

NewsLetter

Business and Economy

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GB Alive empowers new members

The board and committees from Great Bend Alive have begun meeting to make even more positive change in our historic downtown district.



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Lovegrass Music Festival Association brings bluegrass to the entertainment district for Fridays on Forest



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Join us for Barton Co. YEC, March 8th

The public is welcome to join Barton County students for the 3rd Annual Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge on March 8th at noon.



Scott and Jennie Anderson pictured above in the back studio of Kansas Earth & Sky Candle Co. In this space they host classes, 'Hot Wax Weekends', and manufacture all of their candles, melts, and other products.

Kansas Earth & Sky Candle Co, LLC

Scott & Jennie Anderson, Owners

23 N. Main Street

Ellinwood, Ks 67526

order@kansasearthandskycandle.com

PHONE: (620) 240-3949

www.kansasearthandskycandle.com

Find them on Facebook

Kansas Earth & Sky Candle Co.

Hours:

Monday: Closed

Tuesday - Saturday: 11:00am-4:00pm

Sunday: Closed

Entrepreneurship

Kansas Earth & Sky Candle Co.

This Ellinwood Main Street business's future looks bright

Briefly tell us about yourselves

We are a husband and wife team that relocated from Kansas City back to Jennie's home town of Ellinwood in 2015. We both work as graphic designers, brand/product development and marketing team in our other business Forcefield Design. We have 2 kids, 3 dogs, more than a few barn cats, 2 guinea pigs, 6 chickens, and 9 ducks.

Tell us about your business

Having grown up in suburban areas of Eastern United States, the expansiveness of rural western Kansas inspired Scott to brand the company 'Kansas Earth and Sky' - as in, there is a lot of Earth and a lot of Sky to enjoy here, especially the sunrises, sunsets and clouds. Our candles are plant based with a focus on sustainability. We use Midwest grown soy wax and

more info can be found on our [website](#).

Our products can be found in gift shops, museums and other locally owned small businesses throughout the state, including Miss



The brick-and-mortar store has a variety of products, and follow Kansas Earth & Sky Candle Co on social media or check out their website for more products and merchandise as they become available.

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.



Pretty Pickles and the Kansas Wetlands Education Center. A full list of retail partners can be found on our [website](#).

Why did you choose to locate your business in Ellinwood?

We were offered the chance to move into the family farmstead in 2015, and decided we wanted to get away from the I-35 rat race of KC. This of course required us to quit our jobs, sell our house, and generally leap into the unknown. Becoming entrepreneurs meant betting on ourselves, which offered an entirely new set of challenges and benefits. Eventually we acquired our historic building at 23 N Main St in downtown Ellinwood.

Why do you like to do business in Barton County?

The cost of doing business, owning property, and living life is extremely affordable in comparison to more suburban sprawls.



The area offers supportive and tight knit communities, fresh air, and old fashioned optimism.

What inspired you to start your business?

We have always enjoyed candles and incense, and the way fragrance can help spark memories and improve peoples moods. Feeling inspired by a candle we saw in a magazine prompted Scott to try his hand at candle making, with the goal of giving them to friends and family for Christmas gifts. We got a lot of positive feedback from those initial gifts, and we just continue to roll with it.

What did your startup plan and timeline look like?

We tested the process, spent about \$300 and bought the basics. This turned into a small handful of candles and proof of concept. Soon after we developed our business plan, branding, website wireframes, and (of course) fragrances to offer. From start to finish the initial build out was only about 3-4 weeks. Although its important to remember these were being made in a spare bedroom

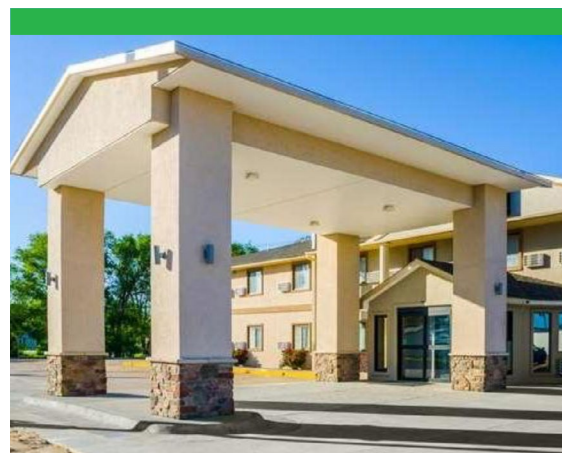
at the time, and our home was overwhelmingly scented like Hot Cider.

Do you have any advice for entrepreneurs starting out?

Do not put roadblocks up for yourself. Meaning, you may have a concept, an idea, something that excites you, maybe something you know people would spend money on, but we humans have a tendency to shut down when presented with a problem. For example, "I can't start a bakery without investing in a big oven." Is that really true? Do you have AN oven, maybe 2? Can you start small and work your way up? Chisel that problem down in a small way, and you'll notice cracks start to form in your roadblock, and soon enough it wont be in your way. ALWAYS BET ON YOURSELF!

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

Challenges due to the recent pandemic continue to play out - supply issues, shortages, shipping costs all have been impacted, and we just do our best to pivot when necessary.



Another Successful Entrepreneur in Barton County

Great Bend Economic Development celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week in November 2022 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 wisdom these featured Barton County businesses have learned.

This month we highlight Kelly Patel from Quality Inn and Super 8. Kelly shares some of the challenges/successes, as well as some advice to entrepreneurs.

Watch Kelly's interview:





Great Bend Alive

New Members, New Committees, and Renewed Mission for Main Street

Empowering Board and Committees members to be and make the change in Great Bend.

Great Bend Alive is Great Bend Economic Development's downtown development arm, and the group went through a reorganization of its board at the end of 2022. Members of the Great Bend Alive Executive Board are asked to also serve on Preservation, Street scape & Design, Economic Vitality & Development, or the Events & Promotions committees. Adding new members to the four committees and the executive board for Great Bend Alive has brought us to a 34-member Great Bend Alive Team. Having new faces volunteering for these committees has re-energized the group. With a focus on downtown, the committees are hoping to execute some smaller projects soon and plan for the bigger impact projects on the horizon.

On February 8th, the Great Bend Alive Team hosted Jeff Siegler from Revitalize or Die. Jeff spoke to the group about the power of place and the importance of strengthening a sense of community. He also shared that there is no mystery to change. He compared it to weight loss and getting healthy. He said that you probably already know the answer, it's simple, not easy. The same thinking is involved in building community pride. He went on to say that we need to hold our community to a standard because when our standards drop, we become apathetic. Jeff said, "There is plenty to be

Jeff Siegler, [REVITALIZE OR DIE](#), gave a lunch presentation to some of the members of Great Bend Alive. Many of the new committee members left the lunch with a renewed sense of pride for the work ahead.

"This is your town, not the one from the tourism brochure, or from the local website that got the lighting just right. Face your city in all of its flaws. Acknowledge it and accept it. Then change it."



optimistic about and lots of reasons to be thankful, but true improvement is only possible when we come to grips with our problems. Be bold, be brave and take a long hard look at your town and ask what's wrong... This is your town, not the one from the tourism brochure, or from the local website that got the lighting just right. Face your city in all of its flaws. Acknowledge it and accept it. Then change it."

Many in the Great Bend Alive group that attended have reached out to GBED to share that they were excited to get moving on projects after Jeff's presentation. We hope to continue that momentum as we get moving on projects throughout 2023.

Downtown development is important because it plays a significant role in the economic, social, and cultural vitality of a community. A well-developed downtown area can serve as a hub for commerce, entertainment, and community events, attracting visitors and locals alike. A thriving downtown can also provide a sense of place and identity for the community, offering unique experiences and opportunities for social interaction. Additionally, downtown development can promote sustainable town growth



Melanie Maneth, a new member of Great Bend Alive, checked in along with seasoned GB Alive member, Shannon Towns.

by encouraging walk-ability, and compact development. It can also help preserve historic buildings and architecture, which can contribute to the cultural heritage of a community. By investing in downtown development, we can stimulate economic growth, create jobs, enhance the quality of life for residents, and strengthen the overall resilience of the community.

Great Bend Alive

Volunteers in Action assists GB Alive events

Become a fan and be notified when you can help!

In January, GBED staff met with Linn Hogg from Volunteers in

Action. Utilizing the website to source volunteers, track hours, and report to our board statistics will be another great addition to Great Bend Alive. Curious about

volunteer opportunities? Sign up at: <https://volunteersinaction.galaxydigital.com>, and become a fan of Great Bend Economic Development to stay up to date on projects for which you can assist us.



**DO YOU
NEED**

**TAX
CREDITS**

Great Bend
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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.

Great Bend Alive

Great Bend Alive and Lovegrass Music Festival partner for Fridays Kick off

Third Year of Fun Fridays Downtown starts April 28th

Great Bend Alive, the downtown arm of Great Bend Economic Development (GBED), and the Lovegrass Music Festival Association (LMFA) are excited to announce their partnership for the upcoming Fridays on Forest Kick-Off event on April 28, 2023. The event will take place on Forest Avenue, from Williams to Main, following a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 5 p.m. to open the entertainment district for the 3rd season. Ahead of their three-day music festival at Lake Wilson State Park in August, Lovegrass is bringing bluegrass to Fridays on Forest with three highly acclaimed bands, Gravel Yard from Arkansas, the Brook Blanche Band from Wichita, and Old Fangled from Lawrence, KS.

"We are thrilled to partner up to bring the 'Lovegrass Experience' to the Great Bend community for our kick-off event!" said Sarah Arnberger, President of GBED. "Our organizations have the shared goal of wanting to see more fun events and shared cultural experiences within our communities. Fridays on Forest is a great opportunity for our community to come together to enjoy fantastic music, food, and drinks. We are really excited to bring a new music genre to Fridays on Forest with the partnership with Lovegrass for our inaugural event!"

In addition to great music, attendees can also enjoy delicious food from Lumpy's, Los Dos Potrillo's, Brand 17 BBQ, and The Spread, in addition to our alcohol vendors, Los Dos Potrillo's, Lumpy's, Charlie's Place, and Dry Lake Brewing.

Great Bend Alive is looking forward to another great season of Fridays on Forest with a few new additions, and many amenities Great Bend has gotten used to having in the entertainment district. Mark your calendar for the last Friday of each month between April and October for all the Fridays on Forest events. Many sponsorships and partnerships are already in place but if you, your business, or your organization would like to get involved, please reach out to GBED staff at 620-796-2407 or marketing@gbedinc.com.

A couple of other new partnerships include Identifications, Co., and Volunteers in Action. Identifications will have an online store open soon for the purchase of Great Bend Alive merchandise. Volunteers in Action is allowing GBED to utilize its platform to source volunteers for events. Fridays on Forest is always needing gatekeepers. Specifically, 12 volunteers are needed for each event. These one-hour shifts cover the three entrances to the entertainment district. Curious about volunteering?



Another great season starts April 28th!

Sign up at: <https://volunteersinaction.galaxydigital.com>, and become a fan of Great Bend Economic Development to stay up to date on projects/events for which you can provide assistance. Another way to stay informed is to follow Great Bend Economic Development and Great Bend Alive on social media.

For the latest updates follow Great Bend Alive on:

Facebook

Instagram

TikTok

[GBEDinc.com/gbalive](https://gbedinc.com/gbalive)



Entrepreneurship

Join us for another Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge!

The public is invited to the 3rd Annual Barton County Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge on March 8th

Barton County's third annual Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge is live on Wednesday, March 8th at noon at the Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th Street. This competition for 7th-grade through 12th-grade students from Barton County is brought to Great Bend by Great Bend Economic Development and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce. This competition was created to challenge our youth, encourage our business community to partner with and mentor our younger generations, and foster an entrepreneurial spirit. This event is also made possible by a partnership with NetWork Kansas. NetWork Kansas holds regional and state Youth Entrepreneurship Challenges as part of its mission in developing entrepreneurship ecosystems throughout Kansas. Great Bend Economic Development and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce partner on this competition as both organizations are tasked with strengthening the area's workforce for the business community, and in this case, that means nurturing the

next generation's entrepreneurs.

This competition and live trade show will take place at the Great Bend Events Center on March 8th at noon. Students and judges have lunch together to break the ice, and then competitors will begin their formal 4-minute presentations to the judges at noon. The public is invited and encouraged to attend this event to cheer on our student competitors and show their support for the next generation of business ideas, and the winners will be announced at 2 pm. There is \$2500 in prize money to be divided among the top competitors. Third place will receive \$500, second place will receive \$750, and first place will receive \$1000 and the opportunity to continue onto the state-level competition. Audience members will have a chance to vote for their favorite and award the People's Choice to one competitor as well as \$250.

Pictured are the winners and participates from 2022's YEC Competition. Join us March 8th at noon for the next great trade show!



Check out the latest promotion for IGNITE Rural Business!

IGNITE Rural Business awareness campaign has begun! Commercials are airing on TV, streaming, and digitally, along with our organic social media campaigns. Have you seen one yet? We are targeting all of Kansas in the hopes of driving more business to Barton County. This competition aims to empower, support, and nurture entrepreneurs in Barton County, promoting creativity and innovation as part of our mission to have a positive impact.

How to participate

For details on how to join the IGNITE competition, deadlines, and requirements, please go to www.igniteks.com/ for a full list of information. However, if you would like to get your business involved as a mentor or being a sponsor of the live event, please reach out to GBED President, Sara Arnberger at director@gbedinc.com.

[CLICK HERE FOR NEW COMMERCIAL!](#)

Marketable Statistics

Do you know...

Our area spends 19M on Gasoline and Motor Oil annually.

That's almost \$2,000 per household annually!



STI: Spending Patterns Transportation (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
Gasoline and motor oil	\$ 7,829,583	22%	\$ 1,887.45	76	\$ 13,518,422	22%	\$ 1,966.06	79	\$ 19,945,114	22%	\$ 1,966.95	79
Gasoline	\$ 7,239,878	20%	\$ 1,745.29	76	\$ 12,509,941	20%	\$ 1,819.39	79	\$ 18,446,151	20%	\$ 1,819.13	79
Diesel fuel	\$ 171,843	0%	\$ 41.43	73	\$ 292,821	0%	\$ 42.59	75	\$ 435,692	0%	\$ 42.97	76
Gasoline on out-of-town trips	\$ 361,958	1%	\$ 87.26	74	\$ 618,978	1%	\$ 90.02	76	\$ 920,411	1%	\$ 90.77	77
Motor oil	\$ 52,238	0%	\$ 12.59	78	\$ 90,416	0%	\$ 13.15	81	\$ 133,546	0%	\$ 13.17	81
Motor oil on out-of-town trips	\$ 3,658	0%	\$ 0.88	74	\$ 6,259	0%	\$ 0.91	76	\$ 9,305	0%	\$ 0.92	77

GBED Organization

Website has a new look

With the new additions of Great Bend Alive committees and focus areas, as well as creating an ease of use, the website's reorganization is now live. The new format will allow site selectors and those intersted in moving to the area a resource for services available and information on Barton County.



Click the image above to take you to the website. New content includes a resource page with info on Barton County businesses. If you are a business that is not listed, please reach out to GBED staff at marketing@gbedinc.com

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.



Apprenticeship Champion, KMW Loaders, was celebrated back in September of 2022 for starting what is now a successful apprenticeship program.

Apprenticeship

Barton Co values 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.

Workforce

Grow Workforce moves to the Fall

Pushing back the date to ensure more attendance and to add new resources.

In an effort to maximize interest and attendance, Great Bend Economic Development and our workforce partners have moved the event formerly know as Job Fest to the fall on November 8th. The group is committed to bringing back incentives for job seekers in those big give-a-ways, add innovative ways for the business community to get more exposure to the area, as well as add fun elements like food trucks to keep the atmosphere light. Many in the Barton County Workforce Connection group have resources our business community is unaware of, so we hope to bridge those gaps with what we are calling “farm show style” speakers throughout the day in one corner of the ballroom. Save the Date and stay informed by subscribing to our newsletter at www.gbenedinc.com.

GBED

Focus Areas

Thank you for following along on our Journey

As we begin a new year, 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.

Workforce

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**



Know someone who would love a great paying job in Barton County? Check out www.gbedinc.com/grow-workforce for more information!

Upcoming Events and Business Education

7
MAR.

QuickBooks Advanced - for Online Users

Tuesday, March 7, 2023
1:30 PM - 4:30 PM Cost: \$99
RC, Regnier Center, 234 - 12345 College Blvd. Overland Park, KS
<https://ce.jccc.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?sclID=35160>

14
MAR.

QuickBooks® Fundamentals - for Desktop Users

Tuesday, March 14 & Thursday, March 16, 2023
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Cost: \$199
RC, Regnier Center, 234
12345 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS <https://secure.com/>

8
MAR.

Barton Co. Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

Wednesday, March 8, 2023
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Judging begins at Noon, The public is welcome!
3111 10th Street, Great Bend

22
MAR.

IRS Small Business Tax Workshop

Wednesday, March 22, 2023
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Cost: \$45
Main Campus, Regnier Center, 145
12345 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS <https://secure.com/>

8
MAR.

Kansas Retail Sales and Compensating Use Tax

Wednesday, March 8, 2023
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Cost: \$20
Main Campus, Regnier Center, 144
12345 College Blvd. Overland Park, KS <https://secure.com/>

24
MAR.

Riddle of the Exporter

Friday, March 24, 2023
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Cost: \$199
Main Campus, Regnier Center, 145
12345 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS <https://secure.com/>

8
MAR.

Kansas Sales and Compensating Use Tax for Construction Contractors

Wednesday, March 8, 2023
1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Cost: \$15
Main Campus, Regnier Center, 144
12345 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS <https://secure.com/>

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

Education

Small Business Development Center Online Classes

Start Your Own Arts and Crafts Business

March 15 - May 5, 2023
Cost: \$119
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

Start Your Own Small Business

March 15 - May 5, 2023
Cost: \$119
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

Start Your Own Online Business

March 15 - May 5, 2023
Cost: \$119
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

Start a Pet Sitting Business

March 15 - May 5, 2023
Cost: \$119
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

Start and Operate Your Own Home-Based Business

March 15 - May 5, 2023
Cost: \$119
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

Starting a Consulting Practice

March 15 - May 5, 2023
Cost: \$119
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>

Creating a Successful Business Plan

March 15 - May 5, 2023
Cost: \$159
<https://secure.touchnet.com/>



“Economic development is a process of making things better – better jobs, better businesses, better communities, and better lives.” - Tom Bradley

In the next issue



- Barton County YEC Winners & Recap
- Featured Business
- IGNITE Update
- National Main Street Conference Overview

Let's keep in touch

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Instagram



LinkedIn



TikTok



Website

