



OUTLOOK BUSINESS JOURNAL

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE GREAT BEND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2019 Award Winners Recognized During Chamber Annual Meeting & Banquet

TCI Answering Service named Business of the Year

TCI Answering Service's team of 11 answers phones and online chat inquiries for 220 different businesses, answering basic questions about products and routing calls to individuals. That might seem daunting, but this mighty crew has dialed in the logistics to keep it up 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The intensity — [Continued on Page 2](#)



Johnson named Citizen of the Year

Mike Johnson, owner of M&M Equipment and the Chair of the Barton Community College Board of Trustees, has been named the 2019 Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year.

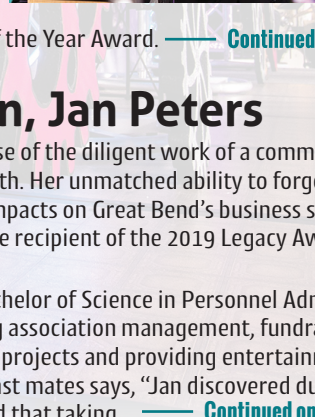
Mike brings an unmatched level of dedication, grit — [Continued on Page 3](#)



Fairchild, NextGen Leader of the Year

Change is brewing in Great Bend, and Ryan Fairchild wants to keep the energy level at a boil with his knack for marrying his passions and hobbies with a thirst to see Great Bend thriving.

This drive to move our community forward and the steps he has taken to that end has earned him the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce 2019 NextGen Leader of the Year Award. — [Continued on Page 9](#)



Legacy Award to Community Champion, Jan Peters

For fourteen years, Great Bend earned notoriety across the State of Kansas because of the diligent work of a community champion whose passion for her hometown was evident to everyone she worked with. Her unmatched ability to forge lasting relationships and find creative solutions resulted in numerous long-lasting impacts on Great Bend's business sector. It is for that reason that the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce named Jan Peters the recipient of the 2019 Legacy Award during their Annual Meeting & Banquet on February 22, 2020.

Jan Peters graduated from Great Bend High School in 1977, and then earned a Bachelor of Science in Personnel Administration from the University of Kansas along with many other areas of study including association management, fundraising, leadership, and more. After college, Jan traveled the world doing community service projects and providing entertainment with traveling performing arts group Up with People until 1984. One of her fellow cast mates says, "Jan discovered during her time in Up with People that there are no limits on what can be accomplished, and that taking — [Continued on Page 2](#)

Business of the Year cont'd from Page 1

of their dedication to serving clients' customers is matched by their commitment to Great Bend. This unique combination has earned them the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce's 2020 Business of the Year Award.

"I strongly believe in the service we provide," TCI Owner Shelly Peacock said. "I feel like we're actually providing a valuable service that's truly needed. Because of us, our clients can get more work done, increase sales and be more successful. It's very rewarding to help other business owners."

They're so dedicated to making sure their clients' customers are satisfied, that they didn't allow downtime when they had to physically move the operation to its new home in June of 2019, which for Shelly's team meant moving two servers and 300 phone lines.

"Our customers didn't notice," she said proudly. "We communicated the move to them and what it entails. The phones were down for less than two minutes."

Shelly graduated from Barton Community College in 1999 and returned to school to finish a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Kansas State University in 2011. Buying the business wasn't her first experience at TCI. She worked for the previous owners on and off since 1996, and her mother has worked there for 31 years.

Before the purchase was official in January of 2013, she spent 18 months learning the ropes from the previous owners, and then spent the next five years learning what it meant to be a manager and how to respond when challenges arise.

"We had every problem in the book in those five years," she said. "A power supply went down, an internet switch broke and we had phone provider issues."

But, Shelly persisted, and now she said her focus is on growing and scaling the business, adding services and new tools for her clients.

"I have a great team, and now I feel like I have a handle on everything," she said. "Working with this team is fun and I love watching them as I hand over more responsibility and seeing them take ownership and wanting to be more involved."

Shelly said she and her crew also try to give back to the community. She is a member of the 100 People Who Care and has been involved with the Chamber as an ambassador and on the Board of Directors. TCI also sponsors various events throughout the year and when they need to hire a vendor, they keep it local.

Barry Stalcup, President of Comfort Pro Inc., has been using TCI since 2008 and said his customers are more comfortable and feel more cared for when they can reach a live person instead of an answering machine. He said TCI does a fantastic job answering many of their customers' questions and directing calls as needed.

"Shelly and the team are a crucial part of our customer service and growth," Stalcup said.

TCI has served Animal Medical Center for more than two decades, and AMC Owner Dr. Nels Lindberg said TCI goes above and beyond expectations.

"They have answered emergency calls for us with great care and service every single hour of the night," he said. "More importantly, we lean on vendors we work with; we challenge them with thoughts and ideas, and they respond every time and work to provide the service."

Shelly said a big part of TCI's success is owed to her team's hard work and the Great Bend community, which is home to the bulk of their clientele.

"We answer phones for businesses all over the US, but a majority of our customers are in Great Bend, so when I go to a Chamber coffee it's nice that I get to see a lot of my customers," she said. "It's a great feeling to know they trust us with their business."

Legacy Award continued from Page 1

initiative and collaborating are the best ways to get things done," says Bruce Erley, Agency Principal for Creative Strategies Group in Denver, Colorado. "She brought all those things into her future roles in community leadership, and is one of those people that makes everyone feel valued - from the president of the company to the janitor. She embraces everyone and builds genuine relationships with everyone she meets."

Following her worldwide tour, Jan took her talents to the Hutchinson community, where she worked for the Kansas State Fair and then for the Hutchinson Convention & Visitors Bureau. In both roles, she was responsible for planning events, developing sponsorship programs, and making strategic plans - the fruits of which are still being seen to this day. "Jan brings a lot to the table with her creative personality and ability to command the attention in a packed room," says Jon Daveline, former President of the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce. "She was a huge asset to Hutchinson, and has the ability to take a complex problem and break it

Continued on Page 11

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Citizen of the Year, continued from Page 1

and focus to every endeavor in which he engages, and perhaps his hobby illustrates this best: He competes on his bicycle in the heat of the summer on hilly gravel roads for 200 miles in a race called the Dirty Kanza. He's done that race four times and he's signed up for his fifth this May. Despite having battled intense weather, sickness and other challenging conditions, he always grinds it out to the finish line, earning the nickname "Machine Mike" from his cycling friends.



Those who have worked with Mike on anything from business ventures to volunteer projects know that's just how he operates; there are no compromises and he doesn't give up, which is likely why he usually ends up in leadership positions wherever he gets involved.

"No matter his interests, he dives in, and in no time is in a leading role," said his wife of 37 years, Linda Johnson. "When the boys were young and playing sports, he would quickly begin coaching, and served as president of two baseball leagues."

From youth sports to legislative committees in Topeka, the breadth and depth of Mike's history of volunteerism is beyond the scope of what this article has room to cover. Some notable points include heavy involvement with the 31 show, including three years as chair, organizing a 14-year-old state baseball tournament membership on the Chamber Board of Directors, serving on the Barton Community College Cougar Booster Club – earning Booster of the Year in 1999, serving nine years on the Community Theatre Board, moderating local Chamber of Commerce Legislative Coffees for 25 years, radio announcing for the Barton Cougars, currently serving on the Great Bend – Better than Great Steering Committee and so much more.

It sounds like a lot, but despite the quantity, the quality never falters. Somehow he manages it all.

"Mike is the most organized and methodical person you'll ever meet," Linda said. "Mike is very humble, hard-working, determined – he never quits what he starts, and is extremely ambitious, creative, loving and kind."

Despite his many commitments, Linda said, Mike always kept his family first attending all the events and activities in which their boys, Chad and Kyle, now 34 and 32 respectively, were involved in while growing up.

Chair of Barton Community College Board of Trustees

Arguably his most engaging and demanding volunteer role is also his longest-held as a member of the Barton Community College Board of Trustees, for which he serves as chair. His dedication and talent for leadership is underscored by the Citizen of the Year Award, but he has been noticed in the higher education realm as well. Johnson was recognized in 2017 with the Western Regional Trustee Leadership Award by a national organization, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). Johnson was nominated by his fellow Barton Community College Trustees, and contended with nominees from 10 other states and a large portion of Canada to receive the Western Region honor. As the nomination describes, Johnson "embodies the spirit of an engaged and motivated board member, with 21 years of raising the bar for what it means to be a Trustee."

That dedication extends beyond Barton, as he has served in numerous leadership capacities for the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees, leading peers from the other 18 community colleges across the state.

"Mike is the real deal, giving of his time and talents without hesitation whenever a need arises," the board wrote to the ACCT nomination committee. "Seeing the time he takes out of his work and personal life to devote to Barton, traveling the three hours one-way to Topeka for routine committee meetings or impromptu visits with legislators, it's apparent this college holds a special place in his heart and to him this work of advancing accessible education is obviously a worthy cause."

Mike said, after receiving the ACCT award, the college is a tremendous asset to the community and an obvious place to direct his time and energy as a trustee.

"It's an asset not only in educating students," he said. "Through economic development, workforce training, return on investment in the service area and dollars that come in through the college, it's a vital component of a prosperous and well-rounded community."

Outlook Business Journal

A monthly publication of the

GREAT BEND
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Addition of Robotics has Clara Barton Hospital's Surgical Team on 'cutting edge'

Many of you may recall watching tv shows and movies during your childhood that featured a robot, such as 'The Jetsons' or 'Lost in Space.' At the time, robots were considered to be more of a myth than reality, but today's technological advancements have proved that robots were in fact a prediction of the future. Today, robots come in many shapes and sizes and can perform a variety of tasks. Although some robots are designed to act in place of humans, the various advanced robotic technologies being used in the medical field are designed to assist medical professionals with complex procedures, not replace them.

Clara Barton Hospital recently unveiled their newest technological gem, known as the da Vinci Xi Surgical Robotic System. The da Vinci Xi is a robotic tool used by surgeons nation-wide for a variety of procedures.

Clara Barton Hospital is excited to now provide patients with robotically-assisted surgical procedures utilizing their brand new da Vinci Xi Surgical Robotic System, which is the very latest in surgical robotic technology.

"We are thrilled to bring this cutting-edge technology to our patients here in central Kansas. The Xi is a new surgical-assist model that is very user friendly for our general surgeons," said Clara Barton Hospital President/CEO, Jim Blackwell. "Having clinicians that embrace this advanced technology is an extreme benefit for our patients. Most importantly, the positive outcomes already experienced are now an option for you at a place you know and trust."

Although it is called a robot, it cannot act on its own. Instead, the surgery is performed with unmatched precision entirely by the surgeon who manipulates the machine's multiple arms—all while viewing a high-definition, 3D image of the surgical site captured by a tiny camera on one of the device's arms. The robot enables the surgeon to operate through a few small incisions, like traditional laparoscopic procedures, instead of a large open incision. The difference though, between a traditional laparoscopic procedure and a robotic procedure, is that instead of directly manipulating the instruments, the surgeon uses multiple robotic arms to translate hand movements into smaller, precise movements inside the patient's body.

"When performing a traditional laparoscopic procedure, we use straight, non-articulating instruments to maneuver throughout the patient's abdominal area. Utilizing robotic technology essentially gives us wrists, providing 360° articulation on the ends of our tools, allowing us to make detailed, precise movements and cuts inside the body," said Dr. PJ Stiles, General Surgeon with Clara Barton Hospital. "They gave this tool the robot name to make it sound 'flashy' so to speak, but robotic surgery is really just a better, more advanced method of laparoscopy with wrists and tools that greatly enhance my capabilities during the procedure."

In addition to these benefits, what may be the single most important benefit to robotic surgery is the decrease in the patient's need for opioid prescriptions after surgery.

Clara Barton Hospital is the only healthcare facility offering this advanced robotic technology within a 50-mile radius of Hoisington and is the only critical access hospital in the state of Kansas using the da Vinci Xi System. Because of this investment, Clara Barton Hospital is now able to perform more complex procedures that patients previously had to travel a great distance to receive.

"It is remarkable to watch great things transpire when you invest in your medical staff," said Blackwell. "By providing in this cutting-edge technology, our clinicians are able to translate their gifted talents into their very own work of art, directly benefitting our patients by providing them with improved outcomes and outstanding care."



Murray Chiropractic Center expanding their services to include massage therapy

Dr. Danny Murray has begun offering massages on Saturday mornings, focusing on deep-tissue sports massage therapy for men. Current active patients who receive a massage may also choose to have a chiropractic adjustment following their massage. Call Murray Chiropractic Center at 620-792-1386 to leave a message with the office staff and Dr. Danny will call you to schedule your appointment.

Tonya Jones is also offering massage therapy at the Murray Chiropractic Center offices. She is an amazing deep tissue massage therapist. With 14 years of massage therapy experience, Tonya offers multiple therapeutic techniques. Tonya is available by appointment only Monday thru Saturday between 8:00am and 6:00pm and can be reached at 620-282-4049.

Murray Chiropractic Center offers a wide range of services including chiropractic adjustments including prenatal, infants, and children, physiotherapies, DOT Physicals, school physicals, and nutritional supplements for patients. With nearly ten years of service to the Great Bend community, Drs. Danny & Scie Murray are proud to continue expanding their services to best suit the needs of their patients. To see more about what all is going on at Murray Chiropractic Center, check out our website www.murraychiropracticcenter.com/ or Follow us on Facebook.



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HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS IN JANUARY

- 1... Great Bend Coffee, Customer and Employee Appreciation Lunch, 2015 Lakin Ave, 10:30AM-2PM
- 1... "Searching for Evidence of the First People in the Americas, Kansas Wetlands Education Center, 592 NE K-156 Hwy, 2PM-4PM
- 5... **Chamber Coffee: Great Bend Coffee, 2015 Lakin Ave, Program @9:30am**
- 5... 63rd Annual Kiwanis Pancake Day, Expo I, 455 W Barton County Rd, 4:30PM-7:30PM
- 6... Great Bend USD 428-No School, Teacher Grading/Collaboration
- 7... Community Mens Breakfast, Central Kansas Dream Center at 7:30am
- 7... **Chamber Legislative Coffee, The Sunflower Center, 1125 Williams St, Program at 10AM**
- 7... Authors Ann Drews & Brenda Cheney Visit and Book Signing, Great Bend Public Library, 1409 Williams St, 10:30AM-12:30PM
- 7... Battle in the Barns, Expo III, 455 W Barton County Rd, Races @6PM
- 8... Daylight Savings Time Begins
- 8... Great Bend Community Theatre Auditions for "Making God Laugh", Crest Theatre, 1905 Lakin Ave, @2PM
- 9... FHSU Makerspace Kids Day Out, GBRC Activity Center, 2715 18th St, 9AM-4PM
- 9... Lake Barton Golf Course-Board Meeting, Lake Barton Golf Course Clubhouse, 673 US-281 @7PM
- 9... Great Bend Community Theatre Auditions for "Making God Laugh", Crest Theatre, 1905 Lakin Ave @7PM
- 12... **Ribbon Cutting: Mind Sculpt Games, 4908 10th St @9AM**
- 12... **Chamber Coffee: Pilot Club, Perkins Family Restaurant, 2920 10th St, Program @9:30am**
- 12... Ladies Night Out, Participating Businesses Downtown Great Bend, 4:30PM-7:30PM
- 12... KWEC Turtle Tot Club, Kansas Wetlands Education Center, 592 NE K-156 Hwy, 10-11AM
- 14... Dilly & Doc Spring Pop Up Market, 1119 Main St, 10AM-4PM
- 14... Barton County Young Professionals Supply Drive, Dillons and Walmart, 10AM-3PM
- 14... SRCA ETI Chassi Certification, SRCA Dragstrip, 455 W Barton County Road
- 17... St. Patrick's Day
- 17... Central Kansas Partnership Meeting, Barton County Courthouse 11AM-Noon
- 18... Lunch & Learn: CASH program offered through Interfaith Housing & Community Services, Inc., Farmers Bank & Trust, 1017 Harrison, Noon-1PM
- 18... **Member Services & Marketing Seminar, Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, 1125 Williams St @2PM**
- 19... **Chamber Coffee: TCI Answering Service, 5810 Anchor Way, Program @9:30am**
- 19... 2020 Building Bridges, Great Bend High School, 2027 Morton St, 6PM-8PM
- 20... First Day of Spring
- 21... Eagle Radio's Home & Garden Expo, Great Bend Event Center, 3111 10 St, 9AM-5PM
- 21... Barton County Young Professionals Casino Night, Expo I, 455 W Barton County Rd, 6PM-11PM
- 26... Almost Home Ask the Expert, KVGB 1590 AM, 8:35AM-9AM
- 26... **Chamber Coffee: Kansas Children's League, 3520 Lakin Ave, Program @9:30am**
- 26... Group Pointillism Painting, Great Bend Library, 1409 Williams St, @6PM
- 27... Family Crisis Center's Bunco Night, Great Bend Events Center, 3111 10th St, 6:30-10:30PM
- 28... Lake Barton Golf Club 2-Man Snowball Tournament, Lake Barton Golf Club, 673 US-281, 11AM-4PM
- 28... Bibliotheca Mysterium: A Library Escape Room, Great Bend Public Library, 1409 Williams St, Noon-4:30PM
- 31... Silent Book Club, Great Bend Public Library, 1409 Williams St, 5:30-7:30PM

Recurring Events:

- Great Bend City Council Meetings, 1st & 3rd Mondays, City Hall, 1209 Williams St, 6:30p.m.
- Barton County Commission Meetings, Every Monday, Barton County Courthouse, 1400 Main St, Rm 106, 9a.m.
- Bible Journaling, Dilly & Doc Creative Studio, 1119 Main St, Every Thursday in March 7PM-8:30PM

Visit www.greatbend.org/events/calendar for a full list of great events taking place throughout the month!

NOTICE OF 2020 BUSINESS HOURS:

Effective January 2, 2020, our regular business hours changed Hours are Monday – Friday, 9a.m. – 3p.m.

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Importance of the Data

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Learn more about how census results can have an impact on your community.

Business Decisions

The 2020 Census will be valuable to businesses, as the results will provide a rich set of data on the communities they serve, including population trends and growth projections.

Business owners rely on census results to make decisions, such as where to open new stores, restaurants, factories, or offices, where to expand operations, where to recruit employees, and which products and services to offer.

Read more at: 2020census.gov

REMINDER BCYP Casino Night is March 21

Tickets are still available for Barton County Young Professionals, Casino Night! To order your tickets online go to:

<https://fs23.formsite.com/GBChamber/form25/index.html>

If you would like to donate to the event or reserve a table, please call the Chamber office 620-792-2401 or email marketing@greatbend.org

QS Nurses

Celebrating 25 Years in Kansas

When Kyle Whitlow's dad looked at a map of Kansas, he was drawn to Great Bend's central location. The next thing the family knew, QS Nurses established a home base here in town.

"Dad noticed that all roads lead to Great Bend," said Whitlow, operations officer at the staffing agency. "He thought, what better way to serve rural healthcare facilities and nurses than being smack dab in the middle of the state.

"Dad grew up on a farm in Montana but moved to Metropolitan Colorado in 1983 to achieve his dream of helping nurses," Whitlow said. "Over time, he desired to reconnect with his rural roots so Kansas made sense."

For 25 years, the first and only QS Nurses office has been located in Great Bend. Its first location was on Washington near Thill Printing and is now at 1701 Williams where an 8-person team, including Whitlow, staffs the local office. The business recently moved here after renovating the space.

QS (Quality Staffing) Nurses hires registered and licensed practical nurses, along with nurse aides and medication aides.

"The name of the game is serving," Whitlow commented. "Some nurses only want to work one day a month and others might desire long-term contract work. They can design their work schedules around their personal lives. Our job is to help them achieve their goals, both personal and professional.

"Being an agency nurse is an adventure because new things happen all the time. New town, new facility, new patients, new team members so it can be quite fun."

Only 3 out of 10 nurses who apply are accepted at QS "because of our strict criteria," Whitlow noted. "We look for professionalism, reliability and dependability. And they must be team players."

"We have earned our clients' trust because we are there when needed most. There are many big outfits across the country but we work solely with Kansas facilities and Kansas nurses."

QS nurses has served in practically every facility in Barton County over the years. "Actually, you name a county west of Topeka, we are probably in it or have been at some point. We serve around 100 facilities ranging from critical access hospitals to small assisted- living facilities.

The goal is to keep their staff from driving more than 60 miles one way so they can return home after every shift. However, some may want to work three back-to-back shifts, stay in local housing and return home for the remaining four days.

"It's all about flexibility and meeting our staff's needs."

Permanent placement also is an option. This comes in to play when "a nurse feels like they found a home and the facility reciprocates."

Currently, QS has 110 active staff members who are in each corner of Kansas and everywhere in between.

"Retention, industry wide is a challenge," Whitlow said. "There is so much competition out there. We make our name by being a family business and having our staff feel a part of that family. They are not just a number to us."

The operations officer noted that QS has been "kind of behind-the-scenes" for too long but is eager to become more visible in the community.

"We want to partner with different organizations, volunteer and give back to the community," he explained.

For instance, when nurses come on board they can donate 10 cents for each dollar they earn to a charitable cause. QS matches these donations dollar for dollar.

Recent donations were made to the Kans for Kids Fighting Cancer Foundation and Central Kansas Dream Center.

Whitlow recalled that a career with QS was not on his radar for a while. Even though he enjoyed working in the office in his younger days, he wasn't sure where the future would take him.

He earned a bachelor's degree in health and exercise science at Colorado State University, then worked as a personal trainer and health coach.

Whitlow also has years of experience with some of the nation's largest medical-related businesses, including Maxim Healthcare Services and Interim HealthCare. In his mid-twenties, he even spent seven months biking around New Zealand until "my money ran out, so it was time to come home!"

Because of Whitlow's employment experience, "Dad would casually hint at working for QS. In 2016, I asked myself: 'Why wouldn't I do this? I felt like God's direction led me to do this and honor my parent's legacy.'"

He is glad for that decision. "Great Bend has been a wonderful home for QS Nurses and my family."

Whitlow and his wife, Breanna, have two sons: Hudson, 4, and Everett, 2. His parents, Terry and Christy who live in Colorado, are "semi-retired but I go to Dad for many things; he is a wealth of knowledge and wisdom!"



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Congratulations!

NextGen Leader continued from Page 1

When thinking about Ryan, the first thing that comes to mind for many is Bike Brew Q, a five-year-running staple event in Barton County that features bike rides, a beer expo, and food trucks. Ryan conceptualized the event in 2016 and has grown it ever since with the help of close friend Joe Vinduska and other volunteers.

“When starting Bike Brew Q, he decided to keep it in the Great Bend area because he felt that it would benefit Great Bend; he felt that this type of event was lacking in our community,” said his wife, Marisa. “And it certainly has been a benefit, with many people traveling hours to attend.”

The initial motivation for the event was simply to add another element of culture to Great Bend, creating a top-notch experience for residents and a draw for visitors, but Ryan doesn't stop at setting just one goal when he begins a new initiative. Combined with its sister event Pumpkin Smash held in the fall, Bike Brew Q raises more than \$10,000 a year to support the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CFF), a cause near and dear to his heart as his wife, brother in law, and cousin live with the genetic respiratory disease. The CFF raises funds to support the search for a cure.

His efforts recently earned him the 2019 Next Generation Award from the Heart of America Chapter of the CFF.

If Bike Brew Q isn't the first thing that comes up when Ryan is mentioned, it's likely his not-so-little project happening on Main Street in the former Brown's Shoe Fit building. Ryan and friend-and-business-partner Kevin Burkey of Hoisington have put action to their dream of opening a brewery. Once again, the focus isn't solely on his own ambitions, but a bigger-picture desire to enhance Great Bend.

“Ryan is creating a meaningful impact due to his desire to improve our town,” Marisa said. “His hope is that the brewery will help to revive the downtown area and provide a place for families to gather.”

The local brew-master has also left his mark on other events and organizations in Great Bend. He is active on the Great Bend Better than Great Steering Committee, has served on the Young Professionals Steering Committee and action teams, initiated the Third Thursday Food Truck events in conjunction with the Great Bend Farmer's Market, volunteers with Cram the Van, added a craft brewing demonstration to June Jaunt and has supported and volunteered for the Flatlander Half Marathon, which raises awareness and funds to a “He makes things happen,” said friend and Bike Brew Q co-planner Joe Vinduska. “If you come to him with a problem, he will show you that it's only a problem until he finds the solution. There have been a lot of obstacles along the way but he always finds a way to traverse them while remaining calm and collected. He will do anything to help a friend, and he will do it with a positive attitude and usually will also be cracking jokes all the way. He cares about the future of this community. He wants to keep improving the experience for people that live here and come to visit.”

Ryan works at Innovative Livestock Services and operates a couple of side businesses. He is raising two girls, Emma, 3, and Annalynn, 8, with his wife of 11 years, who echoed Joe's sentiments, underscoring the strength of his resolve and quality of his character.

“He is brave, outgoing... he can talk to anyone,” Marisa said. “He's always willing to take on new challenges and determined to succeed - don't tell him he can't do something. He's always willing to help, kind, compassionate, creative, and hard-working.”



NexTech Offers New Rate as Fiber Comes to Town

Nex-Tech customers get 200 MBPS fiber internet for \$59.95. If customers sign up before construction they are guaranteed that special pricing. Internet accessibility of speeds up to 1 Gig allow ample bandwidth for running multiple wireless devices at the same time, 4K streaming video, advanced gaming, life-like video chatting and supports a work-from-home lifestyle.

Visit fiber.nex-tech.com for more information.

Farm and Ranch Expo adds Hemp to the Ag Draw

The 2020 Great Bend Farm, Ranch & Hemp Expo is all about promoting agricultural technology! The 7th Annual event is coming up April 8-10, 2020 bringing a new and innovative component with it: Hemp. Visitors from all over the world, including ranchers, producers and agriculture professionals from Canada and Australia, will enjoy over 80 acres of exhibitors, educational sessions, daily entertainment, demonstrations, giveaways, and concessions - truly something for everyone with families also invited.

A leader in sustainable practices of the emerging U.S. hemp industry, Brian Waldrup, will be present and leading panel discussions on topics related to hemp, including:

- hemp production for CBD extraction
- hemp seed oil & fiber production
- methods to maximize yields with minimal start up cost
- overview of the many ways hemp can become a consistently reliable crop as well as invigorate the local economy.

This just in! Watch for more information on a Republican Party Candidate Debate held during the expo with Smokey Hills and RFDTV broadcasting live from the Great Bend Expo Complex.

Show hours are 9am to 5pm on April 8; 9am to 7pm on April 9; and 9am to 4pm on April 10. The Expo stays open until 7pm on Thursday to better accommodate the consumer population that works during the day. Corporate sponsors are KSN, Great Bend Co-op and the American Hat Company Inc. Parking and admission are FREE!

If you are interested in volunteering or in purchasing an exhibit space, contact the show office at 866-685-0989, cell 785-332-6506, or visit www.greatbendfarmandranchexpo.net. The Great Bend Farm & Ranch Expo provides a significant boost to our local economy. The Chamber would like to encourage local businesses to participate in the show and prepare to welcome visitors from across our region!



**Great Bend Rec
Baseball & Softball
Leagues Forming!**

Youth Leagues available for 3 year
olds thru 9th Grade.

Adult Softball Teams for Men,
Women, & Coed Leagues.

Enrollment Deadline March 29, 2020



Great Bend Rec
1214 Stone Street
620.793.3755
www.greatbendrec.com
facebook.com/greatbendrec



**2020
JOB FEST**

Mark your calendars for
the return of Job Fest slated
for Thursday, April 30th.

Employers looking for employees
and added exposure are encouraged
to register early with Sponsorship
Opportunities available. This is also a
great service to Chamber Members
to have their promo items included
in over 30 employer registration
packets.

Watch for more information as
they become available on Barton
Community College & Chamber
Facebook Pages.

Ambassador Profile - Bailey Zink, Yours Truly



What brought you to Great Bend? What keeps you here?

I started my adventure to Great Bend 9 years ago to become the store leader of Maurices, a fashion retailer for women. The position I was in enabled me to make connections with my customers through all stages of their life. Those connections are what made Great Bend feel like home.

In my current position with a local business, I have had the opportunity to have a hand in creating experiences that are representative of a community I want to be a part of.

Where do you work and what do you do there?

I work at Yours Truly Gift & Flower Shoppe, where we create all things beautiful with flowers, gifts and events. I take the lead on

all event planning and design services offered including corporate event planning, wedding floral, event design and coordination.

As with most small businesses, we all wear many hats. You can typically find me merchandising the retail gift shoppe, designing everyday floral deliveries and lending a hand in many other aspects of the business.

What's one thing about you that would surprise people?

I am a pretty good farm hand. From fixing fence to feeding cattle to tagging calves, I can get it done!

What energizes you and brings you excitement?

With each event I get extremely excited to create a space that speaks true to my client and is frustration free. This way they can savor those special moments and truly enjoy themselves.

Personally, I love to travel with my husband and kids! Discovering new unique places to shop, cool food joints and seeing historical landmarks is a great way to have fun with my crew.

At what job, would you be terrible?

Anything with technology is just not my thing. It is safe to say, I won't get a job fixing computers anytime soon. I am definitely a pen and paper gal.

How long have you been a Chamber Ambassador and what do you like most about it?

This will be my second year as a Chamber Ambassador. I enjoy the Chamber Coffee each Thursday where I get to learn about other businesses in our community. I love to hear about other organization cultures, visions and values so I can spread the word on everything our community has to offer.

About Chamber Ambassadors:

The Great Bend Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Club is made up of 30 men and women from the Great Bend business community who represent the Chamber as volunteers. To find out how you can become a member of the Ambassador Club, contact the Chamber: 620-792-2401.

SS Graphics Expands Services

SS Graphics announces a new partnership with MPIRE Companies and expansion of products and services, according to Heather Nicolet, Co-owner. "Bringing in investors has given me the opportunity to be out in the field with my customers to better meet their needs. I know time is one of our most valuable assets and that is why I'm excited to go directly to the customer and customize their experience" said Nicolet. Heather will continue offering the same great service and quality of products moving to her new location this March inside of the MPIRE Companies office building at 605 S. Main, Great Bend, KS 67530.

"Heather brings the same enthusiasm, commitment to quality and strong work ethic that MPIRE brings to all of its endeavors from residential and commercial rentals to garage door sales and service. A great business starts with the right people, and we look forward to the continued success of SS Graphics" said Rick Davis, Chief Operating Officer of MPIRE Companies.

Offering promotional and advertising products, SS Graphics can personalize thousands of items for any occasion and any budget including: apparel, pens, cups, bags, magnets, and note pads. Customized websites are available for businesses and schools to accommodate employees, allowing them to order products with ease.

SS Graphics will remain open during the move and you can still reach Heather at 620-617-5624, by email at s.s.graphics@hotmail.com or visit the website: www.ssgraphics.org. Stay tuned for more exciting announcements from SS Graphics and MPIRE Companies!



Legacy Award -continued from page 2

down into a strategic plan. Not many people can do that.”

Daveline, who now serves on Hutchinson's City Council, also noted that after leaving the Convention & Visitors Bureau, Peters served as the first full-time Executive Director for the Historic Fox Theater in Hutchinson, where she helped bring in huge national acts that their area had never been able to pull before. “She really helped raise the standard for arts in our City,” Daveline says.



Jan was recognized with the Outstanding Tourism Professional award from the Travel Association of Kansas in 1995. In 1996, she returned to the tourism industry as the Executive Director for the Lenexa Convention & Visitors Bureau in the Kansas City area, a role she held for over 3 years before launching her own company called Projects by Design. In this capacity, she served as an expert consultant to numerous private enterprises and associations for event planning, strategic planning, tourism, conventions, performing arts, and more.

In 2006, Jan moved back to her hometown of Great Bend to accept the position of President/CEO for the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development. During her time with the business advocacy organization, Peters was instrumental in restructuring the Chamber, creating additional non-dues revenue, getting the Chamber out of debt, and growing the organization's financial assets to create long-term security. In addition to vastly improving the strength of the Chamber, she was also responsible for leading the Economic Development efforts for the City of Great Bend. For fourteen years, Jan worked tirelessly to represent Great Bend on countless committees and statewide task forces, as well as networking with state and national government leaders to advocate for the Great Bend business community.

But what was most notable during her time with the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce were the countless relationships forged locally, regionally, and nationally with entrepreneurs, business leaders, and developers – many of which resulted in important and significant outcomes for Great Bend's economy. “One of the things I've always been impressed with was Jan's ability to build genuine relationships. Her prospects were her friends. She championed this community because she loves it,” says Andrea Bauer, former Director of Membership & Events for the Chamber. “Jan created a climate of nimbleness within the organization that allowed us to pivot when a particular challenge or opportunity came about. Partnership was at the heart of everything we worked on.”

Some of the most notable projects Jan helped facilitate include American Ag Credit, Stutzman's, Bartlett Grain, Sutherlands, Golden Belt Cinema 6, Holiday Inn Express, Shoe Sensation, The Reserves at Trail Ridge, Heartland Ag, Blizzard Energy, The HandleBar & Grill, and countless others. But probably the single greatest impact was when the former John Morrell beef packing plant closed in 2009. Jan was quick to create career fairs for the 275+ employees that lost their jobs, while simultaneously beginning to market the available real estate to all the prospects and developers she knew. Within a matter of months, national pet food manufacturer Redbarn Pet Products was eyeing the property to expand their operation from Long Beach, California. The owners of the now global enterprise speak very highly of Jan and the role she played in recruiting them to Great Bend. “Jan was always very positive, and was there for us with any questions we needed answered. She was our biggest supporter,” says Jeff Baikie, Co-Founder of Redbarn Pet Products. “When our team started moving there from California, she helped each of them get acclimated. We still get together with her. She is still one of our biggest cheerleaders, and was instrumental in bringing us to Great Bend.”

Another way that Jan helped put Great Bend on the map was by participating in Leadership Kansas, an organization that she now helps lead as a volunteer. After completing the exclusive networking program in 2009, she has since volunteered in several capacities including serving on the selection committee, as Orientation Coordinator, and in 2019 as the Statewide Program Chair. “Jan's role as program chair is our most labor intensive volunteer role, and basically exists to organize the organizers in six regions of our state,” says Jeff Chapman, Executive Director of Leadership Kansas, part of the Kansas Chamber. “Jan made a very positive state-wide impact, and has certainly put Great Bend on the map with our alumni because of her ability to highlight the great things happening there. Her representation of the Great Bend area was spectacular. Our program is successful because of dynamic people like Jan.”

Outside of her busy professional life, Jan also participated in Rotary Club, even taking a turn as the group's President. She also sang in the First United Methodist Church choir, and was an active caregiver for her mother until she passed away last year.

In January 2020, Jan Peters accepted a new role as Regional Director for Kansas Manufacturing Solutions, and now splits her time between Great Bend and their corporate offices in the Kansas City area, as well as traveling throughout the state helping manufacturers solve problems, make valuable connections with other industry partners, and develop solutions to grow their operations.

Jan will undoubtedly continue to be a champion for the community of Great Bend and all she holds dear. The number of people she will mentor and empower will grow longer and longer, making her most worthy of this special award from the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce.

GREAT BEND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

WELCOME to Our **NEWEST** Chamber Members

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(620) 923-6195
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Health Care

LEGISLATIVE COFFEE

Senator Mary Jo Taylor, Representative Troy Waymaster and Representative Alicia Straub will hold a Legislative Coffee in Great Bend on Saturday, March 7 at 10:00 a.m. The event will be held at the Spray/Holt Family Board at the Sunflower Center, 1125 Williams and is sponsored by the Chamber.

The main topic of discussion will be the passage of bills that each chamber has debated and voted on at this time, as well as pending legislation, including the budget. All members of the public are invited to attend and discuss these legislative matters.

Senator Mary Jo Taylor, 33rd Kansas Senate District, represents Barton, Edwards, Kiowa, Lane, Ness, Pawnee, Rush Scott and Stafford Counties as well as parts of Hodgeman and Rice counties.

Representative Alicia Straub, 113th Kansas House District, represents Pratt and Stafford counties as well as parts of Barton, Pawnee and Rice counties.

Representative Troy Waymaster, 109th Kansas House District, represents Barton, Lincoln, Jewell, Osborne, Rush, Russell, and Smith counties.



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CHAMBER COFFEE SCHEDULE **Every Thursday | Doors Open at 9am | Program at 9:30am**

March 5, 2020
GREAT BEND COFFEE
2015 Lakin Avenue in Great Bend

We want to thank everyone for their support for the past 4 years. Great Bend Coffee serves breakfast 7-10a.m., Mon-Fri and 8-10a.m. on Saturdays. We have 65 different sandwiches, salads, wraps, and pizzas with specials daily. We take reservations for Friday & Saturday evening dinners with a full menu including steaks, pasta, seafood, as well as other specials. AND we do Coffee! Come and see us at 2015 Lakin Ave. Find us on Facebook!

March 12, 2020
PILOT CLUB
Perkins Family Restaurant | 2920 10th Street in Great Bend

For 97 years, Pilot International has been a service organization that makes a positive difference in their communities. Volunteers conduct programs, projects and fundraisers at the local level with a focus on brain safety, brain research, education, prevention and awareness. Pilot Club of Great Bend meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of the month.

March 19, 2020
TCI: ANSWERING SERVICE
5810 Anchor Way in Great Bend

TCI is a 24/7/365 Answering Service that provides customer service to commercial accounts all over the United States. TCI specializes in answering and dispatching calls for contractors, funeral homes, oilfield accounts, medical offices, veterinarians, roadside assistance companies and more. Never miss a call with TCI on your team!

March 26, 2020
KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE
3520 Lakin Suite 107 in Great Bend

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. KCSL is dedicated to providing services and advocacy efforts that focus on preventing child abuse, strengthening families and empowering parents and youth. KCSL is the Kansas chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America.

April 2, 2020
GREAT BEND PUBLIC LIBRARY
1409 Williams Street in Great Bend

The Great Bend Public Library is a place that is dedicated to the service of its community. Through various free programs and activities for all ages the library becomes a key learning, social, and friendly space that welcomes all.



3307 10th Street • Great Bend, KS 67530
McDonald's
is providing coffee for Chamber of Commerce coffees.