



Great Bend
CHAMBER of COMMERCE
and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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OUTLOOK BUSINESS JOURNAL

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE GREAT BEND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OPPORTUNITY *in Focus* 95TH ANNUAL CHAMBER MEETING & BANQUET



You are invited to attend the 95th Annual Chamber Meeting & Banquet on Saturday, February 18th at the Great Bend Events Center. This year's theme is "Opportunity in Focus." This year's annual meeting will include recognizing Chamber volunteers, as well as announcing the Business of the Year, Citizen of the Year, and NextGen Leader of the Year award winners for 2016. For the second time, there will also be a new Legacy Award presented. The evening starts with a cocktail hour at 6 p.m. followed by a catered meal at 7 p.m. and award presentations at 8 p.m. Members pay \$55 per person, or businesses can purchase reserved tables of 8 or 10 with sponsorships available. For more details, contact the staff at 620-792-2401. Register at the Chamber office, 1125 Williams, or on the Chamber website: greatbend.org/ChamberEvents.aspx.



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Legislative Coffee Dates Announced for 2017



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REGIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development announced this week that it will host two Legislative Coffee events in the coming weeks, designed to give local constituents the chance to network directly with their elected state officials. The dates for 2017 Coffees will be Saturday, February 11th and Saturday, March 11th with both held at 10:00 a.m. in the Spray-Holt Family Board Room at the Chamber office, 1125 Williams in downtown Great Bend.

"We invite all of the state representatives and senators to attend these events," says Jan Peters, President/CEO of the nonprofit organization. "After a brief update from each legislator who attends, the audience can ask questions about the topics facing our state government."

These events are open to the public, and doors open at 9:30 a.m. Donuts and coffee are provided. The 2017 Legislative Coffees are sponsored by Hutchinson Regional Medical Center.

GBCF Sponsors Kansas Startup Event April 7-9

Kansas Startup will be held April 7th, 8th, & 9th, 2017 in Great Bend! Participants spend 48 hours building businesses with the support of expert facilitators and distinguished judges. Kansas Startup moves business ideas to a fully developed plan. Kansas Startup starts at 6:00 p.m. on April 7th and ends 7:00 p.m. on April 9th. This is a fast paced, high energy activity that bring entrepreneurs together to launch new business ideas! Anyone interested in starting a business - or about learning the process of forming a startup - is welcome, regardless of background or experience. Friday evening, participants will meet to pitch ideas and form teams around the best concepts. The plan will be developed over the weekend in a supportive environment. The weekend concludes with team presentations to a panel of distinguished judges.

Kansas Startup is the largest entrepreneurial event in Kansas and 2017 marks their 5th anniversary. Last November they had over 80 participants at FHSU. This event will fill up fast! Bring your ideas and a laptop and we will provide the rest! Registration is only \$75.00. This includes the high energy 3-day workshop, expert advice, tons of food, and refreshments. Details and registration is available at www.goldenbeltcf.org/leadership or call Golden Belt Community Foundation at (620) 792-3000.

**Kansas
Startup**



A Leadership Golden Belt Event

April 7-9, 2017

Club 1 Fitness Launches Battle of the Bulge

Club 1 Fitness, Great Bend's largest and most popular gym, is excited to announce the launch of the 2017 Battle of the Bulge Competition. The 6-week weight loss challenge will begin February 20th with a special weigh-in event and group fitness class. At the end of six weeks, prizes are awarded. Learn more and sign up at www.club1fitness.net.



Job Fest Returns for 10th Year March 30th

The 10th Annual Job Fest is slated to take place on March 30, 2017 from 3:00 – 6:00p.m., at the Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th Street, Great Bend, Kansas. With multiple partnership opportunities available, employers are encouraged to register online to reserve their booth space where they will have the chance to meet with many area job seekers.

Returning this year will be The Career Closet, full of gently used business attire for those who are not in a position to purchase new clothes suitable for a job interview. “The Career Closet is an additional incentive for job seekers to attend Job Fest. Last year we had quite a few individuals take advantage of not only the free clothing but also the advice provided by Barton Community College business students who set up and ran the closet,” recalls 2017 Job Fest committee chair Judy Jacobs.

“It’s amazing what just a suit, tie and new pair of shoes does for the confidence of a job seeker. That confidence is one more key in making a successful impression on employers at Job Fest,” says Jacobs.

Donations of lightly worn business attire are being accepted for the Career Closet, with drop off locations at KansasWORKS and Barton CKEOC, located at 1125 Main Street, Great Bend.

Job seekers can expect to learn more about the available jobs in central Kansas, visit with prospective employers and interview on the spot. They should plan to bring several copies of their resume as well for employers to review.

Anyone looking for assistance with creating or reviewing his or her resume is encouraged to visit with the KansasWORKS office at 1125 Main Street, Great Bend, (620) 793-5445.

Interested employers can now register online at <http://tinyurl.com/zyfosb6>. For more information the 2017 Job Fest, visit www.facebook.com/GBJobFest. Send inquiries to Judy Jacobs at jacobsju@bartonccc.edu or (620) 792-9349.

About Job Fest

Job Fest is a Central Kansas job fair collaboratively presented by representatives from the Larned Chamber of Commerce, Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development, Barton Community College, Kansas Works and several employers. We focus our efforts on the companies and communities located in and around Barton, Russell, Pawnee, Stafford, Rice, Rush, and Ellsworth Counties. Over the past ten years, we have worked diligently to grow and streamline this economic development resource to help connect growing businesses with the workforce available to them.

Barton is Now a CDL Testing Site for Public

Last March Barton was awarded a contract to serve as a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) test site. Barton is now officially a CDL test site accessible to the general public. The college will provide a driving test for anyone who requires a Class A license. Testers will be required to provide their own truck. The cost for the test will be \$41 for the initial test or \$10 for any re-test. Barton also offers a complete CDL training program. Learn more at CDL.bartonccc.edu. Those interested in taking a test may contact Caryn Kaiser at (620) 792-9255 to schedule an appointment.

BARTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Outlook Business Journal
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Minear Serves As Model Host for Applebee's

Mary Ann Minear is unassuming – a sweetheart by nature who is pleasantly nice to everyone she meets. Those traits are exactly what make her the consummate host at Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar in Great Bend. It's a position the 32-year-old has held for more than a decade, and one that she has become so proficient at doing that for several years now, she carries the designation as "Neighborhood Expert," assigned to training other hosts.



What makes Minear's accomplishments so special is that she has been able to succeed in the workforce by overcoming her developmental disability. With the help of Employment Services Office at Rosewood Services more than a decade ago, a then 22-year-old Minear went job searching, filled out an application, interviewed and then landed her current job at Applebee's. She's been a mainstay in the Great Bend workforce ever since. "Mary Ann serves as a great example of the difference people with disabilities can make for businesses, if given the chance," said Rosewood Employment Services specialist Frankie Pelster.

Minear has advanced her skill level over the years, which culminated in Minear earning the "Employee of the Month" award last summer for her stellar service to customers and fellow employees. Besides working at Applebee's, Minear continues to work on Wednesdays at Rosewood Furniture Gallery, or at Rosewood Ranch. She said she likes the diversity and flexibility that her Rosewood jobs allow.

Great Bend Chamber Staff Welcomes Barfield

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development recently announced the addition of Megan Barfield as their new Member Relations Coordinator.

Barfield will be working with and talking with businesses and non-profit organizations and helping them strengthen their status and continue to thrive as well as heading up the Chamber Ambassador program, expo rentals, Job Fest and Chamber Coffees/Business After-Hours.

The Chamber slightly restructured their positions towards the end of 2016. Jan Peters is still the President and CEO and Roxanne Rich serves as the Office and Business Manager. Andrea Bauer will handle more economic development roles with Peters along with her sales duties.

Megan is a 1999 graduate of Larned High School and has lived in Great Bend with her husband and two children for nearly 18 years. She comes to the Chamber with a long history in marketing and sales, having worked 13 years for CPI Qualified Plan Consultants, Inc., now CUNA Mutual Retirement Solutions and two years with Golden Belt Community Foundation.

Megan also volunteers for both Habitat for Humanity: Barton County Area and R.S.V.P., sitting on their respective boards. She is looking forward to getting to know the business community, their needs, and how she can fill the role of bringing solutions to the table through the Chamber of Commerce.



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HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

- 2... Chamber Coffee: Central Kansas Dream Center at Hungry Heart Soup Kitchen, 16th & Williams, 9:30 a.m.
- 2... Chamber Ribbon Cutting: MPIRE Improvements, 1015 McKinley, 10 a.m.
- 2... Chamber Ambassador Luncheon, 1125 Williams, 12 p.m.
- 2... Sexual Assault Presentations, Barton Community College, 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- 3... GBRC Senior Program "Living Changes," Senior Center, 2005 Kansas Ave, 1 p.m.
- 4... CASA Chocolate Auction, Great Bend Events Center, 6 p.m.
- 6... Barton County Young Professionals Steering Committee, 1125 Williams, 4 p.m.
- 6... Great Bend City Council Meeting, 1209 Williams, 7:30 p.m.
- 8... Technology Roundtable Luncheon "Latest Dangers," 1125 Williams, 11:30 a.m.
- 8... Xelmar Medical Spa Facials, 3421 Forest, 6-7 p.m.
- 9... Chamber Coffee: Central Kansas Christian Academy, 215 McKinley, 9:30 a.m.
- 9... Ribbon Cutting: Shelter Insurance Deanna Vannoster Agency, 3720 10th, 10 a.m.
- 11... Legislative Coffee, Chamber Office, 1125 Williams, 10 a.m.
- 11... Brenda Lichman Ceramics Workshop, Barton Community College, 10 to 4
- 11... Barton County's Got Flavor, Great Bend Events Center, 6 p.m.
- 11... Shafer Gallery Exhibit Reception, "Quarks, Quirks & Conundrums," 4 p.m.
- 15... Barton County Young Professionals Luncheon, Pizza Hut, 4101 10th, 12 p.m.
- 16... Chamber Coffee: Perks Coffee Shop, 1216 Main Street, 9:30 a.m.
- 17... Shafer Gallery Exhibit Reception "The Geometry of Beauty," 6:30 p.m.
- 18... Shafer Gallery Art & Science Encounters, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- 18... 95th Annual Chamber Banquet & Meeting, Great Bend Events Center, 6 p.m.
- 20... Great Bend City Council Meeting, 1209 Williams, 7:30 p.m.
- 23... QuickBooks Seminar by Spectrum CPA, 1400 Polk Street, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 23... Chamber Coffee: First Assembly of God, 601 Patton Road, 9:30 a.m.
- 23... FHSU Golden Belt Chapter Alumni After Hours, Playa Azul, 6-8 p.m.
- 27... Saint Francis Class for Foster/Adoptive Parents, St. Mark's, 2101 Jackson, 6-9 p.m.
- March 2... Chamber Coffee: 2B Organized of Central Kansas, 1125 Williams, 9:30 a.m.
- March 2... Ribbon Cutting: EarCare Hearing Aid Centers, 1925 Main, 10 a.m.

Tech Roundtable Feb. 8th - "Latest Dangers"



Technology consumers, "non-tech" people, and basic users are encouraged to attend the Chamber's next Technology Roundtable, taking place Wednesday February 8th at 11:30 a.m. at the Chamber Office, 1125 Williams.

Today's headlines remind us that in a global community there are dangers and risks associated with technology and doing business. On a daily basis, businesses and consumers are bombarded with suspect emails, ransom ware, viruses, land-line phone hacking and more. At the next session of the Technology Roundtable we invite IT professionals, business owners, and the public to join us for a conversation addressing the latest attacks as well as solutions for fighting them. Cost is \$15 per person, which includes a catered taco bar and a beverage.

To confirm your attendance, be sure to sign up no later than 12 p.m. Monday, February 6th. Learn more or REGISTER at www.greatbend.org. To join the conversation between meetings, be sure to find the group on LinkedIn!

"Barton County's Got Flavor" Returns February 11th

Barton County's Got Flavor is BACK! On Saturday, February 11th, Habitat for Humanity for Barton County will play host to a great night of food prepared by our contestants, followed up with what promises to be a night full of unforgettable entertainment! This fundraiser, taking place at the Great Bend Events Center, will feature food and beverage tastings from 6-7:30 p.m., followed by the high energy entertainers from Dueling Pianos International at 8 p.m. Guests will have the opportunity to taste different pairings of food and drink, prepared by local volunteer chefs. Event attendees are the judges and will vote for their favorite pairing. The winning teams receive a trophy for the professional division and cold hard cash for the individual division.

Tickets are \$60 per couple for the tastings and the dueling piano show. The dinner is available for adults only, and tickets are limited to the first 100 couples. Tickets for the dueling piano show by itself are available for \$15 per person, and children are welcome to attend (family appropriate content).

Tickets are available for purchase at Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, 1125 Williams, Great Bend. For more information or to reserve tickets, contact us at habitatbartoncounty@hotmail.com or send a message through the Habitat for Humanity: Barton County Area facebook page.

About Habitat for Humanity:

Habitat for Humanity has been in Barton County since 2001. Our non-profit organization gives a hand up, not a hand out. All the donations we receive are used to build or remodel homes for our partner families, who then purchase the home through a zero-interest, 25-year mortgage. The funds collected in mortgage payments can then be re-used to help another family in Barton County.



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GBHS Seeks Businesses to Participate in Career Development Program & Job Shadowing

Would your business be willing to welcome GBHS students through their doors for valuable job-show experience? The Career Development Program is looking for opportunities to partner with the Great Bend Business Community to enhance learning by providing work-based opportunities for students. Intended as a one-day experience, career awareness programs such as shadowing, blend academic standards with occupational skills, broaden students' options and help them make informed decisions about their futures. A student follows/observes an employer at a company location to learn about a particular occupation or industry. GBHS is seeking partnerships in all industries, including the following high demand areas: Business, Health Care, Cosmetology, Law and Graphic Design.

Learn more about the program by contacting Lacy Wolters, ACT/Career Coordinator (620.793.1521, x1314) or Randy Wetzol, Director of CTE (620.793.1521, x1311).

Comfort Pro Donates 2-Year Supply of Water Softener Salt to Golden Belt Humane Society

After the Golden Belt Humane Society posted on their Facebook page about a shortage of supplies, lots of people stepped up to fill the gaps. One of those generous local businesses was Comfort Pro, the largest heating, air conditioning, and plumbing company in Central Kansas. The locally owned contractor delivered 40 bags of water softener salt to the nonprofit organization last week, which was among the list of items that were running low.

"We know how important it is to have clean soft water, especially in Barton County where our water is full of minerals and contaminates," says owner Barry Stalcup. "The 40 bags of softener salt should last a couple years at the rate they've been using salt historically, so hopefully they will be one less budget item they will have to worry about."

Assisting with the surprise delivery was Tim Naw, manager of Central Pipe Supply in Great Bend, along with James Doeden, Comfort Pro's most experienced water softener expert. "James has been with us several years, and before that he had over 13 years' experience with another local company," Stalcup says. "He is the go-to-guy when it comes to reverse osmosis systems and water softeners. We are proud to have his expertise on our growing team."

Comfort Pro services all makes and models of water treatment systems, and offers free salt delivery for all homeowners on an annual service contract. "We try to reward customer loyalty by offering little perks like the free salt delivery," Stalcup says. "We take pride in taking care of our clients, and in the awesome charities who serve our community."

For more information, visit the company's website at www.comfortproks.com. In Great Bend, call 620-793-4208 and in Larned, call 620-285-3966. And like their page on Facebook to see more photos from the surprise delivery.



Marketing Maven Consulting Hires Blankenship, Digital Media

After nearly a decade of helping small businesses market themselves in previous roles, local entrepreneur Rachel Mawhirter launched her own company known as Marketing Maven Consulting late last year.



After rapid growth and a high demand locally for web design and marketing strategy services, she quickly realized that it was time to expand the enterprise.

Marketing Maven Consulting is pleased to announce several changes, including the recent move to a new location at 2817 9th Street, inside the business wing of The Fieldhouse.

“It has been thrilling to finally work full time alongside other business owners to improve their brands, increase customer loyalty, and engage with their customers online,” Mawhirter says. “Moving to a new location has allowed me a professional place to meet with clients, and to expand our operations to accommodate a new team member.”

Josh Blankenship, a native of the Kansas City area, recently moved to Great Bend to join the Marketing Maven team. After graduating high school, Josh served in the United States Army as an Intelligence Analyst for four years before working as an analyst for the Federal Bureau of Investigation just outside Washington D.C. As a freelance designer, he has experience in social media, communications, design, and video production with his most recent role being a Media Pastor for a thriving church in the Kansas City area.

“I am excited to be a part of an incredibly close community, and hope I can use my skills in graphic design, video production, and website development to help make this community an even better place,” Josh says. “It has been a lot of fun so far.”

Josh lives in Great Bend with his wife, Laura, and their two sons, Lincoln and Jackson.

Marketing Maven Consulting is a full service brand management consulting firm, specializing in mobile-friendly websites, social media management, print and digital design, and video production. Learn more and see design samples at marketingmavenconsulting.com, find their page on Facebook, or call 620-786-4896 to schedule a free consultation. You can also find customer reviews on their Google Business Listing.

MPIRE Properties Donates to 150 Boxes of Love through United Way

One of the state's leading rental companies for single family homes and multi-family apartment complexes recently did their part to ensure the success of a charitable project happening next month in the Barton County area. MPIRE Properties made a cash donation to ElderCare and United Way for their Box of Love initiative. The property management company also provided refrigerator magnets featuring emergency telephone numbers and a place for the recipient to display their fire escape route.

“We have a number of properties catered to senior citizens in the nine communities we serve throughout the state,” says Rick Davis, COO. “It is incredible the work these agencies are doing to make sure every home bound client for ElderCare and Meals on Wheels will be receiving a special box of Valentine's Day goodies.”

The local nonprofit organizations announced last month that they would be assembling the Boxes of Love with the help of private donations, to accompany handmade Valentine's Day Cards created by local children. MPIRE's donation will help the charities improve the project and add even more to each gift. The Boxes of Love will be delivered by volunteers on February 14th.

“MPIRE Properties invests a lot in the communities we serve in Central and Western Kansas, all with the goal of providing safe, affordable, and well-kept housing for our tenants,” says Jason Mayers, CEO. “This is just one simple way we can extend the arms of the MPIRE family and share our commitment to Worry Free Living.”

MPIRE Properties offers over 270 units in communities all over Central and Western Kansas, including Great Bend, Hoisington, Concordia, Ulysses, Abilene, Ellinwood, Sylvan Grove, Glasco, and Pratt. These units range from affordable single-family homes and multi-family apartment complexes to high-end properties. They also offer commercial rental properties in Barton County. For more information, visit them online at www.MPIREProperties.com, visit their headquarters at 1015 McKinley in Great Bend, or call their professional team at 620-236-3557.



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Great Bend Surgical Properties LLC Announces Planned Sale of GBRH Property

Great Bend Surgical Properties LLC announced this week that they have entered into a planned purchase contract to sell the medical building that is currently leased to Great Bend Regional Hospital, signed December 30, 2016. Global Medical REIT Inc. (GMR) is expected to close on the 58,000 square foot facility sometime in the first quarter of 2017, at which point Great Bend Regional Hospital anticipates entering a 15-year lease with the new property owner. "This sale represents a change in the potential landlord from which Great Bend Regional Hospital leases its medical facilities, but it does not impact in any way the ownership or operations of Great Bend Regional Hospital," says Kerry Noble, CEO for the local healthcare leader. "We will continue to offer exceptional patient care, both in the hospital setting as well as in our two provider-based rural health clinics serving more than 50,000 people in Central Kansas."

About Great Bend Regional Hospital

Great Bend Regional Hospital is a state-of-the-art 33-bed physician owned hospital offering emergency and urgent care services, orthopedics and general surgery, obstetrics and pediatrics, imaging and diagnostics, respiratory therapy, physical and occupational therapy, an in-house laboratory, and more. Also under the auspices of the hospital are two rural health clinics including Central Kansas Family Practice and the Heartland Regional Health Clinic. Learn more at www.gbregional.com.

And be sure to like the Great Bend Regional Hospital page on Facebook. "Committed to and caring for the community!"



Sunflower Diversified Seeks Auction Items & Support for 12th Annual Gala March 4th

Preparations for the 12th Annual Charity Gala sponsored by Sunflower Diversified Services are in high gear and organizers could use the community's help. The non-profit agency's biggest fundraiser of the year is set for Saturday, March 4 at the Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th in Great Bend. Social hour begins at 5:30 p.m. and dinner will be served at 7 p.m.

Sunflower serves infants, toddlers and adults with developmental disabilities and delays in Barton, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties. Connie Oetken, director of development, is encouraging individuals and businesses to get involved as a show of support for Sunflower's clients. "We are collecting items for our live and silent auctions," Oetken said. "Donors can be assured that every dollar raised goes directly to services and adaptive equipment for people with disabilities. Our fundraisers are increasingly important because of local and state budget cuts."

Sunflower staff members have sent invitations to past Gala participants and hope to see a lot of new faces this year too. Cost of a seat at a Gala table is \$100. This donation includes the beef tenderloin dinner with all the trimmings, wine at every table and an open bar. Classic Inn will cater the meal.

Anyone who wants to attend the Gala, and/or donate is encouraged to call 620-792-1325.



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Mawhirter Named Project Manager for New Remodeling Company

The MPIRE name is synonymous with quality workmanship and a commitment to going above and beyond. The property management company known as MPIRE Properties provides housing to more than 270 families across the State of Kansas. But that entity is not to be confused with the new construction company, known as MPIRE Improvements, LLC that launched January 2nd.

“We had been kicking around the idea of launching a remodeling company for several years. Homeowners who live near the rental properties we have fixed up around town are always asking us if we can put up siding or windows for them too,” says Jason Mayers, one of the investors in the new business venture. “Our only hold-up was finding a qualified person to manage the new company and bring the skills that we needed to uphold our quality standards. And now we have that person.”

Great Bend native Justin Mawhirter, joined Mayers and a few other partners in forming MPIRE Improvements earlier this year. After nearly a decade in the home improvement industry, Mawhirter’s experience with remodeling and customer service will come in handy as the corporation’s new Project manager. “I had been contemplating the idea of starting my own company for several years, but this partnership helped it all fall into place,” Mawhirter says. “MPIRE has a great reputation for taking care of people and investing in the community, and I have the experience and the connections we needed to get this thing off the ground.”

The new home improvement company will specialize in kitchen and bathroom remodeling, as well as exterior projects too. MPIRE Improvements will provide sales and installation for siding and seamless guttering, overhead garage doors, replacement windows, ProVia entry doors and storm doors, and more. They are also a dealer for Onyx showers and countertops.

Mawhirter graduated from Great Bend High School before earning an Associate of Science degree from Butler Community College. He and his wife, Rachel, live in Great Bend with their two sons, Jace and Emmett.

For more information or to request a free quote, visit the company website at www.mpireimprovements.com or call Mawhirter at 620-603-0872. And be sure to like their page on Facebook.



Adams Brown Beran & Ball, Chtd. Welcomes Two New Employees

New Marketing & Growth Specialist

The certified public accounting firm of Adams, Brown, Beran & Ball, Chartered is pleased to announce Korby Boswell was recently hired as the firm’s Marketing and Growth Specialist.

In this newly created role, Boswell is responsible for coordinating marketing initiatives and internal and external communications. He will also work toward the firm’s growth and expansion efforts.

Boswell’s experience spans a variety of marketing and communication internships while he completed his studies, including working as the Marketing Coordinator for the Department of Leadership Studies at Fort Hays State University. In addition to a Bachelor of Science in organizational leadership, Boswell also holds a Master of Science in organizational communication, which he also earned at FHSU. A native of Onaga, Boswell currently resides in Great Bend and enjoys traveling in his spare time.



New Human Resources Generalist

The certified public accounting firm of Adams, Brown, Beran & Ball, Chartered is pleased to announce Gerrie Meyer was recently hired as a Human Resources Generalist.

Meyer is responsible for the firm’s recruitment and onboarding processes. She brings four years of human resources experience to her role and has worked primarily in hospitals.

In addition to holding two associate degrees in health disciplines, Meyer holds a Bachelor of Applied Sciences in human services from Washburn University, where she graduated summa cum laude. She is a member of the Society for Human Resources Management. Meyer serves on the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development’s HR/Small Business Roundtable and the Barton County Young Professionals’ leadership committee. When away from the office, Meyer is an avid KSU fan and enjoys spending time with family. She lives in her hometown of Great Bend, Kansas, with her husband, Kenton, and their two children.



Learn more about the firm at www.abbb.com.

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April 5th 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

April 6th 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

April 7th 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Reserve your exhibitor space today!



United Way Update from the Executive Director

Barton & Pawnee Counties have a strong focus on children and families. United Way of Central Kansas is a great fit with this mindset because of their focus on childhood literacy and bringing people together for a common goal. One of the biggest goals is to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to children in Hoisington and Great Bend. This program is currently fully funded by UWCK in Larned and Ellinwood and is loved by those in the community who receive books every month. Don't know what the Imagination Library is? The program was started by Dolly Parton in 1995 to foster a love of reading and to provide high quality, age-appropriate books to children every month, regardless of their family's income. With this program every child age 0-5 can receive a hard cover book every month for free. The book comes address directly to the child in a plastic cover and is specific to the child's age and gender.

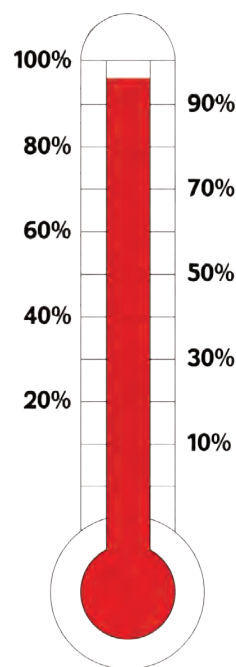
In order for UWCK to be able to provide this program to an additional estimated 1,000 children in Barton County, we have a goal of raising \$50,000 so that we can fund the program for a minimum of 3 years. We are confident that once the communities see these books and the impact they have on childhood literacy, we can further sustain the program through donations and grants. In order to get it started though, we need the funds to make it happen. We have been working closely with clubs and organizations, including, Lions Clubs, PEO Society, Rotary, Progress Club, Optimist Club, as well as business donors who believe this program is beneficial to our children. With the help of these clubs, we have raised over \$8,000 so far, but we still need more to get the program off the ground. We have made huge strides towards our 2017 Campaign Goal of \$275,000 to support our 23 local non-profit agencies. As of submission, we are at 95% of our goal and hope to be over 100% by the time you read this article.

If you want to see this program expand into Great Bend & Hoisington, you can make direct donations to UWCK to help us flood the town with books, boost literacy, encourage family reading time, and help prepare children for school.

Julie Bugner-Smith, Executive Director
United Way of Central Kansas



GOAL: \$275,000



Shoe Sensation Collects 20,000 Items for Vets

Thanks to tremendous participation by friends and neighbors, Shoe Sensation's Socks for Troops program collected over 20,500 items, including over 19,000 pairs of socks, for local veterans and troops overseas. In addition to socks donated, various other items including laces, hand warmers, hats, gloves, baby wipes, powder, and razors were donated by the communities involved including Great Bend. Shoe Sensation has coordinated with veteran's groups to distribute the items to local veterans in need as well as shipping socks and other items to soldiers stationed overseas in remote areas. While the military does provide clothing including socks, extra socks are one of the top requests of U.S. personnel overseas. Learn more about the company at www.shoesensation.com.

Welcome to our 2017 Chamber Ambassadors

The Great Bend Chamber Ambassador Club serves a vital role in the life of our Chamber. Assisting with networking events, ribbon cuttings, groundbreaking ceremonies, and membership recruitment and retention – these volunteers work tirelessly to strengthen and support our business community. Please help us welcome your 2017 Chamber Ambassadors!

2017 President: Steve Swigart, Sunflower Bank

Vice-President: Cindy Brooke, Heartland Taxes & More

New Ambassadors in 2017:

- Trent Bauer, Central Plains Security
- Brett Behrends, Behrends Tax & Accounting Solutions
- Traci Burns, Adams Brown Beran & Ball
- Megan Hammeke, Great Bend Recreation Commission
- Dale MacKinney, First Assembly of God Church
- Sonya Rein, 2B Organized of Central Kansas
- Lexie Schneider, The Beauty Bar
- Dave Storjohann, Kentucky Fried Chicken
- Deanna Vannoster, Shelter Insurance

Continuing their Service:

- Sarah Adams, Nex-Tech
- Aaron Andrews, Coldwell Banker Sell Real Estate
- Amanda Baxter, Coldwell Banker Sell Real Estate
- Barry Bowers, Spectrum CPA Partners LLC.
- Jake Deutsch, Great Bend Co-op
- Mike Fortkamp, Dayton Security
- Amy Habiger, Yours Truly Gifts & Events
- Dale Hogg, Great Bend Tribune
- Melinda Kurth, Thrivent Financial
- Gaila Nielsen, Eldercare, Inc.
- Shelly Peacock, Tele-Communications Inc.
- Cole Reif, Eagle Radio
- Pete Schartz, American State Bank & Trust Co.
- Tiffany Schoendaler, CPCS
- Shannon Stafford, Eagle Radio
- Brandon Steinert, Barton Community College
- Curtis Wolf, Kansas Wetlands Education Center



Welcome to Our Newest Chamber Members

MILLER LAWNS

Troy Miller, Owner

168 W Broadway

Hoisington, KS 67544

620-653-2146

Home & Garden

SHELTER INSURANCE - DEANNA VANNOSTER AGENCY

Deanna Vannoster, Agent

3720 10th Street

Great Bend, KS 67530

620-792-5470

Finance & Insurance

MPIRE IMPROVEMENTS, LLC

Justin Mawhirter, Project Manager

1015 McKinley Street

Great Bend, KS 67530

620-603-0872

Home Improvement

Chamber Radio Show



Tune in to KVGB
1590 AM on the first

Thursday of
every month to
hear Member
Relations

Coordinator
Megan Barfield

discuss the latest happenings and upcoming Chamber projects and events with one of Eagle Radio's talented hosts. This month's show will air on Thursday, February 2nd at 11:35 a.m.



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CHAMBER COFFEE SCHEDULE

Every Thursday at 9:30 AM

February 2, 2017

CENTRAL KANSAS DREAM CENTER

Hungry Heart Soup Kitchen, 16th & Williams

The Central Kansas Dream Center is a multifaceted ministry that reaches hurting people, restores families and helps individuals realize their dreams. We provide the people we serve with a sense of physical, spiritual, and emotional security.

February 9, 2017

CENTRAL KANSAS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

215 McKinley Street

Central Kansas Christian Academy is a non-denominational community Christian school, which provides an exceptional educational opportunity for children in Kindergarten through the Eighth grade. Our strong curriculum not only promotes learning, but also growth in the student's Christian spirit. CKCA combines Christian character training with an excellent academic program that we believe will build a strong foundation for your child's future.

February 16, 2017

PERKS COFFEE SHOPPE

1216 Main Street

Perks Coffee Shoppe has been a Great Bend favorite for 8 years, featuring wonderful coffee plus yummy baked goods, breakfast, and lunch. We have a lunch special every day! Open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Closed Sunday.

February 23, 2017

FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD

601 Patton Road

First Assembly of God is a great place to raise a family. We emphasize Christ-centered worship, preaching, and small group teaching. If you are looking for a place to get connected to others pursuing a relationship with God, First Assembly is the place for you. We would love to have you join us Sunday mornings at 10:30 a.m., and Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m.

March 2, 2017

2B ORGANIZED OF CENTRAL KANSAS

Spray-Holt Family Board Room, 1125 Williams

2B Organized of Central Kansas is locally owned and operated by Sonya Rein, experienced professional organizer and concierge extraordinaire. We work to remove stress in our clients' lives by creating order in your home or office. NEW in 2017, we are offering a concierge program for local businesses as well as personal shopping and errands for busy families, professionals, and seniors.

De-clutter your space, and de-clutter your busy schedule. We are here to help! Learn more at www.2b-organized.com and find us on Facebook.



3307 10th Street • Great Bend, KS 67530

McDonald's

is providing coffee for Chamber of Commerce coffees.