

Regional Development Association of East Central Kansas, Inc.

CEO/President

Opportunity Profile 2026



ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Established in 1994, the Regional Development Association of East Central Kansas, Inc. (RDA) serves as the lead economic development organization for Emporia and the communities within Lyon County, Kansas. With over \$1 billion in capital investments and the creation of 2,800 jobs since its founding, the RDA has a proven track record of fostering a pro-business climate. In collaborates with partners such as Emporia State University, Flint Hills Technical College, Emporia Area Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, Emporia Enterprises, and City and County government agencies, the RDA leverages its resources to ensure long-term economic success for the region. Key services include industrial site development, workforce development support, securing state and federal incentives, business retention, and support for entrepreneurship and land acquisition.

THE POSITION

The RDA seeks a visionary, results-driven leader to serve as its CEO/President. This individual will guide the organization in advancing economic growth, fostering business expansion, and cultivating community partnerships to enhance the quality of life, resulting in job creation, population and income growth, and long-term tax base stabilization for Emporia and Lyon County. As a working executive, the CEO/President will report to the Board of Directors and lead the organization in developing and implementing strategies that align with RDA's mission to proactively promote economic growth through commercial and industrial recruitment, workforce training enhancements, and the retention and expansion of existing businesses. The successful CEO/President will be a strategic visionary with exceptional tactical execution skills, willing to "roll up their sleeves" and contribute as part of the team.

Key Responsibilities

- **Organizational Leadership:**
 - Develop and implement strategic goals that align with the RDA's mission.
 - Act as the primary spokesperson for the RDA and the lead advocate to develop and implement the community's economic vision.
 - Foster an organizational culture focused on trust, inclusion, accountability, agility, responsiveness, service excellence, innovation, and collaboration.
- **Economic Development:**
 - Be the primary representative with the Kansas Department of Commerce, Site Selectors, and businesses considering our area to relocate to or for expansion of existing business.

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- Proactively identify and pursue business attraction and expansion opportunities that will increase the number of higher paying jobs in Emporia and Lyon County; refine and lead the formal business retention program.
- Coordinate industrial and commercial development efforts for small, medium, and large businesses to ensure a robust pipeline of economic growth initiatives.
- Secure and manage development-related funding from public, private, and nonprofit sources.
- Assist with industrial site development, speculative building projects, land acquisition, and cost analyses in collaboration with Emporia Enterprises.
- Research and maintain an inventory of available sites and buildings, including utilities, infrastructure, and development readiness. Coordinate with utility providers to improve the readiness of current sites.
- Oversee the development and implementation of local policies, such as tax abatements and performance-based incentives, in coordination with city and county governments.
- **Community and Business Engagement:**
 - Build relationships with key stakeholders, including government officials (City, County, and State), utility providers, educational institutions, local businesses, and the corporate offices of businesses located in Emporia and Lyon County.
 - Leverage Board resources, skills, and capabilities through committee work, involvement in economic development opportunities, and furthering the RDA's mission, goals, and objectives.
 - Represent RDA at state, regional, and national events, including economic development conferences and industry gatherings, legislative hearings, and other relevant opportunities to promote the RDA mission.
 - Actively participate in community networking events to promote the RDA's mission and projects.
 - Promote, educate, and encourage citizen involvement in economic and industrial growth through public outreach and communication efforts.
- **Personnel Leadership**
 - Recruit, lead, and retain staff; oversee operations and activities of staff with a results- and accountability-oriented approach.
 - Develop and nurture a culture of trust, collaboration, accountability, agility, and responsiveness.
 - Promote collaboration and alignment with ongoing formal and informal communication and regular meetings with staff.
 - Develop a performance management system to create, monitor, and report against annual Key Performance Indicators/Metrics that measure each staff member's performance against goals and objectives.
 - Create and maintain a staff compensation program that aligns with individual and team performance, collaboration, and market.
- **Financial and Administrative Oversight:**
 - Develop and manage the organization's annual budget, ensuring fiscal responsibility and alignment with strategic priorities.
 - Oversee financial performance, including reporting and compliance with regulatory requirements.

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- In conjunction with the RDA Board of Directors and other stakeholders, develop, monitor, and report against annual Key Performance Indicators/Metrics that measure RDA performance against goals and objectives.
- Provide regular updates to the RDA Board of Directors on economic development trends, initiatives, challenges, successes, and business retention issues.
- Seek out alternative sources of public and private funding to facilitate the mission of RDA.
- Ensure monthly and annual financial reports are prepared in collaboration with the Treasurer.
- **Marketing and Communications:**
 - Develop and execute marketing plans to promote Emporia and the communities within Lyon County as an attractive destination for business investment.
 - Leverage media channels and public relations strategies to communicate the RDA's initiatives and successes.
 - Coordinate direct sales campaigns and site visits with prospective businesses and developers.
 - Provide a quarterly review for the City and County funders and an annual review for the community.
- **Other Job Duties and Responsibilities as assigned by the RDA Board**

IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

- **Experience:**
 - A minimum of 10 years of senior leadership experience with at least five years of progressive responsibility in economic development, business development, or a related field.
 - Knowledge and experience with nonprofit organizations.
 - Proven ability to deliver economic development results, manage projects, and build effective partnerships.
 - Proven track record of building consensus among diverse stakeholders and leading complex organizations.
 - Proven ability to build a culture of trust, collaboration, accountability, agility, and responsiveness while ensuring results and accountability orientation.
 - Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in business or with business coursework; Master's Degree preferred. CEcD or EDFP designation, or substantial progress towards an economic development professional designation will be a plus.
- **Skills:**
 - Strong analytical, strategic planning, and creative problem-solving abilities.
 - Knowledge of finance and budgets, business needs, and incentives available to attract, retain, and find solutions for our business partners.
 - Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to inspire confidence and build trust.
 - Proficiency in leveraging public relations and marketing strategies to enhance community visibility and support.

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- **Characteristics:**

- Visionary big-picture thinker with a practical approach to implementation, exceptional tactical execution skills, and a willingness to “roll up their sleeves” and actively contribute as a part of the team.
- Energetic and proactive leader who is visible and engaged in the community and is able to provide leadership in economic development to other organizations not directly under the control of the RDA.
- Politically savvy and diplomatic, with the ability to navigate complex governmental and organizational relationships.
- Strong work ethic and exceptional business ethics.

LOCATION

This is a full-time position on-site in the RDA’s Emporia, Kansas office, extending beyond normal office hours as required for business related travel and appropriate community/economic development related events. The RDA strongly encourages the candidate to reside in Emporia or Lyon County as presence and participation in the community is important and will enhance success.

COMPENSATION

The position offers a competitive minimum base salary of \$150,000 (commensurate with experience), a performance bonus based on achievement of goals and objectives, and a comprehensive benefits package. Relocation assistance may be available.

APPLICATION PROCESS

This position is open until filled. For consideration, please submit a cover letter and resume to Anthony Michelic at EmporiaRDA@jorgensonpace.com. Upon receipt, resumes and cover letter will be screened in relation to the criteria outlined in this brochure. Candidates selected for interview will be contacted by Jorgenson Pace.

REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND CHECK

Candidates will be checked extensively for background and references. Once a strong mutual interest has been established, candidates are asked to provide a list of references that should include, but not be limited to, a supervisor, a peer, a development client, and a subordinate, as applicable. Candidates will be asked to sign an authorization to release information for the purpose of the background investigation, which will include education, social media background, credit check, criminal, and driving records. Should an offer be extended before the completion of these checks, the offer will be made contingent.

Candidate confidentiality will be maintained throughout the recruitment process.

RDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages candidates of all backgrounds to apply.