

VISIONEER



Visioneer Focus - Barry Feaker

(The Visioneer will be featuring monthly interviews with area leaders who have been involved with the visioning process and resulting successes. This interview features Barry Feaker of the Topeka Rescue Mission.)



What's your job?

I've been executive director for more than 27 years. I moved away from Topeka for school and jobs, but came back to Topeka to work in mental health. In 1985, I was asked if I would be interested in coming into the rescue mission to act as director...It was vastly different than it is today...it was just going to be me and a few homeless people -trying to feed around 50 people a day. I've written a book about it.

What does the Rescue Mission have to do with Heartland Visioning and the

strategic plan for Topeka?

At one time the prevailing thinking was that the mission would have to get out of the way before the riverfront and entertainment areas could be developed north of the river. Heartland Visioning helped that thinking change. Heartland Visioning was one of the best opportunities to bring many diverse sector representatives from our community together that we had ever had," Feaker said. "We were all working on how to improve our community together. So, as they were formulating the foundations and one of those was called quality of life, they asked John Hunter and Anita Wolgast, the arts people, to chair the arts, culture and entertainment.

With many diverse aspects of the community in one room, the idea of an arts district was brought forward and the arts advocates did not want to move the mission out of the area. So now we have a whole new way of looking at things, because of Heartland Visioning bringing us together at the same table...so where historically, with the wrong elements that would have come together, we would have had a real

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Events

Smoke on the Water
October 11 & 12
Lake Shawnee

collision here. But because of the right elements, the people, Topeka is different, we have a thriving arts district that has gotten national recognition. Heartland Visioning brought us to the table so we could look at each other with a bigger mindset than just 'my thing' and that allowed us to cross- communicate and plan together.

How has Heartland Visioning helped?

Briefly it has helped us get out of the silo mentality and more into the habit of using objective analysis. "I like Topeka because we are the kind of people who don't want to go with the status quo."

How can Heartland Visioning Help in the Future?

Heartland Visioning, in the future, will have the capability of communicating the essential elements of a healthy, strong and vibrant community. Heartland needs to continue as it was set up, to be a broad-based community representation. It's got to pick up that original vision and say, 'We're going to hear from the community what they want and we're going to have means, not to give them what they want, but to strategize on how to achieve what they want.'

Feaker said he believes an engaged community can empower people to help themselves. And when that happens it isn't just the 'weak links' that get transformed, it's also the people who are compassionate and caring and loving and accepting that get to know the people who are struggling...and what you find is that both get transformed.

Topeka to Chicago Direct to be a Reality



2 DAILY DIRECT FLIGHTS TO O'HARE

Topeka > Chicago		Chicago > Topeka	
6:00 am	7:36 am	1:00 pm	2:44 pm
3:14 pm	4:50 pm	8:30 pm	10:14 pm

Seven years of negotiations have resulted in an agreement that will bring United Air to Topeka Regional Airport to provide two flights daily direct to Chicago O'Hare at the same price as flights from Kansas City, beginning in January 2014.

The wish for commercial air service in Topeka became reality because of a federal-state-local partnership. Last year, the Kansas Legislature granted the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority (MTAA) \$1 million in revenue guarantee incentives. That helped MTAA receive \$950,000

- Campground
- Dinner with the Dead
October
11,12,18,19,25,26
6:00 pm
The Break Room
- Lighter Than Air Series
October 11
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Topeka and Shawnee
County Public Library
- The Legend of Sleepy
Hollow
October 11 -20
7:00 pm
Topeka Civic Theatre and
Academy
- Laugh Lines Improv
Comedy
October 11 & 12
8:00 pm
Topeka Civic Theatre and
Academy
- Public Ice Skating
October 12
12:30 pm - 2:30 pm
October 13
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Kansas Expocentre
- Week Without Violence
2013
October 13 - 19
YWCA
- Fiction Writing
Techniques
October 14
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Topeka and Shawnee
County Public Library
- Wild Wee Wednesday
Every Wednesday
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Kansas Children's
Discovery Center
- Spirit of Women's Girls
Night Out - Presented by

from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Small Community Air Service Program, and the MTAA added \$250,000 in funds for marketing. If the flights prove profitable for United Air, the state incentives won't be needed.

Tickets for the 50-person flights will be priced equally with Kansas City, cut the air travel time to Chicago nearly in half for passengers and save drive time and parking costs. City officials predict it will be a boom for travelers from existing businesses and will help economic developers attract new businesses. [Read more](#) about this amazing accomplishment.

"This Old House" Praises College Hill Area



"This Old House" on-line edition recently recognized Topeka's College Hill area for its efforts toward preservation and redevelopment. College Hill is north of Washburn University, bounded by SW MacVicar on the west, Washburn on the east, SW 17th on the

south and Huntoon on the north. It has about 600 bungalow-style homes built around a century ago. [See the full article.](#)

Topeka is home to some unique architecture that is easy to overlook for long-term residents. The Kenwood neighborhood also has many bungalows from the turn of the century, including airplane bungalows, a uniquely Topeka style. These craftsman-style houses with small rooms added to the top rear of house are not commonly found outside Topeka. Potwin Place and Elmhurst also are home to interesting and historic architecture. [Read more](#) about Topeka architecture.

Bicycle-friendly Efforts Continue

[St. Francis Health](#)
October 17
5:30 pm - 8:30 pm

[Sesame Street Live](#)
October 18 - 20
Kansas Expocentre

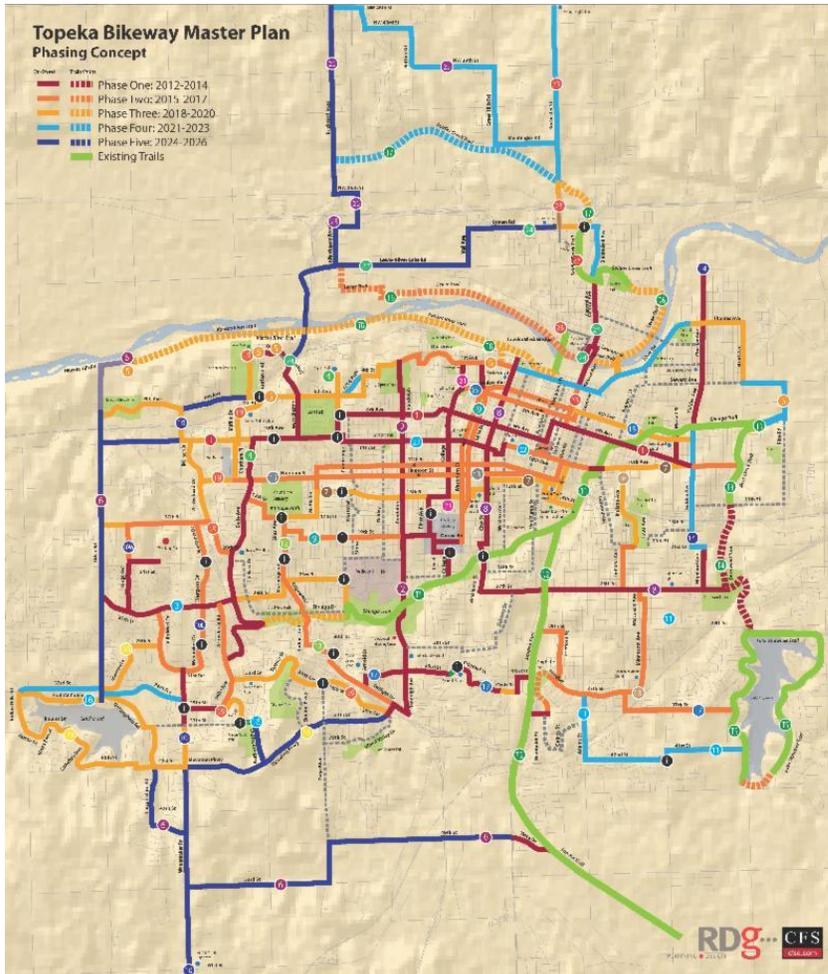
[Gun and Knife Show](#)
October 19 & 20
9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Kansas Expocentre

[Topeka Gem and Mineral Show](#)
October 19 & 20
Kansas Expocentre

[Dia De Los Muertos 2nd Annual Street Fair](#)
October 19
11:00 am - 5:00 pm
NOTO Arts District

[3rd Annual BOO IT Downtown](#)
October 24
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Downtown

[Sumptuous Evening Gala - A Benefit for Meals on Wheels](#)
October 25
6:30 pm - 10:00 pm
Ramada Inn Hotel and Convention Center



Some of America's most livable cities are notably friendly to bikes and bicyclists, and Topeka is enacting a plan to join their ranks. The city commissioned a Bikeways study in 2011, adopted it in 2012 and continues to act on it today.

Actions to date have included adoption of a master plan, creation of a bicycle boulevard on Eight Avenue between Van Buren and Gage Park, installation of back-in parking on Van Buren between Sixth and Seventh streets, painting of "sharrows" on Tenth Street near Walgreens and Topeka High School showing lanes appropriate for bicycles, and installation of a rapid rectangular flashing beacon at 8th and Gage as part of a link between the Shunga Trail, downtown and Gage Park.

This fall, Topeka joined other cities nationwide by participating in annual bike counts to give accurate data on bicycle usage and demand. This will help Topeka confirm where infrastructure improvements have been beneficial and where future improvements are needed.

[Read more](#) about Topeka planning and bicycles.



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