



Spring 2010

Simply...Marketing

The Kansas Rural Center and Kansas Department of Commerce will host a series of direct marketing workshops for agricultural producers beginning April 27 at locations across Kansas.

The workshops are designed for all farmers and agricultural producers who are looking to expand their business through direct marketing. The sessions will include: business planning, food safety, value-added opportunities, marketing principles, and agritourism.

April 27: Dodge City
May 5: Marysville
May 10: Independence
May 12: Lawrence
May 13: Newton

All workshops are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. On-line registration is available at www.ksfarmersmarkets.org/producers/events. Advance registration is recommended. For more information, contact Mercedes Taylor-Puckett at (785) 840-6202 or mercedes.taylorpuckett@gmail.com.

National Tourism Week Opportunities

May 8-16 is National Tourism Week. National Tourism Week is a collective effort to promote the power of travel through customized events in communities nationwide. The goal is to enhance the country's economy, security and perception, and recognize the cultural and social benefits created by travel and tourism.

The Kansas Dept. of Commerce (KDOC) Travel & Tourism Division has several activities planned for National Tourism Week, including "Taste of Kansas" at the state-operated Travel Information Centers in Goodland and Belle Plaine. Travelers who visit these centers will have an opportunity to sample Kansas foods and win Kansas prizes. This event will be on Kansas Travel Rally Day, Tuesday, May 11, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This is an opportunity for companies to showcase Kansas products to hundreds of in- and out-of-state travelers they might not reach otherwise. In addition, the KDOC Travel & Tourism Division will help promote your products through inclusion on the

www.travelks.com Web site, a media release and other event-driven media opportunities that may arise.

If you are interested in providing free samples of your products or prizes for the "Taste of Kansas" event, contact Andrea Johnson at ajohnson@kansascommerce.com for more information or to donate products.

Did You Know?

Simply Kansas Reception—Simply Kansas products were recently featured at the Heartland By-Ways Conference.

Point of Sale Materials—Stickers, shelf-hangers, banners and bags are available for purchase. Download the order form at SimplyKansas.com under the Member Benefits tab.

Simply Kansas Calendar—Members can place their events on the Simply Kansas calendar. This is one more way to promote activities and events. E-mail calendar items to: ruraldev@kansascommerce.com to be added to the page.

Business Enhancement Grant—the next BEG application deadline is July 15.

A Customer-Driven Approach to Product Development

When it comes to creating a product people will love, it's easy for us to believe that our particular salsa recipe, pie crust or piece of home décor is head and shoulders above the rest. In many cases, that's what our family and friends have been telling us. We might even have received some confirmation from the marketplace. But to ensure that our products are sustainable, we must continually consult the most important judge: the consumer.

There are several methods of information gathering to make sure your product is on target. Here are a few:

-Conduct a survey of 50 to 100 consumers within your target set. Include questions that compare your product to others.

-Do an exhaustive search to make certain that what you're doing is radically different than the other products being offered. Be tough on yourself.

-Look at overall consumer trends. What's happening in food and beverage and fashion? What about consumer spending?

-Think about the lifestyle your business venture will require. Do you have the space, time, and other things you will need to produce this product?

-Do a blind taste test of your product vs. all relevant competitors. Make it fun. Have a tasting party for friends. Listen to your critics. Take time to think about the suggestions. Try not to make decisions quickly.

-Once you're in business, make sure to continually solicit feedback from your customers and dealers. Facebook, the Internet and e-mail are great ways to get this information.

Consulting services are provided by the Kansas Small Business Development Center at no cost. Learn at www.kansas.gov/ksbdc.

Simply Kansas at the 2010 Kansas State Fair

Once again, Simply Kansas will take center stage in the Bluestem Building at the Kansas State Fair. This year, we are offering Simply Kansas companies the opportunity to "try out" the State Fair. If you have ever wondered how your product(s) would fare at the state fair, this opportunity is for you.

Each day, one Simply Kansas company will be the featured company of the day. The company will be able to sample and sell their products to "test the market." Spaces will be reserved on a first-come-first-served basis. The 2010 Kansas State Fair is Sept. 10-19 in Hutchinson.

Can you answer "YES" to any of the questions below?

1. I want to TEST the Kansas State Fair market for my product(s).
2. I have never exhibited at the Kansas State Fair before.
3. My products are packaged for consumers to take home.

If you answered yes, contact J.J. Jones to reserve your space (785) 296-3174 or jjones@kansascommerce.com.

Simply Kansas Web site Tip

Have you looked at your listing on the Simply Kansas On-line directory? Are you listed in all the appropriate categories? Do you have events to post on the Simply Kansas calendar?

The SimplyKansas.com site can be an excellent resource for information and promoting your products and experiences. Visit the site periodically to see various updates. Be sure to check out all the new ways consumers can search, too!

For more information about marketing opportunities, contact:

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