

CHAMBER CONNECTION

A Publication of the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce

November 2023 Volume 63, Number 11

AIM

Aviation Innovation and Maintenance

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE AT SLM



AT A GLANCE

Mark your Calendar!

Business After Hours November 2

NEW Saline County Jail

800 E. Pacific - 5-7pm

Salina Crossroads Marathon

Downtown Start/Finish November 4

Leadership Graduation November 16

Salina Country Club

2101 E. Country Club Road - 5:30pm

Business After Hours November 30

Heart Center, Salina Regional Health Ctr

501 S. Santa Fe, Suite 3 - 5-7pm

Details inside!

AIM Program
See pg 03



Salina

Area Chamber of Commerce

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

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From the President/CEO

Salina is well-known for its rich aviation heritage. From the storied Schilling Air Force Base, to the long history of the growing Kansas State University-Salina campus, to the economic development and growth of the Salina Airport Industrial Complex and 1 Vision Aviation- the pillars for reclaiming a top spot in aviation and aerospace innovation are here. It is incumbent upon us to sustain and strengthen this sector by investing in a skilled workforce.



Renee Duxler

Our cover story this month is about a uniquely collaborative project between the Salina Airport Authority and multiple community partners—including the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce-- to address the shortage of skilled workers that are hindering the growth and competitiveness of the aviation maintenance industry in Salina, and Kansas overall. With grant dollars from the Kansas Department of Commerce, the Aviation Innovation and Maintenance (AIM) Center of Excellence at SLN is a pilot project that will utilize short-term comprehensive cohort training to help recruit and retain aviation maintenance workers. As you will read, this is an innovative strategy in itself and is an exciting addition to our workforce development initiatives.

Salina is also continuing to stake a claim in the realm of sports tourism, with the Crossroads Marathon coming up on Saturday, November 4th. With over 3,200 registrations at the time of this publication the marathon officially has become the largest event of its kind in Kansas. This includes 2,865 runners from outside of Salina, and 1,430 runners from outside of Kansas. In fact there are runners from all 50 states, as well as the countries of Botswana, Canada, Mexico, and Columbia, South America. Again, Salina's ability to grow this event is because of the collaborative efforts of many partners, businesses, and community members all stepping in to create a premium level experience. We wouldn't see these type of numbers without that.

I believe that we will continue to see Salina become a top seed in a number of categories because of our community, connections, and relationships. I have been told by Lt. Governor David Toland and the Department of Commerce a number of times that Salina is used as an example over and over again when talking about economic and community development wins. It also is no secret that the current administration aren't the only ones paying attention to what is going on in Salina- other Kansas communities are definitely taking notice as well. This only furthers to support our efforts to recruit from those communities, and across the Midwest region.

Just more reasons to #LoveSalina and love where you live!

Best,

Renee Duxler, President/CEO

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Aviation Innovation and Maintenance (AIM) Center under Development

A new kind of program to learn aviation mechanics and maintenance is being developed in Salina as industry partners and local entities look to address an ongoing worker shortage in the field.



The program will work to equip people with the skills to become aircraft mechanics and service technicians, and aircraft structure, surfaces, rigging and system assemblers at a time when the industry is evolving.

Dubbed the "Aviation Innovation and Maintenance (AIM) Center for Excellence," this new program is unique across the nation as it takes a nontraditional approach to becoming a skilled worker in the aviation industry.

"It is one of a kind," said Lindsey Dreiling, a consultant of the Salina Airport, referring to the AIM Center. "It is the only one we know of that exists today."

AIM Center looks to address worker shortage in aviation

For a while now, there has been a shortage of skilled workers in the aviation industry across all specialties, which has hindered its local growth and competitiveness.

This new program was developed as a means to recruit and build up the aviation maintenance workforce, especially on the local level, as more aviation companies start to call Salina home.

"(Local aviation companies) growth has just shown such a demand for trained aviation-oriented employees that this has been clearly a growing need within the community," said Mitch Robinson, CEO of the Salina Community Economic Development Organization. "We see a lot of people coming in from across the country to take some of (I Vision Aviation's) jobs."

I Vision Aviation is a company located on the airport grounds and specializes in maintenance and repair work.

With Salina's existing reputation for aviation education, through Kansas State University Salina and others, a new education program addressing this need became the next logical step among partners who developed the AIM Center.

"This will help us be in a more competitive position to be able to retain and grow the workforce at Salina," said Tim Rogers, executive director of the Salina Airport Authority.



What will students learn in Salina's new aviation program?

As a consultant for the Salina Airport Authority, Dreiling helped develop the concept of the AIM Center. She said it will function as a pre-apprenticeship program that ties into jobs and specialties that already exist at airports.

"Really the vision for this center is a complementary program that serves as just another pathway to get into aviation," Dreiling said. "All of this will be in preparation for those types of pathways — for those wanting to go do more formal education or if they want to go directly into an apprenticeship position in aviation maintenance."



The program will focus on a few key fundamental areas: sheet metal, basic electricity in avionics, composites repair, and coatings and paint technology.

"We're really calling this more of ... an aviation fundamentals curriculum as it serves aviation maintenance," Dreiling said. "Focusing on these key areas was in collaboration with our partners out on the Salina airfield asking: 'What are you needing in your skilled workforce? What competencies are you wanting your workforce to come in with?'"

Kirsten Zoller, executive director of strategic initiatives at Kansas State Salina, said the program will allow students to explore a variety of different aspects of what critical needs are in the aerospace industry. When they successfully complete the program, students are awarded with a micro credential.

"Micro credentials are a short learning experience that is assessed," Zoller said. "That micro credential is something they can take with them even if they don't come to K-State later on ... so that employers and other institutions can know the type of learning experience they've been provided."

Micro credentials are awarded through a virtual transcript or digital badge that will travel with people wherever they choose to go.

The program structure will consist of six-week instruction periods with 25 individuals per cohort. When the program is up and running, the AIM Center would look to offering these twice each semester: two offerings in the fall, two in the spring and two in the summer.

Instructors will be a mix between industry partners on the Salina Airport, and instructors from Kansas State University-Salina and Salina Tech.

The program is still being developed and details like program cost and exact dates are still to come.

"Our expectation and our goal is an aggressive goal. (Does this make sense?) We'd like to have our first session late fall," Dreiling said. "But we are still in the creation phase. Getting those finer details of the exact date is to be determined."

Aviation is an economic driver in Salina and across Kansas

The airport was awarded a \$3.325 million Aviation Learning Opportunities and Funded Training (ALOFT) grant through the Kansas Department of Commerce to go toward the AIM Center. Salina Airport Authority was one of seven recipients and received the largest award possible.

Partners at the Salina Airport are looking to hire an additional 250 skilled workers in the next year. The Salina Airport industrial complex supports just fewer than 300 jobs, but projected growth within the next two years brings that number to 750 jobs.

Seeing this kind of economic impact, the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce is helping recruit people into the AIM Center program. Efforts will focus on high school students, transitioning workers and military veterans as key candidates who might be interested in a career change or beginning a career in the aerospace field.

"As we've proven, over and over again, I think (community partnerships) are a really successful way to address some of the biggest challenges that Salina and Saline County are facing right now," said Renee Duxler, president and CEO of the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce.

The AIM Center will be self-sustaining through the airport and its partners, but the ALOFT grant will help supplement the program for two years. According to the airport, grant funds will largely go toward equipment, development of curriculum and facilities.

"What we're hoping is that this will be a catalyst for future growth for the airport and be able to ... meet future expectations of business growth that we see happening," Dreiling said. "We really want to broaden access to aviation."



RIBBON CUTTINGS

with the Bluecoat Ambassadors!



Congratulations to [The Friends of the River Foundation](#), Salina Family YMCA, and City of Salina, KS Government on the completion of the first phase of the river and trail project. The ribbon cutting which was held on October 28, marked visible progress of decades-long work toward the river renovation.

The Chamber was thrilled to celebrate with our community partners and friends. This project will spur economic development, create jobs, improve quality of life, and elevate public health, mental health and connectivity in our community.

THANK YOU

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

- ▶ Angels Care Home Health
- ▶ Cave Divers South Liquor Store
- ▶ TGW Wealth Management

Thank You


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Salina Area Chamber of Commerce

Chamber welcomes Mindrup to Staff!

Please help us welcome Julie Mindrup to our team as our Administrative & Accounting Specialist. She will be handling database management, accounts payable and receivable, and providing administrative support to our team. Julie will also be a part of our reception team to take phone calls and greet visitors!

Julie is coming to us from Salina Central High School. Julie has experience in administrative office work and is an active volunteer in our community. She has lived in Salina most of her life and enjoys spending time with her family and friends.



Add Your Business Offer to the 67401 App

Salina Area Chamber of Commerce

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 african@salinakansas.org




Download App

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



Salina Chamber of Commerce



Visit Salina



Imagine Salina





In The News



OCCK announces that Kansas Mobility Week is November 5-11, 2023. This is a celebration of making smart, efficient, and safe multimodal transportation choices, including public transportation, biking, pedestrians, scooters and more. Learn more at: www.ksrides.org.

Salina Dental Arts, 1829 S. Ohio, will again hold their annual "Candy Buy Back" event, Saturday, November 4 from 10:30am-12:30pm. Turn in candy for cash while you enjoy a Bounce House, games, crafts, prizes and more!



Embark on an emotionally rich musical journey with the **Salina Symphony** November 5 at 4pm at the Stiefel Theatre. The Symphony will open the Passage-themed concert with Barber's thoughtful Adagio for Strings. The orchestra will then be joined by flutist Daniel Velasco (left) for a performance of Michael Daugherty's virtuosic and heart-wrenching Trail of Tears, a strikingly beautiful work that demonstrates how the human spirit deals with upheaval and adversity. Following intermission, the orchestra will present Penderecki's intensely romantic and lush Second Symphony, "Christmas." The concert will end with Bach's beloved Sheep May Safely Graze.

GOT NEWS?

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

Join Interim Healthcare Home Care & Hospice for David Torrey's 2nd Annual Veterans' Day Parade, The Parade will be held Saturday, November 11, beginning at 9am, traveling from Elm Street to South Street on Santa Fe Avenue. Anyone interested in participating or looking for more information should contact Kim Rayas at 785-822-7294.



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters.**
OF SALINA

The Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) Frosty Fun Runs will be Saturday, November 18, from 7:30-10am. They will begin at the corner of Santa Fe and Ash. The event will also feature Live DJ Music, cookies and hot chocolate, live results to cell phone, Twitter and Facebook, and chip timing. Packet pick up is Friday, November 17 from 8:30am-5:30pm at 99KG, 1825 S. Ohio, or 7:30-8:30am onsite at the event on Saturday. Register at bbbssalina.org/events. BBBS is also sponsoring a cash raffle, with \$50 tickets available until December 3 at www.bebigsalina.org. The raffle prize is \$25,000, and the winner will be drawn via Facebook Live on December 5 at 3:45pm.



Salina Downtown has several holiday experiences in store! The Downtown Holiday Open House is November 5. Everyone will enjoy the lighting of the beautiful Christmas Tree in Campbell Plaza on November 17 at 7pm. Milt Allen will be leading us in Christmas Carol sing along as well. Everyone's favorite holiday tradition is here on November 18 with the Christmas Festival starting at 11am, and the Parade of Lights at 6pm. Learn more!

WELCOME ABOARD

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KWU to Host State's Top Spellers in 2024 and 2025!



Kansas Wesleyan University will host the Sunflower State's top spellers for each of the next two years, thanks to an agreement announced Wednesday afternoon. KWU is the new host for the Kansas Press Association's (KPA) Sunflower State Spelling Bee, an event that will bring approximately 100 students and their families to Salina. "All of us at Kansas Wesleyan are thrilled to host this event," said Brad Salois, director of marketing and communications, whose team spearheaded discussions. "It's a great opportunity to showcase our campus to some of the best and brightest students in the state! Academics is the centerpiece of KWU, and we're proud to be a part of something that shares that philosophy."

"The Kansas Press Association is proud to partner with Kansas Wesleyan for the 2024 and 2025 Kansas Sunflower State Spelling Bee," said Amber Jackson, KPA's state bee coordinator. "We are grateful for their partnership and look forward to welcoming the best spellers in the state to Salina in March."

The 2024 version of the bee is scheduled for March 23 in Mabee Arena, with a start time yet to be announced. The 2025 competition is tentatively slated for KWU's Sams Chapel, which is currently undergoing renovations that will turn it into one of the top venues in the region.

Students up to 8th grade are eligible for the state competition. Each Kansas county may send their respective county bee winner to the state event. The winner of the Sunflower State Spelling Bee will be eligible for the Scripps National Spelling Bee, broadcast yearly on national television.

Learn more about Kansas Wesleyan University at www.kwu.edu and about The Kansas Press Association at www.kspress.com



Marquee Welcomes

November

- 4 Salina Crossroads Marathon
- 11 MAYB Basketball – Salina Fieldhouse
- 25 KSHSAA 2A State Football – Salina Stadium

Great Things Going On!

Looking for FUN in Salina? Checkout the Salina Arts & Entertainment Calendar where you can find the most comprehensive listing of events including art exhibitions, concerts & live music, sports events, festivals, special happenings and more! And, if you have an event you'd like to see on the calendar, go to: www.SalinaAE.com and click on the "Add Event" button to submit your event for approval. Accepted events include art exhibitions, entertainment, youth sports tournaments and events that visitors might enjoy attending. If you have questions about the calendar, e-mail Samantha at the Chamber: suhler@salinakansas.org



KSHSAA Class 2A State Football

Visit Salina is pleased to host the KSHSAA 2A State Football Championship. The event will be played the Saturday following Thanksgiving Day, November 25 at Salina Stadium with an anticipated 1pm Kick-off.

"KSHSAA Football is a wonderful event for Salina to host!" expressed Tiffany Benien, Visit Salina Sports & Events Mgr., "Salina will enjoy hosting the 2A Class this year, and expects the game to have a good following from fans out of town that want to enjoy an afternoon football game. We believe they'll continue to experience Salina beyond the game by dining in our restaurants, staying in our hotels and shopping. With a little good fortune, we'll have great weather and that makes competing for the title even more fun!"

Economic impact for the event is estimated at \$260,600 for the Salina community.

Would you like to be a part of the event!?! This event requires several community volunteers. Tasks include team hosts, officials' hosts, press box personnel, pass gate workers, concession workers, ticket sellers, ticket takers, and program & t-shirt sellers. If you would like to help, please contact Tiffany Benien at the Chamber by phone (785) 827-9310 x 130 or e-mail: tbenien@salinakansas.org

The 2A District and State matchups will be posted at www.KSHSAA.org.





CROSSROADS



Salina Crossroads Marathon becomes largest qualifier in Kansas!

The Salina Crossroads Marathon continues to grow in size and with 3280 runners currently registered is expected to be the largest marathon event in Kansas. Runners are coming from all 50 states, Botswana, Canada, Mexico, and Columbia, South America. The two largest races are the half marathon with 1650 runners followed by the marathon with 730 runners. The USATF Certified 5K Run/Walk currently has 575 runners and there are 70 youth registered for the new Half Mile Kids Fun Run. The remaining runners are registered for the team relays and virtual options. This year there are 2865 runners registered from outside of Salina, which includes over 1430 runners from outside of the state of Kansas. Last year the number of out of state runners was 134. Visit Salina calculated the impact of the 2023 Salina Crossroads Marathon at \$1,685 million of estimated economic impact. Runners can register up to and including on race morning at: <https://runsalinacrossroads.com/>.



The 2023 Salina Crossroads Marathon weekend will feature seven events: marathon, half marathon, 5K run, 5K walk, half marathon relay, marathon relay, and new half-mile kids run. “One of our goals with the Salina Crossroads Marathon is to create a high-quality event with fun race options for the entire family,” said Daniel Craig, Co-Race Director. “We hope that the 5K run, 5K walk, team relays, new half mile kids run, and opportunities to volunteer and cheer on the runners will enable the entire community to come out and be a part of an amazing marathon weekend. We appreciate the support from the City of Salina in helping us create a flat, fast, and scenic course and want to say a special thank you to Brent Buchwald and Sgt. Chad McCary for their support.” Volunteering is one of the best ways you can help to support your community. With the race continuing to grow the Salina Crossroads Marathon which will be held in downtown Salina on Saturday, November 4 is looking for additional volunteers. To volunteer, sign up [HERE](#). The biggest need is for course monitors who will ensure safety along the race course by assisting traffic across intersections, providing pedestrians/runners with course direction, and encouraging participants along the course. Shifts that are available are 7:45a.m.-11:00a.m. or 10:45a.m.-2:00p.m. If you have never volunteered for a race before that is no problem. There will be detailed maps showing you where you need to be and the Salina Crossroads Marathon will host volunteer training on Wednesday, November 1 at 6:00p.m. at The Alley. The volunteer coordinator will also be available any time during the race to answer questions that come up. Volunteers will receive a Salina Crossroads volunteer shirt.



“We are excited for Salina to have one of the largest marathons in the state of Kansas,” said Craig. “Last year we focused on having a well-organized event starting with excellent pre-race communication, a fun vendor fair, well-marked course with lots of volunteers, and an amazing post-race celebration with lots of photo opportunities. Cash Hollistah and Hannah Holt did an amazing job with race announcements, fun music, and calling out the runner’s names as they finished which helped to create an amazing experience that has been instrumental in the growth that we are seeing for this year’s race.” The amazing support from community organizations and sponsors allows the Salina Crossroads Marathon to be one of the few marathons to provide 100% of the entry fees to a cause. The four organizations that the entry fees will be going to in 2023 are the Salina Family YMCA, Kansas Youth Sports, USD 305 School Marathon Foundation, and Salina Area Youth Sportsmanship Initiative.

Check-in & Packet Pickup

Athlete check-in and packet pick-up will occur at Homewood Suites (115 E. Mulberry) on Friday, November 3rd from 10am to 8pm. Packets may also be picked up on race day from 6 to 7:30am at the Visit Salina Chamber Annex (120. West Ash) which is very close to the start/finish line.

The Start/Finish Line/Post Race Festival will be held at City Lights Stage (175 N. Santa Fe) which is on the corner of Ash Street and Santa Fe Avenue.



Race Day Schedule

6:00a.m.-7:30a.m. Late registration/packet pickup at the Chamber Annex

8:10a.m. 5k Fun Run/Walk begins

9:30a.m. 5k Awards Ceremony (City Lights Stage)

2:00p.m. Race Course Closure

Timing and results can be found at the link below or on our website:

www.runsalinacrossroads.com. Laptops will be available to check results.

About the Salina Crossroads Marathon

The Salina Crossroads Marathon began when two local runners (Chris Lehecka and Daniel Craig) started visiting about what it would look like for Salina to have a high-quality marathon and half marathon race. The City of Salina helped develop a fun and scenic course that minimized disruptions to traffic and parking in Downtown Salina. The Salina Crossroads Marathon planning committee includes individuals in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors as well as local runners. The goals of the Salina Crossroads Marathon are to have a high-quality race that can bring in runners from across the United States, provide 100% of the race entry fees to local organizations, and provide fun family friendly events so the entire community can come be a part of a USATF Certified and Boston Qualifying Marathon weekend.



For more information about the Salina Crossroads Marathon check out the website at: runsalinacrossroads.com or follow us on Facebook.

SPECTATOR SPOTS

There are many areas along the course great for spectating. If you are unfamiliar with Salina or the route, here are few spots we recommend.

- #1 **Lakewood Park** Miles 2-4 and 15-17. Park on the east side of Lakewood Middle School. Access to Lakewood Middle School is on E. Lakewood Circle off of Ohio Street near Orscheln's.
- #2 **Indian Rock** Miles 8-9 and 21-22. Access to Indian Rock is off of Stack Ave off of Ohio Street, one block north of Greeley (stop light). Runners will run on Indiana Ave 3 times: Once before Indian Rock near Gypsum St., once after Indian Rock near Greeley Ave., and again exiting the Indian Rock area after the loop around Bill Burke park. (Please note: There will be no access to Bill Burke park off of Crawford.)
- #3 **Kenwood Cove** Miles 10-11 and 23-24. Access to the Kenwood Cove is on Westchester Dr. off of Ohio Street. Please utilize the Salina YMCA's two parking lots and walk to Kenwood Park Drive.





November Events



Salina Area Young Professionals



- ▶ 06 | Meal Prep Hacks to Help Save Time
@ The Visit Salina Annex – 120 W. Ash
Start time is 5:30PM
- ▶ 08 | Lunch Club
@ YaYa's, 251 S. Santa Fe
11:00am-Noon
- ▶ 15 | Friendsgiving @
The Visit Salina Annex – 120 W. Ash
6:00PM-8:00PM



Save the Date

Leadership Salina Graduation Celebration
Thursday, November 16th
5:30pm - 7:00pm
Salina Country Club

Hors d'oeuvres and other refreshments will be served.

Cash bar will be available

RSVP to Stephanie at sgillig@salinakansas.org, or (785) 827-9310 ext. 124



BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

In partnership with Kansas State- Salina and the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce, Project OPEN provides business training courses to aspiring entrepreneurs in the community, free of charge.

BASICS OF MARKETING, MANAGEMENT & STRATEGY	Tuesday, Nov. 28 5:30-8:30PM K-State Salina Technology Center, Rm. 119
AND FINANCIAL BASICS & TOOLS	Thursday, Nov. 30 5:30-8:30PM K-State Salina Technology Center, Rm. 119

TO FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTER, VISIT: PROJECTOPENSALINA.COM/TRAINING

*Courses are intended to be taken together, as they walk entrepreneurs and start-ups through the creation of a full business plan

Project OPEN is designed to encourage and support entrepreneurial efforts in the Salina County area. Project OPEN establishes designated funding to support entrepreneurial development with special emphasis on owner-operated businesses

www.projectopensalina.com | open@salinakansas.org



57th Annual
SEE & SELL
HOLIDAY MARKET

Saturday,
November 18
8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

TONY'S PIZZA
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For reservations call (785) 827-9301 or email dsmith@salinakansas.org

**Admission – Fast Pass or \$5 at door
Hours – 5-7pm**

**Questions – contact Stephanie at 785.827.9310 ext. 124
or sgillig@salinakansas.org**



Wake Up Wednesday at Nex-Tech, October 4



BAH at Salina Family Health Care, October 12



BAH at SSC CPAs + Advisors, October 19





SALINE COUNTY
ESTABLISHED 1858

**November 2, 2023
800 E. Pacific Avenue
5:00 - 7:00 PM
\$5 per person or Fast Pass**

**Heavy Hors d'oeuvres plus non-alcoholic beverages
Tours will be available**

RSVP Here or call 785.827.9301
or email dsmith@salinakansas.org

**Giveaways
\$250 Attendance Drawing from the Chamber of Commerce**





Salina Regional Health Center

**October 30, 2023
501 South Santa Fe Suite 3
5:00 - 7:00 PM
\$5 per person or Fast Pass**

Appetizers and drinks will be available

RSVP Here or call 785.827.9301
or email dsmith@salinakansas.org

**Giveaways
\$250 Attendance Drawing from the Chamber of Commerce**