

NewsLetter

Business and Economy



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Annual Report



Fr Fridays on Forest looks to 2024

We are sad to see the end of the season but what a great year, but it's fun to look back at a great year!



IGNITE Kicks off 2024 Competition

After an exciting ride to the finals and beyond, GBED is please to announce the latest competition. The new year kicks off with a Chamber After Hours!



HireWorks - Nov. 8th

Job Fair, Business Expo, and an educational session will be on the agenda for the Grow Workforce partnership - HireWorks.



*A Boutique Owner's Journey
in Clafin, Barton County*

Front Street Merchant

Cheryl Hickel, Owner
200 West Front Street
Clafin, KS

shop.frontstreet@hotmail.com

PHONE: 620-786-5411

House Hours:

Wed - Fri: 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sat: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Find them on:

[Facebook](#)

Front Street Merchant

*Navigating Challenges and Triumphs
in Retail Business*

Tell us about you and your business:

I had previously owned a business in Clafin, prior to opening Front Street Merchant. It was a great passion of mine, and I enjoyed the 8 years I operated that gift store. I closed my doors to look after grandkids, and have more time with family. After several years of discussing opening a boutique to bring a place to shop to Clafin, an opportunity landed in my lap to open Front Street. The name comes from the street where my business is located.

We are open Wednesday - Saturday. I have found a great balance of being able to spend time with family, and give a shopping opportunity to our community.



Why did you choose to locate your business in Barton County?

I have lived in Barton County my whole life. I moved to Claflin about 40 years ago, and it was the perfect town to bring a store to. Small town support can't be beat.

Why do you like to do business in Barton County?

I like that Barton County supports all the small surrounding towns.

What did your startup plan and timeline look like?

I spent about a year developing a business plan that I liked. The building was owned by my husband so we were able to get right in and get started on renovations. We started in 2019 thinking of names, and by the end of the year, in November, we were open!

From Babies to Foodies, a Gift for Everyone on Your List.



Mark Your Calendar

Nov. 17

Pink Friday

Nov. 18

Holiday Open House 30% off!

Nov. 24

Friendsgiving

Nov. 25

Small Business Saturday

[Find them on Facebook](#)



Owner, Cheryl Hickel, shows off some of the cuddly gifts for children and babies. Slumber Kins are stuffed animals that come with a book.



Do you have any advice for entrepreneurs starting out?

If you have a dream go for it! Don't be scared, and have faith!

Anything else you'd like to share about your business experience thus far?

Always be open to changes and new things. The world is always moving on and sometimes you have to work really hard to keep up. Be willing to adapt your business with the times, while also trying to keep the bones of your business in tact.

What obstacles have you faced and how did you overcome them?

We opened our doors in November of 2019, and had an amazing holiday season.

In 2020, COVID hit, and we had to close the business down for a month after working hard to bring it to life. Once the shut down had lifted, we created an event to bring people out and get people get together again. We have continued on with that tradition ever since.



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 with your feedback.



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 fund-

ing. Great Bend Economic Development partners with many experts in the entrepre-

neurship field to bring you all the resources you need to get started successfully.



CONNECT

Contact GBED to discuss your ideas and schedule your first business planning meeting. director@gbedinc.com



ASSESS

Determine your financial ask and create a thorough business plan through several free business consultation meetings.



PREPARE

Have your loan documents prepared so your pitch ready!



FUNDING

We'll help you use your loan package to present to banks, and other funding opportunities.

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 if you feel like you might qualify.



MEET OUR PRESIDENT

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



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 sharpened her skills in marketing, planning, and communication at the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, and now 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 GBED's momentum, Lee Ann is invested in seeing the Great Bend area thrive.



Great Bend Alive

#FridaysonForest

A Frosty End to Fridays on Forest in 2023

Great Bend Alive, the downtown arm of Great Bend Economic, hosted 7 fun-filled Friday nights in downtown GBK this year.

We are sad to see the end of the season but what a great year! Looking back at the season, we saw new bands play in the entertainment district, fan favorites come back, a little taste of bluegrass to kick off the year, plus country, and classic rock to boot! Bat Cats brought the 'cool' factor with their dunk tank and attendees got to drench players, coaches and even (GBPD) Chief Haulmark! New vendors got to test drive the event, BAM (Barton Art Movement) brought some fresh art to the Art Alley and handed out a "Bammy" to the fan-favorite. We had our first flashmob

with the help of all the local dance studios in conjunction with Barton Community College's Dance Department. Class reunions enjoyed the atmosphere along with our regular attendees, and newbies. We love seeing those folks that run into

Big shout out to our sponsor, Eagle Communications for joining us on the frosty finale to Fridays this year! All of our sponsors made their event fun for all!

friends you haven't seen since the last Fridays on Forest. The event is more than a block party, it's a 3rd-place. 7-times a year, GB Alive has the pleasure of hosting the community.

As we look to 2024, GB Alive's Events and Promotions Committee will be putting together another great lineup of events. If you or your business is interested in sponsoring one of the events, please reach out to Lee Ann June, Communications Director at 620-796-2407 or marketing@gbedinc.com. 2023's sponsorships were all nearly sold by the end of 2022, so if you are interested please reach out soon!



SPONSORSHIP INCLUDES

Organizations, Individuals, or businesses can sponsor Fridays on Forest. Your sponsorship includes advertising with name/logo for the month of the event on our website, name/logo on a banner at the event, as well as shout-outs on the radio and social media the week of the event. Each table at the event has a table tent with your name/logo and a QR Code link to that night's menu.

For the latest updates follow Great Bend Alive on:

Facebook

Instagram

TikTok

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





Date: November 13, 2023
Time: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Location: Dry Lake Brewing, 1305 Main St

Entrepreneurship

IGNITE 2024 Firing Up Entrepreneurship During Global Entrepreneurship Week, Nov. 13 - 17

We're excited to announce the launch of the second annual IGNITE Rural Business competition, right in the heart of Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW). GEW, a global initiative (you can learn more at www.gew.org), celebrates entrepreneurship and innovation on a worldwide scale. And what better way to embrace this spirit than by participating locally in IGNITE 2024?

During GEW, we'll be joining millions of entrepreneurs, mentors, and innovators from around the world who share the same passion for driving change and fostering innovation. IGNITE is all about embracing that spirit, and we're proud to be a part of this global movement. Watch our local social media channels during the week of Nov. 13th - 17th for spotlights on successful entrepreneurs in Barton County.

It's time to fire up your entrepreneurial spirit because IGNITE is back for its second annual competition! Building on the incredible success of our first year, we're ready to make this one even more spectacular. Join us for the kick off celebration at Dry Lake Brewing on Nov. 13th between 5 pm - 7 pm for a Chamber After Hours as we celebrate the kick off of IGNITE 2024!

IGNITE 2024 offers more educational classes, more mentorship, and more rewards. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a newcomer with a spark of an idea, this competition is your platform to shine.

With the addition of classes to help equip you with the skills to navigate a startup, and our mentors will be your guides on this exciting journey. IGNITE is a celebration of entrepreneurs, innovation, and collaboration.

Last October, we witnessed amazing stories of dreams coming to life and businesses taking off. IGNITE became a launchpad for local entrepreneurs, providing mentorship, resources, and opportunities. Now, we're gearing up for round two.

Get ready to IGNITE your passion, dreams, and future. Stay tuned for updates, and let's make IGNITE 2024 a monumental success, together!

For more information go to igniteks.com. We are seeking partners to mentor contestants and share their insights, as well as sponsors for the live event on October 10th, 2024.

Hireworks



GROW WORKFORCE

[Visit Website](#)

Workforce

Workforce Partnership: HireWorks coming Nov. 8th

The Barton County Workforce Partnership is working to create more opportunities for employers

Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) along with partners from Barton County's Grow Workforce group, have created an opportunity for employers and jobseekers in the Barton County area. This year's workforce event, HIREWORKS, organized by the Grow Workforce Partnership, promises to inform and connect the local

workforce.

HIREWORKS is set to bring together employers, hiring managers, and business leaders from across Barton County for an afternoon of engaging discussions, invaluable networking opportunities, and the chance to establish meaningful connections. Job seekers are encouraged to attend to get support and training to be competitive in today's job market. In breakout sessions, led by KansasWorks, Barton Community College, and career coaches, jobseekers will learn

what employers are looking for today and how to apply those characteristics to be successful in the job market. These breakout sessions are provided to teach jobseekers to master the soft skills necessary to land their dream job!

Key Highlights:

1. Panel Discussion: An hour-long panel discussion featuring industry experts who will share their insights on employment resources, effective hiring strategies, and successful management techniques. This session promises to equip

EVENT DETAILS:

Date: November 8, 2023

Panel Discussion & Networking Social:
2:00 pm to 4:00 PM

Job Fair & Business Expo: 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Location: Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th Street

Extras: Lana's Catering and Goodies will be set up at 3 pm



attendees with practical takeaways to optimize their workforce processes.

2. Networking Social: Following the panel discussion, participants will have an hour to network, delve deeper into the panel discussions, share experiences, and forge valuable connections that can potentially lead to collaboration and growth.

3. Job Fair & Business Expo: The job fair and business expo provide businesses with the opportunity to showcase their organization and connect with potential candidates. Job seekers can participate in breakout sessions throughout the event and have a chance to win prizes at the end of the evening.

The presence and active participation of Barton County employers in HIREWORKS can have a significant impact on their organization's growth trajectory. By joining this event, attendees will not only gain access to valuable knowledge but also establish a strong network within the local business community.

To reserve a spot at HIREWORKS or inquire about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Lee Ann June, GBED Communications Director at marketing@gbedinc.com or visit www.gbedinc.com/growworkforce. Early registration is highly recommended, as space is limited. Let's unite to elevate our workforce strategies, empower our businesses, and contribute to the continued prosperity of the Barton County area. We eagerly await your participation at HIREWORKS and look forward to sharing this enriching experience with you.



REGISTER TODAY AT
WWW.GBEDINC.COM/GROWWORKFORCE



WORKFORCE PANEL

An hour-long panel discussion featuring industry leaders who will share their insights on employment resources, effective hiring strategies, and successful management techniques. This session will equip you with takeaways to optimize your processes.

NETWORKING BREAK

Following the panel discussion, there will be an hour of networking and a deeper dive into some of the panel discussions, share experiences, and forge valuable connections that can potentially lead to collaboration and growth.

JOB FAIR/BUSINESS EXPO

The job fair and business expo provide businesses with the opportunity to showcase their organization and meet potential candidates. Job seekers can participate in breakout sessions throughout the event, and be entered to win prizes at the end of the evening.*

Employer and Job Seeker WORKFORCE EVENT

GREAT BEND EVENTS CENTER | NOVEMBER 8
WORKFORCE PANEL | 2 PM
JOB FAIR & BUSINESS EXPO | 4 PM - 7 PM
CURIOUS ABOUT SPONSORSHIPS? EMAIL US AT MARKETING@GBEDINC.COM

* Job Seekers have a chance to win one of 3 prizes (each valued at \$320 or more)!

Click the image above to learn more about HireWorks or to RSVP for the event.



Interested in purchasing 75% tax credits?

Interested in purchasing 75% tax credits? Please reach out ahead of time to Sara Arnberger at director@gbedinc.com and get more information about how you can take advantage of them. Click the link below to download a pdf.

Tax Credit PDF

Upcoming Events and Business Education

How to Write a Business Plan

6
NOV

Monday, Nov. 6, 2023
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM Cost: \$FREE
Finnup Center for Conservation Education
312 East Finnup Drive, Garden City
<https://www.sba.gov/event/37315>

How to Start a Business

8
NOV

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM Cost: Free
Topeka Learning Center, 1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka
<https://ksbdc.ecenterdirect.com/>

Steps to Take & Resources for Starting a Business

6
NOV

Monday, Nov. 6, 2023
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM Cost: \$FREE
Finnup Center for Conservation Education
312 East Finnup Drive, Garden City
<https://www.sba.gov/event/37315>

Social Media for Service Based Businesses

9
NOV

Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023
10:00 AM Cost: \$FREE
WSU Hughes Metroplex, Wichita
<https://ksbdc.ecenterdirect.com/>

Podcasting for Profit: Master the Art of Business Podcasting

7
NOV

Tuesday, Nov 7, 2023
6:00 - 6:30 PM Cost: \$Free
Business Solutions Co-Working Space, Seward County Development Corporation, 303 N. Kansas Ave., Suite 102, Liberal
<https://ksbdc.ecenterdirect.com/>

Government Contracting Workshop

9
NOV

Thursday, Nov. 9, 2023
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Cost: FREE
Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, 120 West Ash Street, Salina
<https://www.sba.gov/event/37319>

HireWorks presented by the Grow

8
NOV

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023
4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Cost: Free for Job Seekers
Topeka Learning Center, 1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka
<https://ksbdc.ecenterdirect.com/>

Trademark Essentials: What You Need to Protect Your Business

17
NOV

Friday, Nov. 17, 2023
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Cost: FREE ONLINE or in person
FHSU, Hammond Hall Room 238, Hays
<https://www.sba.gov/event/37321>

[Calendar on the www.gbedinc.com](https://www.gbedinc.com)
[Home Page has class descriptions & links.](#)

Education

SBDC & SBA Classes

Click on the Class Name for the Link

[Adding Gratitude to Your Social Media Strategy](#)

Thursday, Nov. 2
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

[So, You're Thinking About Selling Your Business](#)

Wednesday, Nov. 8 Cost: \$20
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

[Using Visual Media for Your Small Business](#)

Tuesday, Nov. 21
1:00 - 2:00 PM

[QuickBooks Online: Training for Beginners](#)

Tuesday, Dec. 12
9:00 - 12:00 PM \$149

[Hiring Your First Employee](#)

Tuesday, Nov. 7
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

[International Trade Opportunities and Resources Webinar](#)

Wednesday, Nov. 15
9:00 AM

[State Taxes for Retailers](#)

Wednesday, Dec. 6
10:00 AM - 12:00 AM

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

Thursday, Dec. 14
9:00 - 12:00 PM \$149

[Startup & Start Right](#)

Wednesday, Nov. 8
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

[How to Work with U.S. Patent & Trademark Office](#)

Friday, Nov 17
12:00 - 1:00 PM

[State Taxes for Construction Contractors](#)

Wednesday, Dec. 6
10:00 AM - 12:00 AM



“Economic growth is not an end in itself, but a means to an end – a way of improving people’s lives.” - Paul Krugman



In the next issue



- **Featured Business**
- **IGNITE Update**
- **Update on Loft Grants**
- **GB Alive, Fridays on Forest, and More!**

Let’s keep in touch

Great Bend Economic
Development, Inc.
3111 10th Street
Great Bend, Kansas 67530

620-796-2407
marketing@gbedinc.com
www.gbedinc.com

