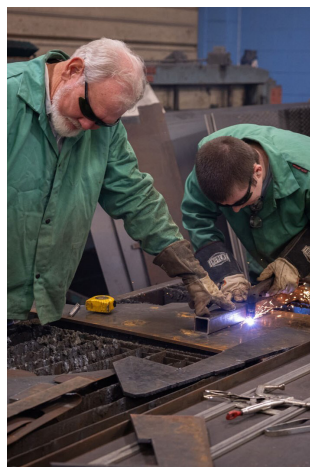




Three Partners, One Vision: How a Telecom Project Sparked a Solar-Powered Gift to Great Bend



Nex-Tech, in partnership with Barton Community College and the City of Great Bend, is excited to announce the upcoming installation of four new solar charging tables throughout Great Bend. Over the past several years, Nex-Tech has been working on a major fiber-to-the-home project in town. The idea of creating and installing these tables was developed by Nex-Tech in thanks to the community for their patience during the ongoing construction associated with the project. Nex-Tech is thankful for the support of the city, the county, and the residents of Great Bend and is excited to provide these charging tables as a gesture of appreciation.

Lindsey Krom-Craven, Nex-Tech Customer Sales Supervisor, shared, "We wanted to express our gratitude to the community for their understanding over the past few years. When a previous project didn't materialize, we shifted our focus to this new opportunity, and we're thrilled to see these tables become a reality. The support from the college and the city has been instrumental in bringing this project to life."

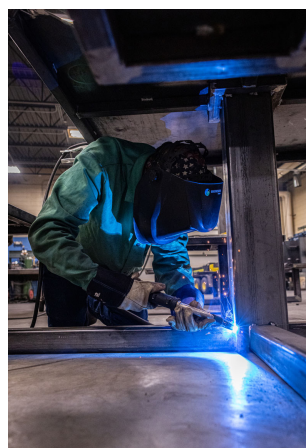
Nex-Tech is providing funding for all material costs, while students from Barton Community College's welding program are generously donating their time and expertise to design and construct the tables. Each of the four heavy-duty, square, picnic-style tables will feature canopies, LED lighting, and

solar-powered charging stations compatible with users' own USB cords. Built from robust steel to withstand the elements, these tables will be installed on concrete pads provided by the City of Great Bend at the Great Bend Sports Complex, Brit Spaugh Park, Veterans Park, and the SRCA Dragstrip.

Great Bend City Administrator, Logan Burns, commented, "The City of Great Bend is proud to partner with Nex-Tech and Barton Community College on the new solar charging table project. We're excited to launch this initiative with the installation of the first table at Brit Spaugh Zoo, marking the beginning of a sustainable and innovative effort to enhance our community spaces. We're grateful for these partnerships that allow us to give back to the community."

Mary Foley, Executive Director of Agriculture and Industry Education added, "The partnership between Barton Community College's and Nex-Tech is giving our advanced welding students a great opportunity to put their skills to use on a project that will benefit the entire Great Bend community."

Four students have been hard at work on the project this semester with the assistance of instructors Jake Streit and Mark Bogner. Joe Vinduska of BCC captured photos of the students in action. As the tables are finished, they will be painted Nex-Tech's signature red and placed in their designated locations for the public to enjoy.



Outlook Business Journal

A monthly publication of the

GREAT BEND

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620-792-2401
www.greatbend.org

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CHAMBER NEWS

A word from your president



Advancing Together In 2026

As we approach the end of another remarkable year for our organization and community, it is a privilege to share a progress update—and a sincere thank-you—with our dedicated Chamber members. The momentum behind our five-year Strategic Plan is stronger than ever, and together we are making measurable gains for business, innovation, and opportunity across Great Bend.

Capital Campaign: \$851,250 Raised—Within Reach of \$1M Goal

Thanks to your generosity, our Elevate GBK Beyond Today Capital Campaign has received \$851,250 raised to date toward our \$1 million goal. These funds are already fueling critical programs and projects to support membership, entrepreneurship, leadership and advocacy programming. Rest assured that every membership dollar and campaign pledge continues to directly empower local businesses and the community.

Strategic Plan Highlights: Advocacy, Realignment, and Member Experience

Our strategic focus on advocacy was elevated this year with the launch of the Run Ready initiative; the first being a half-day session designed to equip civic leaders with the tools, mindset, and inspiration to lead with integrity, resilience, and vision.

Run Ready is part of the Chamber's Elevate GBK advocacy initiative and directly supports its strategic goal to partner with organizations like the Kansas Leadership Center, Kansas Chamber, Kansas Farm Bureau, and League of Women Voters to cultivate business leaders willing to run for office.

Internally, we are realigning Chamber resources to maximize impact, allowing more of our operating funds to be invested back into member support, signature programming, and innovative business initiatives.

Tiered Dues Restructuring: Member Focus Groups Starting Soon

Responding to evolving business needs and best practices in Chamber membership, we have commenced a full restructure of the current investment schedule and are developing a member focused tiered dues structure. The next phase including direct member focus groups will begin in early 2026. Your participation will ensure the redesigned structure is membership and value-driven, empowering all members to choose their level of involvement.

Enhanced Digital Experience: Website and Virtual Resource Library

Our Chamber website will be undergoing a major redesign late 2026 with a focus on usability and member value. The new Members-Only Portal is being developed to include a robust Virtual Resource Library, providing exclusive access to downloadable templates, best-practice guides, and other business tools. Members will soon be able to self-schedule Chamber Coffees, ribbon cuttings, and other events online for greater convenience.

Looking Ahead

Together, we're building a strong future for Great Bend's business community. As we move forward, the Chamber will begin sharing more regular updates with our ElevateGBK investors and members, using the data we collect to highlight progress and impact.

Thank you for being such an important part of this journey and for your continued support of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce.

Sincerely,

Megan Barfield, President & CEO
Great Bend Chamber of Commerce
mbarfield@greatbend.org
620-792-2401

Sunflower Diversified sponsors Angel Trees in three Great Bend locations



Each tree is decorated with angel ornaments, representing the wants and needs of individuals supported by Sunflower. Their gender also is noted.

"Participants are asked to select a tag from a tree, purchase a gift and return it to the location where they chose the tag," said Cody Harris, Sunflower director of planned giving and community support. "We will take it from there and ensure that your gift gets to the right person."

The deadline for delivering the children's gifts is Dec. 8 and the adult deadline is Dec. 16.

"We trust that Sunflower's generous supporters will come through for the people we serve," Harris said. "Together, we can make this a meaningful Christmas season for individuals supported by Sunflower."

Harris encourages businesses to become involved in the Angel Tree project.

"For example, employees could select an angel or two, and shop as a team," Harris commented. "This can be a great team-building project and morale boost for any business."

Those who can't go shopping are welcome to leave a cash donation at any of the three locations.

"If it is inconvenient for you to go shopping, we will do it for you," Harris offered. "We want to accommodate anyone in this supportive community to participate in this wonderful program."

Sunflower serves infants, toddlers and adults in Barton, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties. It is in its 59th year.

Sunflower Diversified Services is once again offering three options to those who want to brighten the Christmas season for infants, toddlers and adults with special needs.

One of the non-profit agency's Angel Trees is located at Westside Market/UPS Store, 5523 10th, which is owned and operated by Sunflower. The others are at The University of Kansas Health System, 514 Cleveland, Great Bend, and Dry Lake Brewing, 1305 Main, Great Bend.

The tree at the brewery is dedicated to children served by Sunflower Early Education Center and their siblings, while the other two are for adults.

Nominate Outstanding Leaders and Businesses

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN!

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
CITIZEN OF THE YEAR
NEXTGEN LEADER OF THE YEAR



It's that time of year when we come together to celebrate the incredible individuals and businesses that make Great Bend a vibrant and thriving community. We're thrilled to announce that nominations are now open for the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce 2026 Annual Awards!

We invite you to help us recognize the best and brightest among us by nominating your peers for one (or more) of these prestigious awards

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Building Tomorrow's Leaders on a Foundation of Faith and Excellence

For over two decades, Central Kansas Christian Academy (CKCA) has been a cornerstone of Christian education in our community, providing students from kindergarten through eighth grade with an environment where academic rigor meets spiritual growth. As an ACSI-accredited institution, CKCA continues to evolve while staying true to its mission of partnering with parents to develop well-rounded students who excel both in the classroom and in their faith.

"We want people to know that CKCA is committed to providing a nurturing and faith-based learning environment where students can thrive both academically and spiritually," school representatives share. "Our school has a rich history of fostering academic excellence rooted in Christian values, and we are excited about the direction God is leading us."

Welcome Back: A Familiar Face Returns

CKCA is pleased to announce the return of Cindy Wilborn as Physical Education Teacher. Wilborn, who previously taught PE at CKCA in 2010, brings extensive experience and a deep commitment to student wellness. Holding a bachelor's degree in Physical Education from Kansas Wesleyan University, she has been shaping young lives through education since 2001.

"Cindy brings enthusiasm, dedication, and a passion for inspiring students to stay active and healthy," the school notes. "She emphasizes our collective responsibility to raise children to know, love, and serve Christ."

The school also expressed gratitude to Tyler Wassenberg for his service in the PE program during the first quarter, and celebrates his continued contribution through Band and Music classes.

Investing in the Future: Annual Legacy Campaign

CKCA is launching its Annual Legacy Campaign with an ambitious goal of raising \$100,000 by January 31, 2026. This critical fundraising effort builds on remarkable success from the previous two years, during which supporters contributed nearly \$122,000 to enhance programs, improve

campus security, and invest in teacher development.

This year's campaign funds will serve multiple purposes: maintaining the quality Christian education CKCA is known for, supporting daily operations, keeping tuition affordable for families, and taking the initial steps toward an exciting expansion—developing a new high school program on campus, beginning with ninth grade.

"These funds will help us continue providing a quality Christian education while taking the first steps toward our high school vision," school officials explain.

Community members interested in supporting this initiative can contact the school office at office@ckcacademy.com or 620-792-3477.

Honoring Those Who Served

This past Veterans Day, CKCA demonstrated its commitment to community engagement and service by participating in the ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park. Students and staff served coffee and cookies to attendees, creating an atmosphere of warmth and appreciation while honoring the men and women who have served in the U.S. armed forces.

The event featured notable community members, including Mr. Palmer, whose presence served as a powerful reminder



of the courage and dedication that characterizes our nation's veterans. For CKCA students, the experience provided a tangible lesson in gratitude, respect, and civic responsibility.

A Clear Vision for Christian Education

As a non-denominational community Christian school, CKCA's vision is straightforward: to prepare young people to function in the world both academically and spiritually. The school's strong curriculum promotes not just learning, but growth in students' Christian character, building what administrators believe is a strong foundation for future success.

Through its combination of Christian character training and academic excellence, CKCA continues to serve families seeking an educational environment where faith and learning work hand in hand.

For more information about Central Kansas Christian Academy, visit www.ckcacademy.com or contact the school office at 620-792-3477.



ElderCare Enhances Giving Program for Home-care Clients



ElderCare has brightened the Christmas season for its clients over the years but has decided to extend its giving program so that seniors can benefit throughout the year.

The Year-Round Senior Collection program officially gets underway Monday, Nov. 17 when donors can begin contributing to the cause.

"We noticed that many of our seniors are facing more challenges than in the past,"

said Brandi Gruber, ElderCare executive director. "More than half our clients depend on Medicaid now. In recent years, that percentage was much lower."

The greatest needs include paper towels; toilet paper; mops, brooms and other cleaning supplies; laundry detergent; toiletries; gift cards for grocery stores and restaurants; and monetary donations.

"We don't often think about cleaning supplies and paper products," Gruber said. "But these are real needs because we want our clients to live in clean and safe environments."

"Our wonderful caregivers perform light-to-moderate house-keeping services but have discovered that many people don't have supplies available. It has become a huge challenge."

Details

Donations will be accepted from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday until Dec. 17 at Great Bend Senior Center, 2005 Kansas.

If drop-off hours are inconvenient, ElderCare makes arrangements for pick-up.

"While we want to collect items to be delivered before Christmas, it is also important that we keep supply shelves full throughout the year," Gruber commented. "Cash donations are especially helpful because they give us flexibility to respond quickly to certain needs."

"Donors may earmark their contributions

for this year-round fund. We will ensure the funds are used as intended."

Checks should be mailed to ElderCare, P.O. Box 1364, Great Bend, Ks. 67530. "We encourage individuals, businesses, and civic and church groups to get involved," Gruber said. "You can be assured our seniors will appreciate it."

A little background

For the past eight years, ElderCare sponsored a Senior Giving Tree at its office. While the non-profit agency will give small gifts to all clients, there won't be a tree this year.

"Christmas gifts are certainly important but the needs continue long after the holidays are over," Gruber said. "We are adjusting our approach to better address these ongoing needs, ensuring seniors get our support when they need it most."

"Over the years, the community's generosity has brought comfort and joy to our clients. They are deeply grateful for this kindness. We hope donors will adapt with us as we work to serve our seniors more effectively and meaningfully."

For more information, contact Gruber by calling or texting 620-792-5942 or emailing bgruber@eldercareks.org. The ElderCare office is located at 2817 9th in Great Bend.

The non-profit agency's home-care services include personal care, household tasks and

Stueder Contractors Spreads Holiday Cheer with "Holiday Heat Up" and "Stueder Sleighs"

This December, Stueder Contractors is celebrating the season of giving in a big way!

Through their Holiday Heat Up initiative, the locally owned company is inviting the community and crew to nominate a homeowner in need of warmth this winter. One deserving recipient will receive a new Lennox heating system and installation, courtesy of the Stueder Crew.

Meanwhile, keep an eye out around town for the Stueder Sleighs—company service vehicles decked out by the crew in full holiday spirit! Snap a photo when you

see one, share it on social media, and tag @StuederContractors to spread some cheer and award bragging rights to the winning sleigh.

Owner Terry Stueder shared, "Being a good neighbor and giving back is at the heart of what we do. We're proud to serve this community and help make Great Bend a little warmer this holiday season."

Nominations will be accepted Monday, December 1- Friday, December 19 and can be made online by visiting, www.Stueders.com/holidayheatup.

Holiday
HEAT UP!
Giving the Gift of Warmth to
a Local Homeowner in Need.

Nominate a neighbor in need
of safe, reliable heat.

December 1 - 19
www.Stueders.com/HolidayHeatUp

STUEDER
CONTRACTORS INC.

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon cutting at **Walnut Bowl** on Thursday, October 23, 2025, celebrating the completion of extensive remodeling at the beloved entertainment center.

Owners Jim and Linda Mayberry welcomed guests to showcase upgrades that have transformed the facility into one of Kansas's most modern bowling centers. Located at 3101 Washington Street, Walnut Bowl has served Great Bend since 1962 and has been under the Mayberrys' ownership since 1996.

The renovation includes cutting-edge string pinsetters—making Walnut Bowl among the first in Kansas to adopt this technology—which are faster, quieter, and 70% more energy-efficient. Other upgrades feature new automatic bumpers, upgraded ball returns and lighting, a completely renovated kitchen, and walk-in cooler and freezer built in-house during the pandemic.

Beyond bowling, Walnut Bowl offers a full-service bar and grill, arcade, party room, and year-round miniature golf (weather permitting). Weekly specials include Monday Bowling Night (\$2.50 games, free shoes), Wednesday All You Can Bowl (\$10, 4-11 p.m.), and Sunday Big City Lights (\$15 unlimited bowling, 4-7 p.m.).

Hours are Monday-Thursday 11 a.m.-11 p.m., Friday-Saturday 11 a.m.-midnight, and Sunday noon-8 p.m.

"We invite everyone to experience Walnut Bowl," said Jim Mayberry, Kansas State USBC Hall of Fame member. "Even if you're not a bowler, you'll find great food, friendly faces, and fun for the whole family."

For more information, visit walnutbowlgb.com.



The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday, November 6, 2025, at the **Crest Theatre**, where Great Bend Public Relations Director Addison Crites read a proclamation from Mayor Cody Schmidt declaring November 9th as Crest Theatre Day.

On Sunday, November 9th, the public was invited to relive the magic of the Crest's 1950 grand opening with two screenings of the original opening film, **Two Weeks With Love**, starring Jane Powell and Ricardo Montalban. Doors opened at 1:00 p.m., with showings at 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Admission was just \$1, including popcorn, thanks to sponsor Max Nichols and the Nichols Family Trust. Tickets were available only at the box office day-of, and seating was first-come, first-served.

Guests were encouraged to wear 1950s attire for the "Best Dressed" contest, with winners announced at each screening. The lobby and mezzanine featured historical displays, uniformed usherettes distributed commemorative programs, and a special 75th Anniversary booklet was available for \$5.

"The Crest has been part of Great Bend's history for 75 years," said Chamber President Megan Barfield. "We're honored to celebrate this milestone and recognize the theater's lasting place in our community."

The event celebrated this iconic venue at 1905 Lakin Avenue.



RIBBON CUTTINGS



The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce proudly hosted a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for **Kutina Dental Office** on Thursday, November 13, 2025, commemorating an extraordinary milestone of 100 years of family dentistry in Great Bend.

The Kutina family's dental legacy began in 1925, when Dr. George Frederick Kutina opened his first practice in downtown Great Bend. What started as a small office above the Great Bend Tribune has grown into a century-long tradition of compassionate care and professional excellence. Over the decades, the practice has been carried forward by multiple generations, including Dr. George's son, Dr. Loren Kutina, and grandson, Dr. Larry Kutina, ensuring that the family's commitment to oral health remains strong in the community.

Today, Kutina Dental Office continues to honor that legacy with modern facilities and a dedication to patient-centered care. Beyond Great Bend, members of the Kutina family

have also extended their dental practice into other communities, carrying forward the tradition of service established a century ago.

The Ribbon Cutting ceremony highlighted both the history and the future of Kutina Dental Office, recognizing the impact of a family business that has served generations of patients. As the practice looks ahead, Kutina Dental Office remains committed to continuing its tradition of excellence in oral health for the community.

For more information visit www.kutinadental.com or call 620-792-2114.



The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce held a Ribbon Cutting for **24HR Laundry** on Thursday, November 20th. The business celebrated a soft opening on Friday, November 14th, followed by a strong turnout during its official grand opening weekend. Community members stopped by to tour the facility, try out the new equipment, and show their support for this much-needed addition to Great Bend.

Owned and operated by Devin Denton, 24HR Laundry is the third laundromat in his growing business portfolio. Denton also operates two laundromats in Dodge City. With the new Great Bend location, he continues his commitment to providing clean, modern, and reliable laundry services for local residents.

Located at 3511 10th Street, Suite 101, Great Bend, 24HR Laundry features state-of-the-art touch screen equipment and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The business prides itself on offering customers the best possible wash and dry service in a safe, convenient environment.

To make laundry even easier, the facility offers a change machine that accepts \$1, \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills, converting them into quarters for customer use. In addition, 24HR Laundry will soon include a mobile app

that allows customers to pay with debit or credit cards directly from their phones and the ability to start any washer or dryer remotely. The app also tracks usage, enabling the business to provide specials and rewards to loyal customers.

Denton shared that Great Bend was in need of a "nice, clean, working laundromat," and he is proud to meet that need. Beyond laundry services, 24HR Laundry is dedicated to giving back to the community. The company supports school athletics, local police and firefighters, and individuals in the community who may need a helping hand.

The grand opening of 24HR Laundry marks another chapter in Great Bend's story of growth and community development.

Shelbi Frees, a graduate of **Barton Community College's** Nursing Program, is now working as a nurse practitioner at **Ellinwood Hospital and Clinic** in her hometown. Inspired by her mother's nursing career, Frees values the patient relationships that nursing provides.

She credits Barton's program with preparing her for success through extensive lab hours with simulation mannequins and clinical rotations at various facilities. The small class sizes allowed for personalized instruction and meaningful connections with classmates from diverse backgrounds and age groups.

Frees also appreciated Barton's affordability, particularly for in-county residents, and the ability to work while attending school. She strongly recommends the program for aspiring LPNs and RNs, noting its strong reputation and hands-on approach.

Applications for the 2026-2027 nursing program are now open, with a priority deadline of January 31, 2026.



Addie Kershner, a Rush Center native, has joined **Pawnee Valley Community Hospital** (PVCH) as an Occupational Therapist. She helps patients of all ages overcome limitations from injury, illness, or developmental challenges to perform daily activities like dressing, eating, and working. Kershner evaluates patients, develops treatment plans, and provides interventions to improve functional independence. OT services also include rehabilitation for shoulders, elbows, wrists, and hands.

"It is rewarding to help people live more independently and safely," Kershner said, explaining why she chose this career path.

She earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas and her Doctor of Occupational Therapy from KU Medical Center. She has clinical experience in inpatient, outpatient, community-based, and mental health settings. Rehabilitation manager Jason Rath praised Kershner as "a great addition to our rehab team" with obvious compassion for patients.

Kershner and her fiancé, Kody, recently purchased a home in Larned. PVCH is a 25-bed facility offering comprehensive services including emergency care, surgery, imaging, and rehabilitation.

Great Bend USD 428 is proud to announce Mandy Stansfield, 5th-grade teacher at Riley Elementary, and Lori McLeland, 7th-grade English teacher at Great Bend Middle School, as the district's 2026 Teachers of the Year. Both honorees will represent USD 428 in the 2027 Kansas Teacher of the Year program sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education.

"Recognizing our Teachers of the Year is one of the highlights of the school year," said Superintendent Khrist Thexton. "Ms. Stansfield and Ms. McLeland represent the very best of our profession. Their enthusiasm, leadership, and compassion have a profound impact on the lives of their students and colleagues."

Mandy Stansfield (right) has taught 5th grade at Riley Elementary for 12 years. Known for her energetic teaching style, she brings subjects to life and keeps students captivated. Stansfield has served as a mentor teacher, Curriculum Steering Committee member, and Process Champion for Capturing Kids' Hearts. She also organizes Student Council and volunteers with The Ronald McDonald House and local community causes.

"Education is at its best when teachers truly connect with their students," Stansfield said. "That relationship—built on trust, care, and respect—is what makes learning meaningful."



Lori McLeland (left) has dedicated 12 years to teaching 7th-grade English at Great Bend Middle School. Her creative classroom activities blend imagination with literacy skills. McLeland has served on the Building Leadership Team for nine years, mentored new teachers, and presented at district events. She is also active in her community as a worship leader and Vacation Bible School coordinator at Ellinwood Community Church. "I believe that effective teaching involves a love for children, a desire to learn throughout your life, a compassionate heart, and the confidence to inspire students to always strive for success," McLeland shared. Great Bend USD 428 congratulates both educators for their outstanding contributions and dedication to students.



Clara Barton Medical Center is pleased to announce the promotion of Cindy Burton, RN, BSN, to Manager of Emergency and Outpatient Services.

A native of LaCrosse, Kansas, Burton earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Fort Hays State University more than 37 years ago. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her new role, having worked at St. Anthony's Hospital (now HaysMed), Rush County Memorial Hospital for over 20 years, Pawnee Valley Community Hospital, and Larned State Hospital before joining Clara Barton Medical Center in 2024.

Throughout her career, Burton has specialized in emergency medicine, medical/surgical inpatient care, and outpatient services. She holds certifications in BLS (Basic Life Support), ACLS (Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support), PALS (Pediatric Advanced Life Support), TNCC (Trauma Nursing Core Course), and NIHSS (National Institutes of Health Stroke Scale), is a BLS instructor, and is also a graduate of the Kansas Hospital Association Leadership Program.

Outside of her professional life, Burton enjoys sewing and building yard art. She and her husband have two adult children and six grandchildren. Dedicated to helping others both personally and professionally, she has volunteered for many years as a camp nurse at a Christian church camp and served as a sponsor on multiple church mission trips.

Burton shared that the most rewarding aspect of working in the medical field is being able to help others. In her new leadership role, she looks forward to continuing that mission by supporting both patients and associates and leading the Emergency and Outpatient Services team in a positive and collaborative manner.

Clara Barton Medical Center is pleased to announce the addition of Kimberly Beary, Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker, to its growing mental health team. As the need for mental health services continues to rise across Barton County and surrounding communities, Clara Barton remains committed to expanding access to quality behavioral health care. Beary's addition strengthens the organization's ability to provide compassionate, patient-focused support for individuals and families seeking help.

Beary will be providing care for patients of all ages and will specialize in helping individuals navigate depression, anxiety, stress management, relationship issues, workplace burnout, grief and loss, and personal growth.

Having long called the Great Bend area home, Beary brings more than 20 years of experience working with children and teens in a psychiatric residential treatment facility, as well as adult men through the Kansas Department of Corrections and Larned State Hospital. She earned her Bachelor of General Studies from Wichita State University, majoring in Psychology, Sociology, and Religion, and went on to complete her Master of Social Work from the University of Kansas.

Finding fulfillment in being a safe, trusted person that individuals can confide in as they navigate life's challenges, Beary also values time spent with family and friends and enjoys being outdoors surrounded by nature's beauty.

Beary will see patients at both Clara Barton's Hoisington and Great Bend Clinic locations. To schedule an appointment, please call 620-653-2386.



Clara Barton Medical Center is proud to announce Alex Wilson, RN, as the organization's new Director of Nursing. In this role, Wilson will oversee the hospital's inpatient nursing floor, providing leadership and support to staff while ensuring the continued delivery of safe, high-quality, and compassionate patient care.

Originally from Washington State and born in Santa Cruz, California, Wilson moved to Kansas in 2014 to further his education — a decision that ultimately led him to build his life and career here. He earned both his Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) from North Central Kansas Technical College.

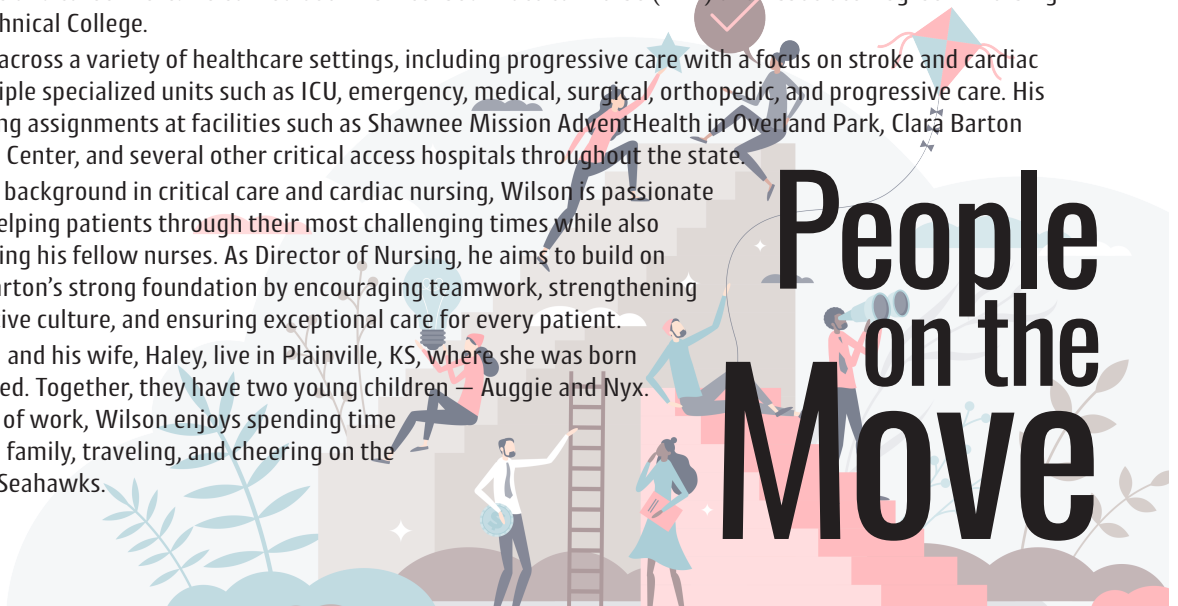
Wilson brings extensive experience across a variety of healthcare settings, including progressive care with a focus on stroke and cardiac patients, the COVID-19 ICU, and multiple specialized units such as ICU, emergency, medical, surgical, orthopedic, and progressive care. His background also includes travel nursing assignments at facilities such as Shawnee Mission AdventHealth in Overland Park, Clara Barton Medical Center, and several other critical access hospitals throughout the state.

With a background in critical care and cardiac nursing, Wilson is passionate about helping patients through their most challenging times while also supporting his fellow nurses. As Director of Nursing, he aims to build on Clara Barton's strong foundation by encouraging teamwork, strengthening its positive culture, and ensuring exceptional care for every patient.

Wilson and his wife, Haley, live in Plainville, KS, where she was born and raised. Together, they have two young children — Auggie and Nyx. Outside of work, Wilson enjoys spending time with his family, traveling, and cheering on the Seattle Seahawks.



People on the Move



Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today: Inside the 4-H Ambassador Experience

4-H Ambassadors are youth in grades 9-12 who have applied and undergone an interview process to participate. Their role is to help plan 4-H programs and events in their communities that help to recruit members and assist younger 4-H members in finding where their interests lie and build on that through project work. They represent the 4-H program and themselves, respectfully and positively.

We would like to highlight one of our Barton County 4-H Ambassadors, Jonas Kern. Jonas is an 11-year member of the Ellinwood Energizers 4-H Club. We asked him to write a message about the impact 4-H has had on his life and why youth should join, to share with you all. Thank you, Jonas!

"I think that 4-H is one of the most important organizations that I have been involved with. Because of being in 4-H, I have had many learning, leadership, and

networking experiences. I have met and worked with peers from all over Kansas and even the United States. The skills that I have learned from 4-H can easily be applied in the future, and have adequately prepared me for the careers ahead of me. Doing the projects

in 4-H has also allowed me to do and create what I love and get constructive feedback to better improve my skills. I think that others should join 4-H so that they, too, can accelerate their skills and learn all that they need to be high-quality citizens." ~Jonas Kern

Do you, your children, or someone you know of have an interest in learning more about being a part of 4-H in

the Cottonwood Extension District? Then please feel free to reach out to 4-H Youth Development Agents, Tamara Robertson in Ellis County or Ben Sims in Barton County at 785-628-9430 (Ellis) or 620-793-1910 (Barton), and they would be happy to provide you with more information!



GREAT BEND REC PRESENTS

SANTA'S WORKSHOP

DECEMBER 8, 2025
6:00 - 8:00 PM
CITY AUDITORIUM

Join Santa Claus for an evening of Christmas fun!
Admission is Free.
Event is designed for children
Preschool age thru 6th grade!

Bring your letters for Santa

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Light Up the Season: Volunteer Opportunities That Sparkle in GBK!

Be Part of the Magic - Volunteer at Santas Around the World!

Step into a sparkling winter wonderland filled with 25 life-sized Santas from around the globe - right here in downtown Great Bend! Volunteers are needed to greet visitors, share fun facts about our jolly international guests, and help collect donations to keep the magic shining bright. You'll also get to see the joy on children's faces as they meet the one and only Santa Claus during open hours. It's festive, heartwarming, and full of holiday cheer - come spread some joy and be part of this beloved Great Bend tradition!

Santas Around the World (Santa House) shifts are Thursday & Friday 4 - 6PM, Saturdays & Sundays 1 - 3:30PM & 3:30 - 6PM. Sign up at volunteersinaction.galaxydigital.com.

Be a Holiday Greeter - Join the Fun!

Love to smile, wave, and spread cheer? Come volunteer at Great Bend's Trail of Lights! You'll hand out holiday cheer bags, share the event schedule, and welcome visitors from near and far. If bags run out, candy canes and good vibes do the trick! You'll help collect donations for the City Light Fund (all proceeds go right back to maintaining and upgrading our beautiful lights) and share tips about local shops, dining, and attractions. It's a joyful, easy way to make spirits bright and show off the warm heart of our community. Come help us light up Great Bend this holiday season! Trail of Lights: Sign up at volunteersinaction.galaxydigital.com.

Barton County Landfill Battles Battery Fires While Advancing Environmental Science

The Barton County Landfill faces a dangerous and growing challenge from lithium-ion batteries improperly discarded in regular trash, creating serious fire and explosion risks for employees and the facility. Lithium-ion batteries power everyday items like smartphones, power tools, small appliances, and vape pens. When these batteries are punctured, crushed, or damaged in the waste stream, they can rapidly overheat and ignite through a process called thermal runaway.

“When a lithium battery is punctured or damaged, it can erupt or ignite, causing fire and possible injuries,” said Jennifer Hamby, Barton County solid waste director. “After a battery fire is extinguished, it can reignite up to a week after the fact.” To combat this hazard, the landfill has installed a fire truck designed for challenging terrain and a thermal camera that detects hotspots and alerts staff around the clock. Hamby is also working with state regulators at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and other landfill operators to find solutions, though she acknowledges there are no easy resolutions. Hamby stressed the critical importance of proper disposal by the public. While scale clerks scan incoming loads for batteries, many still slip through. She urges residents never to smash or damage devices containing lithium batteries and to take all batteries and battery-containing devices to designated recycling or Household Hazardous Waste drop-off points instead of throwing them in the trash.

More Than Just a Dump

Beyond handling hazardous materials, the Barton County Landfill represents sophisticated environmental engineering and science. The facility, which opened in 1973 as a private operation, was taken over by Barton County in 1976 and certified as a Subtitle D facility in 2001—a state-of-the-art designation requiring thick clay and plastic lining under all burial pits. “Landfills are very important,” said Hamby, who has been with the department for 15 years. “Without landfills, waste would accumulate in unregulated dump sites, ditches and city streets.”

The sprawling 89.2-acre facility serves Barton, Pawnee, Ellsworth counties, and portions of Rush County. It operates entirely on tipping fees without tax support. Each year, the landfill must reapply for five different KDHE permits covering greenhouse gas emissions and groundwater contamination,

with constant testing and monitoring to avoid fines or closure.

The facility accepts municipal solid waste, construction and demolition waste, and offers free disposal of household hazardous waste and expired medications. For a fee, they also accept tires and mattresses. HHW collections occur the third Saturday of each month from April through October, with weekday appointments available year-round.

Recycling and Sustainability

The landfill champions environmental stewardship through multiple programs. Since 2009, its e-waste recycling program has processed approximately 700,000 pounds of electronics, transferring them to Rosewood Services’ facility in Great Bend for careful disassembly and component recycling. The facility also operates a free reuse program offering usable items like paint and household cleaners.

With 90 years of capacity remaining, the landfill is in good shape. However, Hamby notes that food waste—much of which could be composted—comprises the largest portion of incoming waste, followed by recyclable plastics and paper products. Recycling helps extend the landfill’s lifespan by keeping materials out of the waste stream.

Daily Operations and Science

Running the landfill requires a dedicated team of seven: one director, two scale clerks, and four equipment operators who manage a fleet including two Caterpillar compactors, a Bobcat skid loader, and various scrapers and dozers. Operators compact waste in thin layers about two feet deep, running over piles approximately four times daily.

Weather poses major operational challenges. The facility closes when sustained winds exceed 30 miles per hour to prevent blowing litter, and rain and snow make navigation difficult. Wind screens and snow fences help mitigate these issues.

The science behind landfill operations involves controlled containment of decomposition. Waste undergoes aerobic decomposition followed by anaerobic decomposition, producing methane and carbon dioxide. A liner system with two feet of impermeable clay and synthetic geomembrane prevents leachate—liquid formed when water filters through waste—from contaminating groundwater. Leachate is pumped into evaporation ponds or recirculated, while landfill gas is currently vented, with energy capture a future possibility.

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SCHEDULE
Every Thursday
Doors Open at 9am
Program at 9:30am

December 4th
BARTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
85 US Hwy 281

The Barton County Historical Society preserves and showcases the rich heritage of Barton County through an on-site "Museum & Village" at 85 S Highway 281 in Great Bend, featuring multiple restored historic buildings and exhibits that span from Native American culture and the Santa Fe Trail era to 20th-century rural life.

December 11th
HEART OF KANSAS FAMILY HEALTH CARE
1905 19th Street

Heart of Kansas Family Health Care delivers affordable, compassionate medical, dental, and behavioral health services across central Kansas. As a nonprofit Federally Qualified Health Center, they welcome all patients with insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, or sliding-scale fees.

December 18th
GOLDEN BELT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Prince of Peace Parish Center - 4100 Broadway

Celebrate the Great Charity Give Back! This special event marks a heartwarming culmination of our Giving Tuesday campaign. Be part of a morning filled with gratitude and community spirit as we unveil the total dollars raised during our Giving Tuesday campaign and distribute grant checks to local nonprofits. It's a powerful moment to recognize the generosity that fuels positive change in our community.

January 8th
CATHOLIC CHARITIES GOLDEN HARVEST THRIFT STORE
2410 Main Street

The Golden Harvest Thrift Store directly supports local families through Catholic Charities emergency assistance and life-changing programs. Our thrift store not only offers quality, affordable goods - it helps sustain the mission of serving neighbors in need with dignity and compassion. Come see the impact your community is making, one donation and one purchase at a time.

January 15th
LANDMARK NATIONAL BANK
1623 Main Street

Landmark National Bank proudly serves communities across Kansas with 29 locations, including two in Great Bend. We're committed to supporting local individuals and businesses through personalized banking, comprehensive business services, and reliable home-lending solutions. We're honored to be part of the Great Bend community and dedicated to helping it continue to grow and thrive.



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Providing the Great Bend community greater access to the resources of the only academic health system in Kansas. Together, we are committed to ensuring the continued well-being of this community, close to home.

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2026 ANNUAL ADVERTISING

VISIBILITY MATTERS!

Reach decision-makers across Barton County and beyond—business owners, managers, educators, and local, state, and federal officials—through our two proven channels. Choose print, digital, or both for consistent, multi-touch visibility.



PRINT: OUTLOOK BUSINESS JOURNAL (MONTHLY)

Audience & Reach

- Distributed to 1,500+ area business representatives, community members, and elected officials
- Approx. 3,500 readers across print and online archives for ongoing exposure
- Every issue is available for online reading—your ad keeps working after delivery

Why It Works

- Trusted, Chamber-endorsed publication
- Evergreen shelf life—kept on desks and in lobbies
- Repetition builds recognition across 12 issues

Ad Options

3" x 5" Tile Ad — \$150/mo or \$1,700/yr

- Full-color, eye-catching placement in all 12 issues (print + digital)
- Consistent branding month after month (or refresh your creative monthly)
- Annual option saves vs. month-to-month

5.5" x 8.5" Mail Panel Ad — \$450/mo

- Full-color prime placement on the mail panel for maximum impressions
- Ideal for launches, promos, and events not covered in articles

8.5" x 11" Flyer Insert — \$450 (1-sided) | \$600 (2-sided)

- We print and mail your full-page flyer inside the Outlook Business Journal
- Turnkey: we handle printing + mailing so you save time and hassle

DIGITAL: WEEKLY EMAIL (EVERY WEEK)

Audience & Reach

- Sent to 2,000+ business representatives and community members, including elected officials
- Open and click rates consistently exceed industry averages
- Instant traffic to your website, landing page, or event signup

Why It Works

- Weekly cadence keeps you top of mind
- Clickable placements drive measurable action
- Easy to swap creative for timely offers

Ad Options

Exclusive Top Banner (2" x 8.5") — \$3000/yr (\$250/mo)

- Guaranteed top placement (one advertiser)
- Linked to the URL of your choice
- Keep the same design for consistency or update monthly

Mid-Email Block/Tile (2.75" x 5") — \$50/wk or \$175/mo

- Prominent mid-message placement for high visibility
- Great for spotlighting products, services, or limited-time offers

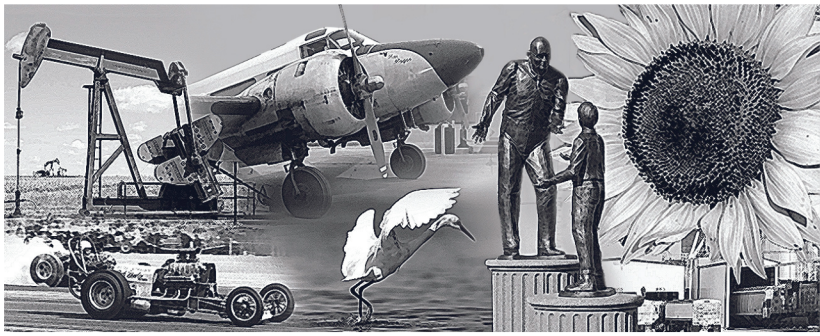
Member-to-Member Stand-Alone Email — \$350 each

- A dedicated email featuring only your content
- Collaborate with our team on copy and layout
- Subject to availability; allow 2–3 weeks for preferred release dates



DEADLINE 12/31/25

Contact Ashley Hickman, Marketing Director - marketing@greatbend.org



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Your Guide to **Year-Round** Visibility

Annual Membership Directory

Be part of the one resource our community turns to all year to find trusted businesses.

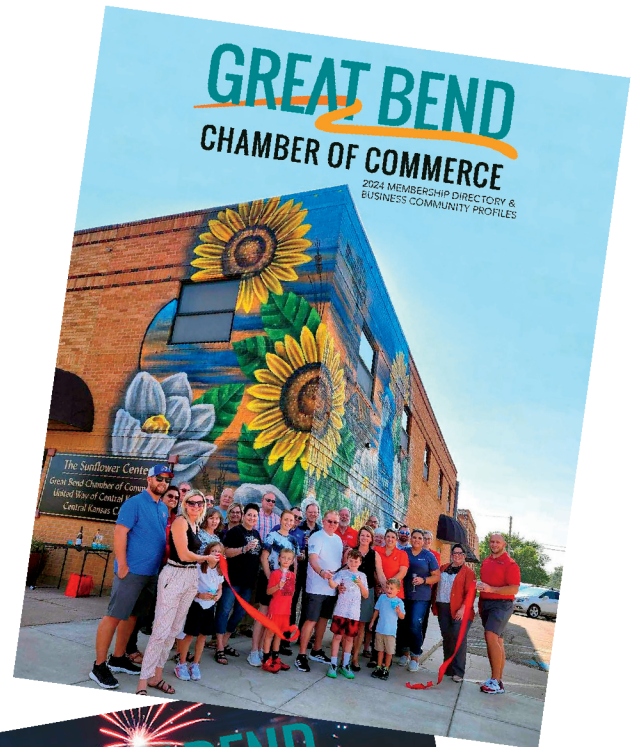
The Great Bend Chamber Membership Directory & Community Guide gives you 12 months of exposure—both in print and online—so your company shows up wherever people look: email, social media, our high-traffic website, and in thousands of printed copies across the region.

Why It's Worth It

- **Built-In Credibility** – Chamber members are the first place our community looks for reliable providers. Your business is already listed—upgrade with a display ad to stand out.
- **Multi-Channel Reach** – Your ad appears in the printed guide and digital edition shared via email, social media, and prominently linked on greatbend.org.
- **All-Year Shelf Life** – One placement keeps working for you for 12 months—no renewals or juggling schedules.
- **Targeted Distribution** – Delivered to 3,000+ business representatives, community members, and elected officials, and shared with visitors, hotels, and real estate prospects.
- **Design Made Easy** – Submit your own design or let us create one for you for just \$25.

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Full page	\$1400
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Quarter page	\$500
Eighth page	\$350



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Don't miss your chance to be featured in the Chamber's most visible publication of the year. Contact Ashley Hickman at marketing@greatbend.org to secure your space now.



DEADLINE
12/31/25

Contact Ashley Hickman, Marketing Director - marketing@greatbend.org

CHECK OUT THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE GREAT BEND CHAMBER BUSINESS COMMUNITY!

OUTLOOK

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GREAT BEND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

business journal

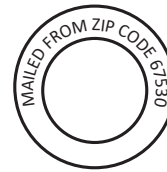
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