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For Immediate Release:

August 22, 2023

Great Bend Economic Development's IGNITE Rural Business Competition Ignites Excitement as Tickets Sales Open for the Grand Finale on October 5th in Great Bend

GREAT BEND – The anticipation is palpable as the IGNITE Rural Business Competition reaches its boiling point. With the top 10 businesses currently engaged in the intense semi-final round, undergoing in-person pitches to our esteemed entrepreneurship committee, the race to the finals is on. This October 5th, the crescendo of this captivating journey will culminate in a live showdown at the historic Crest Theater in Great Bend, Kansas.

On September 8th, we will unveil the exceptional finalists who will be vying for victory in the ultimate showdown at the Crest Theater. This landmark event promises not only high-stakes competition but also an empowering platform for emerging businesses in Barton County. The top three to five businesses that secure their spot in the finals will vie for a coveted grant, each representing a remarkable opportunity for growth and innovation. The grand prize of \$50,000 awaits the first-place winner, with second place taking home \$30,000 and third place securing \$10,000 to fuel their entrepreneurial dreams.

The journey of these competitors can be closely followed through the engaging narratives shared on Great Bend Economic Development's (GBED) social media channels and the official competition website, igniteks.com. This competition isn't just about the numbers—it's about fostering creativity, innovation, and empowerment among Barton County's entrepreneurs. The IGNITE Rural Business Competition stands as a testament to our commitment to effecting positive change in our community.

The live finale, set to unfold in the iconic Crest Theater, a cornerstone of downtown Great Bend, promises an unforgettable experience. With assistance from Barton Community College's Director of Theatrical Activities, Dan Williams, and Gary Parr of Parr Sound & Lighting, the stage will be transformed into a shark tank-style set, infused with the energy and excitement of this inaugural event. Enthusiasts and supporters are cordially invited to secure their seats by purchasing tickets at gbedinc.com/ignite or igniteks.com. Doors will open at 6:30 pm, offering attendees the chance to purchase refreshments in the Crest Theater's lobby. For our esteemed VIP Sponsors, an exclusive reception awaits on the balcony, complete with dedicated wait staff.

Sponsorship opportunities and ticket purchases can be explored further online at igniteks.com. Join us in celebrating innovation, entrepreneurship, and the remarkable spirit of Barton County's business community. Be part of history at the IGNITE Rural Business Competition Grand Finale—where dreams take center stage.

About GBED (Great Bend Economic Development):

Our goal is to sustain Barton county's long-term economic health and vitality through the retention, expansion, and attraction of businesses and development that enhance property values, increase personal income, and positively contribute to the citizens' quality of life of Barton County.

Great Bend Economic Development leads the charge in creating workforce initiatives to sustain our current employers as well as initiatives that will help to support new employers that move to the community. Employers and jobseekers are encouraged to reach out to GBED with questions and concerns and GBED will either pair you up with a workforce partner to help you accomplish your goals, or work with you one-on-one to create solutions and positive outcomes. Together we will create a strong and sustainable workforce pipeline that will enable us to continue to grow Barton County.

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

About IGNITE:

IGNITE Rural Business Competition is a dynamic platform aimed at empowering entrepreneurs in Barton County. The competition encourages creativity, innovation, and community engagement, offering valuable grants to deserving businesses to fuel their growth and success. For more information, visit igniteks.com.

