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Great Bend Economic Development's IGNITE Rural Business Entrepreneurship Competition grows contestant pool and awareness across Kansas

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 Kansans 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. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to begin their journey in the competition soon.

Contestants have already started to join the competition over the last few weeks. A few of the contestants are startups and the others are in the concept phase of their businesses. This has been exciting for GBED staff to see the diverse group of entrepreneurs joining this new competition in the hope of taking their business to the next level. While some of the contestants are locals, a few of them are from outside Barton County, and willing to relocate to start their businesses here.

As we get closer to the live event, we will release businesses/names. But for those interested in throwing their hat in the ring, the time is now. The more time contestants have to work on your business plan and pitch, the better off they are. The deadline for submitting all materials is June 30th, however, we want those competing to get the support they need. GBED and the IGNITE committee can connect contestants to the Small Business Development Center and Business Mentors from local successful companies to help tighten up the business plan. To those thinking they would like to participate in IGNITE, serious prize money is on the line! \$95,000 in total prize money will be given out at the October 5th live event, with \$50,000 going to the first-place winner.

Those interested in competing will not only have the opportunity for exposure of their business, but also assistance from local business professionals. With a major infusion of capital and a year of support, we hope prospective contestants see the real value of joining IGNITE Rural Business.

We want to #GrowBartonCounty. With the help of our IGNITE committee as well as NetWork Kansas and the Small Business Development Center, we hope to assist businesses in getting connected to the resources they need to succeed. Also, a big thank you to NetWork Kansas and the use of Venture Dash as the contestant portal. Venture Dash allows contestants to submit materials and track their progress.

How to participate

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

About GBED (Great Bend Economic Development):

Our goal is to sustain Barton county's long-term economic health and vitality through the retention, expansion, and attraction of businesses and development that enhance property values, increase personal income, and positively contribute to the citizens' quality of life of Barton County.

Great Bend Economic Development leads the charge in creating workforce initiatives to sustain our current employers as well as initiatives that will help to support new employers that move to the community. Employers and jobseekers are encouraged to reach out to GBED with questions and concerns and GBED will either pair you up with a workforce partner to help you accomplish your goals, or work with you one-on-one to create solutions and positive outcomes. Together we will create a strong and sustainable workforce pipeline that will enable us to continue to grow Barton County.

For more information about GBED visit: www.gbedinc.com, call 620-796-2407, or email marketing@gbedinc.com.

