

# NewsLetter

Business and Economy



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

## Hammeke Electric, 25 Years in GBK

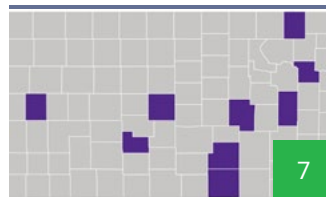
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### ICE House is Back in January 2025

Designed to inspire Barton County residents to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset, ICE House is an interactive walk through a book and video Series.



### K-State 105 Grant assists Innovation Center and others

IGNITE Center is one of many exciting projects across Kansas to receive the KS105 Grant



### YEC is back, March 5th

Calling all young entrepreneurs! Barton County students in grades 7-12 to showcase their creativity, innovation, and business savvy.



*Early mornings light up at Hammeke Electric—where dedication starts before sunrise!*

**Hammeke Electric Inc.**

Tim Hammeke, President  
3715 10th Street  
620-793-6704  
167 N US 281 Hwy  
Great Bend, KS  
[hammekeelectric.com](http://hammekeelectric.com)

**Hours:**

Monday - Friday 8 am - 5 pm

# Hammeke Electric Inc.

*Bright Ideas and Strong Roots:  
Tim Hammeke Leads a Family-Driven  
Legacy at Hammeke Electric*

**Tell us about yourself and your business.**

Married to my wonderful wife Kim who is my partner in everything including the business. Love spending time with my family. Active in my church Encounter. Spend what time I can outdoors hunting, fishing, boating and camping.

My wife and I started the business to provide a quality product to our customers. We are a full service electrical



**Hammeke Electric was recognized with the Business Innovation Merit Award by Lt. Gov. Toland and the Department of Commerce at the To The Stars Banquet 2024.**

contractor from residential to large industrial projects. Ryan Hammeke runs the majority of the day to day. My wife Kim takes care of the financial side. Jennifer and her staff take care of the office and billing. Taking care of all the office duties and communicating with our customers. We have an oilfield division led by Chuck Conaway that specializes in all electrical aspects in the oilfield. We have a security/IT division led by Brant Harms specializing in 24/7 monitored security systems, camera systems, access control, cellular based remote control completely customized for each customer, fiber optic networking and so much more. We also have a special systems division led by Dustin White that specializes in automation and industrial controls, providing our customers specialized systems to operate any system with a superior level of safety and efficiency. Dustin's team have worked on wastewater systems, grain handling, and just about everything imaginable in an industrial facility. We also have a generator division with an all-star team led by Mike Dobson, from sales to annual maintenance and repair. We sell and install generators from residential scale to large scale systems running hospitals, control centers and even entire college campuses. We are proudly a Generac dealer and have the largest dealership in the state. We also have a location in Emporia led by Jack Deiter that gives us good coverage across the entire state of Kansas. We also have a solar/wind division led by Josh Braden that specializes in all types of renewable energy. We have everything a customer needs to either reduce their energy bills or to be completely energy independent!

**How did you get the idea?**

I always wanted to learn something new and not get stale. So anytime a new challenge would come, I would dive in head first to learn and get the right people in the right place to deliver a superior product.

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

I grew up here and the majority of my family is here. My roots grow deep here and I am proud to serve MY home town.

**Why do you like to do business in Barton County?**

I couldn't be more proud to be from the Great Bend area and I am so thankful for our customers. We really do have the best. When traveling

## 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.



**Hammeke ELECTRIC**  
**CORE VALUES**

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Be the best! The words we speak represent who we are

**INTEGRITY**

Doing what is right, even when nobody is looking

**HARD WORK**

Always give 100% and never give up

**TEAMWORK**

Helping others by genuinely caring

**RELIABILITY**

Dependable and trustworthy with our team and customers

**POSITIVITY**

NO Gossip - communicate issues to management

**EXCELLENCE**

Going the extra mile and taking ownership in all we do

**RESPECT**

Company policies, customers, and fellow teammates

**VALUE**

Giving our customers the highest quality workmanship and attention to detail

**SAFETY**

NO complacency, minimize risks by not rushing, and follow safety procedures at all times

**TEACHABLE**

Never stop learning (from others, continuing education, and our mistakes)

**COMMUNITY**

Use our talents and treasures to make a difference in those who need it most

*It is our mission to provide our customers with the best service and value in a safe work atmosphere. We strive for excellence, through honesty and integrity, with a willingness to never stop learning. We are a team that works together for the best interest of our customers. We believe God owns this company and we are His stewards. We want to be sure that everything we do honors Him.*



**Core Values in Action:** Hammeke Electric's guiding principles are proudly displayed on the wall of their shop, serving as a daily reminder of their commitment to professionalism, integrity, and excellence in every project.

outside the state I am always reminded of how kind, thoughtful, hardworking and honest the people of Kansas truly are.

**What inspired you to start your business?**

I had always wanted to run my own company. While working for other companies learning the trade I felt that I could offer more. So in short it was to offer customers the best service at a fair price, with honesty and integrity.

**What did your startup plan and timeline look like?**

We started small and continued to grow as the demand increased.

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

There is no better place I could think of to be able to find employees that will work

hard and apply themselves to learn and grow.

**Do you have any advice for entrepreneurs starting out?**

Be willing to put in the time it takes to be successful. The first 10-15 years of business I worked day and night trying to keep up. I look back and wouldn't have done it any other way.

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

Probably the top issue is finding qualified help. Unfortunately there isn't a large pool of qualified help to choose from so we have had to train them in house. I am so proud of Ryan Hammeke and all the effort he puts into our apprenticeship program and training our staff through our weekly evening classes and on the job hands on learning.



## Entrepreneurship

# ICE House is back in 2025

*Think Like an Entrepreneur* WWW.GBEDINC.COM

# Entrepreneurial Mindset Classes



**Deadline Jan 6 - Class begins Jan 11**  
**First Class is FREE!**

*Great Bend*  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
A Barton County Partnership for Growth

Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) to host the second year of the "Entrepreneurial Mindset" series with a free introductory class on Monday, January 8, 2025. This opportunity invites aspiring entrepreneurs, business enthusiasts, and community members to explore the concepts of entrepreneurial thinking in an engaging and welcoming environment.

Participants in the free trial class will enjoy a complimentary dinner while diving into the foundational principles of entrepreneurial mindset with the co-facilitators and classmates. This unique opportunity allows attendees to experience the class firsthand before committing to the full program.

Should attendees choose to continue with the Entrepreneurial Mindset Class, GBED will assist with the online registration process and payment setup following the first session. The full program will include weekly classes facilitated by Jim Correll and Kimberly Becker, featuring interactive discussions, video content, and insights from the book *Who Owns the Ice House?* by Clifton Taulbert. Additionally, local entrepreneurs will share their real-world experiences, offering valuable perspectives on the rewards and challenges of building a business.

As an added

incentive, participants who attend at least five sessions will receive a 50% refund of their registration fee, making the program even more accessible to those eager to invest in their entrepreneurial journey.

GBED is dedicated to nurturing a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the community. Through initiatives like this program, GBED equips individuals with the mindset and tools necessary to succeed in

business and beyond.

For more information about the free trial class, including registration details, please contact GBED

Staff at 620-796-2407 or email [marketing@gbedinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbedinc.com). Online registration is also available at [www.gbedinc.com/gettingstarted](http://www.gbedinc.com/gettingstarted), where you can sign up for the free class or the full program.

Looking ahead, GBED will offer additional programs such as CO.STARTERS Core, which begins March 5th, and the IGNITE competition, with a submission deadline of July 1, 2025. Participants in GBED's courses and workshops will have the opportunity to earn extra credit toward their IGNITE applications, further supporting their entrepreneurial aspirations. GBED remains committed to empowering individuals to achieve their business goals while fostering growth in Barton County and beyond.

**Next Class is:**

**CO.STARTERS CORE** [WWW.GBEDINC.COM/COSTARTERS](http://WWW.GBEDINC.COM/COSTARTERS)

BEGINNING MARCH 5TH

10 WEEKS FROM IDEA TO ACTION!  
WEDNESDAYS 6-9PM  
GREAT BEND EVENTS CENTER  
\$300 PER PERSON (DINNER & BOOK INCLUDED)  
REGISTER TODAY!

The logo for CO.STARTERS CORE, featuring a stylized green 'C' and 'S' intertwined within a circular border.

## Workforce

# Exciting Changes Coming to Grow Workforce Summit

Listening to feedback from last year's Grow Workforce Summit, the Grow Workforce partnership has made an exciting decision to split the event into two separate experiences: a Business & Career Expo and an Educational Conference. This change aims to better serve the community's needs and create more impactful opportunities for businesses, job seekers, and industry professionals.

The first of these events, the **Business & Career Expo, is scheduled for April 16th**. Mark your calendars! This event will connect local businesses with talent, offering a dynamic platform for recruitment, networking, and showcasing products and services.

Stay tuned for details on the Grow Workforce Educational Conference, set to take place in November, which will provide valuable learning sessions, workshops, and resources tailored to employers and workforce development professionals.

We're excited about this new direction and look forward to seeing you at both events as we continue to grow Barton County's workforce together!



## Childcare

# Bright Beginnings Receives DCF Subsidy Certification

We are delighted to share some exciting news from Bright Beginnings by ABCC! Our preschool program has recently received its DCF subsidy certification, marking a significant achievement in our commitment to providing quality early childhood education.

With this certification, families can now access financial support through DCF subsidies, making it easier to enroll their children in a nurturing and educational environment. At Bright Beginnings, we believe every child deserves the best start in life, and our dedicated team of educators is here to ensure that your preschooler receives a comprehensive and engaging learning



experience.

Our curriculum is designed to foster curiosity, creativity, and a love for learning, with activities that promote cognitive, social, and emotional development. We provide a safe and stimulating environment where children

can explore, play, and grow.

Enrollment is now open! Don't miss this opportunity to give your child a strong educational foundation. For more information or to enroll your preschool-age child, please contact us at 620-796-2392, email [admin@abccinc.org](mailto:admin@abccinc.org), or visit our website at [www.abccinc.org](http://www.abccinc.org).

Join us at Bright Beginnings by ABCC and take the first step in your child's educational journey. We look forward to welcoming you and your family to our community!

For any questions or to schedule a tour of our facilities, feel free to reach out. Let's make your child's bright beginning a reality today!

## Grants

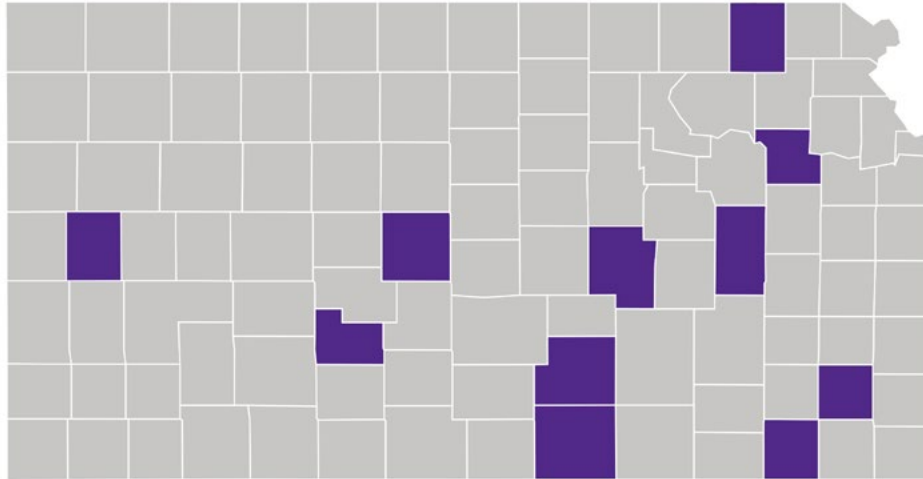
# K-State selects 11 collaborative projects across Kansas for K-State 105 Entrepreneurial Blueprint Initiative

MANHATTAN  
— Kansas State University and Network Kansas are partnering with communities across Kansas to support entrepreneurship and small business through a new program with the K-State 105 initiative.

K-State has selected 11 projects for the first cohort of the K-State 105 Entrepreneurial Blueprint Initiative, which supports collaborative community-based projects focused on entrepreneurship and small business development in Kansas communities.

“The K-State 105 Entrepreneurial Blueprint Initiative is an example of a next-generation land-grant university in action – we’re bringing people and partners together to co-develop new and innovative ways to support entrepreneurs and small businesses across Kansas,” said Jessica Gnad, K-State 105 director. “In a way, we’re co-creating blueprints that can guide future work for economic growth in Kansas. We’re so excited to work alongside these 11 project collaborators in our first cohort.”

The funded projects involve collaborations with Network Kansas, K-State Research and Extension, higher education institutions and multiple community partners. The collaborations aim to leverage resources and build



Lab Expansion,” led by Emporia Main Street in Emporia, Lyon County.

“IGNITE Innovation Center,” led by Great Bend Alive in Great Bend, Barton County.

“Bluejay community retail renovation,” led by the city of Hillsboro, Marion County.

“Edwards County Fair Building commercial kitchen renovation,” led by Edwards County Fair Board in Kinsley, Edwards County.

“The Community Hub,” led by Wichita County Economic Development in Leoti, Wichita County.

“Launching the Topeka startup community,” led by Omni Circle Group in Topeka, Shawnee County.

“Caldwell Workspace commercial kitchen,” led by Sumner County Economic Development Commission in Wellington, Sumner County.

“Side Gig Studio,” led by Cardinal Community Foundation in Wetmore, Nemaha County.

“A La Carte commercial kitchen incubator,” led by Create Campaign in Wichita, Sedgwick County.

The K-State 105 Entrepreneurial Blueprint Initiative is one part of a variety of K-State 105 work happening across Kansas. Learn more and read about other projects at [k-state.edu/105](http://k-state.edu/105).

new ways to foster economic growth and community development in Kansas. The 11 projects in the first cohort were selected after a competitive process and review of applications from across the state.

“For nearly 20 years, we’ve had the privilege of seeing how innovative Kansas communities can be,” said Erik Pedersen, president and chief operating officer of Network Kansas. “The applicants in the Entrepreneurial Blueprint Initiative have raised the bar, proving once again that Kansas is a leader in creativity and forward thinking.”

The 11 projects selected include:

“Neosho Valley Event Center incubator kitchen,” led by the Neosho County Fair Board in Chanute, Neosho County.

“Life Skills Academy and Makerspace springboard,” led by Life Skills Academy Innovative Business Resource Center in Coffeyville, Montgomery County.

“Entrepreneurs Intersection Fabrication

## Workforce

# CK Jobs, an Enhanced Platform for Employers

Central Kansas Jobs has undergone a significant website overhaul, emphasizing our commitment to connecting talent with career opportunities. Our upgraded platform is designed to empower employers and streamline the hiring process, featuring new enhancements for a better user experience.

Users can now create profiles and establish distinct company profiles, fostering seamless collaboration within organizations. A notable addition is the "Featured Company Highlight," allowing companies to showcase their profiles in a scheduled display for \$50 per month, providing heightened visibility to potential candidates.

While we introduce premium features, posting jobs and viewing resumes remain free for employers and job seekers, ensuring an inclusive and accessible platform. Explore the revamped website at [www.centrankansasjobs.com](http://www.centrankansasjobs.com) to leverage these new features and make Central Kansas Jobs your strategic partner in building successful teams.

**ARE YOU HIRING?**

- FREE JOB POSTINGS
- CREATE A COMPANY PROFILE
- LOOK THROUGH RESUMES
- ADVERTISING AVAILABLE

centrankansasjobs.com

central kansas  
**JOBS**



Miss Bridgette Jane Arnberger was born December 11th, 2024. Congratulations Sara, Curtis, and big sister, Charlotte!

## 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](mailto:marketing@gbedinc.com) with your feedback.*





# Fridays on Forest, looking back and looking ahead

The 2024 Fridays on Forest series brought downtown Great Bend to life with music, food, and community fun. With themes like the Parade Through Time, Bat Cats Night, and Homecoming, each event delivered unique experiences for attendees of all ages.

### Attendance Highlights:

This year's series saw tremendous community support, with an estimated 6,142 attendees across seven events. The most popular night, in August, drew a record-breaking 1,717 attendees, showcasing the growing excitement for these vibrant evenings.

### New and Improved:

This year, we are extending event hours to run from 5 pm to 10 pm in response to community surveys. The longer hours provided more time for families to enjoy live entertainment, shop local vendors, and savor delicious food truck offerings.

### Looking Ahead: Join the Crew!

As we gear up for the 2025 season, we're calling



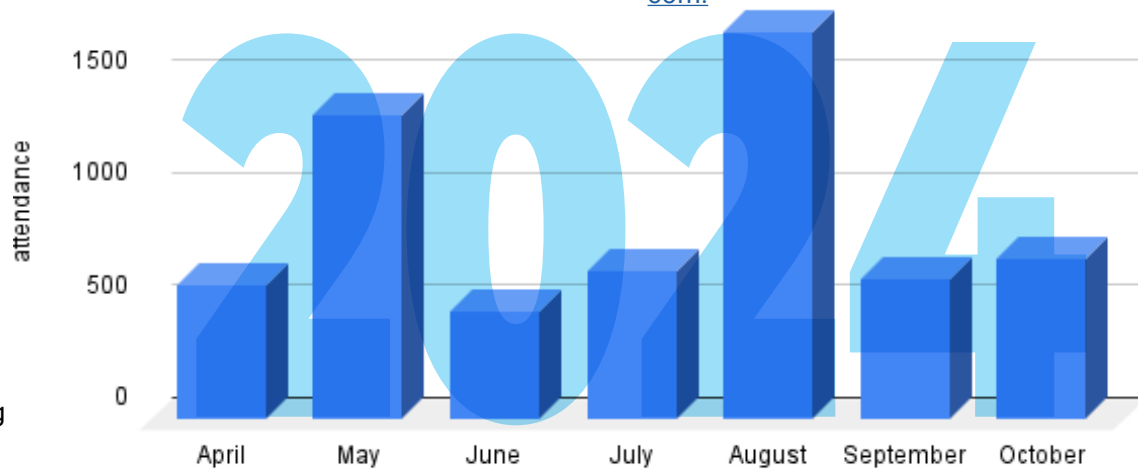
on local organizations to join our Fridays on Forest Crew for the May, June, and July events. We need 10-15 volunteers for setup and teardown, which involves unloading equipment, setting up tables and chairs, and ensuring everything runs smoothly. Setup happens between 3:30 and 5 pm, and teardown wraps up by 10:30 pm. It's a fun, team-building way to support this beloved community event!

### Sponsorship Opportunities for 2025

Sponsorships for the 2025 Fridays on Forest series are now available. Sole sponsorship for an event is \$3,000, which can also be shared between up to three businesses. Sponsorship includes valuable deliverables to showcase your business while supporting one of Great Bend's most celebrated traditions.

Don't miss your chance to be part of the magic! Contact us to learn more about sponsorship opportunities or to sign up as a volunteer for next season. Let's make 2025 even more unforgettable!

Sponsorships are now available, to learn more, please reach out to Lee Ann June at [marketing@gbedinc.com](mailto:marketing@gbedinc.com).



# Join the Great Bend Alive Volunteer Team

Do you love seeing downtown Great Bend come alive with exciting events and vibrant community spirit? You can be part of the magic by joining the Great Bend Alive volunteer team! Whether you're a seasoned volunteer or new to helping out, we'd love to have you on board for the 2025 season.

## Volunteer Opportunities Include:

**Event Support:** Help set up and tear down for popular events like Fridays on Forest.

**Gatekeeping:** Be the friendly face welcoming attendees and keeping things running smoothly (ages 18+ for this role).

**Activity Assistance:** Pitch in with activities, promotions, or special projects throughout the year.

**Researching Local History:** Dive into Great Bend's rich history to support tours, events, and community storytelling.

**Fundraising:** Help secure resources to ensure the success of our programs and events.

**Tech Help:** Assist with adding new tours to our app and keeping it updated for the community.

## Perks of Volunteering

Build new friendships and connections with fellow community members.

Learn new skills and gain valuable event experience.

Be part of the team bringing downtown Great Bend to life.

Make a meaningful impact in your community!



## Sign Up Today

Getting involved is easy! Simply fill out our volunteer sign-up form at <https://forms.monday.com/forms/b67996317e7b4d8cf08c48ca18d63836?r=use1> to let us know how you'd like to help.

## Save the Date

We're hosting a Welcome/Welcome Back Volunteer Event in March to kick off the season and energize our amazing team for a great year ahead! Stay tuned for more details.

Join us and help make 2025 the best year yet for Great Bend Alive. Let's bring people together, celebrate our community, and create unforgettable moments in downtown Great Bend!

## What is a Kansas Main Street?

Kansas Main Street Organizations are a self-help, technical assistance program that targets revitalization and preservation of downtown districts through the development of a comprehensive strategy.

Main Street America™ leads a movement committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.



## For the latest updates follow Great Bend Alive on:

Facebook



Instagram



TikTok



GBEDinc.com/mainstreet



## Entrepreneurship

# Empowering Entrepreneurs

*GBED's Comprehensive Journey of Success in Barton County*

In the heart of Barton County, Kansas, Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) offers a robust and comprehensive path to guide entrepreneurs or 'starters' through every stage of their business journey. From the initial spark of an idea to the sustainable growth of established businesses, GBED's strategic programs, dedicated partnerships, and accessible funding opportunities are shaping the entrepreneurial landscape in Barton County.

### A Path for Every Starter

#### Connection & Awareness

GBED recognizes that the journey begins with fostering a sense of belonging and support. Through innovative programs like the Entrepreneurial Mindset Classes, the organization provides a platform for creative minds to come together. Celebrations during Global Entrepreneurship Week amplify this ethos, creating an environment where ideas can flourish without fear of judgment. GBED celebrates the diversity of thought, welcoming the dreamers, makers, and visionaries who bring unique perspectives to the community.

#### Action & Structure

Ideas, no matter how groundbreaking, need a path to realization. GBED propels entrepreneurs from ideation to action by introducing programs like CO.STARTERS Core. These facilitated, cohort-based programs walk entrepreneurs through business

fundamentals, emphasizing the importance of starting small and embracing the concept of failing fast. GBED ensures that every venture has a robust foundation, offering structure, accountability, and community support.

#### Support & Transfer

As businesses begin to take shape, GBED identifies the need for sustained support. Leveraging partnerships with organizations like the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), NetWork Kansas, Great

Bend Chamber of Commerce, Central Kansas Development, Inc. (CKDI), and Great Plains Development, Inc. (GPDI), GBED connects entrepreneurs with specialized resources. Whether it's business counseling, grants, or low-interest funding, GBED ensures that promising initiatives have the support needed to become sustainable. Recognizing the importance of long-term success, GBED also facilitates knowledge transfer, connecting business owners with the SBDC to navigate succession planning.

**Continued on page 12**



**JULY 1ST  
DEADLINE**

TO COMPETE FOR  
**\$50,000**  
IN BUSINESS FUNDING

**IGNITEKS.COM**

## Programs, Partners, and Funding Opportunities

GBED's arsenal of programs is designed to equip entrepreneurs with the knowledge and resources necessary for success. The Entrepreneurial Mindset Classes challenge participants to 'think like an entrepreneur,' while the CO.STARTERS programs provide a structured journey through business fundamentals. The IGNITE Rural Business Competition empowers entrepreneurs and contributes to the economic growth of Barton County while businesses compete for \$95,000 in total prize money. The 2023 winners, including The Greystone, 10-39 Café, and Hatchet Axtion, exemplify the transformative impact of this competition on diverse business ventures.

Strategic partnerships with SBDC, NetWork Kansas, CKDI, and GPDI enhance GBED's reach, providing entrepreneurs with a network of support and resources. These partnerships offer everything from business counseling and grants to low-interest funding, ensuring that entrepreneurs have access to a comprehensive suite of resources.

### IGNITE the Night and Business Features

GBED's approach extends to community engagement through IGNITE the Night events, set to be a dynamic platform for businesses to showcase their offerings following the IGNITE Competition. IGNITE the Night also acts as a bridge, bringing together stakeholders from the IGNITE Competition, including judges and sponsors.

The monthly business features in Great Bend Economic Development's newsletter spotlight both new and established businesses. These features serve as a dynamic tool for promoting local businesses through various channels, including social media. The newsletter is a testament to GBED's commitment to showcasing the diversity and resilience of the entrepreneurial spirit in Barton County.

In conclusion, GBED's multifaceted approach to supporting entrepreneurs in Barton County demonstrates a genuine commitment to cultivating a thriving and resilient local economy. By offering a well-structured path, engaging the community, and providing invaluable resources, GBED is truly championing creativity, innovation, and sustainable growth in Barton County, Kansas. The organization's impact extends far beyond business development; it is actively shaping the narrative of success for every entrepreneur who embarks on this transformative journey.

## MEET OUR PRESIDENT

[director@gbedinc.com](mailto: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](mailto: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 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 the momentum, Lee Ann is invested in seeing the Great Bend area thrive.

## MARKETING & EVENTS INTERN

[intern.team@gbedinc.com](mailto:intern.team@gbedinc.com)



Hi! I'm Charley Sander, the newest addition to the team at Great Bend Economic Development. Born and raised in Great Bend, I am continuing my academic career at Barton Community College with a focus on marketing. I hope to further my skills in marketing while I learn alongside my new team! I'm excited to be a part of something so big and have the opportunity to give back to my hometown.

## Entrepreneurship

# Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Returns March 5, 2025

Calling all aspiring young entrepreneurs! The Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC) is back and better than ever, taking place on March 5, 2025. This exciting event invites Barton County students in grades 7-12 to showcase their creativity, innovation, and business savvy.

YEC is designed to inspire and empower the next generation of entrepreneurs. Participants will have the opportunity to develop a business concept, create a pitch, and present their ideas to a panel of judges. It's a unique chance to gain hands-on experience, sharpen public speaking skills, and compete for cash prizes.

To help students succeed, a wealth of resources—including samples, templates, and videos from past events—are available online at [www.gbedinc.com/yec](http://www.gbedinc.com/yec).

For those looking to get involved beyond competing, Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) is seeking mentors to guide students through the process and judges to evaluate their creative ideas.

Reach out to the GBED staff for more information about the event, how to support Barton County's young entrepreneurs, or to sign up as a mentor or judge. Let's work together to empower the future of business in Barton County!

For updates and resources, visit [www.gbedinc.com/yec](http://www.gbedinc.com/yec).

## BARTON COUNTY YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGE



## 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](mailto:director@gbedinc.com) if you feel like you might qualify.





## Entrepreneurship

# Innovation Center Groundbreaking Recap

The IGNITE Innovation Center is officially underway! The Great Bend Economic Development (GBED) team hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on Dec. 12th, 2024 that saw a remarkable turnout despite brisk temperatures in the low 40s and 12 mph winds.

Ryan Fairchild, Vice Chair of the GBED Board of Directors, served as emcee, sharing the mission of the project and the excitement it brings to Barton County. He was joined by Andy Mingenback of Brentwood Builders and Representative Tory Marie Blew (District 112), who all underscored the significance of the partnerships that have driven this initiative forward. A common theme emerged from their remarks: "Barton County is open for business."

This milestone marks the start of a \$7 million project designed to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and community growth. With 75% of the budget already funded through grants and donations, the IGNITE Innovation Center is poised to become a hub of opportunity.

Features of the Innovation Center Include:

Fab Lab: A state-of-the-art

makerspace with 3D printers, drones, CNC machines, plasma cutters, and more.

Commercial Kitchen: Supporting childcare providers, restaurant startups, and community cooking classes.

Leafy Green Farm Pod: Engaging youth in agriculture and entrepreneurship.

Co-Working Space & Computer Lab: Providing resources for remote workers, students, and the community.

Childcare Rooms: Meeting the needs of shift workers with nontraditional care hours.

Meeting Rooms & Podcast Studio:

Offering modern spaces for training and content creation.

Attendees were treated to architectural renderings of the center and participated in a ceremonial shovel dig to mark the beginning of construction.

For those interested in supporting this transformative project, donations and materials are still being accepted. Contact Sara Arnberger at [director@gbedinc.com](mailto:director@gbedinc.com) for more information.

Thank you to everyone who braved the weather to celebrate this exciting step toward Great Bend and Barton County's future!



# Did You Know?



## Marketable Statistics

How about some spending pattern facts?!

Our area spends \$1.28 million on lunch meat annually!

That's \$126 a year per household!

STI: Spending Patterns Food: Cereals, Bakery, Meat and Dairy (Annual)	Walmart 0-5 min				Walmart 0-10 min				Walmart 0-20 min			
	Aggregate Expenditure Estimate	%	Average per Household	Market Index to IUSA	Aggregate Expenditure Estimate	%	Average per Household	Market Index to IUSA	Aggregate Expenditure Estimate	%	Average per Household	Market Index to IUSA
Other meats	\$ 503,162	3%	\$ 121.30	80	\$ 866,817	3%	\$ 126.07	83	\$ 1,275,338	3%	\$ 125.77	82
Frankfurters	\$ 69,647	0%	\$ 21.37	80	\$ 154,214	0%	\$ 22.43	84	\$ 226,239	0%	\$ 22.31	83
Lunch meats (cold cuts)	\$ 383,181	2%	\$ 92.37	80	\$ 658,817	2%	\$ 95.82	83	\$ 970,156	2%	\$ 95.68	83
Bologna, liverwurst, salami	\$ 111,561	1%	\$ 26.89	80	\$ 191,560	1%	\$ 27.86	83	\$ 281,948	1%	\$ 27.81	82
Other lunchmeats	\$ 271,618	1%	\$ 65.48	80	\$ 467,244	1%	\$ 67.95	83	\$ 688,200	1%	\$ 67.87	83

## Partnership with The City of Great Bend

# What's in Your Pipes?

Lead levels in drinking water were first regulated by the EPA in the late 1980's. In 2021, the EPA released updates to regulations addressing lead levels in water provided by public drinking water systems. The first step of the updated regulations requires the City of Great Bend to create an inventory of all water lines in their service area. The City of Great

Bend, KS is asking for your help in completing this survey.

If you do not complete your survey, the City will have to designate time, resources and manpower to complete the community survey. This in turn will have an impact on the Utility's department ability to respond to other projects or requests from the public.

[Click here to read more!](#)



The City of Great Bend needs YOUR help to comply with updated EPA regulations on lead in drinking water. By completing a quick survey about your water lines, you'll help protect our community's water quality and save valuable city resources. (Image is AI generated)

# Upcoming Events and Business Education

8

JAN

## ICE House - Entrepreneurial Mindset Class

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

5:45 - 8:00 PM

GBED Offices, 3111 10th Street (REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED)

<https://www.gbedinc.com/event-details/entrepreneurial-mindset-ice-house-2025>

28

JAN

## Target Marketing & Digital Marketing Opportunities Lunch & Learn

Tuesday, January 28th

12-1 pm

3210 W 16th Sedalia MO

[sba.gov/event/59042](https://sba.gov/event/59042)

11

JAN

## SNOWBALL DROP

Part of the City of Great Bend's "Whine about Winter Sale"

Saturday, January 11, 2025

10:00 AM

Crest Theater, 1905 Lakin Great Bend

[Explore Great Bend Event Page](#)

30

JAN

## Social Media the Smart Way: Paid Search with Google

Thursday, January 30th

9-10:15 am

ONLINE

[sba.gov/event/58942](https://sba.gov/event/58942)

24

JAN

## Jumpstart

Friday, January 24th- Friday, February 21st

9am-4pm

3210 West 16th Sedalia MO \$300

[sba.gov/event/59789](https://sba.gov/event/59789)

31

JAN

## How to Bank Ready for Business Loans

Friday, January 31st

9-10 am

ONLINE

[sba.gov/event/59897](https://sba.gov/event/59897)

25

JAN

## Social Media Marketing

Saturday, January 25th

2-3:30 pm

ONLINE

[sba.gov/event/58943](https://sba.gov/event/58943)

[Go to www.gbedinc.com](https://www.gbedinc.com) and scroll down to the calendar for even more classes with descriptions & links.

## Education

# SBDC & SBA Classes

### [Business Financial Literacy](#)

Tuesday, January 7th

11:30am- 1pm

[www.sba.gov/event/58940](https://www.sba.gov/event/58940)

### [Accounting for non-accountants](#)

Tuesday, January 7th

12-1 pm

[www.sba.gov/event/60684](https://www.sba.gov/event/60684)

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

Saturday, January 11th

9:30-11:30 am

[www.sba.gov/event/58947](https://www.sba.gov/event/58947)

### [Lunch and Learn: 5 ways to use ChatGPT \(AI\) for small business](#)

Monday, January 13th

12-1 pm

[www.sba.gov/event/58946](https://www.sba.gov/event/58946)

### [Startup and start right](#)

Tuesday, January 14th

12-1 pm

[www.sba.gov/event/60685](https://www.sba.gov/event/60685)

### [Early-Stage Business Boot Camp- Virtual Training- 4-week/ 8-Session Program](#)

Tuesday, January 14th- Thursday, February 6th

4:30-6 pm

[www.sba.gov/event/58100](https://www.sba.gov/event/58100)

### [Unlocking Opportunities with the 8 \(A\) Small Business Development Program](#)

Thursday, January 16th

12-1

[www.sba.gov/event/60689](https://www.sba.gov/event/60689)

### [States Sales Tax for Retailers](#)

Tuesday, January 21st

9am-12pm

[www.sba.gov/event/60687](https://www.sba.gov/event/60687)

### [State Sales tax for Construction Contractors](#)

Tuesday, January 21st

1-3 pm

[www.sba.gov/event/60691](https://www.sba.gov/event/60691)

### [Polishing your Business Idea](#)

Saturday, January 25th

10 am- 12pm

[www.sba.gov/event/58945](https://www.sba.gov/event/58945)

### [Marketing Strategy](#)

Saturday, January 25th

12:30- 1:45 pm

[www.sba.gov/event/58944](https://www.sba.gov/event/58944)

### [Social Media the Smart Way: Paid Search with Facebook & Instagram](#)

Thursday, January 30th

10:30am- 12pm

[www.sba.gov/event/58941](https://www.sba.gov/event/58941)



U.S. Small Business Administration

Please note that online registration will close at noon the day before each event.



*“Economic development is not a science, but an art, and a combination of forces and factors that must come together in the right way at the right time.” - James E. West*

**2023-2024 Annual Report**

**In the next issue**



- **Featured Business**
- **CO.STARTERS Entrepreneurship Class Update**
- **Update on Childcare Center in Barton County**
- **GB Alive, Fridays on Forest, and More!**



**Watch our 2024 Year in Review**

**Let's keep in touch**

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Facebook Instagram LinkedIn TikTok Website

A row of five social media icons: Facebook (f), Instagram (camera), LinkedIn (in), TikTok (musical note), and Website (globe).