



Elevate Great Bend: A Night to Celebrate Leadership and Vision

Get ready for a night of inspiration and heartfelt tributes as the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce proudly invites you to the **103rd Annual Awards Ceremony** on **Saturday, March 1, 2025**, presented by Spectrum Partners LLC, Barton Community College, and The University of Kansas Health System. Held at the Corinthians Hill Event Center, this unforgettable evening will honor the exceptional individuals and businesses that make Great Bend a thriving and dynamic community.

An Evening to Remember

The night kicks off with a **Cocktail and Social Hour at 6 PM**, sponsored by Equity Bank. Featuring a grazing table by **Proper Boards**, this hour sets the tone for an elegant and celebratory evening.

At **7 PM**, the festivities continue with a divine dinner prepared by **A&G Catering**. Alan and Gail Moeder's culinary expertise will shine in a chef-inspired menu that is sure to please.

The highlight of the evening will be the **Awards Presentation**, where we will recognize the achievements of those who have gone above and beyond to elevate Great Bend. Honorees will receive prestigious awards in the following categories:

- ♦ **NextGen Leader of the Year**
- ♦ **Citizen of the Year**
- ♦ **Business of the Year**
- ♦ **Legacy Award**

Celebrating Leadership and Vision

This year's theme, "**Elevate GBK Beyond Today**," is inspired by the Chamber's strategic vision to propel our community forward. Through initiatives focused on workforce development, business retention, marketing, and advocacy, the Great Bend Chamber is committed to fostering collaboration and inspiring bold ideas that shape our region's future.

Experience the Magic

Dress Code: Black tie optional – an opportunity to don your best attire and make it a night to remember!

Golf Cart Assistance: Need help getting from your car to the door? Chamber Ambassadors will be on hand to provide convenient golf cart transportation.

Reserve Your Seat Today

Corporate and Individual tickets are now available at greatbend.org. Seating is limited, so secure your spot now to join this extraordinary celebration of community excellence. The **deadline to reserve seats is February 20, 2025**. Payment must be received prior to the event.



Outlook Business Journal

A monthly publication of the

GREAT BEND

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www.greatbend.org

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Featured Ambassador: Dale Hogg

Ambassador Club members assist the Chamber with networking events, ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings, and membership recruitment and retention. This group of volunteers allows the Chamber to cultivate business relationships and network with the area's most successful people. If you would like to become an Ambassador and represent your company, contact a member of the Chamber staff.

Q What Brings You Here?

A "I am a native of Ellinwood and was a veteran journalist of almost 40 years. I returned to Great Bend as the editor of the Great Bend Tribune, a job I held for over 20 years before leaving to work at Fuller."

Q Your Day to Day Jobs

A "No days are the same. I write news releases, shepherd special projects, buy advertising, post to social media, work with the Chamber of Commerce and Great Bend Economic Development Inc., act as a liaison between Fuller and the community, and tackle whatever comes my way."

Q Surprise us!

A "I am an avid cyclist having done Biking Across Kansas six times. I love to camp (in a tent or in our camper), along with my wife am a master certified barbecue judge with the Kansas City Barbecue Society, write as a freelance journalist and am the Kansas partnership and communications specialist (PR/marketing) for the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program. I also serve on the Tax-Aide Program's National Recruitment and Retention Committee. Oh, and I'm a coffee and craft beer snob."

Q Your Inspiration

A "I love the adventure of traveling, by bike, car or plane. The opportunity to learn, see new places, meet fascinating people and broaden my horizons and view of the world thrills me."

Q Wild Card

A "I would suck at anything involving math. I was a humanities major at Barton Community College and Fort Hays State University for a reason. I took just the minimum number of credit hours dealing with numbers that I needed to graduate."

Q Your Role as an Ambassador

A "We live in an amazing community and chamber ambassadors have the chance to spread this message and connect with the businesses that make it tick. I served two terms as an ambassador several years ago and am now just starting my second stint with this important group."



Barton Community College celebrates inaugural Fine and Performing Arts Hall of Fame induction

The Barton Community College Fine and Performing Arts department honored its rich artistic legacy last month during the Holiday Concert with the inaugural induction of four influential faculty members into the newly established Fine and Performing Arts Hall of Fame.

The Fine and Performing Arts Hall of Fame was the vision of Dean of Fine and Performing Arts Brian Howe. The selection process involved a committee of Barton faculty, staff, and community members with historied knowledge and interest in the College's arts programs. He said the Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have contributed to the success, quality, and reputation of Barton's Fine and Performing Arts programs.

"This Hall of Fame represents more than individual achievements—it symbolizes the legacy of creativity, passion, and education that Barton has fostered for decades," he said. "The contributions of these inductees continue to resonate within our programs and inspire future generations of students."

This year's inductees were chosen for their pioneering vision and lasting impact on Barton's Fine and Performing Arts programs.

JB Webster (Director of Instrumental Music, 1969-1991)

JB Webster served as Barton's Director of Instrumental Music from 1969 to 1991 and later contributed to the College's leadership as Chairman of Barton's Board of Trustees. He is remembered for his dedication to music education and statewide leadership in higher education governance. His legacy lives on through his children, Marc Webster and Denise Shoff, who both pursued careers in music education. His children accepted the award in memory of Webster and expressed their gratitude for recognizing their late father's lifelong dedication to music and education.

Ken Shaheen (Choral Director, 1970-1992)

Ken Shaheen led Barton's choral programs for more than

two decades, shaping the lives of countless students through his passion for vocal music and performance. Shaheen, who personally accepted his award, reflected on the joy of witnessing the continued growth and success of Barton's choral ensembles, many of which he helped establish.

Steve Dudek (Instructor of Art, 1977-2018)

Steve Dudek's contributions to Barton's art program spanned more than 40 years, during which he fostered creativity and innovation in the visual arts. His influence extends beyond the classroom, inspiring generations of artists, including current Barton 3D Instructor Mark Freeman, who accepted the award on Dudek's behalf. Freeman credited Dudek with inspiring his journey in art education.

Bob Loss (Director of Theatre, 1987-2007)

Bob Loss brought theatrical productions to life at Barton for 20 years, enriching the campus and community with engaging performances. His commitment to storytelling and theatrical education left a lasting impression on students and colleagues alike. Loss accepted his award and shared heartfelt memories of his time at Barton, emphasizing the importance of the arts in education.

During the Holiday Concert, each honoree was recognized between performances by Barton's music ensembles, groups many of the inductees played a key role in developing. The Fine and Performing Arts Hall of Fame will serve as a tribute to those who have shaped the arts at the College, ensuring their legacy lives on for years to come.



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All Stars organizers encourage sixth-grade teachers to participate

Since All Stars has become popular in all USD 428 elementary schools, as well as two other facilities, Michelle Daniel encourages sixth-grade teachers throughout central Kansas to consider the program.

Daniel, student and family advocate at Riley School in Great Bend, collaborates with Marissa Woodmansee, Juvenile Services executive director, to offer All Stars in sixth-grade classrooms. “We want to increase the number of students who delay the onset of using drugs and alcohol,” Daniel said. “All Star lessons teach students to think critically about what type of future they want. “They delve into future possibilities, while All Stars cautions them about roadblocks to achieving their dreams. We hope they will not choose drugs or alcohol, or other risky behavior because it could get in the way of attaining success in life.”

Daniel, who has been involved in All Stars for more than a decade, added that students also learn that “the future is not given to them. They must work hard to reach their goals.” Student and family advocates, along with math and reading coaches, teach a 45-minute lesson once a week for 16 weeks. In addition to USD 428 schools, Ellinwood and Central Plains are involved. Parents sign a permission form for All Stars. “We get positive feedback from parents and teachers alike,” Daniel commented. “For example, parents like to participate by helping their kids with homework four times during the four-month program, and teachers like the curriculum and enjoy co-teaching.”

Typically, she added, the Kansas Communities That Care Survey indicates All Stars helps students look at their lives from new perspectives, while considering what obstacles may come their way. Daniel noted that she and her Riley School colleagues appreciate their partnership with Juvenile Services, which covers Barton, Ellsworth, Rice, Russell and Stafford counties. “When we need guidance, materials, prizes or training, they are always willing to help,” she explained. “Also, Juvenile Services provides food and support during our end-of-class celebrations. They have even taught a few lessons for us, when necessary.”

Juvenile Services

Daniel deserves a lot of credit for getting All Stars off the ground, said

Marissa Woodmansee at Juvenile Services, noting Riley School became the site of a pilot program under the leadership of Daniel and JoAnn Blevins. “Michelle approached us, asking about a curriculum that followed the DARE prevention program for fifth-graders,” Woodmansee recalled. “She wanted something to prepare sixth-graders for middle school. “I mentioned All Stars and how its curriculum includes preparing for the future, while considering how negative behaviors adversely affect the road to a successful life.”

Daniel earned a master’s in social work and “understands the importance of guiding conversations with sixth-graders,” Woodmansee noted. “It is fun to see the family support advocates build strong bonds with students in All Stars. “It is also exciting to see these young people read their commitments to the future during end-of-year celebrations.”

Woodmansee strongly encouraged other schools in the 20th Judicial District to learn more about All Stars. Her number is 620-793-1930.

20th Judicial District Juvenile Services empowers youth in Barton, Rice, Ellsworth, Stafford and Russell counties to achieve positive outcomes by offering Juvenile Intake & Assessment, Immediate Intervention, Intensive Supervised Probation, Case Management, Journey to Change, Life Skills, All Stars and Youth Crew. Parents and guardians also are offered The Parent Project. Visit 1800 12th in Great Bend or call 620-793-1930.



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Department of Labor Report

“Kansas ended the year with little change in the labor market. Total nonfarm jobs increased by 1,200 over the month while the unemployment rate edged up to 3.6%.”

– Emilie Doerksen, Labor Economist

Have questions, a special data request, or a suggestion?

Email us at KDOL.Laborstats@ks.gov.

View full report at klic.dol.ks.gov.



Preparing for Tax Season

As tax season approaches, we want to ensure our collaboration with you is as smooth and efficient as possible. Here are a few things to keep in mind as we work together to navigate the complexities of tax season seamlessly:

- **Organize and provide documents early:**
To ensure we have enough time to provide you with accurate and proactive advice, please provide us your information as early as possible. This will help us avoid a last-minute rush and ensure we have sufficient time to handle your tax preparation needs effectively.
- **Clear and timely communication:**
Let us know about any changes you had during the past year, including major life events and financial changes. Our team may need clarification from you during tax season, so prompt responses from both parties are crucial to keep us moving forward.
- **Utilize our technology solutions:**
We prioritize data security and offer secure technology solutions that enable you to work with us on-the-go for efficient communication.

- **Understand key due dates:**
For calendar year-end entities and individuals:

 >>S Corporations and Partnership returns have an original due date of March 17, 2025.

 >>C Corporations and Trust & Estate returns are due April 15, 2025.

 >>Individual returns are due April 15, 2025.

Extensions are an underutilized tool in your tax planning arsenal. **Filing for an extension** of time to file your taxes can be a strategic decision. It can help ensure accuracy, reduce stress and provides flexibility. While it doesn't extend the deadline for paying taxes, it allows time for you and your tax professional to provide the best possible outcomes for your tax situations. We can help you estimate your tax amount and complete the return filing after the tax season rush.



Training Opportunities

The Kansas Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Wichita State University is offering a comprehensive lineup of training opportunities in February and March 2025, designed to support small business owners and entrepreneurs in enhancing their skills and achieving their business objectives.

The sessions are online or in-person, ranging from free to \$199, and cover diverse business topics like sustainability, branding, social media, financial tools, and hiring.

Learn more or register online: wichita.edu/research/ksbdc/TrainWithSBDC

February 2025

- Sustainability 101 (Feb 4): Basics of sustainable practices and pollution prevention.
- Hiring Your First Employee (Feb 4): Guidance on legal and HR steps for first-time employers.
- Startup & Start Right (Feb 11): Key steps for starting a business.
- Intro to Building Your Brand Story (Feb 13): Developing your company's brand narrative.
- How to Do Business with the City of Wichita (Feb 18): Vendor registration and procurement processes.
- Schedule Your Social Media for the New Year (Feb 18): Social media scheduling tips and tools.
- Pros and Cons of Franchise Ownership (Feb 20): Analyzing franchise opportunities.
- Social Media Analytics (Feb 20): Understanding metrics for better content strategies.
- QuickBooks Online Training for Beginners (Feb 25): Basics of QuickBooks Online for small businesses.
- The Power of Pinterest (Feb 27): Benefits of Pinterest in business marketing.

March 2025

- Building Your Brand Story Workshop (Mar 4): Hands-on workshop to refine your brand messaging.
- Manage Your Own Social Media (Mar 13): Tips for effective social media management.

More available online @ wichita.edu/research/ksbdc/TrainWithSBDC.php

RIBBON CUTTINGS



Great Bend, Kansas – On Thursday, January 16th, the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce hosted a Ribbon Cutting for **Central Kansas CASA, Inc.**, marking the celebration of their new office location at 2000 Washington Avenue in Great Bend. The event also served as a spotlight for their upcoming milestone event, the 20th Annual CASA Chocolate Auction. Set to take place on Saturday, February 1st, at the Great Bend Events Center, this year's auction embraces the theme Two Decades of Decadence, A Legacy of Love. The CASA Chocolate Auction has become a beloved tradition in the community, earning its reputation as one of the most highly anticipated fundraisers each year. Known for its elegant atmosphere, exquisite desserts, and lively bidding, the event is a testament to the dedication and passion behind CASA's mission of



advocating for children in need. Adding to the excitement, Central Kansas CASA is also hosting their Toes in the Sand Raffle! Imagine building your dream vacation—whether it's soaking up the sun on Florida's beaches, sipping tropical drinks in Hawaii, or finding your own hidden paradise. Each raffle ticket is just \$25, or you can grab five for \$100. Tickets are available now on the Handbid app, with proceeds going toward CASA's mission to support vulnerable children. Central Kansas CASA is a lifeline for children who have experienced abuse or neglect, providing trained advocates to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met during some of the most challenging times of their lives. These advocates offer critical support, stability, and hope to children in the court system who might otherwise feel forgotten. Without CASA, many children in our community would have no one to stand up for their best interests. For more information about Central Kansas CASA, Inc., or to purchase tickets for the Toes in the Sand Raffle, visit www.centralkansascasa.org.

On Thursday, January 16th, the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce hosted a Ribbon Cutting for **United Way of Central Kansas (UWCK)**, celebrating their new office location at 2000 Washington Avenue in Great Bend. The event also served as an opportunity to spotlight UWCK's upcoming Box of Love initiative, a heartwarming project designed to bring joy and kindness to homebound seniors across Barton and Pawnee Counties. The Box of Love campaign, presented in partnership with TruStage, AllStaff, Chtd., and University of Kansas Health System—



Great Bend Campus, is expected to deliver 500 boxes this year. Each box will include Valentine's Day goodie bags filled with treats, essentials, and handmade Valentine's cards. Boxes will be delivered to homebound seniors receiving Meals on Wheels or ElderCare Home Services, as well as to residents of local senior centers and nursing homes. "For just \$15, community members can sponsor a Box of Love to brighten a senior's day," said Charell Owings, Executive Director at United Way of Central Kansas. "This simple gesture can make a world of difference to those who may feel isolated or alone." What makes the Box of Love project particularly special is the personal touch added by volunteers from daycare centers, schools, youth organizations, and individuals who create homemade Valentine's Day cards. These heartfelt messages bring warmth and connection to the recipients, reminding them that they are cherished by their community. Each Box of Love is thoughtfully prepared with a mix of fun and practical items, including comforting treats and small everyday essentials, ensuring recipients feel both cared for and celebrated this Valentine's Day. To support this program and send love to a senior in need, visit www.uwck.org/box-love to sponsor a box today. United Way of Central Kansas is dedicated to improving lives and strengthening the community by connecting people, resources, and ideas to create lasting change. From educational programs to campaigns like Box of Love, UWCK continues to uplift and inspire those in need across Barton and Pawnee Counties. For more information about United Way of Central Kansas, visit www.uwck.org.



Wendy Lockwood, a dedicated Great Bend resident with over three decades of service at **The Center for Counseling & Consultation**, has been named its new executive director. She will succeed Julie Kramp, who retired on December 27, 2024. Lockwood steps into this role during a period of significant growth, with The Center planning to add 43 new positions in 2025, increasing its staff to approximately 150 employees. These roles will range from therapists and medical personnel to mid-level managers and IT experts, including a newly created position for a data analyst to enhance resource efficiency. Lockwood is committed to managing this expansion while maintaining The Center's holistic, client-centered approach to behavioral health services.

Lockwood brings extensive experience in youth mental health, case management, and community-based services. Her leadership and expertise are widely recognized by colleagues, state officials, and organizations across Kansas. In addition to her current role as chief operations officer, she has contributed significantly to training programs for case-management certification in Kansas since 1998. Holding a bachelor's degree in psychology and an MBA, Lockwood is well-prepared to guide The Center through the challenges and opportunities ahead, ensuring quality services for the community.

Shionta Gray, a 14-year veteran of **The Center for Counseling & Consultation**, has been promoted to chief operating officer (COO). While transitioning into her new role, she is temporarily continuing her duties as Community Support Services (CSS) director to ensure a smooth handover. Gray's new responsibilities include overseeing finances, managing grant activities and outcomes, addressing state and national policy changes, and using data to identify trends. She expressed excitement about the opportunity to make an even greater impact on clients' lives while collaborating with executive director Wendy Lockwood to deliver seamless services. Gray emphasized her gratitude for the supportive work environment and her commitment to promoting mental health through hope and healing.

Gray has played a vital role in advancing several programs at The Center, including helping it achieve licensure as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC). This milestone has expanded services such as housing and employment support, medication-assisted treatment, and specialized care for military veterans. Additionally, Gray contributed to the development of programs like Individual Placement Services, the Jail Program, and Assertive Community Treatment, which embody The Center's holistic approach to behavioral health. She highlighted the importance of caring for the "whole person" to effectively support individuals facing mental health challenges.

A Great Bend High School graduate, Gray earned degrees in accounting and business administration from Barton Community College and Fort Hays State University, where she also pursued a master's in business administration. Her diverse experience includes roles at The Center as a case manager, health home care coordinator, and CSS director, along with prior work in education and addiction recovery. Executive Director Wendy Lockwood praised Gray's compassion, professionalism, and deep understanding of the community's needs, noting that her leadership is a tremendous asset to both clients and staff.

Clara Barton Medical Clinic is excited to expand its mental health therapy services with the addition of Sarah Vonfeldt, LMSW, to its clinical team. As a clinical social worker, Vonfeldt is eager to bring her knowledge and dedication to serving the Central Kansas community. A Bunker Hill native, Vonfeldt earned her Bachelor of Social Work in 2018 and her Master of Social Work in 2021 from Fort Hays State University. She is particularly devoted to supporting women and families through the perinatal period (pre- and post-pregnancy), completing certificate courses with Perinatal Support International. Vonfeldt resides in Russell with her husband, Michael, and their two children. Both she and Michael are lifelong Russell County residents, and they love raising their children in the same area where they grew up. Together, they enjoy camping, kayaking, and making memories with extended family and friends. "I love our small communities because of the

hard-working and resourceful people," said Vonfeldt. "I want to see these towns thrive for many more generations. I was raised to care for my home and neighbors." At Clara Barton Medical Center, Vonfeldt looks forward to collaborating with a diverse team in a supportive, wellness-focused environment. She finds building trusting relationships with patients to be one of the most rewarding aspects of her work and emphasizes the importance of rest for overall health and well-being. Vonfeldt works with those experiencing a variety of mental health issues and is now accepting patients at Clara Barton Medical Clinics in Hoisington and Russell. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 620-653-2386.



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MBDA Grant Opportunities

The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) has announced the following grant opportunities:

1. MBDA Women's Entrepreneurship Program (WEP)

Focus: Address barriers to entrepreneurship faced by women and provide access to capital, training, and high-growth opportunities.

Key Benefits:

Support for minority business enterprises (MBEs) in industries like STEM and federal contracting.

\$2 million available in FY 2025, with annual renewals anticipated through 2029.

2. MBDA Rural Business Center Program

Focus: Strengthen Rural Minority Business Enterprises (RMBEs) through technical assistance, entrepreneurial development, and addressing digital and economic challenges.

Key Benefits:

\$4 million available in FY 2025, with annual renewals anticipated through 2030.

Partnerships with higher education institutions and private sector stakeholders.

3. Parren J. Mitchell Entrepreneurship Education Program

Focus: Provide underserved communities with education in business management, financial planning, and technology adoption.

Key Benefits:

Collaboration with HBCUs, Tribal Colleges, and other eligible institutions.

\$5 million available in FY 2025, with annual renewals anticipated through 2029, focusing on technology commercialization and supply chain resilience.

These programs are critical to empowering MBEs, creating jobs, and enhancing the global competitiveness of U.S. businesses. For more details and application instructions, please visit MBDA Grants Page to access the Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) for these programs.

Learn more: mbda.gov/financial-resources/grants



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USDA RUS Distance Learning Grants

USDA is making approximately \$40 million in funding available under the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program. This program funds distance learning and telemedicine equipment, like audio and video equipment. These funds will help digitally connect people to education, training and health care resources that are otherwise unavailable or limited in remote parts of the country.

DLT funding can be used to help:

Students to participate in classes that may be in locations too far to access in person.

Teachers to provide their expertise, trainings and educational services to

students across the country.

Patients to seek specialized care and treatment from medical professionals without needing to leave their homes or communities.

Eligible applicants include state and local governmental entities, federally recognized Tribes, nonprofits and for-profit businesses. Applications must be submitted electronically through grants.gov no later than March 6, 2025.

Learn more: rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants

A win for safety and the environment Fuller Introduces Micro-E, a revolution in natural cleaning

There is a mistaken assumption that effective cleaning products must be toxic and dangerous. Harsh, petroleum-based cleaners often fall short in performance and carry significant environmental and human health risks throughout their lifecycle.

That doesn't have to be the case thanks to Fuller Industries Inc., said Dr. Jose Ramirez, chief science advisor for the long-time Great Bend, Kan.-based manufacturer. Recent innovations have resulted in cleaners that are safer for the user and the environment.

"Fuller, a leading innovator in sustainable cleaning solutions, has challenged this notion with the introduction of Micro-E, a family of micro-engineered natural concentrates," he said. "This is revolutionary, and Fuller is the only company doing anything like this."

So what is Micro-E?

"Until now, natural cleaning products often suffered from performance loss when concentrated, especially for professional use," Ramirez said. "This limitation restricted them to ready-to-use formulations, increasing costs and environmental impact. Fuller's innovative engineering overcomes this hurdle, enabling highly concentrated yet incredibly effective cleaning solutions."

The discoveries from Fuller have produced products consisting of micro-engineered natural concentrates. These cleaning solutions are derived entirely from natural ingredients that perform effectively, can be concentrated for economy and packaging reduction, and are safe for human contact without protective equipment and the environment.

"It's all upside," he said. "You no longer have to choose between cleaning effectiveness, the economy of concentrates, and personal and environmental safety. Micro-E delivers the ultimate combination of cleaning effectiveness, economic efficiency, and environmental and human safety."

In addition to cleaning performance, Fuller has introduced an agent engineered to increase hydrophilicity, or the tendency to repel certain soils, that reduces re-soilage and makes it progressively easier to clean a surface.

They all meet Green Seal, Safer, Choice and EU Eco Label Cleaning Performance requirements.

A breakthrough in sustainable cleaning

- **Unmatched Performance:** Derived entirely from natural ingredients, these concentrates deliver powerful cleaning performance, rivaling or surpassing traditional chemicals.
- **Concentrated Power:** Micro-E offers exceptional economy and reduces packaging waste by allowing for significant dilution (two to half an ounce per gallon).
- **Safety First:** These solutions are safe for humans and the environment, meeting stringent green certifications like Green Seal, Safer Choice, and EU Ecolabel
- **Enhanced Hydrophilicity:** A unique ingredient reduces re-soiling, making surfaces easier to clean over time.

The initial Micro-E products include:

- Restroom Cleaner
- General Purpose Cleaner
- Heavy Duty Degreaser
- Glass and Mirror Cleaner

About Fuller Industries Inc.

Based in Great Bend, Kan., with a rich heritage dating back over a century to the Fuller Brush Man, Fuller Industries is a leading American manufacturer of industrial products, including cleaning chemicals and supplies, as well as brooms, mops, brushes and more. Fuller serves manufacturing, commercial, institutional and agricultural clients across the Western Hemisphere. Call 620-792-1711 or visit Fullerindustriesinc.com.



2025 Walk to End Alzheimer's Great Bend: Registration Now Open

The 2025 Walk to End Alzheimer's in Great Bend, Kansas, invites participants to join the fight against Alzheimer's through fundraising and awareness efforts. There is no registration fee, but each walker is encouraged to make a donation and raise funds for research, support, and care. Participants who reach the \$100 fundraising goal will receive an official event t-shirt. Children must be registered, and well-behaved pets are allowed on leashes.

The event will proceed rain or shine, with cancellations only in the case of severe weather. Volunteers are vital to the event's success, and roles include set-up, registration, and managing the Promise Garden. Each participant will receive a colored Promise Garden flower to symbolize their connection to Alzheimer's.

All funds raised through Walk to End Alzheimer's further the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association. The Alzheimer's Association is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

For more details, visit the event's page or contact Annalynn Kirkhart at ankirkhart@alz.org.



Golden Belt Community Foundation Announces 2025 Grant Opportunities

Golden Belt Community Foundation (GBCF) is excited to unveil its 2025 grant opportunities, offering valuable funding for nonprofits, schools, and community organizations. The first grant cycle kicks off in February, giving potential applicants ample time to prepare and submit their proposals.

To get started, organizations are encouraged to review the 2025 Grant Cycle schedule and explore the details at goldenbeltcf.org/grants. This platform provides essential information on application guidelines and available resources. Community members are also invited to save and share the news to spread awareness of these funding opportunities.

Located at 1307 Williams Street, Great Bend, KS, GBCF is committed to strengthening the community through meaningful support. For questions or assistance, reach out at (620) 792-3000. Let's work together to create lasting impact in 2025!

Grants

2025 Schedule

| Spring Community Building Grant | CPI Quality of Life Grant | Neighborhood Youth Grant |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Barton, Pikes, Rush, Stafford County, KS *For projects up to \$5,000 | Barton County, KS | Barton, Pikes, Rush, Stafford County, KS |
| February 17 - April 1 | May 1 - June 13 | July 1 - August 1 |

Apply Online

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GOLDEN BELT
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



DEADLINE: APRIL 6th

GREAT BEND REC BASEBALL & SOFTBALL ENROLLING NOW!

GREAT BEND Rec

620.793.3755 | greatbendrec.com | 1214 Stone Street

Family Crisis Center Events Empower Community Wellness

The Family Crisis Center is hosting a variety of impactful events this February, offering support, education, and connection for individuals and families. These events highlight the organization's commitment to fostering a safe and supportive community while addressing critical needs.

Upcoming Events:
Domestic Violence (DV) Survivor Support Groups

Pratt Location: Feb. 3, 10, 17, and 24 (5:30-7 PM)
Great Bend Location: Feb. 5, 12, 19, and 26 (5:30-7 PM)
Conscious Discipline Parenting Workshops

Great Bend Location: Feb. 11 and 27 (5:30-7 PM)
CAC T-Shirt Design Contest

Open from Feb. 1 to 24, this contest is an engaging way to get creative while supporting the Family Crisis Center's mission.

Added Benefits:

Meals provided at all events to ensure participants can attend comfortably. Childcare available for attendees of the Great Bend support groups and parenting workshops, removing barriers to participation.

A Commitment to Community Support
The Family Crisis Center continues to stand as a beacon of hope, offering resources and a safe space for domestic violence survivors, parents, and individuals seeking connection. These February events are an opportunity to build stronger families and foster resilience in the face of adversity.

For more information or to participate:

Great Bend Office: 620-793-9941
Pratt Office: 620-672-7435

Email: info@familycrisiscntr.org

By providing these essential services, the Family Crisis Center underscores its dedication to creating a safer, healthier, and more connected community.



NEW HIRE? NEW SERVICE? SUBMIT THE NEW HERE!



No formal press release? No communications department? No problem! Simply scan and let us know what's going on in your business, and we'll do the rest!

5th Annual Barton County Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Seeks Students, Mentors, Judges, and Sponsors to Inspire Young Innovators

Great Bend Economic Development and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce announce the return of the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC) for Barton County students in grades 7-12. This unique competition empowers middle and high school students to develop and pitch business ideas while competing for \$2,500 in cash prizes. The 5th Annual YEC will take place on March 5, 2024, at the Great Bend Events Center.

This year, Network Kansas and K-State Research and Extension have joined as partners, bringing additional resources and expertise to help students succeed. Network Kansas holds regional and state Youth Entrepreneurship Challenges as part of its mission to develop entrepreneurship ecosystems throughout Kansas. Great Bend Economic Development and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce partner in this challenge as both organizations are tasked with strengthening the area's workforce for the business community, and in this case, that means nurturing the next generation's entrepreneurs.

To make this event a success, we are seeking participants and community support in the following roles:

- **Student Participants:** Middle and high school students with a passion for entrepreneurship. Compete individually or in teams of up to three to create a business plan, showcase your ideas at a tradeshow, and deliver a 4-minute pitch to judges.
- **Business Mentors:** Guide students as they develop and refine their business ideas, offering invaluable insights and real-world feedback before presenting at the challenge.
- **Judges:** Evaluate business plans and tradeshow presentations, providing encouragement and constructive input while ensuring a fair competition.
- **Sponsors:** Support this impactful program through financial contributions to help subsidize the event.

Student Participants will develop a business plan (3-page maximum for state level), create an engaging tradeshow display, and present their ideas to judges during the event. Participants seeking a business mentor are encouraged to reach out as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to connect and collaborate before the February

26th registration deadline. Gain hands-on experience, develop critical skills, and network with peers and community leaders in a dynamic, supportive environment. The tradeshow also allows students to interact with the public, who will vote for the People's Choice award.

Prize Breakdown:

>> **First Place:** \$1,000 (plus the opportunity to compete in the Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge at the state level).

>> **Second Place:** \$750

>> **Third Place:** \$500

>> **People's Choice:** \$250 (determined by tradeshow attendees).

"We believe in the power of education and entrepreneurship to shape the future

of our community," said Lee Ann June, Communications Director at Great Bend Economic Development. "This challenge provides students with the perfect platform to explore their creativity, gain business skills, and connect with community leaders. We're calling on mentors, judges, and sponsors to join us in making this year's event the best yet!"

All applications and registration must be submitted by **February 26, 2025**, on the Venture Dash portal. Resources are available at www.gbenedinc.com/yec.

Learn more and sign up at www.gbenedinc.com/yec, or contact Lee Ann June at marketing@gbenedinc.com.

BARTON COUNTY YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGE

STUDENTS

Barton County YEC

MARCH 5th, 2025
Wednesday, Noon - 2 PM
@ Great Bend Events Center

3111 10TH STREET
GREAT BEND, KS BARTON COUNTY

Calling all Barton County Students 7th-12th Grade

Win the chance to compete at the state level for even more cash prizes!

CREATE
CREATE YOUR OWN BUSINESS AS A CONCEPT OR ACTUAL BUSINESS

GET HELP
BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS IN THE AREA HELP TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS STAND OUT

WIN BIG!
FIRST PLACE = \$1,000
SECOND PLACE = \$750
THIRD PLACE = \$500
PEOPLE'S CHOICE = \$250

LOCAL JUDGING/DEMOS
3111 10TH STREET
GREAT BEND, KS BARTON COUNTY

MORE INFORMATION AT:
WWW.GBINEDINC.COM/YEC
WATCH VIDEOS. READ RULES. GET INSPIRED

START NOW!
FINAL REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FEB. 27, 2025

Contact:
GBED Staff: info@gbenedinc.com

\$25 TICKETS OR 5 FOR \$100
ONLY 3,000 TICKETS AVAILABLE
Drawing to be held April 3, 2025
Sunflower Diversified Services Pancake Feed @ 6-8pm

WIN THIS CAR!
***NEW* Trax Activ**

Sunflower
 DIVERSIFIED SERVICES, INC.



Tickets available at:
 Westside Market
www.sunflowerdiv.com
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THANK YOU!
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Proceeds support persons served at Sunflower Diversified Services
 official rules available upon request or at www.sunflowerdiv.com



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

February 6th
CENTRAL KANSAS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
215 McKinley

Concerned about the impact secularism will have on your child's faith and future? When your family invests in a Christ-Centered education at CKCA, you'll be providing your child with every opportunity to grow spiritually, academically and socially in a safe and nurturing environment. Our educators reinforce biblical values and challenge students to filter every subject through the lens of a biblical worldview that's rooted in the infallible Word of God. CKCA a Christ Centered, non-denominational K-8 Christian school.

February 13th
STRAUB'S POWERSPORTS
200 S Patton

Straub's Powersports in Great Bend, KS, is your go-to destination for top-quality ATVs, UTVs, and outdoor power equipment. Known for their exceptional customer service and extensive inventory, they cater to powersports enthusiasts of all kinds. Whether you're gearing up for work or adventure, Straub's has the gear to keep you moving.

February 20th
REBORN RENOVATIONS & DISASTER SERVICES LLC
716 Washington

Todd Smith, formerly of TNT Renovations, has rebranded as Reborn Renovations, offering the same trusted services since 1992. Specializing in home remodeling, water removal, mold remediation, trauma cleanup, carpet and tile cleaning, and air duct services, Reborn Renovations is committed to meeting the diverse needs of the community. They look forward to connecting with everyone at the upcoming event.

February 27th
FREAKING DELICIOUS CHEESECAKE CO.
1125 Williams

The Freaking Delicious Cheesecake Company is thrilled to celebrate its 2nd anniversary of serving irresistible, handcrafted cheesecakes. Since its launch, the company has delighted dessert lovers with a variety of unique flavors and top-notch quality. This milestone marks two years of sweet success, gratitude to loyal customers, and excitement for the delicious future ahead!

March 6th
AVAST YE JAVA
1125 Williams

Avast Ye Java in Great Bend, KS, is a charming, pirate-themed coffee shop serving up delicious brews, teas, and sweet treats. Known for its cozy atmosphere and friendly service, it's the perfect spot to grab your favorite drink and unwind. Whether you're a caffeine lover or just passing through, Avast Ye Java is a hidden treasure worth discovering!



**Committed to
 Caring for the
 Great Bend
 Community**

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.

kansashealthsystem.com/greatbend



McDonald's

3307 10th Street • Great Bend, KS 67530

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

OUTLOOK

GREAT BEND
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
GREAT BEND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

business journal

1921



2021

Great Bend Chamber of Commerce
1125 Williams Street
Great Bend, KS 67530

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2025



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BARTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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KANSAS HEALTH SYSTEM**