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New *Agents of Change* Report: How One Community's Resiliency Reshaped Its Economy

Agents of Change Series Showcases Stories of People and Organizations Challenging Traditional Thinking in Education and Workforce Training

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. - [SynED](#), a national non-profit focused on workforce education, today released [Agents of Change Volume 5: How One Community's Resiliency Reshaped Its Economy](#), the fifth in a series of reports that provide a roadmap on how individuals, organizations and communities can address economic challenges and create innovative education and workforce training systems that make a difference.

"This series is designed to inspire and guide those who want to improve the process of connecting trained individuals to the employers who need them. Each story is presented as a how-to guide clearly identifying the critical components of successful innovation approaches, and provides practitioners and policymakers alike useful insights and tools they can leverage to realize success in their own communities," said [Scott Young](#), President and Executive Director, SynED. "This volume, highlighting the [Kansas City Tech Council](#) and their efforts to unify a multi-state city's effort to build a robust and growing technology economy."

Volume 5 of *Agents of Change* highlights the Kansas City Metropolitan Area's impressive transformation. It has emerged from a period of population decline in the late 20th century to become a thriving metropolis known for its diverse business ecosystem and being the world's first Google Fiber city.

This remarkable transformation can be attributed to a strategic, long-term approach that capitalized on existing assets. Unlike many cities that aspire to emulate the success of "tech hubs" like Silicon Valley, Kansas City has blossomed without housing a major research institution. The largest university in the area is the University of Missouri – Kansas City (UMKC).

Kansas City's success also hinges on its strong entrepreneurial culture, which is fostered by the Kauffman Foundation, a local organization focusing on entrepreneurship and civic development. Several prominent companies, such as Hallmark, Garmin, Black & Veatch, and Cerner (acquired by Oracle in 2021), originated in Kansas City. The Federal government and Kansas City Southern railroad are also significant employers in the region, demonstrating the diverse economic landscape.

Kansas City saw an economic boost in 2010 when it became the first Google Fiber-connected city, selected from over 1,100 American cities for its rapid permit process, robust infrastructure, and diverse economic sectors. Google Fiber's arrival spurred the convergence of different interest groups and imbued the region with a newfound confidence that catalyzed the growth of startups and the tech sector.

Advocacy groups like the KC Tech Council, born out of the Software & Information Technology Association of Kansas (SITAKS) and the Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC), have played crucial roles in promoting and expanding the tech industry in Kansas City.

Greg Kratofil, a local attorney, and co-founder of the KC Tech Council, noted, "The Google Fiber experience was transformative for Kansas City in two significant ways. First, it cultivated an unprecedented sense of unity among diverse interest groups, all of whom rallied behind a shared goal and passion for our region. No one wanted to be seen as unsupportive of this extraordinary initiative. Secondly, it endowed us with an enviable distinction, something everyone else coveted. This not only boosted our morale but altered our collective psyche, giving Kansas City an undeniable swagger. It was a game-changer in the truest sense."

Recent global events, such as the rise of remote work due to the pandemic, have benefitted Kansas City due to its unique mix of quality of life, robust infrastructure, and cost of living advantages. Investments in the city's quality of life and central synergy have been a magnet for mobile workers, reversing decades of decline and making Kansas City one of the fastest-growing downtowns in the US.

Kansas City has recently attracted significant investments from Panasonic and Meta, underscoring its burgeoning economic appeal. Venture capital funding for companies in the region hit a record \$1.72 billion in 2022, up more than 50% from 2021, signaling a renewed interest in the city's tech startup industry.

Kansas City stands as a shining example of strategic urban renewal, transitioning from a city in decline to a thriving, attractive metropolis. Its ability to leverage its cost-of-living advantage and market its quality of life has positioned it perfectly to take advantage of the increased worker mobility and Federal investments in clean energy.

[About SynED®](#)

SynED is a non-profit organization that acts as a catalyst to help you help others to improve their lives through education and knowledge and skill acquisition, giving them rich career opportunities. SynED facilitates collaboration and communication to find common ground in an increasingly complex and diverse workforce ecosystem. We identify emerging best practices for effective articulation between training providers and employers. SynED is the proud recipient of the 2021 Association for Career & Technical Education Business-Education Partnership [Award](#).

[About Agents of Change](#)

The Agents of Change series seeks out unique and highly successful efforts that look beyond generally accepted approaches, on what jobs are available and how to fill them, to truly understand the local community connection points between trained individuals and the employers who want to meet them. *Highlighting Those Who Dare to Make the World a Better Place.*

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