

OUTLOOK

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Elevate GBK: Investing Today for a Thriving Tomorrow



The energy in the room was electric as the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce officially launched the “Elevate GBK Beyond Today” Capital Campaign, a bold five-year strategic plan designed to drive economic growth and community development. More than 80 business leaders, stakeholders, and passionate supporters gathered at the Best Western Courtyard for the campaign kick-off, eager to invest in Great Bend’s future.

“This evening, we’re here to share our vision for growth and the detailed plan we’ve developed to pave the way for where we are headed,” said Chamber President & CEO Megan Barfield. “Our fundraising campaign is a crucial investment in the future success of our local businesses and community, allowing the Chamber to provide valuable support and resources at a higher level. The overwhelming support we’ve already received highlights the strength of our community and its commitment to a thriving business environment.”

The campaign is centered around five key initiatives: Workforce Development, Business & People Retention, Membership Development & Support, Business & Community Marketing, and Business Advocacy. With an ambitious \$1 million fundraising goal, the campaign had already secured an impressive 75% of its target before the public launch, with \$750,500 pledged by over 30

businesses and individuals.

Chairman Rob Bauer highlighted the extensive groundwork laid in preparation for the campaign, including over 60 stakeholder interviews and the contributions of more than 70 volunteers from the Chamber’s membership to build and refine the plan.

Serving as honorary co-chairs for the campaign are Rob and Andrea Bauer, Barry and Monica Bowers, Mark and Melanie Calcara, Sheryl Cheely, Mike and Linda Johnson, Mark and Leslie Mingenback, Kathering Opie, Brad and Sarah Shirer, Dr. Perry and Krista Smith, and Terry and MelEesa Stueder, whose leadership and commitment to Great Bend’s business community have been instrumental in shaping this initiative.

A Homegrown Success Story Returns

A highlight of the evening was keynote speaker and Great Bend native Jeremy Rusco, founder of Dynamic Discs and owner of Champion’s Landing in Emporia. Rusco’s journey from a small-town entrepreneur to an industry leader is a testament to the power of



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Featured Ambassador: Zach Streit

Ambassador Club members assist the Chamber with networking events, ribbon cuttings, groundbreaking, 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 My job with a previous employer moved me back to Kansas from Arkansas in 2023 and Great Bend happened to be where.

Q Your Day to Day Jobs

A "I manage the Commercial and Ag Banking portfolio in the Great Bend market for Landmark National Bank. Building relationships with customers and members of the community, assisting and making sure all their financial/lending needs are being met."

Q Surprise us!

A "I have a degree in Criminal Justice. Growing up and all through college I always thought I wanted to be a police officer. It wasn't until I got a part time job at a bank while at K State that I would start to entertain the finance industry. Funny how life has a way of working things out."

Q Your Inspiration

A "My mother, she is the probably the smartest person I know and is the reason that I work in banking today. I strive to be the person/banker that she is and to one day be as half as successful as she has been in her life."

Q Wild Card

A "A job that I would be terrible at would be anything computer science related. I am not a genius when it comes to IT and Tech."

Q Your Role as an Ambassador

A "I have been an Ambassador since the beginning of this year, so just a few months! I am looking forward most to get-



ting out more and involved in the community. Building relationships with my peers and business professionals, and being able to better support my community."

Chamber News Cont'd

investing in one's community.

"It is a true honor to stand before you as part of the Elevate GBK Campaign," Rusco said. "While I don't live in Great Bend anymore, Great Bend lives in me. I'm here because I care about a greater future for my hometown, and that is what tonight is all about."

Drawing inspiration from Emporia's "Ignite Emporia" initiative, Rusco shared how intentional investment transformed the town into a thriving hub for business and community development. "Emporia is thriving because people chose to invest in it," he emphasized. "And tonight, I want to encourage you to do the same for Great Bend. It takes motivated and passionate people who are willing to keep investing in a community to create a brighter future and change the narrative."



Why Invest in Great Bend?

Rusco's message was clear: investing in Great Bend is about more than just economic growth—it's about creating a lasting legacy. He outlined three key reasons why community investment is essential:

1. A Thriving Community Creates Opportunity – "Investing in Great Bend means creating jobs, attracting talent, and fostering innovation. Better infrastructure, better schools, and stronger businesses make this a place where people want to be."

2. Investment Inspires Belonging – "Every business you support, every event you attend, every park you help improve—it all strengthens the identity of this community. Great Bend isn't just a place you live; it's the place you belong."

3. Our Youth Deserve a Legacy of Hope – "What kind of Great Bend do we want to leave for the next generation? A place where opportunities are scarce? Or a thriving town where young people want to stay, build their futures, and contribute?"

The Call to Action

As the campaign gains momentum, the message remains clear: action fuels change. Rusco urged attendees to find their own ways to contribute—whether through financial support, volunteerism, or simply showing up for their community.

"You already know this, but let me remind you—you are the stewards of Great Bend's tomorrow," Rusco concluded. "By choosing to invest today, you inspire hope, ignite potential, and ensure that Great Bend remains a beacon of opportunity in Kansas and beyond."

With the backing of local business leaders and dedicated community members, the "Elevate GBK Beyond Today" campaign is poised to play an important part in shaping the future of the Great Bend for generations to come.

A message from Barfield, "It takes every one of us to keep moving the needle."

To learn more about how you can invest in Great Bend's future, visit greatbend.org/elevategbk or contact the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce at 620-792-2401.



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Entrepreneurial Mindset Class Wraps Up, Paving the Way for Future and Current Business Owners



The latest session of the Entrepreneurial Mindset class, based on the book *Who Owns the Ice House?*, has successfully concluded, leaving participants with valuable insights and a renewed perspective on business and problem-solving.

Out of the 11 individuals who enrolled, eight received a 50% refund on their class fees for attending five or more of the six sessions. Participants ranged from current business owners and startups to professionals seeking to apply entrepreneurial thinking in their existing careers.

One of the key components of the class was weekly interviews with local entrepreneurs, where participants had the opportunity to learn firsthand from those who have navigated the challenges of starting and growing a business. These real-life insights helped students connect theory to practice, gaining valuable lessons from business owners who have successfully built their enterprises.

The final class of 2025 was joined by co-facilitator Jim Correll and Kimberly Becker, both of whom have guided participants through the program's engaging curriculum. Their expertise has helped foster a mindset of innovation, resourcefulness, and resilience among attendees.

For many participants, the class provided not only knowledge but also the motivation to take the next step in their entrepreneurial journey. As Melinda Harter, one of the newest graduates of the ICE House program, put it: "If you want to get the ball rolling on making your dreams a reality... the Ice House class is a great place to start!"

For those eager to continue their entrepreneurial journey, Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) is offering the next step—CO.STARTERS Core, a 10-week program designed to help entrepreneurs refine and launch their business ideas. The next cohort begins March 5, 2025.

What is CO.STARTERS Core?

Entrepreneurship is an exciting journey, but the path isn't always clear. CO.STARTERS Core provides a structured, proven process that helps participants get unstuck and move forward with confidence.

Trusted by over 24,000 entrepreneurs nationwide, this program is ideal for:

- Individuals with a business idea but no clear starting point
- Creatives who want to turn a hobby into a business
- Side-hustlers looking to transition into full-time entrepreneurship
- Small business owners seeking to scale or diversify revenue streams

Throughout the course, a small cohort of 6-12 participants will work through the program in a collaborative setting, led by CO.STARTERS certified facilitators Regan Rief and Jeremy Elliott. Each session includes hands-on learning, valuable peer feedback, and expert guidance. Class fees cover all materials and dinner at each session. For more information or to register for CO.STARTERS Core, visit www.gbbedinc.com/costarters.

For more information about GBED visit: www.gbbedinc.com, call 620-796-2407, or email marketing@gbbedinc.com.

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Honoring Persistence: New Kansas Capitol Mural Celebrates Women's Suffrage Movement



by Lissa Staley, TSCPL

Artist Phyllis Pease's mural in the Kansas Capitol celebrates the efforts of the women who persisted until their goal women's suffrage was accomplished. The design for the mural was approved by the Kansas Capitol Preservation Committee and will be dedicated on January 29, 2025. The Kansas Suffragist Memorial Committee was founded in collaboration between the League of Women Voters of Kansas, the American

Association of University Women (AAUW) of Kansas, and the Kansas Capitol Preservation Committee to develop an innovative and original work of art to be displayed in the Kansas State Capitol Building. Historian Jeanne Klein spoke about the history of women's suffrage in Kansas at the League of Women Voters Topeka-Shawnee County Tuesday Topics presentation at the library in December 2024. The library is a partner with the League of Women Voters in sharing

nonpartisan civic information. The Kansas Woman Suffrage Movement spanned 1859 to 1912. Klein's presentation provides history, stories and emphasis on the Topeka and Lawrence suffragists. View the recorded presentation below and the slides for more details. More than 580 Kansas suffragists are known in our history. In 1912 a Kansas suffragist wrote the proposed Constitutional amendment as: "The rights of a citizen of the state of Kansas to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex." These words are written at the top of the new Capitol mural. Kansas women are also recognized in the National Votes for Women Trail that seeks to recognize and celebrate the enormous diversity of people and groups active in the struggle for women's suffrage. In 2019 a Votes for Women Trail Marker was erected along the Missouri River to commemorate the work of suffragists in Kansas. The Trail is marking sites across the country to tell the untold story of suffrage for all women, of all ethnicity, that extends well past the passage of the 19th amendment.



RIBBON CUTTINGS



The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce joined **Ruhe Rituals** in celebrating a milestone moment with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on Thursday, February 7. Owner Danielle Hunter and her team welcomed Chamber members, clients, and community supporters to mark one year in business and their new Chamber membership.

Ruhe Rituals is redefining self-care in Great Bend, offering an advanced med spa experience that blends cutting-edge skincare, body sculpting, and wellness treatments. With a strong focus on results-driven services in a soothing, rejuvenating environment, clients can enjoy customized facials, chemical peels, massage therapy, body contouring, IV therapy, B12 injections, wood therapy, and infrared sauna therapy—all tailored to individual needs for

a holistic approach to beauty and well-being.

Since its founding, Ruhe Rituals has experienced incredible growth. They have served over 523 clients and are expanding their offerings. The business also earned 3rd Place in the IGNITE Rural Business Competition, securing funding to introduce its infrared sauna—a wellness innovation that enhances detoxification, relaxation, and overall health.

“We’re excited to continue growing and providing even more advanced treatments to help people feel their best,” said Danielle Hunter, owner of Ruhe Rituals.

With a vision to make self-care a lifestyle, Ruhe Rituals is ready to welcome even more clients and expand its services in the years ahead. Ruhe Rituals is open Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information visit www.ruherituals.glossgenius.com

Beugelsdijk Chiropractic recently enhanced its patient care services with the introduction of StemWave technology, marked by a Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting on February 13th. This innovative equipment utilizes extracorporeal shock wave therapy (ESWT) to revolutionize pain management and recovery. As one of the first chiropractic practices in the country to offer this cutting-edge treatment, Beugelsdijk Chiropractic is bringing professional-grade musculoskeletal care to the Great Bend community

StemWave is a non-invasive therapy that reduces inflammation, improves blood flow, and enhances mobility without requiring injections, surgery, or downtime. Already used by professional and collegiate sports teams to accelerate athlete recovery, this technology is now available locally. Dr. Sam Beugelsdijk expressed his excitement about the addition, noting that many patients experience noticeable pain relief after just one session. The treatment precisely targets inflammation, promoting effective healing and rehabilitation.

This advanced therapy is beneficial for various conditions, including joint pain, soft tissue injuries, and chronic discomfort. It serves as an alternative to invasive procedures, helping patients avoid surgeries for the back, knee, hand, foot, and shoulder. By using harmless acoustic waves, StemWave stimulates the body’s natural healing response, promoting new blood vessel formation, cell growth, and long-term inflammation reduction. With minimal side effects, it provides a comfortable and effective solution for pain relief.

Beugelsdijk Chiropractic offers StemWave treatments at its Great Bend office, open throughout the week with flexible hours. Their second location in St. John provides additional services on select days. Dr. Beugelsdijk and his team remain committed to delivering top-tier chiropractic care, with StemWave reinforcing their dedication to innovative health solutions. For more information or to schedule an appointment, patients can contact Beugelsdijk Chiropractic at (620) 792-3678.



Dr. Richard Aballay, the new physician at **Heart of Kansas Family Health Care** in Larned, offers comprehensive family medicine services with a focus on functional medicine, addressing the root causes of illness rather than just symptoms. He emphasizes a holistic approach, integrating lifestyle factors like diet, exercise, and stress management to help patients manage chronic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. With over 15 years of experience in family medicine, emergency care, and leadership roles, Dr. Aballay has worked extensively in rural and underserved areas. Originally from the South Bronx, he has trained in integrative and naturopathic medicine and has a strong background in medical education. He chose Heart of Kansas for its commitment to accessible, patient-centered care and looks forward to building connections within the community. Heart of Kansas, a Federally Qualified Health Center, provides care for all patients, including the uninsured and underinsured, across its multiple locations.

Dr. Sidney Lenox, a new dentist at **Heart of Kansas Family Health Care**, emphasizes the importance of preventive dental care, highlighting its impact on overall health and quality of life. Treating patients of all ages, he provides a full range of services, including fillings, extractions, root canals, crowns, bridges, cleanings, and emergency care. With a background in community and public-health dentistry, Dr. Lenox is committed to serving populations with limited access to dental care. He earned his dental degree from Howard University and a master's in public health with a concentration in dentistry. His experience includes work with the VA, Hunter Health Clinic, and over two decades of service in the U.S. Navy. He values Heart of Kansas for its welcoming team and patient-centered approach. As a Federally Qualified Health Center, Heart of Kansas provides accessible dental services to insured, uninsured, and underinsured patients across its locations.

When Kendra Hagerman learned about the open director-of-nursing position at **Pawnee Valley Community Hospital (PVCH)**, the memories came flooding back. Hagerman worked there for nine years in several capacities and was eager to return. "I loved working here but I left in 2020 to fulfill my dream of being a flight nurse," she noted. "Now, I am so pleased to be back in this atmosphere in which our amazing staff strives for excellence. "They support patients and their families, as well as one another; the spirit of teamwork is contagious. I cannot imagine why anyone would not want to be a part of this team." Hagerman's goal in her new position is to provide support and leadership to the nurses and other

PVCH departments. "I want to continue to build this great team, while providing skilled and compassionate care through evidence-based practices," she commented. "I also will do my best to live up to the hospital's values of accountability, innovation, integrity, service excellence, teamwork and stewardship. "In addition, a strong work ethic and professional attitude are so important as we care for our patients' physical and emotional well-being." Hagerman's previous positions at PVCH were registered nurse, Emergency Department supervisor, director of nursing, and administrator. Her professional background also includes instructor of nursing at Barton Community College; assistant director of nursing at Larned State Hospital's Psychiatric Services Program; RN at The University of Kansas Health System – Great Bend Campus in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit; and Critical Care Transport for EagleMed. Melanie Urban, Administrator at PVCH, commended Hagerman's qualifications, stating, "Mrs. Hagerman's professional background and alignment with PVCH's core values make her an excellent leader for our nursing team. Her commitment to healthcare excellence plays a crucial role in our ongoing mission to deliver outstanding patient care."

Hagerman earned an associate's degree in nursing at Trinidad State Junior College, Alamosa, Co., in 2010, and a master's in nursing at Walden University in Minneapolis, Mn., in 2016.

I will rely on this background at Pawnee Valley Community Hospital, which I consider to be my home," she said.

"There is not much better than serving the community you live in."



People on the Move

Local high school student completes Barton EMT program; goes to work for Great Bend Fire and EMS

When Great Bend High School student Trey Milsap was a youngster, he took a tour of the Great Bend Fire Station, which left him fascinated with the world of emergency response, and he is now working as a part-time firefighter for the Great Bend Fire and EMS Department all before graduating high school.

Before he zeroed in on being a firefighter, he also became interested in law enforcement as well as being an EMT. So, he signed up for ride-a-longs with local agencies for all services, and after helping work a small grass fire on his law enforcement ride-a-long, he knew his true passion was to fight fires.

Shortly after rolling alongside the professionals, he quickly enrolled in Barton's one-semester EMT certificate program to pursue his dream of being a fireman.

"I would say that helping people on what could be their worst day and the adrenaline at a moment's notice are what has drawn me to it," he said.

Milsap could take the EMT course almost at no cost thanks to the state-sponsored Excel in CTE Initiative, which allows Kansas high school students to take specific career technical courses tuition-free.

While he has only spent a semester at Barton so far, Milsap said he's had a positive experience that has helped him enter the workforce with the skills he needs.

"Barton provided a lot of hands-on time to practice skills learned, such as placing basic airway adjuncts, for example," he said. "The technology in the EMT program was advanced, including a new ambulance

simulator inside the facility as well as a fully functioning ambulance, which both have their uses."

Part of the program is also doing calls with our EMS partners in the area and running calls alongside them in the field, which Milsap said were invaluable.

"Our field internships are a requirement to complete the course, and they helped me a lot by allowing me to transfer what we learn in the classroom setting to real situations," he said. "I ran a few real calls with some diversity, so I was able to perform a variety of skills."

Milsap said his journey is just beginning. After high school, he plans to work full-time for the Great Bend Fire Department.

"I look forward to continuing my career at Great Bend Fire and EMS long-term, along with furthering my education at Barton over the next few years," he said. "My main goals moving

forward consist of obtaining more certifications in both fire and EMS fields and striving for promotions at the fire department."

For non-high school students, Barton's program qualifies for the Kansas Promise Scholarship, which means students can complete it at no cost. For more information about this, visit bartonccc.edu/promiseact.

For more information, please contact Director of Emergency Medical Services Education Nicholas Larmer at larmern@bartonccc.edu or visit ems.bartonccc.edu.



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Storm Team's Hammond, Edwardson Honored with Awards from Special Olympics Kansas

When teams took the floor Saturday, Feb. 22, for the Special Olympics Kansas West Region Cheerleading and Basketball Tournament at Great Bend High School's Panther Activity Center, there were two distinguished hometown coaches in their midst. Storm Team's Amanda Hammond and Carole Edwardson were recognized in Topeka last December for their stellar work with the area's Special Olympics team.

Hammond was named Special Olympics Kansas "Coach of The Year." Edwardson earned the West Region's "Volunteer of the Year" award and she also took home a "Legacy" award for her longstanding effort with Storm Team.

Special Olympics Kansas awards were presented during the Champion's Luncheon at the enclosed Garfield Shelter in Topeka on Dec. 4. Hammond attended the event and received her award from Special Olympics Kansas President John Lair. In attendance to watch Hammond receive her award were her dad, Eric, and her sister, Anna. The event was a culmination that began 15 years earlier, starting with cheer coaching and evolving into coaching basketball and track and field.

"It was an honor to attend the luncheon with my family and receive the award," explained, Hammond. "Coming from no experience to winning this award, we laughed about it, actually. I played sports a little bit in middle school; I wasn't the star athlete; I did it for the social aspect. Learning to coach from the basic level allowed me to learn it and then break it down so that I could explain it better to my athletes. I am proud to win the award, but honestly, I'm even more proud that Carole won her awards."

The modest Edwardson was humbled when she learned about her recognition, immediately pointing out so many other people that have been just as involved with Special Olympics over the quarter-century that she has volunteered and coached. She opted to receive her award upon Hammond's return from Topeka.

Edwardson got involved in Storm Special Olympics more than 25 years ago when her son, David, joined the program. She took on many roles for the organization over the decades, including serving as the teams Local Program Coordinator for many years. She relinquished that lead role to Hammond nearly two years ago, but she continues to volunteer during each respective sports season, which



covers cheer and basketball, track and field, and bowling. She also serves on the Storm Special Olympics Board, along with Hammond.

It is fitting that the tandem has been recognized with awards during the same time period. The two are closely linked to the success of Storm Team's past and future. Edwardson kept the team going through several lean years, serving most of those years as LPC. Hammond helped where needed over her years with the team and readily took the LPC baton from Edwardson when the time came. Both continue to advocate for Storm Special Olympics and are always on the lookout to recruit quality coaches to help lead the team far into the future.

"Involvement with Special Olympics takes work, but the outcome is so rewarding," said Hammond. "In the hustle of the day when you are putting out fires, to be able to connect with your athletes at a different level, because you are linked together with a common goal, it brings you back to what the purpose is for what we do. It grounds you. I see the improvement with the athletes during every practice, every game and every season. It's a journey that is about so much more than just competing to win. I'm honored to be a part of their growth and experience."



Celebrate International Women’s Day at Kelly’s Garden Sense!

Kelly’s Garden Sense is thrilled to invite the community to a special event in honor of International Women’s Day on Saturday, March 8, from 1-4 p.m. Join us at the Greenhouse, 134 NE 10 Ave. Great Bend, KS, for an afternoon of inspiration, networking, and shopping as we celebrate and showcase local women in business!

This exciting event is all about Women Supporting Women—and because we’re a greenhouse, we hope you’ll take the opportunity to grow from the shared knowledge, experiences, and connections of incredible female entrepreneurs and community leaders coming together.

Attendees will have the opportunity to:

Get a professional headshot taken in the Greenhouse by Blue Thistle Film & Photography (\$10 suggested donation to Prairie Godmother’s, an organization helping local women).

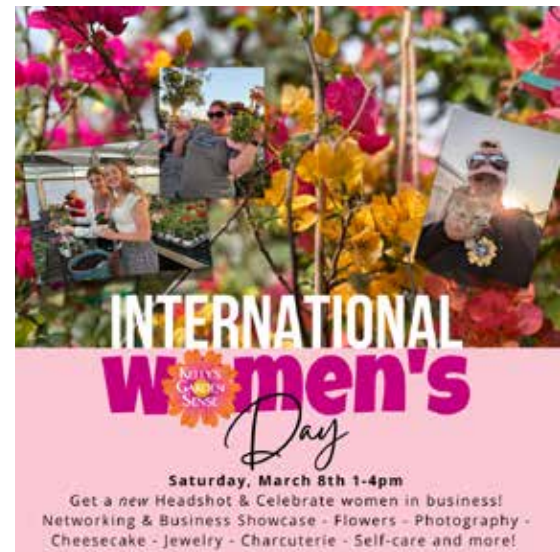
Network and gain inspiration from local business owners and community leaders as they share their experiences and insights.

Local Showcase from a variety of female-owned businesses featuring everything from charcuterie to chalk paint, bath bombs, cheesecake, jewelry, and more!

Give Back – a portion of all Greenhouse sales from the day will be added to the donation to a local women’s organization.

More details will be announced on Kelly’s Garden Sense social media pages in the coming weeks, so be sure to follow along for updates! If you’re a woman-owned business interested in showcasing your products or getting involved, contact Kelly today.

Let’s come together to celebrate, support, and uplift the incredible women in our community. We can’t wait to see you there!



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Empower Your Employees Through FUEL Barton County’s Action Teams

Investing in your employees’ professional growth and community engagement is a win-win for both your business and the region. FUEL Barton County, the area’s emerging leaders network, is actively seeking passionate individuals to join its Action Teams—small groups dedicated to fostering leadership, event planning, and community involvement. By encouraging your employees to participate, you’re not only supporting their personal development but also strengthening their ties to the community, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and retention.

FUEL’s Action Teams provide emerging leaders and other young professionals with opportunities to build leadership skills, expand their professional networks, and

contribute meaningfully to local initiatives. Whether they’re helping to organize major events, promoting FUEL’s mission, or spearheading leadership development projects, members gain valuable experience while enhancing the overall vibrancy of Barton County. Engaged employees bring

fresh perspectives, stronger leadership abilities, and a renewed sense of purpose to their workplaces.

Encourage your team to take the next step in their careers and community involvement by joining a

FUEL Action Team. Not only will they grow as professionals, but they’ll also help shape the future of Barton County—one initiative at a time. Email fuelbc@greatbend.org for more information.



CKCA advocates for Senate Bill 75 in Topeka



near or far, religious or secular—that works best for them.

Proponents of SB75 advocated that parents' tax dollars are being spent on children who attend public schools rather than where they choose to send their children. Several argued that many parents cannot afford to send their children to the school they would choose if they had a choice. SB75 would allow them to attend the school they would choose for their children. One proponent said that parents want a school where they can succeed academically and not be indoctrinated with woke ideals and agendas that the public education system is forcing.

CKCA Board Chair Janine Burton agreed: "Parents should not be limited to government-only options like public school. Parents should be able to do what they feel is best for their children. I have heard too many people say 'I wish I could afford to send my kid to CKCA.' SB75 would help provide the means for more parents to have a choice."

Several opponents were concerned about losing funding for special education programs should SB75 pass. Leah Fliter, another opponent who is the Assistant executive director of advocacy for KASB, referred to the separation of church and state and said she didn't think that it was fair to use public dollars to fund Christian education. "...that means my taxes are being diverted away from public schools that I support and instead are being used to fund

religious teachings."

"Not all taxpayers want to support everything their tax dollars are used for," Mrs. Burton countered. "I don't support a lot of what is being taught in the public schools, but I am still paying taxes to them."

Currently, there are 75 school choice programs in 34 states including Education Savings Accounts, Vouchers, Tax Credit Scholarships, or Individual Tax/Credit Deductions. Eighteen states offer Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs). In just three years, the number of states offering universal school choice has risen from 0 to 12, and 22 other states have passed school choice expansion bills.

"The ultimate question becomes, 'What is the best educational environment for my child?'" Pruter concluded. "As a parent, there are many factors to consider, including curriculum, program offerings, class sizes, teaching styles, value and cost. School choice would allow one's tax dollars to follow students to the schools or services that best fit their needs."

If anyone interested in learning more about CKCA can visit www.ckcacademy.com to learn more, or they may contact the school office at 620-792-3477 or email office@ckcacademy.com. Central Kansas Christian Academy also has a Facebook page for followers to keep up with school news and events.

Central Kansas Christian Academy celebrated National School Choice week Jan. 26-Jan. 31. They organized awareness activities during the week including explaining school choice, sharing video clips, bracelets and stickers, and yellow and red dress days. Individuals even attended a School Choice Rally and hearing of Senate Bill 75 in Topeka on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

"It was exciting to attend the School Choice Rally and be a part of this national movement with over 1,000 Kansans participating," Sherry Pruter, CKCA administrator, said. "And to feel the unity with other educators and parents in the state who are advocating for their educational tax dollars to be used for their own children's educational choice."

Along with Pruter, others from CKCA attending the rally were Janine Burton, parent & school board chair; Brandon Schroeter, teacher, parent & school board member; Hazel Schroeter, 6th grader; and Eric Rostine, parent. These CKCA individuals also attended the Senate Education Committee hearing where the revised Senate Bill 75 on School Choice was introduced. Kansas SB75 is a refundable tax credit bill similar to what Oklahoma passed. SB75 would allow parents to use the public funds set aside for their children's education to choose the education—public or private,



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

March 6th
AVAST YE JAVA
1125 Williams

Avast Ye Java is a mobile specialty coffee trailer serving specialty coffees hot or iced, chai teas, flavored lemonades and Red Bull energizers. We are available for fundraising, weddings, events, customer/employee appreciations.

March 13th
CENTRAL PLAINS COMPUTER SERVICE
608 S Patton Rd

Central Plains Computer Service in Great Bend, KS, provides expert computer repair, IT support, and technology solutions for businesses and individuals. With a commitment to quality service and customer satisfaction, they help keep technology running smoothly for the local community.

March 20th
LLB PLUMBING
5810 Anchor Way

LLB Plumbing is excited to announce its upcoming grand opening celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony in Great Bend, KS. The community is invited to join the festivities, meet the expert team, and learn more about the company's top-quality plumbing services. This special event marks the beginning of LLB Plumbing's commitment to providing reliable and professional service to the area.

March 27th
HEARTLAND FARM
1049 CR 390, Pawnee Rock

Heartland Farm will be hosting 9-12 AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), the national version of Peace Corps, for 3-weeks from March 23 - April 13 as they work on projects at the Farm. Come out and learn about Heartland Farm, AmeriCorps, and the opportunities available through the NCCC program.

April 3rd
BARTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
85 US 281 Hwy

Visit the Barton County Historical Society and learn about the history of Barton County. Volunteering at the museum is a fun, worthwhile endeavor, ask a board member or employee about helping preserve our history.



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OUTLOOK

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GREAT BEND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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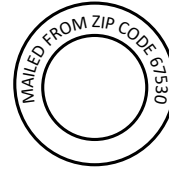
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2021

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

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April 16, 2025

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