



Winter Edition 2010

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### **Business Enhancement Grant**

Do you need assistance with your marketing expenses? See the featured article for important new changes in the Business Enhancement Grant.

### **Simply Kansas Receptions**

Simply Kansas products were featured at several recent events. See the feature article for all the details!

## **Agritourism Business Development Course Coming to South Central Kansas**

The five-part agritourism business development course, *Agritourism: Your Next Cash Crop?* will be making its next stop in Pratt, KS in February. The course is designed for those considering starting an agritourism venture to learn how to get started and have a successful business. Even existing agritourism businesses will find valuable information that will help to grow and expand current operations. The course consists of five sessions, each covering important aspects of an agritourism business, from targeting your customer and pricing your product to managing risk.

Two free informational sessions will be held Jan. 6 for those who want to learn more about the full course. The first session will be held in Wellington, KS from 1 to 3 p.m., with the second session in Medicine Lodge, KS from 6 to 8 p.m. (Meeting locations will be determined very soon.)

The full course will be held at Pratt Community College on Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24 and March 3. The registration fee for the full course is \$75. Additional information about the courses and on-line registration will be available after Dec. 12 at [KansasAgritourism.com](http://KansasAgritourism.com). For further details, contact Becki Rhoades at (785) 296-1847 or [brhoades@kansascommerce.com](mailto:brhoades@kansascommerce.com).

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## **Business Enhancement Grant Program Update**

As we reported in the Fall 2010 Edition, we have removed the application due dates for the Business Enhancement Grant (formerly January 15th, April 15th, June 15th and October 15th) and are now accepting applications at any time. All applications received before May 25th of any year will be considered for funding in the current fiscal year. Applications received after that date will be considered for funding in the following fiscal year. For example, any application submitted between May 25, 2010 and May 25, 2011 will be considered for funding in fiscal year 2011. Applications received after May 25, 2011 will be

**Point of Sale Materials**  
Stickers, shelf-hangers, banners, aprons and bags are available for purchase. Download the order form at [SimplyKansas.com](http://SimplyKansas.com) under the Member Benefits tab.

### **Simply Kansas Calendar**

Members can place their events on the Simply Kansas calendar. This is yet another way to promote activities and events. E-mail calendar items to: [ruraldev@kansascommerce.com](mailto:ruraldev@kansascommerce.com) to be added to the page.

considered for funding in fiscal year 2012.

Please keep in mind, you must be a Simply Kansas member in good standing for at least six months before applying for grant funding and each company is limited to total cumulative grant funding of \$7,500. Projects must be new ventures and/or an expansion of current marketing efforts to qualify for funding. Application may be made for a single project or as a combination of business enhancements and/or marketing efforts. Funds can be used for:

- Business consulting fees
- Marketing consulting fees and/or efforts
- Web site development or expansion
- Brochure or catalog development
- Tradeshow displays, signage and/or decorations
- Other business enhancement expenses deemed appropriate by the Department of Commerce Rural Development staff

Visit [SimplyKansas.com](http://SimplyKansas.com) (Member Benefits tab) for complete program guidelines as well as the application form.

As always, we appreciate your membership in the Simply Kansas program and look forward to assisting you with your business enhancement endeavors. If you have questions on the BEG application process, please contact Mari Tucker at (785) 296-6080 or [mtucker@kansascommerce.com](mailto:mtucker@kansascommerce.com).

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## **Food Export Midwest**

As a service to our Kansas companies, the Rural Development Division has membership in the Food Export Midwest Association. Food Export Midwest is a private, non-profit international trade organization whose members are state agricultural promotion agencies. The members work with producers, including small and medium-sized producers in the Midwest, with a focus on products that are value-added and consumer-oriented. Members promote services to the companies within their state.



With 95% of the world's consumers beyond the U.S. border, exporting provides an extraordinary opportunity to expand your business. In addition, companies that export are 8.5% less likely to go out of business. Food Export Association of the Midwest USA (Food Export - Midwest) is dedicated to promoting the increase of U.S. food and agricultural exports.

No matter your level of exporting expertise, Food Export Midwest has a service available to assist you. The Exporter Education services provide continued educational opportunities on a variety of exporting subjects. The Market Entry services

help your company determine the best prospective international markets for your products and meet qualified buyers. Lastly, the Market Promotion programs support your company's international presence through financial assistance of your overseas marketing efforts.

Contact Food Export Midwest at [exportinfo@foodexport.org](mailto:exportinfo@foodexport.org) or (312) 334-9200 to learn how exporting can benefit your company and how you can participate in Food Export programs and services. Visit the [Activities Page](#) to view all the Food Export Midwest services.

For additional information on the program, contact Becki Rhoades at [brhoades@kansascommerce.com](mailto:brhoades@kansascommerce.com) or (785) 296-1847.

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## Training Opportunities



Kansas Main Street, a program of the Kansas Department of Commerce, has been in the business of assisting communities across Kansas improve their central business districts for 25 years. As a service to the member communities, the Kansas Main Street staff provides quarterly training workshops which show the trends, tools and best practices of successful businesses and communities from around the country. While the training is targeted to communities, much of the information is also relevant to individual businesses. As a Simply Kansas company, you are eligible to attend these quarterly training sessions for a nominal fee.

Topics covered during quarterly training in the past year included:

### PROMOTION 2.0

Engaging Businesses in Promotional Events and Activities -- Getting businesses to participate in promotional events and activities can sometimes be a struggle. It is important to connect with them in the promotional process. Discover the realities of the promotion planning committee's expectations and learn the top 10 ways to engage them in your program.

Marketing, Branding and Image Campaigns -- Learn the value of branding and marketing, methods to improve downtown's image, promoting the district as a whole and developing a consistent image throughout the organization.

Retail Events That Work! -- Retail sales and events often take a backseat to special events and festivals but businesses need customers walking through their doors spending money. This session examined the most successful events being conducted by other downtowns across the country, with an emphasis on creating retail "experiences."

Measuring the Success of Your Promotional Events and Activities --And finally, how do you measure the success of any promotional event or activity that your downtown program conducts? How do you squeeze dollars out of these events and activities to support the overall downtown program?

## TOOL BOX FOR MARKETING & PROMOTION SUCCESS

- So I have a website - now what?
- Connecting traditional media with new media
- Effective e-mail marketing
- Creating a comprehensive marketing plan

## DESIGN THAT SELLS - WEBINAR

An age-old challenge for Main Street Programs and design committees is how to "sell" design improvements to downtown businesses and property owners. This webinar provided some possible solutions to this dilemma. Even more importantly, this webinar addressed the important fact that the right investment in design improvement will result in increased sales.

The next quarterly training session will be held in Ottawa, KS on January 20th. For further details on the training or to register for the session, please contact Mary M. Helmer, Kansas Main Street Assistant State Coordinator at [mhelmer@kansascommerce.com](mailto:mhelmer@kansascommerce.com) or (785) 296-3485.

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## Simply Kansas Event Grant Update

The Simply Kansas Event Grant (detailed in the Summer Edition) has been activated and we are receiving applications for a variety of events. Applicants are required to feature at least three Simply Kansas products in their event. As such, you may notice an increase in demand for your products. In an effort to assist applicants with requesting bids for their events, we have created a Simply Kansas Event Request for Bid form. A sample form may be found on [SimplyKansas.com](http://SimplyKansas.com) under the "Event Planning" tab. If you are contacted to provide product for an event, please remember to respond in a timely manner!

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## Simply Kansas Receptions

As a service to our member companies, we routinely host Simply Kansas receptions at agency events. These receptions are a wonderful way to showcase the great Kansas food products and provide an opportunity for attendees to sample product.

During the past quarter, Simply Kansas receptions were held at the Kansas State Fair (Hutchinson), the Kansas Energy Conference (Wichita), the Kansas Tourism Conference (Kansas

City), the Kansas Broadband Summit (Wichita), the Kansas Main Street Annual Conference (Hutchinson) and Kansas MarketPlace (Dodge City). Non-food products (goat milk soap and tea light candles) were incorporated as table centerpieces during the MarketPlace luncheon.

At each reception, attendees are given a menu which lists the items featured in the reception, as well as details on using Simply Kansas product in an event. In addition, the menu is displayed on easel signage and products on the reception table are identified with table tents.

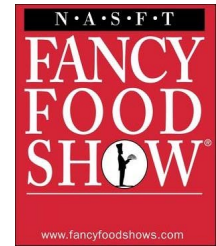
We strive to include a variety of products. If you would like to have your product(s) included in an upcoming reception, please contact Mari Tucker at [mtucker@kansascommerce.com](mailto:mtucker@kansascommerce.com) or (785) 296-6080.

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## **It May Be Cold Outside, but Plan Now for the Summer Fancy Food Show!**

Even though the Winter Fancy Food Show hasn't taken place, it is already time to start thinking about being a part of the Kansas Pavilion at the Summer Fancy Food Show in Washington, D.C.

Are you ready to take your food business to the next level? Do you feel your product is right for the specialty and gourmet market? The Fancy Food Show may be just the place to meet the buyers who can make a huge impact on your business. There are several steps to prepare for exhibiting at this event. It is important to start the process now to ensure you reap all the benefits available to you as an exhibitor. If you'd like to request an information packet or if you have questions about joining the Kansas Pavilion at the Summer Fancy Food Show, contact Becki Rhoades at (785) 296-1847 or [brhoades@kansascommerce.com](mailto:brhoades@kansascommerce.com).



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The following article is the final installment, contributed by David Mace, in a four-part series designed to give you a process for bringing your product to market, pricing it, choosing a distribution channel and promoting it. This installment is entitled:

### **Promoting your Kansas-made product**

After putting in the blood, sweat and tears to get the right product priced right and into the right distribution channel(s), the real fun begins. It's time to think about the best way to promote your product. After all, if nobody knows about your product, you won't have any customers.

The biggest mistake we see new marketers make is writing checks to media companies and advertising agencies without first formulating

some kind of plan. You will stand a better chance of spending the right amount of money in the right promotional areas if you have a strategy in mind.

The three pillars of your plan are:

- Who you are talking to?
- What are you going to say?
- Where should you be having the conversation?

Let's look at each of these foundational elements in detail.

Who are you talking to?

After developing your product, you probably have some idea about who wants to buy your product. But different people buy for different reasons. And one customer might have very different needs when it comes to stocking the shelf versus purchasing your product as a gift. Before you buy that radio spot or Web banner ad, make sure you take the time to identify the who, what, where, when, how and why for the various types of customers who will purchase your product. A survey or even an informal focus group can go a long way toward educating you about your customers.

What are you going to say?

Ever have one of those conversations where you felt like the other person did nothing but talk about themselves? Irritating after awhile, eh? Well, savvy marketers know that customers would much rather "talk" about themselves when it comes to promotions. That's why the pistachio promotion board has started using celebrities doing funny things with pistachios. It's more fun to imagine ourselves having fun cracking open pistachios than to have someone telling us we should eat the little suckers because they're good for us.

Where should you be having the conversation?

I'm fond of saying that the grocery store or the newspaper might not be the best place to reach my wife, who does most of the shopping. She's just as likely to be making her grocery list while she rides the stationary bike at the gym or puts on her makeup. So, my challenge to you is to find out how to get into those places where your customers are thinking about your type of product. It might be online. It might be a radio sponsorship for a college sports team. It could be Facebook, which is a fantastic way for word of mouth about great products to spread quickly. Or, it might be just speaking to organizations and doing interviews with news outlets and lifestyle publications. You don't necessarily have to spend a fortune.

David Mace is assistant director for the Wichita State University Kansas Small Business Development Center.

Visit the [KSBDC](#) website to find a consultant near you.

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