

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development

2006 Annual Report


Mission Statement

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development will promote and improve the business climate in the city of Great Bend through its services and partnerships that encourage growth and assist existing and new businesses in reaching their business goals.

Goals

- o Partner with organizations to position Great Bend community for growth
- o Be financially responsible
- o Provide quality services and programs for members
- o Increase revenues to provide for future longevity

Areas of focus

- o Advocacy for business
 - o Investment in the future
 - o Community Marketing and Promotion
 - o Chamber member services
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2006 proved to be a year of transition and re-structure. With the departure of the Executive Director of Great Bend's Downtown Development, Inc., the Board of Directors of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development acknowledged this opportunity and made the decision to merge the Downtown organization into the Chamber of Commerce causing the restructure of staff and the Board of Directors. In addition, the by-laws were updated to reflect these changes.

The goal of the restructure was to build a team for professionals who provide quality services to the Chamber of Commerce members, are efficient with financial resources, and work with volunteers to position the Great Bend community for growth. The plan consisted of the following:

- Create a new Committee of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development – Central Business District
- Chairman of the Central Business District committee to serve as a member of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
- Any member of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce can serve on Central Business District committee
- Only Great Bend Chamber of Commerce memberships will be sold to businesses
- Committee will focus on beautification and infrastructure improvements of central business district
- Vice-President of Community and Membership Development will serve as staff liaison to the Central Business committee
- Committee members and staff will determine plan of action and marketing strategies for the committee

The new staff structure calls for the following positions:

- President/CEO
- Vice-President of Community and Membership Development
- Marketing & Communications Coordinator
- Office/Business Manager
- Sales Director (*part-time*)
- Event Coordinator (*as needed*)

The structure of the Board of Directors was also changed to reflect the addition of a representative from the newly created Central Business District. Several new Ex-Officio members were added to the Board of Directors (representatives from the Great Bend City Council, Barton County Commission, Kansas Legislative delegation, USD 428, Barton County Community College, and The Great Bend Ambassadors) to insure that partnerships and business relationship continue to exist.

These changes allow the organization to:

- Promote and improve the business climate of the community through **partnerships** and **services** that **encourage growth** and assist existing and new businesses in reaching their business goals
- Encourage the growth of existing industries and businesses and give all proper **assistance** to any new firm or individuals seeking to locate in Great Bend.
- **Preserve the competitive enterprise system** of business by creating a better understanding and appreciation of the importance of business people; **represent the business community** in city, county, state and national legislative and political affairs; **preventing or addressing issues which are detrimental to expansion and growth of business** and the community.

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In order to accommodate the staff and the expanded Board of Directors, The Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development is seeking to relocate its offices. An announcement should be made in December 2006 or January of 2007.

As outlined in the 2006 Plan of Work the following list highlights accomplishments and successful partnerships with members and various organizations:

Advocacy for Business

- Business Speaker Seminars – US Dept. of Education – Dr. Cohen and “HyperGrow your Business”
- A successful Annual Meeting in February
- 4 Legislative Forums addressing current legislative issues
- 50 Chamber Networking coffees
- A successful 3i Show with the assistance of the Great Bend Ambassadors who volunteered their time and energy
- Distributed gift item to over 75% of exhibitors at the 3i show, encouraging them to “Grow their business in Great Bend”
- The establishment of a Human Resource Roundtable

Community Marketing and Promotion

- Selling over \$175,000 of gift certificates
- Redesign of the Chamber newsletter
- Public Relations – Fuller Brush featured on the Travel Channel’s “Made in America” – discussion to buy advertising space during show’s airing
- Supported CVB’s efforts in the GrandBreaking of the Kansas Wetlands Education Center at Cheyenne Bottoms and the dedication of the Wetlands and Wildlife National Scenic Byway – excellent coverage in area print media
- Drafting of a joint community development planning strategy
- Great Bend ranked 122nd out of 577 in “Top Micropolitans” in a study conducted by BizJournals, a part of American City Business Journals
- Wally Eldridge featured in Cabela’s Outfitter Journal
- Brit Spaugh Park & Zoo ranked 3rd among group tour operators in “Kansas West Showcase”
- Becker Tire ranked 77th of the top 100 rereaders in the United States
- Eldridge Fencing received the 2005 Existing Business of the Year award from the Kansas Small Business Development Center at Ft. Hays State University

Investment in the Future

- The Agribusiness Committee created yet another very successful Kid’s Ag Day for Barton County 4th graders
- Established that the successful JOBS program – centralkansasjobs.com will be taken over by staff at The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development
- The creation of the Barton County Young Professionals Group. Hosted over 65 at the first networking event.
- Graduated a group of seven future leaders through Leadership Great Bend
- Connected with 68 new and existing businesses for business expansion or relocation
- Participated in College 2 to Community Day
- Staff participated in Adult Academy and state Leadership Forums
- Street improvements and upgrades provided by the City of Great Bend which allows for existing businesses better access
- Neighborhood Revitalization Program renewed – Since inception in 2001 – The NRP has increased the market value in the City by \$21.2 million and increased the Assessed Valuation by \$ 3.9 million.

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Chamber Member Services

- 70 new members joined the Chamber of Commerce in 2006
- Organized a successful Gary Gore Annual Golf Tournament – 19 teams
- Winter storage of 40 boats and campers
- Distribution of approximately 3,000 maps and 4,500 phonebooks
- Distribution of 250 relocation packets
- 32 members of the Plan Room with 29 plans open for review
- Business 2 Business Expo held at the Expo facility

Additional partnerships, services, and programs:

- The hiring of a new team of professional staff members
- Working with The Chesapeake Group and Hutchinson Leisure Group on an Entertainment Study funded by Farmers Bank & Trust and the City of Great Bend
- Attendance at the Western Kansas Congressional Reception – Washington, DC
- Attendance at a Kansas BIO Conference and joined the state-wide coalition as a member
- Attendance at the wKREDA quarterly meeting
- Attendance at International Conference on Shopping Centers
- 12 speaking engagements to service organizations
- Partnerships established with Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas BIO, CKDI, Department of Wildlife and Parks, Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation, Prairie Enterprise Project, JOBS First program, Kansas Main Street Organization, local real estate professionals
- Kansas BIO, Executive Director to tour Great Bend in January 2007
- Worked with Central Business District volunteers in producing a successful Downtown Holiday Parade and Customer appreciation Event
- Celebration of Fuller Brush's 100th years in Business
- Business Appreciation Month Dinner sponsored by Kansas Department of Commerce – 6 Great Bend area businesses recognized
- Celebration and attendance at The Golden Belt Community Foundations' 10-year Anniversary Celebration
- Partnership with BCCC, the City of Great Bend, Workforce Center of Great Bend to review successful events – 4th of July celebration, March of Champions, Lucas Oil Races,
- Welcome of new Barton County Community College President – Dr. Carl Heilman
- Speaking to new teachers at USD 428
- Welcome to participants at the Kansas WheatBowl
- Attendance at the Black Metal Film Festival
- Worked with volunteers on holiday media buys
- Assisted in promotion of 2006 AirShow at Great Bend Airport
- Attendance at GBHS football team's appearance at the State Championship
- Hosted State travel writers
- Attendance at The Kansas Banker's Association Economic Development Seminar
- Attended announcement event for the OPEN for Business program
- Monthly updates presented to Barton County Commissioners
- Monthly updates to Great Bend City Council on Economic Development efforts

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2006 GRAND OPENING/GROUND BREAKINGS/RIBBON CUTTINGS

The Book Seller
Farmers Bank Plaza
10th Street EyeCare Center
Goodwill Industries
Scrap Book Moments/My Coffee
Enterprise Car Rental
America's Inn – *formally known as Super 8*
Johnson's Electric – *new owners*
Kansas Wetlands Education Center
Advanced Imaging Partners – PET imaging machine
Shelter Insurance – Randy Bahe agent
Club West
St. Joseph Family Medicine – Great Bend Clinic
Little One's Day Care
Beauti Control Spa Escapes
Careers Academy
Nex-Tech
Barry Bowers, CPA
Sunflower Insurance Group – Sunflower Bank

