

CHAMBER CONNECTION

A Publication of Salina Area Chamber of Commerce

April 2023 Volume 63, Number 4



AT A GLANCE

Mark your Calendar!

Business After Hours Thursday, April 6
Long McArthur
3450 S. Ninth – 5-7pm

Springboard TrainingApril 12
Kansas Wesleyan University
Peter Science Hall - 9am-4pm

Business After Hours Thursday, April 13
Superior Contracting and Manufacturing
Services
1655B Wall Street – 5-7pm

Business After Hours Tuesday, April 18
The Yard
138 S. Fourth St.

SculptureTour Salina UNwrap Party May 6
City Lights Stage and Plaza
Santa Fe & Ash Street - 11am

Details inside!

Salina at the State House See pg 04



Salina

Area Chamber of Commerce

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

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Sanity Boutique
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Bennington State Bank

From the President/CEO



Renee Duxler

I genuinely can't believe that we are in April already. The end of another school year, graduations, and summer are just around the corner. These calendar markers are significant to the Chamber of Commerce because of just how closely involved we are with our local school districts and post-secondary schools. From working on community childcare initiatives to helping post-secondary students with internships and registered apprenticeships, we are very invested in 'cradle to career' workforce development.

A big way that we like to support our secondary students is through our Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. We completed our sixth year of that event this year and continue to see what an impact teaching entrepreneurship at these young levels can really have on our economic growth and development. Many of our recent participants and winners continue to run their businesses while in high school and beyond. Being able to help students explore their talents and alternative career paths is beneficial to Salina in so many ways. Big thanks to Kendrick Calfree at the Salina Journal for the front page write-up he did of the event; we're excited to also share it here.

April also marks another milestone: Annual Meeting. We can't wait to celebrate another year of accomplishments and victories with our membership. We're equally as excited to hear from Colin O'Brady, who will offer a truly inspiring evening with his personal story and own triumphs. I hope you aren't reading this and regretting that you missed out!

And finally the beginning of spring also indicates the winding down of another legislative session. We were able to take a large delegation from Salina up to the statehouse again this year; an event that continues to solidify Salina's status as a major player in Kansas. This is the first year that the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce has partnered with the City of Salina, Saline County, the Airport Authority, and Kansas State University-Salina to invest in a governmental affairs consultant, and we are seeing that investment pay off in dividends. Salina is also grateful to our local representatives for doing such a great job in advocating for the needs of our region at the state level. They say 'teamwork makes the dream work' and Salina has an exceptional team.

The dog days of summer will be here soon enough, but we hope to enjoy all of the promise of spring as much as we can. And maybe we'll even get to enjoy some spring weather too?!

Best,

Renee Duxler, President/CEO

HERE'S HOW TO CONTACT OUR CHAMBER STAFF

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Chamber Announces Duxler As Next President & CEO

SALINA, KANSAS – The Salina Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors announced Tuesday the selection of Renee Duxler as the chamber’s new president and chief executive officer.

Duxler, who has served as the chamber’s director of economic and workforce development since August 2020, will succeed president and CEO Eric Brown, who announced his resignation earlier this year after serving 11 years with the chamber.

In a statement, board members said they believe Duxler’s extensive experience leading teams, marketing campaigns, and fundraising efforts will help elevate the chamber’s relevancy and value in the Salina region.

“The search committee was impressed with the quality of relationships and support Ms. Duxler has built in the Salina business community since she arrived in Salina two years ago,” said Dr. Alysia Starkey, chair of the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors. “Renee’s direct impact on the workforce development efforts in this short time, particularly at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, speaks for itself. She is still new to this community and brings a fresh perspective and creativity to the role that lends itself well to the needs expressed by the chamber’s members. After a nationwide search, it was clear that we had our next president right here in Salina.”



Duxler received her undergraduate degree from Kansas State University and earned a master of social work degree from Newman University. She was executive director of the Douglas Design District in Wichita prior to moving to Salina and joining the Chamber. While in Wichita, Duxler also served on the Wichita/Sedgwick County Metropolitan Planning Commission and owned a designer resale clothing store for several years. Duxler most recently has received an Inclusive Economic Growth Fellowship in 2021 from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and is currently participating in a Business Leads Fellowship from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

“The Chamber has really taken the lead in community marketing and workforce efforts for Salina and the region over the last few years, and I’m honored to continue to lead these initiatives and conversations,” Duxler said, “Salina has the quality-of-life and robust arts and cultural scene to rival much larger metropolitan areas. As we look to retain and recruit talent in ways that we never have before, our priorities include housing, childcare, small business growth, entrepreneurial infrastructure, and overall community health.”

The Salina Area Chamber of Commerce was established in 1911. It is a not-for-profit 501c(6) chartered organization of business, industry, professional men and women and individuals working together to build a healthy economy and improve the quality of life and advocate and elevate our members’ economic prosperity and are the catalyst for our community’s future



Salina at the Statehouse

The Salina Area Chamber of Commerce took a delegation of business and community leaders to the Capitol for our annual Salina at the Statehouse event on March 8. The statehouse event is an opportunity for our community to advocate at the state level, but it also serves as an educational event for young leaders to learn more about state government.

This year's attendees got to meet with Lt. Gov. David Toland, Senate President Ty Masterson, and House Speaker Dan Hawkins. They also visited with the Acting Secretary for the Kansas Department of Transportation, the Executive Director of the Governor's Military Council, and the Executive Director of the Children's Cabinet.

Overwhelmingly, legislators and administration commented just how unique it is for a community to be coordinated the way that Salina is and all working toward shared goals and policy items.

"I feel like we continue to make a really impactful impression when we have interactions with state leaders. Not only our own representatives, but the entire legislature and administration," Renee Duxler, interim President & CEO said, "Salina has a reputation right now for being determined and driven and it's getting us results."





Another Farm Expo in the Books!

The Mid America 58th Annual Farm Expo was held Wednesday, March 22nd through Friday, March 24th at Tony's Pizza Events Center and the Saline County Livestock and Expo Center. There were more than 250 booths with a variety of exhibitors that filled the Arena, Lobby and



Great Plains Manufacturing Exhibition Hall, plus a full Ag Hall and parking lot with returning and new exhibitors.

An estimated total of 4,000 attendees were present throughout those 3 days, along with an impressive speaker line-up that discussed agricultural impacting topics.

A Banker's Luncheon was hosted on Wednesday, March 22nd with over 400 attendees. We would like to thank all the Bank Institutions that sponsored this event. Lunch and Speaker Sponsors included Bennington State Bank, Equity Bank, First Bank Kansas, The Bank of Tescott and Central National Bank and Solomon Bank were lunch sponsors.

It takes a number of volunteers to make this event happen and to make it such a success. There are a number of men and ladies that worked behind the scenes and on hand throughout the event. One of the most impressive attributes of all the volunteers

that were helping is their hospitality and willingness to help wherever needed. There were a couple of exhibitors that even stated that they attend our Farm Expo year after year due to the hard work and the

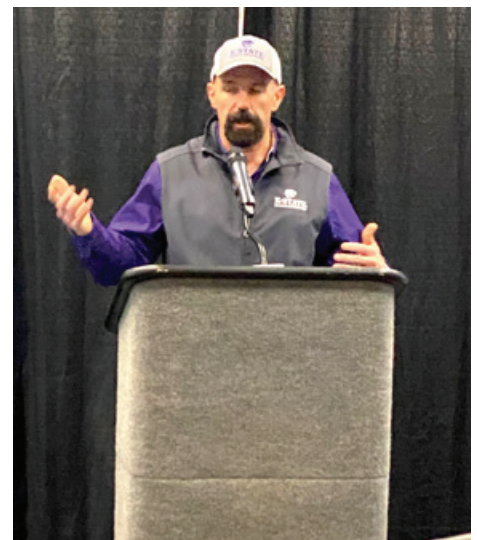
help of the volunteers, especially those that help unload and load their equipment.

A huge thank you to the Steering Committee that planned and executed the event. Carl Garten single handedly knows the layout, and recognizes the exhibitors needs before they know what they need. He knows about all of the attendees that came through the doors and his sense of humor and dedication to the Expo is top notch. Cade Rensink, who is the sound behind many of the ads, is also the guru of agricultural topics and was the mind behind the chosen speakers. He was always there to encourage all exhibitors and exhibitors, support all volunteers and their ideas and help wherever he was needed. Bill Mahanay with First Bank Kansas and Cameron Maier with The Bank of Tescott who were instrumental on the Bankers Luncheon, serving the Exhibitor Breakfast and initiated new ideas. And, of course all



the volunteers throughout the event were integral to the success. The positivity and the cohesiveness of this group was the reason this event has been such a success all of these years!

We look forward to the 59th Mid America Farm Expo in March 2024!





LEADERSHIP SALINA

UPDATE UPDATE

CONGRATULATIONS!



Stephanie Anderson, Vernon's Jewelers, on receiving her American Gem Certification!

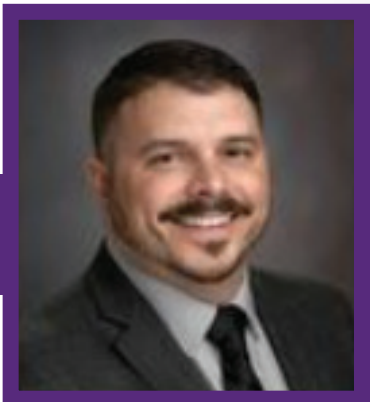
Nikki Roelofsen, The Hive, for being Salina's Choice for Best Salon!



Mattie King with Bennington State Bank on her promotion to AVP Accounting Officer

AND

Tyler Elting with Bennington State Bank on his promotion to AVP Information Security Officer and Vendor Management!



Good Luck to Ron Redder for his new career and location move to Texas. We will miss you and wish you the best of luck!



UPDATE UPDATE UPDATE UPDA



Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge

Originally Published in Salina Journal, March 3, 2023

By Kendrick Calfee

Around 30 students from Salina Public Schools tapped into their creative and innovative skillsets to create a business that competed for top prizes in an entrepreneurship challenge this week.

The USD 305 Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge is an event in collaboration with the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, where students at Salina Public Schools have the opportunity to create a business model and pitch their ideas to judges.

Wednesday's event marked the sixth consecutive year of the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge.

How the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge works

Students went into the event March 1 having already submitted an executive summary online. The deadline to submit was Feb. 24, and was hosted through VentureDash, a digital platform known for business competitions. As the first step, those executive summaries get judged online before the event.

Then the in-person event Wednesday featured the tradeshow, where students talked about their business to those visiting their respective booths, and formal presentations, limited to five minutes and set up as a pitch to judges.

The executive summaries, trade show presentations and formal presentations had equal weight contributions of 33.3% for their overall score tabulations.

To select judges, the Chamber asks sponsor organizations if anyone is interested, asks around the Salina community for volunteers and takes advantage of long-term judges who have been a part of the event since its inception.

"Certainly we put out a call to anybody who is really interested in doing this as a member of the community – business leaders, community leaders – because all of that input and questions that they could potentially ask is great for our students," said Renee Duxler, interim president and CEO of the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce.

While the event is currently made up of Salina Central and Salina South High School students, the Chamber has been exploring options to open the event up to area parochial and private schools, and the Ell-Saline and Southeast of Saline school districts as well.

Some businesses from the challenge have gone on to become a long-term success locally. Mason Bettles' "Bettles Mobile Car Detailing" was a second-place winner in the challenge a couple years ago and still continues to do detailing.

Meet a couple of this year's young entrepreneurs

Liam Deniau-Young



Liam Deniau-Young's business called "The Spindle & Chisel Woodworks" earned third place Wednesday. His business specializes in handmade woodworking with a focus on small decorative items.

"Everything I make is handmade, not from machines compared to some of our competitors," Deniau-Young said.

His handmade items, like sheep, rabbits, Christmas trees and bowls are perfect for gifts, he said, and come at a lower cost than what one might find online.

"Our prices are a lot lower. Etsy, for example, you would find a Christmas tree like mine for about \$50, and about \$35 on Amazon." Deniau-Young said. "For us, it's only \$25."

Deniau Young sources his wood for projects both locally and out of state. Some woods that are harder to come by he orders online.

Sophia Osborn

Sophia Osborn's business, "Sunn Bakery," specializes in baked goods and snacks that people don't have to sacrifice their diets to enjoy. The word "Sunn" is the Norwegian word for "healthy."

"At Sunn Bakery, we fully believe that there should be healthy, affordable and protein-filled goods so that people don't have to lose their diets, or have a cheat day in order to have tasty treats," Osborn said.

Osborn said she plans to run her business as a sole proprietorship. The high school sophomore said classes in leadership and business prepared her well to formulate a plan around a bakery business.

It will sell everything from cookies, cupcakes, scones, banana bread, and waffles. A unique option at Sunn Bakery is their snack, which provides variety and range in price. It would start off as an at-home business but as it makes money, she said she would like to have a downtown location.





Emily Truong

Emily Truong, a sophomore at Salina South, presented her business "Dew Shine" Wednesday. Her business provides a variety of graphic design services.

"All we really advocate for is happy customers," Truong said.

Utilizing industry standards for digital media and print design, Truong's business looks to help provide solutions to companies through thoughtful and innovative designs.

To start, it would just be Truong making the designs, but if the company made enough, she would later hire more designers to tackle larger and long-term projects.



This year's winners

In the past, the competition awarded 1st through 3rd place winners. This year, the event's sponsor, Network Kansas, was so impressed with the group of competitors that they added another \$250 in cash prizes the day of the event, adding 4th and 5th place winners.

This year's USD 305 Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge winners are as follows:

- 1st Place (\$500): **Brooks Richardson** with LakeSide Cleanings
- 2nd Place (\$350): **Allison Johnson** with Pumphouse Fitness & Cafe
- 3rd Place (\$200): **Liam Dinou-Young** with The Spindle & Chisel Woodworks
- 4th Place (\$150): **Donald Crawford III** with Jeweler's Emporium
- 5th Place (\$100): **Parker Graves** and **Jesus Delgado** with Sleevies

In addition to top prizes, there was a "People's Choice" award that those who attended the trade show portion of the event could vote on. This year's USD 305 Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge People's Choice award winner was **Noah Peck** with his business Shaggy & Sharp. He received \$50 in Smoky Hill certificates.





In The News

Sunflower Bank, N.A. is thrilled to announce the launch of a new small business lending platform in partnership with SmartBiz, the leading AI-powered small business financing platform. Through a new end-to-end online portal, small businesses in Sunflower Bank, N.A.'s branch footprint now have access to a streamlined process to apply for conventional small business loans from \$25,000-\$350,000. Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) and Express Line loan products will be available beginning in second quarter 2023.



WELCOME ABOARD

CHRISTY THERAPY

Sarah Diehl
641 W Cloud
785-304-9254
<https://mt2.linknow.com/?id=102093648>

THE ASSOCIATED CONSULTANTS, LLC

Nicole & Jake Deatherage
785-201-8095
www.theassociatedconsultants.com

COMPASS MEDICAL PROVIDER

Kimberly Hatfield
611 E Iron Street
785-404-2595
www.compassmedicalprovider.com

GOT NEWS?

Do you have news to share about your business or organization? Email srice@salinakansas.org and we'll publish it in an upcoming issue of *Chamber Connection*.



SDI staffers Leslie Bishop and Dian Gebhardt attended the Market Pros "In Tents Farmers Market" Conference in San Diego March 6-8. Thirty states were represented and the two cities from Kansas were Salina & Overland Park. Downtown Salina is in a prime position to offer a

downtown Farm & artisan Market that has the potential to offer something for everyone in our community. We need to start small and grow.

The Farmers Market community is very passionate about what they do and how they do it. They are a tribe, and we are excited about the future.

Add Your Business Offer to the 67401 App

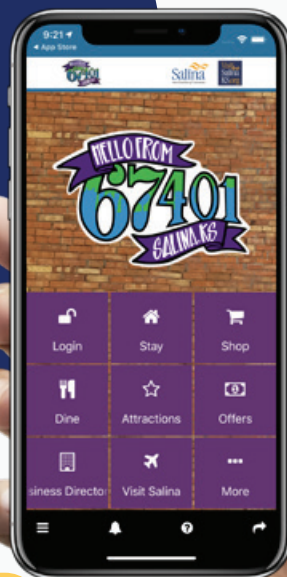


Chamber member businesses can offer coupons for free or discounted products or services on our 67401 app and website!

If you'd like to provide a coupon for the app, please contact Ashley Finan at (785) 827-9310 x132 or afinan@salinakansas.org



Download App



FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



Salina Chamber of Commerce



Visit Salina



Imagine Salina





THANK YOU

to these Chamber members who continue to support our programs through their membership renewal:

- ▶ 404-Move Inc.
- ▶ Acoustic Sounds Inc.
- ▶ Advantage Softwash
- ▶ Ahlers Family Dentistry
- ▶ Allmetal Recycling Salina
- ▶ Avflight Salina Corp.
- ▶ CAD Law, LC
- ▶ Cancer Center of Kansas
- ▶ Central States Enterprises
- ▶ Chick-fil-A
- ▶ The Cleaning Lady
- ▶ Phil Coleman
- ▶ Crossroads Collision, Inc.
- ▶ D S & O Electric Cooperative
- ▶ Dillon Stores Division #95
- ▶ Farmers Financial Solutions, LLC
- ▶ Feldkamp Furniture
- ▶ Fili Creative
- ▶ Fletcher & Associates - Aflac District Office
- ▶ La Velle Frick
- ▶ Friends of the River Foundation
- ▶ Gateway Real Estate Agency
- ▶ Ken Guest
- ▶ Tom Hemmer
- ▶ Ironstone Wealth Advisors
- ▶ ISG Technology
- ▶ JRI Hospitality
- ▶ Kansas Coring & Cutting
- ▶ Kansas Gas Service
- ▶ Kansas Physical Therapy Partners LLC
- ▶ KU School of Nursing - Salina Campus
- ▶ Maas Paint & Paper, LLC
- ▶ David Martin, Independent Marketing Consultant
- ▶ Memorial Art Co., Inc.
- ▶ The Mortgage Company
- ▶ Perkins Restaurant & Bakery
- ▶ PrairieLand Partners
- ▶ Red Lobster
- ▶ The Renaissance Cafe
- ▶ Reserves at Prairie Glen
- ▶ Sage Oak Wealth Partners
- ▶ Salina Building Company, Inc.
- ▶ Salina Human Resource Management Association
- ▶ Smoky Hill Financial Group
- ▶ Triad Mfg., Inc.
- ▶ Kathryn K. White, CPA, PA
- ▶ XWE Entertainment/Wrestling LLC

Thank You

SAVE THE DATE

05 1 5 23
MONDAY

CHAMBERNET SUBMISSION DEADLINE
1,100 PRINTED FLYERS (NOT FOLDED)
DELIVER TO THE CHAMBER
120 W. ASH





**Smoky Hill
Silver**

**CALL (785) 827-9301
TO ORDER!**

ACCEPTED AT PARTICIPATING
CHAMBER MEMBER LOCATIONS

Marquee Welcomes

- 1 USA 8U Indoor Fast pitch Softball Tournament
- 1-2 Salina Slugfest Baseball Tournament
- 2 Sharp Performance Free Football Combine
- 8-9 Salina Diamond Wars Baseball Tournament
- 8 XWE Pro Wrestling Event
- 15 SAYSI Youth Baseball & Softball Tournament
- 22-23 USSSA Youth Fast Pitch Softball Tournament
- 29-30 USA Crown the Queen of the New Turf Softball Tournament

May

- 6 MAYB Basketball Tournament
- 6 SAYSI Youth Baseball Tournament
- 6 USA Blue & Gold Fast Pitch Softball Tournament

Site Visits Important Step in Securing Events

Visit Salina staff has had several potential clients come to Salina for site visits during February and March. These prospects are organizers of conventions, agriculture, military, sports and other event business. More site visits are scheduled for April.

The site visit usually entails spending a few hours, up to sometimes a full day, with the event organizer in Salina. The prospect gets a look at the facilities that would best serve as their event location and meets with the venue staff. In addition, the day usually includes a lunch or dinner meeting to discuss their specific needs. A site visit might also include a look at area lodging options, specific attractions, and/or a general driving tour so that the organizer can gauge whether their participants would enjoy the Salina experience. General information, brochures, and Salina swag is provided during or after the visit. A proposal from Visit Salina, plus the all-important follow-up are usually the final steps toward winning their business.

If you belong to an organization that is considering Salina to host an event that will generate visitors, please make sure you let the Visit Salina team know and find out how Visit Salina might be able to help.

SPRINGBOARD
BOARD SERVICE TRAINING

Join us for SpringBoard, a 1-day training to learn about serving on a board.

No previous experience is required for participation.

The program fee is \$60 per participants that includes training materials, instruction and lunch.

**Wednesday, April 12th, 2023
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

KANSAS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
PETER SCIENCE HALL ROOM 201
100 E CLAFLIN AVENUE

Register through the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce [website](#)



RIBBON CUTTING



Nex-Tech celebrated their grand re-opening on March 31 with a Chamber ribbon cutting!

**HAVE SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE AT YOUR BUSINESS?
AN EXPANSION? ANNIVERSARY? AWARD?**

Consider a Bluecoat Ribbon Cutting to help celebrate the occasion. For more information, contact **Stephanie Gillig** at: sgillig@salinakansas.org or 785-827-9310, ext. 124

APRIL

Mark your calendars to attend the following Business After Hours in April.

LONG MCARTHUR

3450 S. NINTH



THUR.
4-06

SUPERIOR CONTRACTING & MANUFACTURING SERVICES

1655B WALL STREET



THUR.
4-13

THE YARD

138 S. 4TH STREET



TUES.
4-18

785-827-9301

RESERVATIONS ENCOURAGED

BUSINESS After Hours

\$It Pays to Attend\$



The March BAH at Crown Distributors attracted an enthusiastic crowd (left)! Among those in attendance were prize winners Mike Sample and Stacey Swaggerty (center/right), both of Bank of Tescott.



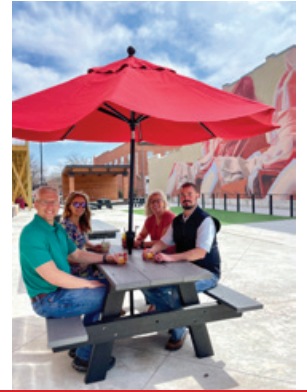
Smoky Hill Vineyards and Winery was another popular BAH event! Boone Vidricksen won the \$250 Attendance Drawing (left) and Matt Stewart won a cool gift basket from the winery (right)!



Visit Salina *Doing that Marketing Thing!*



Many thanks to various members of the Bennington State Bank staff for donating time to act as models for a recent Visit Salina television shoot. We welcomed the KWCH crew in and spent some time gathering b-roll footage to promote things to see and do while in Salina. This time we spent time downtown and captured images of The Prickly Pear, Lauren Quinn Flower Boutique, Apron Strings, Sanity, the Salina Kanvas Project murals, and SculptureTour Salina pieces. Thanks to those entities for allowing us the opportunity to shoot.



If you would like to be placed on a list to assist with models for future shoots, we welcome that information. We are always looking for couples, families, groups of friends, people of varying ages, ethnicities, and interests. Contact Sylvia Rice for more information at srice@salinakansas.org or 785-827-9310, Ext 138



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SculptureTour Salina



SculptureTour
SALINA

Saturday, May 6

Along Santa Fe and Iron Ave.

Salina Downtown

Pack up the family and head downtown and watch as 22 new sculptures are unveiled at 11am with juror awards to be announced at 1pm at City Lights Stage!

Charter Sponsors:

