

NewsLetter

Business and Economy



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Annual Report



IGNITE Finalists

One business was awarded \$50K, but each of these businesses will push forward with the tenacious spirit of entrepreneurs! Learn more about the TOP 5!



Final Friday in '23 is Spooky Family Fun

Fridays on Forest is fall fun for all. Join us Oct. 27th downtown. It's the last Fridays block party for 2023.



HireWorks takes shape for Nov. 8th

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



Entrepreneurship

IGNITE Rural Business Finalists and first place winners, Greystone are pictured with IGNITE Judges, Jason Mayers, Jerrod Westfahl, and Kari Smith.

IGNITE Results & Review

IGNITE Rural Business Competition Grand Finale: A Night of Triumph and Celebration

Great Bend, Kansas - October 9, 2023 - The stage was set, the anticipation was palpable, and the excitement was electric as the IGNITE Rural Business Competition Grand Finale unfolded on October 5th at the iconic Crest Theater in downtown Great Bend, Kansas. This thrilling event marked the culmination of an exhilarating journey that began with the top 10 businesses competing in a semi-final round.

With 1805 total viewers tuning in to the live stream on Thursday night, ignitek.com saw an impressive 887 visitors directly to the site and an additional 1650 coming from Facebook to the site. In the last 30 days alone, there were a total of 2,565 site sessions, showcasing the widespread interest and engagement generated by the competition.

[Click For more pictures](#)

One of the highlights of the evening was the People's Choice award, which was presented to 10-39 Café. They not only earned the admiration of the audience but also an additional \$5,000, thanks to their remarkable 56% share of the votes. A total of 921 votes were cast on the Slido.com platform between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8:50 p.m.

The judges for the evening, Kari Smith, Jason Mayers, and Jerrod Westfahl, played the role of "sharks" or judges, carefully evaluating the top 5 finalists. Each finalist delivered a compelling 10-minute pitch followed by an



Winning 2nd Place and the People's Choice Award is 10-39 Cafe (pictured to the left). 10-39 won the people's choice by capturing 56% of the votes!

Hatchet Axtion owners, pictured below, walked away with the third place prize and most definitely a few new customers!

The iconic downtown landmark in Great Bend, The Crest Theater, was enjoyed by all that joined us in person and the 1,805 that watch via livestream.

additional 10-minute question and answer period. The judges' deliberation determined how the prize money would be awarded.

The winners of the IGNITE Rural Business Competition were announced as follows:

- 1st Place: Greystone - winning \$50,000
- 2nd Place: 10-39 Café - winning \$30,000
- 3rd Place: Hatchet Axtion - winning \$10,000

These businesses demonstrated outstanding innovation, dedication, and a vision for contributing to the Barton County community. The competition showcased the remarkable entrepreneurial spirit thriving in the region.

Hosted by Shannon Towns and Lyle Jones, the evening was filled with humor, sponsor acknowledgments, and an opportunity for the audience to get to know the contestants. The event was a true celebration of innovation and entrepreneurship in Barton County.

The IGNITE Rural Business Competition, organized by Great Bend Economic Development, aims to empower entrepreneurs and promote innovation in Barton County, Kansas. The competition provides a platform for emerging businesses to showcase their ideas, win grants, and contribute to the local economy.

To relive the excitement of the IGNITE Rural Business Competition Grand Finale, visit igniteks.com for streaming highlights and engaging narratives about the remarkable entrepreneurs who made it to the Top 5. You can also watch the live-stream finale in its entirety on igniteks.com or on GBED's [YouTube Channel](#).





Manases Turf and Ruhe Day Spa gave compelling pitches, and even though these two businesses did not place, they are using the exposure of their business to leverage their startup to success! Below: Our judges wait for the show to begin on stage on our shark tank-inspired set. Many thanks to Millers of Clafin for the use of the modern furniture, and Kelly's Garden Sense for bringing that "pop of color"!

Learn more about the TOP 5:

[10-39 Cafe](#)

The idea for the 10-39 Cafe was born when the local Magneto repair shop became available. The Owners, who are equal partners, Chance and Brittney Bailey and Jarrett and Audrey Mermis, recognized the need for a local restaurant and knew they had the perfect person to run it!

10-39 is code for lights and siren, so 10-39 Café seemed like the perfect name since all partners are involved in Law Enforcement, Fire or EMS. While the partners all own other businesses, including Two Chicks and Some Old Bird, JM Builders and several Air B&Bs, 10-39 Café is unique in that it will not only serve as a much-needed restaurant, it will also be giving back a portion of all proceeds to local first response agencies, and developing a scholarship for persons interested in serving in those professions.

Be sure to find them on [Facebook!](#)

[Hatchet Axtion](#)

Hatchet Axtion is Great Bend's Axe Throwing venue offering private lanes with a reservation or walk-ins are welcome. Located in the downtown district, Hatchet Axtion is evolving into an experience-based entertainment venue.

Johan Sanchez and Sage Cauley are both owners of Hatchet Axtion running the day-to-day operations. Sage Cauley is a student getting his bachelor's degree in Computer Science at Kansas State University. Johan Sanchez is a supervisor at Waters Hardware. In Johan's free time, he likes spending time working on his cars and spending time with his family. In Sage's free time, he likes to go mountain bike riding, gravel bike riding, and doing 3D printing projects.

Be sure to find them on [Facebook](#) or click their name above to go to their website!

[Greystone](#)

For nearly 10 years, partners Matt & Dena Hiss, and Rob & Andrea Bauer, have dreamed of revitalizing the historic "Masonic Lodge" in Downtown Great Bend. They've dreamed of putting the building back into service to host the special celebrations and milestone events that bring our community together. After a persistent pursuit of this dream, they proudly introduce to you... Greystone, an exquisite private event space situated in the heart of Downtown Great Bend, KS.

Meet the team: All of our Greystone partners were born and raised in Great Bend, returning home after college and career experiences to raise their families. Matt Hiss is a financial



Huge Thank You to all our sponsors from the investor sponsors, to the in-kind sponsors! Your commitment to entrepreneurship allows us to showcase these startups. Special Thank You to our Entrepreneurship Committee, Our Judges, The Crest, all the sponsors, the community members who bought tax credits to contribute to this event and volunteers that made the night possible.



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.



planner and owner of Legacy Financial, where Dena also works as the marketing officer. Rob Bauer is an attorney at Bauer Pike Law, and Andrea is the public information director for USD 428. Collectively, the ownership team of Greystone processes the expertise to oversee a project of this scale, while leaning on the skills of architects and vendors to bring the project to life.

Find them on [Facebook!](#)

Manases Turf

Kevin Manase is an entrepreneur with over 10 years of experience in the tech industry. He is the founder of Ligence, a startup consultancy firm. Graduate of Great Bend High School, Barton Community College, and at Kansas State University, he majored in Computer Engineering with an Entrepreneurship minor. He is always looking for new opportunities to learn and grow. In his spare time, Kevin enjoys spending time with his wife and daughter, playing soccer, and hiking. He is also an avid reader and loves to learn new things.

Raza Manase is a self-made man with a bachelor's degree in finance. MANASES Enterprises LLC, a managing company with four divisions: CPS Home & Garden, Manases EcoBlast, Jack The Handyman, and Manases Turf in the USA. In his spare time, Raza enjoys camping and fishing with his family. He is also a passionate volunteer who helps out at local charities. Raza is a man of many talents and interests, and he is always looking for new ways to make a difference in the world. His favorite scripture is "Philippians 4:13"

Find them on [Facebook!](#)

Rühe Day Spa

Danielle Lee is a passionate massage therapist with over 7 years of experience in the field. Her journey started in her hometown, Ness City, and led her to Wichita where she received her Associate's degree in massage therapy. It's been an incredible ride, and she's had the privilege of working in various settings, from chiropractic clinics to serene spas and even bustling gym environments.

Danielle resides in the beautiful city of Great Bend, where she lives with my two amazing boys and loving husband. Her dedication to enhancing well-being through the art of massage has always driven her. She's taken her expertise from spa sanctuaries to gym floors, always striving to bring relaxation and healing to her clients. She encourages everyone to embark on a journey to wellness with Ruhe Day Spa.

Find them on [Facebook!](#)

Curious about Sponsorship for IGNITE 2024

Be a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship! Join us in supporting the next wave of local businesses and gain valuable exposure for your brand. [Contact us](#) today to explore exciting sponsorship options and become a vital part of Barton County's economic growth. Don't miss the chance to **IGNITE success together in 2024!**



Great Bend Alive

#FridaysonForest

Join us in October for the Final Fridays on Forest for GB Alive this year

Great Bend Alive, the downtown arm of Great Bend Economic, is hosting the next Fridays on Forest Event on October 27th, 2023. Sponsor for the evening's event is Eagle Radio. Eagle will be holding down the west end of Forest and live music will be on the east side of Forest. In addition to great music, attendees can also enjoy delicious food from Lumpy's, Los Dos Potrillos, Flatlanders - Stone Fired Pizza, and A & G Catering, and drinks from our alcohol vendors include: Los Dos Potrillos, Lumpy's, Charlie's Place, and Dry Lake Brewing.

Special to this event:

- Axe Throwing with a mobile version from our friends at Hatchet Axtion
- Costume Contest for all ages! Youth (0-12), Teen (13-17), and Adult (18+)
- Eagle Radio will be playing the GBHS Football game on the west side of Forest.

SPONSORSHIP

Organizations, Individuals, or businesses can sponsor one of our Fridays on Forest events. Your sponsorship includes advertising with your



Join us Oct 27th for the next Fridays on Forest (last one of the season)! Watch September's Friday on Forest TikTok by clicking the image of last month's poster (below).





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.

Curious about a 2024 sponsorship? Contact Lee Ann June, Communications Director at 620-796-2407 or marketing@gbedinc.com.

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. Click the image to the right for details.



For the latest updates follow Great Bend Alive on:

Facebook



Instagram



TikTok



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



Entrepreneurship



Resources for Entrepreneurs

Where to start?

While we are excited to make IGNITE an annual event, Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) is passionate about entrepreneurship and business development and expansion. Getting your business started can seem like a daunting task. At GBED, our goal is to give you ample support in planning and in the first stages of executing your vision to ensure your business IS a success.

With our partners at the Small Business Development Center, Great Plains Development, CKDI and Network Kansas, along with our board comprised of 11 individuals who have seen their own business successes, we feel like we've composed a winning team to help you reach your goals.

Reach out today to start planning your next endeavor and find out what funding and/or learning resources are available to you.

WHERE TO START



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.

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.



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.



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](#)

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.

Hireworks



GROW WORKFORCE

[Visit Website](#)

Workforce

Great Bend Economic Development Announces Exciting New Workforce Partnership Initiative: HireWorks

Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) is thrilled to introduce a new 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. This event has been crafted to equip attendees with essential

resources, expert insights, and actionable strategies that will enhance their hiring and management practices while fostering a positive company culture. Job seekers are encouraged to attend to get support and training to be competitive in today's job market. In breakout sessions,

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



Jennifer Dixon, Superior Essex, visited job seekers at last year's Workforce Summit. This year's event is a little different than last year and we hope to bring more job seekers and businesses out to connect.

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 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



REGISTER TODAY AT
WWW.GBEDINC.COM/WORKFORCE

GREAT BEND EVENTS CENTER
Nov 8

Five works
GROW WORKFORCE
EMPLOYER AND JOBSEEKER SUMMIT

<p>WORKFORCE PANEL</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>NETWORKING BREAK</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>JOB FAIR/BUSINESS EXPO</p> <p>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.*</p>
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Employer and Job Seeker
WORKFORCE EVENT

GREAT BEND EVENTS CENTER | NOVEMBER 8
WORKFORCE PANEL | 2 PM
JOB FAIR & BUSINESS EXPO | 4 PM - 7 PM

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

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.gbедinc.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.

Housing

Great Bend Economic Development launches BC ReNEW, a New Housing Rehab Program for Barton County Homeowners

Great Bend Economic Development launches BC ReNEW, a New Housing Rehab Program for Barton County Homeowners

Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) is excited to announce the launch of its BC ReNew - Housing Rehab Program in Great Bend, Ellinwood, Hoisington, and Claflin. This program aims to provide homeowners in these areas with an opportunity to upgrade their older homes while receiving a rebate grant of up to 10% for material purchases.

Under the program, eligible homeowners who occupy their properties within the city limits may qualify for a rebate grant based on the cost of their rehabilitation project. The rebate is determined as follows:

- 8.7% of material purchases if less than 90% of the materials are locally purchased, provided the material costs exceed \$10,000 per approved project.
- 10.0% of material purchases if over 90% of the materials are locally purchased, provided the material costs exceed \$10,000 per approved project.

The maximum award per recipient is set at \$10,000. Homeowners and contractors must demonstrate their experience in property rehabilitation or present a plan that utilizes contracted resources to carry out the rehabilitation process.

The application process involves homeowners submitting a complete application with all the required documents to the GBED office for review by the Housing Rehab Committee. The committee will then approve or reject the application and inform the homeowner accordingly. Documentation, including before and after photos, will be required for verification purposes.

The



Housing Rehab Committee, in conjunction with the GBED Board, will review all program applications and make recommendations for approval. Ongoing rehab projects will also be monitored by the committee to provide guidance and support to owners and contractors. For the year 2023, a total of \$35,000 has been allocated to this program.

Eligible upgrades under the BC ReNEW Housing Rehab Program include structural improvements, energy conservation measures, and modernization projects.

BC ReNEW is committed to revitalizing the community and enhancing the quality of housing in Great Bend, Ellinwood, Hoisington, and Claflin. This program presents a unique opportunity for homeowners to improve their homes while receiving financial assistance.

For more information about the BC ReNEW Housing Rehab Program, including eligibility criteria and application details, please visit www.gbeted.com/housing or contact Sara Arnberger, GBED President, at director@gbeted.com.



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“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

