

NewsLetter

Business and Economy



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Wellness Collective - Great Bend

2

Entrepreneurship in Central KS	4
YEC is back for Year 4	7
Staff	8
Information for those in Manufacturing	8
GB Alive Retail Event	11
Calendar	15

Annual Report



Childcare progress continues

ABCC's first center is under construction. Click the graphic to the left to jump to page 5 and see progress pictures and an interview with the site director.



Entrepreneurial Mindset classes begin Jan. 10th

GBED is teaming up with NetWork Kansas to bring you "Entrepreneurial Mindset" classes!



Grow Workforce HireWorks Recap

We recap some of the workforce panel discussion from HireWorks.



Empowering Beauty: A Nurse's Journey into Medical Aesthetics and Wellness

Body and Aesthetic Great Bend

Portia Jade Perez, RN, Owner,
Aesthetic Nurse Injector
1005 Williams Street
Great Bend, KS

jadeperez709@gmail.com

PHONE: 620-282-4859

By Appointment Only:

Portia Perez, RN 620-282-4859

Jessica Williams 620-639-6035

Kristen Yarmer, APRN 620-617-0222

Shelby Langston 615-336-5668

Find them on:

[Facebook](#)

Body and Aesthetic Great Bend

From RN to Entrepreneur - Transforming Lives Through Art, Science, and Self-Care in Barton County

Tell us about you and your business:

I am an RN of 10 years, and I graduated from Barton in 2013. I have experience in Med Surg, ER, outpatient care, psych, and correctional nursing. I grew up in a diverse area in Corpus Christi Texas, right by the beach around all types of people. Growing up I cultivated my passion for creativity by participating in art contests, playing the violin and the viola, and competing in choreographed jump rope competitions where our team dressed up and performed/competed in massive, televised parades. I am a self-proclaimed nerd, and my passion is fulfilled in helping others with



Back row: Portia Perez, Kristen Yarmer.
Front Row: Shelby Langston, and Jessica Williams.

my love for beauty and art.

I am married, a mother of 5, and have a French bully named Winston. When I'm not working or with my family, I'm usually working on some projects at home because I love interior design and decor. I never see something for just what it is but for the potential of what it could be. I love any opportunity to be creative.

I started with body contouring after weight loss surgery in 2016, back when I was looking up options to help support and maintain my weight loss. When I discovered how amazing some non-surgical options could be, I took a deep dive and learned everything I possibly could. Once I saw my own amazing results, I knew that other people struggling with the same issues just had to know about these other great options besides going under the knife. Once I got into Medical Aesthetics, I found my calling! It was the perfect mesh of art, science, and beauty! Plus the relationships I've developed from this are amazing. I love collaborating with other professionals and learning from their experiences! I'd like people to know that I'm located inside of an office comprised of other wellness-

based service providers. We recently renamed the building "The Wellness Collective" and have been working hard to upgrade the look. We now have an expert skin specialist and Aesthetician, Shelby Langston, who offers everything from facials and chemical peels to dermaplaning and lash extensions. Kristen Yarmer, APRN is my medical director and offers her own medical weight loss services. Jessica Williams is a certified massage therapist who took over the business lease (Wholistic Health Center) back in 2005!! She has been pivotal in how the place has evolved and grown over the years. The building is full of amazing providers offering some really great services that you typically would have to drive for! We are all available by appointment only, and the best way to contact any of us is through our social media or numbers posted on the window.

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

I started in Larned. Some amazing people came through and told me about some great options in Great Bend as far as leasing commercial space. I admired all the beautiful people who were so invested in growing and developing Great Bend's economy and the community in general. Also, I luckily found the location that I was in and met Jessica. She is a rarity in people these days, she is a very kind and caring soul. It was by chance that I found my location, and it ended up being a huge blessing that I am so grateful for. The rest is history!

Why do you like to do business in Barton County?

I enjoy the people that I have met and the relationships that I have formed here in Barton County. I really enjoy my clients! It's a diverse community that still has that small-town charm to it. I like that it's big enough to allow me to meet so many people,

yet small enough that I can still have a relaxed and personable feel with my client interactions. I think it could be a disadvantage to be in a larger community where you may see so many people, that you really have to cut down service time and not really get the chance to establish a good provider-client relationship. I don't want to be a Botox factory that pushes people through like cattle. I like to educate while also learning about my clients.

I also enjoy the other businesses and entrepreneurs in the area that I have met. There are some amazing boss ladies here! All the beauties in my building are also business owners and mothers, wives, friends, care providers, etc. They work their tails off and are great people too. I don't know that I would have that same experience somewhere else. I'm extremely grateful to get to collaborate with them and to get to work in close vicinity to them.

What inspired you to start your business?

Like any woman, I struggled with insecurities about my weight and appearance for a very long time. I recognized the mental and emotional impact that being unhappy with one's appearance could have. When we are confident in our appearance, it helps us to feel more capable in anything else that we do.

I started just wanting to help people feel more confident and let them know these services are not only for celebrities and are well within their reach.

Eventually, I figured out that my services go way beyond just a physical level and have had huge impacts on some of the lives of the clients I serve. I'm able to provide a safe and judgment-free space, where they can speak freely and share insecurities. They may not be able to share these things with anyone else.

I can offer them a chance to be heard and validated, recognized, and appreciated, all the while enhancing their own natural beauty in a subtle and artistic way.

Before, when I started, I was merely excited to share information with the world all about these amazing non-surgical options, but now, I stay motivated because of my clients. This experience has been incredibly rewarding!

What did your startup plan and timeline look like?

When I first started, I planned many things and most of them evolved and changed as time went on. I knew I eventually wanted to make this my full-time career, and I was able to do that after about a year and a half. I still have a side job,

but now it's the facility nursing position to keep up my skills and for a bit of extra income. I have learned to be very flexible and to just adapt and keep going when delays occur.

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

Barton County is a great community for your family and there is a fabulous support system for businesses in the area. Other business owners I have met and spoken with have been very helpful, so building a network here should be easy. Great Bend is continuing to grow and improve, too, so this would make a great place to get established as more and more people are drawn here!

Do you have any advice for entrepreneurs starting out?

Don't rush, know your numbers, and take your time developing your systems and getting to know your target market. Get very clear on your "why" and make all your decisions with that "why" as your point of reference. There are so many resources and free content out there, so definitely take advantage of it, but also don't be afraid to ask for help!

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

I've learned so much! I've learned not to let mistakes discourage me and to learn from them and grow!

Systems! A great system is worth its weight in gold.

Check out the services the other ladies in my building offer! We all offer different components to a Wellness Center that complements one another. I've learned that collaborating with complementary businesses is great for our clients and us. Relationships are key!

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

Sometimes small towns tend to be a bit more conservative about cosmetic treatments, and many women feel guilty spending on themselves or are concerned about other people finding out. I educate, educate, educate! I explain how Tox is more of an extension of their self-care than a means of completely changing their appearance.

One thing I like to say to myself to help me keep the creative juices flowing is, instead of asking myself 'Why is this happening to me?' after a setback. I ask, 'Why is this happening for me?' This shifts the perspective and allows for an opportunity to brainstorm how to troubleshoot the issue to work in my favor.

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 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.





ADVANCING BARTON COUNTY CHILDCARE



Watch a short video with Sara Arnberger, GBED President, and Kelsie Baxter, Bright Beginnings Site Director. Click the YouTube logo above to launch video! Click the job posting for link below to check out the available job listings.

Childcare

ABCC's first childcare center, Bright Beginnings, taking shape with new details on the development

Progress Report from Site Director, Kelsie Baxter

In the heart of Barton County, a wave of excitement and anticipation is sweeping through the community as construction continues. This eagerly awaited development has drawn the attention of families from all corners of the county, and the buzz is growing stronger with each passing day. As the GBED offices receive a deluge of inquiries about the project timeline and the availability of childcare spots for the children of Barton County, we had the privilege of sitting down with a key figure in this transformative initiative.

Kelsie Baxter is the Site Director for ABCC's first childcare center, Bright Beginnings. Overseeing

its development, she brings to the table a vision and dedication that are sure to shape the future of childcare in Barton County. Join us as we delve into Kelsie Baxter's journey and the exciting path ahead for the ABCC project.

Can you give us a high-level timeline for the center with waitlist dates, when you will be hiring, tentative open dates, etc?

We are planning on putting on our website abccinc.org job listings and a child wait list in December so be checking our website for those updates. We also plan on opening our doors in spring of 2024. So lots of exciting things ahead!

What inspired you to pursue a career in childcare and early childhood education?

The first Childcare Facility I had worked in, GPSkids in



Kelsie Baxter,
ABCC Site Director

Hoisington, really inspired my journey. The staff I worked with were like family to me, My job didn't feel like a job, it was more of a second home. I really enjoyed getting to play with the children

Job Listings Live



Icon Structures has been moving along on Bright Beginnings, while Kelsie and the ABCC board prepare for what will happen on the inside of the facility.

and watching them grow.

Can you share a memorable experience or success story from your career in childcare that has had a lasting impact on you?

I have had personal childhood experiences that pushed me to want to advocate for children and become a safe person for them to be around. Following that calling has made the most positive impact on me since I started my journey in Childcare.

What are your favorite aspects of working with children, and how do you stay connected with the children at the daycare center?

My favorite aspect about working with children is to get to see them flourish. I plan to stay connected with the children at the childcare center through my staff. I specifically chose the high scope curriculum because it supports connection through children and teachers and parents. Together, we'll get to watch our Bright Beginnings children thrive.

Can you tell us about any innovative or unique programs or activities you plan to introduce at our daycare center?

I am excited to share with you the Watch Me Grow system that we will utilize. This system allows parents to check on their children throughout the day using the Watch Me Grow app. It also allows us to enforce a high level of accountability among our teaching team. Another thing I am excited about is the curriculum we have chosen, High scope. This is a high quality curriculum fit for the needs of each child in our program. There is an infant/toddler curriculum as well as a preschool curriculum.



High Scope also provides training for teachers on the curriculum, which I am in the process of completing to get an in-depth understanding of what the curriculum teaches and how to use it effectively. We are working towards being a High Scope accredited center, which will allow us to offer the highest quality education to the children of the community through a highly trained and educated staff. I am also proud to announce that we are going to provide above average pay and benefits for all staff members as well as ongoing education and training so that our

staff can offer the best to the youngest members of our community.

What strategies will you employ to build a strong and cohesive team among the childcare center staff?

I plan to hire 11 other staff members to join me. I am looking for a well-educated and highly motivated teaching team to learn and grow alongside me as we create our Bright Beginnings Center. There will be lead teacher positions, assistant teacher positions, and part time staff positions. Myself and my ABCC board



team are also thrilled to offer an apprenticeship program for all part-time staff members. We want to encourage and support growth throughout the organization and beyond, and what better way than to have a mentorship and milestone program in place. This information and more will be posted on our website in December.

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges or opportunities in the field of early

childhood education today, and how do you plan to address them?

It's no secret that amidst all industries right now staffing is a challenge. We are not immune to that. By providing quality pay and benefits as well as a positive and growth-oriented culture within our walls I am hopeful that we are able to overcome the hiring challenges that we know we face. At Bright Beginnings our core values focus on communication, trust and



Learn More & Stay Informed:
abccinc.org

respect, and training and education. We are looking forward to adding the right team to the mix to help us create a space that champions these values daily.

Entrepreneurship

4th Annual Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge is seeking student participants and teacher champions

Great Bend Economic Development and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce are bringing back the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC) for Barton County students in 7th to 12th grade. Scheduled for March 6th, 2024, the 4th Annual YEC offers students a unique chance to showcase their entrepreneurial skills, present innovative business ideas, and compete for cash prizes. Teacher Champions are sought to mentor and guide students through the process, fostering entrepreneurship. Lee Ann June, Communications Director at Great Bend Economic Development, emphasizes the impact of education and entrepreneurship on the community's future.

Teacher Champions will collaborate with students, local businesses, and contribute to entrepreneurial growth. The commitment involves refining business concepts, guiding presentations, and serving as mentors. The YEC participants will present their ideas at a tradeshow, competing for a total prize money of \$2500. The breakdown includes \$1000 for first place (with the opportunity to advance to the Statewide competition), \$750 for second place, \$500 for third place, and a People's Choice award of \$250 voted on by tradeshow attendees. To learn more or get involved as a Teacher Champion or participant, visit www.gbedinc.com/yec or contact Lee Ann June.



Barton County YEC
 Great Bend Economic Development and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce are thrilled to, once again, offer Barton County students (7th to 12th Grade) a chance to compete in our Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge! This challenge allows students to create a business and compete to win cash prizes. We need **teacher champions** to help make this program successful. Reach out today to learn more, have someone talk with your class, or see how you can help!

March 6
gbedinc.com/yec

PRIZES
 THIRD PLACE - \$500
 SECOND PLACE - \$750
 FIRST PLACE - \$1,000
 + People's Choice - \$250

TIME
 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM
 Tradeshow begins at noon

3111 10th St
 Great Bend Events Center

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGE (YEC) 2023-2024

Contact:
 Sara Arnberger
director@gbedinc.com
 Megan Barfield
mbarfield@greatbend.org

Learn more at www.gbedinc.com/yec



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

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.

THINK LIKE AN ENTREPRENEUR

Entrepreneurship is a Mindset that can empower you to accomplish the extraordinary!

ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET CLASSES

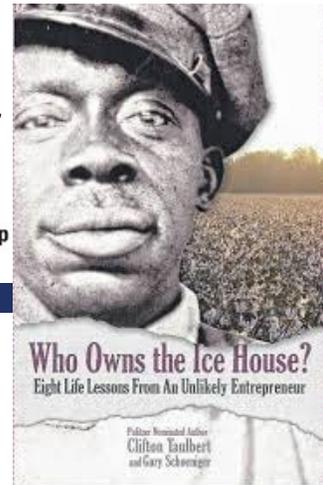
Beginning Jan. 10th



Want more information on the Entrepreneurial Mindset Class coming in Jan. 2024? Click the [YouTube](#) or [TikTok](#) [logo](#) to the right to see our interview with one of the co-facilitators, Jim Correll. Jim is the Executive Director of the Innovative Business Resource Center and he gives us a little background on him and why these classes are helpful for entrepreneurs and anyone looking to "think like an entrepreneur". If you are ready to register for the class, click [HERE](#) or the image to the left.



Youtube



Entrepreneurship

IGNITE sparks need for more classes for entrepreneurs

Great Bend Economic Development is excited to announce another partnership with NetWork Kansas, a collaboration aimed at empowering Barton County residents to think like an entrepreneur through the upcoming "Entrepreneurial Mindset" classes. Following the success of IGNITE Rural Business, a program that showcased the community's enthusiasm for entrepreneurial ventures, the demand for further education in this field has been on the rise.

With generous support from NetWork Kansas, the classes will be made more accessible, keeping the costs down for participants. NetWork Kansas, known for its commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and economic development, shares the vision of providing valuable education and support to individuals exploring entrepreneurship.

Led by co-facilitators, Jim Correll, Executive Director of the Innovative

Business Resource Center, and Shelly Peacock, a local entrepreneur and past mentor with the IGNITE Competition, the classes aim to equip participants with the essential skills and mindset required for successful entrepreneurship.

The weekly classes are scheduled to begin on January 10 and will run until February 21, excluding February 14. Sessions will be held every Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Great Bend Economic Development Offices, situated inside the Great Bend Events Center.

Course participants will engage in thought-provoking discussions, explore video content averaging one hour per week, and delve into the pages of "Who Owns the Ice

House?"—a book featuring the inspiring journey of entrepreneur Clifton Taulbert. The curriculum also includes insightful visits from local entrepreneurs, offering firsthand perspectives on the challenges and triumphs of the entrepreneurial journey.

Jim Correll emphasizes that the class revolves around eight key life lessons: Choice, opportunity, action, knowledge, wealth, brand, community, and persistence. "Our objective is to open our participants' minds to a new way of thinking and approaching the challenges of business and daily life. By learning through the stories of successful entrepreneurs, we aim to showcase that there is more than one path to every destination in life, and a change in mindset can lead to great personal and professional fulfillment,"

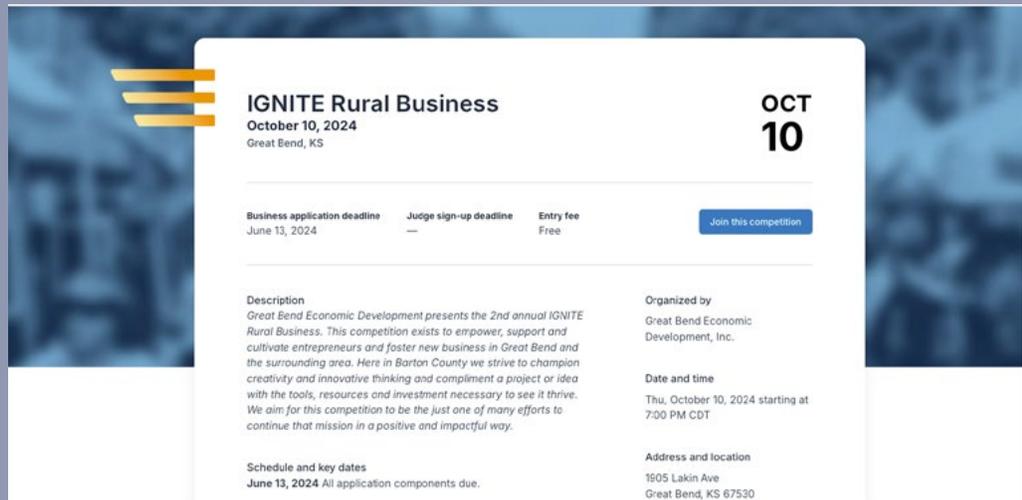
Think like an Entrepreneur

said Correll.

This course is open to adults of all ages, whether they are considering starting their own businesses, are already in business, or are simply seeking new approaches to problem-solving. The deadline to register for the classes is January 8th. Registration fee is \$100 per person, this includes dinner at the start of each class. As an added incentive, if registrants attend at least 5 sessions, they will receive a 50% refund.

For more information on course content, schedule, and attendance tuition reimbursements, please contact GBED Staff at 620-796-2407 or via email marketing@gbedinc.com. Registration is also available online at <https://www.gbedinc.com/event-details/entrepreneurial-mindset>.

Great Bend Economic Development is committed to fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, empowering individuals to realize their business goals and contribute to the growth and vibrancy of our community. The IGNITE Rural Business competition has sparked the addition of the "Entrepreneurship Mindset" classes, upcoming "Co-Starters" classes as well as a pitch day intensive coming in Spring 2024. As a reminder, the deadline to compete in the next season of IGNITE is June 13, 2024, these classes are being offered to help participants and those interested in learning the philosophy of successful entrepreneurs. New to the competition this year, participants will earn extra credit for their participation in the added classes and intensives.



IGNITE begins new year with more resources for entrepreneurs

Great Bend Economic Development has launched year two for the IGNITE Rural Business competition, inviting entrepreneurs and startups to establish a business in Barton County. The initiative aims to empower and support innovative ventures by providing tools, resources, classes, intensives and investment. This competition, part of ongoing efforts in Barton County, fosters creativity and impactful entrepreneurship.

Participants stand to gain business exposure, mentorship from local professionals, and the chance to win significant cash prizes. Partnering with NetworkKansas and the Small Business Development Center, the IGNITE committee uses Venture Dash for contestant submissions and progress tracking. Both organizations offer mentorship and support in developing business plans.

The competition unfolds in several rounds, starting with material submissions via the Venture Dash platform on the GBED website or igniteks.com. The live IGNITE Finale event October 10, 2024 will feature the top contestants. Startups (less than 5 years old, 10 or fewer employees) are eligible, and applicants must be 18 years or older. The application deadline is June 15, 2024, with rules and applications available at www.igniteks.com.

Join the IGNITE Rural Business competition for a chance to showcase innovation, creativity, and long-term business viability. The IGNITE Committee is also looking for business mentors and sponsors. If you or your business is interested, please reach out to GBED staff at 620-796-2407 or via email at marketing@gbedinc.com.



Great Bend Alive

2024 brings GB Alive's first downtown retail event

2024 brings a Snack & Stroll Shopping event with a Pop-up Shop and Snowball Drop at the Crest Theater

Join Great Bend Alive, a vibrant Main Street Community, in celebrating downtown businesses and beating the winter blues with our upcoming event—Snack & Stroll Shopping on January 13th.

Downtown Store Participation:

Local businesses are encouraged to participate by extending their hours from 10 am to 2 pm on January 13th. As part of this initiative, downtown stores are invited to provide exclusive discounts, gift cards, and/or prizes for patrons during this special event. A small snack for shoppers is also encouraged to enhance the overall experience. The collective goal is to amass 400 total discounts, gift cards, and prizes. Business owners are urged to email their promotion details to marketing@gbedinc.com at their earliest convenience.

Snowball Drop Extravaganza for Shoppers:

Kicking off at 10:00 am inside the iconic Crest Theater, Jack Frost will be orchestrating a magical Snowball Drop. Each snowball will be numbered 1-400, and shoppers can redeem up to three snowballs per person for exclusive discounts, gift

cards, and prizes. The Crest Theater will further play host to a Pop-Up Shop, featuring vendors from outside the downtown area and home-based



businesses.

Post-Snowball Drop Delights:

Following the Snowball Drop, the festivities continue with Trolley rides, Hot Cocoa stops, and a delightful Snack and Stroll through downtown. Shoppers are encouraged to share

their finds and experiences on social media using #GBK.

GB Alive envisions Snack & Stroll for Savings as a winter wonderland of savings, fostering community spirit and supporting local businesses. Join us for a day of

festivities, shopping, and community engagement!

For inquiries, please contact Lee Ann June, Great Bend Economic Development, Communications Director at marketing@gbedinc.com or 620-796-2407.

Great Bend Alive

Fridays on Forest 2023 has come to an end but GBA reflects on the year and looks ahead to 2024

Volunteers, Sponsors, and event-goers kept the fun going in 2023!

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

Looking back on the 2023 Fridays on Forest season, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the 37 dedicated volunteers who generously contributed their Friday nights as gatekeepers. Their invaluable commitment resulted in a total of 60 collective hours across seven events! A special thank you goes out to these individuals for their integral role in enabling GB Alive to host the open consumption district.

In addition to our gatekeeping heroes, Great Bend Alive is fortunate to have the support of an additional 34 volunteers spread across various committees, sub-committees, and boards. The collaborative efforts of these passionate individuals, coupled with GBED staff and board members, have proven instrumental in fostering positive change



within Great Bend's downtown. We express our sincere appreciation for the precious gift of time and the extensive network contributions that are propelling our shared vision forward. Together, we are creating a more vibrant and thriving community!

Eagerly looking ahead to the coming year, we are fueled by the promise of

new possibilities and fresh experiences awaiting us in the future. Great Bend Alive is ready to embrace the opportunities that the upcoming year holds, fueled by the collective passion of our volunteers, committees, and dedicated staff. Here's to a future filled with even more growth, camaraderie, and the continued revitalization of Great Bend's downtown.

For the latest updates follow Great Bend Alive on:

Facebook



Instagram



TikTok



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





Megan Barfield the President of Great Bend Chamber of Commerce lead the discussion with area HR professionals, employers, and leaders about workforce issues and how they/their companies overcome those challenges. Read about the panel discussion below or watch on YouTube: [HERE](#)

Workforce

HireWorks Panel: Navigating Workforce Challenges

Insights from the Workforce Panel Discussion

In a recent panel discussion moderated by Megan Barfield, President of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, local HR professionals, employers, and leaders gathered to delve into the pressing workforce issues faced by their companies and our community. The discussion focused on innovative recruitment strategies, diversity and inclusion efforts, and the role of technology in modern recruitment. Panelists included Panelists included Kris Thexton, Lynda Jamison, Tucky Allen, Nick Strecker, and Dr. Ty Brunswick.

Internship Programs and University Recruitment:

Lynda Jamison, Talent Advisor for AdamsBrown, LLC, emphasized the effectiveness of their internship program in addressing recruitment challenges. With locations across Kansas and Arkansas, the company actively engages in university recruitment, expanding its reach each fall and spring. The shift towards recruiting freshmen and sophomores, even in high schools, aims to establish an early connection with potential candidates.

Innovative Recruiting in Non-Traditional Settings:

Tucky Allen, Business Services Director/Rapid Response Coordinator for KansasWorks, highlighted the importance of targeting specific

populations within institutions, such as prisons and schools. Drawing an analogy to hunting instead of fishing, Allen emphasized the need for a targeted approach in recruitment. While acknowledging the lack of a quick fix, he emphasized the importance of partnerships and collaborations, citing successful hires from Sunrise Staffing Services and other partnerships.

Technology's Role in Recruitment:

Nick Strecker, COO & Co-Founder of INA Alert, discussed the unique recruitment challenges faced by a rapidly growing technology company. Strecker emphasized the company's gaining about 15 new employees ever year, creating opportunities for employees to envision their growth within

the organization. The use of technology plays a pivotal role in communication and outreach, with the company receiving daily inquiries from potential candidates. Strecker highlighted the importance of leveraging technology to showcase the company culture and attract diverse talent across various roles.

Addressing Veterinary Recruitment Challenges:

Dr. Ty Brunswick, a Veterinarian and Partner at Animal Medical Center, shared insights into recruitment within the veterinary field. Utilizing social media and internship programs, the clinic aims to connect with potential veterinarians early in their education. Dr. Brunswick also acknowledged the gender imbalance in veterinary schools and emphasized the need to expand recruiting efforts to

schools outside the local area.

Educational Initiatives for Local Recruitment:

Kris Thexton, Superintendent of USD 428 Schools, discussed the importance of educational initiatives in addressing workforce challenges. The school district has implemented a high school internship program to expose students to various career paths within the community. Thexton emphasized the need to showcase the diverse opportunities available locally, encouraging students to consider Great Bend as a viable place to live, work, and build a career.

The panel discussion shed light on the multifaceted approach required to tackle workforce challenges effectively. From internships and university recruitment to targeted outreach in non-traditional settings, the insights shared by the panelists provide valuable strategies for companies and communities grappling with the evolving dynamics of the modern workforce.

Navigating the New Normal: Insights on Remote Work and Recruitment Strategies

In the discussion, professionals across various industries shared valuable insights into the evolving landscape of remote work and the recruitment strategies adopted in response to these changes. The conversation shed light on the challenges and opportunities brought about by the widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work setups, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adapting to Remote Work: A Transformational Journey

The dialogue commenced with a reflection on the transition to remote work. Lynda Jamison highlighted the swift adaptation her organization underwent, moving hundreds of employees to remote setups within a matter of days. This shift not only proved that remote work was feasible but also opened new doors for recruitment. The



flexibility offered, allowing employees to work from home or adopt hybrid arrangements, emerged as a powerful recruitment tool. The ability to maintain work-life balance, especially for working parents, became a key factor in attracting and retaining talent.

Diverse Perspectives on Remote Work Across Industries

The discussion also featured diverse perspectives from professionals in different sectors. Tucky, representing a people-centric industry, emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance between remote and in-person work, citing the need to monitor employees effectively. Meanwhile, Nick, from the technology sector, highlighted the significance of assessing technical skills during the recruitment process, underscoring the unique challenges and advantages his industry faces.

The Soft Skills Conundrum: Navigating the Gen Z Workforce

A significant portion of the conversation revolved around the changing nature of communication skills, especially concerning the influx of Generation Z into the workforce. Participants discussed the challenges in evaluating soft skills during the hiring process and emphasized the need for a cultural fit within the organization. Strategies such as using situational questions during interviews and aligning hiring criteria with the company's mission and values were highlighted as effective approaches to identify the right cultural fit.

Strategies for Successful Recruitment

Recruitment strategies varied across industries, with an emphasis on mentorship, training, and creating a supportive work culture. Kris, representing the education sector, stressed the importance of investing

time in bringing staff members up to speed, acknowledging the unique challenges of hiring teachers. Dr. Ty, from the veterinary industry, underscored the significance of assessing an individual's adaptability to their work environment and highlighted the benefits of a thorough onboarding process.

Check out more photos from the event, thanks to our partner organization the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce. Click [HERE](#) for a link.

Conclusion: Embracing Change for Future Success

As the nature of work continues to evolve, these insights provide valuable guidance for organizations navigating the complexities of recruitment in a remote or hybrid world. The emphasis on flexibility, cultural fit, and essential skills underscores the need for adaptable strategies that align with the changing dynamics of the workforce. By embracing these changes, organizations can not only attract top talent but also foster an environment conducive to long-term success.

Stay Informed with Grow Workforce Partnership Updates

In addition to the enriching insights shared in our recent discussion, we encourage readers to stay tuned for updates from the Grow Workforce Partnership. As a key player in fostering collaboration and innovation in workforce development, Grow Workforce Partnership regularly shares valuable information on education, roundtable discussions, and new initiatives aimed at enhancing the workforce landscape. By keeping an eye on these updates, you can stay at the forefront of industry developments, gain access to educational resources, and participate in meaningful discussions that shape the future of our workforce. Watch our website and newsletter for the latest updates and opportunities to engage with Grow Workforce Partnership initiatives.

Upcoming Events and Business Education

5
DEC

The Power of Positive Teams

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Cost: \$279
405 N Jefferson Ave - Springfield, MO 65806
<https://www.sba.gov/event/29799>

6
DEC

Solopreneurship

Wednesday, Dec 6, 2023
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM Cost: Free
Kauffman Foundation Conference Center
4801 Rockhill Rd, Kansas City, MO
<https://www.sba.gov/event/36267>

5
DEC

Simple Steps for Starting your Business - Basics

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM Cost: \$FREE
Kauffman Foundation Conf. Center, 4801 Rockhill Road, KC, Mo
<https://www.sba.gov/event/36266>

6
DEC

Uncovering the Benefits of Minority, Women, and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses

Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2023
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM Cost: Free
Topeka Learning Center, 1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka
<https://www.sba.gov/event/38470>

5
DEC

QuickBooks Fundamentals - for Online Users

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023
12:00 PM - 4:30 PM Cost: \$199
RC, Regnier Center, 234 -12345 College Blvd. Overland Park
<https://ce.jccc.edu/courseDisplay.cfm?schID=39010>

7
DEC

Intentionally Developing Your People

Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Cost: \$279
405 N Jefferson Ave, Springfield, MO
<https://www.sba.gov/event/36264>

6
DEC

Managing People, Processes & Projects

Wednesday, Dec 6, 2023
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Cost: \$279
Missouri SBDC at Missouri State University
<https://www.sba.gov/event/33457>

18
DEC

Market Your Business with Video

Monday, Dec. 18, 2023
1:00 PM - 12:00 PM Cost: FREE
UMKC Innovation Center, 4747 Troost Avenue, Kansas City
<https://www.sba.gov/event/36269>

[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

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

Monday, Dec. 4
12 - 1:00 PM FREE

[Basic Government Certification for Small Business Owners](#)

Tuesday, Dec. 5
10:00 AM - 11:15 AM

[Simple Steps for Starting your Business - Basics](#)

Tuesday, Dec. 5
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

[State Taxes for Retailers](#)

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

[State Taxes for Construction Contractors](#)

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

[Launching Your Social Media for New Businesses](#)

Thursday, Dec. 7
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM FREE

[Marketing Basics for Your Business Plan](#)

Thursday, Dec. 7
12 - 1:00 PM Free

[QuickBooks Online: Training for Beginners](#)

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

[Disaster/Business Continuity Planning](#)

Tuesday, Dec. 12
12:00 - 1:00 PM Free

[Starting a Small Business: The First Steps](#)

Wednesday, Dec. 13
9:00 AM - 10:15 AM FREE

[Franchising: Start a business - Keep your day job!](#)

Wednesday, Dec. 13
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM FREE

[Plan Your Social Media for 2024](#)

Wednesday, Dec. 13
3:00 - 4:00 PM FREE



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

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

[Enhancing the Customer Experience and Retention](#)

Thursday, Dec. 14
3:00 - 4:00 PM FREE

[Business Financial Literacy](#)

Tuesday, Dec. 19
11:30 - 1:00 PM FREE



“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

