

# NewsLetter

Business and Economy

Issue no. 8

*Great Bend*  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
A Barton County Partnership for Growth  
[www.gbenedinc.com](http://www.gbenedinc.com)



## GBED launches entrepreneurship competition, IGNITE Rural Business

On November 19, 2022, Great Bend Economic Development launched a new competition for entrepreneurs to open/start a business in Barton County. New inventions/businesses are encouraged to apply as well as startups. This competition exists to empower, support, and cultivate entrepreneurs. Here in Barton County, we strive to champion creativity and innovative thinking and complement a project or idea with the tools, resources, and investment necessary to see it thrive. We aim for this competition to be the first of many efforts to continue that mission in a positive and impactful way.

Those interested in competing will have the opportunity for exposure of their business, assistance from local business professionals, and three businesses are walking away with substantial prize money. With an emphasis on bringing business to Barton County, the Ignite committee is partnering with NetworkKansas and the Small Business Development Center. NetworkKansas

has facilitated the use of Venture Dash as the contestant portal. Venture Dash allows contestants to submit materials and track their progress. In addition to weighing in on the competition, both NetworkKansas and the Small Business Development Center connect contestants to mentors and assistance with their business plans.

IGNITE Rural Business is launching Friday in celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Week. This week the world is celebrating the entrepreneurship spirit with events like the IGNITE Rural Business competition and a push for entrepreneurial ecosystems. For more information about Global Entrepreneurship Week visit [www.genglobal.org](http://www.genglobal.org). If you are looking for local inspiration, GBED has interviewed some of Barton County's entrepreneurs and posted those videos on the [Great Bend Economic Development YouTube Channel](#), as well as [@GBEDinc on TikTok](#).

- Continued on Page

## The IGNITE competition

In round one, all competitors submit the necessary materials through the Venture Dash platform. The link to the portal is on the GBED website. In round two, the competition pool is narrowed. Businesses will be selected to engage in a one-on-one meeting with a business planning professional. To have viable businesses in the next round, each contestant will be paired with a local business mentor in a category of the contestant's desire. Contestants will have a final Q&A with the IGNITE Team before the final five contestants are chosen for the live IGNITE Finale event in October 2023.



**Click to Watch a short  
IGNITE Overview Video**

A few extra takeaways for those interested in entering the competition include startups (Startups are considered businesses less than 5 years old and with 10 or fewer employees) and all applicants must be 18 years and older. The application deadline is June 30th, 2023. Rules, eligibility requirements, guidelines, and applications are live and available on [www.gbедinc.com/IGNITE](http://www.gbедinc.com/IGNITE).

The live IGNITE Rural Business competition finale (on October 5th, 2023) will have participants pitching to our Jury in front of a live audience at the Crest Theater in Great Bend, then our Jury will conduct a Q&A session following every pitch. Composed of experts



from the private and/or public sectors with relevant business experience, the jury will base their decisions on innovation, creativity, long-term business strategy, and viability. The winner of the Grand Finale will win \$50,000! Second place is awarded \$30,000, and third place gets \$10,000.

Those following along the journey of the IGNITE Rural Business competition will vote online for the People's Choice Award and award a business with \$5,000.

## How to participate

If you like more information about being a sponsor of the live event or becoming a business mentor, please reach out to GBED staff at [marketing@gbедinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbедinc.com) or by calling 620-796-2407.

## MEET OUR PRESIDENT



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



I'm GBED's Communications Director, Lee Ann June. As a longtime local with a love for community, I am excited to join forces with GBED to promote and grow Great Bend. I bring a comprehensive set of skills that I believe will be valuable to this organization. Sharpening my skills in marketing, planning, and communication at the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, I am delighted to contribute my talents towards GBED efforts. Mother of two, former business-owner/instructor, creative; I bring a unique perspective to this position. I'm motivated by the momentum and invested in seeing the Great Bend area thrive.

**Do you have questions for GBED?**

**Submit questions [here](#) or by emailing [marketing@gbедinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbедinc.com)**

We are bringing back Sara's Asked & Answered. This video series came about to help the community understand what Great Bend Economic Development is working on and how businesses can utilize resources in the area. Submit your questions via email, post on the link above, or by calling 620-796-2407.

## Local Entrepreneurship Success Stories



Great Bend Economic Development celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week in November with a video series. We at GBED want to continue to spotlights these businesses throughout the year as we celebrate those entrepreneurs that have been successful. We hope to inspire the next wave of entrepreneurs with the advice, wisdom, and lessons these featured Barton County businesses have learned.

First up is Office Products Inc. owner, Kenny Vink. Kenny and his brothers, Terry and Craig, have grown the business that their father started 60+ years ago.

Watch Kenny's interview:



## GROW WORKFORCE: A Recruiting Incentive for Barton County Residents

Know someone who would love a great paying job in Barton County?

**Recruit them and GET PAID!**

How it works:

1. Pick an advertised job posting and share it with your friends and family who live outside of Barton County.
2. Your friend or family member moves to Barton County to fill one of the advertised positions and GBED pays you CASH for your recruiting efforts.
3. After your recruit completes 90 days of employment the employer will then match the cash you received from GBED.

Amount received is dependent on the job salary. For example: if the job you recruited for pays between \$35K - \$53K you will make \$500, if the job pays between \$54K-\$69K you will make \$750, and if the job pays \$70 + you will make \$1000!

Visit our page to view the advertised jobs to get recruiting OR visit our page if you are a business that would like to advertise a position.



To advertise your open positions contact us [HERE](#)

To learn more about the program, visit us [HERE](#)

## Interested in being on a GBED Board or Committees?

Are you interested in being a part of shaping Great Bend's downtown and Fridays on Forest? GBED is seeking board members for the Great Bend Alive Board.

Within the GB Alive board, members are asked to serve on one of these committees:

- Design
- Economic Vitality
- Organization Promotion

GBED is also looking for those interested in serving on the Housing Board. This is specific to industry professionals and those with experience in incentives development or market strategy.

Lastly, GBED is seeking Workforce Board Members. Those interested in the workforce board are asked to be employers and organization leaders that

deal in workforce training or incentives.

As well as:

- Apprenticeships
- Recruiting
- Retention

As we shape these committees/ boards we are looking to create positive change in these areas. Interested parties are to reach out directly to Sara Arnberger via email at [director@gbedinc.com](mailto:director@gbedinc.com).



# Apprenticeship in Barton County

Looking for ways to build your workforce pipeline? Apprenticeship might be the answer you've been looking for!

With this model, you are able to create a line of apprenticeships that takes someone from entry level to skilled positions within your company. Together with a mentor, your apprentice will participate in on-the-job-training, outside

education that you as the employer choose based on your goals and needs, and a structured timeline for progression in wages, core competencies all the way to completion.

Our partners at Hamilton-Ryker will work with you to create a custom apprenticeship program, provide funding to assist with training costs, and take care of all of the

reporting to the state office to ensure your apprentice is getting recognized by the state for their hard work and career advancement, all while our BCC partners help with your training needs.

To get more information or find out how this may benefit your company contact us [HERE](#)



## What is Apprenticeship?

Structured training programs which give you a chance to work towards a qualification. They help you gain the skills and knowledge you need to succeed in your chosen industry. Getting into employment earlier means there's lots of potential for you to progress in your career quickly.

Think of an apprenticeship as an opportunity for employers to invest dedicated time and expertise in their new hires, and an opportunity for the apprentice to gain the qualifications or expertise to finish and enter the company in a skilled position.

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[www.GBEDinc.com/gbwc](http://www.GBEDinc.com/gbwc)

*Please join us on December 7th to celebrate our Fall 2022 Internships*

Students will be presenting their electronic portfolios that showcase their internship experiences. Information will also be shared about the GBHS Internship program for businesses and students that are interested in participating during the 2023/2024 school year. All families, community members, businesses, and USD #428 students and staff are invited to attend!



**Great Bend High School**

*Internship Portfolio  
Presentations*

December 7, 2022 | GBHS Commons

6:00 pm: Networking/Appetizers

6:30 - 8:00 pm: Presentations



If you plan to attend, please RSVP by November 20th at the following link: [RSVP Here](#)

*We look forward to seeing you!*

Please contact Lacy Wolters with any questions: [lacy.wolters@usd428.net](mailto:lacy.wolters@usd428.net)





# Friday on Forest

Presented by GB Alive!

GB Alive is GBED's downtown development arm and we are committed to, not only Fridays on Forest, but many other downtown development initiatives to come.

Fridays on Forest run the final Friday of each month from April - November. While there are no more events planned for this year that doesn't mean the fun is over!

Thank you to those that participated in the 2022 season, and if you missed it, we will see you in April 2023 for a BIG kickoff event.

It takes a lot of help, hands, and support to throw a party every month. If you/your business is interested, please reach out today. We are working now to get the next season scheduled and we want to get you in for 2023!

Would you or your business be interested in being a part of the Friday on Forest fun? Here are a few ways to help:

## SPONSORSHIP

Organizations, Individuals, or businesses can sponsor



one of our Fridays on Forest events. Your sponsorship includes advertising with your name/logo for the month of the event on our website, your 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.

## PARTICIPATE

Organizations or businesses can participate in one of our Fridays on Forest events. Each event needs many hands setting up Forest Street in preparation for the hundreds of folks that come out to enjoy it. More help is needed as we tear it all down and leave the street better than we found it. For a donation, would your organization be interested in being the setup/cleanup crew?

## VOLUNTEER

Organizations, Individuals, or businesses can volunteer at Fridays on Forest events too! We need 12 volunteers at each event to be our gatekeepers. Each gatekeeper has a one-hour shift and asks our guests to abide by our rules:

- No outside food or drinks come into the event, and no drinks leave the consumption area.
- No smoking.
- No pets.

Gatekeepers also share any special events happening at that month's event.

Please reach out to GBED staff at [marketing@gbedinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbedinc.com) or call 620-796-2407.

Great Bend Alive is seeking Businesses or Individuals to

# SPONSOR FRIDAYS ON FOREST

Interested in Sponsoring one of the Fridays on Forest in 2023? Reach out to GBED Staff for more details on deliverables, available dates, and/or how you can help!

GB Alive is GBED's downtown development arm and we are committed to, not only Fridays on Forest, but many downtown development initiatives to come. [www.gbenedinc.com/gbalive](http://www.gbenedinc.com/gbalive)

Contact us today!  
[marketing@gbedinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbedinc.com)  
620-796-2407

For the latest updates follow Great Bend Alive on:

Facebook Instagram TikTok GBEDinc.com/gbalive





# Bringing new life to historic Downtown

Loft living can utilize the historic buildings in Great Bend's downtown corridor while adding to the available housing. By updating and filling those upper levels with households, downtown lives a new life and helps with the housing crisis.

"If we were to use the existing infrastructure that these historic buildings provide, we now have the ability to shorten our end goal timeline."

In combating the rural housing crisis, we have to consider every opportunity, traditional and outside the box. Of course traditional tells us we need a

new housing development, and while we certainly do not disagree, we saw a quicker timeline opportunity in a less traditional, route downtown loft living.

Great Bend's downtown corridor alone has over 200,000 SF of unused upper floor space. If we were to use the existing infrastructure (building, infrastructure, plumbing, etc.) That these historic buildings provide, we now have the ability to shorten our end goal timeline. In finding this opportunity, the next step was to provide funding assistance to enable downtown property owners to complete these loft and commercial spaces in a condensed timeline. As

these are historic buildings, there are many costs property owners will face to upgrade these unused/ vacant spaces.

The funding assistance comes in the form of our loft grant program. It will provide \$5.50 per interior SF of the property to help property owners spur forward to complete these extensive, but worthwhile projects. This project has the potential to create over 20 new residential units and a handful of new commercial opportunities.

Great Bend Economic Development is continuing forward with other more traditional housing solutions as well and will share those projects as they gain traction.

Learn more about the loft project and the funding opportunities available here:

<https://www.gbenedinc.com/downtowndevelopment>

\* Other state and federal funding opportunities for this project are available now. Reach out for more information.

## GBED Talks Loft Projects

On a brisk November afternoon, Sara Arnberger presented to 50+ City Managers from across Kansas at the Kansas Association of City/County Managers Conference. Sara shared the progress being made in Great Bend's historic downtown district utilizing the upper levels for housing.

Renue Boutique and Salon was the host location for GBED's presentation. This upper floor area of 1419 Main (pictured to the right) shows some of the history, character, and obstacles downtown property owners are up against, as many of the properties have not been touched in decades.

Sara's presentation covered incentives available to developers, the historic designation of downtown Great Bend, and projects that are currently underway with the help of Loft Grants.





## New Business Highlight: **Sunrise Staffing Services, LLC** Workforce Connector and Resource

*“Sunrise Staffing is a full-service staffing agency, fully equipped to provide temporary, temporary-to-hire, and direct placement staffing to virtually all types of businesses.”*

### **Briefly tell us about yourself**

My name is Chris Ryan otherwise known as Melanie Ryan's husband. Mel and I have two children: Alaycia Luebcke and Samuel Ryan. Alaycia is married to David Luebcke and they reside in Marysville, Kansas with their two children Simon and Russell. Samuel is currently a junior at Ozark Christian College in Joplin, Missouri. Mel and I love spending time with our grandkids and are active members of

Community Christian Church in Great Bend.

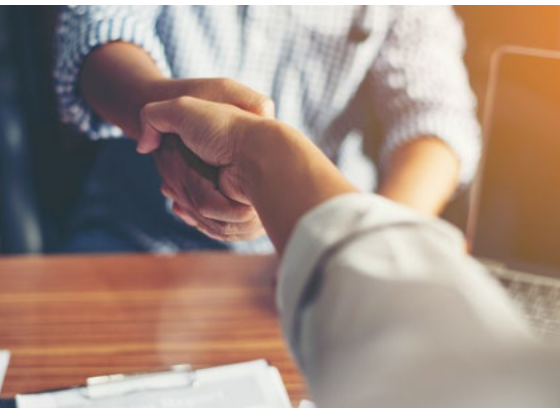
### **Tell us about your business**

For 24 years, I have been employed by Cynthia Kruse at Sunrise Staffing Services, LLC. I am in the process of buying the company with the transition scheduled to be complete by the end of the year. When I went to work for Cyndi, she had offices in Liberal and Dodge City. Since I have been with the company, we have expanded the business in Kansas and Oklahoma with a concentration in Central and Western Kansas. We expanded the communities we serve to include Great Bend, Liberal, Garden City, Dodge City, Guymon, Hutchinson, Hays, Hoisington, Hesston, Newton, Lyons, Sterling, McPherson, and Yoder, as well as many rural communities surrounding the aforementioned. Sunrise Staffing is a full-service staffing agency, fully equipped to provide temporary, temporary-to-hire, and direct placement

staffing to virtually all types of businesses. We pride ourselves on excellent customer service and flexibility which is proven by our foundational relationships with customers that have lasted 20-plus years. Sunrise is the perfect extension to your current HR Department or if you're a mom-and-pop organization we can provide full HR support. Sunrise Staffing Services, LLC will recruit, interview and screen (Reference Checks/Background Checks/Drug Screens) candidates per your company specifications. Candidates found to possess the requisite skills; experience and abilities to successfully perform the job will be scheduled for an interview with your company's designated staff.

### **Why did you choose to locate your business in Great Bend?**

The plan was set in place by Cyndi and I many years ago for me to take ownership of Sunrise Staffing once she retired. Our corporate headquarters have been located



**Learn more about Sunrise Staffing [HERE](http://www.gbedinc.com)**

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





***“ We have a great team and  
are always ready to assist you  
with all of your staffing needs.  
”***



in Liberal, Ks all these years, I will register the company in Barton County once the transition is complete. Great

Bend will become the corporate headquarters for Sunrise Staffing Services, LLC and we will continue to provide the same quality service that those we serve are accustomed to.

**If you could share any positive feedback to another company hoping to open in the Great Bend market, what would it be?**

Mel and I have been married for 27 years and I have called Great Bend home for over 30 years. I believe in this community and where it is going. We have many dear friends, long-time business associates, and many of my most trusted advisors in this community. I believe that Sara Arnberger (President of Great Bend Economic Development) and Megan Barfield (President of Great Bend Chamber of Commerce) are taking this city in the right direction. The teams from Economic Development and the Chamber of Commerce operate at a level as partners, which I've never seen before in Great Bend. Both young ladies are visible in the community and the projects that they are spearheading provide real unity and progress for Great Bend. The work to revitalize downtown is near and dear to my heart as my parents were retailers in Anthony, Kansas for over 40 years. Sara is actively looking for new business and industry opportunities for Great Bend but also taking care

of the existing folks as well. I can't imagine a better place to keep Sunrise Staffing Services, LLC moving forward than Great Bend, KS. Mel and I are excited for the new chapter at Sunrise. We have a great team and are always ready to assist you with all of your staffing needs.

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

Mel and I are excited for the new chapter at Sunrise. We have an excellent team of professionals always ready to assist with all of your staffing needs.

### **Sunrise Staffing Services, LLC**

Chris Ryan (President/CEO)

2015 Forest Avenue

Room 202

Great Bend, Kansas 67530

[chris.ryan@sunrisestaffingservices.com](mailto:chris.ryan@sunrisestaffingservices.com)

PHONE: (620) 792-1004

FAX: (620) 792-1003

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

### **Hours**

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

### **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.



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

# Did You Know?



How about some spending pattern facts?!

STI: Spending Patterns Summary (Annual)	Walmart 0-5 min				Walmart 0-10 min				Walmart 0-20 min			
	Aggregate Expenditure Estimate	%	Average per Household	Market Index to USA	Aggregate Expenditure Estimate	%	Average per Household	Market Index to USA	Aggregate Expenditure Estimate	%	Average per Household	Market Index to USA
Food and beverages	\$ 30,957,180	19%	\$ 7,462.72	80	\$ 53,362,747	19%	\$ 7,760.85	83	\$ 78,634,971	19%	\$ 7,754.85	83
Food at home	\$ 18,113,268	11%	\$ 4,366.49	79	\$ 31,274,805	11%	\$ 4,548.47	83	\$ 45,992,147	11%	\$ 4,535.67	82
Food away from home	\$ 12,843,908	8%	\$ 3,096.23	80	\$ 22,087,936	8%	\$ 3,212.37	83	\$ 32,642,823	8%	\$ 3,219.18	83



## Fun Facts...

Our area spends \$32.6M annually on Food away from home. That equals around \$3,219 per household at restaurants! We spend a little more than that on our home cooked meals.

Across the county, we are consistent about spending!



## Upcoming Events & Business Education

### Upcoming Events and Business Education

**6**  
DEC.

#### SBDC Virtual Class - State Tax Webinar for Construction Contractors

Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022  
10 am  
Virtual Class through SBDC  
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

**14**  
DEC.

#### SBDC - Human Resources - Rules and Regulations - First Employee

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2022  
9 am  
SBDC Class in Chanute, KS  
<https://ksbdc.ecenterdirect.com>

**6**  
DEC.

#### SBDC - State Tax Webinar

Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022  
1 pm  
Virtual Class through SBDC  
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

**14**  
DEC.

#### SBDC - SBDC Understanding Financial Statements in Chanute, KS

Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022  
10:30 am  
SBDC Class in Chanute, KS  
<https://ksbdc.ecenterdirect.com>

**13**  
DEC.

#### SBDC - Business Basics in a Day - How to Start a Business

Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022  
8 am  
SBDC class through JCCC - \$75 fee  
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

**14**  
DEC.

#### SBDC - Think like a Marketer (Iola, KS)

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2022  
12:30 pm  
SBDC Class in Iola, KS  
<https://ksbdc.ecenterdirect.com/>

**14**  
DEC.

#### SBDC Virtual - Startup and Start Right

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2022  
12 pm  
Virtual Class through SBDC  
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

**15**  
DEC.

#### SBDC - Know Your Numbers & Make More Money

Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022  
1:00pm-4:00pm  
SBDC class through JCCC - \$35 fee  
<https://www.gbenedinc.com/gbalive>

## Thank you for Following Along on our Journey!

As we sprint to the end of 2022, 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@gbenedinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbenedinc.com) with your feedback.*



Facebook



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LinkedIn



TikTok



Website

