



The mission of Forge is to make Topeka a place where all young talent want to live, work, play, connect and lead.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We work to support and encourage the forging and growth of new and existing young professional-friendly businesses in the Topeka community. We also empower young professionals with the knowledge and resources to build wealth and contribute to the economic betterment of Topeka.



NAMASTE CHARDONNAY



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

We work to build awareness, education, respect and acceptance of underrepresented and marginalized groups in Topeka; while also striving to ensure Forge membership is a representation of the broader community.



NYE PARTY



FORGE YOUR FUTURE

Forge Your Future is committed to advancing the knowledge of young, local residents regarding civic policy and creating opportunities for increased participation in the political process through non-partisan collaboration.



LATE LATE LUNCH SHOW



ONBOARDING



D&I EVENT



HEALTH

Dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Forge's young talent.



FORGE DAY OF SERVICE

INSPIRE VOLUNTEERS

To help Forge members find ways to give back to the community and build a culture of service among young professionals.



LEADERSHIP

To develop Topeka's young talent into tomorrow's leaders by providing them with leadership development resources that will help them shape, change and influence their community.



PLAY

To provide fun and unique experiences leading to deeper, more meaningful connections with the community and other young professionals in Topeka.



VIP TOURS

Giving young talent a behind the scenes look of what's happening in Topeka.



HISTORY



FAST FORWARD



FAST FORWARD



FAST FORWARD

1999

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The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce launched the young professionals group called Fast Forward in 1999 to provide a forum for young professionals in Topeka and to develop the next generation of leadership. Joe Pennington was the first chair of the organization.

2011

EXPAND BENEFITS AND PROGRAMING

First full year of the insider series, which gave professionals in the community an inside look at the local chamber member businesses and organizations. It allowed these organizations to educate and present themselves to the community from an insiders perspectives.

2012

FAST FORWARD HIRES MANAGER

Jennifer Owen became a full time staff member at the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce by becoming the first Fast Forward Manager in 2012.

KANSAS YP SUMMIT

Competed on a highly competitive bid to host the 2012 Kansas YP Summit and Conference, and won.

2014

GOLF TOURNAMENT AND FUNDRAISER

Hosted the first ever Golf Tournament and Fundraiser. Allowed Fast Forward to offer scholarships to young professionals for educational purposes.

2016

MOBBED

Fast Forward hosted it's first flash mob type event called Mobbed. The goal was to give retail and restaurant establishments a shot in the arm economically.

FRESH NAME

In 2016, Fast Forward became Forge to address challenges facing Topeka in attracting and retaining young talents. During the rebrand, Forge hired

FORGE HIRES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gabriel O'Shea became the first executive director of Forge in May of 2016.

2017

FORGE YOUR FUTURE

In May of 2017, Forge introduced a new initiative called "Forge Your Future" with the goal of bringing young professionals to the voting polls.

TOPCITY INTERNS PROGRAM BEGINS DEVELOPMENT

The TopCity Interns program gathers over 200 interns from local Topeka and Shawnee County businesses, providing presenting them with the best internship experience possible and maximizing attraction and retention of young professionals to the community.

2018

FORGE MOVES UNDER GO TOPEKA

In 2018, Forge moved from under the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce to GO Topeka within the Greater Topeka Partnership.

FORGE DAY OF SERVICE

In April of 2018, Forge hosted it's first Day of Service. This event provided a fun opportunity for corporate and local non-profit agencies to work together on special projects.

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SELECTED

On November 2, 2018, Lindsay Lebahn was selected as the new executive director of Forge.

2019

TOPEKA YOUTH COMMISSION FORMED

The Topeka Youth Commission came under Forge because of their aligned missions. The TYC was formed with the intent of elevating the voices of young people in Topeka & Shawnee County by providing 14-21-year-olds the opportunity to become an informed, involved and engaged member of the community.

WASHBURN UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP

Forge continued to help bridge the gap and engage a range of young talent to help mold and form the future of Topeka and Shawnee County. In it's first year the Washburn/Forge intemship focused specifically on the relationship with campus and downtown Topeka.

TOPEKA FLAG

The flag initiative lasted over a year, included everyone from elementary school students to congressmen/women, all with the mission to create a new flag for the city of Topeka. More than just a flag, Forge believed the 3'x5' piece of fabric was a visual representation of the cultural shift that is happening in Topeka.



YOUTH COMMISSION



DAY OF SERVICE



TOPEKA FLAG