

OUTLOOK

GREAT BEND
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

business journal **ONLINE**

MAY 2022

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1921



YEARS 2021



GROW WORKFORCE

EMPLOYER AND JOBSSEEKER SUMMIT

Thirty-two area businesses took part in the first Grow Workforce Summit in April. The two-day summit brought together both employers and job seekers. The Summit kicked off April 20th at the Great Bend Event Center meeting employers right where they are in the thick of a workforce crisis. Sessions included various topic meant to shed light and contribute to the future success in recruiting and retaining a scarce workforce.

Dr. Nels Lindberg spoke to the group about creating a strong culture that embodies a business's core values, while hitting home that employing the right person from the very beginning is crucial to the success and the longevity of

WORKFORCE SUMMIT RECAP

that new hire. An afternoon panel discussion elaborated on various strategies to bolster recruitment initiatives such as, creating a such a positive workplace that causes current employees to second guess ever leaving.

Great Bend Chamber of Commerce President, Megan Barfield connected Central Kansas Jobs to the employers encouraging them to think about their job descriptions when posting to the various job boards available. "It is important to make your

business stand out from the hundreds of other job openings. This can be done by paying more attention to the job description in terms of more focus on culture, pay structure, room for advancement, investment in the employees, and core values, and less focus on a lengthy list of duties and job requirements."

Employers should also think

Continued on Page 2



FEATURED BUSINESS



NEW HIRES/PROMOTIONS



NEW MEMBERS



FEATURED VOLUNTEER



CALENDAR



COFFEE SCHEDULE



Click on title to jump to the story!



IS BACK IN HAYS!

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- > 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- > Hilton Garden Inn - Hays

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Continued from Page 1

about the education requirements advertised when it comes to education. Consider whether the job really requires a bachelor's degree or associate degree. Advertising such requirements that are not truly required means losing potential candidates.

The Great Bend High School also got in on the action by sending 50 students through the KansasWorks Career Success Workshop. Ten students returned April 27th participating in the Reverse Job fair highlighting their abilities and interest in apprenticeships and internships with area employers.

Following the Reverse Job Fair was the traditional Job Fair itself scheduled from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. with the KansasWorks bus and staff on hand to help job seekers with resume assistance, Yo Dog Wieners

was also on site serving up delicious gourmet hotdogs for everyone.

Appearing as a Platinum Sponsor is Superior Essex. Gold sponsors included KMW Loaders, KanEquip Inc., and Hess Services Inc. Standard sponsors included the City of Great Bend, Fuller Industries Inc., Ellsworth Correctional Facility, Amerine Utilities Construction, First Kansas Bank, Adams Brown, and Great Bend Industries. Special thanks to these additional in-kind sponsors: Great Bend Coffee, Dillons, Office Products, Inc., and Nex-Tech.

Helping make this first summit a success were these partners: Great Bend Economic Development, Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, KANSASWORKS, USD 428, JAG-K, Barton Community College, and Great Bend Tribune.

Royal Family 5K for Kids Walk/Run May 7

The 2022 Royal Family 5K for Kids Walk/Run will take place on Saturday, May 7 at Brit Spaugh Park. Registration begins at 8 AM and race starts at 9 AM. Cost is \$30 for adults and \$15 for kids under 15 years of age. All proceeds go to support our local Royal Family Kids Camp, a week-long camp for abused and neglected foster children.

Saturday, May 7th
9am, Brit Spaugh Park, Great Bend



All Proceeds benefit the local
Royal Family Kids Camp

SATURDAY, MAY 7th
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ADULTS: \$30 | CHECK IN: 8:00 AM
KIDS: \$15 | RACE: 9:00 AM
FAMILY REGISTRATION: \$100

Every runner gets a **FREE t-shirt** with registration!

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Bring your family for a fun event, where your kids can help other kids in foster care!

Scan this QR CODE to register online now!





10th Street Eye Care Center Invests in the Latest Retinal Imaging Technology

The 10th Street Eyecare Center is proud to be offering the latest technology available for retinal imaging, known as Optomap (pictured to right). This ultra-wide retinal imaging captures over 80% of the eye, whereas traditional imaging allows for only a 15% view. The Eyecare Center invested in the technology to allow their optometrists the ability to know as much as possible about what's going on in their patients' eyes, and make it easier to detect early signs of degenerative eye conditions.



"We are thrilled to offer this new imaging technology to our patients," says Dr. Chad Premer, of The 10th Street Eyecare Center. "Early detection allows us to implement a treatment plan sooner, which is vital for degenerative conditions."

Not only is the Optomap imaging capability far superior to traditional imaging, but it can also be utilized without that patient using dilation drops in most cases. It's also safe to use with children, ensuring they're receiving the highest quality care as their eyes develop and change throughout their youth.

All patients at The 10th Street Eyecare Center are given the option to utilize Optomap instead of the traditional imaging, but anyone can contact the optometry practice for more information at any time: 620-792-2020.

The 10th Street Eyecare Center is a leader in optometric healthcare, offering everything from routine eye exams and diagnostic testing to retail glasses and contacts and frame repair. The clinic is open six days per week, and office hours are published on their website at



www.10thstreeteyecare.com. For more information or to make an appointment, call 620-792-2020.

Where have all the volunteers gone?

The pandemic has taught us a hard lesson. The "silver generation," gave a great deal of their time and talent to help others. But COVID-19 has unfortunately retired many of them.

But why is the next generation not stepping up? They watched their parents give and they saw how their parents were better for it. They also saw how the community was better for it.

Our community thrives on those that step forward to help. Yes, it is important to help monetarily. But it is even more important to take the time to physically be present, as well as to be mentors to the next generation,

Many of the volunteer opportunities we have involve access to food such as Meals On Wheels, Senior Food Boxes and Food Pantries. Other opportunities include access to care such as Non-Emergency Transportation and Blood Drives.

Currently we have 59 volunteers that deliver either or regular weekly or biweekly route, or they rotate with office members or they serve as substitutes



for volunteers that can't deliver on their scheduled day. The

normal amount of volunteers for this program is 80.

Our transportation program usually has 17 active drivers and we currently have 6 with 3 more that occasionally can help

These opportunities fulfill everyday needs of many of our community members. Without these programs, people cannot age at home, become ill due to lack of nutritional food or end up in emergency rooms because they cannot make it to necessary appointments.

Many of these problems can be conquered with just one or two hours a week. And of course with all volunteer opportunities, you are not assigned but

choose where and what you do.

Thank you to those volunteers that have step forward or have continue to serve. Without you, many of the very necessary programs people need to survive would have shut down.

To everyone else. We are all good people and I know we haven't gone anywhere. It's time to feed your soul with some kindness to others.

Give Volunteers In Action a call at 620-792-1614.

Outlook Business Journal

A monthly publication of the



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Great Bend, KS 67530
Phone: 620-792-2401
Fax: 620-792-2404

Web address: www.greatbend.org

for a complete list of staff and board members [CLICK HERE](#)

Local Businesses receive certificates of entrepreneurship



Fifteen local entrepreneurs recently completed the entrepreneurial certificate program "Growing Rural Businesses." Successfully completing up to 24 hours of coursework earned them a Certificate of Entrepreneurship through Wichita State University's Center for Entrepreneurship. Brought to Barton County, in partnership with the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, Great Bend Economic Development, and NetWork Kansas' E-Community Partnership, this 8-week course was custom-made to meet the needs of existing rural business owners who are ready to grow their business as well as look at ways to adapt post-pandemic.

Those pictured and receiving a certificate included: Amy Smith (Forest Ave. Antiques), Jerry and Kristie Carmichael (That Hipster Place), Kim Vink (Coldwell Banker Sell Real Estate), Jeremy Elliott (myLawn! Turf & Tree/Have It Maid Cleaning), Kristie Carmichael (That Hipster Place), Jake Fryberger (American National), Ana Hayson (Rana Luna Boutique), Mike Snyder (Hydro-Chem Spray Services), Raza Manase (CPS Landscaping), Vicki Dayton (Dayton Security, Inc.), Cassandra Hernandez (Mary's Kitchen), Brad Brack (Dilly and Doc Creative Studio), Yoselin Perez (Mary's Kitchen), Derek Schneider (Kansas Pro Wash), and Joni Carr (Westside Market).

"Building up

Entrepreneurship has been a key factor to Great Bend Economic Development's growth plan for this year," said Sara Hayden, Great Bend Economic Development President and CEO. "As such, we are so thrilled to see how well the Growing Rural Businesses class was received by class participants. We are committed to continue to bring more resources, training, etc. to help create a community that supports and fosters entrepreneurship on all levels."

Participants received hands-on, practical solutions and techniques to grow and modernize business ventures while living in a rural setting. Insights and learning tools included small group exercises, case studies, and interactive discussions with peers, facilitators, and industry experts.

Great Bend Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, Megan Barfield, comments on the importance of utilizing state-wide partners and building networks, "This popular training is offered only a few times per year on a competitive basis. More than 260 businesses across a variety of industries have benefited from this instruction."

Barfield went on to say, "It's crucial that we all work together in providing the biggest impact we can to our local economy. Watching the relationships form in the class was a highlight for me. They

cheered one another and broadened their own individual networks."

A grant to the Great Bend E-Community Fund from NetWork Kansas provided partial funding for the Barton County program.

NetWork Kansas' Rural Entrepreneurship Senior Product Manager, Christy Preston, has enjoyed working with Great Bend's E-Community as they build. "As an E-Community Coach, with NetWork Kansas, it is very exciting to work alongside a community that is focused on empowering entrepreneurs and building a sustainable ecosystem!"

"Through our E-Community partnership, both NetWork Kansas and Great Bend have made the commitment to cultivate and grow an entrepreneurial environment through economic development and community engagement. We are focused on connecting entrepreneurs and small business owners to the education, expertise, and economic resources they need when they need them," NetWork Kansas' Preston added.

To learn more about the "Growing Rural Businesses" program and to express interest in a future session, contact either the Great Bend Economic Development at 620-796-2407 or the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce at 620-792-2401.

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FEATURED Volunteer

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The Myth...

The Legend...

Arlen Schroeder

What brought you to Great Bend? What keeps you here?

My wife's family was from the area. So that brought us back, I enjoy it. I enjoy the people and I know what I can do here.

(Arlen recently accumulated 1,000 hours of volunteering at the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce.) What are your day-to-day tasks (describe your role)?

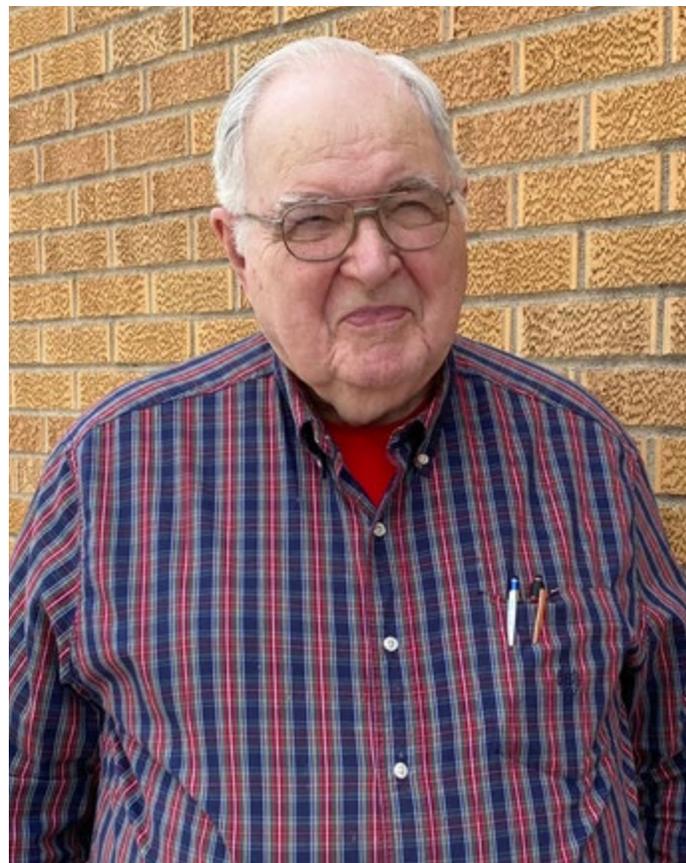
I assemble various relocation folders, new member folders, all that kind of stuff. Blue Cross and Blue Shield packets have been put together. Stuffing bags for events, mailing invoices, and things of that nature. I help during Christmas, there's an awful lot of stuffing gift certificates that they are selling in batches. What else... minor little projects and things that need to be done, answering the phones to cover the office over lunch hours. And I come down and keep you guys in line. That's an impossible task.

What's one thing about you that would surprise people?

Well, probably a lot of people know about it, but I will be celebrating my 50th birthday June the 27th. 50 years of sobriety. That's the date I've chosen. It's reasonably close because I carried I got a ticket for being drunk in public and ended up in jail. I carried my ticket around in my billfold as a reminder.

What energizes you and brings you excitement?

My men's group is very important to me. It's a men's Bible study that was started 16 years ago. The group has grown to about 12 to 15 men, we meet on Monday evenings. And that's very important for me. Volunteering in



general is important to me because I think it's important. People give back all that they've been given over the years. And the community needs as much volunteerism as there is out there. Considering the amount that's available, we don't give nearly as much as we get.

At what job, would you be terrible?

I could not imagine being around a bunch of 12 year olds without laughing me in jail. I appreciate school teachers and what they do.

How long have you volunteered at the Chamber and what do you like most about it?

I hit 1,000 hours sometime in the second week of December (2021). I started in like October 2019. In October I remember coming up here and I had known Megan because she had been on the RSVP advisory board. And I was on the advisory board for 14 years. So I had known her and I realized she and I have an awful lot of bad habits in common. We were the kind you did not sit together in a meeting. Anyway I came up talk to her for about 15 minutes, and it became quite apparent she had quite a lot on her plate (Megan was temporarily a staff of one).

Interesting in Volunteering?

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce has numerous projects and events for volunteers to help participant in and help run. If you have not been asked to volunteer and are interested, please contact Lee Ann June at 620-792-2401 or by email: ljune@greatbend.org

A Legacy of Good Food and Family



Located at 2210 10th St., Delgado's Mexican Restaurant is a quiet treasure for the Great Bend community, and it began with the help of a few good friends, family, and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce. Terri and Beaver Delgado, owners, recently spoke about the history of their family's restaurants in Great Bend over the years, where they are located at today, and how being a Chamber member has benefited their business over the years.

"Mom and Dad started feeding Great Bend in 1967 and it has continued on with other family businesses, clear up to the opening of what is now Delgado's Mexican Restaurant in October of 1994," recalls Beaver Delgado, owner.

Beaver's parents, Pancho and Alberta Delgado, owned Panchos, a staple in Great Bend for 30 years. Growing up in the business, Beaver spent many years working for his parents up until its closure. From there, he and Terri worked at Kiowa Kitchen, owned by Frank and Gwini Delgado, another iconic Mexican restaurant in

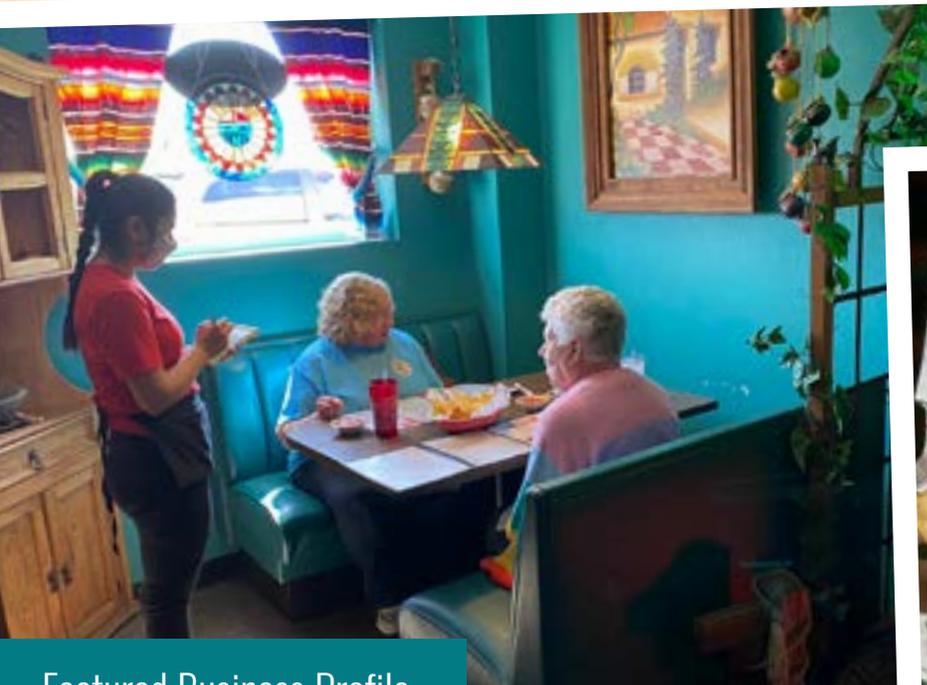
Great Bend.

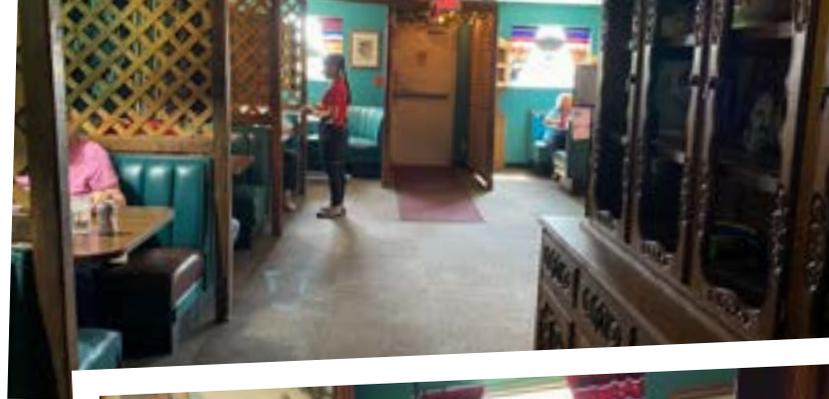
Continuing in his parent's footsteps, Beaver and Terri purchased their current location and created a place for people to come and hear music while enjoying a cold beverage in what Beaver calls "a little beer joint."

Taking over the business meant Beaver could combine his love for music with a love for good food. Beaver's band entertained crowds and when he wasn't doing that, he was cooking food.

The main catalysts to moving away from a traditional bar into their own restaurant business was two Great Bend couples, including a "Chamber gal." Mr. & Mrs. Gene Sheets, along with Karen Naylor (former Chamber staff) and her husband often came by to have a few beers and burritos. According to Beaver, "They just loved it." Within a few weeks, Karen Naylor (being a connector for the community at the time) brought two more couples just to have more of the food Beaver was preparing, especially the pork chili.

Beaver remembers feeding this returning crowd and the rest is history, as they say. "You know from there... those





four mouths got a fork (of pork chili) put in them. That's all it took. Word of mouth. And that's what happened. And it pretty much turned into a restaurant right then."

Changing the name from 10th Street to Delgado's Mexican Restaurant meant more people could enjoy the burritos, hot chips, and famous pork chili. When asked about what was unique about their restaurant, residents of Great Bend would not be surprised. "No one does pork chili like us, and our chips are always served hot," the couple added.

Diners will never find their fresh corn and flour chips sitting under a heat lamp.

Delgado's catering can feed small groups of 10 people up to large groups of 300. Terri Delgado went on to speak about catering to larger groups including the farm show. "Farm show organizers have hired Delgado's since they started having the Great Bend Farm & Ranch

Expo to bring a taco bar out to thank all the volunteers of the event."

Their catering options affordable and they do all the set-up and tear down making it an easy solution when feeding a group.

Asked how the chamber has benefited Delgado's, Beaver said, "I would say we've benefited through the chamber quite a bit through support and catering jobs," Terri can often be found delivering fresh food to the chamber board room for any number of board meetings and other non-profit meetings held at the Sunflower Center. Delgado's also participated in the #BartonStrong campaign during the pandemic in 2020 as shuttered business.

Hours of operations are Monday through Friday from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm, and then from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. However, they offer catering seven days a week! For more information on Delgado's Mexican Restaurant, find them on Facebook or call 620-793-3786.



New Hires & Promotions

Foley Equipment Welcomes Erin Bradley

Accomplished Human Resources leader joins Foley executive team; new role will help meet expanding workforce needs.

Foley Equipment announced the addition of new Chief People Officer Erin Bradley.

“Our business has continued to grow and is showing no signs of slowing down,” explained President and CEO Ann Konecny. “As our workforce expands to meet that demand, it will be more important than ever to ensure we are living our mission of fostering a culture that attracts the very best so we deliver the very best. Erin will play a critical role in reinforcing that mission through our existing workforce and as we continue to hire new talent.”

In this new role, Bradley will oversee HR, recruitment,

training, and organizational development.

“Part of what attracted me to Foley was the authenticity of its people,” said Bradley. “Many companies post mission, values, and purpose, but Foley works hard to live those ideals. As I grow into the CPO role and better understand Foley’s organizational needs, I hope to build a workforce that continues to embody and embrace those principles.”

Bradley most recently served as People Services Director at Garver, a national engineering, planning, architectural, and environmental services firm. Prior to that, she held a variety of Human Resources leadership roles at Black & Veatch, Honeywell Federal Manufacturing & Technologies, and Applebee’s Services Inc. Bradley holds



Erin Bradley
a Master of Business Administration from Baker University and Bachelor of Science from Park College.

“We are thrilled to add Erin’s talents to Foley,” added Konecny. “Her diverse Human Resources leadership experience and deep passion for culture will be a valuable asset to the company as we continue to grow and empower the progress of our employees, customers and communities we serve.”

Jill Burbank joins Xpress Wellness Team in GB

Jill Burbank is a graduate of Wichita State University Physician Assistant Program, class of 2004. Jill is a Board-Certified Physician Assistant with close to two decades of experience. She has worked with Xpress Wellness Urgent Care for nearly four years. She is a dedicated provider who takes the time to understand each patient’s needs and concerns while consistently maintaining the highest level of professionalism and compassion.

Jill has two children, ages

thirteen and twenty. As a family, they enjoy traveling and seeking adventures.

One of their favorite destinations is Disney World. Jill is also an avid sports fan and isn’t shy about her love for her favorite football team, the Kansas City Chiefs, attending games as often as she can with her children.

Xpress Wellness Urgent Care is proud to have such an exceptional provider as part of our company, our Great Bend clinic, and the community we serve.



Jill Burbank

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Jimenez promoted to transportation director at Sunflower Diversified

Sunflower Diversified Services recently announced the promotion of Christina Jimenez to director of transportation.

Jimenez is using her background in Sunflower's General Public Transportation (GPT) program to oversee all ride scheduling and vehicle maintenance, while ensuring compliance with Kansas Department of Transportation regulations.

"We currently run a crew of 11 KDOT drivers for our public transportation service," Jimenez said. "This service is for everyone. Anyone who needs a ride to work, the grocery store or a medical appointment is encouraged to call on us. We'll take you anywhere you need to be."

Jimenez started working at Sunflower, which supports people with special needs, six



Christina Jimenez
years ago.

"I love coming to work," Jimenez commented. "Sunflower is such a great organization for people with developmental disabilities and delays. Even if you are not having your best day, clients cheer you up. They greet you with a smile and are engaged in their work and other activities."

In addition to her day-to-

day responsibilities, Jimenez has begun preliminary work on what will become a brand-new transportation facility.

"This adds a whole new dimension to the job," Jimenez noted. "It is exciting for all of us because it will afford even more opportunities to clients and the public to get to where they need to be."

"Some people simply don't have access to transportation," she added. "They rely on us and we are happy to serve."

A ride costs \$1, or \$2 for a round trip throughout Barton, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties.

Sunflower serves infants, toddlers and adults in Barton, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties. It is in its 57th year.

Zuniga serves as Interim E.D. at Sunflower Diversified

Shelby Zuniga is still the chief financial officer (CFO) at Sunflower Diversified Services but she now has another title in front of her name - interim executive director.

Zuniga, a Great Bend native, is filling the temporary position until a new leader is named. Jon Prescott recently retired after five years on the job and he "is moving forward with his heart for service" as the newly appointed District 4 Barton County Commissioner, Zuniga said.



Shelby Zuniga

"Jon took our non-profit agency to a totally different level, while building on a long legacy of past achievements," Zuniga commented. "He is a go-getter with innovative ways of looking at things."

Because the duties of a CFO and executive director often overlap, Zuniga is up to speed on projects currently in the works. These include:

- Construction of a new transportation facility in the 5500 block of W. 10th that will be financed with the help of a \$1.2 million grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation;
- Expanding the Applied Behavior Analysis program for children up to age 5 with an Autism Spectrum Disorder medical diagnosis;
- A new partnership with Housing Opportunities Inc. to build apartments just off 6th Street that will provide more living options for clients at Sunflower; and
- The Community Habilitation Services move from the K-96 location to the manufacturing plant near the Great Bend Airport. The K-96 building was sold and the cost-saving project is nearing completion.

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Bobbi LaViolette promoted to Senior VP/COO

Bobbi LaViolette has recently been promoted to Senior Vice President & Chief Operations Officer at Farmers Bank and Trust. Bobbi began her career with Farmers Bank and Trust as a teller in 2007 after receiving her Bachelors of Business Administration from Fort Hays State University in 2006. Prior to her promotion, Bobbi has held a variety of positions with the bank including New Accounts, Operations Supervisor, Assistant Cashier, Head Cashier, Director of Operations & BSA Officer. According to



Bobbi LaViolette
Robert Rujan, Western Market President for Farmers Bank and Trust, "Bobbi has been instrumental in the overall growth of our deposit operations division for the bank. We have relied upon

her leadership in enhancing our digital presence in the marketplace including online banking, mobile banking, same day ACH, and many other products over the past several years." Bobbi is currently in her 3rd year of the Graduate School of Banking in Colorado and expected to graduate in July 2022. She will continue to maintain oversight of the Bank's deposit operations in its branches located in Great Bend, Albert, LaCrosse, Bazine, Kinsley, Overland Park, Larned and Olathe Kansas.

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Continued from Page 9

“These are just a few of the bigger, ongoing projects,” Zuniga said. “Our staff deserves high praise for their input into these innovations, while they continue to demonstrate their professionalism and compassion in meeting the daily needs of clients. Their commitment is amazing.”

Zuniga is a 1998 Great Bend High School graduate; she earned an associate’s degree in business administration at Barton Community College before being awarded a bachelor’s degree in accounting in 2002 at Fort Hays State University.

She then received a master’s of professional accountancy in 2012 at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin in Odessa. Zuniga became a CPA in 2015.

Sunflower’s recruitment committee continues its search for a new leader. It is looking for someone with: leadership that builds relationships; executive-level skills; adaptive and creative leadership; and a passion for improving people’s lives.

Sunflower serves infants, toddlers and adults in Barton, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties. It is in its 57th year.

Ribbon Cuttings!

Great Bend Chamber of Commerce commemorates open ceremonies at the Great Bend Farm Ranch & Hemp Expo with a Ribbon Cutting



The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce staff and Ambassador Club joined Star Expos staff and volunteers to kick off the 2022 Great Bend Farm Ranch & Hemp Expo.

Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Welcomes Pump Nutrition to membership with a Ribbon Cutting



The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce welcomed Pump Nutrition, 2122 Main, to their membership with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Starting their first nutrition club in January of 2020. Ashly Davis, owner, has 100’s of customers between their locations and have enjoyed learning about the amazing community here in Great Bend. Pump Nutrition is available Monday - Friday 6:30 am to 2:00 pm at 2122 Main Street in Great Bend. You can also contact them on Instagram and Facebook!

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www.greatbend.org

JOIN NOW



1921 YEARS 2021

More Ribbon Cuttings!

Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Celebrates Sunflower Bank merger and new logo with a Ribbon Cutting



Chamber staff and Ambassador's Club celebrated Sunflower Bank with a ribbon cutting at 3600 10th Street in Great Bend, following their Chamber Coffee. The bank announced that it has completed its previously announced merger with Texas-based Pioneer Bancshares, Inc. effective April 1, 2022. Also, effective April 1, 2022, Pioneer's subsidiary bank, Pioneer Bank, SSB, merged into Sunflower Bank.

Great Bend Chamber Commemorated Heartland Dermatology and Skin Cancer Center with a Ribbon Cutting



Heartland Dermatology, 1017-C Jackson Square, completed a remodel and the staff was excited to show off the new look. Heartland Dermatology has been serving Western and Central Kansas families since 1977 with offices in Salina, Hays, Great Bend, Newton, Dodge City, Concordia, McPherson, Wichita, and El Dorado. Stephanie Burkholder, Regional Director, shared that Heartland Dermatology is accepting new patients with no referral needed. For more about Heartland Dermatology and Skin Cancer Center, PA, find them online: www.heartland-derm.com, [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), or by calling 620-792-3666. Office hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday – Thursday.



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May 5, 2022

THE CENTER

5815 Broadway Ave. in Great Bend

The Center for Counseling & Consultation's mission is to promote mental health through cultivating help, hope and healing by providing quality care and education with integrity, dedication and compassion. The Center was established in January 1968, by the local Mental Health Association, in conjunction with the county commissioners in the counties that are served. The Center offers Outpatient Mental Wellness Services such as Medication, Therapy, and Community Based Services for Adults & Children. The Center is staffed by professionally trained mental health personnel and serves all residents of Barton, Rice, Stafford, and Pawnee Counties, regardless of age, race, creed or income level.

May 12, 2022

BARTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

85 S 281 Hwy in Great Bend

The Barton County Historical Society is the repository for Barton County and Great Bend history. Since its beginning its mission is to preserve and exhibit the heritage of those who have called this area home. With thousands of objects in our collections and displays there is plenty for all to see at our 5-acre facility just south of the bridge on highway 281. The historical society will be hosting an exhibit on Cinco de Mayo all through May and has new exhibits in progress to continue to tell the story of Barton County, Kansas

May 19, 2022

TCI ANSWERING SERVICES

5810 Anchor Way in Great Bend

TCI is a 24/7/365 Answering Service that provides customer service to commercial accounts all over the United States. TCI specializes in answering phone calls and live chats for contractors, funeral homes, oilfield accounts, medical offices, veterinarians, roadside assistance companies and more.

Never miss a call with TCI on your team!

May 26, 2022

VFW – POST 3111 MORRISON MCFADDEN

504 Washington St. in Great Bend

The VFW Post and Auxiliary 3111 has been a part of Great Bend since 1953, and presently together has over 500 members. The Post and Auxiliary work together for community projects and scholarships, such as Patriot Pen and Voice of Democracy. The combined efforts are also evident the Saturday before Veterans Day when they hand out Buddy Poppies for donations, which are returned 100% directly back to the community. The mission of VFW members is to help others, supporting each other, and giving back to the community.

June 2, 2022

CREDIT UNION OF AMERICA

4708 10th St. in Great Bend

Credit Union of America started in 1935 by teachers at Wichita East High School as the "Wichita City Teacher's Credit Union." We've changed names since then and grown to over \$1B in assets and over 85,000 members. Our members have a wide array of services available including, but not limited to - checking, savings, loans (personal, home, auto) and credit cards. We offer competitive rates to all. Staying true to our roots, we have unique services and products specifically for educators and healthcare professionals.



3307 10th Street • Great Bend, KS 67530

McDonald's

is providing coffee for Chamber of Commerce coffees.

The Center announces Manning's retirement and Gray's promotion

When Bill Manning recently retired as Community Support Services (CSS) director, Julie Kramp was faced with a bittersweet situation.

As executive director of The Center for Counseling & Consultation, Kramp was sorry to see Manning leave. But, at the same time, she knew that Shionta Gray was well-equipped to step into the position.

"We are happy for Bill as he looks forward to his retirement," Kramp said. "But we will always miss him. Bill helped us through so much change, especially during the peak of the pandemic.

"However, we are fortunate that Shionta brings her extensive skills, knowledge and experience to the job. She is allowing a smooth transition, as well as opportunities for new ideas. We are grateful to have such a highly qualified internal candidate for this important position."

The CSS department offers community psychiatric support and treatment; attendant care; psycho-social rehabilitation; targeted case management; and certified peer support.

The CSS director oversees all functions of the 12-member department.

Shionta Gray

Gray has served The Center clients for almost 11 years and held several titles, including Community-Based Services support aide for youth; CSS case manager; health home care coordinator; and CSS targeted case manager.

"I have always enjoyed the work I do and the difference we make in people's lives," Gray commented. "Staff



Manning and Gray were honored for their years of service to The Center.

members support one another, which makes for a great work environment in which to care for and treat those who need a helping hand.

"Our mission is to promote mental health as we cultivate hope and healing. We offer quality care and education with integrity, dedication and compassion with the highest quality of service possible."

Gray is a 2002 graduate of Great Bend High School and a 2009 graduate of Barton Community College with an associate's degree in accounting. She earned her bachelor's in business administration in 2011 at Fort Hays State University, with a certificate in human resource management.

Gray was a teacher assistant at Great Bend's USD 428 Alternative Learning Center from 2005-12 and a chemical dependency technician at the Women's Recovery Center in Hoisington from 2007-2009.

"I want to use this education and background to support The Center's consumers," she said. "I learned a lot from Bill, who was a great supervisor and mentor. He is missed by everyone here; it will not be the same without him."

Bill Manning

Manning, who had worked at The Center for 16 years, began his journey there in

psycho-social rehab and attendant care. He then advanced to adult case manager before being promoted to CSS director.

"I wanted to help people with mental illness," Manning said. "The Center is the only place in the area that offers so many badly needed services, such as case management for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. The team supports these clients, regardless of insurance or ability to pay.

"The Center is the best place I have ever worked," he added. "I have never encountered a more caring and compassionate team. They benefit the clients and their co-workers by providing necessary and excellent support."

Manning also emphasized that the CSS department is in good hands with Gray in the director's position.

"Shionta shows great compassion and is a great team player," he said. "She has always stepped up to take on additional responsibilities and is willing to support clients and team members whenever needed. Shionta has the skills, talents and understanding to be the new CSS director."

The Center for Counseling & Consultation is a Community Mental Health Center serving Barton, Pawnee, Rice and Stafford counties. Professionally trained personnel offer: individual and group therapy; marriage and family counseling; community-based services; psychosocial rehabilitation; peer support; and medication management. The confidential 24/7 crisis hotline number is 800-875-2544.

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JUNE 17TH - 18TH

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Wed. May 11th @ 8:00 am

FREE REGISTRATION!
GREATBEND.ORG

HIGHLIGHTED MAY EVENTS IN GREAT BEND

- 3... Golden Belt Community Concert, Great Bend Municipal Auditorium, 7:30 pm
- 4... KCAC Championship Tournament, Great Bend Sports Complex, all day event
- 5... Chamber Coffee: The Center, Heritage Building, 1225 Patton Rd., Program at 9:30am on the Chamber's Facebook Page or YouTube Channel**
- 6... Great Bend Zoo Society Benefit Tournament, Lake Barton Golf Club, 10 am
- 6... Downtown Art & Wine Walk
- 6... VFW Post 3111, Corn Hole League, 504 Washington St., 7 pm
- 6-7... SRCA Test and Tune, Summit Points Race #1, 455 W Barton Country Rd.
- 7... Cinco De Mayo Festival
- 10... Freddy's Fundraiser for Grace Community Church Youth Group, 3008 10th St., 4 pm
- 11... Member Services Seminar, Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, 1125 Williams, 8 am**
- 12-15... Lucas Oil Event, 455 W Barton Country Rd., all day event
- 12... Chamber Coffee: Barton County Historical Society, 85 S 281 HWY, Program at 9:30 am on the Chamber's Facebook Page or YouTube Channel**
- 12... Chamber Ribbon Cutting: Clara Barton Medical Clinic, 906 McKinley, 10:30 am**
- 13... VFW Post 3111, Cornhole League, 504 Washington St., 7 pm
- 14... USASB Mid-America B/C Super Regional, Great Bend Sports Complex, all day event
- 15... Shen Yun Performing Art Show, 225 W Douglas Ave, Wichita, 7:30 pm
- 15... VFW Sunday Brunch, 504 Washington St., 9:30 am
- 17... Central Kansas Partnership Meeting, 1400 Main St., 11 am
- 19... Chamber Coffee: TCI Answering Service, 5810 Anchor Way, Program at 9:30 am on the Chamber's Facebook Page or YouTube Channel**
- 19... Ribbon Cutting: Corinthians Hill, 464 NE 20 Ave, 10:30 am**
- 19... Third Thursday - Summer Street Stroll with Food Trucks
- 20... VFW Post 3111, Corn Hole League, 504 Washington St., 7 pm
- 20-22... USSSA Baseball Tournament, Great Bend Sports Complex
- 22... USD 428 High School - Graduation
- 24... Chamber Blue Informational Meetings, Chamber of Commerce Board Room, 1125 Williams St., 12 pm, 2 pm, 3:30 pm & 5:15 pm**
- 24... Mental Health Awareness Day Celebration, Barton County Courthouse Square, 3:30 pm
- 25... USD 428: Last Day of School!!
- 26-27... KSHSAA State Baseball Tournament, Great Bend Sports Complex
- 26... Chamber Coffee: VFW - Post 3111, 504 Washington St., Program at 9:30 am on the Chamber's Facebook Page or YouTube Channel**
- 26... Chamber After Hours: VFW Post 3111, 504 Washington St., 5 pm - 7pm, Program at 6pm**
- 27... GB Alive Final Friday, Forest Ave., 5 pm
- 27... VFW Post 3111, Corn Hole League, 504 Washington St., 7 pm
- 27... Military and First Responders Night Out: Dropping 22 Inc., Registration is required, 916 Williams St., 6 pm

Recurring Events:

Great Bend City Council Meetings, 1st & 3rd Mondays, 1209 Williams St., 6:30pm

Barton County Commission Meetings, Every Wednesday, Barton County Courthouse, 1400 Main St, Rm 106, 9am

Can't make it to the Weekly Chamber Coffee, watch online: [The Chamber's Facebook Page](#) or [YouTube Channel](#)

Visit greatbend.org/events/calendar for a full list of great events taking place throughout the month!

Kiwanis Club of Great Bend Inducted Several New Members on April 6th



Several new members joined the Great Bend Noon Kiwanis Club and were sworn in at a meeting earlier this month. Meetings are at noon on Wednesdays at Walnut bowl. Pictured are, back row, from left: Lindsey Krom-Craven from Nex-Tech, Matt Althouse from Eagle Radio, Scott Dewerff from Kan-Equip, Rick Wilson from Pawnee County Co-op and Jerry Carmichael from That Hipster Place. Front row: Sarah Stromski from Sunflower Diversified Services, Haley Ruble from Free Style Marketing, Diane Ponsin and her granddaughter, and Lee Ann June from the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce.

Sunflower's Gala raises over \$69,000 for people with special needs

Sunflower Diversified Services' supporters donated just over \$69,000 for children and adults with developmental disabilities and delays at the 17th annual Charity Gala.

"We are once again overwhelmed by the generosity of central Kansans," said Cody Harris, director of planned giving and community support. "It is always gratifying to know that our neighbors understand that Sunflower makes a real difference in people's lives."

During the live auction at the Feb. 26 event, \$16,915 was collected specifically for the non-profit agency's Invest in Kids Club. These proceeds are earmarked for the Early Education Center (EEC) and Incredible Years Preschool.

"These donations followed captivating testimony from Jaimee and Dr. Sam Beugelsdijk," Harris said. "They talked about the tremendous progress their young son has made with the help of our Autism Team. We are grateful to them for sharing their family's story."

The Beugelsdijk's son, John, was the first participant in the Applied

Behavior Analysis (ABA) program early in 2020. ABA is designed for children up to age 5 who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder medical diagnosis.

"We appreciate all Gala attendees, donors, sponsors and volunteers," Harris emphasized. "They contributed their time, money and talents to infants, toddlers and adults with special needs. Our staff and clients couldn't be more grateful."

Harris also noted that Auctioneer T.R. Esfeld and Emcee Dr. Mike Burdett kept the crowd of over 190 people entertained throughout the evening at the Great Bend Events Center.

"Everything and everyone came together for the Gala, which is our biggest fundraiser of the year," Harris noted. "Fundraising is crucial to filling financial gaps to help pay for medical and dental care, therapies, adaptive equipment, communication devices and many other items and services."

Sunflower serves infants, toddlers and adults in Barton, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties. It is in its 57th year.



KTE Hosts Successful "Shoot Like a Girl" Event

Kansas Trophy Experience recently hosted an exclusive all female event featuring their lodge and a larger purpose of

introducing hunting and shooting sports to women in a fun and safe atmosphere. KTE posted this to their Facebook page, "What an

awesome opener we had for our 2022 Kansas Rio Turkey Hunts. We had the pleasure of hosting Cabela's and Bass Pro Shop's Signature Events Turkey Hunt. It was certainly an honor to be awarded this plaque representing outstanding

customer service and hospitality to our hunters. These guys do not take this award lightly. This is also the second year in a row

that we have been awarded this plaque. All this has become possible with our Team of guides, cooks, cleaners and last but not least our Families. Each

one plays an important part of the success of KTE and we thank you tremendously for all the continued efforts!"

Congrats to this business for being recognized for their customer service and outstanding hospitality!



Xpress Wellness Offers Student Physicals with Give Back to the School

Xpress Wellness is offering sports physicals for area students at a flat fee of only \$25. Plus, when they bring the completed form into their local Xpress Wellness Urgent Care, Xpress Wellness will donate \$5 back to their school's athletic

department. This is a great program that gives back to the communities they serve. Xpress Wellness is excited about this promotion. Click the link below to download the forms/flyers to area schools but the form can also be completed at the clinic.



Scott Donovan hits milestone in local radio sales

Scott Donovan has quite a collection of broadcasting awards but a recent recognition is especially gratifying to him.

Donovan is the first sales representative at Eagle Radio to earn a spot in the \$10 Million Sales Club for local ad sales. There are 28 Eagle stations in Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri.

In addition, Donovan earned the Top Gun Award in the company for the fifth consecutive year. He also brought home plaques for the Platinum Club, Market Leader and Half-Million-Dollar Club.

These commendations for his work during 2021 were announced during a recent sales conference in Hays.

Donovan has been on the sales side of the radio business for 18 years, developing relationships with many private businesses and non-profit entities. When he started he

had 30 clients and now has about 150.

“I am grateful that many of these clients have stayed with me for a long time,” Donovan said. “Some had one or two employees when they started and I have had the pleasure of watching their phenomenal growth over the years.

“I appreciate all my clients who have allowed me to be creative and offer innovative marketing solutions,” he added. “I write and produce most of the ads but I couldn’t do this without these trusted partnerships with clients.”

Donovan started his career in 1983 as a nighttime deejay; he still spends a little time on the



Scott Donovan

air and hosts live remotes now and then.

“But my main job is sales, which has changed so much in recent years,” he said, noting formats such as digital, TV streaming, Google and Facebook.

“I like to work with clients who appreciate collaborating with just one sales rep. It is always exciting to see their businesses grow and how I can be part of spreading the word.”

Donovan is active in many local charitable organizations and is the new state board member for CASA and vice president of the Great Bend Knights of Columbus Club.

He is a board member at Sunflower Diversified Services

and Great Bend High School Site Council. He also is a familiar face as the emcee at local fundraising events.

Donovan has donated his time to the Great Bend Optimist Club, Central Kansas CASA, Great Bend Zoological Society, Great Bend Noon Lions Club and Jobfest.

He also served Prince of Peace Parish on the Pastoral Council and Confirmation Life Teen Committee. Donovan was the 2006 Barton County Relay for Life chairman and a Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Ambassador for six years.

Matt Althouse, local Eagle general manager, said “Scott is passionate about the success of his clients, our radio station and our community. This passion, in turn, attracts others who want to be the best they can be. Scott and those around him are driven by his can-do attitude.”

New sleep technologist joins PVCH to care for patients

The new sleep technologist at Pawnee Valley Community Hospital (PVCH) is using her education and experience to perform sleep studies and care for patients at the facility’s Sleep & Diagnostic Center.

Caitlan Stice, who recently moved to Larned, is a registered polysomnographic technologist. She helps specialists who study, document and analyze sleep patterns, providing positive airway pressure (PAP) therapies when indicated.

“There are a number of situations in which you should consider an appointment for a sleep study,” Stice said. “If you feel unrefreshed in the morning, tired throughout the day and/or wake up multiple times a night, a sleep study might be in order.”

Gasping or snoring also can be

a concern, while hyperactivity in children may be a sign of sleep-disordered breathing, she added.

Stice outlined some additional information: during sleep, cycles go from light to deep; in the deep-sleep stage, organs are repaired; and if the airway is obstructed, the brain will tell the body to move to allow taking a full breath, which can lead to a change in cycles.

“Getting the proper rest is so important to our daily living,” Stice commented. “In addition, sleep disorders can result in

health issues such as diabetes, heart problems, high blood pressure and stroke.

“I look forward to providing care and education to patients, while performing high-quality sleep studies to help prevent some of these problems.”

Stice said that even though she has been at PVCH only a short time, she already knows that “patient care is the top priority in the sleep lab and all other areas of the hospital. I also have been very impressed with the personnel and equipment in the sleep lab, which offers top-of-

the-line care and treatment.”

The technologist began her sleep-medicine education at OIT in Klamath Falls, Ore., and earned an applied science degree with a certification in polysomnography in 2013.

She has worked in sleep labs in Aurora, Co., Portland, Ore., several towns in Wyoming, and Billings, Mt. Stice has worked with all ages at varying levels of complexity. She was born and raised in Aurora, Co.

Megan Donecker, Sleep & Diagnostic Center director, said “all of us are excited that Caitlan came from Montana to create a new home in this great community and provide excellent care to our sleep-deprived patients. Her education and years of experience are assets to our sleep lab and the community.”



Caitlan Stice

Pilot Club of Great Bend Grateful for Community Support of Autism Workshop

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: The Pilot Club of Great Bend with our community partners recently held our second Autism workshop and we would like to thank and acknowledge all the time and heartfelt effort of the Autism Committee, especially our chairperson Ros Neeland. I can tell you they have put in hundreds of hours to make this event happen. So, gratitude and thanks go out to Betty Schneider, Amanda Staab, Marcia Johnson, Mary Doherty, Barbara Watson, Dan Watson, Nancy Sundahl, Janice Walker, Vickie Richardson, and Cristy Suchy, Heather Quillin and Alyson Burkhart, with therapy dog Star, who represented Sunflower Diversified Early Education Center and were an immense help to us. Including are all the Pilot club member volunteers.

We especially want to give a big shout out to our many donors without their generosity this workshop would not have been possible. First, Barton Community College! Heather, in

booking the rooms, Ron, our IT man, and Food Service has all been great and we appreciate their teamwork with us. Chris McCord, from the Historic Wolf Hotel, put up our speakers, Kiwanis Club, The Great Bend Tribune, Cole Reif with Eagle Radio, Mpire Reality, the Chamber of Commerce, KWCH in Wichita, Perkins, Farmer's State Bank, Jim and Kathy Armatys, Medical Park Pharmacy, Keller Real Estate, Great Bend Coop, Marilyn Kopke, USD 428 and Trish Rieser, BCSS and Christie Gerdes, many anonymous donors, and our panel members Christine Dickerson and son Dawson, Grady Bolding, our young members Quincy and Mason, and Aaron Emerson, and Baker University.

Again, our gratitude and thanks to our presenters and speakers, Jenni Halstead, our Certified Rhythmic Movement Consultant, Melinda McDaniels, Assistant Special Education



Director for USD 489, Dr. Heitzman-Powell, Director of Community Research, and assistant professor at UMKC, and our mainstage speaker and national author, Beth Aune pediatric occupational therapist, She works with Desert Sands Unified Autism program development with emphasis on behavior and communication supports from Palm Desert, CA.

This workshop was a collaborative effort, and we look forward to our next workshop and informational seminar coming in the Spring of 2024.

2022-2023 Community Concert Season: 'Music of Legends'

Music of many legendary performers will be the recurring theme of the Golden Belt Community Concert Association's 2022-2023 season. These concerts will be available to association's 2022-2023 season members. The membership campaign for the season continues through May 13. Current members are receiving their renewal information by regular mail and will be contacted by concert volunteers.

New memberships are available to be purchased online, by mail or by phone throughout the campaign, or they can be purchased in person at the GBCCA campaign headquarters May 12 and 13 at the Best Western Angus Inn Courtyard in Great Bend.

The six concerts to be presented in the 2022-2023 season are as follows:

How Sweet It Is!: Oct. 3, 2022

Nashville-based Steve Leslie is an award-winning singer/songwriter/guitarist. In "How Sweet It Is!" he performs the music of one of his greatest influences, James Taylor, in an authentic and spellbinding concert event.

Decades of Love – Ernie Haase & Signature Sound: Oct. 14, 2022

"Decades of Love" highlights beloved favorites from the Gershwins to Nat "King" Cole, James Taylor, Disney, and John Legend, all in the lush four-part harmony that is the hallmark of Ernie Haase & Signature Sound, one of the finest Southern Gospel quartets.

Cherish the Ladies – Irish Folk Fest: Oct. 24, 2022

Cherish the Ladies is a New York-based all-female ensemble featuring flute/penny whistle, guitar, violin, keyboard & accordion. The group is led by All Ireland flute-and-whistle champion Joanie Madden. Formed in 1985, the ladies have played around the world, including the White House and the Olympics.

The Patsy Cline Project – Lisa Brokop: Feb. 26, 2023

Lisa Brokop's warm, rich voice and accompanying band will pay homage to one of country music's greatest ladies, Patsy Cline. Sit back, relax and enjoy many of Patsy's classic hits including Crazy, Sweet Dreams and "Walkin' After Midnight."

Forever Simon and Garfunkel – The Everly Set: March 14, 2023

Starring award-winning singer-songwriters Sean Altman and Jack Skuller, this concert celebrates the best-selling duo Simon and Garfunkel with humor, soaring energy, charm, and laser-precise harmony.

Beginnings – Chicago Tribute Band: April 22, 2023

This group is a tightly woven structure of musical talent that brings to life the original and glorious music of Chicago. Bringing out the guitar riffs, hopped up vocal melodies and power of the famous brass section of the

original Chicago makes this group the Ultimate Chicago Tribute Band.

Admission to the concerts is by season membership only. No single concert tickets are available. Concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. and take place at the Great Bend Municipal Auditorium, Lakin and Stone. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Season memberships are now available at the same low prices of \$50 for adults; \$10 for full-time enrolled students; \$110 for a family membership including two adults and all dependent children living in the same household; and \$110 for a grandparent package for two adults and up to four minor grandchildren.

Current GBCCA members may renew online at www.goldenbeltcca.org if they wish. Those who are not current members but wish to join the association may call 620-793-2748; join by mail: GBCCA, P.O. Box 1795, Great Bend, KS

67530; join on the GBCCA web site; or go to the GBCCA headquarters at the Best Western Courtyard, 2920 10th St., Great Bend, from noon to 7 p.m. May 12, or from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 13.

New members who join the association before May 3 will receive as a bonus the final concert of the current season, Crocodile Rockin' – with Jim Witter.



Barton to host Annual Endowment Concert

The Barton Music Department will host the Endowment Concert, a fundraiser for music student scholarships, at 7:30 p.m. May 9 in the Fine Arts Auditorium. Advanced tickets can be purchased for \$10 at shows.bartonccc.edu or \$20 at the door. All proceeds go to the Music Endowment Scholarship fund. Donations will also be accepted at the door.

The concert will feature vocal and instrumental music groups including the Rock Band, Jazz Ensemble, Concert Band, Concert Choir, and Hilltop Singers.

Vocal Instructor Jessica Perez, who was once a music student at Barton and personally benefited from scholarships, said she encourages people to donate if they are able.

“Many students are only able to graduate from Barton because of the generosity of such donors and the Foundation. As an alumnus, I reflect now on how these scholarships were essential for me and my education. I could not have done it if it wasn’t for the donors. Now, I am happy to give back a little as a professor teaching here.”

Director of Instrumental Activities Dr. Luis Palacios said in addition to being a very important fundraising event, it is also a much-needed celebration of all the musicians’ efforts.



Musicians perform at a concert earlier in the year in the Fine Arts Auditorium.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our community to support these talented young musicians,” he said. “Our students have worked diligently and this will be a fun evening that you won’t want to miss.”

The endowment started in 1998 with the help of the Barton Foundation and has since helped numerous students participate in music at Barton. The Endowment Concert also helps benefit a program, which began in 2017, to provide tuition and fees scholarships to high school juniors and seniors who enroll in voice, piano or instrumental lessons.

For more information, contact Director of Instrumental Activities Dr. Luis Palacios at palaciosl@bartonccc.edu or (620) 792-9396.

Keep up with the latest Barton news here: news.bartonccc.edu

#Zero Reasons Why finds success in central Kansas schools

Participants in #Zero Reasons Why display a banner at Chase-Raymond High School. From left to are Superintendent Dr. Kylee McDonald, Teen Ambassador Kaitlyn and School Counselor Sheree Poskey.

If a recent orientation is any indication, it won’t be long before all the high schools in The Center for Counseling & Consultation’s service area are actively involved in the #Zero Reasons Why (#ZRW) campaign.

“We already have nine high schools participating and the other two are very interested,” said Julie Kramp, executive director of The Center. “I had hoped for this level of support and awareness. My hope wasn’t misplaced.”

#ZRW is a teen-led campaign to reduce teen suicide and emphasize that mental health is as important as physical health. The Center’s service territory is Barton, Pawnee, Rice and Stafford counties.

“The campaign so far has been very effective and I am eager to see what can be accomplished when more teenagers join in,” Kramp said. “When they learn what other schools have accomplished, we don’t have to beg them to get involved.”

More than 50 teens from the various schools participated in the orientation session.

“They learned about the history of #ZRW and how it works,” Kramp noted. “We also talked about how they can rally support at Banner Days, where teens can ask questions and pick up a release form for their parents to sign.”

A popular part of the orientation was a planned call to The Center’s Crisis Line.

The caller explained that a friend was self-harming and wondered how to help. The person answering the phone listened to the caller, who was quickly connected to the appropriate therapist.

“The therapist also showed concern for the caller because these types of calls aren’t easy to make,” Kramp noted. “The friend and caller were both connected to the resources they needed.”

Hoisington and Chase-Raymond high



schools hosted the in-person part of the orientation for those who participated by Zoom. Other schools now actively involved are Great Bend, Ellinwood, Central Plains-Claffin, Larned, Lyons, Stafford and St. John.

The schools are at varying levels of participation. In some cases, dozens of teens are active, while in others, principals are just starting to talk with students and teachers about how #ZRW can best be implemented in their schools.

Three pillars

The three pillars of #ZRW are: remove the stigma of discussing mental-health issues; build community support; and commit to education.

“We want to enhance what the schools are already doing to encourage conversations about mental health,” Kramp said. “Parents and the business community will have the opportunity to discover #ZRW. This is not just a program; it is an ongoing campaign to educate the entire community.”

High schoolers are now talking about what projects they can tackle by the end of the school year and during the summer, along with their goals for next year.

The Center for Counseling & Consultation is a Community Mental Health Center serving Barton, Pawnee, Rice and Stafford counties. Professionally trained personnel offer: individual and group therapy; marriage and family counseling; community-support services; community-based services; psychosocial rehabilitation; peer support; and medication management. The confidential 24/7 crisis hotline number is 800-875-2544.

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NEXT INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS:

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3:30PM
5:15PM



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