

Hello SVED members~

This is the monthly email to update our Solomon Valley Economic Development members.

Highlights of the **March 16th, 2017** meeting:

FIELD TRIP – This month our Solomon Valley Economic Development members took a field trip to Jewell. Kevin Thompson hosted us for lunch and our meeting at Jewell Grocery. Kevin and also Daryl Bohnert spoke to us about Jewell happenings.

BOHNERT WELDING – Daryl Bohnert started his company when he was 20 years old because he knew he wanted to stay in his community. He started a welding shop and over the last 40+ years he has grown, expanded, diversified, built and rebuilt after a tornado. He started manufacturing various items, and is best known for the round bale feeders. Daryl and his son also added the Pioneer Seed business and are the primary supplier of seed in Jewell County. In 2008 they had just finished an expansion building and got to enjoy it for 10 whole days before a tornado demolished it. In true rural Kansas fashion, they just went right back to work. They kept expanding and the latest addition added bulk bins and another new building. Daryl understands the need to diversify and also how important it is to volunteer in a small community. He gives his time as the Fire Chief and is also the newly appointed Mayor of Jewell! Thanks to Daryl for sharing a little bit about his business. Check out his website: <http://bohnertwelding.com>

JEWELL GROCERY - Kevin Thompson was born and raised in Jewell, Kansas. Even though he left for a while to work for a big box store, he knew he wanted to move home. He worked in Beloit for Todd Catlin for 7 years and learned a lot about the grocery business from Catlin's Apple Market. Then when the opportunity presented itself to purchase a grocery business in Jewell he couldn't resist. Jewell Grocery has seen many changes since Kevin has been at the reigns. He purchased the building next door for additional inventory; he also added a hot bar and does catering. He is appreciative of his very dedicated customers and tries to add more items to keep them happy. It was a bustle of activity today and his loyal customers were gracious to share their space with us. Kevin has purchased a grill and chicken fryer and looking to add more menu items. He also recruited his brother Shane to be his meat cutter which is a fantastic service for his customers. Kevin states it best "This is home and I can't imagine living anywhere else". Thanks for sharing your business with us today. Check out his Facebook page: www.facebook.com/Jewell-Grocery

MITCHELL COUNTY CONVENTION AND TOURISM – Lucille Heller was present at our meeting to discuss the new tourism website: www.mitchellcountystourism.com Please check it out and also let her know of any corrections. The first stage of the website was to gather information in the county. The next stage will be to set up an events calendar and trip planner. We have so much to see in Mitchell County and this website will be a great way to advertise our community.

Mitchell County Kansas Tourism – Discover the Solomon Valley, lodging, dining and attractions including Waconda Lake, Glen Elder State Park and the World's Largest Ball of Twine. Mitchell County also offers the best hunting and fishing Kansas has to offer.

WEBSITE – Don't forget about our other Mitchell County website here: www.mitchellcountykansas.com We will use the site to provide information for our residents, but also as a positive snapshot for those businesses, families and individuals looking for a new place to relocate and establish themselves. Please take a look and let me know what you think.

DANE G. HANSEN – The Dane G. Hansen Foundation will be hosting a Community Forum in Hays on March 23rd, 2017. I hope to hear the next exciting things that will be coming from the Hansen Foundation. The Solomon Valley Community Foundation was asked to present a break-out session on the Matching Campaign

that we ran last November. This forum is a great place to share success stories and I am anxious to hear what other communities have been accomplishing with funding from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS – This is a program that allows you to see your community through the eyes of a first-time visitor. A team of volunteers is assembled to make an unannounced visit to another community. The team members usually include business leaders, chamber of commerce members, leadership development members and other interested volunteers. Teams receive training to ensure evaluations are both thorough and standardized. The volunteers explore residential, retail and industrial areas, plus schools, government locations and points of interest. The idea is to take a look at a community with a fresh pair of eyes. Whether in one's own home or community, it's easy to pass by something without thinking about how it looks to others. For the first-time visitor, is the drive into town welcoming? Is there something unique that may help draw people to shop? Does it strike them as a community they would like to return to? Communities are sometimes complacent about both their strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes strengths are taken for granted, and weaknesses are accepted as part of the norm. Once completed, the assessment helps drive goal setting and priorities for new development, plus identifies ways to strengthen community services. The process promotes community vitality and enhances the environment for both the residents and the visitor. **If this is something that interests you and you would like to be part of the volunteer team, please contact me!** We are going to be a First Impressions community and will be assigned our sister-city soon.

TREE CITY USA - The Beloit Tree Board and the City of Beloit will be hosting **"Celebrating 41 years of TCUSA and Kansas Community Forestry"** on **Thursday, March 23rd** at the **First Christian Church**. The City of Beloit has been recognized as a Tree City for 40 years. One of the featured keynote speakers will be Beloit's native son, Fred Deneke, along with his brother Stan. Fred is considered one of the early founders of Community Forestry and the TCUSA program. Tree City USA program has been greening up cities and towns across America since 1976. It is a nationwide movement that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees. More than 3,400 communities have made the commitment to becoming a Tree City USA. They have achieved Tree City USA status by meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management: maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry and celebrating Arbor Day. For more information on Tree City USA Recognition Day, contact Lynn Miller, Parks & Rec, at 738-2270.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – I am very pleased to announce the start of a new program in Mitchell County, the Façade Improvement Program.

Purpose – This program is designed for small scale renovation projects to the façade of the buildings in Mitchell County. The program is available to provide an affordable financing option for improvements to commercial building facades in order to improve the functionality, structural integrity and aesthetics in commercial areas.

Applicant Eligibility –

1. Building must be located in Mitchell County;
2. Building owner or business owner must be the program applicant;
3. Project must comply with applicable city, building, electrical, mechanical codes and have a valid permit;
4. **The applicant MUST have 2 of the following 3:**
 - a. A credit score of 700;
 - b. Been in business for 1 year;
 - c. Provide a matching fund of 1:1 for the requested amount

Eligible Use of Funds – Funding will only be approved for exterior improvements only. Projects may include but not limited to:

- Building Expansion
- Window replacement and repair
- Vacant building redevelopment
- Canopy or awning replacement, repair or installation
- Signage – not more than 30% of the funds can go towards signage
- Removal of contemporary facades to expose original construction of building
- Repair and/or tuck point existing structures
- Repair or Replacement of siding, trim, windows, doors, awnings
- Exterior painting, pressure washing, sand blasting
- Exterior Lighting

- No Interior renovations
- Will consider Heating/Air/Energy Efficiency Projects
- Other improvements not listed may be approved

Requirements include:

- All projects awarded must be completed within one calendar year from the official date of the award letter
- Will not fund debt
- Quotes for work to be completed

Loan Terms and Repayment:

1. Maximum loan of \$5,000
2. Interest rate fixed at 0%
3. Maximum loan term of 5 years
4. Closing fee of 1% to cover NCRPC expenses of administering the program
5. The loan will be paid in equal monthly installments by ACH draft from the applicants

Application period is open and on a first come, first served basis with no deadlines, based on the availability of funds.

SMALL BIZ SURVIVAL – What is Your Small-Business Money Maker?

by Glenn Muske

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Question 1: What product or service in your business adds the most to your bottom line?

I hope you answered that question without even needing to take a look at your financials.

This may not be the product or service that necessarily provides the greatest return per item. You may sell only one a year. That's great, but what is it doing for the bottom line of the business? And you shouldn't be looking at where you get the greatest revenue because that fails to take into account the costs to make it available to the consumer.

You need to know what one item, or maybe it's a category of items, is keeping the lights on and paying your salary?

Question 2: What are you doing to grow that item for your business? Or, in some cases, what are you doing to replace that item as it reaches the end of its life cycle or the competition gets tougher?

If this is your significant profit center, then you should be taking steps to do even more. How might you sell more? What marketing efforts might help? Do you know who the current buyers are and how they are using it and why they like it?

Related to selling more, do you have ways you can cut costs? What about product line extensions? If your consumers like this item, do you have other markets you haven't tapped yet, or can you change the item slightly to attract another audience?

You also need to consider, before making a lot of changes for that item, where this product or service is in terms of its life cycle. No one item can maintain its place in the market forever. Think of paper. What is used to make paper has changed, the shapes and other aspects have changed, and more and more of the items we capture are stored electronically today.

And even if you find a new market, new competitors always are coming along who want to tap into that market. For example, Whole Foods has had much of the natural or organic market for itself. Well, the competition has noticed the trend and chains are moving in, including brands such as Costco.

Perhaps your best-performing item has seen its best years. So then you need to ask:

Question 3: What item do I have that might take its place? This might be the second-most profitable item or it may be something that is just taking off?

A related question might be: What item could I add to my inventory or set of services that (a) is trending higher (b) fits my business model and current or future customer base and (c) can help me be competitive?

The bottom line (in more ways than one): Knowing which items you offer that keep the doors open is crucial. Just as important, or even more important, though, is what you are doing to enhance the value of those items or looking for what will

NEXT MEETING – Our next meeting will be on April 20th at 12:30pm at North Central Regional Planning Commission. We will be discussing our meeting options for the future. Be there or be square! 😊

As always, please contact me with any questions or comments.