

Mission Statement

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development will promote and improve the business climate in the city of Great Bend through its services and partnerships that encourage growth and assist existing and new businesses in reaching their business goals.



Goals

- Partner with organizations to position Great Bend for growth
- Maintain fiscal accountability and responsibility
- Provide quality services and programs for members
- Increase revenues to provide for future longevity

Areas of Focus

- Advocacy for business
- Investment in the future
- Community Marketing & Promotion
- Chamber member services

Top Successes in 2010

Membership Drive – In early August, the Board of Directors and Ambassadors partnered together in the 2010 Membership Drive. During the event, **41 memberships were sold generating over \$7,800 in revenue.**

3rd Annual Big Bend Bike Rally – For the third year in a row, the volunteers on the Big Bend Bike Rally planning committee organized a hugely successful Big Bend Bike Rally. More entertainment, more advertising, and more word-of-mouth brought over 1,300 riders and spectators to the Great Bend Expo Complex in late September. The continued growth is an indicator of the potential this event holds for future years. **The 2010 Big Bend Bike Rally brought in a net profit of over \$15,000.**

3i Show – May 5-7, 2010 marked the 54th Annual WKMA 3i Show, hosted at the Great Bend Expo Complex. Nearly 500 vendors from all over the country came to exhibit at the agricultural show representing three main areas: industry, implements, irrigation. Thank you Eddie Estes for another great event!

NEW! Barton County Young Professionals – Targeted for people who live/work in the Barton County Area, the Young Professionals group grew from a handful of contacts to over 150 in the second half of 2010, and held 10 events in 8 months.

Human Resources Roundtable – During 2010, the Human Resources Roundtable luncheon series grew exponentially, with **meeting attendance increasing from 25 to 60.** The diverse range of speakers and featured topics helped boost attendance at each meeting. Topics featured at the quarterly luncheons during 2010 included: On-Boarding, Kansas Career Pipeline, Health Care Reform, Employee Recognition/Incentive Programs.

NEW! Manufacturers Roundtable – In October, manufacturers from all over Central Kansas met in the Chamber Board room to hear information from state and national experts on international trade and exports. This new program gave those in attendance an opportunity to directly network with government officials and with others in their industry.

NEW! Spray-Holt Family Board Room Completed! An unusable, dilapidated storage space in the Sunflower Center has now been transformed into a state-of-the-art, contemporary meeting space, thanks to the generous donations of many contributors. Since its completion in early summer 2010, the board room has already been occupied 140 times.

Top Successes in 2010 (cont.)

Great Bend ACER Program - A partnership between businesses, local and county government, the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development, state resources, and non-profit community action organizers allowed this program to grow. Below is a list of items accomplished January through November 2010:

- Job fairs attended: 9
- Resumes/applications received: 402 Resumes + 327 Redbarn Applications
- Resumes received from college job fairs: 51
- New potential applicants (contacts, no resume): 160
- HR contacts listing (businesses receiving resumes): 165 businesses
- Community meetings attended: 39

Marketing - Promoting local businesses was once again the greatest focus for the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development in 2010. Through the *Outlook Business Journal*, Chamber Business Directory, weekly E-mail *Updates* and ever-expanding web site – activities and special features of numerous businesses were highlighted.

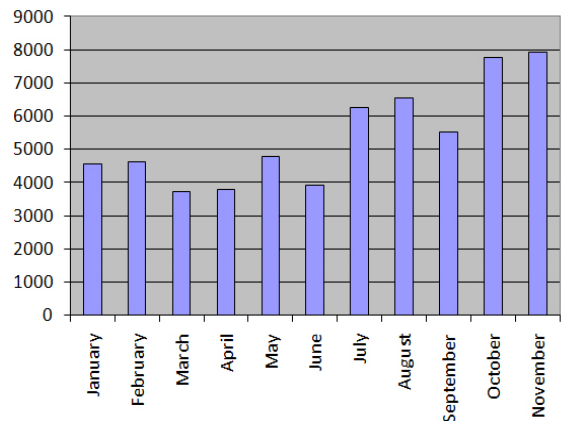
From January through December 2010, 120 **businesses** were highlighted in the *Outlook Business Journal* comprising 10,191 **inches of editorial space**. At the rate of \$7.00 per inch (a comparable advertising rate for the area), the **total value to these local businesses equates to \$71,335**. *A copy of this data available upon request.*

From January through November 2010, **59,424 emails were distributed** from the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development, as compared to 49,383 in 2009. On a monthly average, we circulated 5,402 emails per month in 2010, as compared to 4,489 per month in 2009. The number of average contacts per message increased from 909 in January to 1132 in November (increase of 25%).

Leadership Golden Belt - In 2010, 16 individuals in the 4-county area surrounding Great Bend took part in this regional leadership training program with the purpose of educating, connecting, and inspiring leaders of our communities. One major change we made to the program this year was incorporating a 3-day Kansas Community Leadership Initiative (KCLI) Summit in Wichita. This summit gave Leadership Golden Belt participants a chance to connect with over 200 diverse community leadership program participants from across the state of Kansas who were going through, or had already been through their own leadership training. It was also a chance for them to reconnect and nurture on a much deeper level, the new theories, principles, and competencies that were incorporated into this year's curriculum.

The focus of the 2010 Leadership Class was on creating purposeful leaders in our communities. Each of the session tours were pertinent to a 'topic of the day' and were conducted by owners who were leaders themselves in their respective communities. Speakers for some of the session panels included Ron Wilson from the Huck Boyd Institute, Erik Pedersen from Network Kansas, and Sue Dondlinger from Kansas Leadership Center.

Total Email Updates Sent Each Month



Economic Development

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development continuously strives to “position Great Bend for growth” as stated in our organizational goals. While this goal has been met for several years in a row, the 2010 calendar year brought more growth than any year to date. One of the most important aspects of community growth is the ability to step up and welcome change with open arms.

The first major accomplishment of the year was welcoming Redbarn Pet Products, and the 175 jobs they have created. Our staff was responsible for acquiring financial incentives, recruiting job applicants, and assisting the upper management with their transition to life in rural Kansas. Another new business that created jobs in Great Bend is no stranger to “growth.” Stutzmans Greenhouse announced in January that they’d be expanding to Great Bend, and executed their first season successfully between April and October.

While new businesses got most of the public’s attention, existing businesses experienced growth during 2010 as well. The Chamber staff partnered with Golden Belt Entertainment Group (Village Cinemas) in marketing their massive renovation and expansion. Other local businesses such as CKMC and BMI also experienced transition this year, and took advantage of the Chamber’s services and programs to help lighten their load. Great Bend’s largest private employer, CPI Qualified Plan Consultants, was purchased this year by CUNA Mutual, and the Chamber stepped up to welcome their executive management including President Jeff Post and Vice President Kevin Thompson.

A major part of Economic Development is business retention and networking. To help local businesses connect with state and national resources, the Chamber hosted two industry specific functions. The Manufacturers Roundtable connected area manufacturers and production facilities with representatives of state and national government offices that will advocate their products and services internationally. Likewise, the KansasBio Hot Team Meeting gave community representatives the opportunity to provide their input to KansasBio on the future of BioScience in Kansas. The relationships forged at these meetings might never have been made if it weren’t for the Chamber’s invaluable partnerships and services.

While national media focused on a down economy, The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development will decide to focus on the opportunistic future. Inevitable changes will certainly affect the business community – healthcare reform and a new state administration. Now, more than ever the positive effects of a tight economy require creative thinking, solid partnerships, strategic planning, more customer service, and innovative marketing. The Chamber/ED will continue to work with businesses to overcome barriers in order to welcome future growth. Business recruitment and business retention will continue to be the top two priorities.

Additional partnerships, services, and programs:

- Speaking engagements to service and social organizations & high school business classes
- Monthly updates presented to Barton County Commissioners
- Monthly updates to Great Bend City Council on Economic Development efforts
- Weekly meetings with Economic Development Team (City Administrator and Mayor)
- Welcomed new teachers at USD 428
- Welcomed 2010 Leadership KS Class
- Served on Board of Directors for MyTown LLC
- Western Kansas Congressional Staff Reception
- SRCA

Memberships

- Prairie Enterprise Project
- Great Bend Board of Realtors
- CKDI
- Kansas Chamber
- Kansas Chamber of Commerce Executives
- Kansas Sampler Foundation
- ICSC
- US Chamber of Commerce
- Kansas BIO
- wKREDA
- American Chamber of Commerce Executives
- Kansas Economic Development Association
- Western Kansas Manufacturers Association
- IEDC

Chamber staff participation

- Job Fest 2010
- Golden Belt Leadership Program
- Annual Banquet
- Jack Kilby Monument Project
- Great Bend CVB
- Big Bend Bike Rally
- KDOT district meetings
- BCC WorkForce Advisory & Business Advisory Committees
- Kansas WorkForce Summit
- Friends of Cheyenne Bottoms

Chamber Member Services

- Approximately 300 members were contacted by the Ambassadors through personal visits
- **79 new members** joined the Chamber of Commerce in 2010, compared to 41 in 2009
- Organized a successful Gary Gore Annual Golf Tournament – 22 teams, 2 event sponsors, & 35 hole sponsors
- Winter storage of **52** boats, campers and cars - compared to 57 units in 2009
- Distribution of approximately 1,500 maps and 2,000 phonebooks
- Distribution of relocation packets
- 34 members of the Plan Room with 25 sets of plans opened for review in 2010

As outlined in the 2010 Plan of Work, the following lists highlight a few accomplishments in this year of great opportunity:

Advocacy for Business

- 3 Legislative Forums addressing current legislative issues
- 49 Chamber Networking coffees, with average attendance of 54
- 10 Business After Hours Networking Events
- 28 Ribbon Cuttings

Community Marketing and Promotion

- Maintained a quality, 16-page monthly newsletter – *Outlook Business Journal* - that allows The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development to effectively promote member businesses and well as keeping all members informed of business happenings.
- Sold over \$62,000 worth of gift certificates (through November 30, 2010)
- Email UPDATE - Weekly e-mail Updates serve as a vehicle that allows the Chamber to reach members in a timely manner with information about committee work and special projects. During 2010, the weekly Update template was redesigned to include a calendar of events and table of contents feature.

Investment in the Future

- Agribusiness Committee created yet another successful Kids Ag Day for Barton County 4th graders
- Co-sponsored and promoted 1st Annual Wetlands Education Day for 2nd graders in USD 428
- Connected with over 85 new and existing businesses for business expansion or relocation
- Participated in College 2 Community Day – Barton Community College
- Continued growth of New 2 Great Bend Program, currently reaching 150 families
- Participated and co-sponsored Job Fest
- Board of Directors visited the coal power plant being expanded in Holcomb, KS
- Hosted a KansasBio Hot Team Meeting
- Expo facilities utilized 39 event days for 19 events, generating \$8,450.

Expo Complex Utilization	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total Units Stored	-	59	57	52
Winter Storage Revenue	\$6,150	\$8,200	\$8,700	\$8,450
Expo Rental Revenue	\$7,300	\$11,825	\$7,400	\$9,716
Gross Expo Income	\$13,450	\$20,025	\$16,128	\$18,166
Total Expo Expenses	-	\$12,917	\$9,144	\$13,956
Net Expo Income	-	\$7,108	\$6,984	\$4,210