

# There's no place like Kansas

## SAMPLE OP-ED

**How to use:** Draft your sample op-ed using the outline below, replacing text in red with destination/organization-specific stats and anecdotes. Feel free to tweak remaining copy as you see fit.

**Useful resources:** Kansas Tourism's [Economic Impact Study](#).

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### Travel's History of Growing Jobs in COUNTY/CITY—And Across the Country

SUBHED: Visitors have long kept our area vibrant—and our nation's economy strong.

By INSERT AUTHOR

Many politicians, both in and out of election cycles, tout their focus on creating and keeping good American jobs. A top performer in that category is an industry right under their noses: travel.

Most people are likely familiar with the frequently touted (and research-proven) positive effects of travel on our work performance, relationships and personal well-being. It's travel's economic power, though, that arguably deserves more attention—especially in COUNTY/CITY.

Travel is a top-10 employer in Kansas. Spending by travelers in Kansas, which currently totals over \$6.5 billion, supports over 94,000 Kansas jobs. That's one in twenty Kansans whose employment depends on a healthy travel industry

This week, travel industry workers across the country are celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> annual [National Travel and Tourism Week](#) (NTTW). This year's theme, "Travel Then and Now," highlights travel's long history of supporting jobs, businesses and livelihoods everywhere in America—and the need to craft smart, travel-friendly policies that keep their jobs flourishing.

Policies that protect and promote travel—from improvements to our roads and airports, to safely keeping America's doors open to international visitors—are necessary for the health of our country. It's our country's [top service export](#), generating \$2.3 trillion in economic output each year.

One in nine Americans depend on a healthy travel industry for their employment—and it's not just those directly working in the travel industry either. In 2016, travel generated \$72 billion in state and local tax revenue, enough to pay the salaries of all the 1.2 million



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elementary school teachers, or the 978,000 state and local police and firefighters across the U.S.

Those economic benefits aren't just isolated to top tourism hubs like New York City, Orlando and Las Vegas either—they ripple throughout communities nationwide. From the early days of [LOCAL ATTRACTION](#) to today's [UPDATED VERSION OF LOCAL ATTRACTION](#), travel has meant [NUMBER OF JOBS](#) and [OTHER LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT NUMBERS](#).

Given these extraordinary returns, it's important that our elected leaders seek avenues to support and expand travel to and within the U.S., and right here in [COUNTY/CITY](#). Here's how.

Modernizing our travel infrastructure, particularly our airports, is one critical step. Our country's aviation system is one element of travel firmly stuck in the past—and not a single U.S. airport is ranked in the [top 25](#) in the world. This is partly due to the financing structure that funds improvement projects at major airports, which has not been altered since 2000. Reliable funding for our nation's airports could modernize our World War II-era air traffic control system, make much-needed safety updates, and add gate space—which would spur competition among airlines by allowing more carrier options, improving prices and service for customers.

Growing international visitation to the U.S. is also crucial to preserving the economic engine that is travel. Our country's share of the competitive international travel market is [shrinking](#) and has been since 2015. Even with the current strength of the stock market and low unemployment, the U.S. economy *will* suffer unless we turn this trend around. Just a 1.7 percent drop in America's international travel market share has already cost the U.S. economy four million additional visitors, \$32.2 billion in additional spending at American businesses and—most importantly—100,000 additional jobs that could have been created if we had simply maintained our 2015 market share level as global travel volume grew.

American business leaders across a variety of industries have taken notice of this trend, and continue to work with the administration through groups like the [Visit U.S. Coalition](#), which seek to emphasize that the U.S. can be the most secure *and* most welcoming country in the world for international visitors.

We are also in a position to boost travel's effect on our lives and the [AREA](#) economy by encouraging the American workforce to use their earned time off to travel and see our great country. The U.S. is well on its way to becoming a “no vacation nation,” with a 20 percent decline in vacation days used since the year 2000. Many workers cite a lack of encouragement from employers and a work culture emphasizing productivity above balance. This lifestyle has consequences for our [health](#), our [families](#), our [relationships](#)



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and our [work performance](#)—and local employers can do their part to change this dynamic at work.

Travel makes a difference in our communities and lives every day—and has done so for years in COUNTY/CITY.

