




Kevin Venator

THE NEW KC







Look at any map of the United States and chances are your eye will be drawn to Kansas City. It is literally in the center of the country—in the very heart of the heartland—a fact of life that’s played a defining role in the city’s growth. In the early 1800s, KC was a place for pioneers heading west on the Santa Fe Trail to stock up and rest their weary bones. Many were so taken with it that they never left, and their pioneering spirit continues to influence the city today.



The H&R Block Center, KC's newest signature building, anchors a \$4.5 billion downtown revitalization.

Nowadays, of course, the pioneers aren't gold prospectors or cattlemen. They're researchers in Kansas City's top life sciences labs. They're entrepreneurs in the city's burgeoning startups. They're real estate developers who are pouring billions of dollars into the city's downtown. And they're politicians who are getting it right, making the new KC a great place to work and live.

Although they love the city, many of today's pioneers, like their forebears, originally came from elsewhere. "Kansas City is the anti-provincial city," says Tim Cowden, senior vice president of business development for the Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC). "The people are very open. You can come here from another community and within a year or two become a civic leader. It's more about what you do than who you are or where you're from."

Downtown Boom

Kansas City's 2.4 million residents are doing a lot these days. The city, which straddles the states of Missouri and Kansas, is one of the fastest growing in the nation. And nowhere is its growth and pioneering spirit more apparent than in the urban redevelopment project taking shape on the Missouri side of downtown Kansas City. Gone are the days when a jail was built for \$15 and the marshal was authorized to shoot hogs roaming the streets. Roughly \$4.5 billion is currently being invested in the downtown, including \$270 million for the Sprint Center, \$145 million for a new H&R Block headquarters, \$150 million to renovate the city's convention center, and a 1,000% increase in residential construction from 2000–2005.

The most ambitious project may well be the Power & Light District, a seven-block, \$850 million entertainment complex being developed by Baltimore-based Cordish Co. "With the Cordish Co. there's a huge public infrastructure investment,"

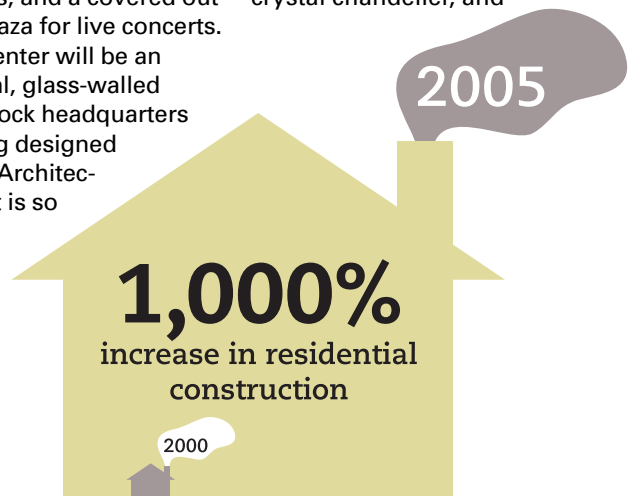
says Kay Barnes, mayor of Kansas City, Mo. "They're not just taking a building down in the middle of a block and building a new one. They're taking out all the streets, all the sidewalks, all the buildings—literally starting from scratch with all new utilities, sewer lines, and so on. And once they're done with that phase, Cordish becomes part of the management. They have never sold an entertainment complex they built, and they have never had a failure."

The new downtown district will include several clubs, cafes, restaurants, theaters, and a covered outdoor plaza for live concerts. At its center will be an elliptical, glass-walled H&R Block headquarters building designed by 360 Architecture. "It is so

gratifying to see our designs being built right outside my window," says Marvin Manlove, a principal at 360 Architecture. "This is our city."

Barnes says the goal is to make Kansas City a destination for the surrounding seven-state region of Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. "About eight million people live within a four-hour drive of Kansas City," she says. "When you add all the existing amenities—the speedway, the casinos, the Royals, the Chiefs, the Nelson-Atkins Museum—you have the critical mass to become that destination location."

Despite all the new development, the city's downtown will retain its historic charm. Two of the Power & Light district's anchor buildings are the Midland Theatre and the Empire Theatre, both built in the 1920s and both later purchased by Kansas City based AMC Entertainment Inc., one of the world's premier theater operators. With its dramatic three-story lobby, gold filigree, crystal chandelier, and



Source: The Downtown Council of Kansas City

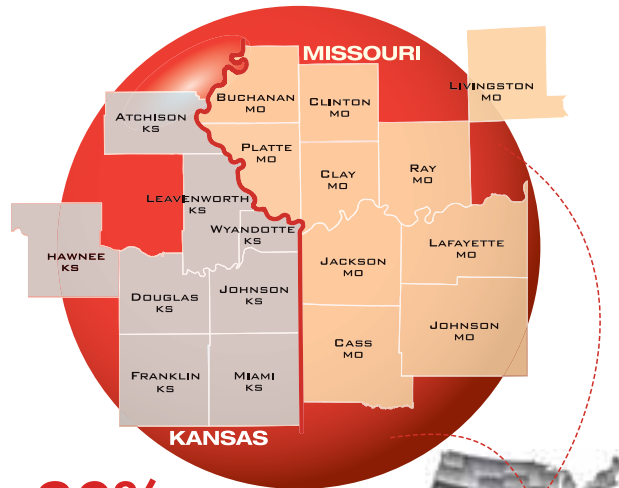
marble staircase, the Midland is a tribute to the glamorous flapper era. The Empire—which had been boarded up for years—boasts a magnificent terracotta dome.

AMC and the Cordish Co. are renovating the buildings and retrofitting them with cutting-edge technology, turning the Empire into a multiplex with digital projectors, and the Midland into a dazzling live-entertainment venue.

“It really will be a neat blending of the old and the new,” says AMC’s chairman and CEO Peter C. Brown. It will also be a tribute to AMC’s founder Stan Durwood, who tried in vain for almost 40 years to build his own similarly dubbed Power & Light district downtown before he died in 1999. “I think Stan would be pleased to see it finally coming together like this,” says Brown.

The locals are excited about the city’s revitalization. Although the Sprint Center has only begun construction and doesn’t yet have an anchor team, all 72 of its private suites have been sold to fans and sponsors. “It illustrates the enormous pride people have in what’s happening downtown,” says Tom Murphy, Sprint Nextel’s vice president of sponsorships. “And everybody’s confident we’ll get an anchor. This is a sports-crazy town. More Final Four college games have been played here than in any other city.”

To honor the city’s heritage, the new arena, which will seat 20,000, will also include the first College Basketball Hall



30% of the gross state products of Kansas and Missouri come from the KC region, totaling **\$90 billion**

of Fame. Sprint has committed to pay \$2.5 million a year for the next 25 years for naming rights. It also plans to introduce cellphone technology that will enable subscribers to watch instant replays. “We’re developing some powerful applications that will entertain and enhance a fan’s experience here,” Murphy says.

All For One

But the city’s downtown is only part of the story. An additional \$4 billion is being invested outside the urban core, bringing the

total to \$8.5 billion for the 18 counties that comprise the Kansas City region. That, by the way, is how Kansas City natives prefer to think of themselves: as one region, or one KC.

When the Kansas City Area Development Council launched its OneKC branding campaign in 2004, the grassroots response was enormous. More than 100 companies voluntarily incorporated OneKC and ThinkKC slogans in their advertising. Billboards for Midwest Airlines read: *Think non-stop. ThinkKC.* Those for football’s Kansas

City Chiefs: *Two states. One home team.*

Bob Marcusse, KCADC’s president, is convinced the city’s diversity of locales makes it attractive to businesses looking to relocate. “Most people would assume that having a state line dividing your market is a major disadvantage,” he says. “Not so. Because of Kansas City’s strong regional partnership, we’ve capitalized on the diversity of product offerings the state line provides us—from different incentive and taxing structures to a wider variety of sites and buildings we can offer.”

It seems to work. Having four different site alternatives on both sides of the state line was crucial to the recent decision by mail-order pharmaceutical company Prescription Solutions to relocate from Costa Mesa, Calif., to a 175,000-square-foot space in Overland Park, a Kansas City suburb. “They wouldn’t have come here if we didn’t have the flexibility to give them what they wanted,” says KCADC’s Cowden. Prescription Solutions will bring 1,300 new jobs to the city by the end of 2008.

A Broader Portfolio

In addition to a downtown location, businesses can relocate in Village West in Wyandotte County, Kan. This \$430 million, 400-acre entertainment smorgasbord began five years ago with just a NASCAR racetrack and has since grown to include several major retail outlets, themed



The Kansas City Chiefs entertain some of the NFL’s loudest and most enthusiastic fans.

Kansas City Chiefs

restaurants, hotels, and a minor league baseball stadium, all of which attract 10 million visitors a year, making it the largest tourist attraction in Kansas. Village West has already created 3,725 new jobs and will generate an estimated \$440 million in revenue this year.

"The development's success doesn't just revolve around race weekends anymore," say Joe Reardon, Mayor/CEO of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kan. "The development itself has become the destination." Next up: a \$412 million Schlitterbahn Vacation

cities with populations of more than 100,000, Olathe, Kan., and Overland Park, Kan., ranked 19th and 45th. And a 2005 survey by *Money* magazine of the best places to live across America placed Overland Park, Olathe, and Leawood, all part of Johnson County, Kan., among the top ten in the central United States. Significantly, the U.S. Bureau of the Census tally of businesses on both sides of the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) found the two sides about equally matched—29,469 businesses on the

generation than any other company. "We're going to hire 800 to 1,000 new employees in 2006, about the same as in 2005," says Kim Mastalio, Black & Veatch's president of sales and marketing. "About half of those hires will be here. Overland Park is a great place to work and live. Many of our employees spend their careers here with us."

Also rife with opportunities are the seven counties outside the MSA and part of what is called "the greater Kansas City area"—including the cities of Lawrence,

development projects.

According to a 2002 study by the *New York Times*, Lawrence was second in metro job growth in the nation, while *Expansion Management* considers it one of its "Hottest Cities for Business Relocation and Expansion." Both cities contain universities—Washburn University in Topeka and the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Lawrence's workforce is particularly well educated: Some 93% of its workers have high school diplomas while 43% over the age of 25 hold bachelor's degrees.



“This is the center for entrepreneurial thinking in the nation and increasingly in the world.”



Village to be built next to Village West. Scheduled to open in three years, it will include one of the world's largest tubing parks, an interactive Marine Park with saltwater lagoons for snorkeling, and a River Walk shopping district. "Schlitterbahn is the No. 1 water-park operator in the U.S.," says Reardon. "Their water parks outdo Disney's."

Clearly, the counties on the Kansas side of the city have much to offer. According to a 2005 ranking by the U.S. Census Bureau of the nation's 251 fastest-growing

Kansas side and 32,236 on the Missouri.

Some of Kansas City's biggest and fastest-growing companies are in Overland Park. Black & Veatch, a 90-year-old infrastructure company with 3,000 employees here and 7,000 worldwide, has been growing by leaps and bounds. About 20% of the world's population gets its potable water from systems Black & Veatch has designed, constructed, or maintained, and it is involved with more megawatts of power

St. Joseph, Topeka, Atchison, Chillicothe, Ottawa, and Warrensburg. In particular, neighboring Kansas communities Topeka and Lawrence have a great profile. According to a ranking by *Site Selection Magazine*, the Topeka-Lawrence area is 15th among the nation's "Top 20 Small Metro Areas" favored by entrepreneurs who are starting or growing a business. *Expansion Management* magazine placed Topeka 34th on its list of "America's 50 Hottest Cities" for economic

Left: KC is the "City of Fountains." Right: The University of Kansas in Lawrence is home to nearly 30,000 students.

Entrepreneurial Paradise

If any group epitomizes Kansas City's pioneering spirit, it would have to be its entrepreneurs. And their patron saint, if they had one, would be Ewing Marion Kauffman. Born on a farm in Garden City, Mo., in 1916, he founded pharmaceutical company Marion Laboratories as a one-man operation from

the basement of his Kansas City home in 1950, turning a \$1,000 profit his first year. By the time he sold the company in 1989, it had nearly \$1 billion in sales and 3,400 employees. With his wealth and desire to help others become economically independent, he established the Ewing Marion Kauffman Founda-

of our entrepreneurial programs implemented on a national basis," says Carl Schramm, the Foundation's CEO. "This is the center for entrepreneurial thinking in the nation and increasingly the world." *Entrepreneur* magazine agrees, naming it one of the top 15 cities to start a business. According to *Business*

really was the father of entrepreneurship in the city." Brandmeyer originally purchased his business from Kauffman's Marion Labs in 1985, then struggled for years to make the company grow. "My daughter and I had to take a second mortgage on our homes," he says. Through it all Mr. K was there for him. Says Brandmeyer:

"Whenever I would call him and say, 'I'd like to talk about the business,' he would clear his calendar and say, 'When do you want to see me and how much time do you need?'"

Medi-Flex eventually struck gold with the 2001 launch of its FDA-approved ChloroPrep preoperative skin antiseptic, which provided a new option to help hospitals in the U.S. kill skin bacteria that cause infection. That one product has had an immense impact, increasing the company's revenues from \$12.5 million in 2001 to \$80 million last year. And with good reason: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates

that two million people contract infections in U.S. hospitals each year, killing some 90,000 patients, more than homicides and automobile accidents combined. About 19% of hospital-acquired infections are bloodstream infections. ChloroPrep can help cut that infection rate by half. And yet Medi-Flex has no intention of being a one-trick pony. "We plan to launch one new product each year for the next five years," says Brandmeyer.

The Kauffman Foundation has been a supporter of the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corp. (KTEC), a Topeka-based public-private partnership created by state legislators in 1987 to promote technology-based economic development. KTEC supports and funds entrepreneurs in the high-tech industry through six business incubators and two venture capital funds: the Applied Research Matching Fund for early-stage ventures and the Technology Commercialization Seed Fund for later-stage ventures.

KC is in the **top ten** when it comes to starting a pharmaceutical company.

Source: *Business Xpansion Journal*

tion, a nonprofit dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship and education. He also brought baseball to Kansas City, purchasing the Royals in 1968, thereby giving the city six division titles and a World Series.

Today the Kauffman Foundation has a war chest of more than \$2 billion, about \$90 million of which it gives away each year. True to Kauffman's vision, it continues to fund innovative entrepreneurship initiatives throughout the country, and math and science programs for students in the Kansas City area. The foundation just announced a \$15 million grant for 13 metro-area school districts for enhanced math and science education. Paired with an earlier \$7 million grant, this investment demonstrates a serious commitment to improving critical thinking skills and preparing the city's youth for future high-growth industries. "Kansas City is the testing ground for most

Xpansion Journal, KC is in the top 10 when it comes to starting a pharmaceutical company.

Some of the beneficiaries of Kauffman's generosity are now key players in the Kansas City business community. "Everybody here affectionately calls Ewing 'Mr. K,'" says Joseph Brandmeyer, founder of Medi-Flex, an antiseptic manufacturer in the Leawood suburb. "He

Building a World of Difference

Black & Veatch is a leading global engineering, consulting, and construction company specializing in infrastructure development in the energy, water, information, and government markets. Founded in 1915, Black & Veatch has been a fixture in the Kansas City area for more than 90 years. Through the vital infrastructure it deploys, its unique offerings span more than 100 countries across six continents, touching the lives of millions



of people. Whether providing clean water, reliable electricity, and clear communications for cellphones and land lines, or protecting the critical resources of our government, Black & Veatch applies global solutions to local needs—fulfilling its mission of Building a World of Difference®.



BLACK & VEATCH
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ENERGY WATER INFORMATION GOVERNMENT

Scientific Capital

Kansas City is also home to some of the country's largest life sciences companies and research institutions. Within that sphere, it dominates the animal health niche, with the presence of companies representing 40% of the \$14.5 billion a year business in the nation and 26% of it worldwide. Some of the major players located in KC include Bayer Animal Health, Fort Dodge Animal Health, Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Hill's Pet Nutrition, and Intervet Inc. It also doesn't hurt that the region is positioned within driving distance of the top five veterinary schools in the nation.

To attract more participants, early this year Bayer Animal Health provided seed money for the Kansas City Animal Health and Nutrition Initiative, which has the goal of increasing the U.S. share of the animal health market from 40% to 60% over ten years. The initiative is a collaborative effort of the public and private sectors—including KCADC, the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute, and business leaders—designed to bring new animal-health companies to the region, help fund startups, garner more state and federal research dol-



Funding for scientific research in KC institutions, such as UMKC, has more than doubled since 1999.

lars, and encourage favorable industry legislation. "Four animal health companies recently said they are considering ventures here, and we are competing to secure the Department of Homeland Security's new National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility here," says Joerg Ohle, who as president of Bayer Animal Health is spearheading the initiative. The city also has a commanding presence in life sciences research, thanks in part to the Stowers Institute for Medical Research. The institute has a \$2 billion endowment, second largest of any life sciences institution in the country and the largest concentrated in one locale. Its 600,000-square-foot research facility is situated on a ten-acre campus in the heart of the city and currently employs 255 scientists researching developmental genetics. "The research team is organized around the general question of how a single cell becomes an entire organism," says Bill Neaves, the institute's president. "We're trying to understand how genes get switched on and off to cause cells to multiply, differentiate, migrate, procreate, or die. In the process of doing this we have gained insights that will point the way toward more effective means of preserving health and preventing disease."

Recruiting Talent

In 2004 the Nature Publishing Group in London added Robb Krumlauf and Olivier Pourquié, two Stowers researchers, to a list of 24 who have made the most important discoveries in developmental biology in the past century. "Our colleagues on the East and West Coast tried unsuccessfully to recruit Pourquié from the University of Marseilles," says Neaves. "When we started focusing on him in 2002, they said, 'You're nuts to try it. You'll never get him out of France. His wife and daughter do not speak English. He's tenured

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KC's Stowers Institute for Medical Research is the nation's second-largest endowed medical research facility.

in the French system. You're wasting your time.' After two visits, his wife declared that Kansas City was more European than any U.S. city she had experienced. And he's even more productive here than he was in Marseilles."

Although Stowers is primarily a research institution, it is also a key member of the Kansas City Area Life Science Institute (KCALSI), a nonprofit created in 2000 to promote collaborative research between its ten stakeholder institutions and also to facilitate the transformation of that research into commercial ventures. KCALSI partners with other institutions such as the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC). "With recognized schools of medicine,

pharmacy, dentistry and law, UMKC is a powerful partner in KC and the life sciences," said Dr. Guy Bailey, UMKC Chancellor.

KC Collaboration

Thanks to relationships developed through KCALSI, Stowers researchers are now teaching classes as

adjuncts at the KU School of Medicine and the school's students are working in Stowers' labs. The university itself is already a leader in such diverse fields as liver toxicology, reproductive biology, kidney disease, cancer, and neuroscience. And those areas of expertise translate into superior care at the University of Kansas Hospital (KUMED), where many faculty members work.

The life sciences effort has garnered critical support from government officials on both the Kansas and Missouri sides of the city. In March of 2004 the Kansas Senate passed the Kansas Economic Growth Act (KEGA), which allows for income taxes collected from biotech companies in the state to be funneled into the newly created Kansas Biosciences Authority. In turn, the Biosciences Authority's 11-member board invests

that money in recruitment of new biotech companies to Kansas and in promising biotech research—research that could lead to new business ventures, thus ensuring that the cycle of innovation in the state will continue.

"We estimate that over the next decade the Biosciences Authority will be able to invest some \$580 million in research with a potential economic impact on the state," says KCALSI stakeholder Dr. Paul Terranova, dean of research in graduate education at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. The aforementioned Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC) will manage the commercialization and technology transfer aspects of the funded research. Meanwhile, the recently passed Missouri Quality Jobs Act will offer sellable tax credits and allow companies to retain a portion of their payroll withholdings for those hiring new workers in the biotech and technology industries. And in 2004, Missouri legislators

Don Ipock

Medical Innovation

The University of Kansas Hospital is a national leader in combining the latest advances in medicine with high-quality, compassionate care. Patients benefit from the expertise and collaboration that are hallmarks of an academic medical center.

In October we will open the Center for Advanced Heart Care. This healing environment will be home to the region's leading heart team.

And in 2007 we will open an expanded outpatient cancer center, the largest in the region.



Cancer patients benefit from our innovative multidisciplinary approach where specialists develop the best treatment strategy for each patient.

It's all part of the academic medical center difference.
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THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL
KUMED

earmarked 25% of the state's future tobacco lawsuit settlement awards for life sciences research, garnering a No. 2 ranking in *Southern Business & Development* magazine's top ten bio industry initiatives of 2004.

Kansas City also has a significant footprint in other areas of technology. Sprint, the city's largest employer, has many engineers among its 17,000 employees. Another major employer, the \$3.7 billion Cerner Corp., is a leader in the health-care information technology that is enabling hospitals and doctors to computerize their records systems.

And then there's Garmin International, the \$9 billion manufacturer of global-positioning systems (GPS), which has 1,300 employees in Kansas City. Garmin's stock has quadrupled in the last five years, driven by its cutting-edge GPS devices. Its latest entry, the Nüvi, is a "personal travel assistant" that is an automotive GPS, language translator, currency converter, MP3 player, and travel guide rolled into one.

Like many of the city's largest companies, Garmin had humble beginnings. Its founders Gary Burrell and Min Kao (combining their first names Gar-y and Min makes Garmin) opened their first facilities in a small office park in Lenexa, Kan. (a suburb of Kansas City). "Kansas City is in the center of the U.S., and that's extremely helpful for delivering products to the rest of the U.S.," says Garmin spokesperson Jessica Myers. "It is also close to many aviation manufacturers, which

is advantageous for the aviation segment of our business."

Transportation Hub

When all is said and done, Kansas City's great advantage remains its oldest one—location, location, location. Being the heart of the heartland, it is the country's most important transportation hub. The Kansas City International Airport moves more air cargo than any other in a six-state radius. More tons of railroad freight pass through it than through any other U.S. city. The second-largest rail center in the country, Kansas City is a destination for five major railroads, all of which have intermodal facilities here. It also has more freeway miles per capita than any other U.S. city, being one of only five cities where three interstate highways meet.

Is it any wonder then that the world's largest trucking and logistics company, YRC Worldwide, calls Kansas City home? With more than 70,000 employees moving a million shipments a day through 70 countries, YRC is, of course, not just a local enterprise, but the region is its headquarters and hub. "Kansas City is essential to us," says CEO Bill Zollars. "Being in the middle of the country at a highway convergence point means it doesn't take us long to get anywhere, and the Central Time zone makes it easier to do business on both coasts. The time difference is always minimal."

To facilitate the growth of the city's transportation



Top: Kansas City is the second-busiest rail hub in the country. Below: The Kansas City International Airport gets high marks from business travelers.



industry and make transportation more efficient, the Greater Kansas City Area Chamber of Commerce, the KCADC, and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) created a transportation nonprofit called Kansas City SmartPort in 2001. It has capitalized on the fact that the city is at the center of both the NAFTA rail corridor heading from Mexico to Canada and the transcontinental corridor from the East to West Coasts. "Some \$9 billion

of global imports come through Kansas City every year," says Chris Gutierrez, KC SmartPort's president. "All that freight needs to go into a warehouse distribution center to be shipped throughout the U.S."

KC SmartPort has been instrumental in attracting investments from companies looking to open such distribution centers. Recent successes include companies like pharmaceutical distributor AmerisourceBergen, FedEx Ground, DHL, and Musician's Friend, which has announced plans to build a new 1,000,000-square-foot distribution center in Kansas City.

Adding to Kansas City's transportation and distribution appeal, KC SmartPort has helped plan the nation's first inland Mexican Customs facility for exporting

goods to that country. "U.S. exports will clear Mexican customs here in downtown Kansas City and then go directly into Mexico without stopping at the border," says KC SmartPort's Gutierrez. The customs facility should be open by the end of 2006 and should significantly accelerate the shipping time it takes to get goods into Mexico since border crossings have historically caused a bottleneck. "We've shown through test shipments that we can

cut shipping times in half," says Gutierrez.

Seamless System

A new Mexican rail line, the Lázaro Cárdenas-Kansas City Corridor, presents even greater opportunities to capitalize on the city's strengths. In March of 2005 the city signed a pact with officials of the Mexican State of Michoacan to increase cargo volume between the two regions. Subsequently, Kansas City Southern (KCS)

#1 Rail
center by tonnage
in the U.S.

#3 Truck
center in
the U.S.

THE MOST
underground
warehouse space
in the world

only increase shipments from Mexico via this route but from Asia as well.

"Historically, most of the goods from Asia have passed through Los Angeles and Long Beach," says Gutierrez. "But there is now so much trade with Asia that those ports are congested. This corridor will alleviate some of their capacity constraints."

Kansas City is also a great place to store cargo. Among other things, KC boasts the most foreign

caverns was originally dug in the 1940s to extract limestone. The temperature underground is a steady 65 degrees, with low humidity year-round.

The constant climate can save companies as much as 70% on their utility bills and a lot of headaches. "We're immune from natural disasters," says Dick Ringer, Hunt Midwest's assistant general manager. "We don't worry about hurricanes and tornadoes down here." Workers like



A worker moves pallets around a portion of Hunt Midwest SubTropolis' nearly five million square feet of underground warehouse space.

acquired Mexican railway Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana, thus creating a seamless system spanning the heart of North America all the way to the Western port of Lázaro Cárdenas in Michoacan.

As part of the pact, Mexican Customs agreed to cut the "through bond" costs of transporting goods across the border from \$100,000 per shipment to \$55,000 per carrier. The resulting savings in both time and money will not

At the very heart of the heartland, KC is one of the nation's busiest transportation hubs.

trade zone space, the most underground warehouse space, and one of the largest air-cargo facilities in the Midwest. With more than five million square feet to lease, Hunt Midwest's SubTropolis underground facility offers a comfortable and cost-effective alternative to aboveground storage. Besides that, it's just plain cool—literally and figuratively. A product of the city's mining industry, the winding network of gleaming whitewashed

it, too, and why not? "We've got guys working in shorts down here in the middle of the winter," says Ringer. At \$2.80 a square foot, space is a steal, about half as expensive as aboveground facilities.

And that's just underground. The Kansas City International Airport is surrounded by more than 11,000 acres of land, about 8,000 of it undeveloped and ready to be used for warehouses and distribution centers of every sort.

"If you Google us and look at the space, it's just massive," says Mark VanLoh, director of aviation at the Kansas City Aviation Department. "There's a lot of land, and it's very cheap, with incredible interstate-highway access, and it just happens to be next to a major airport."

The department is currently developing 600 acres of that land with the help of world-renowned developer Trammell Crow. FedEx, UPS, and DHL have already taken advantage of the cargo space to build sizable trucking facilities. "There's so much room we've dedicated an entire runway just for cargo," says VanLoh. "We also don't have any people living near here, so trucks can come in all night and have no issues with noise pollution or traffic congestion."

Topeka is especially ripe for building distribution centers. It is already home to facilities for Target, Payless ShoeSource, Frito-Lay, and Jostens. Five years ago the county acquired a 600-acre business park

known as Central Crossing Commerce Park; Target's 1.4 million-square-foot facility sits on 143 of its acres. The new park is strategically located adjacent to Interstate 75 with easy access to I-35 and I-70, in addition to extensive fiber-optic networks and rail access. *Area Development* magazine cited the Target center as one of the 15 largest job-creation projects in the U.S. in 2002.

Vibrant Lifestyle

There's more to Kansas City, of course, than just business. It is also a beautiful and a genuinely fun place to live. Often called the "city of fountains," it has over 200, more than any other city except Rome. It also ranks in the nation's top ten for art deco style buildings, the two most recognizable being the Power & Light Building, which has a 97-foot-high pillar that changes colors, and Bartle Hall Convention



Center, with giant aluminum sculptures on its cabled roof.

The city's museums are world famous as well, the most prominent being the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, which recently boosted its standing by the acquisition of the Hallmark Cards photography collection. Arguably the greatest collection of American photography in the world, it consists of more than 6,500 prints by 900 artists, including Alfred Stieglitz, Dorothea Lange, Harry Callahan, Lee Friedlander, Andy Warhol,

First Fridays in the Kansas City Crossroads Arts District draw thousands of visitors.

and Cindy Sherman.

Although renowned art collections are part of the city's cultural heritage, it also has a vibrant community of living artists in the Crossroads section of town, which is bordered by the freeway "crossroads" of I-70 and I-35. For a long time the Crossroads area was largely uninhabited and "uninhabitable." About ten years ago, artists started moving in and renovating buildings. They opened galleries, and word soon spread that the district was now the hippest part of town. To accommodate the traffic, the Crossroads Community Association created the monthly First Friday gallery walk, during which some 50 galleries display the latest and greatest in the city's art scene.

"When we first started the gallery openings, it was small and everybody knew everybody else," says Suzie Aron, president of the Crossroads Community Association. "Now so many people come I hardly

University of Missouri-Kansas City

A comprehensive public research institution, UMKC offers 59 undergraduate degree programs and 50 graduate degrees or graduate certificates. Student life is a major focus, as is connecting students with the urban community. Enrollment continues to grow, now at 14,300. UMKC academic areas include a College of Arts and Sciences, the Henry W. Bloch School of Business and Public Administration, a Conservatory of Music, and schools of biological sciences, computing and engineering, education, law, and graduate studies. UMKC is home to four health



The UMKC Volker Campus

sciences schools: dentistry, nursing, medicine and pharmacy. UMKC is Kansas City's 21st-largest employer and generates a \$1 billion yearly economic impact to the region.



know anybody, and I'm the president. We get license plates from all over the region." The city now has the seventh-highest concentration of visual artists in the nation, many of them located in this part of town. Some have even launched commercial ventures, such as visual-effects company TakeTwo, which has produced video content in its Crossroads studio for companies like Wal-Mart, McDonald's, and Sprint.

Barbecues Too

If avant-garde art isn't to your taste, Kansas City's barbecue probably will be. With more than 100 barbecue restaurants, it is possible to eat a different kind every weekend for

two years. "Around here barbecue's a real passion," says Rick Hughes, president of the Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association. "It all goes back to the stockyards. Our barbecue history is closely linked to our transportation history because originally the Texas cattlemen drove their herds here via the Chisholm Trail to be slaughtered and shipped East by rail. Some 70% or 80% of the country's beef is still processed in the region, so you have a lot of people thinking of innovative ways to cook it."

Perhaps the biggest barbecue parties on the planet occur on the 300-acre parking lot outside the Kansas City Chiefs'

Arrowhead Stadium. "They're the best tailgate parties," says Hughes, "and they're a big deal." Indeed, the game-day parties are so large Arrowhead's management has installed special receptacles for disposing of live coals from all the barbecue grills. The only thing more popular

here is perhaps football itself. "No one will argue this: We have the loudest NFL stadium in the world," says Hughes. "It's hard to imagine 80,000 people shouting at once. The decibel effect is equivalent to standing on the track at a NASCAR event."

The nice thing is that all

COMMUTING TO WORK

Average travel time to work for workers 16 years and over

Kansas City	19.4 minutes
Dallas	25.3
Los Angeles	28.5
Chicago	28.5
New York City	38.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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The Country Club Plaza, the Rodeo Drive of the Midwest, features high-end shopping, dining, and entertainment.

the attractions and sites are only minutes away for most residents, thanks to the city's abundant, gridlock-free roads. "I started my career in San Francisco where my commute was an hour," says William Lyons, CEO of American Century Investments. "My commute now is only eight minutes." Lyons says the absence of rush-hour traffic has made him more productive and given him more time to spend with his family, but it's the absence of big-city noise—the shouting, honking horns, sputtering motors—he appreciates the most. "I used to deal with a couple hours a day of background noise," he says. "That went away here."

Throw in a low cost of living—not to mention one of the lowest personal income tax rates in the country—and you can see why the Stowers Institute has an 80% success rate recruiting scientists, better

than almost any other institution of its kind. "The salaries we're paying can buy so much more around here than on either coast," says Stowers' Neaves.

Indeed, according to national realtor Coldwell Banker's Home Price Comparison Index, in 2005 a 2,200-square-foot, four-bedroom house with a two-car garage ranged in price between \$151,562 and \$237,237 in Kansas City. By comparison, a similar home in San Francisco averaged \$1.3 million. According to the KCADC, a home of this size is typical of a corporate middle-management transferee. Health care is also inexpensive here, as is insurance. According to a 2005 study by eHealth-Insurance Services, the city had the lowest-cost health insurance of the nation's 50 largest cities, averaging \$172 a month for a non-smoking family of four.

Heartland Values

Saving money, of course, isn't everything. Part of what makes Kansas City a great place to live is the intangibles. Among other things, KC is perhaps the friendliest city on earth. "Everybody will say 'Hi' to you, smile at you, or open the door for you," says the

Crossroads' Suzie Aron.

The great transportation and the friendly character of KC make for an environment that is simply less stressful than other cities. According to a 2005 study conducted by *American City Business Journals*, Kansas City was the third least-stressful U.S. city, based on socioeconomic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and insufficient housing.

That native friendliness is coupled with a Midwestern tradition of honesty, hard work, and integrity. KC's S&M NuTec, the eighth-largest pet-food company in the world, outsources all its manufacturing, packaging, and shipping to 18 different local businesses. When asked over lunch about his relationship with those companies, co-founder Joe Roetheli says, "It's all handshake. It's all about honesty and integrity.

The work ethic here is absolutely great."

The city is kid-friendly as well. KC scored top honors in a 2005 ranking of the 100 Best Communities for Young People, compiled by the Alliance for Youth. The school system here is also first-rate. Four of the top 25 school districts in the nation are in the Kansas City metro area. And according to a recent study conducted by *Men's Health* magazine, the city ranked as the 12th-smartest city among 101 U.S. metros based on the bachelor's degrees per capita, the number of universities, SAT scores, and the number of Nobel Prize winners for physics and medicine born within the city borders.

There are plenty of fun things for youngsters too. "If you've got kids and you're not overwhelmed with things to do with them here, you're not trying very hard," says Warren Erdman, senior vice president of corporate affairs at Kansas City Southern. "There's every kind of show you can imagine—the zoo, museums, and a world-class parks system—and they're all 15 minutes away by car."

If you get tired of city living, there is always the country. A short drive to the south is the Ozarks, one of the largest national forests and a favorite among hunters and fishermen. To the west are the vast plains where

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kansas city
AREA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

KCADC is the metro-wide economic development agency for the two-state, OneKC region. Contact Tim Cowden at 816.374.5650 or cowden@thinkKC.com.

www.thinkKC.com

herds of buffalo once roamed. To the north and east are the stretches where desperadoes like Jesse James became infamous.

"A lot of people view the prairies as flat and boring, but I think enlightened people see them as just spectacular," says KCCVA's Rick Hughes. "They give you a tremendous sense of expansiveness, of the great American frontier. When you see miles and miles of sunflowers with their yellow faces all rotated towards the sun, you have to wonder what the first pioneers must have felt when they came here. They must have loved this place."

The same can be said for the current crop of pioneers. ●

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