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and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Outlook

Business Journal

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of Commerce and Economic Development

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2014 Great Bend Chamber Board Set, Officers Elected



Curt Mauler, Chairman



Kenny Vink,
Vice Chair



Derek Fredrick,
2nd Vice Chair



Erika Brining,
Past Chair



Alan Burton,
Treasurer

With the changing of the calendar year comes a new look and a new set of goals. The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development welcomes six new members to its board of directors.

Beginning three-year terms are Taylor Calcara (Watkins Calcara Chtd), Pam Chambers (Great Bend Regional Hospital),

— Continued on Page 2



Mark Bitter



Taylor Calcara



Frank Callahan



Pam Chambers



Matt Fehr



Dr. Jesse Grove



Lynda Jamison



Jim Johnson



Kevin Keller



Kevin Mauler



Dennis Neeland



Chris Smith



Julie Smith



Chris Spray



Kristy Straub



Jan Westfall

"Outlook Business Journal"
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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Chairman**
Curt Mauler, L&M Contractors
- Vice Chairman**
Kenny Vink, Office Products Inc.
- 2nd Vice Chairman**
Derek Fredrick, Waters True Value
- Immediate Past Chairman**
Erika Brining, CPI Qualified Plan Consultants
- Treasurer**
Alan Burton, Fuller Industries Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Mark Bitter**
Kustom Floors, Inc.
- Taylor Calcara**
Watkins Calcara, Chtd.
- Frank Callahan**
American Family Insurance
- Pam Chambers**
Great Bend Regional Hospital
- Matt Fehr, DVM**
Animal Medical Center
- Dr. Jesse Grove**
Grove Chiropractic & Sports Injury, P.A.
- Lynda Jamison**
Adams Brown Beran & Ball, Chtd.
- Jim Johnson**
Sunflower Diversified Services
- Kevin Keller**
Keller Real Estate & Insurance Agency
- Kevin Mauler**
4M Farms
- Dennis Neeland**
Great Bend Co-op Association
- Chris Smith**
Smith Supply LLC
- Julie Smith**
United Way / Chamber Ambassador Club
- Chris Spray**
Venture Corporation
- Kristy Straub**
Straub International / Young Professionals
- Jan Westfall**
Harden Hospice Kansas

EX-OFFICIO

- Cris Collier**, Great Bend CVB
- Dr. Carl Heilman**, Barton Community College
- Ken Roberts**, City of Great Bend
- Chris Thexton**, USD #428
- Jennifer Schartz**, Barton County Commission

CHAMBER STAFF

- Jan Peters**, *President/CEO*
jpeters@greatbend.org
- Rachel Mawhirter**, *Marketing Director*
rmawhirter@greatbend.org
- Andrea Bauer**, *Director of Sales & Member Services*
abauer@greatbend.org
- Roxanne Rich**, *Office/Business Manager*
rrich@greatbend.org

2014 Great Bend Chamber Board Set, Officers Elected

— Cont. from Page 1

Kevin Keller (Keller Real Estate & Insurance Agency), and Dennis Neeland (Great Bend Co-op Association). Also serving on the board in 2014 will be Kristy Straub representing Straub International and the Barton County Young Professionals group and Julie Smith representing United Way of Central Kansas and the Chamber Ambassador Club.

Curt Mauler (L&M Contractors) will serve as Board Chairman and Kenny Vink (Office Products Inc) will serve as the new Vice Chairman, while Derek Fredrick (Waters True Value) serves as the 2nd Vice Chairman, and Erika Brining (CPI Qualified Plan Consultants) is Immediate Past Chairman. Alan Burton (Fuller Industries Inc) is Treasurer.

Remaining Chamber Board members are Mark Bitter (Kustom Floor Designs), Frank Callahan (American Family Insurance), Matt Fehr (Animal Medical Center), Dr. Jesse Grove (Grove Chiropractic & Sports Injury), Lynda Jamison (Sunflower Bank), Jim Johnson (Sunflower Diversified Services), Kevin Mauler (4M Farms), Chris Smith (Smith Supply LLC), Chris Spray (Venture Corporation), and Jan Westfall (Harden Hospice Kansas).

Ex-Officio Board members are Cris Collier (Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau), Dr. Carl Heilman (Barton Community College), Ken Roberts (City of Great Bend), Chris Thexton (USD 428), and Jennifer Schartz (Barton County Commission).

Finishing their terms on the Board are Chad Somers (Benefit Management Inc), Tatum Dunekack (Dunekack DDS), Sally Mauler (The Buckle), Ellen Moran (Fuller Industries Inc), and Rick Nulton (Eagle Radio of Great Bend). Retiring board members will be recognized during the 92nd Annual Chamber Meeting & Banquet on Saturday, February 22nd, 2014.

Keller Real Estate & Insurance to Host Chamber Business After Hours & Customer Appreciation Event Jan. 9



Keller Real Estate & Insurance Agency invites you to attend their Customer Appreciation Event and Chamber Business After Hours Event on Thursday,

January 9th from 5-7 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 723 Main in Great Bend. Enjoy a taco bar, free beer and other beverages, and door prize drawings!

Keller Real Estate & Insurance Agency has been in operation for over 42 years. Keller Real Estate - it's the sign of success!

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MyTown Celebrates 5th Anniversary in Business

The momentum has been gathering for the past five years and now MyTown wants to look at new downtown possibilities. One item on the wish list is the transformation of some upper floors of downtown buildings from wasted space into residential lofts. The other is a fine-dining restaurant.



“We are researching what other communities have done in these two areas. As we celebrate our fifth anniversary we want to continue our vision.” MyTown Board member Mark Bitter said. “MyTown always seeks partners who share our goals, and city leaders have proven they also want to make positive things happen in Great Bend.”

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development also has made vital contributions that go back several years, Bitter said. It helped with research before MyTown began opening its first stores in November 2008. Jan Peters, MyTown board member and chamber president, noted MyTown has had, and will continue to have, a significant impact.

“We used to have a slow-paced downtown but now it is a vibrant area filled with shopping and special events. New businesses have sprung up and many have expanded,” Peters said. “One goal was to attract and retain employees by providing an area to meet family and friends. This is now a reality because of MyTown.”

Sheryl Cheely, MyTown board member, said the organization was born when local business leaders Mark Mingenback, Bob Dema and Mark Bitter met for breakfast about six years ago. “Because of that meeting, about 50 local investors made this happen,” Cheely said. “These people donated money and time with no expectation of personal financial return. The range of early contributions was \$10,000 to \$250,000.”

The early MyTown ventures were Renue Salon & Day Spa, Perks Coffee Shop and Heart of Kansas Mercantile. Each is still serving downtown customers; the other current MyTown store is Miss Pretty Pickles. For more information or to get involved, call 620-786-2330.

Hoisington Chamber Welcomes New Vice President

We are happy to announce that Kristi Lovett has agreed to join the Hoisington Chamber. We are confident that Kristi has the right skills, qualifications, and commitment to be of great service to Hoisington and she will help grow and enliven the Hoisington business community. Her family has lived in Hoisington for seven years and considers Hoisington their home. She has volunteered in many areas in town, and she and her husband Mark have recently invested in our community by opening their own local business.

The position of Executive Vice-President of the Chamber is a position that has the opportunity to positively impact an area even greater than Hoisington alone. The future of Hoisington is bright, and we are pleased that Kristi has accepted this role in the Chamber of Commerce. The board is looking forward to working with her into the future, and we are excited to introduce her to the Chamber community at our annual banquet on January 18th. We also want to publicly thank Stacey Bressler for her 26 years of dedicated service to Hoisington and to the Hoisington Chamber of Commerce.

Contributed by Brian Wilborn, Board President, Hoisington Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Connect Radio Show Airs Jan. 2

Tune in to Eagle Radio’s KVGB 1590 AM on the first Thursday of each month to hear Eagle Radio’s Patrick Burnett discuss the latest Chamber happenings with Chamber Marketing Coordinator Rachel Mawhirter. The January edition of *Chamber Connect* will air on Thursday, January 2nd at 11:35 a.m.

This month’s show will be centered around the Chamber’s Annual Meeting & Banquet and marketing services you’ll want to be using in the new year!

Members are welcome to submit topic ideas at any time to Marketing Director Rachel Mawhirter, rmawhirter@greatbend.org.



SAVE THE DATE - Icy Sidewalk Sale Scheduled Saturday, Jan. 18



Great Bend’s sidewalks are crowded with eager shoppers during the annual Icy Sidewalk

Sale that takes place each January. Scheduled for Saturday, January 18th, this year’s sale promises to be as exciting as ever. What started as a downtown collaboration has expanded to include retailers all over the City.

Stores will be sizzling with hot deals, so you won’t be left out in the cold! If your business plans to participate, contact Community Coordinator Christina Hayes at 620-793-4111 or chayes@greatbendks.net so that you can be included in future promotional items and City-wide advertising.

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Club 1 Fitness Hosts “Battle of the Bulge” Weight Loss Competition

Club 1 Fitness is currently recruiting teams of 4-6 people to participate in its “Battle of the Bulge” challenge, which will take place January 15th through March 15th. The cost per person is \$49 per club member or \$99 per non-member, which includes 8-week club access, a food plan, special team workouts, motivational coaching by email and text, healthy cooking classes, and a ticket to the Fitness Gala Party (formal event on March 22nd). The kick-off for the new challenge will be held January 13th from 6-8 p.m., and the final weigh-in will be held Saturday, March 15th from 8 a.m. to noon. The first ten teams to sign up will receive a free t-shirt.

Club employees are hoping to help challenge participants lose a total of 2014 pounds in 2014! Prizes will be awarded in several categories: team weight loss percentage, team inch loss percentage, and individual weight loss percentage. To sign up your team, contact Chris Berger at chrisbergerclub1@yahoo.com or 620-792-1366 x 13.



jazzercise® Hosts Dancing Days

Turn your resolutions into results! Dance off the inches and have fun doing it at the Great Bend Jazzercise Center. Sign up during the Dancing Days Sale January 9-14. Put nothing down, plus get January FREE. You can have fun, dance and sweat to Jazzercise routines featuring top artists like Katy Perry, Justin Timberlake, and Lady Gaga. Jazzercise is a group fitness class that combines dance-based cardio with strength training and stretching to sculpt, tone, and lengthen muscles for maximum fat burning. You can burn up to 600 calories in one fun and powerfully effective 60-minute total body workout, which combine jazz dance, resistance training, Pilates, yoga, and kickboxing - all choreographed to today's hottest music! Now is a perfect time to join, with more class times available than ever before, offered six days a week! Regular class time is 5:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, with low impact classes offered at 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and at 5:45 p.m. on Wednesday. For more information, contact the Jazzercise Center at 620-617-1534, or stop by 1409 Main times. Like us on Facebook!

Young Professionals Spotlight

A monthly update on activities & events for members of the Barton County Young Professionals group.

During the month of December, Barton County Young Professionals members gathered for their annual Ugly Sweater Christmas Party, sponsored by Watkins Calcara, Chtd, the area's largest law firm. The attorneys provided a free nacho bar, adult beverages, and prizes for the gingerbread decorating contest and ugly sweater contest. The event also served as a food drive for the Barton County Food Bank. Following the party, a large box of non-perishable food and just over \$30 in cash donations were delivered to the food bank's appreciative volunteers.

The growing group will take on another supply drive in the month of January, partnering with the Great Bend Rotary Club and several area charities. This is the second year that the Young Professionals Community Impact Team will take on the massive charity project, with the goal of collecting non-perishable food and household supplies for the numerous agencies in the area that need the support in the post-holiday doldrums. The Supply Drive is scheduled for Saturday, January 18th in conjunction with the Icy Sidewalk Sale, and will take place at the Great Bend Wal-Mart Supercenter. Shoppers are encouraged to stop by and be a part of the worthwhile charity project.

Just in time for the start of another exciting and eventful year for the Young Professionals group, the Steering Committee is pleased to welcome several new members to its leadership teams! Megan Hammeke, AJ Chrest, Brian Ewing, and Regan Ochs are joining the Steering Committee. Officers have also been elected, including Candice Moeder (chair), Kristy Straub (past chair), Brandon Steinert (vice chair), and Aaron Andrews (treasurer). Other committee members include Rachel Mawhirter, Andrea Bauer, Jenna Clarke, Christina Hayes, and Tina Mingenback.

Want to Join?

Anyone who works in Barton County between the ages of 21 and 40 is welcome to join the growing group at any time. For more information or to join, email us at bartonyp@gmail.com. And be sure to join the group on Facebook!



Want to Host a Young Professionals Event?

If your business is interested in hosting and/or sponsoring a Young Professionals event, the Steering Committee would love to hear from you. Submit your interest by emailing bartonyp@gmail.com. Sponsorships are available for mixers and family events.

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Highlighted Events in January

View & post all your community events at [www.greatbend.org!](http://www.greatbend.org)

- 1... Chamber Closed for New Years Day
- 1-5... Barton Campus Closed for Winter Break
- 2... Chamber Coffee: Shelter Insurance, 1922 Main, 9:30 a.m.
- 2... United Way "Light to Unite" Glow Run/Bike/Walk, 5-8 p.m.
- 6... Barton County Commission Meeting, 1401 Main, 9 a.m.
- 6... Great Bend City Council Meeting, 1209 Williams, 7:30 p.m.
- 9... Chamber Coffee: Maggie's Bar, 1318 Kansas, 9:30 a.m.
- 9... Ribbon Cutting: Relay for Life at Great Bend Coffee, 2015 Lakin, 10 a.m.
- 9... Business After Hours & Customer Appreciation Event: Keller Real Estate & Insurance Agency, Knights of Columbus Hall, 723 Main, 5-7 p.m.
- 11... Miss Barton County & Miss Golden Belt Pageant, GBHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- 13... Barton County Commission Meeting, 1401 Main, 9 a.m.
- 16... Chamber Coffee: Specials Herbs & Vitamins, 2415 10th, 9:30 a.m.
- 18... Golden Belt Community Concert: DePue Brothers Band, 7:30 p.m.
- 20... Barton County Commission Meeting, 1401 Main, 9 a.m.
- 20... Great Bend City Council, 1209 Williams, 7:30 p.m.
- 23... Chamber Coffee: Convention & Visitors Bureau, 3007 10th, 9:30 a.m.
- 25... Barton County's Got Talent Dinner Theater, 210 McKinley, 6 p.m.
- 27... Barton County Commission Meeting, 1401 Main, 9 a.m.
- 30... Chamber Coffee: 20/20 Optix, 1701 K-96 Highway, 9:30 a.m.

It's in our Nature to Inspire!

Column by Cris Collier, Great Bend CVB President



Did you know Great Bend has it's own destination page on Trip Advisor? Trip Advisor is the world's largest travel site... which is exactly why the CVB contracted to have a great professional presence for our community. They have over 260 million monthly visitors and 125 million reviews on accommodations, restaurants, and attractions worldwide

Through a page management site, the Great Bend CVB operates the Great Bend destination page which allows travelers to download a Great Bend visitor's guide, view photos, and check upcoming events. We encourage you to take a look at Trip Advisor, browse the reviews, and check out what the CVB has been up to on the Great Bend destination page. The advantages of a community based presence are numerous, one of which is protecting our destination by ensuring we are properly represented where it counts - and this is definitely where it counts.

Increasing numbers of travelers use the internet for travel planning; searching for travel-related information is one of the most popular online activities. A study done by Trip Advisor suggests that 40% of online trip planners use the internet to find coupons for the place in which they intend to travel.

We are now looking to expand our community representation on our Trip Advisor site. In doing so, we are looking to partner with local hotels, restaurants, retail shops, and attractions who would like to offer special rates, coupons, and discounts to out of town travelers.

What are the benefits of taking advantage of this offer? This travel site is well established, proven effective, open and accessible to a very large audience. It also opens doors for smaller businesses to be featured on a platform that has an international reach.

What are the disadvantages? Well, there are none! What is your cost? Zero. You get free exposure and advertising on a page that is paid for by the CVB and used by more than 260 million people monthly!

If you would like to take advantage of this special offer, contact the Great Bend Convention & Visitors Bureau at 620-792-2750 or e-mail tours@visitgreatbend.com.

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The DAMM BODY SHOP

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It took a minute or two before Jerry Damm would say it out loud, but like a lot of down-home, small-business owners, he didn't want to appear to be bragging.

After he mentioned that word of mouth was his biggest and best advertiser, the owner of Damm Body Shop finally got around to acknowledging that the quality of work is what leads to that word of mouth.

"I guess doing quality work speaks for itself," Damm said. "We get them fixed up and taken care of."

Damm Body Shop, 1910 16th., specializes in everything from major collision repair to replacing a mirror.

"We take care of anything to do with the body of the vehicle from front to back – but not the mechanics," Damm explained. "We also do the painting. We get it back to you just like it was before."

In keeping with his laid-back humility, Damm gives his employees credit for the good customer service. "The people who work here are the backbone of the business," the body-shop owner said. "They have been here for years and are dependable self-starters.

"They make my job easier and do quality work," he continued. "They treat the vehicles like they were their own."

Terry King has been with Damm for more than 20 years, and Tyler Hinson for eight. Annette Burton, who manages the office, is a 15-year veteran. "Hopefully, the customers are happy with what we do," Damm commented. "But if there ever is problem, we will get it handled."

Just as Damm and crew know what to do with a vehicle in need of repair, they also know what not to do. "If there is something we cannot do," Damm said, "I will be up front about it. We don't want people wasting their money."

For example, people who want to repair old, rusted-out vehicles, might want to seek service elsewhere.

"If you have an old car that you dug out of a creek bed, you will spend a ton of money and it will not be worth it when it is done," Damm said. "You will spend x amount of dollars and it is money out the window."



Owner Jerry Damm poses with his three staff members, Tyler Hinson (8 years), Terry King (20 years), and Annette Burton (15 years). Damm Body Shop is located at 1910 16th Street in downtown Great Bend.

"People sometimes think if they put \$1,500 into a car it will be worth \$50,000 later," he added. "It is not going to happen."

Damm did note the situation would be different if someone wants to refurbish a car for sentimental reasons.

Damm, who many people know as Lumpy of Lumpy's Bar & Grill, bought the body shop in January 1988 from Marvin Basgall of Basgall's Body Shop. Before then it was Spruills Ford Body Shop – all at the same 16th Street location.

"I have been in this business all my life," Damm said. "This is all I have ever done. Right after high school I went to Wichita Automotive and Body school," he said, noting he is a 1973 Great Bend High School graduate.

He started working at age 15 for Kottwitz Motors, the local Pontiac dealership at the time. He also worked at Bud Stein Body Shop and a few other shops in the early years. "Then the opportunity arose to purchase this place," he recalled. "I thought I would try it on my own. Now I have been in body repair for 40 years. So, I might be one of the few old timers still doing it."

"A lot of independently owned body shops are gone now," he elaborated. "Now there are about four, plus the dealerships. There used to be twice as many independents here."

There also have been changes in the way the body-shop business is conducted. "The repair process has changed a lot over the years," he noted. "We used to do mainly repair. Now it is more replacement because of the design and manufacturing."

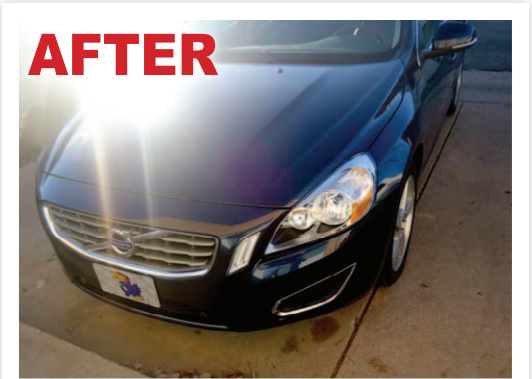
"There are now more plastics, fiberglass and different metals," he explained. "They are not building the big bulky machines like they used to. Even though there is more replacement, there is still a lot of repair. It depends on the availability of parts and then the cost of those parts. It is often cheaper to replace than repair. Back in the day, they didn't have a choice - repair was the only option."

Hours at Damm Body Shop are 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or by appointment. The crew works on any domestic or foreign car, sport utility vehicle or pickup in six work stalls and the paint booth. "We also have a frame machine," Damm pointed out. "If there is structural damage, we have the equipment to handle it. It is a full line of collision repair."

"Some of these big major-collision jobs can run \$12,000 to \$15,000 or more," he said, shaking his head. "Most vehicles, however, are totaled when they get to be that high. But we have done some big jobs."

Smaller jobs include repairing or replacing items such as door handles, mirrors and glass. Business stays pretty steady at Damm Body Shop, whose territory includes mainly Barton County but also Rush, Stafford and Pawnee counties.

"Great Bend is my hometown and I have been here all my life," he commented. "I admit I was kind of skeptical when I first went into business for myself. But we have had good customers who support smaller local businesses. I have been here for 26 years so I must be doing okay." —



Cheyenne Travel Receives Dual Recognition

- **Axman Rewarded for Sales Record**

Paula Axman, Vice-President and Director of Marketing for Cheyenne Travel Agency and Please Go Away Vacations, was recently notified by American Queen Steamboat Company that she and her husband were invited to be guests of the cruise line for a Mississippi River cruise aboard the American Queen Steamboat in December. The invitation was extended in recognition of Cheyenne Travel's proven and one-of-a-kind promotional programs and the resulting sales production numbers that make Cheyenne Travel one of the cruise line's preferred sales organizations in the United States.

- **Agency Receives Best of Great Bend Award**

Cheyenne Travel Agency, Inc. has been selected for the 2013 Best of Great Bend Award in the Travel Agents category. Each year, the Great Bend Award Program identifies companies that have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. These are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and our community. Winners are determined based on the information gathered both internally by the Great Bend Award Program and data provided by third parties.

Nex-Tech Wireless Launches 4G LTE

Nex-Tech Wireless has completed its initial deployment of fourth-generation (4G) long-term evolution (LTE) technology across their network. Equipment installation and extensive network testing has concluded. Nex-Tech Wireless customers will now be able to take advantage of this cutting-edge network with two brand-new devices, the Motorola Moto X and the LG F7. The iPhone 5, 5c and 5s will also be 4G capable for Nex-Tech Wireless customers soon.



Customers can utilize lots of available devices to enjoy the fastest wireless experience available to download apps and games faster, open files almost instantly, do real-time video chat, surf the web and stream movies, music and video at speeds up to 10x faster than what they have experienced.

The first phase of Nex-Tech Wireless' 4G LTE rollout includes the cities of Hays, Great Bend, Salina, Beloit, Concordia, Ellis, McPherson, Scott City, Norton, Colby, Russell, Plainville, Lyons and Stockton. For more details, visit Nex-TechWireless.com.

Great Bend Sports Complex to Host 2014 KCAC Baseball & Softball Tournaments

The City of Great Bend and Great Bend Recreation Commission are excited to announce that the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference (KCAC) Baseball and Softball Championships will be played at the Great Bend Sports Complex April 30th through May 3rd.

"We are thrilled to host the KCAC baseball and softball championships for 2014," stated Howard Partington, Great Bend City Administrator. He added, "This is an opportunity for as many as ten different college communities to see what Great Bend has to offer and play on our beautiful fields."

A proposal and recruitment effort was made by the Great Bend Sports Complex team to encourage the KCAC Board of Presidents to choose Great Bend as the location for the tournaments. The team is made up of City and Great Bend Recreation Commission staff; other contributors include: USD 428, Barton Community College Sports Medicine, and New Boston Creative.

Upon visiting Great Bend and the sports park, KCAC staff highlighted the features the Great Bend Sports Complex that include: Three softball fields, one premier baseball field, one dual use field, batting cages, bullpens, Musco Lighting, Daktronics Scoreboard technology, wireless internet, shaded areas, meeting space, umpire locker room, ample parking, Imagination Playground, and dedicated athletic training space.

The City and its partners will be preparing for the tournament coming this April and May. Until then, the City is interested in finding collegiate alumni from the KCAC Team list to help be community ambassadors for the teams while they spend the week in Great Bend. If you are a graduate of a KCAC member institution, please contact the City Community Coordinator Christina Hayes at 620-793-4111 or email her at chayes@greatbendks.net. Or for more information on the overall tournament, contact Diann Henderson at 620-793-3755.

SAVE THE DATE - Sunflower Gala Mar. 1

The Sunflower Diversified Services 9th Annual Charity Gala is Saturday March 1, 2014 at the Great Bend Convention Center. There will be a gourmet dinner, open bar, live and silent auctions, our version of Deal Or No Deal, and lots more! You may help by donating items for the auctions, attending or be a sponsor. Please mark your calendar and join us for this fun and informative evening.

Sunflower Diversified Services is a non-profit agency serving babies, toddlers and adults with developmental disabilities and delays in Barton, Pawnee, Rice, Rush and Stafford counties. For more information, call 620-792-1321 or visit www.sunflowerdiv.com.

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Great Bend Public Library Commemorates Renovation with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

The Great Bend Public Library hosted an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony last month to commemorate the completion of a year-long renovation. Paid for by Friends of the Library group, the renovation was extensive and much-needed. “The biggest change that people will notice right away is the new circulation desk, which has been moved and reorganized to better serve our customers,” says Harry Willems. “The old format was more intimidating, so now our employees can do more than just check out books. We are here to serve, and the circulation desk is the best way we can do that.”

The beautiful craftsmanship in the circulation desk is carried throughout other parts of the library, including endcaps and shelving for new displays. Upgraded furniture and a large flat screen television help modernize the space, while adding comfort and convenience for library patrons. The children’s library is much more colorful, and features more reading spaces and new books.

Also present at the ceremony was City Administrator Howard Partington and the State Librarian of Kansas, Jo Budler, who was recently named State Librarian of the Year, an honor awarded to only one person each year.

Other changes at the Great Bend Public Library include investments in technology, with an expanding collection of DVD’s (including new releases being added all the time) and AWE Early Literacy Machines. The Teen Spot is a new room dedicated to teenagers with gaming systems, a flat screen television, and an expanded collection of teen literature.

The Great Bend Public Library strives to keep up with the needs of its patrons. Currently employing a total of fourteen people with two being bilingual, the staff can help people with academic research, genealogical research, reading for leisure, and so much more. The library has two computer labs. One is available for use by the general public on the main floor, and the other is available in the basement for private use by local businesses for trainings, continuing education, etc.

“The library is so much more than a place to check out books,” Willems continued. “We rent everything from books and audiobooks to dvd movies and cakepans. We really try to serve the public through services and programming that changes regularly, so we encourage people to keep up with us through Facebook and our website.”



For more information about the library or its upcoming events, visit <http://greatbendpl.info> or call 620-792-2409. The Great Bend Public Library is located at 1409 Williams, and hours vary by season. Winter and spring hours are Mondays from 12-9 p.m., Tuesdays through Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays from 1-5 p.m.

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Relay for Life of Barton County to Hold Kick-Off Jan. 12

Relay for Life of Barton County is gearing up for another exciting fundraising campaign. The local fundraising organization brings people together around the annual Relay for Life event to raise money for the American Cancer Society. This year’s kick-off event will be held Saturday, January 11th from 9-10 a.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 723 Main in Great Bend. Anyone interested in being involved with the Relay for Life event in June is invited to attend this free breakfast. The theme for the 2014 Relay is “Music from Around the World.” For more information, contact Kandi Wolf at 620-797-5651.



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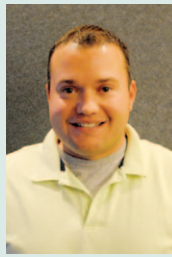
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Ambassador Profile - Aaron Andrews

The Ambassador Club is made up of 30 men and women from the Great Bend business community who represent the Chamber in a number of ways. They host the weekly Chamber Coffees, attend Business After Hours and Ribbon Cuttings, serve on Chamber committees, and assist with member recruitment and retention efforts. They also volunteer at numerous Chamber events, such as the Great Bend Farm & Ranch Expo and the Big Bend Bike Rally. To find out how you can become a member of the Ambassador Club, contact us, 620-792-2401 or abauer@greatbend.org.



Where I Work

I have been a loan officer for Community Bank of the Midwest since 2008. My primary focus is mortgage and consumer loans, but I can help my customers with almost anything.

Educational Background

I am a 2000 graduate of Great Bend High School and a 2005 graduate of Kansas State University. I grew up in Great Bend, and lived in Hays and Wichita for short times after college. I came back to Great Bend for a great job, and have enjoyed my time here ever since.

My Family

I have been dating the same beautiful lady, Jenna Clarke, for almost 2 years now, and we have a Shih Tzu that makes us laugh all the time. Most of my immediate family still lives in and around Great Bend. My mother has been a school teacher here for nearly 35 years, and her husband has been a mail carrier for about the same. My dad and his wife own a neat little bar and grill just south of Lake Wilson, which is a hot-spot year round.

As an Ambassador

I have been an ambassador for approximately one year, and I enjoy it a lot. There is a very diverse business background among the Ambassador Club members, and I think that broadens the ideas that come about. The group is fun and productive, and I believe it is a great asset to the Chamber and the business community.

Hobbies & Interesting Facts

I love the outdoors, and wish it was summertime year round. I love to play golf, ride Polaris UTV's all over the country, and spend time at the lake with family and friends.

Handlebar & Grill Celebrates Grand Opening

Tim Fabricius has been dreaming of owning his own bar and grill for years. Now with the help of his wife, Robin, and a staff of dedicated employees, he is finally seeing that dream become a reality. Fabricius is the owner of Great Bend's newest restaurant, The Handlebar & Grill, located at 807 E. 10th Street in the facility that used to house Diane's Diner. After purchasing the building in July, Fabricius spent the rest of the summer completely refurbishing the building with all new kitchen equipment, an updated décor, and a full service bar.

"Before this year, I'd worked in the oil industry for decades. When I saw the Diane's Diner building come up for sale, I knew this was the right time to start my business." Fabricius says. "I'm an avid motorcyclist, but this is not a biker bar. It's a family friendly restaurant that features a biker themed décor and menu."

The Handlebar & Grill serves appetizers, salads, sandwiches, burgers, hotdogs, and several signature entrees that have already made the Handlebar quite popular since it opened in October.

In addition to the unique atmosphere and hearty menu, another factor sets the Handlebar apart from other local restaurants. The staff of 15 full time employees uses state-of-the-art technology to ensure their customers receive the best possible service. Instead of writing down orders that are passed to the kitchen manually, the wait staff takes orders and processes checkout using iPads that digitally transmit the orders to the kitchen.

"Using iPads for ordering and checkout helps reduce the wait times for customers and keeps the flow of business running smoothly," Fabricius says. "There's a learning curve involved for our employees, but it's been a good move for us."

The Handlebar & Grill is open seven days a week for lunch and dinner, and features a full service bar in addition to dine-in and carry-out menu items. For more information or to place an order, call 620-603-6676.



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Tickets for "Barton County's Got Talent" Dinner Theater Jan. 25 Now on Sale!

Habitat for Humanity would like to announce that tickets for the "Barton County's Got Talent" are now on sale, and going fast! The 5th Annual event is scheduled for Saturday, January 25th at Grace Community Church, and includes a 3-course meal before a talent showcase from volunteer performers in the Barton County area.



Two types of tickets are on sale for the popular fundraiser. Patrons can enjoy the dinner at 6 p.m. and the talent show afterward for \$30 per person, or they can come for the performances at 7 p.m. for \$15 per person. Between the tickets sold to over 500 spectators, donations, sponsorships, and a silent art auction, the event is anticipated to generate over \$18,000 for the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity.

The dinner theater fundraiser is a spin-off of the network television show "America's Got Talent." Volunteer performers participate in a laid back talent competition, where two titles are awarded with small cash prizes. A Judge's Choice Award is given to a winner selected by a panel of local experts (Joe Boley, Malia Divilbiss, and Lorrie Stickney) and a People's Choice Award is given to a winner selected by audience vote.

Habitat for Humanity works to build and rehabilitate houses all over the world, which are sold through zero-interest mortgages to families that cannot otherwise qualify for traditional loans. The local affiliate's board of directors hopes to begin their next project in 2014.

Anyone interested in purchasing tickets or confirming a tax-deductible sponsorship/donation for the nonprofit organization should contact event organizer Rachel Mawhirter, 620-786-4896 or habitatbartoncoun-ty@hotmail.com. Tickets are also available at the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce office, 1125 Williams, weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

First Christian Church Hosts Retirement Reception for Reverend Bill Johnson Jan. 12

The First Christian Church of Great Bend invites the many friends of Reverend Bill Johnson to a retirement reception on Sunday, January 12th from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at the Great Bend Convention Center, 3017 10th Street. The reception will celebrate the 27 years of service to the church and the Great Bend community.

Reverend Bill will be retiring as the Senior Pastor of the First Christian Church in late January. He and his wife, Lois Ann, would be honored to have the community join them at this reception. For those unable to attend, cards and love offerings may be sent to the church at 5230 Broadway.



United Way of Central Kansas

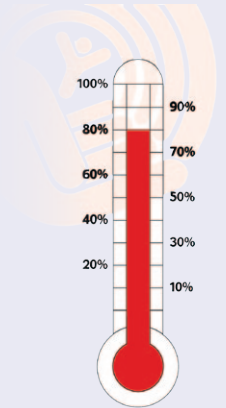
1125 Williams in Great Bend, KS 67530
Office Phone: (620) 792-2403
unitedwayofcentralks@hotmail.com

Submitted by Executive Director Julie Smith

United Way Campaign Update

United Way of Central Kansas is closing in on their goal of raising \$250,000 to fund United Way agencies in 2014. With payroll contributions from area employers rolling in, we are currently at 98% of our goal! If you would like to contribute to help finish out the year strong, please send your tax-deductible contribution to UWCK, 1125 Williams, Great Bend, KS 67530. Thanks to the community for all your continued support!

To keep up with United Way events throughout the campaign, visit www.uwck.org.



Introducing the NEW Outlook Business Journal Full Color Ads Now Being Reserved for 2014!

It's time to reserve your advertisement space in the 2014 issues of the Chamber's Outlook Business Journal. Spaces are still available for new members who want to jump in!

The exciting NEW Outlook Business Journal will now be full color in 2014! The 12-page publication will still feature the same types of information, but in a more streamlined format that will appeal to our readers a little more.

Also NEW this year are two opportunities for contract discounts. You can earn a \$50 discount (that's one free ad!) if you pre-pay for the entire year. You can also earn a \$25 contract discount by keeping your ad the same all year round.

We rely on our advertisers to cover the costs of this high quality (and expensive) publication. It's a great opportunity to keep your products and services in front of the core consumers in our area. We appreciate all of our members, but especially the ones who go above and beyond to underwrite our valuable marketing services.

For more information, contact Rachel Mawhirter at 620-792-2401.

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January 9, 2014

Maggie's Bar • 1318 Kansas

Maggie's Bar is Great Bend's hippest hangout, featuring the famous round bar and the loosest lazy susans in town. Enjoy pool tables, a dance floor with digital jukebox, and daily drink specials.

January 16, 2014

Specials Vitamins & Herbs • 2415 10th Street

Enjoy our healing atmosphere at Specials Vitamins & Herbs in Great Bend. We provide health and diet food products, natural hormones, mineral make-up, massage and foot spa detox. Owner Cyndi McGee and her friendly staff are always ready to assist you.

January 23, 2014

Convention & Visitors Bureau • 3007 10th Street

The GBCVB is a self generating-tax-supported (transient guest tax) marketing organization that exists to serve, support, and supplement the community economic development efforts through aggressively marketing to potential overnight visitors.

January 30, 2014

20/20 Optix & Dr. Mark Judd • 1701 K-96 Hwy

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February 6, 2014

Up N Rollin Skate Center • 2805 9th Street

Up N Rollin Skate Center is a family friendly roller skating rink with open sessions on Fridays and Saturdays from 6-8 p.m. and 8-10 p.m., and on Sundays from 3-5 p.m. We also offer Cheap Skate on Tuesdays from 6-8 p.m. and Holy Roller Night the first Wednesday of each month from 6-8 p.m. Private party bookings are available.



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Employment – Barton County	October 12	October 13
Labor Force	15,857	16,527
Employment	15,280	15,957
Unemployment	577	570
Unemployment Rate	3.6%	3.4%
KS Unemployment Rate	5.2%	5.6%

City/County Local Sales Tax Distributions Report	October 12	October 13
Sales Tax for Barton County at 1.00%	\$467,570	\$424,568
Sales Tax for Great Bend at 0.75%	\$234,954	\$227,078

Permits	October 12	October 13
Commercial – GB	6	12
Residential - GB	42	37

Great Lakes Airlines Flights - October 2013

Flights from Denver	40
Flights to Denver	39

Boarded 80 Passengers

