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BEYOND TODAY

SPECIAL EDITION 103RD ANNUAL AWARDS ELEVATE GBK BEYOND TODAY

Outlook Business Journal



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ELEVATE & CELEBRATE: HONORING THOSE LIFTING GBK HIGHER

On March 1st, 2025 the Great Bend business community came together at the beautiful Corinthians Hill Event Center to honor the outstanding individuals and businesses that make our town truly exceptional. Presenting sponsors of the evening included: Barton Community College. The University of Kansas Health System, and Spectrum Partners

EVENTHIGHLIGHTS

- Equity Bank sponsored cocktail hour with Proper Boards &

- A & G Catering spread with bacon wrapped pork loin covered in a cherry wine sauce
- Sheryl Cheely recognized with Legacy Award
- Family reunion when Dr. Ty realized his parents were across the room and Paul Snapp embraces daughters
- Flying rolls thanks to Emcees having fun
- 26 corporate table sponsors
- Nearly 350 people present ready to Elevate GBK!



2024 Chamby Award Winners Sonya Rein & Lindsey Bogner



Sheryl Cheely



2024 NextGen Leader of the Year Dr. Ty Brunswig, DVM Animal Medical Center



2024 Citizen of the Year: Paul Snapp, First Kansas Bank



2024 Business of the Year: MPIRE Realty



CHAMBY AWARDS

Introduced in 2022, The Chamby Awards put a fun twist on recognition, inspired by The Office's Dundie Awards. These lighthearted honors celebrate our Chamber Ambassadors for their enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to supporting our chamber members throughout the year.

Hosted the Mosted - Awarded to the Ambassador who stepped up to host the most Chamber Coffees this past year.

Ribbon Cutting Champ – Given to the Ambassador who made the most appearances in ribbon–cutting photos—always ready with giant red ribbon and a big smile!

These awards add a little fun to our evening while celebrating the hard work of our incredible Ambassadors.

This years well-deserved winners: Sonya Rein and Lindsey Bogner.



2025 Ambassador Club

Jordan Batman - BTI Kimberly Becker - Move Your Mountain Coaching & Consulting Patrick Cowan - Adams Brown Toby Elliott - myLawn! Turf & Tree Caleb Frye - Strategic Partners Financial Group Michele Gregg - ICT Insurance Group Maggie Harris - Barton Community College Dena Hiss - Legacy Financial Solutions Dale Hogg - Fuller Industries, Inc. Lee Ann June - Great Bend Economic Development Tarynn Kirmer - Stueder Contractors, Inc. Sasha Lahman - Abbey Carpet & Floor Heather Lamb - Peoples Bank & Trust Benn Maddox - Equity Bank Melanie Maneth - D. McMillen, Chtd. Carmen Martinez - Peoples Bank & Trust Michael Miller - Ronald L Miller Public Accounting Andrew Murphy - Great Bend Tribune Charell Owings - United Way of Central Kansas Sarah Panning - Nex-Tech Wireless Aaron Raney - Iron Therapy Training Sonya Rein - Edward Jones Flor Sanchez - Heart of Kansas Family Healthcare Lleraldy Sandoval-Holquin - The Buckle Kyler Sill - Adams Brown Trina Smith - Farmer's Union Midwest Agency Jennifer Stoddard - Hammeke Electric Dave Storjohann - Arby's Zach Streit - Landmark National Bank Santíago Talamantes - Spectrum Partners LLC



NEXTGEN LEADER OF THE YEAR

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce honors individuals whose exceptional service and dedication enhance the quality of life in Great Bend with the NextGen Leader of the Year Award. This award recognizes those who selflessly give their time, talent, and energy to uplift the community and members of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, enrich the culture, and inspire others through their actions.

Nominees for this award embody a generous community spirit and excel in their chosen profession or as volunteers by demonstrating:

- Exceptional Leadership: Inspiring others through quality leadership and vision.
- Unwavering Commitment: Consistently dedicating effort toward meaningful community impact.
- Role Model Behavior: Setting a high standard of social and professional responsibility, serving as an example for others to follow.

This award celebrates individuals who lead by example, making Great Benda better place to live, work, and thrive.

BY DALE HOGG

Sure, Dr. Ty Brunswig practices veterinary medicine at the Animal Medical Center with a passion but that passion goes much further than that, being felt in his home and community. He was recognized for this as the recipient of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce's 2024 Next Gen Leader of the Year.

"Dr. Ty's impact on Great Bend extends far beyond thewals of the Animal Medical Center," said Dr. Nels Lindberg, who brought Brunswig into the practice in 2014 and nominated him for the award. "He has become a driving force in the community, embodying servant leadership and inspiring growth in both his business and the lives of those around him."

"Ty is a humble servant leader at workand in the community, but most importantly to our three daughters at home," said his wife Courtney. "He is dedicated to raising the next set of leaders that are going through Great Bend schools and affect our community as well."

His influence is evident at the AMC, where he has cultivated a thriving environment. "He's not just a veterinarian; he's a mentor, advisor, and coach to a team of over 20, fostering their personal and professional development," Lindborg said.

Brunswig's leadership was instrumental in a recent \$800,000 clinic expansion, growing the AMC team from under 15 to over 20 members. He is now co-owner and manager of the practice.

"Beyond AMC, Dr. Ty's commitment to Great Bend shines brightly," hesaid. Hewas a founding member of the First Christian Church's Refuge service, which has blossomed under his leadership from a small group of eight to a vibrant congregation of over 100 every Sunday.

His involvement with the Chamber of Commerce, including recent work with FUEL on their rebranding efforts, demonstrates his dedication to the broader business community. For over two years, he served as president of the local Quicksi were softball organization, further showcasing his commitment to local youth.

"Dr. Ty's achievements speakto his dedication and drive," Lindborg said. He's a graduate of the ICE House Entrepreneurial Mindset program, a testament to his commitment to leadership development.

His contributions have been recognized with prestigious awards, including the 2022 Outstanding Young Alumnus of the Year from the KSU College of Veterinary Medicine and a place in the Great Bend Tribune's 20 Under 40 class of 2022.

Friends and colleagues describe Brunswig as a selfless individual with a huge heart and a contagious personality, he said. He has a knack for finding joy even in challenging situations, making him a beloved figure in the community.

"Ty really enjoys mentoring Great Bend High School students who work at the clinic as well as those who come to be interns for school projects," Courtney said. "He also leads and guides upcoming vet students through an internship program hosting many in our home over the summer."

"He pours his blood, sweat and tears into everything he does, from growing a successful business to nurturing charitable organizations," Lindburg said." His commitment to Great Bend is undeniable, and his influence is shaping a brighter future for the community he so passionately serves.

"Dr. Ty's blend of professional success, community involvement, and genuine care for others makes him a truly deserving candidate for the Next Gen Leader of the Year award," he said.

Brunswig is a WaKeeney native who graduated from Fort Hays State University and Kansas State University. He is an avid hunterand marks men, spending lots of time outdoors and custom reloading his own ammunition. He and have three daughters, plus a poodle/bichon mix named Rusty and a Yorkie named Reesie.





CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce is proud to honor individuals whose exceptional service and dedication enhance the quality of life in Great Bend. This prestigious award recognizes those who selflessly give their time, talent, and energy to uplift the community and members of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, enrich the culture, and inspire others through their actions.

Nominees for this award embody a generous community spirit and excel in their chosen profession or as volunteers by demonstrating:

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Unwavering Commitment: Consistently dedicating effort toward meaningful community impact.

Role Model Behavior: Setting a high standard of social and professional responsibility, serving as an example for others to follow.

This award celebrates individuals who lead by example, making Great Bend a better place to live, workand thrive

BYDALE HOGG

Devoted father, respected banker and active community leader.

These words help describe Paul Snapp, the 2024 Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year. But, his wife Elise noted, they are not enough.

"It's hard to summarize my husband," she said." I am very proud of who he is. He lives what he thinks is important and that is faith, family and community. Outside of being busy following our four qirls, he tries to be involved in our community as he thinks it's important to be engaged."

Snapp, who serves as president and CEO of First Kansas Bank, was nominated for his "leadership, unwavering commitment to community development, and exemplary role model behavior," the nomination reads.

"Paul Snapp is a deserving winner due to his exceptional dedication to our community and Bank team," said friend and co-worker Jay Luerman, vice president at First Kansas." With the support from his wife, Elise, Paul has graciously volunteered his time throughout the years."

On the work front

At the office, "Paul is a great leader for the First Kansas Bank team," Luerman said. Whenever a situation arises, Paul always asks the co-worker what their thoughts are first before he shares his opinion.

"That little gesture truly makes each employee feel like they have authority within the decision," he said." Paul truly enjoys mentoring and seeing others on the team be successful. It brings him more joy than any personal recognition. He is a valuable asset to our team and community."

With over 35 years of experience in the banking industry, Snapp has guided First Kansas since 2007, overseeing its expansion across the region. His leadership extends beyond the bank's walls, as he actively participates in strategic planning initiatives fostering economic growth in Great Bend.

In the community

In addition to his professional achievements, Snapp epitomizes social responsibility, the

nomination notes. He sets high standards within his organization and inspires his colleagues and the broader community.

Hisservice includes boards and organizations such as Great Bend Economic Development, United Way of Central Kansas, Great Bend Kiwanis Club, Great Bend Rotary Club, Central Kansas Development, Golden Belt Community Foundation, Golden Belt Bankers, Prince of Peace Parish, USD 428 Foundation, Barton Community College Foundation, Barton County Kids Ag Day and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce.

"Paul's dedication to the community is undeniable," the nomination reads. He serves on the Great Bend Economic Development Board, collaborating with other leaders to enhance the local economy.

And" under his leadership, First Kansas Bankhas generously supported numerous local events and organizations, contributing a remarkable \$45,000 in donations and thousands of volunteer hours in a single year," the nomination continues. Snapp's commitment to community service is further evident through his past service on the Chamber Board of Directors, where he served as board chair in 2017.

"Paul has always been committed to improving the community where he and his family live," Luerman said, citing one of many examples. When Paul and Elise moved to Claftin they made a grassroots effort to help raise money to plant trees and install new playground equipment at the Claftin Community Park for the youthand families to be proud of and enjoy.

And then, there is the home front.

"Our girls got involved in summer swim and, over they ears, the program has experienced a shortage of officials," she said. "So, he became an official to help keep the summer club going. This involves a lot of extra hours, but he felt it was important to help and as a result, kept it possible for the kids to continue to swim."

In addition, he volunteers to set up and take down flags on Memorial Dayweekend, Fourth of July and Labor Day, Prior to this, he helped with the annual Kiwanis Club pancake feed.

For the last two weeks, he was selling half-courts hot tickets for a fundraiser at Great Bend High School basketball games.

"Paul Snapp is a true asset to our community," the nomination reads. "His dedication to making Great Bend a better place is truly inspiring.

"Snapp's visionary leadership, steadfast involvement, and exemplary conduct make hima deserving candidate," the nomination continued." His continuous efforts to improve the quality of life in Great Bend have made a significant and lasting impact on the community."

Paulwas born in Belleville, the youngest of four. His fatherwas a postmaster and farmed and Paul helped on the farm growing up. Most of Paul's family attended K-state so he thought he would take a different path and went to KU.

He has a special interest in history, especially. World War II. His interest was largely because his dadwas a leg amputee from fighting in that conflict, but he didn't think job opportunities would be as good with a history degree, so obtained a business degree instead.

His world revolves around his family, faith and community. "He believes in volunteering to help the community be a better place," Elise said.

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

The Business of the Year Award celebrates exceptional companies that exemplify excellence in the market place and set a standard for business success in Great Bend. This prestigious award is open to members of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in customers ervice, growth, reliance, community engagement and innovation.

This award honors businesses that inspire others by leading with innovation, integrity, and commitment to the community.

BY DALE HOGG

When it comes to this year's Great Bend Chamber of Commerce 2024 Business of they ear, MPIRE Really Group checks all the boxes and then some.

Customerservice, check. Growth, check. Reliance, check. Community engagement, check Innovation, check

In short, "MPIRE Really Group exemplifies the qualities celebrated by the Business of the Year Award through their commitment to excellence in customer service, business growth, resilience, community engagement, and innovation," the nomination for this outfit reads.

Small beginnings

MPIRE Realty was started in 2017 by Aaron and Jenna Andrews, Jason and Jayme Mayers and Nels and Karen Lindberg. It continues to expand, contributing to the local economy by attracting new families to the Great Bend area.

" We began with two agents and have grown over the past nearly eight years to a team of nine agents," Aaron said, Combined the office has over 120 years of real estate experience.

"Our owners had a vision to create a real estate company that was designed more around a team approach where the agents work together for the benefit of our clients," he said. "From this vision, MPIRE Realty Group was born. Our primary focus is to consistently create a team environment where serving the needs of our clients is more valuable than profits or large volumes of sales."

Aaron said their core values are at the forefront of every interaction they have both with clients and within our community. "We believe in serving our community with integrity, humility and honesty in each and every transaction."

These values are non-negotiable and guide each of the agents as they strive to provide residential, commercial and agricultural real estate services.

" We are proud members of Great Bend and the surrounding communities. All of our agents are heavily involved in community service and believe in giving back," he said.

Last year, in conjunction with Kansas Trophy Experience, they began Trophies to Tables where they team up with USD 428 to provide deer meat and beef to families. And "each fall we take great pride in stocking the Panther Pantry at Great Bend High School and pantries in several of the surrounding school districts," Aaron said.

Many of the agents are members of clubs and organizations throughout the area, and they are always looking for new opportunities to volunteer and get involved with activities and events.

"We believe that being involved in the communities that we work in is essential," he said. "That was part of what recently drove us to move our business to 1317 Main Street in Great Bend, where we can be part of all that Great Bend has to offer."

A community commitment

MPIRE Realty Group's commitment to excellence is evident in their consistent growth and





resilience, the nomination notes. The company has navigated the evolving real estate landscape with agility, adapting to markets hifts and emerging challenges while maintaining a strong focus on clients at is faction.

This adaptability has not only ensured their continued success but also solidified their position as a trusted partner in the community.

"Beyond their professional achievements, MPIRE Realty Group actively contributes to the betterment of Great Bend," the nomination reads. The company demonstrates a strong sense of civic responsibility through its involvement in local schools, divic organizations and community-focused initiatives. This commitment to giving back underscores their deep-rooted connection to the community they serve.

"Lookingahead, MPIRE Realty Group continues to innovate and expand its services," the nomination reads. "By offering a comprehensive range of real estate solutions, including residential, commercial and agricultural services, they are well-positioned to meet the diverse needs of their clients and contribute to the continued growth and prosperity of Great Bend.

"MPIRE Realty Group's dedication to customer service, significant business growth, resilience, active community engagement, and innovative practices make them a deserving candidate for the Business of the Year Award. Their contributions to the real estate market and the overall well-being of Great Bend have solidified their position as a respected and valued member of the community."

The Legacy Award, presented by the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, honors the life and legacy of individuals who have made an indelible mark on the fabric of our community. The Prst recipient of this award was Great Bend's own Skip Yowell, founder of the company Jansport - an American brand of backpacks and collegiate apparel, now owned by VF Corporation, and one of the world's largest apparel companies. The award is given at the discretion of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

BY DALE HOGG

Unlike the other honors awarded annually by the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, it bestows the Legacy Award only at the discretion of the Chamber Board to individuals whose impact in Buences the community at the bedrock level.

This truly is the case with Great Bend native. Sheryl Cheely, the 2024 prize redipient.



Cheely. "That is Sheryl. There are so many things that happen, and we never realized she was involved. She was content to work in the background."

"Sheryl Cheely has left an indelible mark on Great Bend, embodying the spirit and purpose of the Legacy Award," her nomination reads.

"Sheryl has been a foundational Pgure in

"It's kind of unique to have someone this

dedicated to their community and willing

a longtime friend and business partner of

to give so much back to it," said Mark Bitter,

"Her dedication to helping the community and fostering local initiatives is a testament to her outstanding service," the nomination continues. She has "signiPcantly contributed to the Great Bend community through her leadership, dedication and philanthropic efforts, making her a deserving recipient."

Great Bend."

A sample of this includes being a founding member of Prairie Godmothers, which provides hardship assistance to women for basic needs not met by other resources, and supporting MyTown, the grassroots effort to Pll downtown storefronts. She donated the Dolly Trolley to the Rosewood Roots and Wings Foundation, a beloved Christmas tradition, and generously supports small businesses and entrepreneurs, often anonymously.

"As a board member of MyTown, Cheely played a pivotal role in revitalizing downtown Great Bend," the nominator noted. Her efforts included overseeing projects that enhanced the local economy and community aesthetics. Notably, she announced the full repayment of a City of Great Bend loan for MyTown,

reßecting successful Pnancial stewardship.

"She's a very generous person," Bitter said. "Not that many people are that dedicated to their hometown. My Town wouldn't have happened without her generosity."

There is also her involvement with the Golden Belt Community Foundation, where she helps shape the future of the region, and the Sunßower Rod and Custom Association dragstrip, where she fuels the town's vibrant spirit. Her efforts are evident also in her support of community services, the Great Bend Bat Cats, enhancements to recreational opportunities, scholarships and other endeavors.

And then there's her



work with the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce (having served as its Board president), and Great Bend Economic Development Inc. and the Final Fridays on Forest events.

"There's just so much. She is very committed to the community. She wants it to prosper. She wants it to grow," said Alene Owen, who started working with Cheely 25 years ago with what is now Renue Salon and Spa as part of MyTown and has since become a close friend. Yet, "she's very humble. She wants no credit for anything and nothing in return, she is very giving."

"I've known Sheryl since the mid-80s, back when we were all young and energetic, playing volleyball on opposing teams," recalls Jon Prescott, businessman and longtime acquaintance. "Sheryl and her late husband, Ray, were the team to beatbut we never could"

Prescott's connection with Cheely deepened in 1986 when he joined her at CPI QualiPed Plan Consultants. "From that point forward, she became a true friend," he said. He emphasized the kind of candor that dePnes their relationship.

"True friends won't hesitate to share what's on their mind, provide constructive feedback, or engage in a good debate," he said. "But," he added with a smile; "you better have your homework done because she always had done hers."

Beyond friendship, Prescott recognizes Cheely's leadership qualities. "She always commits her mind and heart to anything and everything she does," he said. As an employee-owner at CPI, Cheely played a crucial role in the company's growth over her 35-plusyear career.

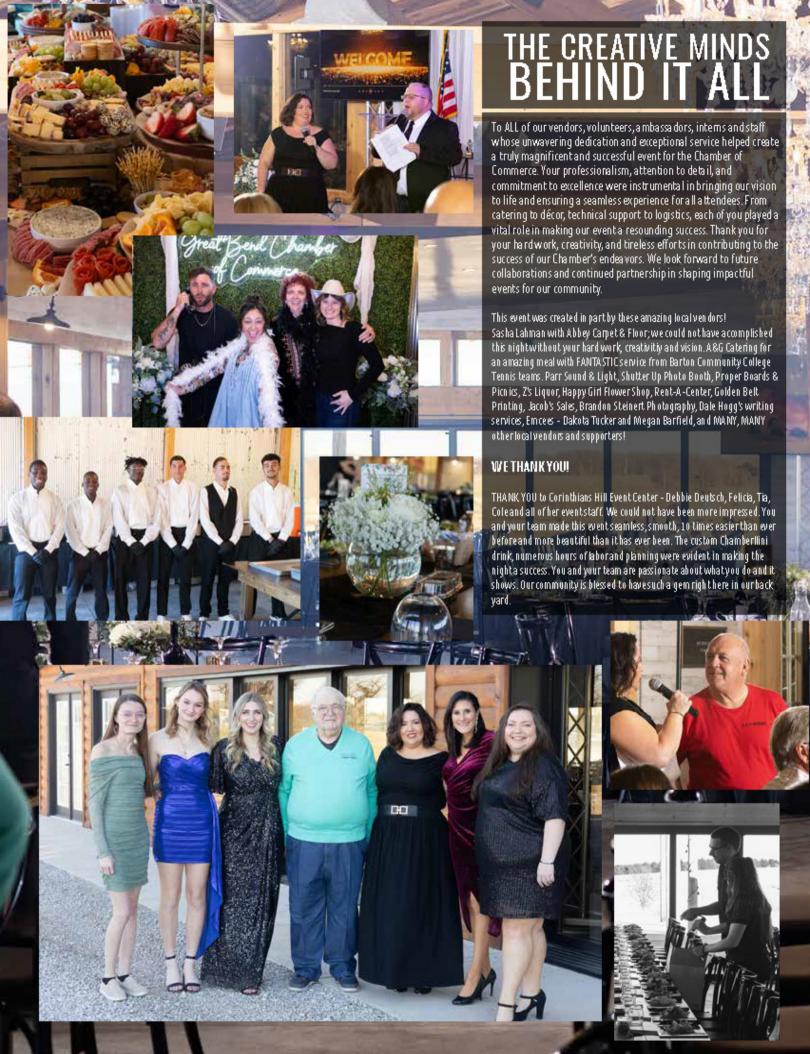
"She helped grow one of Great Bend's largest corporations from three employees to over 500, servicing corporations in all 50 states," Prescott noted. "She helped CPI become one of the most renowned retirement plan providers in the country."

"She was content to work in the background," Bitter said. "She's always there and always a part of it."











with purchase of heartworm prevention.





ComfortProKS.com

Featured Ambassador: Santiago Talamantes

 $m{A}$ mbassador Gub members assist the Chamber with networking events, ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings, and membership recruitment and retention. This group of volunteers allows the Chamber to cultivate business relationships and network with the area's most successful people. If you would like to become an Ambassador and represent your company, contact a member of the Chamber staff.





an ARCHER LEWIS firm

What Brings You Here?

A "Great Bend has always been home. Although I was born in Arizona. I have been here since the age of 6. Great Bend has been very generous to me, it is where I went to school, met most of my friends, peers, mentors and it's where I met my high school sweetheart Jessica. After attending FHSU for a few years, my wife and I decided to come back to Great Bend and start our lives and grow our family. We currently have a 3-year-old daughter

Q Your Day to Day Jobs

A "I assist clients with payroll, bookkeeping and tax returns throughout the year. In the off season, I am involved with community service efforts like Meals on Wheels and Operation Christmas Child. Also, I am our only bilingual staff member and am proud to serve Spanish speaking clients!"

🔾 Surprise us!

 $m{A}$ "I know how to play a variety of instruments! I can play, the Tenor, Alto and Soprano Saxaphone, Accordion, Bass Guitar, and Guitar. I'd say music was one of my favorite subjects other than math of course!"

Q Your Inspiration

A "I have a few impactful inspirations that help fuel me, Firstly, my parents, being a first generation Mexican American and the oldest of 6, there were a lot of firsts that I had to learn and accomplish, and even though some things my parents couldn't directly help me with, they have always been my biggest supporters. I am lucky to have a great support system, my wife, Jessica has been my foundation throughout any situation, whether good or bad. Chasing my goals and ambitions hasn't always been easy but she makes it so easy to focus on my goals with her unconditional support and love. Lastly my child, Ariely, she makes any cloudy day bright and her willingness to learn and stay curious, reminds me every day to do the same throughout my day."

 $oldsymbol{O}$ Wild Card

 $oldsymbol{A}$ "I would be a terrible, pilot, for one I am afraid of heights and there are way too many buttons and controls! I'll leave it to the pros!"

Your Role as an Ambassador

 $oldsymbol{A}$ "I have been an ambassador since the beginning of the year. So far it has been great to be part of a couple events like the Annual Chamber Banquet and many of our weekly chamber coffees and meetings. What I look most forward to is growing my network with community leaders and be more involved with our community. It's also really cool to represent Spectrum Partners, LLC while being an active member of this group!"

Barton County Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Winners!



Barton County's fifth annual Youth
Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC) continues
to grow, showcasing the talents of young
entrepreneurs and fostering an innovative
business spirit among local students.
On March 5, 2025, Barton County's YEC
Tradeshow was held at the Great Bend
Event Center, where 7th to 12th-grade
students competed for cash prizes and the
opportunity to advance to the State Level.

This year, Network Kansas partnered with K-State Research and Extension to further enhance the program and provide additional resources to participants. The top winners from regional competitions like Barton County's YEC move on to the Kansas Entrepreneurship Challenge (KEC). KEC is sponsored by Network Kansas, Kansas State University Research & Extension, and Kansas State University Center for the Advancement of Entrepreneurship and is held in April.

The 2025 competitors included:

- » Crafts by Mady Co: Mady Hammeke, 10th grader from Ellinwood High School
- » Dave's Paracord Provisions: David Morgan, Great Bend Home School Coon
- » Ice on Wheels: Callie Umphres, 9th grader from GBHS & Bennett Jacobs, 10th grader from Ellinwood
- » Loesch Mfg: Tucker Loesch, 12th grader from Hoisington High School
- » Nik's Lawn Care: Nikolus Patterson, 7th grader from GBMS
- » The Kansas Voice: Zoey Bogner, 8th grader from Central Plains High School

»Sparrow's Commissions: Amelia Baskerville, 7th grader from GBMS

A distinguished panel of judges
evaluated the business plans, tradeshow
presentations, and overall pitches. Judges
included Barton County Fuel Member
and entrepreneur Paxton Rein, Lea Ann
Seiler from Network Kansas, Jason
Murray, Executive Director of Golden Belt
Community Foundation, and Benn Maddox,
Consumer & Small Business Lender from
Equity Bank.

After a competitive tradeshow, the winners were announced:

- · First Place:
 - The Kansas Voice \$1,000 Prize
- · Second Place:
 - Ice on Wheels \$750 Prize
- Third Place:
 - Loesch Mfg. \$500 Prize
- People's Choice Award:
 - Loesch Mfg. \$250 Prize

This competition, brought to Great Bend by GBED and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, aims to challenge youth, encourage mentorship from the business community, and cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset. The event was made possible through a partnership with Kansas State University Research & Extension and Network Kansas and Nex-Tech Wireless.

To learn more about YEC or watch videos of the contestants, visit www.gbedinc.com/yec.

WELCOME New MEMBERS!

Edward Jones

Edward Jones - Cameron Smith 1904 Broadway Great Bend, KS (620) 793-5481 Financial & Investment Services



Living Wellness – Lori Ann Reber 1309 Williams (inside Beugelsdijk Chiropractic) Great Bend, KS (620) 454–5421 **Health & Wellness**



Built Better Chase & Haley Boots Pawnee Rock, KS (620) 617-6883 **Construction**

Membership questions?

Contact Julie Mazouch for all your membership needs!

jmazouch@greatbend.org 620-792-2401

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Reborn Renovations hosted the Great
Bend Chamber of Commerce for a Chamber
Coffee and Ribbon Cutting on Thursday,
February 20, 2025, at their location at 716
Washington St, Great Bend, Kansas. The
event celebrated the company's new name
and remodel while highlighting their long-standing
presence and service in the Great Bend community.

Though Reborn Renovations is a newly branded business, owner Todd Smith is a familiar name in the local renovation industry. Todd Smith has owned and operated a local renovations company in Great Bend for the past 33 years. During that time, he has gained over 30 years of experience in water restoration, mold remediation, carpet cleaning, duct cleaning, and more. Reborn Renovations represents a fresh start, while continuing the legacy of trusted service that Smith and his team have built over the decades

Reborn Renovations offers turn-key solutions, helping clients through every step of the renovation

or restoration process. Whether a homeowner is dealing with water damage or is planning a full-scale remodel, the team at Reborn Renovations is equipped to manage the project from start to finish. In addition to renovations, they provide carpet and air duct cleaning services, with the option for customers to sign up for a convenient monthly carpet cleaning plan for year-round service.

The company also integrates innovative technology into their services, including high-tech smart fans that can be set on timers and provide performance updates directly to Reborn Renovations. This allows for more efficient service and improved results for clients.

Reborn Renovations is dedicated to serving the community with quality workmanship, responsive service, and forward-thinking solutions. For more information about their services, visit www.rebornrenovationsks.com.

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce hosted a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for **BTI** on Thursday, February 20, 2025, marking the official opening of their remarkable new facility. Following the ceremony, attendees were invited to tour the 100,000-square-foot space, which reflects a significant investment in both the local community and BTI's continued commitment to excellence.

Bucklin Tractor and Implement (BTI), a familyowned John Deere dealership founded in 1944 in Bucklin, Kansas, has grown to six locations across the state. With over 200 employees and a customer base of more than 10,000 across Kansas, BTI is proud of its 80-year legacy of providing top-tier equipment and service. The company's success in Great Bend led to the need for a larger, more advanced location—one that matches the growing needs of customers and employees alike.



The new Great Bend facility stands out as one of the most impressive in the region, offering expanded service capabilities and enhanced customer support. The fully air-conditioned and heated shop floors provide a comfortable working environment for employees year-round, and the location is already stocked with 15,477 parts, ensuring prompt and efficient service for customers. The project was completed using local contractors, demonstrating BTI's commitment to supporting the community at every level.

BTI's dedication has always been to serve local customers while remaining available to those beyond the immediate area seeking specific equipment solutions. The new facility in Great Bend exemplifies that commitment, combining advanced resources with a customer-focused approach.

BTI remains dedicated to excellence in all that they do—from serving customers and supporting employees to investing in the communities they call home.

Community members are encouraged to visit the new location at 94 SE30 Road, Great Bend, KS, and explore everything BTI has to offer. More information can be found at www.btieguip.com, or by contacting connect@btieguip.com.



UTTINGS



What began as a small effort to cover an unexpected expense has turned into a full-fledged, thriving business. Freaking Delicious Cheesecake Company, founded by Allie Cartwright, recently celebrated two years in business, marking a journey filled with growth, innovation, and, of course, plenty of cheesecake.

To mark the milestone, the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce hosted a Ribbon Cutting and Chamber Coffee on February 27th, 2025. In just two years, Freaking Delicious Cheesecake Company has seen tremendous success. What started as a part-time side gig quickly became a full-time operation. To help keep up with demand, Allie now has a wrapped Freaking

Delicious Cheesecake vehicle, which serves as both her business's mobile presence and her means of delivering freshly made cheesecakes to customers. She has also expanded her reach with a cheesecake concession trailer, allowing her to bring her signature treats to local festivals and events.

The success of Freaking Delicious Cheesecake Company is a testament to Allie's dedication and the overwhelming support from the community. Each cheesecake is made fresh to order in The Historic Wolf Hotel kitchen, with local delivery available within a 25-mile radius of Ellinwood. Her cheesecakes are also available by the slice at The Page in Great Bend and 9 inch cheesecakes are available at the Ellinwood Packing Plant, giving fans even more ways to enjoy them.

From frozen cheesecake on a stick to cheesecake parfaits and bite-sized delights, Allie continues to push the boundaries of what a cheesecake experience can be. As demand continues to grow, she remains a one-woman powerhouse, balancing baking, delivery, and creativity while looking a head to what's next for her growing business.

For more information or to place an order, visit www.freakingdeliciouscheesecake.com or call 620-303-0350.



The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce proudly welcomed **Massage at Eades** as a new Chamber Member with a Ribbon Cutting ceremony on Thursday, March 6th. Owned by Certified Massage Therapist Jason Eades, Massage at Eades provides customized massage therapy services and is currently located inside Hair Central at 3800 Forest Avenue, Great Bend.

Jason brings over five years of business experience and 25 years of healthcare experience working in hospitals and nursing homes across Kansas. His expertise extends beyond relaxation, focusing on medical and therapeutic massage techniques that help dients manage pain, improve mobility, and maintain overall health.

Massage at Eades offers a wide range of modalities, with Jason utilizing up to 13 different massage techniques daily to meet the unique needs of his clients. His clientele is diverse, ranging from young athletes seeking performance care to elderly individuals focusing on wellness and pain management.

What sets Massage at Eades apart is its flexibility and personalized approach—Jason offers in-office sessions, home visits, workplace appointments, and event-based massage services. Currently, he serves 13 to 18 client hours per week, with room to welcome 2 to 7 more clients into his schedule.

To schedule an appointment or learn more, contact Jason Eades at (620) 786-6955. He is also available through his website at calmateades, wixsite.com/website, via Facebook Messenger at Massage at Eades, or through Schedulicity.

RBBOATTINGS

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce hosted a Ribbon Cutting ceremony on Thursday, March 13th, celebrating the recent remodeling of **Keller Real Estate & Insurance Agency**, Inc., located at 1101 Williams Street in downtown Great Bend.

For 57 years, Keller Real Estate & Insurance Agency has served the community with professionalism and care. Their newly upgraded façade adds a vibrant, modern touch to their long-standing downtown location, marking a new chapter for the trusted local business. Attendees gathered at the Ribbon Cutting ceremony to admire the refreshed exterior, connect with the team, and celebrate this exciting milestone.

Keller Real Estate & Insurance
Agency provides comprehensive
services in real estate and insurance.
Their real estate division offers sales
of residential, commercial, and farm
properties, while the independent
insurance agency provides personal,

REAL ESTIATE - INSURANCE

commercial, and farm lines of coverage tailored to their clients' needs. With a dedicated staff of 10 employees and 12 realtors, Keller continues to make an impact in the local business landscape.

Owned by Kevin and Jeff Keller, the agency remains committed to excellence and proud to call Great Bend home. Their continued investment in the community, as shown through their recent updates, reflects a bright future for both their team and the clients they serve.

For more information, visit www.kelleragency.com or follow Keller Real Estate & Insurance Agency, Inc. on Facebook.



FUEL Barton County Ignites Excitement with Upcoming Networking, Learning, and Community Events

FUEL Barton County is gearing up for an exciting lineup of events designed to foster networking, professional development, and community engagement among emerging leaders in the region. With a mission to empower the next generation, FUEL offers a variety of opportunities to connect, learn, and grow. Here's a closer look at some of the upcoming events you won't want to miss.

Mix & Mingle with Reborn Renovations & Disaster Services

Kickstarting the series is the Networking Mixer hosted by Reborn Renovations & Disaster Services LLC on Friday, April 11th, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Located at 716 Washington Ave., Great Bend, this event offers attendees a chance to connect in a relaxed setting. Guests will enjoy a taco bar and beverages, courtesy of Reborn Renovations, whose owner, Todd Smith, is committed to supporting emerging leaders in Barton County. This mixer is an excellent opportunity to expand your professional network and learn more about local husinesses.

<u>Leadership Luncheon: Balancing Those</u> Budgets

On Tuesday, April 29th, from Noon to 1 PM, FUEL Barton County will host a Leadership Luncheon titled "Balancing Those Budgets" at Gambino's Pizza. This session focuses on personal finance and budgeting, crucial skills for young professionals. Spectrum Partners will provide insights on managing credit card debt, home buying, savings, and investments. Attendees are encouraged to send their financial questions in advance to fuelbc@greatbend.org to tailor the discussion to their needs. The luncheon is free, with lunch available for purchase.

Cinco de Mayo Festival

FUEL Barton County will also have a booth at the Cinco de Mayo Festival on Saturday, May 3rd, 2025, in downtown Great Bend! Stop by to learn more about our mission, upcoming events, and how you can get involved. Whether you're looking to grow your network, develop your skills, or simply connect with other young professionals, we'd love to chat with you. Come see us and join the celebration!

Annual Casino Night

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for FU EL Barton County's Annual Casino Night on Friday, June 13th, at the Columbus Club, 723 Main St., Great Bend. This event promises an evening filled with casino-style games like blackjack, poker, and roulette, along with dinner and entertainment. Open to community members over 21, the funds raised will support initiatives aimed at promoting the growth and development of young professionals in Barton County. Ticket sales will be announced soon, so stay tuned for more details.

Engage with FUEL Barton County

FUEL Barton County is dedicated to empowering next-gen talent by helping members focus on personal and professional goals, unite through a strong peer network, engage in impactful community initiatives, and lead with confidence in their careers and communities. Whether you're looking to set new goals, expand your network, or develop leadership skills, FUEL provides the platform to connect with like-minded individuals passionate about making a difference.

looking for a way to grow your leadership skills, expand your network, and make a difference in Barton County? FUEL Barton County is actively seeking passionate young professionals to join its Action Teams! Whether you're interested in planning events, marketing, volunteer initiatives, or professional development, there's a place for you. Action Teams provide valuable experience while connecting you with likeminded peers and community leaders. Take the next step in your professional journey—email fuelbc@greatbend.org to learn more and get involved today!

For more information on these events and how to get involved, visit FUEL Barton County's Facebook page **@fuelbarton**, our website: **greath end.org/fuel** and the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce events calendar: **members.greathend.org/events/calendar**.







5.3.25







Barton Construction Tech graduate lands job with local company

by Joe Vinduska

After graduating from Barton's Construction Tech program in just one semester, Great Bend native Brecken Carroll immediately found employment and started earning a living as part of the window installation crew at MPIRE Improvements of Great Bend.

"The hands-on experience prepared me for the real world because it would have been way more of an adjustment just to get thrown into working with the crew and not knowing anything," she said. "It was nice that I didn't have to start from scratch when I joined the team and had some experience. It makes you more appealing when you're at an interview when they know you have at least some background."

Seasoned construction professional Angel Gutierrez is the foreman for Carroll's team at MPIRE, and said she came into the job with a working knowledge of essential tools and processes that made it easy to put her to work right away.

"Brecken is a great helper, a great hand, and even with her being here not even a year, I already feel that I can trust her and not have to shadow her all the time," he said. "She was more well prepared than most. She knows what she's doing and hit the ground running because the program gives students hands-on time with actual tools in the field. She knows how to run a nail gun, a saw, and all the various tools we have out here."

While some students may have experience, Carroll came into the program with almost zero, which is a true testament to the curriculum. In just one semester, she fast-forwarded her skills from novice to someone ready to enter the job market.

"I maybe held a flashlight for my dad once or twice," she said. "Otherwise, I had no experience whatsoever."

Carroll credits the Barton instructor for showing her the ropes of the construction world.

"They're here to teach you, and it's common knowledge for them, but to be able to put it into a perspective that's easier to learn for people that have never even encountered something like



construction, that's really nice to have."

Carroll said going to Barton was a wise fiscal decision as well.

"I graduated debt-free," she said. "I can't imagine what it would be like to have some of the student debt that I've heard that some people have. So, it's definitely not anything I ever have to worry about."

For anyone who's on the fence about their career, Carroll said the Barton program is perfect for anyone who likes to work with their hands.

"My Barton experience...I loved it," she said. "It was awesome. It's been very useful to me. I mean, I wouldn't have the job that I have right now if I didn't come here, and I'm very grateful."

For more information, visit construction. bartonccc.edu, or contact Carpentry Instructor Matt Mazouch at mazouchm@ bartonccc.edu or (620) 792-9336.





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Proceeds go to Barton Faculty Mini-Grants

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The accounting firm of **D McMillen Chartered** is excited to announce Melanie Maneth has joined the firm as a Senior Accountant. Melanie was born and raised here in Great Bend. Upon her graduation from Great Bend High School, she went onto attend the University of Kansas. She earned her bachelor's degree in Accounting in December 2017 and completed her master's degree in Accounting in May 2019 from the KU School of Business. She went onto complete her licensure to become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in 2019, which marked a significant milestone in her life.

Throughout her career, Melanie has gained a vast range of experience and knowledge working for a wide array of businesses and industries. During her time at KU, she taught financial accounting courses to undergraduate students while completing her graduate degree. After completing her education, she returned to Great Bend and began working in agricultural accounting for Innovative Livestock Services. In 2022, she transitioned into a role at Marmie Auto Group serving as the Controller and Human Resources Director. Melanie gained invaluable experience in each of these roles, and she is excited to take her skills into this next chapter with D McMillen Chartered and their team.

Great Bend has always been home for Melanie, and she is excited to have the opportunity to serve a broader range of clients in town and the surrounding communities. Melanie is on the Executive Board for Great Bend Alive serving on the Design, Development, and Preservation Committees as well as a Chamber Ambassador with the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce. She is the Head Coach of the Colorguard at Great Bend High School which is part of the GBHS Marching Band. She is an active member of the Barton County

Historical Society where she volunteers throughout the year, and she is a member of the American Institute for Certified Public Accountants (AIC PA). Melanie was most recently honored as part of the 2024 Class of NextGen Under 30 Leaders for the State of Kansas and an honoree for Great Bend Tribune's 2024 Class of 20 Under 40 individuals.

"We are excited to welcome Melanie to our firm," said Devin McMillen, President of the firm. "Melanie's breadth of knowledge and warm personality are exactly what we are looking for to aid in the expansion and continuance of our



When Megan Homolka, nurse practitioner, visits **Pawnee Valley Community Hospital (PVCH)** twice each month, she not only cares for patients, she also educates them about heart conditions and diseases. In observance of American Heart Month in February, Homolka wanted to take it a step further and share information about her PVCH visits and heart disease with the whole community. "I am here to

meet with new patients for consultations, as well as follow-up visits for people with cardiac conditions," said Homolka who is based at HaysMed. "I work closely with our physicians to ensure we provide the highest quality of care."

During this special heart-related month, Homolka has a message for the public. "If you experience chest pain, increased shortness of breath or irregular heartbeats, please do not hesitate to contact your local doctor or call DeBakey Heart Clinic at HaysMed for a self-referral," she emphasized. "You should also watch for sudden weight gain, swelling and fatigue." One big risk factor for cardiac disease is family history. "Unfortunately, we can't change our genetics but we can take measures to reduce risk," the advanced practice registered nurse said. "This includes lifestyle modifications, blood-pressure management, lipid control and other factors." Homolka noted that residents of Larned and the surrounding area are fortunate to have the local resources of PVCH and its association with HaysMed.

"Providing services locally allows patients to receive care close to home," she explained. "By expanding access to care, we can save and enhance more lives. Since hypertension, coronary artery disease, atrial fibrillation and valualar heart disease are all-too common, PVCH is providing a valuable service through its Specialty Clinics." Homolka added that PVCH offers high-quality imaging, which includes CT scans, stress tests, echocardiograms and vascular ultrasounds. "Our technicians are experienced in getting top-notch imaging, allowing for more streamlined cardiac care."

Homolka earned a bachelor's degree in general studies from the University of Kansas; bachelor's in nursing from Chamberlain University in Arlington; Va.; and master's in nursing –family nurse practitioner from the University of Texas, Arlington. Jewel Davis, PVC H director of clinic operations, noted that Kalyan Wagle, MD, of the DeBakey Heart Institute, also travels to Larned twice a month. "Our Specialty Clinic option is so important because these professional providers can see patients right here at home, with access to all HaysMed resources," Davis said. "If this access wasn't available, local residents may choose not to see a cardiologist because they are unable to travel.

"We are so fortunate that Megan Homolka is here regularly," she added. "She sees a high volume of patients and is truly amazing in the care she provides." Pawnee Valley Community Hospital, 923 Carroll in Larned, is a 25-bed facility, offering 24/7 emergency care; acute, skilled and specialized nursing; surgery; high-tech imaging and laboratory tests;

firm."

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Students learn the risks, and rewards, of Wall Street in 8th Annual Legacy Investment Challenge

Students at Great Bend High School recently stepped into the world of stock trading as they participated in the Eighth Annual Legacy Financial Solutions Investment Challenge. This hands-on competition gave students a taste of real-world investing, teaching them the fundamentals of financial markets in an exciting and interactive way.

Using the online platform How the Market Works, students, and staff each started with \$100,000 in virtual funds to build their investment portfolios. Throughout February, participants researched stocks, made trades, and refined their strategies, simulating realtime market conditions in a low-risk environment.

After a month of strategic decisionmaking, the top three student investors emerged out of 167 participants: Jakobi Swartley, a junior, placed first place, receiving a \$100 gift card; Aiden Stacey, a sophomore, placed second, receiving a \$50 gift card; and Sydney Bailey, a freshman, placed third, receiving a \$25 gift card.

"It's inspiring to see students engage with the stock market in such a meaningful way," said Lacy Wolters, GBHS career/ACT coordinator. "This challenge provides a valuable opportunity for them to learn about investments and financial planning in a hands-on setting."

"This competition encourages students to think critically about financial decisions, and it's exciting to see their enthusiasm grow each year," added Wolters.

Matt Hiss, investment advisor representative with Legacy Financial Solutions, emphasized the importance of financial literacy. "Our goal is to give students and staff practical exposure to investing. Watching them gain confidence





in making financial decisions reinforces the value of this challenge."

Staff members also took part in the challenge, with this year's winners all located at Great Bend High School. Carrie Minton secured first place, Kyle Kriegh earned second, and Robin Linsner placed third – receiving \$100, \$50, and \$25 gift cards from Legacy Financial Solutions.

For more information about GBHS
Personal Finance and Investing courses or
the "How the Market Works" simulation,
please contact Lacy Wolters at 620-7931521. To learn more about Legacy Financial
Solutions, call 620-792-6333 or visit their
office at 2001 Broadway Ave, Great Bend.





Grow Workforce Partnership Invites Businesses to Join as Exhibitors at the 2025 Grow Workforce Business & Career Expo

The **Grow Workforce Partnership** is excited to introduce the 2025 Grow Workforce Business & Career Expo, set for April 16 at the Great Bend Events Center. This event is designed to connect businesses with job seekers throughout Great Bend and the surrounding areas, providing a valuable opportunity for companies to showcase what makes them unique, engage with potential hires, and invest in the future of the local workforce.

This year, the Grow Workforce Summit has been expanded into two distinct events. The April 16 Business & Career Expo will focus on direct engagement between businesses and job seekers, helping companies find talent for full-time, part-time, and internship positions. Later in the year, the Grow Workforce Summit on November 12 will provide a day of education, inspiration, and networking for employers and managers.

Businesses participating in the Grow Workforce Business & Career Expo are encouraged to be set up by 3:30 PM to welcome early arrivals. Employers can use this opportunity to highlight career opportunities, build connections, and share open positions. To further attract job seekers, businesses can submit a list of current job openings for additional promotion. Those who are fully staffed can still take advantage of the event to increase brand awareness and educate attendees about their company's role in the community. Additionally, businesses are invited to contribute a door prize valued at \$10 or more to encourage more engagement at their booth.

The Grow Workforce Partnership is committed to strengthening the regional workforce by providing resources and networking opportunities that benefit both businesses and job seekers.

- Booth registration is now open, and businesses interested in participating can register for a \$50 booth fee.
- To reserve your business' spot, sign up at www.gbedinc.com/ growworkforce.

About the Workforce Partnership

The Workforce Partnership is a collaborative initiative bringing together Great Bend Economic Development, the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, Kansas Works, Barton Community College, and human resource professionals from local businesses. Together, they are committed to strengthening the local workforce by connecting businesses, job seekers, and essential resources.







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kansashealthsystem.com/greatbend



SCHEDULE

Every Thursday Doors Open at 9am Program at 9:30am

April 3rd GREAT BEND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 3111 10th Street

Great Bend Economic Development seeks to improve quality of life by creating jobs, strengthening the workforce, increasing the number of living wage jobs, and expanding the tax base. We always strive to grow Great Bend!

April 10th SOUTHWEST KS AREA AGENCY ON AGING

1125 Williams

SWKAAA strives to provide services and resources to promote the well-being of older Kansans and individuals with disabilities in Great Bend and Southwest Kansas. Their mission focuses on enhancing independence and quality of life for seniors through various programs, including rent assistance, employment opportunities, case management, in-home services, caregiver assistance, and legal services.

April 17th NEX-TECH

3700 10th Street

Tech Edge 2025, hosted by Nex-Tech, is scheduled for June 12, 2025, at Kansa's Wesleyan University in Salina, Kansas. This annual event offers IT professionals and business owners insights into advancements in cloud computing, cybersecurity, physical security, and network infrastructure.

April 24th MARKETING MAVEN 3108 10th Street

Marketing Maven Consulting is a full-service brand management firm based in Great Bend, Kansas, specializing in services such as graphic design, website design, video production, and social media marketing.

May 1st THE CENTER FOR COUNSELING & CONSULTATION

1225 Patton Rd

The Center is excited to promote National Mental Health Awareness Month which aims to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding behavioral health issues, highlighting the importance of mental well-being for all.



MicDomaid's 2307 18th Street - Great Bend, KS 67530

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