

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Caring for wildlife, inspiring our
community, and creating lasting impact.

topeka zoo
& conservation center



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Dear Friends,

Last year was an exciting year at the Topeka Zoo! We've grown, innovated, and deepened our connection with the community, proving once again that the Zoo is a place for learning, wonder, and conservation.

Our education programs reached Kansans of all ages, from homeschoolers and preschoolers to adults, while families celebrated birthdays and explored the wonders of wildlife together. Beyond the classroom, the Zoo welcomed guests through fun and accessible events, bringing our community together and creating memories that last a lifetime.

Conservation continues to be at the heart of what we do. From protecting endangered Sumatran tigers to leading local efforts for Black-footed ferrets, pollinators, and waterways, our team and volunteers are making a real difference for wildlife and the environment.

A true highlight of the year was breaking ground on the Mark and Bette Morris Family Tiger Trails & Den Academy. This immersive experience will give visitors up-close encounters with endangered tigers while inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders. It's the first step in our new five-year master plan, a bold vision for the Zoo's future that reflects our commitment to animal care and wellbeing and our community's trust and support.

The Topeka Zoo is more than a place to visit, it's a hub for education, conservation, and community. Thanks to you, it continues to be a source of pride, joy, and inspiration for all Kansans.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Christina Castellano

Christina Castellano, PhD, MBA

CEO

Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center





WHO WE ARE

Mission Statement

To enrich the community through wildlife conservation and education.

Vision Statement

We believe what we do changes the world. Every choice we make helps save the planet.



ACCREDITED BY THE
**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**



MEMBER of
World Association of
Zoos and Aquariums
WAZA | United for
Conservation

WHAT WE DO

The Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center identified the following five sustainability initiatives from which form the framework of the Zoo's strategic plan. Each initiative has overlap with more than one of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals:

- Slow the threat of extinction.
- Reduce the effects of plastic on the environment.
- Ensure food availability for the future.
- Create respect and empathy for water conservation.
- Innovation: Be a pipeline to solutions.

2025 By the Numbers

Total Attendance
256,260

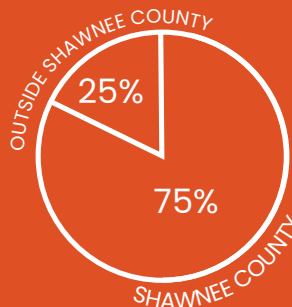
Visitors from 50 States



Total Household Memberships

4,848

Ticketed Attendance



Attendance Breakdown

57% ADULTS
35% CHILDREN
4% SENIOR
4% UNDER TWO

15 WEEKS OF YOUTH CAMPS
464 EDUCATION PROGRAMS
14 SINGLE-DAY CAMPS
12,553 PEOPLE REACHED

Voted #1 Family Entertainment in Topeka

Social Following

FACEBOOK
63K

INSTAGRAM
26.3K

TIKTOK
47.9K

ANIMAL CARE HIGHLIGHTS

At the Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center, our animal care team goes far beyond daily routines. They are dedicated to helping every animal thrive. Working hand-in-hand with our veterinary team, they continually evaluate each animal's well-being, making thoughtful adjustments to nutrition, training, enrichment, habitat, and healthcare throughout every stage of life.

Their impact extends well beyond behind-the-scenes care. This team plays a vital role in conservation efforts, supports educational programs, and helps create meaningful, memorable connections for every guest who visits the Zoo.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS



LEADING THE WAY IN CONSERVATION BREEDING

Over the past two years, our team has achieved remarkable success breeding Blue Death Feigning Beetles. In 2025, we proudly sent two groups of captive-bred beetles to other accredited facilities—marking a significant milestone. Historically, these beetles were primarily wild-caught for zoo collections and the pet trade. Our success contributes to a future where fewer animals are taken from the wild.



EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR A RECORD-BREAKING LION

Asante, our African lion, celebrated her 21st birthday in 2025, making her the oldest living lion in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums population. Her dedicated care team has trained her to voluntarily participate in blood draws, allowing for close monitoring of her kidney health and ensuring the highest quality of care in her golden years.



COMPASSION IN ACTION

When Nettle the hedgehog was diagnosed with Wobbly Hedgehog Syndrome, our staff designed and built a custom-assisted walking device to support her mobility. This innovation greatly enhanced her comfort and quality of life during her final months. It was a true reflection of the compassion and creativity of our team.

ANIMALS BY THE NUMBERS

72
BIRDS

66
MAMMALS

5
AMPHIBIANS

23
REPTILES

17
INVERTEBRATE
SPECIES



**DWARF CAIMAN:
BENI**

**TRUMPETER SWAN:
MISO**



BIRTHS & ARRIVALS

- Black and White Tegu
- Bali Myna
- Cape Porcupines
- Dwarf Caiman
- Helmeted Guineafowl
- Bearded Dragon
- North American Black Bears
- Pink Orchid Mantis Group
- Cheetahs
- 2 Superb Starlings
- Troupial
- Trumpeter Swan

**CAPE PORCUPINES:
PEZ & MOYO**



**NORTH AMERICAN
BLACK BEARS:
KIONA & TAZ**

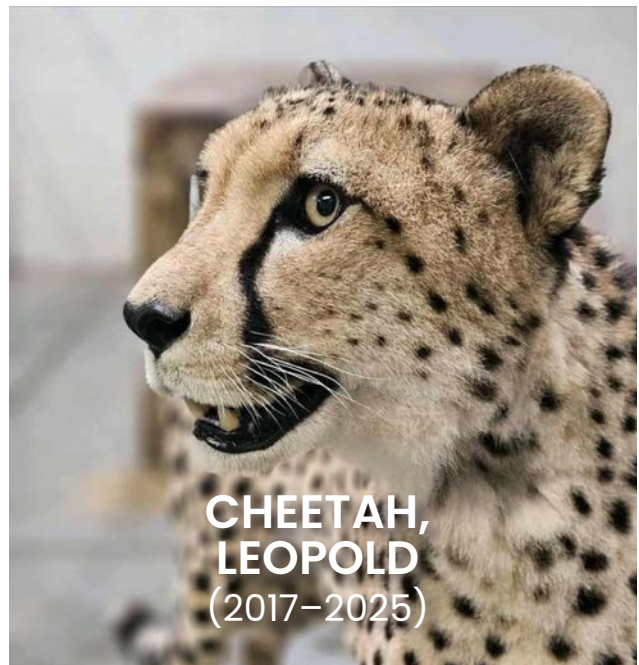


**BEARDED DRAGON:
LITE BRITE
THORNADO**



IN MEMORIAM

2025 was also a challenging year for the Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center as we said goodbye to some of our most cherished animals. Our veterinary and animal care teams worked tirelessly to provide expert, compassionate care at every step.



“Liz, Cassy, Leopold, Cora and Spike touched countless lives, inspiring our team and our visitors with their presence. They will always remain a part of the Zoo family.”

EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

Education is at the heart of the mission at the Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center, which is to enrich our community through wildlife conservation and education. Our education team brings this mission to life by connecting with all ages through both on-grounds and outreach programming, ensuring we reach as many members of our community as possible.

In 2025, we delivered 464 programs, engaging 12,553 participants through on-site experiences, outreach visits, and camps. Each program is designed to inspire curiosity, foster a connection to wildlife, and empower individuals to make a difference.

Access and inclusion remain a priority. Scholarships are available for EcoClub and week-long camps, with applications thoughtfully reviewed by our Education Committee throughout the year. These opportunities help ensure that all youth—regardless of financial barriers—can participate in meaningful, hands-on learning experiences.

One of our most impactful programs, EcoClub, brings together middle and high school students who are passionate about wildlife and the environment. With 13 students participating in 2025, the group met twice monthly during the school year for presentations, animal encounters, activities, and discussions. In the spring, students applied what they learned by developing their own conservation projects, many of which were proudly presented at Party for the Planet—demonstrating the power of youth to inspire change in our community.



CONSERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS

Our commitment to preserving biodiversity, protecting local wildlife, and engaging our community in meaningful conservation efforts. At the heart of our work is the belief that a thriving world for wildlife and humans alike begins with education, collaboration, and direct action.



BY THE NUMBERS

SLOWING THE THREAT OF EXTINCTION

11 AZA SAFE programs supported

1 Population survey in the fall and spring for Black footed ferret in western Kansas.

43

Black-footed ferret sightings in Kansas

29

new black-footed ferrets

8

wild-born ferrets confirmed in 2025 - clear signs of a thriving population

80

critically endangered salt creek tiger beetles were raised and released

3,000

native plants distributed annually

10,421 sq. ft.

of Monarch Waystations created

PROMOTING WATER CONSERVATION

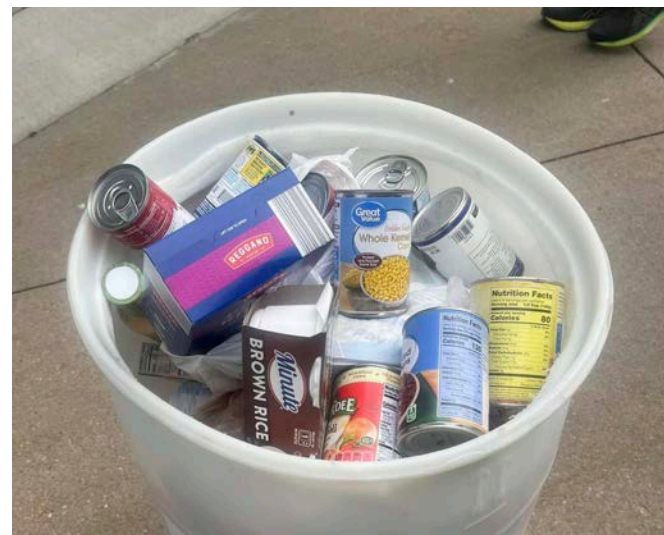
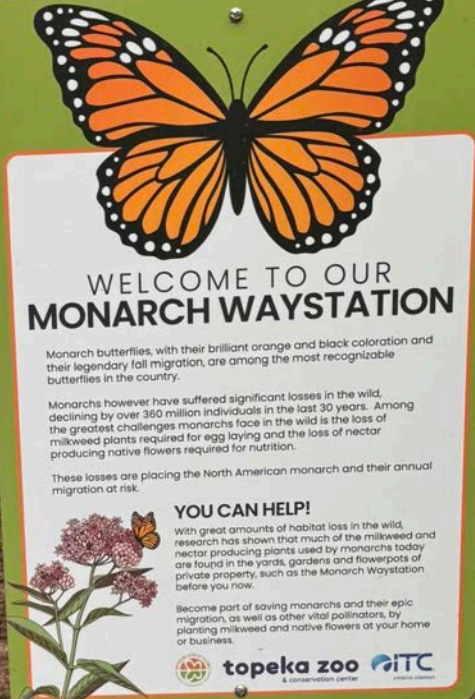
250

storm drain covers painted to support the Waterways Protection Project



1.6

million gal of water saved from 2024-2025



REDUCING THE EFFECTS OF PLASTICS

1

partnership with the Rotary Club of Topeka to continue a community plastics reduction campaign.

4

clean up days at the Kaw River State Park riverfront boat ramp

REDUCING FOOD INSECURITY

4,290 lbs.

of food collected and donated to Project Topeka

\$1,468

contributed to Project Topeka to fight food insecurity

ADVANCING THE ZOO'S MASTERPLAN

2025 was a year of exciting momentum as the Zoo advanced its masterplan and enhanced the guest experience.



MARK AND BETTE MORRIS FAMILY TIGER TRAILS AND DEN ACADEMY

Groundbreaking for the Mark & Bette Morris Tiger Trails & Den Academy was announced on March 28, initiating demolition and active construction that broke ground end of July. This will be a state-of-the-art Sumatran tiger habitat, transforming the northwest corner of the Zoo and introducing the King Vulture to the community.





JOEL SARTORE

The community enjoyed a captivating experience with Joel Sartore, Photographer, the founder of the Photo Ark, a global mission to document every species in human care and inspire conservation through powerful imagery. This special event supported the future Tiger Trails & Den Academy, helping build a better world for our Sumatran tigers and educate young conservationists.



2025 EVENTS AT THE ZOO

CONNECTING COMMUNITY & CONSERVATION

SPRING HIGHLIGHTS:



EARTH DAY

Guests celebrated conservation with hands-on learning, interactive exhibits, and family-friendly activities. EcoClub student projects highlighted youth



ROAR & POUR

Presented by Kaw Valley Bank, this after-hours wine fest offered live music, local flavors, and a collaborative art auction pairing nine local artists with our animal ambassadors. A silent auction raised critical support for Zoo conservation and education.



SUMMER & SPECIAL EXHIBITS

DINOSAURS ALIVE – TRAVELING EXHIBIT

Presented by KBS Constructors Foundation, guests explored life-sized animatronic dinosaurs, blending entertainment with learning and drawing visitors of all ages.



WAKE AND LEARN MEMBERS ONLY EVENT

In the serene atmosphere of the Zoo before opening hours, this series invites Zoo members to enjoy a unique blend of education, exploration, and inspiration as the animals begin their day. Topics included: Inside scoop on animals, Dinos &

SUMMER NIGHTS AT THE ZOO

Guests enjoyed special behind-the-scenes access, heard fascinating stories, and learned fun facts directly from our Animal Curators.



FALL FUNDRAISERS & COMMUNITY EVENTS



BREW AT THE ZOO

Presented by Kendall Construction, guests sampled local and domestic beers, enjoyed live music, food trucks, games, and animal encounters, raising support for conservation and education programs.



BOO AT THE ZOO

Presented by FIT Excavating, the highest-attended family event of the year, Boo at the Zoo offered safe, interactive Halloween fun with decorated pathways, trick-or-treating, costumed staff, and seasonal games.



HOLIDAY & YEAR-END CELEBRATIONS



ZOO LIGHTS

The 6th annual Zoo Lights, presented by Evergy, welcomed thousands with dazzling light displays, festive entertainment, and visits from Santa Claus. Private igloos, corporate gatherings, and group celebrations made this holiday tradition a community favorite.

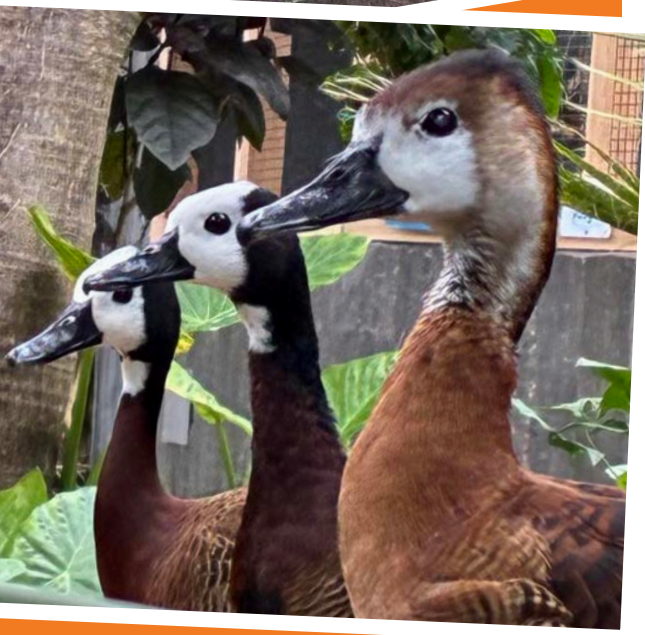


TOAST AT



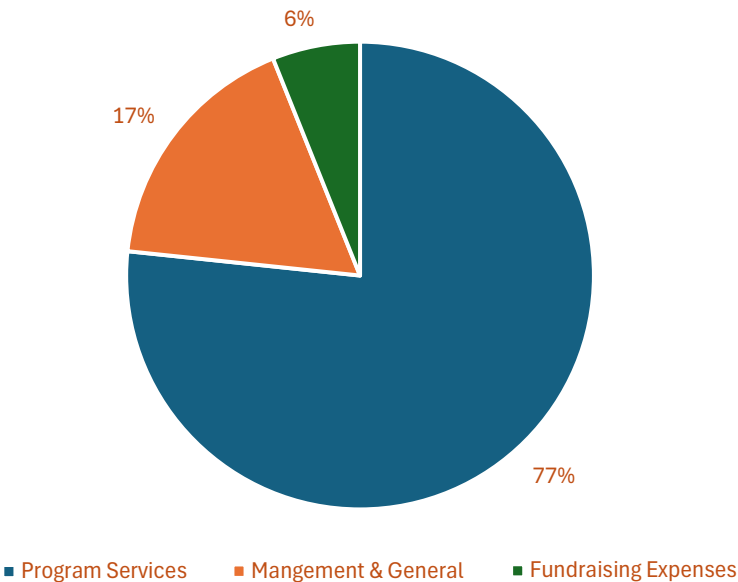
TOAST AT TEN – NEW

Presented by SDG + Architecture, guests rang in the new year with live music, and a sparkling toast at 10 p.m., creating a memorable close to 2025 while supporting the Zoo's mission.

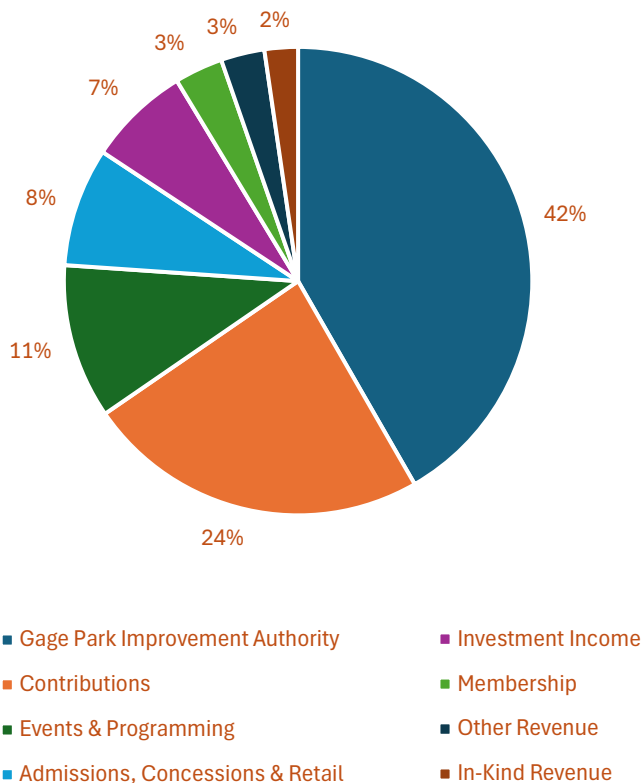


FINANCIALS

2025 EXPENDITURES



2025 REVENUE



LEADERSHIP AND BOARD MEMBERS

2025 LEADERSHIP CABINET

Fred Patton, Chair

Pamela Alexander

Randy Austin

Dina Cox

Vince Frye

Kris Klima

Bette Morris

Tim Resner

Colton Strathman

Matt Strathman

Gary Yager

Widge Yager

Terry Young

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Pat Colley, Vice President

Shane Beavers, Treasurer

Jen LeClair, Secretary

Braxton Copley, Exec Committee

Dina Cox, Exec Committee

Dan Chavez

Holly Cobb

Keith Griffin

Ben Hart

Michelle Hoferer

Andrea Kaberline

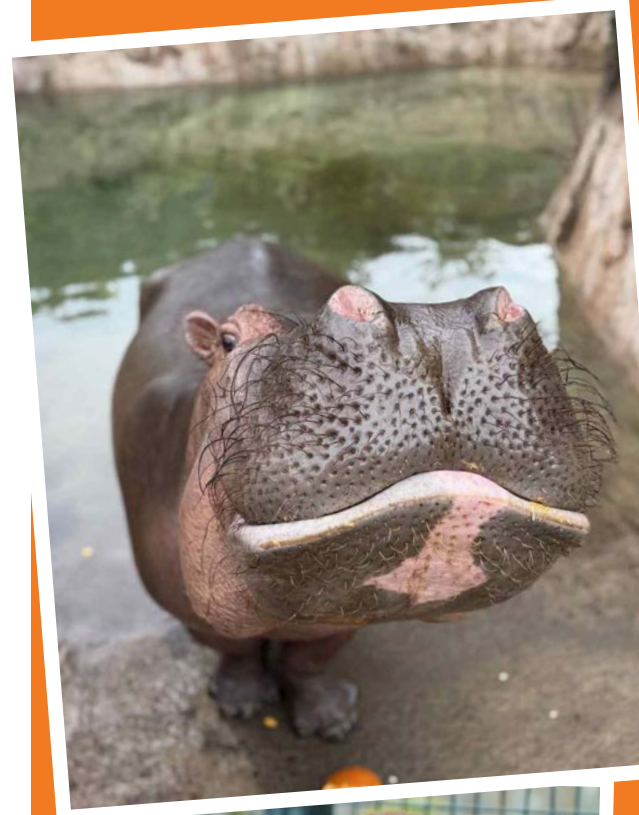
Kelly Kelsey

John Koop

Deb Miller

Tim Resner

Ken Scott



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Your support makes everything possible.

Because of you, the Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center can:

- Care for hundreds of animals every day
- Enhance habitats and guest experiences
- Expand educational programs and community outreach
- Protect wildlife locally and globally



Every gift creates lasting impact.

***Thank you for being part of
the Zoo family and helping us
inspire, educate, and protect.***



Martin and Shari Albrecht
Ken and Pamela Alexander
Mark and Marilyn Ault
Margaret Ballantyne
Shane and Jennie Beavers
Sue Blackman
Laura Bonnell
Barbara Bowman
Carolyn Boyer
C Barry Bray
Jeanette and Brad Broome
Jessica Bryson
Bruce Burns
Kim Busey
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Mary Chavez

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Jim and Michel' Cole
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 Tyler Johnson and Michelle Butler
 Greg and Katherine Johnson
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 Deb Miller
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Bruce and Kathy Myers
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 Mark and Theresa Young

COMMUNITY & FOUNDATION DONORS

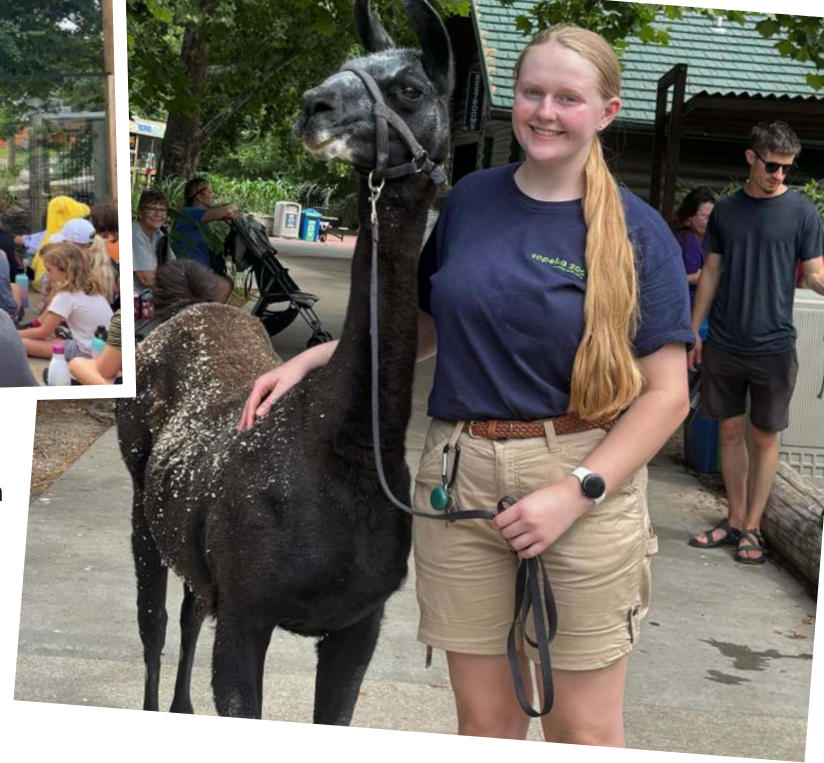
2 Chefs Catering
 A1 Lock and Key LLC
 Advisors Excel
 Alltech Communications, Inc.



American Association of Zoo Keepers – Topeka Chapter	Century Business Technologies
American Home Life Insurance Company	Certus Structural Engineers
American Online Giving Foundation	Chavez Restoration
Ash Grove Charitable Foundation	Chick-Fil-A
Belin Foundation	Chipotle Mexican Grill
Berkshire Hathaway	Clayton Wealth Partners
Better Homes and Garden Realty	Coldwell Banker
Blackbird Espresso Bar and Bistro	College Hunks
Blind Tiger Brewery and Restaurant	Connoisseur Media
Blue Collar Press	Cooperative Producers, Inc.
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas	CoreFirst Bank and Trust
Bob Schwarz Financial	Courtyard Topeka by Marriott
Briggs Auto Group	Cumulus Radio Station Group Topeka
Calhoun's Jewelers	Dance Factory
Capitol Federal	Delta Dental
CAS Constructors LLC	DeVaughn James Injury Lawyers
	Dillon's
	DL Smith Electric
	Edward Jones Topeka Marketing Group



Engroff Catering	
Envista Credit Union	
Ernest Spencer Metals, Inc.	Hayden Catholic High School
Everygy	HF Mixing Group
Everygy Plaza	Hill's Pet Nutrition, Inc
Fairlawn Plaza Merchants Association	Hoyt's Truck Center
Farm Bureau April Kelsey Agency	HUB International Mid-America
Farmers Insurance Jarred White Agency	INTRUST Bank
Farview Farms Meat Co.	J. M. Smucker's Company
FHLBank of Topeka	J.F. McGivern Inc
FIT Excavating	Jefferson's
Frito-Lay	Kansas Department of Commerce
Futamura	Kansas Fencing Inc
Gardner Roofing, Inc.	Kansas Gas Service
Great Plains Media	Kansas Public Television
Happy Basset Brewing Co.	Kaw Valley Bank



KBS Foundation
Kendall Construction
Key Staffing
KSNT-TV
KTWU Public Television
Lamar Advertising
Lasting Legacy Online LLC
Lewis H. Humphreys
Charitable Trust
Long Trucking
Love's Travel Stops & Country
Stores

Mars
Marshall Family Foundation
McDonald's
Midwest Health
Management
Mohan Construction
Morris Family Foundation
Oleander Cafe
Oread Orthodontics
Partners in Pediatrics
Patterson Legal Group
PKMR Engineers

Polo Custom Products
ppB Enviro-Solutions
Prairie Band Potawatomi
Nation
Premier Farm and Home
Premier One
Professional Engineering
Consultants
R&S Maintenance Services,
Inc.
Resers Fine Foods/Reser's
Cares
Residence Inn
Rueschhoff Security
Schendel Lawn and Green
Pest Solutions
Schendel Pest Services
Schmidtlein Excavating, Inc.
Schwartz Family Foundation
SDG Architecture + Interiors
Security Benefit
Silver Lake Bank
Smokin' G's
Sowards Glass Inc
SSC CPAs+ Advisors
State Farm Insurance,
Brandon Aldridge Agency

Stone & Storey Real
Estate
Strathman Sales Co
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Topeka Frontier Self Storage
Topeka Landscape
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topeka zoo
& conservation center

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To enrich our community through wildlife conservation and education.