses.

A year after Greater Grads' debut, a partnership was forced with the Alliance of Emerging Professionals, Oklahoma City's young professionals group. These recent college graduates returned to their campuses to promote the Greater Grads program and website to college students during monthly AEP social events.

BP2: UPSKILL HOUSTON (HOUSTON, TX)

houston.org/upskillhouston/

In 2013, the Greater Houston Partnership, an association of business leaders representing 1,200 member companies in 11 counties, created a task force of 79 leaders from large companies, education and training providers, workforce and economic development entities, and social services. The task force in turn developed UpSkill Houston, an industry-led effort to "better align the supply of middle skills labor to

employers' needs creating a robust workforce pipeline." The program seeks to increase the number of available workers that are have the necessary skills to support the region's seven key sectors: Petrochemical Manufacturing; Industrial and Commercial Construction; Healthcare; Port, Maritime, Logistics; Utilities; Advanced Manufacturing; and Oil & Gas—Upstream and Midstream.

UpSkill Houston's work focuses on closing the skills gap in the region and aligning collective efforts. It pursues three fundamental objectives:

- Attract unemployed and underemployed Houston residents and youth to advanced technical and craft careers across the region—in part by raising awareness of and changing perceptions about these careers.
- Train individuals in the technical and employability skills necessary for success—using curricula built around industry demand and aligned across the sector for portability.
- Place and retain these workers on career paths that reward those who continue to upgrade their skills and mentor those who need a little support.

UpSkill Houston provides resources, structure, and convening opportunities to foster region- and sector-wide collaboration among employers and educational institutions, as well as training and service providers (community-based organizations and government agencies). Specific tactics in the action plan include the creation of sector specific councils to identify workforce needs, developing messaging targeted to students and workers that seeks to "redefine perceptions" about middle skills careers, gathering demand- and supply-side data from companies and training programs, and establishing networks among education and training providers to more efficiently share information.

BP3: EVOLVE SECURITY ACADEMY (CHICAGO, IL)

evolvesecurity.io/academy/home

In response to the growing demand for cyber security specialists, Evolve Security Academy was launched. Evolve Security Academy is a 17-week in-person or 15-week online cybersecurity bootcamp that offers students hands-on holistic and immersive training where students gain the concrete and practical skills they need to become cyber security professionals. At the academy, students are given real work experience through its live security assessment work that is performed on not-for-profit companies. Courses include networking, application stack, social engineering, cryptography, incident response and forensics, and defense, detection, and architecture, among others. The curriculum also includes interview preparation and job placement process to assist students with finding a job. Successful graduates receive an Evolve Security Certified Professional (ESCP) certification, a CompTIA Security+ certification, and are introduced to a network of security professionals and experts. In 2018 and 2019, Evolve Security Academy was rated as the number one security bootcamp by Switchup.

BP4: BUSINESS FIRST (RICHMOND, VA)

businessfirstrichmond.com

Launched in 2006, Business First is a collaborative, regional, existing business retention and expansion (BRE) program of the Greater Richmond Regional Partnership (GRP) and its local government partners. Professional economic development staff and trained volunteers from the business community interview CEOs and other top company officials to fully understand the company's competitiveness and its long-term prospects for growth. Interviews cover a wide range of topics and findings include hiring prospects for the next year, perceptions of the regional workforce and specific skill shortages, projected sales, and business climate issues. The data allows the GRP to gauge the health of the regional economy, develop an early warning system to foretell potential future layoffs, and provide targeted solutions to existing businesses. Typical services offered through Business First visits include:

- Expansion support;
- Connection to state and local incentive programs;
- Workforce recruiting and training;
- Financing;
- Business planning;
- Coordination of municipal services; and
- Downsizing prevention and management.

BP5: QUAD CITIES MANUFACTURING INNOVATION HUB (QUAD CITIES, IL-IA)

quadcitieschamber.com/locate-start-grow/grow/manufacturing-innovation-hub

A program of the Quad Cities Chamber, the Quad Cities Manufacturing Innovation Hub is working proactively to help the region capitalize on a manufacturing revolution of new product forms, materials, processes, and smart automation converging on the shop floor. Hub services include:

- Operational assessments
- Triage and project management to oversight solutions
- Free registry in regional supplier catalog
- Seminars and B2B events
- Access to a Critical Talent Network of industry experts
- Connections to the Quad City Manufacturing Lab (QCML) and national research
- Personalized support

The Hub also provides opportunities to connect with others who share similar interests or common business development prospects.

BP6: GREENVILLE HEALTH SYSTEM TELEHEALTH INITIATIVE (GREENVILLE, SC)

https://www.ghs.org/healthcareservices/telehealth-initiatives/

Based in Greenville, South Carolina, the Greenville Health System has been a pioneer in the provision of telemedicine services to its rural patients. It is consistent with the System's vision to transform healthcare for the benefit of the people and communities it serves.

The key components of the telehealth initiative include:

- Delivery Buddy – Neonatal specialists provide urgent resuscitation support for babies in distress at distant sites.
- Home Health Telemonitor – Home health providers monitor patient's health status remotely.
- NeuroDirect – System neurologists consult with outlying hospitals lacking 24-hour neurology coverage.
- Tele-Infectious Disease – Infectious disease specialists provide consults at hospitals via InTouch robots.
- Tele-Maternal Fetal Medicine – Specialists provide ultrasound consults in rural areas.
- Tele-School – Boosts access to health care for students in underserved communities.
- Tele-Sitter – Allows patients who need continuous oversight to be monitored remotely.
- SmartExam – Offers online visits with a Greenville Health Systems provider.

BP7: DSM USA (GREATER DES MOINES, IA)

www.dsmpartnership.com

DSM USA is the regional identifier for Greater Des Moines. Developed and promoted by the Greater Des Moines Partnership, the region's economic development organization, the brand is intended to communicate that Greater Des Moines is a welcoming, diverse, and vibrant community with affordable and accessible amenities for residents and businesses.

The regional identifier was the result of significant quantitative and qualitative research. The Partnership will promote the DSM USA message and encourage its Investors, members, and DSM USA Ambassadors to use DSM USA messaging on their websites and in their communications, including by using the hashtag "DSMUSA" on social media

BP8: EARNED MEDIA STRATEGY (CHATTANOOGA, TN)

Ever since Walter Cronkite called Chattanooga the "dirtiest city in America" in the 1970s, the community has been focused on changing both its local realities and also external perceptions. Beginning in the 2000s, the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce, partnering with the region's Convention and Visitor's Bureau, contracted with a national public relations firm to try to change the outside perceptions of Chattanooga as a declining industrial city with few modern assets for companies, talent, or visitors.

Focusing on strengths such as its revitalized downtown, America's first city-wide gigabit fiber network, emerging entrepreneurial climate, and other assets, the public relations (earned media) strategy has seen notable success. Since implementing the strategy, the Chattanooga region has been featured in hundreds of business media placements with more than 1 billion impressions worldwide in a wide range of national, regional trade and online outlets including The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, The Economist, Fortune, CNN, Fox Business News, CNBC, and The Huffington Post. The tourism and visitation campaign was also effective, with nearly 1 billion impressions showcasing Chattanooga in outlets such as ABC News, Birmingham Parent, Baltimore Sun, Chicago Tribune, Delta SKY, Forbes.com, Georgia Magazine, National Geographic Weekend, Preservation, and Southern Living.

BP9: METRO DENVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION CODE OF ETHICS (DENVER, CO)

metrodenver.org/about/partners/code-of-ethics/

The Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is the economic development arm of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce representing 70 cities, counties, and economic development organizations from nine counties. To ensure that standards of conduct were advanced and adhered to by Metro Denver EDC's full complement of diverse economic development organizations, the EDC developed a code of ethics for local partners to follow. Components of the code include the following pledges:

- "When representing the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (EDC), we shall endeavor to sell 'Metro Denver First' and our individual communities and projects second."
- "We shall honor the confidentiality requested by both our fellow members of the Metro Denver EDC and our prospects."
- "We are committed to the concept of competition for locations and expansions among our individual communities and projects, provided that the prospect has asked for specific proposals or has settled on a Metro Denver location."
- "At no time shall any member of the Metro Denver EDC solicit a fellow member's prospects."
- "We are committed to sharing among our membership as much information as is necessary and prudent on any activity undertaken by or in the name of the Metro Denver EDC."

- "At no time shall any economic development organization member of the Metro Denver EDC advertise or promote its respective area to companies within another member's geographic area in a manner that is derogatory or insulting to the other geographic area."

Member municipalities and organizations have approved the code for application and the agreement has been effective in promoting and maintaining regional cooperation across a number of economic development-related issues, not solely leads management. Other regions across the U.S., such as Northeast Indiana, have adopted regional economic development codes of ethics modeled around Metro Denver EDC's agreed non-compete standards.

BP10: GEORGIA TECH STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ATLANTA, GA)

http://www.research.gatech.edu/sites/research.gatech.edu/files/misc/Steve%20Cross%20SR68%2011.16.11.pdf

The Georgia Institute of Technology is one of the preeminent public research institutions in the country. As part of its campus-wide strategic planning activities, Georgia Tech convened an innovation task force to assess the current state of innovation across its enterprise and to propose new initiatives. The goal was to accelerate promising research results and apply the precepts of the new research strategy to the field of innovation itself. Georgia Tech then defined an industry-facing research strategy focused on cutting-edge innovation and economic development. The research strategy focuses on 12 strategic theme areas covering the full breadth of the Institute's technologies of focus.

To support commercial application of its research, Georgia Tech created professionally staffed teams of industry licensing and contracting, commercialization, communications and marketing, and business development staff around each of its 12 strategic theme areas. Georgia Tech's research strategy is "concurrent," which means that teams of faculty, graduate students, application and economic development experts, and professional staff work together to define and pursue challenges, foster early engagement with industry, and accelerate the maturation and transition of technology to the marketplace. Georgia Tech has several spin-off entities that are leveraged to bolster and support its innovation efforts, including Georgia Tech Research Institute, Georgia Tech Research Corporation, and Enterprise Innovation Institute.

BP11: SKANDALARIS CENTER FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (ST. LOUIS, MO)

skandalaris.wustl.edu/

The Skandalaris Center for Interdisciplinary Innovation and Entrepreneurship began in 2001 as a program in the Washington University's business school. It eventually spun out into its own innovative space and became an independent interdisciplinary center open to students, faculty, and staff from all disciplines. The Center provides entrepreneurial resources with goals to:

- Draw as many students, faculty, staff and alumni as possible into the funnel of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Provide real-world, practical entrepreneurial skills training; and
- Provide access to funding to all promising Washington University affiliated innovations and innovators.

Its initiatives include facilitating connections with the appropriate groups and opportunities; providing real-world, venture-specific, practical skills training; and providing university-affiliated ventures with access to funding. In the 2016-17 year, the Center served more than 1,200 students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members and awarded more than $700,000 in funding.

BP12: AEROSPACE AND MRO TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION CENTER (PURDUE UNIVERSITY)

https://polytechnic.purdue.edu/aerospace-mro-technology-innovation-center

The mission of Purdue University's Aerospace and MRO Technology Innovation Center is the "research, development and deployment of aerospace and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) technology innovations in air transportation operations." The center takes advantage of the research expertise of faculty members and helps to address current industry issues and provide solutions. The center is focused on:

- Operational process/production, real-time status, and visualization
- Tracking and authentication of high value parts
- Real-time operational safety/hazard alerting and control
- Layered, adaptive, amplified technical task data on-demand at the point of operation

The Center is housed in the School of Aviation and Transportation Technology's Hangar of the Future (HOF). As the research arm of the Center, students gain experience in practical research, rapid and innovative solution development, and testing of technologies applied to the aerospace manufacturing and air transportation operational environment.

BP13: CENTER FOR CYBERSECURITY AND DIGITAL FORENSICS (TEMPE, AZ)

https://globalsecurity.asu.edu/center-cybersecurity-and-digital-forensics

The Center for Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics (CDF) at Arizona State University (ASU) is a designated National Center of Academic Excellence in both Information Assurance Education and Information Assurance Research by a joint National Security Agency and U.S. Department of Homeland Security program. The Center focuses on three key pillars – education, research, and innovation – to help produce a skilled workforce and improve cybersecurity tools and technologies. CDF has 14 sponsors supporting it and has secured more than

ten U.S. patents through ASU's intellectual property management and technology transfer organization, Skysong Innovations.

The Center takes a hands-on approach to education and brings together subject matter experts from industry and government partners with leading faculty in law, business, engineering, psychology, public services, social sciences, and criminology to work to produce new tools and technologies and accelerate educational opportunities. The CDF has partnered with a wide range of tech companies and government organizations including Google, Microsoft, Samsung, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the National Science Foundation, among others. In 2017, CDF and Samsung announced a new partnership to help tackle digital security challenges and advance research, education, and entrepreneurship in the field of cybersecurity. Samsung Electronics pledged $1.5 million over three years to go towards scholarships, student fellowships and competitions in the field of cybersecurity and digital forensics.

BP14: RURAL BROADBAND (COLORADO)

Across the country, there is growing attention on the issue of broadband internet and the impact that it has on the economic divide between rural and urban areas. Reliable, quality internet is necessary in today's economy where it enables farmers to connect with markets and opens up opportunities for telemedicine, public schools and education, and small businesses. In response to increased attention by state lawmakers who prioritized the needs of rural communities and a growing number of rural advocates, Colorado signed into law three bills aimed at accelerating the state's investment in rural broadband. The new laws will open up new funding for broadband deployment and established a minimum download and upload speeds of 10 Mbps/1 Mpbs. The state currently has 77 percent coverage but the goal is to reach 100 percent by 2020. Legislative analysts estimates that more than $115 million will go to broadband grants to extend high-speed internet to rural Colorado between 2019 and 2023.

BP15: ARIZONA CYBER WARFARE RANGE (MESA, AZ)

https://www.azcwr.org/

Arizona Cyber Warfare Range opened in 2012 for the purpose of developing a well-trained and skilled workforce by providing a continuous improvement process for cyber defense and security professionals and students. The Arizona Cyber Warfare Range is a live fire cyber warfare range and helps to drive innovation in cyber security techniques, technologies, and training. The range provides self-paced training, organic mentoring, and hands-on experience in a real world environment.

The Arizona Cyber Warfare Range provides cyber security professionals with a 24x7 live-fire dedicated space so that they are able to practice cyber defense and security. Cyber security professionals practice InfoSec through a game of Capture the Flag where one team is tasked to secure a machine while the other attempts to take over that machine. The range is a privately funded non-profit entity that is open to the public at no cost and is 100 percent volunteer driven.