



emerging



existing

**KANSAS**  
2019 SMALL  
**BUSINESS**  
**AWARDS**

exporting



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# CONTACT

Learn more about our program and read more about our clients' inspirational success stories.

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Cover photos  
(top row, left to right) Cara Bolling  
Thomas, Bolling's Meat Market in  
Iola; Ralph Diaz, The Winged Lion in  
Manhattan; (bottom row, left to right) Lisa  
Ragan, Safely Delicious in Overland Park;  
Kristi Schmitt, Gravity Wellness in Garden  
City

Featured above: The family of Norsemen  
Brewing Company in Topeka. Read their  
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2019 ESU Existing Business

Automotive and body repair  
Emporia

Owners: John and Ruth Wheeler

SBDC Advisor:  
Lisa Brumbaugh, ESU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Roger Marshall

Representative Mark Schreiber  
Senator Jeff Longbine

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## **Ellen Plumb's City Bookstore**

2019 ESU Emerging Business

Retail bookstore  
Emporia

Owner: Marcia Lawrence

SBDC Advisor:  
Lisa Brumbaugh, ESU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Roger Marshall

Representative Mark Schreiber  
Senator Jeff Longbine

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## **LaCrosse Furniture Co.**

2019 FHSU Existing Business

Upholstered household furniture manufacturer  
LaCrosse

Employee owned

SBDC Advisors:  
Mariel Huasanga, FHSU  
Rick Feltenberger, FHSU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Roger Marshall

Representative Leonard Mastroni  
Senator Mary Jo Taylor

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## **Lost Creek German Shepherds**

2019 FHSU Emerging Business

Dog breeder  
Clayton

Owners: Taylor and John Meitl

SBDC Advisors:  
Mariel Huasanga, FHSU  
Rick Feltenberger, FHSU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Roger Marshall

Representative Ken Rahjes  
Senator Richard Billinger



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Foodservice and  
catering  
Kansas City

Owner: Ron Tilman

SBDC Advisor:  
Jack Harwell,  
JCCC

Legislators:  
Senator Pat  
Roberts  
Senator Jerry  
Moran  
Congresswoman  
Sharice Davids

Representative Tom  
Burroughs  
Senator Pat Pettey

## 15 **Safely Delicious** 2019 JCCC Emerging Business

Food manufacturer  
Overland Park

Owner: Lisa Ragan

SBDC Advisor:  
Jack Harwell,  
JCCC

Legislators:  
Senator Pat  
Roberts  
Senator Jerry  
Moran  
Congresswoman  
Sharice Davids

Representative  
Patty Markley  
Senator Jim  
Denning

## 16 **Good Energy Solutions** 2019 KU Existing Business

Solar and electrical  
energy solutions  
Lawrence

Owner: Kevin  
Good

SBDC Advisor:  
Will Katz, KU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat  
Roberts  
Senator Jerry  
Moran  
Congressman  
Steve Watkins

Representative  
Dennis Highberger  
Senator Marci  
Francisco

## 17 **Leeway Franks** 2019 KU Emerging Business

Meat market and  
deli  
Lawrence

Owners: Lee and K  
Meisel

SBDC Advisors:  
Will Katz, KU  
Brian Dennis, KU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat  
Roberts  
Senator Jerry  
Moran  
Congressman  
Steve Watkins

Representative  
Dennis Highberger  
Senator Marci  
Francisco

## 18 **Bolling's Meat Market & Deli** 2019 PSU Existing Business

Meat market and  
deli  
Iola

Owner: Cara  
Bolling Thomas

SBDC Advisors:  
Tom Byler, PSU  
Dacia Clark, PSU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat  
Roberts  
Senator Jerry  
Moran  
Congressman  
Steve Watkins

Representative  
Kent Thompson  
Senator Caryn  
Tyson

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**ArtForms Gallery**  
2019 PSU  
Emerging Business

Art gallery  
Pittsburg

Owners: Sue Horner, Janet Lewis, Ruth Miller and Sylvia Shirley

SBDC Advisors:  
Tom Byler, PSU  
Mindy Lee, PSU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Steve Watkins

Representative Monica Murnan  
Senator Richard Hilderbrand

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**Angela's Wellness Center, LLC**  
2019 SCCC  
Existing Business

Health, beauty, and fitness center  
Elkhart

Owner: Angela Willey

SBDC Advisor:  
Mike O'Kane, SCCC

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Roger Marshall

Representative Stephen Alford  
Senator John Doll

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**Gravity Wellness Center**  
2019 SCCC  
Emerging Business

Medical spa and wellness center  
Garden City

Owner: Kristi Schmitt

SBDC Advisor:  
Mike O'Kane, SCCC

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Roger Marshall

Representative John Wheeler  
Senator John Doll

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**Dod Installations**  
2019 WSU  
Existing Business

Fireplace and hearth business  
Wichita

Owners: Wilt and Tina Dod

SBDC Advisor:  
Frank Choriego, WSU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Ron Estes

Representative Tom Sawyer  
Senator Mary Ware

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**Triple Threat Ag Services**  
2019 WSU  
Emerging Business

Custom ag product application and soil service  
Conway Springs

Owners: Aaron, Allen, Paul and Phillip Lange

SBDC Advisors:  
Elaine Hanna, WSU  
Frank Choriego, WSU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Ron Estes

Representative Kyle Hoffman  
Senator Larry Alley

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## **The Winged Lion**

2019 WU Existing Business

Home décor and lifestyle store  
Manhattan

Owner: Ralph Diaz

SBDC Advisor:  
Laurie Pieper, WU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Roger Marshall

Representative  
Sydney Carlin  
Senator Tom Hawk



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## **Norsemen Brewing Company**

2019 WU Emerging Business

Beer manufacturing, taproom, and events venue  
Topeka

Owners: Jared and Emily Rudy, Adam and Melissa Rosdahl

SBDC Advisor:  
Karl Klein, WU

Legislators:  
Senator Pat Roberts  
Senator Jerry Moran  
Congressman Steve Watkins

Representative  
Ronald Ellis  
Senator Anthony Hensley

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## **About Us**

We are small business advisors focused on helping Kansas businesses.

The Kansas SBDC is a statewide small business (typically less than 500 employees) advising, consulting, and training service funded by federal, state, and local partners.

Funding through tax dollars allows the Kansas SBDC to provide advising and training (i.e., cash flow, marketing, and market data) to businesses across the state at low or no cost.

The SBDC is part of a larger national association committed to helping small businesses reach their development, improvement, and transition goals.

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## **Services**

No-cost advising, fee-based consulting, and low-cost and no-cost training are provided in a variety of areas. Core and specialty services include:

Marketing  
Business Planning  
Financial Analysis

International Trade  
Strategic Planning  
Financial Projections  
Market Research  
Startup Processes  
Legal Structure  
Technology Commercialization  
Exit, Transition, and Succession Planning  
Business Valuation  
Cyber Security

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## **Impact in 2017**

258 new businesses started  
3,019 jobs created or retained  
\$75.2m new sales generated by clients  
\$110.9m in new capital raised by clients

Every \$1.00 invested in the Kansas SBDC network generated \$23.20 in new taxes at the federal and state levels.

# FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR



**Greg Panichello**  
**Kansas SBDC State Director**

Our small business clients' stories tell our story best.

Every year we choose two or three clients from each of our service regions that exemplify small business success. Our objective is to honor them at the Kansas SBDC Existing, Emerging, and Exporting (aka E3) Small Business Awards ceremony. Our goal is to highlight both the impact of small business in our Kansas communities and the impact of our work with these same businesses.

This program includes summaries of their stories along with information about the Kansas Small Business Development Center (Kansas SBDC). We hope you find it useful.

## About Us

Since 1983, we've helped tens of thousands of businesses just like the ones featured in this program with a variety of services: access to capital, business plan development, and financial analysis, including cash flow projection and evaluation. We provide service through effective one-on-one advising at no cost to the business as well as low-cost high-impact training, fee-based consulting, and responses to vital requests for resources and information.

We encourage you to learn more about the SBDC by reading 'About Us' on page 27 or the FAQs included in the back of this program.

## Impact and Accountability

Throughout the year we measure the

impact our services have on our clients as well as on the regional, state, and national economy.

In 2017 (the most recent year surveyed) we helped more than 2,000 small business owners, decision makers, entrepreneurs, and aspiring businesses reach their goals. Reaching their goals translates into more jobs, more sales, and more capital for their businesses. To learn how this impacts you as a Kansas resident, read 'Impact' on page 29.

## Services

Following our guidance through strategic planning, market evaluation, and more, our clients have reported a significant impact on their businesses in the form of profitable business expansion and increased sales, as well as job expansion and retention -- outcomes that show in their stories.

This year you can learn more about the services our clients use by visiting our website [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net). Just type in the service (i.e., market research), in the search box on our website to connect with success stories and resources.

Some of the key areas where we consistently help our clients are marketing, business planning, and financial analysis. In addition to advising, we refer and connect businesses to the resources they need to succeed. Our clients include business service providers, retailers, and others in business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) entities.

I've provided some information on these core services in the next few paragraphs, but encourage you to look at page 28 or online at [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net) to learn about the specialized services we have developed over the last few years.

## Marketing

We can offer help to business decision makers who have questions about social media, websites, and advertising. Our goal

is to help our clients support their sales with effective marketing.

When clients want their marketing to look professional and deliver results at a reasonable cost, they can call on our team.

Our SBDC team will listen and help businesses refine their marketing. If what they need is more hands-on help, we'll get business owners in touch with trusted marketing resources, including other small businesses, that can help.

## Business Planning

Did you know that companies that have a written business plan are four times more likely to succeed?

Individuals in business or thinking of going into business who have been told to develop a business plan can come to us for help.

Business owners and entrepreneurs want to take their ideas and turn them into reality. They often need help finding funds as well as a plan of action they can share with investors and partners. Our team at the SBDC listens, helps them clarify the plan, and connects small business owners with the people that can help them move their ideas forward.

## Financial Analysis

While people often assume we just work with those interested in getting into business, we actually work often with business owners that are preparing financial projections for loans as well as business owners that are trying to improve their business performance.

We help with business financial checkups, benchmarking, identifying funding, as well as managing profitability.

Well, that's a little about us. Now let's take a look at what really makes a difference . . . our Kansas small businesses.



# PARTNERS

Partners provide the funding and substantial resources that make it possible for the Kansas SBDC to provide no- and low-cost services to small businesses across the state of Kansas.

We'd like to thank our partners listed on this page as well as many other businesses and organizations that sponsor training programs and provide resources at no cost to our clients.

## **Training sponsors and resource providers in 2018 included:**

Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball  
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BizBuySell  
Booz Allen Hamilton  
Central National Bank  
Commerce Bank  
Core Bank  
Country Financial  
CrossFirst Bank Wichita  
Ennovar  
First Business Bank  
First National Bank  
FranNet  
Friends University  
Greater Wichita Partnership  
Kansas Air National Guard  
Kansas Department of Agriculture  
Kansas Department of Commerce  
Kansas Department of Labor  
Kansas Department of Revenue  
Kansas PTAC  
Kaw Valley State Bank  
Keller Leopold Insurance  
K-State School of Business  
Kyle Danner Family Business Advisor  
Lyon County State Bank  
Meritrust Credit Union  
Payne & Jones Chartered  
Salina Chamber of Commerce  
Salina Economic Development Organization

Small Business Bank  
Sunflower Bank  
Wichita State University  
Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas  
TriCorps Security  
UBS  
USDA  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
Westar Energy

## **Kansas SBDC Advisory Board**

Statewide Members:  
Linda Adams – Cherry Pickers, Inc.  
Karin Brownlee - Consultant  
Patty Clark – Kansas Leadership Center  
Tony Dellasega – Community National Bank  
Tom Holland – Holland Technologies  
Wayne Bell – U.S. Small Business Administration

Technology Commercialization:  
Gary Stecklein – Inventors Association of South Central Kansas

Cyber Security:  
Kyle Johnson - Bixy  
Jonathan Lanning – Friends University  
Daniel Eliot – National Cyber Security Alliance

## **Federal**

U.S. Small Business Administration

## **State**

Kansas Department of Commerce

## **Host**

Emporia State University  
Fort Hays State University  
Johnson County Community College  
Pittsburg State University  
Seward County Community College  
University of Kansas  
Washburn University  
Wichita State University

## **Local**

City of Lawrence  
City of Liberal  
Colby Community College  
Dane G. Hansen Foundation  
Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation  
Douglas County  
Glacial Hills RC&D  
GrowHays  
Junction City Chamber of Commerce  
Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce  
Neosho County Community College  
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce  
Peoples State Bank  
Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corp.  
Thomas County Economic Development Alliance  
Seward County



# Floyd's Inc.

## 2019 ESU Existing Business

John Wheeler had worked as an auto-body man and mechanic for more than 25 years at Floyd's Inc. when his boss and Floyd's owner, Floyd McCracken, decided to hang up his wrenches in 2005. So, to John and his wife, Ruth, it only seemed natural to buy the business and keep the local landmark open and operating at 1221 Industrial Road in Emporia, Kansas.

When you work for yourself, it takes hard work, dedication, and sometimes burning the midnight oil to keep a small business going. For John and Ruth, working 16-hour days was their new normal. As new business owners, they were committed to doing what they needed to do to keep the doors open—even if it meant working their fingers to the bone 90+ hours in a given week.

In August of 2006, almost a year after they purchased the business, John and Ruth were introduced to Lisa Brumbaugh, regional director and business advisor at the Kansas SBDC at ESU, by John's mother, Evora Wheeler. Evora knew the business community well and knew that Lisa would be a good resource for John and Ruth. Lisa shared the story of how they met: "I was at the Lyon County Fair working in the ABWA food tent, grilling hotdogs in 110-degree heat (and that is before you add the heat off of the grill), when all of a sudden I look up to see Evora with John and Ruth, whom I had never met before. Evora wanted to introduce them to me so we could set a time to get together. I stopped long enough to meet them, got their contact info, and followed up in the next day or so to set our first appointment."

Brumbaugh worked with the Wheelers over the next several weeks reviewing Floyd's financials and talking through many aspects of restructuring. These conversations weren't uncommon for Brumbaugh. Most businesses that transition to new ownership require a certain degree of restructuring, which often includes a new look at the financial strategy of the business.

Just as they would have accomplished the body and mechanical work on a classic

car, the Wheelers worked on the business over time. Many pieces needed to come together to keep things running. And some pieces were easier to work on than others. They put in a lot of hours.

Ask any small business owner and they'll tell you that putting in the hours is worth it—until it isn't, and it really starts to wear on you.

John and Ruth didn't want to get to the point in their business where they were too run down to take good care of their customers. Floyd's has a very good reputation—one of the reasons why the Wheelers purchased the business. They genuinely care about the quality of their work, and customers will tell you they are very good at what they do.

For 10 years the Wheelers had kept the car on the road. But in early 2017 it was time to make a significant change. It was time for an overhaul of the business.

When the Wheelers had purchased the business in 2005, revenue was good, but there was less-than-optimal debt structuring in place. The couple had been working nights for years to make more money for the shop and were trying to pay the high-interest debt in addition to the original debt. They were exhausted. "We were drowning in working-capital debt," shared Ruth. Refinancing would be necessary.

To get where they needed to go, the Wheelers began working with the Lyon County State Bank. Their banker, Russ Bonitatibus, suggested they work again with Lisa Brumbaugh. For the Wheelers it was a good thing. "Lisa had all of the documents necessary, including a business-plan outline and guidelines and the profit-and-loss and cash-flow-projections forms," said Ruth. "She asked lots of questions, counseled us on the forms, and looked over our financials. She was able to locate a couple of business practices that were causing our financials to be out of whack. Working with Lisa and our accountant, we were able to clean

up the errors. The result was accurate financials that reflected positively on our gross margin and the overall profitability of our business. The bank was able to lend us the money necessary to pay off the working-capital debt, refinance our property, and have manageable monthly payments."



How is the business today?

Fifty years from the day that Floyd McCracken opened the doors, Floyd's lives on. "We are still open, supporting our employees, and serving the automotive needs of our community and the surrounding areas," shared Ruth. "We believe that without Lisa and the SBDC we would not be in business today. The SBDC's involvement provided Lyon County State Bank with options to help us be where we are in 2018."

The Kansas SBDC celebrates the small businesses like Floyd's that have the grit and tenacity to do the hard work it takes to build a successful business in Kansas. You have our utmost respect.

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Lisa Brumbaugh, ESU*

# Ellen Plumb's City Bookstore

## 2019 ESU Emerging Business

In 2015, Marcia Lawrence was actively planning her retirement.

Marcia had moved back to Emporia, Kansas, two years prior, in 2013. She had purchased a home in the same town as her alma mater—Emporia State University—and was eagerly contemplating traveling, writing, and volunteering after her retirement.

But in October of 2015 everything changed. Emporia's only independent bookstore abruptly shut its doors.

Marcia was at a loss.

For Marcia, one of the key deciding factors in favor of retiring in Emporia was its bookstore. As an author and avid reader, Marcia considered a locally owned bookstore to be a crucial element of her ideal "forever home." She'd already made the commitment to live in the heart of Lyon County. She'd purchased her home and didn't want to think about pulling up stakes and moving elsewhere. She had always liked Emporia and was impressed with the bustling small business environment. Why leave?

But, could she live in a town without a bookstore?

Owning a business was not part of Marcia's life plan. If she was going to take the leap, she needed someone to help her talk it through. That someone was Lisa Brumbaugh, regional director and business advisor with the Kansas SBDC at ESU.

Lawrence had previously met Brumbaugh when both were volunteering at Symphony in the Flint Hills—an annual prairie concert that attracts thousands of visitors to the Flint Hills of Kansas. She knew that Brumbaugh worked with small businesses and felt confident that Brumbaugh could help her think through the questions and considerations of

starting a bookstore business.

After engaging Lisa at the SBDC, Marcia worked with her on a weekly basis for months. "Lisa provided the framework and resources for creating an extensive business plan for the new venture. Lisa was instrumental in putting me on the right track for creating a marketing analysis and financial projections to determine if Emporia could even actually support a bookstore," shared Marcia.

included strong support and promotion of local authors. During those first weeks, the only books on the shelves were titles from local authors. When the large initial orders from national distributors finally arrived, weeks later, Marcia made it a point to keep those local and regional titles front and center. Ellen Plumb's continues today to give preference to local authors whenever possible.

Ellen Plumb's has evolved into an



"Additionally, she helped me explore various types of business models, including a cooperative and LLC. Lisa also brought Jim Stephens, SBDC business advisor, into the planning process. Jim brought valuable marketing insights that helped shape the long-term planning for the bookshop."

Less than a year after their first conversation, Marcia quit her job and invested all of her savings into opening a full-service independent bookshop. Ellen Plumb's City Bookstore, named after the founder and owner of Emporia's very first independent bookstore, opened on September 6, 2016.

A big part of the bookshop's business plan

experience beyond a bookstore. Open mic events, Kansas Day Author Showcase, Banned Books Week, and other unique events keep the bookstore busy at all hours. In addition to drawing business to downtown Emporia, the bookstore promotes other small businesses in and around Emporia. Plumb's has partnered with local Sweet Granada, a gourmet chocolate shop, to create Ellen Plumb's Signature Truffle—available exclusively at the bookshop. Coffees from Gravel City Roasters and Granada Coffee Company are regularly featured at 1122 Commercial Street. For Marcia, it's giving back to part of the small business community that drew her to Emporia in the first place.

More than two years into business, Ellen Plumb's is ready to add another unique





chapter to its story.

Part of the long-range plan for Ellen Plumb's City Bookstore was to acquire an Espresso Book Machine, which can print and bind a perfect-bound paperback book in five minutes. Currently there are fewer than 100 of these machines worldwide. Marcia decided she would acquire the machine to further her vision of "Preserving Information; Sharing Knowledge."

Marcia credits Lisa with providing the resources to help make this dream a soon-to-be-actualized reality. Lisa introduced Greg Yotz, general manager of operations at VekTek, into the conversation early in the bookstore's startup phase. VekTek is an Emporia-based international supplier of hydraulic and pneumatic clamping systems. Over the past two years, Greg has provided technical and troubleshooting advice and expertise.

An almost complete Espresso Book Machine, purchased used from Cornell

University, is nearly ready for use at Ellen Plumb's. To fund the project, Lisa encouraged Ellen Plumb's City Bookstore to apply for the state of Kansas Jumpstart grant. It was the proceeds from winning that grant in 2017 that propelled the bookshop forward and made it possible to purchase the machine, hire a full-time employee, and create opportunities for several freelance writers, editors, and graphic designers in the area.

As Ellen Plumb's City Bookstore moves confidently into its third year of operation, Marcia reflects that she could never have made the leap from soon-to-be retiree to small business owner without the valuable and caring help from the SBDC and the continuing support from Lisa Brumbaugh. Marcia still consults regularly with Lisa as she moves forward with plans for the next many years and many chapters of Ellen Plumb's story as it unfolds in the Emporia community and beyond.

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Lisa Brumbaugh, ESU*

# LaCrosse Furniture

## 2019 FHSU Existing Business

For years “Made in the USA” has meant something good. For LaCrosse Furniture Co. it means “something better.”

Since 1972 LaCrosse Furniture Co. has operated in rural LaCrosse, Kansas—the county seat of Rush County. LaCrosse manufactures custom living room furniture, including sofas, sofa sleepers, loveseats, chairs, and ottomans. The business operates as a wholesaler selling products through authorized furniture stores across the United States.

Over the past few years, the team at LaCrosse began experiencing a decline in sales. Was it a result of product pricing, changing economic conditions, ineffective marketing, change in shopping preference (brick and mortar stores vs. e-commerce sites), or some other unknown?

It was incredibly important to act quickly and turn sales around for the sake of the business and its employee owners.

In March of 2018 the group at LaCrosse Furniture reached out to the Kansas SBDC at FHSU and engaged then-SBDC business advisor Mariel Huasanga and Rick Feltenberger, regional director and advisor, to help identify what was happening at the business and how to boost sales.

LaCrosse Furniture was impressed with the SBDC approach. “Rick and Mariel not only came to speak with management members in person but also toured our facility to get a better understanding of our business,” shared Tiane Seltmann, VP of finance/secretary/treasurer of LaCrosse Furniture Co. “They provided recommendations on how to address our concerns and put us in contact with people to assist us in creating our marketing plan.”

As an employee-owned company, LaCrosse was familiar with pulling together teams to solve challenges. They knew the value that many minds could bring to a solution. So it seemed only natural, and even refreshing, when the SBDC team suggested that they involve Fort Hays State University, their faculty, and students in the engagement.

The SBDC called on FHSU’s marketing faculty as well as an SBDC student



employee to participate. Dr. Mary Martin, professor of marketing in the Department of Applied Business Studies; Dr. Mike Martin, associate professor of marketing; and Beiqi Chen, graduate teaching assistant for the Kansas SBDC at Fort Hays State University, joined the group. Dr. Mary Martin is the President’s Distinguished Scholar for 2018. Dr. Mike Martin teaches courses in customer service and relationship management, business-to-business marketing, strategic selling, and sales management. Ms. Chen supervises the Secondary Market Research Department for the Kansas SBDC at FHSU.

What have they discovered?

“After meeting with Rick and Mariel, we determined we need to focus on

brand recognition,” shared Brian Sass, co-president of LaCrosse Furniture Co. “We are developing a marketing strategy, including a series of informational videos. We are having market research conducted to get a better understanding of the furniture buyers and consumers, including their motivations, desired product attributes and criteria, preferred price points, and preferred methods of and sources of information and purchase.”

Specifically, the team agreed upon an approach to first develop two initial marketing videos and conduct focus-group analysis to determine buying preferences for baby boomer and millennial customer segments.

The development of the two videos provides LaCrosse Furniture Co. with a professional

marketing tool. LaCrosse plans to make the videos available on their website, Facebook page, and YouTube channel. The videos have also become a valuable tool for their network of retailers, mostly small independent stores. Based on the results of the market research and focus groups, LaCrosse will have an additional mechanism for determining if adjustments are needed to their product line, pricing, or distribution channels.

Thank you to the owners at LaCrosse Furniture for trusting the SBDC and our host, Fort Hays State University, to assist your business. We have no doubt that this process will help you achieve your goals.

*Kansas SBDC Advisors  
Mariel Huasanga, FHSU  
Rick Feltenberger, FHSU*



# Lost Creek German Shepherds

## 2019 FHSU Emerging Business

Taylor Meitl lives on a small remote ranch in northwest Kansas with her husband, John, their daughter, Bracelynn, and their newborn son, Lane. They fell in love with the German Shepherd breed after purchasing their first one several years ago. Soon after, they became fascinated with the workability and intelligence of the breed and decided to turn their passion into a business.

After years of extensive research on health testing, temperament testing, and their pedigree, Taylor decided she was ready to launch her business. Encouraged by a friend of hers, Taylor came to the Kansas SBDC at FHSU seeking assistance in developing a business plan and obtaining funding.

The Kansas SBDC provided initial startup information on how to start and maintain a dog-breeding business and assisted in identifying her capital needs and the funding programs that were available to fulfill them. Assisted by her Kansas SBDC advisors, Mariel Huasanga, Taylor presented a complete business plan and 3-year financial projections for Lost Creek German Shepherds to Solutions North Bank and the Norton County Economic Development as part of her e-community loan application. Soon after, Taylor was approved for the loan and immediately started the construction of her new dog facility.

Later on, Taylor turned to her advisors to assist her in developing her business website. Her Kansas SBDC advisors assisted in developing the structure and design of the website based on Taylor's specifications and the content that she provided. Lost Creek successfully launched their website. The site is currently Lost Creek's main marketing tool, along with their Facebook page.

According to her Kansas SBDC advisors, "Taylor displays a perfect combination of passion and knowledge of her business, which will guarantee her success. Her dogs are family members and are treated as such. She spares no expense to make sure the parents and puppies are comfortable and in excellent health condition." All Taylor's dogs are registered in the Pedigree Database and with the



American Kennel Club; have passed a DNA test; are cleared from MDR1, Hyperuricosuria, and Degenerative Myelopathy; and are certified by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals to make sure they won't develop hip/elbow dysplasia.

All Lost Creek German Shepherds puppies are socialized and taught basic obedience commands before leaving for their new homes. Additionally, the pups are health tested, microchipped, vaccinated, and dewormed and are provided with a puppy-go-home pack. Taylor also encourages the new owners to register their puppies with the American Kennel Club to receive free 30-day insurance on their puppies and a free first vet visit.

Currently, Taylor owns seven German Shepherds (two males and five females), three of them being direct European imports. Lost Creek has completed the final renovations on their facility and has become a USDA licensed commercial dog dealer. Lost Creek is as of the time of this article currently producing litters.

Taylor is also committed to generating a positive impact on her community. They are planning to actively participate in search-and-rescue teams to help people who are in distress or imminent danger. Additionally, the business provides discounts to law enforcement officers and veterans. In December of 2018, one of the Lost Creek pups will be joining the Kansas City Fire Department as a search-and-rescue dog.

*Kansas SBDC Advisors  
Mariel Huasanga, FHSU  
Rick Feltenberger, FHSU*

# Wolcott Foods

## 2019 JCCC Existing Business

Ron Tilman believes everyone should be able to eat homemade, fresh meals in their homes on any given day. Most of us take that for granted, but there are many among us who don't have the ability to prepare our own meals. Each week, Wolcott Foods delivers fresh and fully prepared meals to customers who don't have other options. While other companies meet the Medicaid-mandated nutritional requirements with processed foods such as applesauce, Wolcott Foods fills this need with fresh fruits and vegetables. They are always introducing new recipes to provide a variety of nutritional meal options.

When Ron first reached out for assistance from the Kansas SBDC at JCCC, his business operated out of a small, 600-square-foot kitchen adjacent to his home on the farm. There was little room to move around with the kitchen equipment taking up most of the available space. He needed to build a bigger kitchen if he wanted to grow the business, but Ron didn't have a lot of experience with financial planning and financing. With the help of his SBDC business advisor, Jack Harwell, Ron was able to project the financials of his business with the added debt and lease payments. This enabled him to determine that expansion could be done profitably. He secured a loan for additional equipment and moved into a well-equipped, 3,000-square-foot commercial kitchen.

Now that they have the extra breathing room, the Wolcott Foods employees are much happier and more productive. Ron has wasted no time in planning how he can utilize the added capacity to expand his business. He immediately started developing a marketing strategy and hiring someone to execute his social media marketing campaign. He has hired a full-time chef and dietitian and has developed a line of heart-healthy and diabetic menus to leverage his current footprint and expand beyond the Medicaid market. He is also planning



geographic expansion as a way of continuing to build his business.

Ron has taken advantage of other programs that the Kansas SBDC offers, including the GAME series and other training programs targeting small businesses. He is a strategic thinker, always thinking ahead and identifying how to get to the next level. He has brought his son, Ronnie, into the business as General Manager to manage the day-to-day operations and complement the management team.

"A great deal of the credit for our successes goes to the Kansas SBDC," Ron says, but it takes a vision and hard work to create the kind of success that Wolcott Foods has seen.

Secret to Success: "It's easy to provide quality products and services when you treat your employees and clients like family."

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Jack Harwell, JCCC*

# Safely Delicious

## 2019 JCCC Emerging Business

It's hard to find anyone more passionate about their business than Lisa Ragan. Lisa has channeled that passion into her emerging allergy-“friendly” snack-food business. She has made it her mission to produce snacks that look and taste like other snacks. Parents of kids with food allergies can have peace of mind, knowing that these snacks are free of the top eleven food allergens, and their kids can more comfortably feel included in social settings.

This drive enabled her to bootstrap her business and distribute her snacks to three major grocery chains and multiple specialty retailers and online outlets, as well as local businesses that want their

can occur, at the same time developing packaging and marketing assets that rival any other snack food company, large or small. She has quit her job to work full time on the business, a leap of faith that demonstrates her commitment to her mission.

When Lisa first sought assistance from the Kansas SBDC at JCCC, she needed help with product pricing, financial projections, understanding the requirements for a commercial kitchen, and online marketing. Her advisor, Jack Harwell, dove right in and helped her structure a costing and pricing method that she has refined over time. According to Lisa, “I do not have a business background so having someone there to direct questions to has been great.” She and Jack have continued to meet regularly to develop her marketing and distribution strategies.

and direct to businesses. Based on the number of companies contacting her about carrying her products, Lisa is just getting started.

Several times Lisa has shared her experiences with students of the SBDC's Business Basics in a Day class, inspiring future business owners to pursue their passions and serving as an example of how hard work and determination are necessary ingredients in building a small business. Everyone loves to see Lisa coming because she is always quick to share her latest tasty creations.

Secret to Success: “The secret to my success is passion and faith. I can't have one without the other.”

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Jack Harwell, JCCC*



customers to have an alternative snack while waiting for service. Lisa has built her own commercial kitchen to ensure that absolutely no cross-contamination

When you hear Lisa talking about her business, you walk away with the impression that she will be successful. She has already shown signs of this by getting her products placed in more than 100 retail locations in 10 states plus Bermuda, as well as in eight online stores. She also sells her products on her website



# Good Energy Solutions

## 2019 KU Existing Business

Kevin Good had a business idea. He wanted to build a home-energy-solutions company that not only installed solar but also educated consumers on energy solutions—focusing on which solutions would benefit customers most.

As an engineer, Kevin had run across numerous consumers who had purchased wind towers and solar photovoltaic systems that weren't generating the amount of energy promised by alternative-energy companies and their sales representatives. Many alternative-energy companies were making exaggerated performance claims simply to sell a system. That didn't sit well with Good so he decided to change the market and start his own business.

In 2007 he founded Good Energy Solutions, Inc., in Lawrence, Kansas.

Good knew the engineering side of the business but wanted to learn how to set up general accounting practices. He wanted to learn how to benchmark similar businesses so he could understand the business financially. "General business skills and strategies are not taught in engineering school," shared Kevin.

So he reached out to Will Katz, regional director and business advisor at the Kansas SBDC at KU. He'd worked with Katz previously on another business venture and was comfortable working with Katz. For Good, learning business "was like learning an entirely new language." After working with Katz, the business processes became clear. "Will taught me much of how to decipher P/L statements, so now I can look at them and tweak the business accordingly," said Good.

Since their first meeting Katz and Good have remained in touch. Good Energy



Solutions has grown by leaps and bounds. When Good needs a business check-in, Kevin and Will work on growth issues—sales, product decisions, management, and more.

Good Energy Solutions has earned a solid reputation over the past 11 years. It's known for expert reliable service, long workmanship warranties, and quality through commercial and residential installations that focus on renewable-energy efficiency measures and electrical services.

Congratulations to Good Energy Solutions, Inc., on your amazing accomplishments. You're a fine example of exceptional small business success and growth.

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Will Katz, KU*





# Leeway Franks

## 2019 KU Emerging Business

Three years after Lee and K Meisel opened Leeway Franks they will expand their popular lunch and dinner spot at their current location at 935 Iowa Street in Lawrence, Kansas.

Since its opening in 2015, Leeway Franks has become a popular eatery serving handmade sausages and ground beef sandwiches. The menu varies from traditional frankfurters, bratwurst, patty melts, and burgers to more unique options, including “choppy tots” and goat kebab. Leeway Butcher is opening December of 2018. The extra space will give Lee and K room to expand their business model from retail to include wholesale and will enable the business to further develop the brand, selling sausages to area restaurants and chefs.

Starting out.

Before Leeway Franks opened its doors in 2015, Lee Meisel contacted the Kansas SBDC at KU to provide a second set of eyes for his business plan. Lee and K had already pulled together the plan and financials for their sausage and snack bar business. They worked with Brian Dennis, SBDC business advisor, to tailor the plan for lender conversations. Brian provided market research, including traffic studies and population-density reports, to support the marketing section of the plan. For financing options, he provided them with a list of SBA-approved lenders to discuss financing. Lee and K secured full funding, allowing them to move forward with the project.



How was the Meisels' experience with the SBDC?

“The local SBDC team was supportive of our project and championed the idea,” shared Lee. “When first starting out, it’s imperative to know that you have an advisory team available to you.”



At the SBDC we are happy to play a role in assisting businesses behind the scenes with support, connections, and advising. We look forward to savoring more poutine, choppy tots, and goat kebab from Leeway Franks and Leeway Butcher in Lawrence, Kansas.

*Kansas SBDC Advisors  
Will Katz, KU  
Brian Dennis, KU*

# Bolling's Meat Market & Deli

## 2019 PSU Existing Business

Startup. Expand. Challenge. Move. Grow.

It's 2018 and Bolling's Meat Market & Deli in Iola, Kansas, is expanding once again.

Eight years ago, when Cara Bolling Thomas purchased the current building at 201 South State Street, she and her business partners had no idea the business would grow to a full-scale restaurant, nor how quickly it would grow.

In 2014 Cara purchased a building across the street from the meat market and deli. It was originally Miller's—a sewing factory that had been converted to a restaurant in the 1990s. Cara had been running it as an event venue for the last few years.

"I was being spread too thin with two businesses and running back and forth across the highway," shared Cara. "Our meat market was growing exponentially. We had too little parking, too little seating, too little storage, and we could hardly process all our meat in our tiny meat room. Converting the Miller's Factory seemed like the best of both worlds—unlimited parking, triple the floor space, and a kitchen that was ready to go. The upstairs of the two-story building was also raw; it could be converted to the wedding venue if I ever had a change of heart."

With the move planned for 2019, Bolling's Meat Market & Deli will soon offer expanded hours, three meals a day, and a sit-down-style dining experience. The meat market will offer curbside pickup, additional product, and grocery items, and feature a new meat case—the cornerstone of the business.

With this expansion, you might think Cara would be slowing down soon. But, she's not. "I am looking at a second location within five years, so I've been working with Kansas SBDC to hire a feasibility-study professional. In the future, I plan on using Kansas SBDC for financial planning and strategy to make that happen. Since I am a legacy owner, I also am seeking services to protect myself in a transitional role."

Cara has used the Kansas SBDC at PSU since opening Bolling's in 2010.



In 2010, Cara decided that she would lead the expansion of the family business, Moran Locker, into the Iola market. Together with her parents, Mitch and Sharon Bolling, Cara purchased the vacant building at 201 South State in Iola. She would be the fourth generation of Bollings to continue the family business.

This was a new business model, different from the meat lockers the family had operated since the 1940s in southeast Kansas.

When you expand a business and change the model, you invite new challenges.

The Bolling family's idea for the meat market and deli in Iola was a topic of discussion for several years before it became a reality. Their idea? To open a full-service meat market like something you might have experienced from the past—with a local butcher that knows you by name and where customers can buy every cut carved to their specifications.

To open a retail store, they would need quite a few new resources. They had the location. They had the products from the locker. But what would it take to expand to retail?

Cara began with a few hundred square feet and a cash register. But she soon learned that it was impossible to work without two things—a deep understanding of her customers and an efficient point-of-sale system. With an effective electronic system in place, Bolling could get a better grasp of sales, costs, and profits. A consistent accounting system could also reduce the guesswork around inventory, cost of goods, and

sales tax.

Following up on a recommendation from another small business, she contacted the Kansas SBDC at PSU and began working with SBDC business advisor Tom Byler.

To help them achieve their goals, Byler researched several point-of-sale (POS) systems and provided his report to the

client for comparison. To nail down the market potential, Byler used Kansas SBDC market research tools and provided data that Bolling's could use to identify their market, including what their market looked like, who their potential customers were, and how they could better market to their base.

Because of Kansas SBDC assistance, the Bollings purchased a POS system, implemented accountability in their paperwork, re-worked their marketing strategy, and re-priced their product accordingly.

The business still operates more efficiently today. They have a firmer grasp on cash flow and profitability, and they have a plan in place to continue moving forward with their business goals as evidenced by their planned expansion.

The future is bright for Bolling's. In addition to the planned expansion, the business will be rolling out a new logo and branding materials.

We know that Cara's attitude, determination, persistence, and work ethic will keep the business going and growing. "I work every day at improving our product and our customer service. I talk and listen to our customers and find out the reasons they spend money with me, and how I can make sure that they continue," says Cara. "I know our product. I know our customers. And I know the work it takes to keep it that way."

Her advice to someone thinking about starting a business is to "know who your potential customers are, how to attain them, and how to keep them. Realize the people who work for you are a direct reflection on you, the owner. Never employ someone you cannot trust." For



current business owners, Cara would recommend taking time "to stay on top of the ever-changing scene. A business will need to evolve through the years, and the owner should embrace change or the business will not grow."

Thank you, Cara and the Bolling family.

*Kansas SBDC Advisors  
Tom Byler, PSU  
Dacia Clark, PSU*



# ArtForms Gallery

## 2019 PSU Emerging Business

We'd like to open the story of ArtForms Gallery LLC with "Once upon a time . . ." —a beautiful post written by Janet Lewis and originally published April 17, 2016, on <https://www.artforms-gallery.com>. Please enjoy.

*Once upon a time . . .*

*By Janet Lewis*

*The Small Business Development Center at PSU sponsored a seminar entitled "Art as a Business." It was presented by Marc Willson, an operations expert who had counseled over 1200 retailers and developed this particular seminar specifically for artists. He offered advice on everything from business structures to blogs, but his overwhelming recommendation for business success as an artist was to work cooperatively.*

*That was at the end of October 2015, and shortly after, local artists Sylvia Shirley, Sue Horner, Ruth Miller, and I began meeting regularly with the intention of establishing a cooperative gallery in Pittsburg, Kansas. Each of us had experience in operating our own small businesses as working artists, and we were excited about the possibilities of joining forces with other local artists. We established a model based on Willson's advice, as well as our own research into the structure and operations of several existing artist co-ops of varying sizes throughout the country.*

*Then we fell in love with a building. Our passion grew. We held an informational meeting at the Pittsburg Public Library near the end of February 2016. It was well attended, and several of those artists were soon juried in and paid their initial*

*membership fees. Word spread, and other area artists joined the effort.*

After the four artists' initial meeting following the "Art as a Business" seminar, they connected with the local team at the Kansas SBDC at PSU. The SBDC team helped with their business plan and connected the four partners to various resources as they created their business. Tom Byler, SBDC business advisor, shared, "Working on a business plan with one or two people is a challenge, but when that number is four or five, it has the potential for chaos. That did not happen with ArtForms. It was remarkable that such a large group was able to get consensus and stay focused."

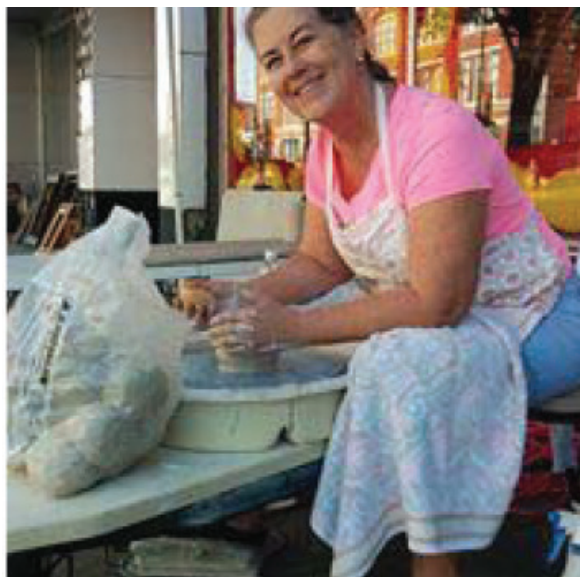
ArtForms Gallery LLC opened its doors at 620 North Broadway during the first Pittsburg Artwalk of the season on Friday, April 22, 2016.



Fast forward to 2018 . . .

ArtForms Gallery LLC continues to successfully operate as a premier artists' cooperative gallery with a steady membership of around twenty participating artists drawing patrons

to downtown Pittsburg, Kansas. The gallery has quality handmade art and fine crafts for sale and offers to the community workshops led by member artists. The business continues to fulfill its purpose: "to provide display areas and sales opportunities for southeast Kansas



artists by giving them the opportunity to share resources and skills within the membership."

Thank you, Janet, Ruth, Sue, and Sylvia, for shining a light on the talent and beauty that surrounds us in southeast Kansas.

*Kansas SBDC Advisors  
Tom Byler, PSU  
Mindy Lee, PSU*



# Angela's Wellness Center, LLC

## 2019 SCCC Existing Business

After Angela Willey opened Angela's Wellness Center in Elkhart, Kansas, in 2013, she didn't take her eyes off the market. Many changes were taking place. "As a massage therapist, I knew that my clients and so many others, could benefit from MORE, so I began researching different types of therapies that were beneficial, cost effective, and a rarity," shared Angela. "I wanted to bring something in that no one else offers to patients who need a service to help aid in their wellness, for a cost that is affordable."

With a ton of research Angela began to fill a large three-ring binder, gathering information on all facets of owning new equipment and offering the newest wellness therapies available. "As my dream grew, I began piecing together a business plan," said Angela. So she reached out to Mike O'Kane, business advisor at the Kansas SBDC at SCCC. Angela and Mike had previously worked together on Angela's original business plan, so it only seemed natural to work together again on a business expansion.

"SBDC advisor Mike O'Kane is very good at taking my random numbers and plugging them into spreadsheets and making the numbers make sense," said Angela. "He is great at seeing what needs to be added or taken away to make a business plan work. I trust him completely!"

Working together with the numbers, Angela was able to successfully secure the funding she needed to grow her business. She has grown from a small

five-room business on Main Street to a large eighteen-room treatment facility. As a result, she has recently moved to her new and noteworthy location—inside the north wing of Morton County Hospital at 445 Hilltop Street in Elkhart. The North Wing underwent a major transformation. Angela and her support team brought in a shabby chic country-style atmosphere



that is breathtaking throughout the entire facility. From sliding barn doors to rustic tin walls to the ceiling hangings, Angela and her supportive team completed this amazing remodel.

Angela's new location has provided some unique opportunities, and the visibility has expanded her customer base to a 200-mile radius around Elkhart. Angela used the extensive research she conducted while working on her business plan and put it to good use. She's added services that truly address wellness, including a personal fitness trainer and the only medical-grade sauna in the

market. As part of her expansion she's bringing in unique wellness solutions. "I'm also bringing in a hyperbaric chamber, cryotherapy, infrared sauna, halotherapy, hydrotherapy, a fuel bar, and finally a targeted cryotherapy called an Elephant," shared Angela. "Each unit targets a specific kind of client, including but not limited to those who suffer from diabetes,

stroke, traumatic brain injury, autism, cancer, muscle damage, and also those who suffer from joint pain, COPD, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, emphysema, arthritis, asthma, and allergies." Within this expansion, Angela embraced the beauty industry as well. Pairing with Paisley Parlor Salon and opening the only barbershop in Elkhart, Angela's Wellness Center is a TRUE full-service health, beauty, and fitness center.

Mike O'Kane had this to share about working with her. "The most rewarding aspect in working with Angela was knowing that she was truly listening to my recommendations. Her kind thanks for my assistance were so appreciated. This collaboration felt like a true partnership between the SBDC and Angela, and there is no greater reward

as an advisor than to watch your client continue to grow and expand successfully while truly impacting the community in which they live."

Well done, Angela. Well done.

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Mike O'Kane, SCCC*

# Gravity Wellness Center

## 2019 SCCC Emerging Business

When Kristi Schmitt wanted to open a wellness center in Garden City, she knew she'd need help with the startup challenges of building a new business. As a certified family nurse practitioner, she knew how important wellness is for health. She just needed help with the business side of her wellness center.

When she was ready to move forward with her idea, Kristi turned first to her local Chamber of Commerce, where she was referred to the Kansas SBDC at SCCC. Kristi used market research provided by the SBDC and worked with the team to ready her plan for financing.

In 2017 Kristi successfully opened Gravity Wellness Center at 1106 Campus Drive in Garden City, Kansas.

What is the status of Gravity Wellness Center today?

With more than 15 employees, Kristi stays busy operating her business. Gravity Wellness Center offers a full range of spa services, including some medical procedures—massage, hair removal, dermal fillers, sclerotherapy, body contouring, facials, and flotation therapy.

We took a few minutes to ask Kristi about her experience with the SBDC.

**SBDC:** What specific challenge(s) prompted you to contact the Kansas SBDC?

**Kristi:** As an entrepreneur, I needed help with the startup challenges of building a new business. I was referred to the SBDC by the Chamber of Commerce.

They helped me to start a business plan and look at financials and gave me the direction I needed to move forward. The financial planning was critical in making informed decisions as to what type of investment I would need to achieve my goals for the business.

**SBDC:** How did your Kansas SBDC advisor or advisor team help you overcome these challenges? What solutions did you and your advisor discover together?

**Kristi:** My advisor was there every step of the way to help put together my business plan. The counseling I received was a big factor in helping me decide what services I should offer. The SBDC advisor was a great resource in helping me to take an in-



depth look into financials and what type of expenses I would incur during startup and beyond. SBDC was knowledgeable about area markets and helped me structure my business accordingly. The advisor's knowledge, experience, and counseling gave me the support I needed to move forward to implement my business plan.

**SBDC:** What specific results/outcomes have you experienced in your business since implementing these solutions? How have these results changed your business?

**Kristi:** The counseling I received from the SBDC directed me in making decisions in every aspect of my business. The plan of action I developed with my SBDC

advisor helped me to have a blueprint to follow, whether it was making financial decisions, employee decisions, or what services I should offer. The SBDC assisted in developing new ideas and strategies to help generate sales and to monitor expenses. Strategic planning and using the financial spreadsheets the SBDC helped me develop, gave me the direction I needed to make sure my decisions were sound and on track with my business plan.

**SBDC:** When assisting you with your business, what did the Kansas SBDC do well?

**Kristi:** The financial spreadsheets were very valuable in helping me to develop strategies for success. The SBDC was a vital resource in helping me to implement ideas and look at all aspects of what I needed for startup. They gave me the support I needed to help build on my ideas and services offered. The SBDC was beneficial in helping me plan and look at everything I could do to maximize my return on investment. Their support was critical in helping me to make realistic and informed decisions based on financial information.

Mike O'Kane was one of the SBDC business advisors on

Kristi's team. "The most rewarding aspect of working with Kristi was seeing her dream of building this business come to fruition," shared Mike. "The beautiful building and interior are the result of Kristi's determination not only to build a beautiful facility in Garden City, but to provide an exquisite center for clientele who seek services in the aesthetics industry. It truly is one of a kind in western Kansas."

Congratulations, Kristi and Gravity Wellness.

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Mike O'Kane, SCCC*

# Dod Installations

## 2019 WSU Existing Business

As business owners, Wilt and Tina Dod have witnessed many changes in the housing market over the past 28 years.

Since they first opened Dod Installations Inc.—their stove and fireplace business in Wichita, Kansas—the market has hit its highs and lows. With that, the demand for their fireplaces and stoves and other hearth products has followed suit.

In 2016, business was going strong at Dod Installations Inc. and had been on a steady growth trend for years, keeping them busy. Then the next year's predictions came out. The 2017 Wichita Housing Forecast, published by the Wichita State University Center for Real Estate, predicted Wichita home sales to rise 5.1% and home prices to increase 3.5% over 2016 numbers. For Wichita, it would be the sixth straight year of growth following the housing bubble and the housing bust.

With bigger growth predictions in front of them, how would they handle an even busier 2017? Could they successfully manage the growth and the many challenges and growing pains that came with it?

They needed some ideas, some help, and some guidance—a sounding board from the outside.

For the Dods, finding help to navigate the approaching year would come from an unlikely source—the Wichita Area Builders Association's luncheon. As longtime members of WABA, they had attended "lunch and learns" for years. At one event Frank Choriego, a business advisor with the Kansas SBDC at WSU, delivered the keynote message. "Frank had a special

way of connecting with the group. We quickly related to him and his unique understanding of business ownership," shared Tina. After his presentation, Wilt asked for Frank's card, and the Dods reached out to Frank for a meeting.

In January of 2017, the Dods began advising at the SBDC with Choriego. "We



were excited to meet with him on a one-on-one basis to discuss our continued business growth and identify solutions and ideas for handling the challenges and opportunities that were associated with our business growth," shared Tina.

Over the next several months, the Dods met and counseled with Frank on a regular basis, going over specifics of their business and asking for Frank's insight.

How has the SBDC connection worked for Dod Installations?

They weathered 2017 with their best year of sales, profits, and growth since they started their business in 1990.

"We planned and orchestrated solutions together that have enabled us to further increase our revenues—as well as improving our management skills and expanding our horizons and vision in the areas of future planning concepts," said Tina. "Specifically, we have experienced growth and improvement reflected in our financials—but more intangibly, we feel we've become better leaders in our business with our employees

and stronger as individuals. We have experienced a greater cohesiveness within our business team because we've implemented targeted ideas to improve communications with customers, as well as with our team members—in turn, strengthening the team spirit within our organization."

What does the future hold for Dod Installations?

The year 2018 is tracking to be stronger than 2017—and the Dods are expecting an even better year for 2019.

Congratulations, Dod Installations Inc., on your incredible growth. And thank you for allowing us to be part of the process.

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Frank Choriego, WSU*



# Triple Threat Ag Services

## 2019 WSU Emerging Business

The need to do things better, faster, and more efficiently has fueled innovation and the increased use of technology in all industries—most notably in agriculture.

When brothers Allen, Paul, and Phillip Lange, with their cousin Aaron Lange, wanted to find a better way to spread fertilizer and improve their farm soil with more precision, they began experimenting. They were early adopters of variable-rate application and wanted to find a better, faster, more efficient method to apply fertilizer and lime. Variable-rate technology (VRT) in precision agriculture is a process that focuses on the automated application of materials to a specific management zone.

They developed a solution. “It wasn’t elegant at first,” said Phillip, “but it worked.”

Realizing that other producers could use their solution, they went to market selling their services as well as light agricultural equipment.

In 2010 the brothers and cousin founded Triple Threat Ag Services LLC in Conway Springs, Kansas. Triple Threat positions itself as a progressive organization using the latest technology to maximize profitability for landowners and producers in southeast Kansas.

A few years into the business the Langes found themselves too consumed with equipment sales—a segment of the business that wasn’t the most profitable for them.

This is when they approached the Kansas SBDC at WSU.

After working with the SBDC, Triple Threat has changed how they operate, moving away from equipment sales and focusing on the core of their business—custom

product application and soil sampling. Triple Threat continues to be an early adopter, choosing partners that have the same philosophy. Both Heartland Soil Sampling and the Lange brothers’ alma mater, Kansas State University, work with Triple Threat to provide customers with the latest advances in soil-sampling technology and testing.



Our team at the Kansas SBDC at WSU has been fortunate to work with Triple Threat for the past three years. Here’s what we learned about their experience.

**SBDC:** What specific challenge(s) prompted you to contact the Kansas SBDC?

**Triple Threat:** As a small business looking to grow, we wanted to connect with a team that could offer an outside perspective on where we could improve our business. We also were seeking a source of industry information and business fundamentals. Having previous knowledge of the SBDC, we decided to use this resource to help our business grow.

**SBDC:** How did your Kansas SBDC advisor or advisor team help you overcome these challenges? What solutions did you and your advisor discover together?

**Triple Threat:** Working with SBDC advisors has helped us focus on our strengths and eliminate distractions. This in turn has directed us to create clarity with our marketing message and day-to-day operations. Specifically, we have stopped

focusing on equipment retail sales efforts (header trailer sales) and are solely focused on acting as an agricultural services business (soil sampling, lime/gypsum/fertilizer application).

**SBDC:** What specific results/outcomes have you experienced in your business since implementing these solutions?

**How have these results changed your business?**

**Triple Threat:** Our marketing message clearly reflects our company’s mission to serve the agriculture community as a service business. After a complete revamp of our website and trade-show booth, customers can easily associate the

Triple Threat brand with the services we offer. This has been a positive change from a business perspective. We now are completely focused on activities that directly boost our revenue instead of investing time and energy in areas with smaller returns. This has also helped provide vision for mid- to long-term planning.

**SBDC:** When assisting you with your business, what did the Kansas SBDC do well?

**Triple Threat:** Kansas SBDC did a good job of being an unbiased mediator for our discussions. Additionally, our SBDC team has done a good job of helping brainstorm ideas for future business growth and development.

**Congratulations, Triple Threat Ag Services LLC! It’s a pleasure to work with you.**

*Kansas SBDC Advisors  
Elaine Hanna, WSU  
Frank Choriego, WSU*



# The Winged Lion

## 2019 WU Existing Business

The Winged Lion, LCC, is a home décor and lifestyle store located in downtown Manhattan, Kansas. Its loyal customers turn to owner Ralph Diaz for all kinds of decorating and gift-giving advice . . . and advice on life as well. Ralph opened The Winged Lion in August of 2014 to fulfill a dream that he had been holding onto since a trip to New York City in 1987. On that trip, Ralph visited a store that he loved everything about—right down to the way that the store decorated its gift bags. In fact, he kept the bag that his purchase came in and still has it for inspiration.

The roots of Ralph's interest in business ownership, however, can be traced back to his upbringing. His parents, though not business owners, were hard workers. He picked up a strong work ethic from them and was inspired by them to acquire something that was just his—eventually he wanted his hard work to go into his own business.

As a student, Ralph started out in fashion design and envisioned himself moving to New York City. However, through life's twists and turns, he decided to stay in Manhattan, Kansas, and open a salon with a friend. For Ralph, the salon was a creative outlet, a way to make a living, and also an introduction to business ownership.

The biggest challenge for Ralph in making his dream of opening the décor and lifestyle store come true was putting together the startup funds. Selling his share of ownership in the salon contributed substantially to making this happen, but he also needed a business loan.

Ralph worked with the Kansas SBDC at WU to put together the financial projections and materials that he needed

to apply for the loan. Daryn Soldan, the SBDC advisor with whom Ralph worked, also helped Ralph understand his target customer base and the financial side of running a retail business. Ralph describes Daryn as having been a great help.

Ralph says that business ownership is different the second time around, mostly in that he no longer has a business partner. All the responsibility, for better or worse, falls on his shoulders. Importantly, however, he says that he also learned



a lot from his experience at the salon about his strengths and weaknesses as a business owner. This, in turn, helped him understand where he could push forward on his own and what kind of resources he was going to need to complement his strengths and offset his weaknesses. From the outset, Ralph knew that he had a strong creative vision and enough passion to make the store a success. He also understood that he loves talking with customers and has a talent for guiding them in their stylistic choices—his keys to creating a loyal customer base. However, he also recognized, going into the new venture, that he was going to need to rely on help managing the budget and understanding the cash flow cycles of the business.

With all of his experience, and having been through the full life cycle of business ownership, Ralph appreciates the wisdom that other business owners have shared with him and is happy to share what he has learned. Ralph's advice to new business owners: Understand your strengths and weaknesses and don't be afraid to ask for help in the areas where you need it. Seek good guidance. Also, recognize that your business can't be good at everything. Focus on what you are good at and expand slowly and stay passionate. Big isn't always better. You need to find the size that fits you.

At the Kansas SBDC, we are delighted to have been a part of helping Ralph fulfill his dream of owning his beautiful lifestyle store. When asked whether there is yet another business in his future, Ralph acknowledged that pursuing yet one more dream venture is a definite possibility. In the meantime, Ralph is enjoying doing what he is doing.

At the Kansas SBDC at WU, we work with entrepreneurs from the pre-venture stage to the transition planning stage, helping them understand their business needs, identify opportunities, and find solutions.

*Kansas SBDC Advisor  
Laurie Pieper, WU*

# Norsemen Brewing Company

## 2019 WU Emerging Business

It was 2015, and Jared Rudy was eager to start his own microbrewery in Topeka, Kansas. Microbreweries were thriving across the United States, and Kansas was no exception. The Brewers Association reported there were 4,588 breweries in the country at the time, of which 1,740 were operating as brewpubs. The industry was booming.

So how does one get a microbrewery business off the ground?

For Jared Rudy it began with his business partners.

To get the partners interested in the idea of opening a business, Jared convinced the group to attend one of the small business startup seminars offered at the Kansas SBDC at WU. After a good experience at the seminar, the team agreed to proceed, and Jared began working with SBDC business advisors. The goals were to fine-tune the business plan and put the team in a solid position to attract financing for the business.

Jared and his team identified early in their startup process that their vision was to be a microbrewery and taproom. While the concept was consistent with more developed brewery areas across the nation, it was a very different concept in Kansas. For years Kansas liquor laws required certain establishments that serve alcohol to generate at least 30% of sales from food so most Kansas residents had grown up around bars with kitchens. To add to the confusion, some breweries in Kansas are restaurants that make their own beer and are referred to as “brewpubs.” So how could a microbrewery and taproom without a kitchen, not a brewpub, succeed in

this market?

“A lot of time was spent in our business plan discussing these issues and trying to relieve any worries that such a place could be successful,” shared Jared.

In addition to concerns about the business concept, Jared and the team had challenges finding a location for the business in Topeka. “When it came to



locating a suitable building, we tried the traditional way of looking at online ads and newspapers for buildings available to rent or buy. After settling on a general area that we wanted to be in, and looking at a few buildings, we were unable to find anything suitable,” said Jared. “Karl Klein with the SBDC knew of a few buildings for sale that weren’t necessarily heavily advertised. Karl, utilizing his ability to listen to and see a prospective business-owner vision, got us in contact with a person that knew of a building he thought could be a good possibility for putting in a brewery and taproom. The building we found at 830 North Kansas Avenue ended up being the one and is now home to our business—Norsemen Brewing Company.”

With the business concept and location in place, financing became the third hurdle the Norsemen team would face. To clear this obstacle Jared worked with the SBDC team and Ben Tenpenny of Capitol

Federal. They developed a sound plan with solid sales projections that helped to secure an SBA guaranteed loan to open the Norsemen Brewing Company doors in October of 2016.

Looking back on the process, Jared said, “Throughout the process the SBDC worked to set us up with the appropriate people through each stage of the project and helped us avoid common pitfalls. I firmly believe that the SBDC increased our chances of being successful. The SBDC also does a great job at teaming up with knowledgeable individuals with experience in their respective fields to help prospective business owners along the way. Business plan creation and sales forecasting are a couple of the areas we utilized ourselves.”

How’s Norsemen Brewing Company doing in 2018?

“Two years in, and we have met or exceeded all sales projections. Norsemen has become a Topeka hotspot for Friday evenings and out-of-towners. The Topeka community has welcomed us in and supported us well. This is the result we were expecting and hoping for,” said Jared. “This has allowed us to be more involved in the community, which also was very important to us. Along the way we have had to learn and adapt to out-of-the-box ways of supporting non-profits, but the result has been a giant increase in helping charitable organizations such as United Way and Big Brothers Big Sisters.”

We are happy to raise a glass to your success. Cheers to you, Norsemen Brewing Company of Topeka, Kansas.

*Kansas SBDC advisor  
Karl Klein, WU*

# ABOUT US

## Our history

Since 1983, we've served as the driving force leading small business development in Kansas. For the past 35 years we've served tens of thousands of existing businesses, entrepreneurs, and pre-venture clients by providing exceptional confidential consulting, education, and training to businesses just like those featured in this program.

## Where we're located

In 2018 twenty-five consultants along with support teams deliver service from eight regional centers across the state. Regional centers are hosted on both university and community college campuses. Outreach centers can be found on community college campuses or co-located with economic development partners.

## Who we serve

We serve all small businesses and provide services in every small town, large city, and rural area across the State of Kansas including existing small businesses and individuals exploring pre-venture opportunities. (See *What is a small business?* sidebar.)

## Why you may not have heard about the Kansas SBDC

Because our services are confidential, we do not actively advertise. We only share success stories with the express permission of our clients. Due to our confidential nature and because our financial resources are invested in providing our services at low or no cost to the business, we may be one of Kansas' best-kept secrets.

## How to access our services

Any current small business owner or individual interested in pursuing a small business interest is encouraged to contact any center (see back cover) or to visit our website at [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net) to learn more about our services.

## Inspired by success

At the Kansas SBDC, we share stories about our clients throughout the year--on our website, through social media, and in everyday face-to-face conversations.

We've taken this year's stories and posted them on our website at [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net). Each story goes into more detail about how the client used or currently uses our services. Additionally, we've provided links to our clients' websites and social media profiles so you can learn more about them. Just use the search box on the home page of our site and type in the name of the business you want to learn more about.

Read or watch more inspirational success stories online:  
[kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net)  
[twitter.com/KansasSBDC](https://twitter.com/KansasSBDC)  
[youtube.com/c/KansasSBDC](https://youtube.com/c/KansasSBDC)  
[pinterest.com/KansasSBDC](https://pinterest.com/KansasSBDC)  
[instagram.com/kansassbdc](https://instagram.com/kansassbdc)



## What is a small business?

The Small Business Administration (SBA) defines a small business concern as one that is independently owned and operated, is organized for profit, and is not dominant in its field. Depending on the industry, size standard eligibility is based on the average number of employees for the preceding twelve months or on sales volume averaged over a three-year period.

Examples of SBA general size standards include the following:

- Manufacturing: Maximum number of employees may range from 500 to 1500, depending on the type of product manufactured;
- Wholesaling: Maximum number of employees may range from 100 to 500 depending on the particular product being provided;
- Services: Annual receipts may not exceed \$2.5 to \$21.5 million, depending on the particular service being provided;
- Retailing: Annual receipts may not exceed \$5.0 to \$21.0 million, depending on the particular product being provided;
- General and Heavy Construction: General construction annual receipts may not exceed \$13.5 to \$17 million, depending on the type of construction;
- Special Trade Construction: Annual receipts may not exceed \$7 million; and
- Agriculture: Annual receipts may not exceed \$0.5 to \$9.0 million, depending on the agricultural product.



# SERVICES

As the needs of small business owners have changed, we've kept our core services while adding specialized assistance to keep up with their needs.

The following are specialty services we offer at the Kansas SBDC. Advising is offered at no cost to the business. Fee-based consulting is offered for businesses that need a more hands-on approach. In all areas we advise, refer, and connect businesses to the resources they need to succeed.

## **Cyber Security**

For Kansas SBDC business clients, we break down the complexity of cyber security. We make it possible for all businesses to reduce their risks in real time. We advise, refer, and connect businesses to the resources they need to succeed.

We help business owners and decision makers faced with HIPAA and other regulations and businesses that need to comply with new NIST standards to continue doing business with the federal government. Our clients include pharmacies, manufacturers, and business services. Our clients are trying to comply with regulations on their own so we assist them to ensure they are not only in compliance, but more importantly, we pull together a manageable plan to protect their businesses

## **Technology Commercialization**

For Kansas SBDC innovators, we break down the complexity of commercialization. We make it manageable for businesses to run their existing business while expanding through research and development. We advise, refer, and connect businesses to the resources they need to succeed and ensure the engagement on both sides of the table is more productive.

We help innovators interested in working with the U.S. government and private

enterprise by connecting the idea people with the people that need the ideas. Our clients include individual developers as well as industries such as biomedical, software development, and UAS. We help our clients make meaningful connections to move forward with commercialization.

## **Succession and Exit Planning**

We help Kansas SBDC clients through the challenge of leaving their business, and we make it manageable for business owners to evaluate their options with confidence.

We help business owners who are interested in selling their business to internal or external buyers. By working with owners on how to make the most of their business value, we address their retirement or exit financial needs, and plan for what happens after they sell. Our advising helps reduce the stress of the process.

Our clients include business owners in a variety of industries who want to transition their business to their children, to employees, or to partners as well as sell the business on the market to an outside buyer. Our clients are often unsure of what steps to take to make a smooth transition so we help them plan for a future with which they can be comfortable.

## **Exporting/International Business**

For Kansas SBDC business clients we make it manageable for small businesses to thrive locally while expanding globally. We advise, refer, and connect businesses to the resources they need to succeed.

We help business owners who are interested in expanding their sales to new overseas markets. They may just be trying to find buyers for their products or deciding on which markets to enter. Our clients include business services, resellers, and manufacturers. Business owners are often unsure about the processes, rules, and regulations as well as the time and

effort it will take to explore new markets. We help them determine if and how exporting fits with their overall business, how to find the right markets, establish the right distribution chains, and price effectively to preserve profits.

## **Market Research**

For Kansas SBDC business clients we break down the complexity of market research. We make it manageable for small businesses to stay focused on their current day-to-day operations while helping them develop plans for the future.

We help business decision makers from the operations, sales, or marketing side of business by finding the data they need to make critical marketing decisions. By providing our clients with research they can use, we help our clients break down the complex data into actionable information. Our clients often couldn't afford extensive research and became overwhelmed when deciding what data to use. Using our research with our one-on-one advising we've helped our clients determine where to locate, which markets to pursue, and which markets to avoid.

## **Strategic Planning**

For Kansas SBDC business clients, we break down the complexity of strategic planning. We make it manageable for small businesses to stay focused on their current day-to-day operations while helping them develop plans for the future. We advise, refer, and connect businesses to the resources they need to succeed.

We make it manageable by providing a customizable approach to fit their specific needs. Our clients include business service providers, manufacturing, retail, ecommerce, and high tech. Our clients come to us when they need a team from the outside to provide a fresh look into their businesses. So we help our clients develop strategies they can live and work with while meeting their current obligations and future goals.

# IMPACT

We know that helping small businesses in Kansas grow pays dividends to every citizen living in the state. But did you also know that our work puts money into the federal government?

## Why should we care?

Since each and every person that works at the Kansas SBDC is a taxpaying citizen, we take a very concerned interest to ensure that the dollars invested in the Kansas SBDC are well-spent, flowing back into our communities many times over. Why? Because we live and work and take our kids to school in these communities as well. We hold ourselves to the highest level of accountability and measure the difference we make in our clients' businesses every day.

We know that everything we do to help grow small businesses in Kansas needs to make a difference in the short term, interim term, and long term. It needs to make a difference in the small business owner's life, in his or her business, immediate community, county, and beyond.

## How do we know that we've made a difference?

Our small business clients tell us.

Each year we conduct a series of surveys to measure impact. Clients are asked to respond and report the difference that the Kansas SBDC has made in their business. We ask how we've helped them grow and retain employees, increase sales, and secure capital to grow their businesses.

Basically, we're measuring a return on your taxes as they are used in the SBDC program.

To understand how we calculate our impact, return is measured by calculating sales and income tax on client revenue, jobs created, and jobs retained. Numbers are calculated based on self-reported

and affirmed client surveys, independent scientific study, and legislative audit. And even though our return on investment is impressive, keep in mind that our impact is a conservative estimate with 40% of our clients completing survey requests in 2017.

Additionally, we compare the performance of our business clients with all of Kansas businesses. We use information from the Kansas Departments of Labor and Revenue to compare our performance. Since we started measuring this in 2002, our clients have consistently outperformed all Kansas businesses when comparing average annual sales and jobs growth.

According to the most recent numbers we have from the Kansas Department of Revenue, in 2016 our clients' sales grew at 30.9% versus all Kansas businesses at 6.6%. And in 2016 our clients' jobs grew at 21.4% versus all Kansas businesses at 0.5% according to the Kansas Department of Labor.

These numbers really come to life when we can convey them in the stories told by our small business clients.

## Our 2017 Results

Through these surveys we found that in 2017 (the most recent year for which we've collected data) for every \$1 invested in the Kansas SBDC network \$23.20 was generated in new taxes at the federal and state levels.

Collectively the clients we surveyed in 2017 generated an increase of \$9.1 million in tax revenue to the Kansas state economy through the help we provided them in the previous year. From what you know about our state economic situation, that's a big deal. We're not just using taxes, we're assisting in the generation of new funds for the state.

In 2017, 258 respondents indicated that they started new businesses. And, as

you might guess, starting a new business translates to new jobs, new sales, and new investments.

A total of 3,019 jobs were created or retained in 2017. It's estimated that these jobs would have generated \$4,268,780 individual income tax revenue for the state of Kansas and \$50,898,740 individual income tax revenue for the federal government in 2017.

## More on the math

The total benefits to the state would have been the sum of the revenue from the sales tax and the revenue from the individual income tax (\$4,893,532+\$4,268,780); that is \$9,162,312. The Kansas SBDC spent \$671,827 from the Kansas Department of Commerce (KDOC) in 2017. The return on investment from the KDOC was 13.6:1 (\$9,162,312/\$671,827), which means for every dollar spent from the KDOC, Kansas small businesses in the study returned \$13.60 income and sales tax revenue to the state government.

The Kansas SBDC spent \$1,018,745 from the Small Business Administration (SBA), and the return on investment from the SBA was 50:1 (\$50,898,740/\$1,018,745). In other words, for every dollar that the Kansas SBDC spent from the SBA, Kansas small businesses in the study returned \$50 income tax revenue to the federal government.

The total tax revenue generated from sales increase and job creation and retention is estimated to be \$60,061,052 (\$9,162,312+\$50,898,740).

The Kansas SBDC spent a total of \$2,588,329 local, KDOC, and SBA funds in 2017. The return on the combined local, state and federal investment was 23.2:1 (\$60,061,052/\$2,588,329).

*Questions? Contact Greg Panichello, Kansas SBDC State Director, 785-296-6514 or [panichello@ksbdc.net](mailto:panichello@ksbdc.net).*

# FAQ

## ***How can you help my business?***

We can help in a variety of ways. The primary way we help is by working with you to find out what your needs are and helping you develop a strategy to reach your goals.

Some of the key reasons clients contact us for help include:

- Business plan assistance
- Financial projection development
- Financial analysis
- Cash flow analysis
- Marketing plan development
- Human resources
- Sources of capital and financing
- Product cost analysis and pricing
- Market research assistance
- Advertising strategies
- Selling to the government/procurement
- Investor assistance
- Patent process
- International trade
- Buying or selling a business
- Business valuation
- Continuity planning
- Cyber security
- Technology commercialization

## ***How do I use your services?***

Start by contacting the center nearest you. A map can be found on the back of this material. If you want to take advantage of online training without contacting your local center first, visit <https://www.kansassbdc.net/locations>.

## ***Is there a charge for Kansas SBDC services?***

No and Yes. No, Kansas SBDC advising services are provided at no cost to our clients. Workshops, seminars, and online training are offered at low-cost or no-cost to clients as well.

Yes, we do offer specialized fee-based consulting if you need something beyond general advising. We offer different levels of business valuations and continuity plans. To learn more call 785-296-6514.

## ***Why do you provide advising at no cost? Why don't you charge?***

When the SBDC was established in 1983, the federal government decided that they would not charge for advising. Essentially, since our government is funded by the taxpayer, they decided that taxpayers had really already paid for the service.

## ***Can I see a business advisor without an appointment?***

We would suggest scheduling an appointment to meet with us. As a first-time client you can complete some helpful forms before you meet with an advisor to make the most of your time together. Learn about how to become a Kansas SBDC client at [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net).

## ***Do I have to become a client to attend one of your online or in-person classes?***

No, you don't. Online classes as well as on-the-ground classes, workshops, and seminars are open to anyone that is interested in improving their business performance, starting a business or exploring a business idea.

However, we encourage you to take advantage of working with our team as a Kansas SBDC client. Learn more at [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net).

## ***How do I learn more about a class I might be interested in taking?***

Visit our website at [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net), or visit the website of the center in your area. All center websites and contact email addresses are listed on the reverse of this program and report.

## ***Why don't more people know about your services?***

Because we're a confidential service ("Las Vegas rules" apply) and we don't talk about our clients without their permission, you won't hear a lot about us. Plus, since we operate using taxpayer dollars we don't spend money on advertising. We put all of our effort into delivering our service.

## ***I already own a business. Can I still use the Kansas SBDC?***

Yes. We encourage it. As of 2017, approximately half of the businesses we serve are already in business when they seek out our help. Our Kansas SBDC advisors have extensive experience and knowledge in many areas of business operations across a variety of industries. We can help with marketing, management, operations, expansion, cash flow analysis, inventory control, strategic planning, and pricing your products and services.

If your business meets the size standards of the SBA (typically less than 500 employees), you'll be able to access the no-cost and confidential business advising offered by the Kansas SBDC.

If your issue is outside the scope of your Kansas SBDC advisor's expertise, he/she will tap into a large network of business experts across the country to assist your company.

## ***What if I'm interested in selling my business? Can you help with that?***

Yes, we can. We have consultants that are certified in business valuation as well as advisors that can help you prepare to sell your business. We've helped many small businesses with successful transition and succession plans.

## ***What if I'm interested in buying a business? Can you help with that?***

Yes. We have advisors that can help you evaluate the existing business, your ideas, and the market so you can make an informed decision. Certified consultants can assist with a business valuation as well.

## ***Does the Kansas SBDC loan money for my business startup?***

The Kansas SBDC does not provide loan or grant money. However, we will assist you in developing your business plan and financial projections and identifying potential sources of capital. This is often the key to help you obtain additional capital. Additionally, Kansas SBDC advisors can often identify various non-traditional sources of capital to help your business.



# FAQ

## ***Will a Kansas SBDC advisor help me write a business plan?***

The Kansas SBDC will provide resources and guidance in the process of writing your business plan. Many centers have accelerated business plan training courses that can help as well.

## ***I can't get away from work. Do you have any online help?***

Yes. The Kansas SBDC can consult with you via email, phone, or video conferencing. Several online training classes are available for anyone that needs help in your business. Learn more at [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net).

## ***I'm concerned that people will know that I am working with the SBDC and lose confidence in my leadership. How confidential are your services?***

Our services are highly confidential. "Las Vegas rules" apply here. We can't even confirm with your business partners if you are our client without your written permission.

## ***How good are you?***

Each year we survey our clients to find out if we've made a difference in their business. For 2017, our clients said we helped them accomplish the following:

- Secure \$110.9m in new capital
- Increase year-over-year sales by \$75.2m
- Create or retain 3,019 jobs
- Start 258 new businesses

According to the Kansas Dept of Revenue, Kansas SBDC clients consistently grow average annual sales at a pace much faster than all of Kansas businesses. In 2016 our clients increased their annual sales by 30.9% while all Kansas businesses reported a sales increase of 6.6%.

According to the Kansas Dept of Labor, Kansas SBDC clients consistently grow average annual jobs at a pace much faster than all of Kansas businesses. In 2016 our clients increased their annual jobs by 21.4% versus an increase of 0.5% by all of Kansas businesses.

## ***How do I find a center in my area?***

Look on the back cover or visit us online at <https://www.kansassbdc.net/> and type "locations" in the search bar.

## ***How many Kansas SBDC locations are there?***

At the time of publication there were eight regional centers and four outreach centers. Our locations and a map are provided on the back cover. You can work with an advisor in your area, or you may work with a team from across the state. Your primary advisor will help coordinate our team to best meet your needs.

## ***How many businesses do you help each year?***

We work with approximately 2,500 small business clients each year.

Since we began tracking impact in 2002, we have helped small businesses across the state. Through free one-on-one advising, training, and education, we have helped 36,732 clients:

- Start 4,408 small businesses
- Create 20,856 new jobs
- Retain more than 18,840 jobs
- Generate more than \$956,000,000 in equity injection or debt financing to start and expand their businesses
- Increase year-over-year sales by more than \$1,224,000,000

From 2002 to 2016 we helped small businesses through training:

- provided more than 225,177 hours of training
- held 7,982 training events
- assisted more than 68,708 small business owners and others through workshops, seminars, and training events

## ***What if I refer someone to you? How will I know that you've helped them?***

You won't unless they share that information with you. Our services are highly confidential. Confidentiality eliminates a big barrier for small businesses, entrepreneurs, startups, and innovators that want to test their ideas in a protected environment.

## ***Who do you work with?***

The Kansas SBDC network partners with many players across the economic landscape including Chambers of Commerce, economic development professionals, universities, community colleges, and lending institutions as well as federal, state, and local governments.

The goal of the Kansas SBDC is to work with all players interested in supporting entrepreneurship in our communities; because of this, we excel at providing a comprehensive service through many important partnerships.

## ***You say that you help small businesses, and small businesses are important to the economy. What kind of impact do you have in Kansas?***

A huge impact. For every \$1 that was invested in 2017 by the state and federal governments as well as our local funders, we returned \$23.20 to the tax base.

How? By helping our clients increase sales, more sales tax was paid. By helping our clients grow to hire more employees, more federal and state employment tax was paid.

We know this information is accurate because each year we measure our impact by asking our clients directly how we've helped their business through a third-party objective external survey firm.

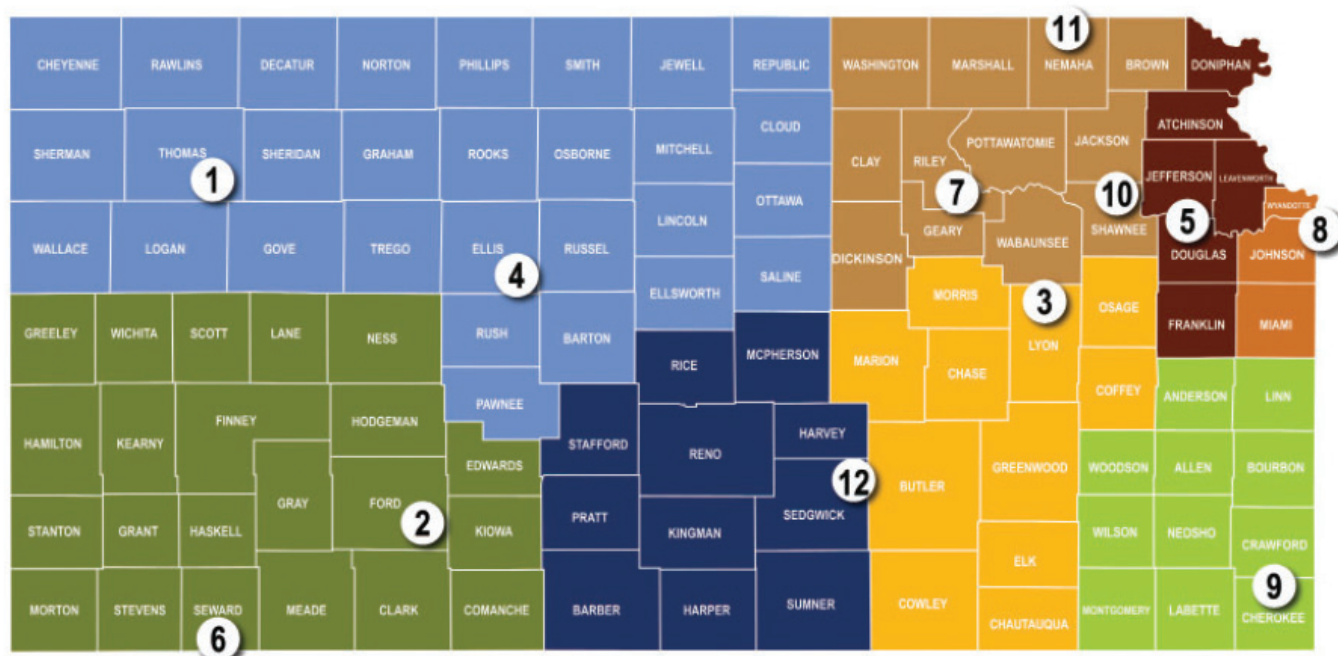
## ***Do your centers have contact information for local attorneys and accountants?***

Yes, each office does their best to maintain a local list of contacts for attorneys and accountants and other for-profits that work with small business. We also keep a list of other resource contacts that you may need on hand.

## ***What if I have more questions?***

Call your local center listed on the back cover, visit our website at [kansassbdc.net](http://kansassbdc.net), or email [info@ksbdc.net](mailto:info@ksbdc.net). We'll be happy to help.

# KANSAS SBDC LOCATIONS



- 1 Colby. Kansas SBDC (FHSU region) | 785.460.5482 | <http://www.fhsu.edu/ksbdc> | [ksbdc@fhsu.edu](mailto:ksbdc@fhsu.edu)
- 2 Dodge City. Kansas SBDC (SCCC region) | 620.371.3871 | <http://www.swksbdc.com> | [ksbdc@sccc.edu](mailto:ksbdc@sccc.edu)
- 3 Emporia. Kansas SBDC at ESU | 620.341.5308 | <http://www.emporia.edu/sbdc> | [ksbdc@emporia.edu](mailto:ksbdc@emporia.edu)
- 4 Hays. Kansas SBDC at FHSU | 785.628.5615 | <http://www.fhsu.edu/ksbdc> | [ksbdc@fhsu.edu](mailto:ksbdc@fhsu.edu)
- 5 Lawrence. Kansas SBDC at KU | 785.843.8844 | <http://www.business.ku.edu/ku-small-business-development-center> | [ksbdc@ku.edu](mailto:ksbdc@ku.edu)
- 6 Liberal. Kansas SBDC at SCCC | 620.417.1955 | <http://www.swksbdc.com> | [ksbdc@sccc.edu](mailto:ksbdc@sccc.edu)
- 7 Manhattan. Kansas SBDC (WU region) | 785.587.9917 | <http://www.washburnsmallbusiness.com> | [ksbdc@washburn.edu](mailto:ksbdc@washburn.edu)
- 8 Overland Park. Kansas SBDC at JCCC | 913.469.3878 | <http://www.jccc.edu/ksbdc> | [ksbdc@jccc.edu](mailto:ksbdc@jccc.edu)
- 9 Pittsburg. Kansas SBDC at PSU | 620.235.4921 | <https://usi.pittstate.edu/sbdc.html> | [ksbdc@pittstate.edu](mailto:ksbdc@pittstate.edu)
- 10 Topeka. Kansas SBDC at WU | 785.215.8375 | <http://www.washburnsmallbusiness.com> | [ksbdc@washburn.edu](mailto:ksbdc@washburn.edu)
- 11 Wetmore. Kansas SBDC (WU region) | 785.207.0267 | <http://www.washburnsmallbusiness.com> | [ksbdc@washburn.edu](mailto:ksbdc@washburn.edu)
- 12 Wichita. Kansas SBDC at WSU | 316.978.3193 | <http://www.wichita.edu/ksbdc> | [ksbdc@wichita.edu](mailto:ksbdc@wichita.edu)



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