

# NewsLetter

Business and Economy

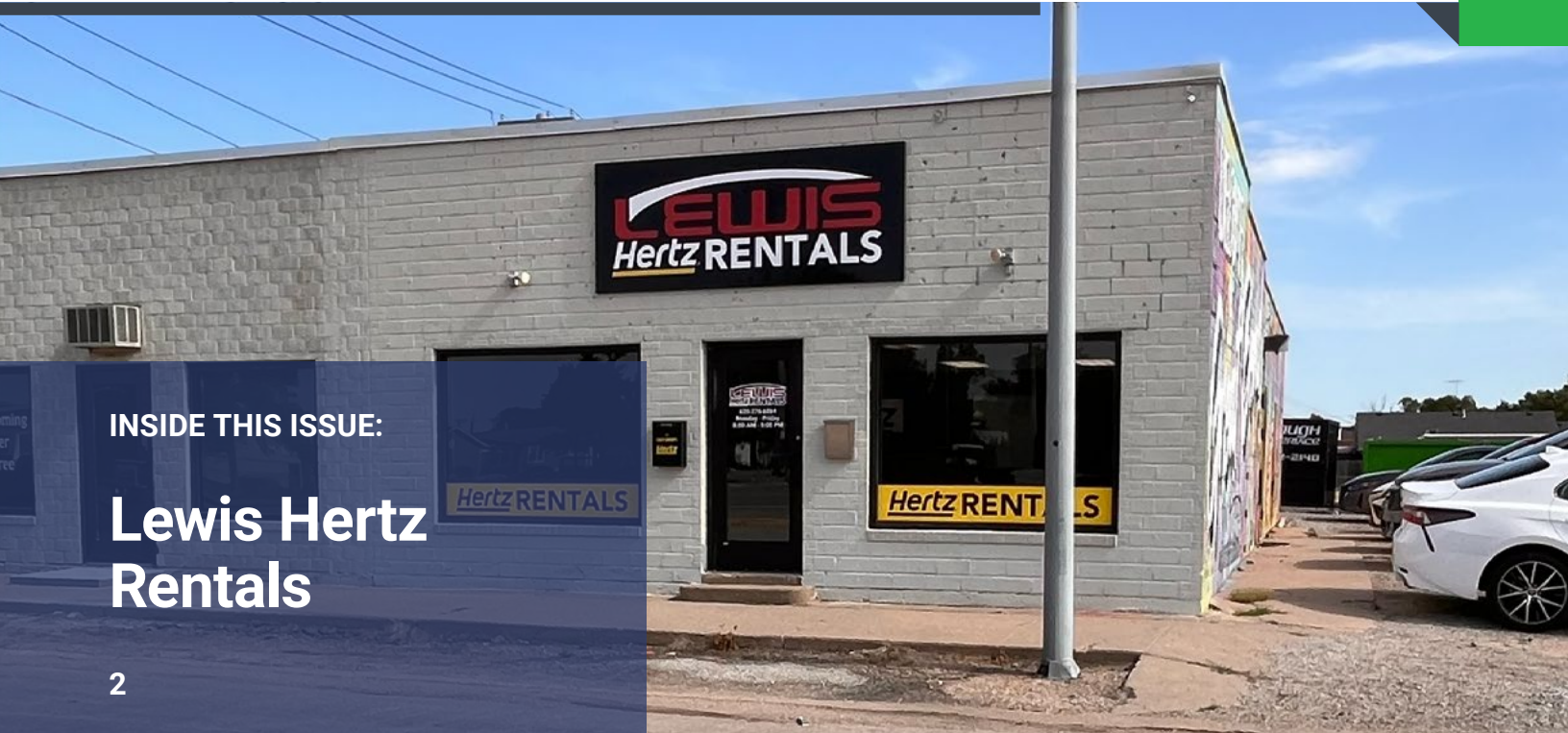
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## 2023-2024 Annual Report



### Bright Beginnings Open and Accepting PreK Enrollment

New childcare center is open and accepting enrollment for preschoolers

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### Fridays on Forest celebrates the arts

Check out our recap from Bat Cats Night in May and see a review of what to expect at the June 28th Fridays on Forest sponsored by the University of Kansas Health Systems.

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### CO.STARTERS CORE Class graduates 3 Starters

June 5th marked the end of the first cohort for CO.STARTERS Core.

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*Hertz Rentals opens  
in Great Bend*

### Lewis Hertz Rentals

Steve Clark, Area Manager

Colin Wohlford, Great Bend Manager

2602 10th Street

Great Bend, KS

620-603-7010

[Steve\\_clark@rentlewis.com](mailto:Steve_clark@rentlewis.com)

[www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)

### Hours:

Monday - Friday  
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

# Lewis Hertz Rentals

*Area Manager, Steve Clark, answered our questions about choosing Great Bend for the latest location for LAG Rentals*

### **Tell us about you and the business:**

We are a franchisee of Hertz. We are owned by the Lewis Automotive Group. We offer a wide array of vehicles, from compact cars to 15 passenger vans and everything in between. We also take pride in keeping a new and low mileage fleet. Different than a corporate location, we personally own all of our fleet. We also take pride in keeping our cars very clean. We also have locations in Garden City, Dodge City, Liberal, Hays, Salina, Manhattan, Lawrence, Winfield, Newton, Emporia, Sioux City IA,





Enid OK and Stillwater OK.

### Why did your company choose to locate in Barton County?

We felt that Great Bend would be a great location for a car rental business, simply because of the distance in any direction one would have to drive to find such a place.

## Entrepreneurship

# In Early May, GBED hosted IGNITE the Night with 10-39 Cafe

The IGNITE Rural Business Competition (2023) empowered 10-39 Cafe in Ellinwood. They honed their plan, received mentorship, and secured 2nd place (\$30,000) and the People's Choice award (\$5,000) at the live finals.

A celebratory event, "IGNITE the Night with 10-39 Cafe," filled the cafe with customers on May 17th (5-8 pm). Guests enjoyed appetizers, door prizes, and the vibrant atmosphere.

Learn more about IGNITE at [www.igniteks.com](http://www.igniteks.com).



## Entrepreneurship Resources with Great Bend Economic Development

Entrepreneurs are the key to success in rural communities. If you have interest in creating a business, reach out to us today for help with business planning, financial analysis and access to start up loan funding. Great Bend Economic Development partners with many experts in the entrepreneurship field to bring you all the resources you need to get started successfully.





Join "IGNITE the Morning," a monthly GBED gathering for passionate individuals at Perks Coffee (1216 Main St., GBK) on the 2nd Friday of each month (7:15 AM). This is a space to spark ideas, share experiences, and learn from seasoned entrepreneurs and young visionaries. All are welcome – no age limit!

It's FREE, but feel free to support Perks with their delicious coffee and treats.



## Focus Areas

# Follow along on our journey

We are elated with the momentum gained and plan to continue to capitalize on the current progress and continue pushing forward on many ground breaking projects.

If you are interested in *investing* in GBED projects, we would be happy to keep you updated on any specific categories of interest. The upcoming project categories that we will be seeking funding for are as follows:

- \* Housing
- \* Childcare
- \* Entrepreneurship
- \* Apprenticeships

*Anything you want to see in these newsletters that was not included? Please reach out to [marketing@gbedinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbedinc.com) with your feedback.*

## Workforce

# Apprenticeships

*Job Seekers can earn while they learn with apprenticeships*

Apprenticeship is an essential learning model that provides individuals with the opportunity to gain practical skills and knowledge in a particular trade or profession. It enables aspiring professionals to work alongside experienced practitioners, learn from their experiences, and receive hands-on training that prepares them for a career. Apprenticeship programs help bridge the skills gap between theoretical education and the practical application of skills, providing individuals with the necessary skills to thrive in the workplace. By offering a structured and supervised approach to learning, apprenticeships can help promote career advancement and economic mobility, leading to increased job satisfaction and higher earnings potential. Apprenticeship programs are essential to building a skilled workforce and sustaining economic growth.





## Entrepreneurship

# The Deadline to Apply for IGNITE Competition is June 13th!

The IGNITE Rural Business competition beckons entrepreneurs to sow their seeds of success in Barton County. This dynamic initiative equips new business owners and entrepreneurs with tools, resources, educational sessions, and investment opportunities, igniting a blaze of innovation and impactful entrepreneurship within the community. Participants stand to gain invaluable business exposure, mentorship, and the prospect of lucrative cash prizes.

This competition aims to empower, support, and cultivate entrepreneurs in Barton County. We're looking for passionate individuals with creative and innovative ideas to join our mission of fostering a thriving business community. GBED has seen a diverse range of businesses, from startups to early-stage concepts. Some contestants are local, while others are eager to relocate to Barton.

**Important Deadline: Applications Due June 13th**

The deadline for submissions is June 13th. The sooner businesses submit their application, the more time they have to refine their business plan and pitch with the support of GBED and the IGNITE committee. GBED can connect you with valuable resources, including the Small Business Development Center and experienced



Click the image above to see the competition overview for 2024! local business mentors. They are helping businesses to polish their business plan and position themselves for success in the competition.

### Life-Changing Prizes Await!

This isn't just any competition. We're offering a total of \$95,000 in prize money, with a whopping \$50,000 going to the first-place winner! Beyond the financial boost, you'll gain invaluable exposure for your business and ongoing support from the Barton County community.

**Join the Movement:**  
#GrowBartonCounty

With the help of our dedicated team and esteemed partners like NetWork Kansas and the Small Business Development Center, we're committed to connecting businesses with the resources they need to thrive. A special thanks to NetWork Kansas

for providing Venture Dash, the user-friendly portal for submitting applications and tracking your progress.

The competition unfolds in structured rounds, culminating in the electrifying IGNITE Finale event scheduled for October 10, 2024, where top contenders will shine.

### Ready to Take the Next Step?

Head over to [www.igniteks.com](http://www.igniteks.com) for complete details on the competition, including deadlines, requirements, and the application process. If you want to become a mentor or sponsor the live event, please get in touch with GBED President Sara Arnberger at [director@gbedinc.com](mailto:director@gbedinc.com).

Don't miss this incredible opportunity to launch your business and become a part of Barton County's exciting future. Apply today! Eligible startups—those under five years old with ten or fewer employees—are encouraged to seize this opportunity for growth and recognition. Applicants, aged 18 and above, must submit their entries by the June 13, 2024 deadline, with detailed guidelines and application forms available at [www.igniteks.com](http://www.igniteks.com). Additionally, check out our new overview video that provides insights into timelines, requirements for each round, and more. We are igniting the spirit of entrepreneurship in Barton County!





## Childcare

# Bright Beginnings Open and Seeking Preschoolers

Advancing Barton County Childcare (ABCC) held a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house to celebrate the grand opening of their new daycare center, Bright Beginnings, on May 2nd. The event took place at 4507 Farmers Plaza, situated at the corner of 10th Street and K-96 Highway.

Advancing Barton County Childcare, spearheaded by Great Bend Economic Development, undertook the vital mission of securing funding and constructing a cutting-edge group daycare center in Great Bend. Representatives from funding partners, contractors, board members, and staff were present to share insights about the center.

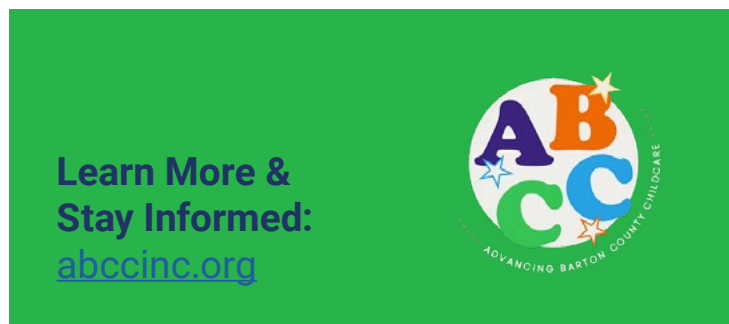
Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony conducted by the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, the public was warmly invited to tour the facility. **Bright Beginnings is now open and accepting preschool enrollment.**



Top: Megan Barfield (Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, President) welcomes the community to the Ribbon Cutting ceremony on May 2nd. Advancing Barton County Childcare (ABCC) board members, architects, construction managers, and ABCC director, Sara Arnberger shared the need for childcare and the journey to completion with the community.

Below: In between rain showers the Chamber ribbon cutting ceremony concluded in front of Bright Beginnings.

Bottom: Sara Arnberger poses with representatives from the Children's Cabinet and Trust of Kansas in front of the mural by local artist, Melanie Ryan.





## Great Bend Alive Bat Cat Night was a huge success!

Great Bend Alive's May 31st Fridays on Forest event, held on Forest Avenue from Williams to Main from 5 pm to 9 pm, celebrated the beloved Great Bend Bat Cats baseball team before their season opener on June 1.

Over 1,350 attendees enjoyed live music from Dallas Pryor and The Lazy Wayne Band, delicious food, and fun at every turn.

### A Home Run for Bat Cats Fans:

The Bat Cats joined the festivities following the Great Bend Alive Parade Through Time. Fans had the chance to meet the players, participate in a scavenger hunt, and enter to win awesome giveaways sponsored by Pryor Automatic Fire Sprinklers.

### Looking Ahead to a Summer of Fun:

This was just the first of many exciting Fridays on Forest events planned for 2024. Mark your calendars for the **last Friday of each month** between now and October! Great Bend Alive is always looking for new sponsors and partners. If you're interested in getting involved, contact GBED staff at 620-796-2407 or [marketing@gbedinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbedinc.com). You can also stay informed by following Great Bend Alive on social media.

Don't miss out on the fun! Join us for the next Fridays on Forest event and be part of the vibrant Great Bend community!

### Join us for the next Fridays on

**Forest on June 28th!** Great Bend Alive presents Fridays on Forest, sponsored by University of Kansas Health System! The event will take place on Forest Avenue, from Williams to Main, on **June 28th**. This month, we are Celebrating the Arts. Barton Arts Movement will have their Art Alley Showcase again this year, there will be activities for the kids, and some fun giveaways!

**What to expect?** Come after work with your friends, family or coworkers and sit outside with a beverage in your hand and enjoy some great food, great music, and a great time! Alcohol will be served in the district, but CANNOT be brought into the district from outside. NO Smoking and no pets in the district, Thank you!

This is a family atmosphere, feel free to bring the whole gang! There will be security to ensure the safety of you and our properties. Worried about bathrooms?! Don't be, we've got you covered! Bring your appetite - you'll



Click the image above to see our TikTok from May 31st!

Click the image below to learn more about June 28th's Friday on Forest!



have plenty to choose from!

**Calling All Rule Enforcers!** Be a Fridays on Forest Gatekeeper and ensure a fun, safe environment for all. Get free drink tickets and help us make each event a success! Sign up now, and click [HERE](#)







**More Parade Pictures**



# Great Bend Alive Parade through Time

Great Bend Alive was delighted the community showed up to watch and participate in the Great Bend Parade Through Time. Kicking off the City of Great Bend’s June Jaunt festival, this parade promised to be an exciting celebration of Great Bend’s rich history.

Parade goers enjoyed inflatable costumes, a 30ft flag, a submarine replica, classic cars, World War II vehicles, and so much more. Dance performances from a local studio and the Great Bend High School danceline entertained parade goers in front of the grandstand. Great Bend Alive volunteers and their families also showcased balloon “fireworks” to

represent our vibrant organization.

The Great Bend Tribune printed a special “Parade through Time” edition with information on the parade entries. The 8-page issue leans into the history of GBK. Extra copies are available at the GBED office.

We are incredibly grateful to the City of Great Bend for partnering with us. The City’s streets department, police and fire departments, and community coordinator’s office played crucial roles in making this parade happen, and we extend our heartfelt thanks for their support and collaboration.

The GB Alive Events team was fully activated for this parade! Sarah Maneth, a GB Alive committee member, kept the eras moving by playing music at the grandstand. Meanwhile, Shannon Townes, a GB Alive committee member and Eagle Country radio personality, emceed the parade alongside Sara Arnberger, the GB Alive director.

Our parade Grand Marshal, Rose Kelly, rode in “Miss Buttercup” with Barton County Historical Society Board Member, Carl Helm.

The Bat Cats Baseball Team pulled double duty, helping with setup and teardown at Fridays on Forest, and participating in the parade—even wearing some of the inflatable costumes!



For the latest updates follow Great Bend Alive on:

Facebook



Instagram



TikTok



GBEDinc.com/[mainstreet](https://www.gbedinc.com/mainstreet)





## Great Bend Alive

# Main Street, What does that mean?

Great Bend Alive is Great Bend Economic Development's downtown arm. Great Bend Alive is also a Kansas Main Street and Main Street America.

As a Main Street organization, the focus is on four main areas: Development, Design, Preservation, and Promotion/Events. Great Bend Alive is known for Fridays on Forest, while this has been our biggest success to date, we have committees in place to give equal focus to our other areas as well.

Be sure to follow Great Bend Alive on social media (click the links below) for upcoming events, opportunities to volunteer, sponsor events, or get involved in new ways!

### What is a Kansas Main Street?

Kansas Main Street Organizations are a self-help, technical assistance program that targets revitalization and preservation of downtown districts through the development of a comprehensive strategy.

Main Street America™ leads a movement committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

## MEET OUR PRESIDENT

[director@gbedinc.com](mailto:director@gbedinc.com)



Sara Arnberger is a native of Great Bend, Kansas and located back to the area to pursue the opportunities with economic development. Sara comes to Great Bend Economic Development with a bachelors degree from Friends University and close to 10 years of experience in management and customer service. Her experience combined with her passion for the area is sure to spur new growth.

## COMMS DIRECTOR

[marketing@gbedinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbedinc.com)



Communications Director, Lee Ann June, is a longtime local with a love for community. She is excited to join forces with GBED to promote and grow Barton County. Bringing a comprehensive set of skills that are valuable to the organization, she is delighted to contribute her talents to GBED's efforts. Mother of two, former business owner/instructor, and creative; she brings a unique perspective to this position. Motivated by the momentum, Lee Ann is invested in seeing the Great Bend area thrive.

## MARKETING & EVENTS INTERN

[intern.team@gbedinc.com](mailto:intern.team@gbedinc.com)



Hi! I'm Charley Sander, the newest addition to the team at Great Bend Economic Development. Born and raised in Great Bend, I am continuing my academic career at Barton Community College with a focus on marketing. I hope to further my skills in marketing while I learn alongside my new team! I'm excited to be a part of something so big and have the opportunity to give back to my hometown.







## Workforce

# CK Jobs, an Enhanced Platform for Employers

Central Kansas Jobs has undergone a significant website overhaul, emphasizing our commitment to connecting talent with career opportunities. Our upgraded platform is designed to empower employers and streamline the hiring process, featuring new enhancements for a better user experience.

Users can now create profiles and establish distinct company profiles, fostering seamless collaboration within organizations. A notable addition is the "Featured Company Highlight," allowing companies to showcase their profiles in a scheduled display for \$50 per month, providing heightened visibility to potential candidates.

While we introduce premium features, posting jobs and viewing resumes remain free for employers and job seekers, ensuring an inclusive and accessible platform. Explore the revamped website at [www.centrankansasjobs.com](http://www.centrankansasjobs.com) to leverage these new features and make Central Kansas Jobs your strategic partner in building successful teams.

## ARE YOU HIRING?

- FREE JOB POSTINGS
- CREATE A COMPANY PROFILE
- LOOK THROUGH RESUMES
- ADVERTISING AVAILABLE

centrankansasjobs.com

central kansas

# JOBS

## Development

# Attention Manufacturers!

Did you know there are funds available to assist in your expansion projects? Get in touch with us today to find out how to take advantage of the State's incentive programs for manufacturing. Whether you're expanding machinery, building space, capital improvements in general, hiring new employees or

re-training existing ones, there are programs that are in place to help you and we're here to help make it happen!

Check out the list of all Kansas Business Incentives [here](#) and get in contact with us at [director@gbedinc.com](mailto:director@gbedinc.com) if you feel like you might qualify.



Brush Up BC programs sees another Pawnee Rock resident to take advantage of these grant funds.

## Housing

# Brush Up BC

Great Bend Economic Development supports Brush Up Barton County, offering grants for exterior painting projects to eligible homeowners. With a \$5,000 annual budget, the program allocates up to \$1,000 per project, enhancing community aesthetics and property longevity. Learn more at [www.gbbedinc.com/housing](http://www.gbbedinc.com/housing).





## Entrepreneurship

# Entrepreneurs Thrive with CO.STARTERS Program

Great Bend Economic Development, Inc. (GBED) recently completed the CO.STARTERS Core program, a ten-session course designed to empower entrepreneurs with the tools and insights needed to bring their business ideas to life. The program focused on lean business modeling methods, encouraging participants to test small models and receive real-time feedback from customers.

With a global presence in over 200 communities, CO.STARTERS has a proven track record of success. In Great Bend, the program was facilitated by GBED, guiding entrepreneurs through every stage of their business journey. The ten-week program began on April 3rd, with sessions held on Wednesday evenings.

Lee Ann June, Communications Director for GBED, praised the program, stating, "CO.STARTERS Core was the perfect addition to our suite of classes for entrepreneurs. It guided 'starters' through the essentials needed for business sustainability." The core beliefs of CO.STARTERS—simplicity, community focus, and individual investment—resonated well with the participants.

GBED's experience with the IGNITE Rural Business competition highlighted the need for more support and education for local entrepreneurs. CO.STARTERS addressed this need, recognizing the crucial role small businesses play in the local economy.

We are proud to announce that the first cohort included three "starters" who have launched their businesses. This success marks a new chapter for entrepreneurship in Great Bend. GBED will host another cohort this Fall. Join us in supporting our local entrepreneurs and fostering a vibrant business community. Stay tuned for application details.



Top: Regan Reif, one of the CORE facilitators, alongside Jeremy Elliott (not pictured), commemorated the first group to complete the program with Celebration Night. Each participant gave an "elevator pitch" and participated in a tradeshow showcasing their new business ventures.



Michelle Moshier, Kassandra Razo, and Heather Ward participated in the first cohort. These three, along with their facilitators, began as strangers and, through the 10-week program, became friends and champions for one another.





# Upcoming Events and Business Education

**6**  
JUNE

## Business Credit

Thursday, June 6  
6:00 - 7:30 PM  
ONLINE  
<https://www.sba.gov/event/45807>

**17**  
JUNE

## Growth<sup>360</sup> (10 Week Class)

Monday, June 17  
9:00 AM - Noon \$899  
4747 Troost Ave Kansas City, MO  
<https://www.sba.gov/event/49049>

**8**  
JUNE

## Simple Steps for Starting your Business-Basics

Saturday, June 8th  
9:30 - 11:30 AM  
<https://www.sba.gov/event/45806>

**20**  
JUNE

## Technology Evolution Symposium: Staying Ahead in a Dynamic Business Environment

Thursday, June 20  
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM 3950 Newman Road Joplin, MO  
<https://www.sba.gov/event/46621>

**15**  
JUNE

## Financial Statement Basics

Saturday, June 15  
9:30 - Noon  
Online  
<https://www.sba.gov/event/45805>

**27**  
JUNE

## Get Started with Canva: Part Two (Hands On)

Thursday, June 27  
2:00 - 3:30 PM \$20  
WSU Hughes Metroplex - Wichita  
<https://www.sba.gov/event/49076>

**15**  
JUNE

## Sources of Funding

Saturday, June 15  
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM  
Online  
<https://www.sba.gov/event/45804>

**28**  
JUNE

## Fridays on Forest Celebrate the Arts!

Friday, June 28  
5:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.  
No Tickets Needed Thanks to our Sponsor: University of Kansas Health System  
Forest Street between Main & Williams in Great Bend  
Learn more: [greatbendlive](https://www.greatbendlive.com)

[Go to www.gbedinc.com](http://www.gbedinc.com) and scroll down to the calendar for even more classes with descriptions & links.

## Education

# SBDC & SBA Classes

Click on the Class Name for the Link to Registration



U.S. Small Business  
Administration



### [Kansas APEX Accelerator's Guide to Successful Proposal Writing](#)

Wednesday, June 12th  
online  
9:30 am - 11:30 am

### [Financial Projections](#)

Saturday June 15th  
online  
2:15 pm- 4 pm

### [Business Law and Related Tax topics for Emerging Business](#)

Tuesday June 18th  
online  
9 am - 11 am

### [QuickBooks Online: Training for Beginners](#)

Tuesday June 18th  
online \$179  
9 am - Noon

### [Technology evolution Symposium: Staying Ahead in a Dynamic Business Environment](#)

Thursday June 20th  
3950 Newman Road  
Joplin, MO 64801  
8am- 4 pm

### [QuickBooks Online for Intermediate Users](#)

Thursday June 20th  
Online \$179  
8am- Noon

### [IRS Resources for Small Businesses](#)

Thursday June 20th-  
online  
11am - 12 pm

### [Grant Prep Boot Camp Workshop](#)

Friday June 21st  
online  
9 am - 11 am

### [Market Research](#)

Tuesday June 25th  
online  
9 am -11 am

### [Sales & Use Tax for Retail Businesses](#)

Tuesday June 25th  
online  
9 am - noon

### [Disaster and Business Continuity Planning](#)

Tuesday June 25th  
online  
Noon - 1 pm

### [Sales & Use Tax for Construction Contractors](#)

Tuesday June 25th  
online  
1 pm - 3 pm

### [DIBBS Training](#)

Tuesday June 25th  
online  
1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

### [How to Stand Out in a Competitive Market with a Capability Statement](#)

Wednesday June 26th  
online  
1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

### [eMail Marketing and CRM \(Customer Relationship Marketing\)](#)

Thursday June 27th  
online  
9 am - 11 am

Please note that online registration will close at noon the day before each event.



***“Economic development is not a science, but an art, and a combination of forces and factors that must come together in the right way at the right time.” - James E. West***



**Watch our 2023 Year in Review**

## Let's keep in touch

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### In the next issue



- **Featured Business**
- **Entrepreneurship Class Update**
- **Update on Childcare Center in Barton County**
- **GB Alive, Fridays on Forest, and More!**



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LinkedIn



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Website

