

This is the monthly email to update our Solomon Valley Economic Development members. **Highlights of the September 21, 2017,** meeting:



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Hello! There are some great things happening in the Solomon Valley this Fall, and a couple of exciting things put on your calendar. Fall is especially busy with conferences and this year I attended the League of Kansas Municipalities. I have highlighted a few things below that might be of help to you in your business. The most exciting thing coming up is the Strategic Doing Meeting on September 27th at 7pm. I have outlined a little bit about the meeting below, but if possible please attend to help guide the future of Mitchell County. As always, please contact me with questions or comments. Thanks for reading!





# Strategic Doing™

*Do More Together.*

Hopefully you have been following some of the amazing things the Dane G. Hansen Foundation has been doing in our communities over the past few years. The Hansen Foundation has been instrumental in helping improve the quality of life for rural Kansas, and we are fortunate to have them in our area.

The Hansen Foundation has recently challenged each local Community Foundation to be the organizers of a “Strategic Doing” process. Your local Solomon Valley Community Foundation jumped at the chance to organize the initial Strategic Doing meeting in our area.

- What is Strategic Doing? Strategic Doing teaches people how to form collaborations quickly, move them toward measurable outcomes and make adjustments along the way. In today’s world, collaboration is essential to meet the complex challenges we face.
- How does Strategic Doing work? Strategic Doing focuses on two questions: “Where are we going?” and “How will we get there?”
- Want to know more about the process? [Check out Strategic Doing here.](#)

There is no set agenda, but instead it will be a process of dialogue that will allow our community to define and work through projects that will enhance our quality of life in Mitchell County. This process will allow some definition of what our community citizens feel should be accomplished here in Mitchell County. Our blood, sweat and tears combined with potential financial assistance of The Dane G. Hansen Foundation could lead to some incredible things happening right here in the Solomon Valley.

Please try to join us:

**When: Wednesday, September 27th, 2017**

**Time: 7:00pm**

**Place: NCK Tech, Beloit**



**RURAL OPPORTUNITY ZONES  
STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM**



There's something special about life in rural Kansas. Something authentic and wholesome. Something that makes it the ideal place to live, work and raise a family. And thanks to the Rural Opportunity Zones program, there's never been a better time than now to make rural Kansas your new home. If you're looking for lower cost of living and better quality of life, Kansas is your best choice.

Rural Opportunity Zones are Kansas counties that have been authorized to offer one or both of the following financial incentives to new full-time residents:

\* **Kansas income tax waivers for up to five years**

\* **Student loan repayments up to \$15,000**

Who's Eligible?

To be eligible for **Kansas income tax waivers**, individuals must have:

1. Established residency in a ROZ county on or after the date the county became part of the program - Mitchell County became part of ROZ on July 1st, 2011.
2. Lived outside Kansas for five or more years immediately prior to establishing residency in a ROZ county
3. Earned less than \$10,000 in Kansas Source Income in each of the five years immediately prior to establishing residency in a ROZ county

For more information about the state income tax exemption [click here](#) or contact:

To be eligible for **student loan repayments**, individuals must:

1. Establish residency in a ROZ county after July 1, 2011 and on or after the date on which the county opts-in to the student loan program
2. Hold an associate's, bachelor's or post-graduate degree
3. Have an outstanding student loan balance

**How to Get Started**

Step 1. Fill out the Student Loan Repayment Application [here](#).

Step 2. Wait for email from Commerce requesting documentation/proof of residence in Kansas.

Step 3. Wait for a letter to arrive based on your approval status in the program and follow the instructions listed in the letter.

New program standards now allow private companies to sponsor Rural Opportunity Zone participants, creating a unique recruitment tool that will help build loyalty with your new employee.

Employer sponsorships allow participating businesses to help employees reduce student loan debt by paying up to \$1,500 per year over a five year period, with matching funds from the state.

The Rural Opportunity Zones allow Kansas students to return to their roots. The unique student loan repayment program lifts the financial burden that often prevents graduates from coming home.



1.

## CENSUS BUSINESS BUILDER



Business owners can now use the Census Business Builder Version 2.2 to access and use key demographic and economic data for research. The Small Business Edition is aimed at small business owners who require data for your business plan or to understand the market.

### **Why You Might Want to Consider Using the Census Business Builder Tool**

The CBB tool is a suite of services that provide selected demographic and economic data from the Census Bureau. The data is tailored to your needs in an easy-to-access and use format.

Some of the key features of the tool include interactive maps. And you can browse and download data about the selected area and type of business, interactive and downloadable reports and more.

I have just started looking at the Business Builder Tool, but I have already found useful information for our area. A few fun facts about Mitchell County:

- \* 22.4% of our population is over the age of 65
- \* 2.25 is the average size of households
- \* 95% have a high school degree
- \* 72.6% home ownership rate
- \* 1953 the median year structures were built
- \* \$24,939 total per capita consumer expenditures

There are many layers and data you can find on this site. Check out the [Census Business Builder here!](#)



**ST. JOHN'S MEDIA CLASS**

St. John's High School received a Solomon Valley Community Foundation Grant for a new Media Lab. The students are producing short segments to practice their skills. The equipment and their expertise is being put to the test with several different types of videos. Check out some of their work below.

[Senior Environment Class sampling fish using seine net. Working into water quality testing and freshwater ecosystems.](#)

[St. John's students out identifying a variety of native grasses, wildflowers and trees for the upcoming Kansas State Eco-Meet competition.](#)

If your business is needing a small marketing segment produced, please contact Mr. Joe Holdren to schedule a time with his class. This is great hands-on experience for our local students.

Mr. Joe Holdren

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**95 DAYS UNTIL CHRISTMAS**



## Six Ways to Prepare for a Successful Holiday Season

By Bridget W. Pollack - Guest Blogger

**Published:** September 7, 2017

Guess what people are doing right now? They're starting their holiday shopping.

They may not be decking the halls yet, but 17 percent of shoppers surveyed by the [National Retail Federation](#) said they start researching holiday purchases *before* September, while 8 percent reported making purchases before the start of autumn. That holiday mentality holds steady in September before rocketing up in October and November.

Customers are looking ahead, and your small business needs to get ready for this busy season.

Now, before the holidays get hectic, is the perfect time to plan ahead for success. Many experienced business owners start this planning process in June or July! Prepare for a successful holiday season by reviewing these six tasks and delegating with your team.

### **1. Make a list, check it twice, and order supplies**

Reference your orders from last season to anticipate how much of basic supplies you'll need, whether that's shipping supplies and packaging, paper towels and toilet paper for your restrooms, or branded gift cards for holiday shoppers. If this is your first year in business, your network may be able to guide you through your first holiday ordering season. Remember to order early to avoid rush shipping charges later in the season. Being prepared can help you meet your customers' needs with ease.



## **2. Make holiday staff schedules**

It's important to determine your holiday operating hours, whether that means you'll be open longer than usual or you may plan some additional days when your business is closed. Be sure to communicate those holiday hours with your staff, and explain your expectations of your employees during the holiday season. Ask your team to request any holiday time off by a certain date so you can plan employee schedules accordingly.

## **3. Order or make extra inventory**

Anticipate holiday orders by manufacturing additional product or placing orders with your vendors. Be aware that your suppliers are under their own holiday pressure, and may have ordering deadlines to get product to you in time for the holidays. Mark these deadlines on a calendar you can see easily so these ordering deadlines don't pass you by.

## **4. Freshen up your website**

Give your business a once-over to make sure it's ready for a busy holiday season. Is the design tidy and easy to use? Can customers easily find your most popular products or services? Does your ecommerce checkout work smoothly? If you're the person who works on your website most often, hand this task to a staffer or a trusted friend. They'll be able to spot the issues you might miss.

## **5. Get in the spirit - decorate!**

Even if you feel like the Grinch when it comes to holidays, your business will need a little extra flair to help stand out from the crowd during this busy season. Your whole team can get involved: plan a late-night or early-morning decorating party. Order takeout for your team, play festive music (or regular music, for the Grinches among us), and transform your business in a matter of hours. Remember to check corners for cobwebs, and dust your fixtures to help your merchandise shine.

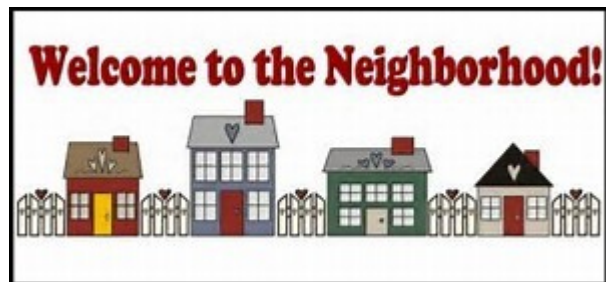
## **6. Develop and execute a marketing campaign**

Why will customers want to spend time at *your* small business this holiday season? Determine the answer, and build a [marketing campaign](#) around it. Maybe you have the best selection in town. Maybe your seasonal desserts are coveted all year long. Maybe your customer service can solve any shopping conundrum. Build your holiday marketing about what makes your business stand out from the crowd.

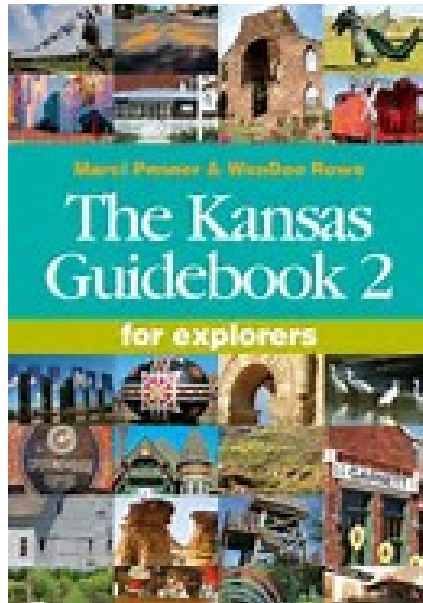
Don't forget to plan for [Small Business Saturday](#). Kick off the holiday season on November 25 by adding your business to the Shop Small map, and take advantage of free promotional materials

available to small businesses. More than 112 million customers reported shopping on this day celebrating small businesses last year!

## SOLOMON VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WELCOME WAGON



Welcome to the Neighborhood! Solomon Valley Economic Development is pleased to present the Kansas Guidebook 2 during Grand Opening's and Ribbon Cuttings. This guidebook is perfect for waiting rooms, lobby's, and reception areas. What a great way to celebrate all the great things in Kansas!



Check out the Kansas Sampler Foundation right here: [Kansas Sampler Foundation](https://www.kansasamplerfoundation.org/)

## SOLOMON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



### Solomon Valley Community Foundation Awards Grants

The Solomon Valley Community Foundation is pleased to announce the recent awarding of grants of approximately \$50,000 to local projects in Mitchell County. Funding of the Grants was made possible from the generosity of The Dane G. Hansen Foundation and the Founding Donors of Solomon Valley Community Foundation through its Community Impact Fund.

The following projects received funding from the Solomon Valley Community Foundation:

- ♣ Beloit Area Chamber of Commerce for Courthouse Christmas Beautification ♣
- Beloit Jr. Sr. High School for Library Media Center Green Screen & Video Camera ♣
- K-State Research & Extension Post Rock District for Master Gardner Educational Development & Resources ♣
- Mitchell County Community Development for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) throughout Mitchell County ♣
- Mitchell County Historical Society for Museum Renovation Electrical ♣
- Mitchell County Partnership for Children (Early Learning Center) for Commercial Grade Dishwasher, Outdoor Play Equipment & Storage ♣
- Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation (AWARE NCK) for Sustainability planning for Safe Routes to School Program ♣
- Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation for Perdue Hospitality Home Grounds Beautification ♣
- NCK Technical College for High Tech Simulators for Nursing Student Lab ♣
- Port Library for Library Puppet Collection ♣
- Smoky Hills Public Television for Literacy for Children in Mitchell County ♣
- Tipton Christian School for Science Classroom Materials Kits ♣
- Tipton Recreation, Inc. for Concrete approaches & exits at Tipton Oaks for Walking Trails ♣
- USD #273 (Beloit Jr. Sr. High School) for STEM Robotics for Student Technology & Engineering Skills ♣ USD #273 for School Sports First Aid Readiness Traveling Kits

“The Board of Directors of Solomon Valley Community Foundation is very pleased to be able to award these grants due to the generous support of the Dane G. Hansen Foundation,” said Jeff Zimmer, Board Member. “The Board had a difficult time in the selection process due to the quality and quantity of grant applications received. We look forward to the impact these grant awards will make on our area.”

Solomon Valley Community Foundation was established in 2013 to allow Mitchell County communities to plan long term for our families and friends.

The Foundation will accept the next round of grant applications online beginning November 1 with a due date of **February 1, 2018**. For more information, visit Solomon Valley Community Foundation’s website at [www.solomonvalleycf.org](http://www.solomonvalleycf.org), call 785-534-1126, or contact any Foundation board member.



[Facebook](#)



[Mitchell County Website](#)

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

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Our next SVED meeting will be October 19th, 2017 at 12:30pm at  
**The Porter House - 209 East Main Street, Beloit.**