



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Kansas Travel and Tourism launches new Web site

The Kansas Department of Commerce Travel and Tourism Division has launched a new Web site just in time for the summer travel season. Capitalizing on the fact that more than 70 percent of travelers are now using the Internet to plan their trips, Kansas Travel and Tourism has undertaken a complete overhaul of its www.travelks.com Web site and is now able to market the state over the Internet in ways it never has in the past.

Key features of the new Internet site include:

- An easy-to-use trip planner that allows the consumer to custom-design a trip
- Interactive mapping of destination locations
- Advanced search technology
- More photography throughout the site, including the ability for communities to post photos with each individual attraction and event

"We are extremely excited about the new travelks.com Web site and know that the commitment made will pay dividends for Kansas," explained Becky Blake, director of tourism for the Kansas Department of Commerce Travel and Tourism Division. "This project is the culmination of many months of work by the entire tourism industry and we are pleased with the results. In addition to all the new features and design, we will now be able to provide personal, relevant, and timely information to travelers."

The trip planner is an important new feature of the Web site and allows consumers the opportunity to custom design a trip. Visitors can either select an individual city and activities within a pre-determined radius or select themed areas of interest and discover places across the state that offer unique travel experiences. Pre-planned travel itineraries are also posted on-line and offer a variety of Kansas Ready Made Adventures ranging from western heritage to outdoor experiences.

Key sections of the 2006 Official Kansas Visitors Guide are also posted online. These stories give visitors a comprehensive look at the state's tourist attractions, towns and people that make a visit to Kansas a memorable one. Sections focus on one-of-a-kind travel experiences ranging from Secrets of the Flint Hills, home of the famed tallgrass prairie, to the land of Famous Kansans, from Ike (Eisenhower) to Amelia (Earhart). The Treasure Hunt section encourages visitors to venture off the Interstate and discover the real Kansas with out-of-the-way antique shops, local specialties and craftsmen. Elbow Room showcases just how vast and varied the landscape is for visitors to discover here, from the red-colored buttes of the Gypsum

Hills and the state's famed wetlands to the bison ranges and working ranches where visitors become cowboys, if only for a day or two.

Important links to other organizations involved in making the visitor experience a positive one are now included on the Web site. Consumers can browse stories from the recent Kansas! magazine, get up-to-date road information from the Kansas Department of Transportation, find an RV or camping spot and even check on the weather in cities across the state from Goodland to Atchison.

With more foreign travelers visiting Kansas, the new Web site has several sections geared to the international visitor. Order forms for the 2006 Visitors Guide are offered in three languages—Spanish, French and German. There is also a section with important information for international visitors traveling in Kansas, including tips on driving laws, tipping suggestions, what to wear, climate and a listing of traveler services.

A newsroom was also added to the Web site for the first time. Themed press releases and up-to-date news releases will be posted on the site, making it easier for travel media to find story ideas on Kansas.

Funding for www.travelks.com is provided by the Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF), which is derived from state lottery proceeds, and the Kansas Department of Transportation Blue Sign program.

Chamber luncheon series to bring national business officials to Lawrence

Three national business figures will bring important information to Lawrence about today's business climate during a series of Chamber luncheon speeches in May.

- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Chair Maura Donahue will speak at a Chamber of Commerce Luncheon on Tuesday, May 2, about issues affecting businesses across the country.
- Boeing Commercial Airplanes President and CEO Alan Mulalley will speak at a Chamber of Commerce Luncheon on Tuesday, May 16, and tell the amazing story of how Boeing was resurrected.
- Westar Energy President and CEO Jim Haines will discuss ethics in busi-

ness at a Chamber of Commerce Luncheon on Wednesday, May 31.

"This luncheon series gives our members the opportunity to interact with business professionals they would not ordinarily have access to," said Cathy Lewis, Lawrence Chamber of Commerce vice president, membership. "We are pleased to bring them to Lawrence, especially Mr. Mulalley, who is a Lawrence native."

The luncheons will be sponsored by Morgan Stanley and held at SpringHill Suites by Marriott. Cost is \$25 to Chamber members for each speech, with lunch provided. Registration deadlines are April 27 for the Donahue speech, May 11 for Mulalley, and May 25 for Haines. Registration is available online at www.lawrencechamber.com or by calling the Chamber at 865-4411.

For more information, please contact Cathy Lewis at clewis@lawrencechamber.com, 865-4406, or Julie Mettenburg at jmettenburg@lawrencechamber.com, 785-865-4483.

Chamber to hold 'Parties in the Park'

Mark your calendars and bring your family to hear live bands and enjoy family fun with food vendors, beer sales, and an activity center for kids during the Chamber of Commerce's Parties in the Park this summer.

From 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month throughout the summer, Parties in the Park will provide a fun evening of entertainment for the whole family.

Parties in the Park dates throughout the summer are:

- Thursday, May 25
- Thursday, June 22
- Thursday, July 22
- Thursday, August 27

Parties in the Park will also promote the Chamber's "Start Here" campaign, which encourages starting in Lawrence and Douglas County for shopping, service, volunteering, education and more. Keeping dollars local helps build a stronger community by investing in our infrastructure and economy.

Parties in the Park are also sponsored by 1320 KLWN/Lazer 105.9 and O'Malley Beverage of Kansas Inc.

For more information, please contact Cathy Lewis at clewis@lawrencechamber.com, 865-4406, or Julie Mettenburg at jmettenburg@lawrencechamber.com, 865-4483.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Kaw Valley Small Business Monthly would like to congratulate the Leadership Lawrence Class of 2006:

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GUEST COLUMN

Health insurance: Price transparency is the answer

By Scott Day

I am writing in response to the guest column written by Mr. Kenneth Daniel in the April edition of *Kaw Valley Small Business Monthly*, which left me with the feeling that there is very little that can be done to solve our current health care crisis. I am a co-owner of Day Insurance Solutions, LLC, a health insurance agency located in Ozawkie, KS. I co-authored the bill HB 3011: Kansas Health Care Price Transparency Act with Representative Kenny Wilk, R-Lansing, which was introduced late in the 2006 Legislative session and had a late hearing with the House of Representatives Committee on Health & Human Services.

HB 3011 introduced the concept of "Health Care Price Transparency." Though I would like to take credit for this simple, but powerful concept, I have to defer to President George Bush and his Health Care Reform Agenda where "Price Transparency" is one of his top priorities. This bill would require most medical facilities to publish their lowest rate for any given medical procedure. So...how will publishing the cost of medical procedures lower the cost of health care, and thus health insurance? By introducing the great American concept of market competition to the medical field.

Benefits of "Health Care Price Transparency"

Consistent price information for our citizens. In our current system, there are a variety of prices that you may be billed depending on your situation: a) the uninsured - there are no price constraints on this group. You can be billed any amount the provider wants for its services. Usually, most providers will discount their services, but they are not required to; b) the insured, IN network patient - medical providers accept the negotiated rate from the insurance company or Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) network as paid in full; c) the insured, OUT of network patient - medical providers have no price constraints on this group. Insurance companies pay a lower percentage of the cost and the patient is balance billed for everything insurance did not pay; and d) the CASH paying patient - most medi-

cal providers will accept a lower rate for services if you have the ability to make a lump sum payment. Health care is the only industry in America where the cost is not known until AFTER the service has been performed. All recipients of health care services will benefit from consistent pricing practices.

Lower utilization of services. Our current system of health care dramatically hides the true cost of medical procedures from our citizenry. Low deductibles, low office visit co-pays, and low prescription drug co-pays hide these costs to the consumer. Since consumers only worry about their actual costs, they don't CARE how much it costs, as long as insurance pays for it. This concept has fostered and encouraged the over utilization of the health care system. Higher utilization equals higher insurance premiums.

The low deductible, low co-pay plans are disappearing fast. Employers are moving towards higher deductibles, higher co-pays, fewer benefits, and towards HSA qualified plans. Employees are becoming cost conscience on their health benefits. Higher utilization will decline to necessary utilization, which means less demand for services.

Competition for services lowers health care costs. Health care is one of the rare industries in the United States where economic market forces are not a factor in regulating price control. In our current system, hospitals compete with each other to offer the most advanced (and most expensive) technologies. This technology costs money, so hospital systems encourage the use of these technologies. Insurance pays for most of the cost, so everybody is happy. But, high utilization of costly technologies is a major cause of medical inflation and higher insurance premiums.

As consumers compare the cost of these technologies and inquire about affordable alternatives, competition and less demand will begin to lower the cost for these services. We have already seen a steady growth of outpatient surgery centers, outpatient MRI centers, and urgent care centers which offer lesser known, but more affordable services. Even Walmart and Hy-Vee have announced plans to offer low cost clinics in their stores.

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KAW VALLEY **Small Business** MONTHLY

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SMALL BUSINESS PROFILE

Creager strives to become Lawrence's premiere furniture builder

BY KEVIN GROENHAGEN

Some boys dream of becoming astronauts when they grow up. Others dream of becoming firefighters or police officers. Unfortunately, most childhood dreams fall by the wayside. That's not the case with Dave Creager.

"My grandpa had a workshop and the first time I walked into it, I knew that's what I wanted to do," Creager said. "Whenever we visited him in Oklahoma, he would teach me something about woodworking. I also took all the workshop classes available when I was in high school."

In addition, Creager worked with a master craftsman several years ago

"That's where I really learned how to build high-end furniture," Creager said.

Creager, a Topeka native, came to Lawrence to attend college, and then decided this is where he wanted to live. He has been building high-end furniture for about a decade, and launched Creager Fine Furniture and Cabinets—a home-based business—two years ago. Creager's wife, Laura, is also self-employed and the two businesspeople work together to take care of their two preschoolers.

A few years ago, Creager tried the retail route when he had a business partner, but he soon discovered he preferred working directly with clients.

"We placed a few pieces downtown in one of the shops, but it was too expensive for people," he explained.

In addition to the lower cost, work-

ing directly with clients allows Creager to design furniture in accordance with their tastes and desires.

"As far as the design of a client's furniture, the sky's the limit," Creager said. "I don't like to impose my particular tastes on folks. For example, if they want French Country, that's what they get. I have some clients who come to me and they know exactly what they want. If someone comes with a picture of what they want, that's no problem. That just makes my job easier. However, a lot of the time I enjoy it when someone comes with an idea, but they want to work together on the design. There are also times when a client might say, for example, 'I want a corner entertainment center,' and leave the design to me."

Furniture pieces Creager has designed and built in his basement shop include hutches, tables, chairs, entertainment centers, end tables, armoires, mantels, humidors, and even a baptismal font. He also repairs furniture.

"I fix so many kitchen chairs you wouldn't believe it," Creager said. "It's usually just because the glue has gotten old."

While furniture building is by far his



Dave Creager

main emphasis, Creager does not limit his work to furniture.

"I like to do anything out of wood,"

Creager said. "I like to dabble with it all. For example, I have a friend from col-

CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE

From the Creager Fine Furniture and Cabinets Workshop



Inverted Pyramid End Table



Mahogany Headboard with Quilted Mahogany Bookmatch Panels



Cherry Humidor

Creager

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

lege who I make body-piercing jewelry for."

Thus far, Creager has made two runs of ear plugs for his friend. Individuals with stretched earlobe piercings can wear the larger gauge ear plugs. Creager used woods such as cherry, maple, Osage orange, and madrone burrow in his second run, which will be on display at the Association of Professional Piercers Conference and Exposition in Las Vegas during the first week of May.

Creager also began incorporating woodcarving into some of his pieces after buying tools at an auction six months ago.

"I'm not by any means a professional woodcarver," Creager said. "I've just gotten into it. But I do like carving. It's all done by hand, but no matter what

project I've done, I've always ended up using some kind of hand tool on it."

Creager's plans for the near future include an above ground shop out of the house.

"I'd also like to have one or two guys working with me," Creager added. "It's not that I want employees. In fact, I really don't want employees. What I want is to bring someone in, teach him what I know and, hopefully, contribute our ideas for projects together. What I miss the most when I work alone is not having someone to collaborate with.

I'm constantly going upstairs and asking Laura, 'What do you think of this?' or 'What do you think of that?' It also wouldn't be bad to have an apprentice to do a lot of the labor-intensive work I do."

Looking a bit further into the future, Creager has another goal for his business.

"I'm trying to build a legacy here—something for my kids," Creager said. "I want to teach them how to work with wood. They'll be starting out in a full-production shop."

They'll also be learning from someone who truly enjoys his work.

"Working with your hands is satisfying work," Creager said. "I enjoy the idea of seeing a project through. That's really important to me. I don't want anything to leave here until I know it's exactly what the client ordered. So far—knock on wood—everyone has been happy."

For more information about Creager Fine Furniture and Cabinets, please call 785-842-6935 or e-mail creagerfurniture@sunflower.com.

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OPENINGS

NETisc brings IT solutions to small businesses

BY BILLIE DAVID

Lawrence businessmen Kevin Hett and Steve Riedl have some good news for small-business owners who need help setting up a computing environment that is not only convenient and secure, but also affordable.

Hett and Riedl opened NETisc last July specifically to help small- and medium-sized businesses—those with fewer than 50 employees—that can't afford to hire their own information technology (IT) person.

"Our goal is to provide the customer with cost-effective IT solutions: e-mail services, network setup, file and print services, data management and overall IT management," Hett explained.

Target companies could purchase a package deal somewhere else, but those packages aren't personalized, and customers often end up buying packages they don't need, Hett said adding, "It's more expensive that way."

Riedl, who has been friends with Hett since 1997 when they worked together at Microtech, agreed.

"Small businesses, in order to com-

pete in today's world, need to be able to keep up. We are getting information technology into their hands," he said.

That's why, after Hett recently returned to Lawrence after a four-year stint in Colorado, the two friends decided to open NETisc.

"Steve and I are both in the IT field and we were working in the corporate world," Hett said. "We put our heads together and thought we'd give it a shot."

"We had reached a point in our careers where we decided we could make a difference with small businesses," Riedl added.

NETisc offers consulting services for designing an office network infrastructure that facilitates communications and provides centralized file/print services. The new business also provides training and ensures safety via a backup procedure and security management. In addi-

KEVIN GROENHAGEN PHOTO



Kevin Hett and Steve Riedl

tion, administration is provided through a one-call help desk system and onsite maintenance. And NETisc helps minimize risk by implementing a customized security plan designed to fit the specific needs of each particular business.

"It's hard to find people to provide

technology at an affordable rate," Hett said, explaining why he believes that his company will succeed. "We want to provide it to customers who couldn't otherwise afford it."

For more information about NETisc, please visit www.netisc.com.

Business offers customized approach to promotional products

BY BILLIE DAVID

After working for a decade and a half in the apparel and promotional products industry, local entrepreneur Matt Lomshek decided it was time to harness technology to his line of work and turn his attention toward direct marketing through the Internet rather than relying on sales representatives working out in the field.

"Direct marketing will be my main focus," said Lomshek, who previously owned Sun Promotions, a business that merged with Midwest Graphics in 2003. "I will be launching Web sites that cater to specific businesses."

With this goal in mind, Lomshek started the new Lawrence-based business We Promote Companies, which differs from other distributors that typically do not match specific products to

their respective industries.

We Promote Companies will inform customers about products suited to their particular needs through a three-pronged approach: a Web sites program, custom catalogues and direct mailing.

Lomshek explained that these customized overtures will alert clients in the different sectors—such as schools, banks, doctors, dentists, churches and businesses—to products and packages

that pertain to them individually, saving them the effort of pouring over the numerous ideas that they may find in catalogues aimed at businesses in general.

The Web sites wepromoteschools.com, for example, will appeal to college admission departments, alumni and endowment offices and school booster clubs. A similar Web sites—wepromotebanks.com—will cater to the needs of bank personnel such as presidents, human resource directors and tradeshow sponsor members. Other Web sites include wepromotedentists.com, wepromotechurche.com, wepromotedoctors.com and wepromotecompanies.com. The Web sites should be live some time during May.

"Basically, this company was started to do marketing direct," Lomshek explained. "The companies submit their orders online and we produce the prod-

ucts and ship them to their company."

The products are decorated and imprinted with company logos by specialty suppliers that market these products exclusively through distributors like We Promote Companies. The recipients in turn use the items to introduce new salespeople and products, promote branch openings, move inventory, improve customer relations, promote new facilities, build new images, and motivate salespeople, employees and consumers.

In conjunction with the Web sites approach, We Promote Companies will distribute customized flyers showcasing the available products. Customers will then have the option of ordering through the flyers, placing their orders through industry-specific catalogues, or accessing the new We Promote Business Web sites.

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To learn more about advertising opportunities with *Senior Monthly*, call Kevin at 785-841-9417 or send an e-mail to rates@seniormonthly.net



Guest column

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

Competition lowers costs!

Decline in our reliance upon insurance companies to negotiate & regulate medical provider's costs. Our current system developed as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's), Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO's), and insurance companies negotiated medical rates with health care providers in an attempt to regulate and control costs. This has developed into a confusing system of pricing schedules that was previously discussed. As competition lowers the cost of health care, we will not need to rely upon the insurance companies to negotiate lower rates. Nor will we worry if services are IN network or OUT of network.

The Kansas Hospital Association (KHA) and the Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine (KAOM) have lined up against this bill. The KHA pro-

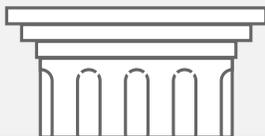
fesses to be for 'price transparency', but against the KS Legislature's involvement. The KHA prefers to have the Kansas Health Policy Authority that was created by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to develop the "price transparency" guidelines. If you take a look at the Authority, you will see that many of its members are medical CEOs. I have serious doubts about this group's ability to produce true "price transparency."

The Kansas Health Care Price Transparency Act had a late hearing and is too big of an issue to pass out of committee in 2006. But, this will be a hotly debated issue in 2007. There is growing interest in the Legislature about this subject, but not enough. Let your legislators know if you are interested in "price transparency."

*For complete copies of the testimony on HB 3011, the Kansas Health Care Price Transparency Act, go to <http://dayinsurancesolutions.com> and click on the Kansas Health Care Price Transparency Act link.

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CALENDAR

NETWORKING

• **Altrusa International, Inc. of Lawrence.** International association of business executives and professionals who volunteer their energies and expertise in projects dedicated to community betterment. Meets first and third Wednesdays each month at the Hereford House; Socializing at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m., program at 7:00 p.m. For more information, call Nancy Hambleton at 785-838-4982.

• **American Business Women's Association, Lawrence Express Network.** Provides businesswomen opportunities to grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking support and national recognition. Meets at 11:30 a.m. on fourth Thursday of each month at Hereford House. For more information, call Autumn Weiss at 785-749-0316 or e-mail autumn@sunflower.com

• **American Business Women's Association, Twilight Chapter.** Provides businesswomen opportunities to grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking support and national recognition. Meets at 6:30 p.m. on third Monday of each month. For more information, call Julie Kingsbury at 785-841-3466.

• **Business Network International, Nova Chapter.** BNI is a business and professional networking organization that offers members the opportunity to share ideas, contacts and most importantly, referrals. Group meets every Thursday at 7:30 a.m. For more information, call Thomas Howe at 785-550-1169.

• **Douglas County Connection.** DCC is a devoted group of local professionals dedicated to the promotion and growth of the businesses owned by the DCC members. DCC meets every Wednesday at 7:00 a.m. For more information, call Valerie Grose at 785-393-9809.

• **Lawrence Apple User's Group 2.0.** Meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Signs of Life Bookstore's community room at 722 Massachusetts St. in Lawrence. Meetings are always free and questions are always welcome, even if it isn't about the topic being discussed. A door prize will also be given out to an attendee. Go to <http://www.laugks.org> for more info or contact Dave Greenbaum at dsg@mac.com to be notified of upcoming meetings.

• **Lawrence Area Coalition to Honor End-of-Life Choices.** Works with 31 other Kansas communities to help all Kansans live with dignity, comfort and peace at the end-of-life, regardless of age. Members have backgrounds in healthcare, pastoral care, senior citizens' services, funeral home care, library and educational services. Meets at 3:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month in Conference Room E of LMH. For more information, call 785-830-8130.

• **Lawrence Area Partners in Aging.** Networking group meets first Thursday of each month at Jade Mongolian Barbeque, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Call Kim or Laura at 785-842-0656 for more information.

• **Lawrence Business Exchange.** Objectives are to institute and maintain a method of collecting, recording and exchanging business information for and between its members, and encourage trade expansion for the benefit of its members. Meets for lunch at noon on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. For more information, call Larry Northrop at 785-842-3535.

• **Lawrence Women's Network.** Gives women a chance to expand their knowledge about business, become exposed to new ideas, and cultivate contacts for networking

in the community. Meets at noon on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at various restaurants. For more information, call Rusty Thomas at 785-856-6262.

• **Young Professionals Network.** Gives workers in their 20s and 30s a chance to discuss the personal and professional issues they share as relative newcomers to the business community. Meets on the second Friday of each month at different host bars. For more information, call Bobbie Clark at 785-865-4483.

RIBBON CUTTINGS/ OPEN HOUSES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

• **Old World Pottery,** 1918 E. 23rd, Ste. B, 4:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce.

THURSDAY, MAY 11

• **Boeing Credit Union,** 4821 W. 6th, Ste. B. Open house for the credit union, 11:30 a.m. Sponsored by the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

• **Automated Billing Services,** This will be at the Chamber office, 734 Vermont, Ste. 101, 11:30 a.m. Sponsored by the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

• **O'Malley's Beverage,** 2050 Packer Ct., This is a ribbon cutting but also the Business After Hours for the month, 4:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce.

SEMINARS/CLASSES

WEDNESDAYS, MAY 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

• **Mentoring Roundtables.** Offered and presented by the Kansas Women's Business Center. These peer-to-peer mentoring roundtables are designed for women to share ideas, take part in creative brainstorming, network, create a support system and increase confidence. Topics addressed include marketing, public relations, cash flow, HR and strategic planning. Our goal is for women business owners to come in with issues and concerns and leave with ideas and solutions. For more information on the application process and fee structure, contact Kelly Pruneau, Client Services Manager, kpruneau@KansasWBC.com.

TUESDAY, MAY 9

• **The Right Start.** Pathways Seminar offered by the University of Kansas Small Business Development Center and the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce. Interested in starting a business? New to business ownership and looking for an overview of the process? This introductory seminar covers a wide range of topics including registering your business, legal structures, taxes, insurance, business planning, accounting, financing and marketing. A fast-paced introduction to the topics of business ownership. An extensive notebook is included. KU-SBDC Conference Room. 4:00-6:00 p.m. Fee. Please call 785-843-8844 to register, or e-mail the KU-KSBDC at maggie32@ku.edu.

TUESDAY, MAY 16

• **Exploring Entrepreneurial Options.** Offered and presented by the Kansas Women's Business Center. If you're thinking about becoming an Entrepreneur, but are not certain of your options, join KWBC as they bring in experts in Franchising, Purchasing an Existing Business and Understanding & Choosing a Direct Selling or Network Marketing Business. You'll leave knowing there are quite a few options in addition to starting up a business from scratch. 6:30 p.m.

Fee. To register, call 913-492-5922 or e-mail kpruneau@KansasWBC.com.

THURSDAY, MAY 18

• **KWBC Orientation.** Offered and presented by the Kansas Women's Business Center. This one-hour session is designed to introduce you to the Kansas Women's Business Center, the services we provide, and information on starting or growing your business. Kelly Pruneau, Client Services Manager, will cover resources available through the Center as well as other resources. Start-up and growth questions will be answered, and you will receive an information packet and a plan of action for developing business skills. 9:00 a.m. Free. To register, call 913-492-5922 or e-mail kpruneau@KansasWBC.com.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

• **The Small Biz Tune Up.** Pathways Seminar offered by the University of Kansas Small Business Development Center and the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce. This class is recommended for any small business owner or potential owner. Specific areas covered are marketing strategies, money, and management concerns. An assessment

is used in which the participant ranks their business on each of the 33 key points. This helps the participant assign their business a score between 1 and 100. The program then seeks to increase the score for better profitability and overall business health. Lawrence Chamber of Commerce. 1:00-5:30 p.m. Fee. Please call 785-843-8844 to register, or e-mail the KU-KSBDC at maggie32@ku.edu.

TUESDAY, MAY 30

• **Marketing to Employees.** Pathways Seminar offered by the University of Kansas Small Business Development Center and the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce. Learn how to increase profits, increase employee retention, get and keep better people, reduce management frustrations, improve customer satisfaction, and build your team. Lawrence Chamber of Commerce. 1:00-4:30 p.m. Fee. Please call 785-843-8844 to register, or e-mail the KU-KSBDC at maggie32@ku.edu.

(To add your event to Kaw Valley Small Business Monthly's calendar, please send your information to keving@smallbizmonthly.com. Information can also be faxed to 785-749-4691.



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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Jan Stewart, a member of Lawrence's **American Business Women's Association (ABWA), Twilight Chapter**, was recognized last week at the ABWA 2006 Spring Conference in Hershey, Penn. Her newsletter design was selected as one of the top five, which makes the Lawrence chapter eligible to compete at the 2006 National Women's Leadership Conference in Anaheim, Calif., September 28-30.



Stewart

Stewart received points based on appearance and effectiveness of content. This includes criteria such as design, layout and neatness, as well as if the newsletter is informative, stimulating and positive.

ABWA chapters may enter their newsletters in competition at any spring conference. Judges select five award winners at each conference. Those chapters winning awards are eligible to enter the national convention, where judges select five national award winners.

Stewart has been a member of ABWA since 1989, and is the current owner of Office Helpline in Lawrence, which services local businesses with bookkeeping, payroll and administrative support.

Judy Mathews, has been promoted to Program Manager of the **Kansas Women's Business Center (KWBC)** after serving women clients of the center for over five years.

In 2005, Judy was awarded the Kansas Women's Business Advocate of the Year award by the Kansas Department of Commerce. Mathews will be responsible for program and event logistics at KWBC as well as working more directly with start-up and emerging business owners.



Mathews

Karen Zecy, president of **American Micro Co.**, has joined the KWBC Advisory Board and in addition, has been named to the Board of Directors of the Enterprise Center of Johnson County.



Zecy

KWBC is a program of the Enterprise Center and housed in the Enterprise Center at 8527 Bluejacket in Lenexa, Kan.

To advance the success of women business owners, Kansas Women's Business Center provides training, mentoring, consulting, and networking programs to women entrepreneurs in the greater

Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas area and throughout the state of Kansas. More than 2,000 clients have received over 15,000 hours of services since the center was opened in July 2000.

KWBC serves women throughout the bi-state area providing training workshops, facilitating a wide variety of mentoring programs, and offering business networking events. For more information about the center visit the Web site, www.KansasWBC.com.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

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Commercial Space - 750 sq. ft. for office, business, etc. available near Dillons on 23rd St. Ideal arrangements for start up or existing business. 785-841-6254.

If you would like to include your listings in the Kaw Valley Small Business Monthly Commercial Real Estate section, please call Kevin at 785-841-9417.

Are You Targeting Your Potential Customers Effectively?



The goal of daily newspapers is to reach as many households as possible. In fact, according to Philip Meyer in *The Vanishing Newspaper* (2004), household penetration (average daily circulation as a percent of households) "peaked early in the 1920s at 130. By 2001, newspaper household penetration was down to 54 percent."

Today, daily newspapers in Lawrence and Topeka reach about 3 out of every 10 households in their markets. Those households include subscribers such as the widow on the corner, the professor at the university, and many others who have no or little need for business-to-business products and/or services.



At *Kaw Valley Small Business Monthly*, we do things quite a bit differently. Our goal is not to reach every household in the market. Instead, our goal is to reach the business people who are most likely to have a need for the products and services you offer. And we can reach those businesses like no one else can.

Each month we mail 1,900 copies of *Small Business Monthly* directly to business people in the Lawrence area. Another 1,100 are distributed for free in racks throughout the area. We can get your message to these business people for about what you would spend to advertise in a smaller community newspaper.

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If you would like to have your promotion or appointment published in *People on the Move*, please send a press release with a contact name, a telephone number and a photograph to Groenhagen Advertising, 2612 Cranley St., Lawrence, KS 66046, or send an e-mail to keving@smallbizmonthly.com.

INCORPORATIONS

The following incorporations were filed with the Kansas Secretary of State's office between March 21 and April 21, 2006:

BALDWIN CITY

Corporation Name	Resident Agent	Address
Apartment Renovators, Inc. Baja LLC	Adam Hazelwood	315 Blaze Blvd
Eckman Farms, Inc.	Brian Sheldon	1537 N 300 Road
Parkside Lane Homeowner's Association, Inc.	Michael F. Eckman	988 E. 1800
	Michael C. Green	15 Signal Oak Ct.

DE SOTO

Corporation Name	Resident Agent	Address
Classic Commodities, Inc. Finishing Touche, LLC G.E.A. Framing LLC	Gordon N Happel Susan Craig G.E.A. Framing LLC	31010 W 83rd Street 28340 W 85th Terr PO Box 103

EUDORA

Corporation Name	Resident Agent	Address
El Sonador, LLC Eudora Dollar Store LLC Eudora Lions Club Foundation Tazz, Inc.	Fernando Tapia Elaine Bailey E. R. Slapar Cliff True	38750 W. 151st St. 1201 Peach 1135 Locust St. 1140 E 2100 Rd

LAWRENCE

Corporation Name	Resident Agent	Address
3C Holdings, L.C. 611 W. 9th, L.L.C. ABC Flooring Inc. ASR Investments, LLC Beckmeisters, L.L.C. Big Brutus Music, L.L.C. Big Dipper Productions, LLC Bluefly, L.C. Brian Green Lawns, L.L.C. Bridgetowne Group, LLC Cadmium Nights LLC Central States Hart Parr Oliver Collectors Association Chris Ordal, Ink., L.L.C. David Stineman Ltd Devlin Inc. Downs Geomatrix, L.L.C. Fields Of Promise, Inc. Fine Living Management, LLC GomaNet LLC Great Santa Fe Trail Horse Race, LLC GT Rentals, L.L.C. Hummer, L.C. Hustle Records LLC In The Zone Pro Shop, L.L.C. J.D.C. Framing Inc. Jeff's Audio Video L.L.C. Kansas State USBC Youth Inc Kansas USBC Youth Inc Lahu, LLC Lawrence Lockbusters LLC Lighthouse Investigation & Recovery, Inc. Make It Right Enterprises, Inc. Mariner Wealth Advisors, LLC N O'Brien Realtor, Inc. Prairie Rose Holdings, L.C. Queen's Knight, Inc. Red Barn Homes, Inc. Regit, Inc. Renovation Construction, L.L.C. Robbins Acquisitions, Inc. Sage Systems, LLC Second Stream Consulting LLC Shadow Ridge Townhomes Association, Inc. Sleepy Jean's Confections, Inc. Stella Miner, Inc. Sue Simmons LLC The Accelerated Bureau Of Recovery, LLC Theraplay Inc. Tyco Investments LLC U. S. Chiropractic Care, Inc. Vital Values, Inc. Wait Until Eight Productions, Inc. White Lotus Photography, LLC Yellow Pencil Studio, Inc.	Cheri L. Drake Brendon Glad Stephen Garlow Arthur P. Hall Terence E. Leibold Aaron Hale Rick Cowan Gregory M. Polk Brian J. Green Byce Crady Marilyn J Horsch Donald M. Fuston Chris Ordal Jacquie Stineman Thomas Devlin Jason Downs Fields Of Promise, Inc. Fine Living Management, LLC GomaNet LLC Robert W. Phillips Brendon Glad Gregory M. Polk Hustle Records LLC Elmer J. James III J.D.C. Framing Inc. Jeff's Audio Video L.L.C. Randall L Altman Randall L Altman Mashhur Zarif Haque Laurance Shute Bryan K. Sorenson Brendan D. Sullivan Stephen K. Lambright, Jr. Nancy O'Brien Timothy F. Stultz Corporation Service Company Roger A. Morningstar James Kevin Craig Terence E. Leibold Phillip F. Robbins Corporation Service Company Karen Davis George F. Waters Jean M. Younger Stella M. Miner Corporation Service Company Corporation Service Company Theraplay Inc. Tyco Investments LLC M. Gary Banwart Sheryl K. Jacobs Wait Until Eight Productions, Inc. Laura Wolfe Christine M. Schneider	1702 Lake Alvarar 611 W 9th Street 2116 Delaware St Suite C 4432 Greichen Court 1211 Massachusetts Street 2601 Pickwick Place 611 West 9th Street 2418 Orchard Lane 907 W 6th Street 5114 Veronica Drive 7 E 7th Street Suite 306 802 N. 1800 Road 611 W 9th Street 1643 Bobwhite Dr 4529 Grove Dr. 1617 St. Andrews Dr Ste 210 3017 Oxford Rd. 1501 George Williams Way Apt 1-4 1131 Stoneridge 1431 N 1900 Road 611 W 9th Street 2418 Orchard Lane 2319 Louisiana Street 933 Iowa Street 1097 E 1500 Road 805 Locust St. P O Box 3430 P O Box 3430 5220 Thorn Tree Ct. 1121 Louisiana Apt 19 1516 East 25th Terrace 2535 S. Iowa 5107 Stonewall Court 5228 Campbell Pl 411 N Iowa 922 Wellington Rd. 1067 N 1655 Rd 923 N 1464 Road 1211 Massachusetts Street 23966 Loring Road 5902 Longleaf Drive P.O. Box 442445 1203 Iowa 1029 Tennessee 2509 Alabama 5902 Longleaf Drive 49 Blanchard St - Ste 202-9 879 E 1259 Rd 1627 N 1600 Road PO Box 1573 2232 Vermont St 2424 Cedarwood Ave 801 1/2 Massachusetts 1945 New Hampshire

OTTAWA

Corporation Name	Resident Agent	Address
Bittner Anesthesia Services, P.C. Bob's Mobile Home Service, LLC Capelli Salon Day Spa, Incorporated Ottawa RV LLC Xiang Yu, Inc	Curtis J. Bittner Robert C. Hall Francine Leone Brice Dryden Yan Ling Wu	1837 South Osage Drive 2682 Stafford Road 129 South Main Street 118 S Mulberry 634 S Hickory

TONGANOXIE

Corporation Name	Resident Agent	Address
GBV, Inc Tonganoxie Civic Club	Brent Ventura Jason Kyle Ward	113 S Village Terrace 200 Rawlings Drive

LABOR MARKET

Kansas economy improves in March

TOPEKA – The Kansas economy continued to improve in March 2006. Kansas businesses added an estimated 7,400 nonfarm jobs over the year. Statewide unemployment declined to 4.9 percent from 5.3 percent in March 2005.

The continued growth in jobs coincides with increasing revenues flowing into state coffers, signaling a growing and healthy state economy.

"For many months now, Kansas has added jobs in a variety of industries, both goods-producing and service-providing," said Jim Garner, Kansas Secretary of Labor.

Garner noted the recently announced layoffs at Boeing will likely have some impact on both jobs and unemployment in coming months, but until the layoffs are complete, it will be difficult to ascertain the full effect of the reductions.

Eight of 11 industry sectors added jobs between March 2005 and 2006. Both the natural resources and mining sector and construction sector added jobs over the year. Manufacturing jobs declined, largely due to losses in non-durable goods production such as food manufacturing.

In the service sectors, education and health services jobs increased by 1,200, primarily in non-hospital health care and social services. The trade, transportation and utilities sector added 1,000 jobs. Financial activities, government, professional and business services and leisure and hospitality sectors all saw growth over the 12-month period. Information and other services sectors declined.

Initial claims for unemployment compensation in March 2006 were up over the previous year. The state recorded 10,800 initial claims compared to 9,100 one year ago, but there were some

5,000 fewer (5,236) people receiving unemployment payments in 2006.

Six mass layoffs were reported in March 2006. When 50 or more people are laid off in a five-week period, regardless of the duration of the layoff, it is considered a mass layoff.

At the end of each quarter, extended mass layoff numbers reflect layoffs that exceed 30 days in duration, thereby excluding temporary plant shutdowns and other types of short-term layoffs. There were no extended mass layoffs reported in the first three months of 2006.

Nonfarm payroll employment for the Topeka Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in March was 110,000. The unemployment rate was 5.3 percent, down from 5.7 percent one year ago. The total number employed stood at 115,500 in March. The number unemployed was 6,400.

The Wichita MSA had a total nonfarm employment of 288,800 in March. Its unemployment rate fell to 5.3 percent in March compared to 5.7 percent last year. Total employment stood at 289,100 jobs and the number unemployed was 16,200.

Nonfarm payroll employment in March for the Kansas portion of the Kansas City MSA was 426,800 and the unemployment rate was 5.2 percent in March, down from the rate 12 months before of 5.7 percent. The total number of employed residents was 407,500 and the number unemployed was 22,400.

The Lawrence MSA had a nonfarm employment of 52,200 in March. The MSA's unemployment rate was 4.0 percent in March, down from 4.2 percent the prior year. Lawrence MSA employment stood at 60,600 jobs and unemployment stood at 2,500.



Let us help you introduce your business to other businesspeople in the Lawrence area. Call Kevin Groenhagen today at 785-841-9417 to learn more about Kaw Valley Small Business Monthly's advertising options.

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HYPERGROW!

Six prices, not one

The third law (of nine) in my HYPERGROW system encourages business owners to "refine toward perfect pricing." Of all the laws, the mere mention (and the strategic wording) of this law seems to elicit the most noticeable reaction. Eyes bug out. Brows raise. Head's tilt. Sometimes, I even get speechless mutterings from the client I



Curt
Clinkinbeard

am working with.

Yes, perfect pricing would be great, but I am certain I am not there yet!

Never fear if your reaction was similar. Pricing is not a "perfect" science and does require a certain amount of refinement toward that goal. However, when you study the pricing part of your business, rarely will you find a business concept that has as wide a reaching impact. Pricing has a huge influence on the customer and our marketing efforts (and thus our ability to hypergrow), as well as having monumental weight on the financial side of the business. Shooting for a great approach to pricing is a super-smart thing to do!

Here's the trouble as I see it. Pricing is a multifaceted management issue (see below). However, we tend to treat pricing decisions as one single decision. In reality there are many factors which

should be studied when selecting our prices. This is why the process seems to confuse a large percentage of businesses. To solve this, I suggest considering six individual, narrow approaches to pricing instead of a single, convoluted, and complex one.

How does this work? When looking at pricing, look at the following six things on their own first. Put the blinders on. Do not consider the other factors until later. Initially, study each of the six by themselves. After completing that exercise pull the six different approaches together to see how the different methods relate to each other. For me, only after you have done this, are you making an informed, intelligent, and growth-based approach to pricing.

Here are the six methods and a brief overview of each:

- **The Margin Method** - simply, in most companies there is a relationship between the cost of an item and what it is sold for. Margins look at the unit profit per item in relation to the selling price. (How much of the selling price is profit after we pull out the direct product costs?) A related concept (though slightly different) is markup. Using standard markups or margin targets is a common way to study pricing. In most industries, margin standards for the industry can be identified and used the pricing equation.

- **The Income Method** - Your prices have an impact on your bottom line, and if you are the business owner, also

your personal compensation. If you don't believe me on this, take the financial model for your business and run it through with everything else being equal, but change the pricing approach. You will be amazed. Set your prices with an understanding of how this impacts the bottom line of the company.

- **The Competitive Method** - Of course, what others are charging for comparable products and services should be considered. The goal is not to be higher or lower than the competition, necessarily, but to (a) solidly understand where the competition is, and (b) make a conscious decision where you want to fit in relation to the market.

- **The Volume Method** - Economic theory tells us that as the price of an item changes the quantity we sell should change, as well. In some industries this is more pronounced than in others. You want to study the market and make some estimates based on how unit volumes may change if you modified your prices. Yes, this is guessing at something where you do not have perfect information, but a "wild guess" is still better than doing nothing.

- **The Image Method** - The price of an item, by itself says something to your customers. For instance, a \$0.99 hamburger says something very different than one which costs \$15. Just the price tells us a lot about what you expect of that hamburger and your perceptions of what it will be like. Your price—by itself—also makes a statement about your product, your company, and sets the tone for how people will react to you. Again, the key is to study this and consciously select the

way you want the market to look at you and what you do based just on the price.

- **Lastly, The Testing Method** - Like many things in business, pricing is an inexact science. You will try some things that work, and some others that don't. Important is to seek to learn and modify your prices based on how the market actually reacts to your offering and price, not just on how you think they will. I often tell clients it does not matter what I think or what they think. Ultimately what matters is what their customers believe and act upon.

Is that complex? Well, probably. But it reflects the many things which have a significant impact on pricing. Ignoring any of them simply means you are making decisions with a blind eye to important elements in the business. By looking at the six methods separately, we are able to isolate the variables, do a real analysis without feeling overwhelmed, and make a decision with more comprehensive information.

Your pricing decision is not one, but six!

- Curt Clinkinbeard is the Director of the Kansas University Small Business Development Center and is the author of HYPERGROW YOUR BUSINESS. He can be reached at curt@hypergrow.com.

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FINANCIAL FOCUS

Pension in trouble? Take steps to replace income

In recent months, some well-known companies — including Verizon, Lockheed Martin, Motorola and IBM — have “frozen” their pension plans. If your company freezes its plan — or if you think it might do so in the future — you’ll want to start thinking *now* of how



Harley & Ryan Catlin

to replace the potential lost income during your retirement years.

When a company freezes its pension, it discontinues contributions or additional benefits. Without a freeze, your benefits typically would have increased each year of continued employment. Generally, when you retire — or if you become disabled and can no longer work — distributions will be paid to you based on your plan’s distribution options.

Companies that freeze their pension plans may replace them with 401(k) plans, a move that gives you both opportunities and responsibilities. Now *you* must determine how much you need to save in your retirement plan. That means you need to calculate your retirement income needs and how your 401(k) might meet them.

Also, *you* must choose the right mix of available investments within your

401(k) to help meet your retirement goals, given your individual risk tolerance and time horizon. As time goes on and your situation changes, you may need to periodically adjust your investment mix, as well.

To manage your 401(k) correctly, you may want to work with a qualified investment professional — because there’s a lot at stake.

Roth 401(k) May Be Available

If your company moves from a pension plan to a 401(k), it also may provide you with the option of putting some of your money into the new Roth 401(k). Distributions from a Roth 401(k) are always tax free, although these distributions must meet a “triggering event,” such as retirement, disability or death. Earnings also can be tax-free once you reach age 59-1/2 and have had your Roth 401(k) for five years. This tax-free feature can be valuable in helping you build resources for retirement.

Other Income-building Possibilities
Apart from actively managing your 401(k), you have other options to help replace some of the income you might lose from the freezing of your pension plan. Here are some possibilities:

- **Contribute to your IRA.** Try to fully fund your Roth or traditional IRA, both of which offer tax-advantaged savings and an almost unlimited array of invest-

ment possibilities.

- **Purchase an annuity.** If you can afford it, you might want to purchase a fixed annuity, which offers tax-deferred growth of earnings and can be set up to provide you with a lifetime income stream.

- **Take Social Security earlier.** If your pension had not been frozen, you might have preferred to start taking Social Security at your “full” retirement age, which can be anywhere from 65 to 67. Now, however, you might need to start collecting your checks at age 62. Your monthly payments will be smaller than if you had waited, but if you need the money, it’s there for you.

- **Adjust your investment portfolio.** With

the help of an investment professional, you might want to restructure your portfolio to provide you with more income during your retirement years.

Don't Get Frozen Out

Clearly, it can be upsetting to see your pension frozen. But by managing your 401(k) wisely, and by considering the other steps mentioned above, you may be able to attain sufficient retirement income to overcome the loss of what you once counted on.

- Harley Catlin and Ryan Catlin are with Edward Jones, 4828 Quail Crest Place, Lawrence. They can be reached at 785-841-6262.

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MOUSE CALL

Newer Intel-based Macs can now run Windows

On April 1 Apple computers celebrated their 30th anniversary. Yes, the company that told us to Think Different was founded on April Fool's Day, and for their anniversary they changed the rules of the computing industry. Now, with Apple's blessing, and software that makes it easy, newer Intel-based Macs can install and run Windows. When Apple announced



Dave
Greenbaum

last year they would be introducing Macs that ran on the Intel processors, the same processors a majority PCs use, the announcement was revolutionary. The potential thus existed to run Windows software directly on a Mac. At the time, Apple said they would do nothing to stop people from doing so. This month instead of being indifferent towards people using the Mac to run Windows, Apple has developed software called "Boot Camp," which makes installing Windows and switching to it extremely Mac friendly. In many ways, Apple will be competing for your Windows business just like Dell or Gateway.

As a consultant, one of the major questions clients ask me is whether to get PC or Macintosh. Each type of computer has advantages and disadvantages, and sometimes people would actually

get both a Mac and PC because of their different capabilities. Now if you get a Mac, you get the ability to run Windows software as a bonus. However, if you buy a PC, Apple will not allow you to install their software on hardware not made by Apple, such as a Dell or Gateway PC. The only way you can run both is to buy a computer from Apple. Are you unsure which computer to get that recent grad? When in doubt, buy a Mac.

To run Windows on the Intel-based Macs, you'll need to provide a copy of XP, which usually runs about \$125. Legally, you won't be able to use a version of XP that is still installed on another machine. Installing the software takes about 45 minutes. As of this writing, the "Boot Camp" isn't quite ready for prime time. It's in "beta," or testing, mode and Apple warns that you shouldn't use it for important data and you should back up before installing. I have read of problems people have booting between Mac and Windows, but no more so than any other computer problem. A great guide written on this is called "Running Boot Camp: The First Step-by-Step Install Guide," which can be downloaded at <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/bootcamp> for \$7.99.

You may be paying more for a Mac than an inexpensive PC, but you'll be getting better quality components. As an experiment, I tried to build a PC with the equivalent style parts that come on a Mac, and the pricing was within 10 percent of the cost of the entry-level Mac,

the Mac Mini.

Apple warns that while booted into Windows you'll be susceptible to all the viruses and spyware that plague Windows, so you'll need to install an anti-virus and antispyware program. Luckily, anything on the Mac portion of your hard drive is inaccessible from Windows, so it will generally be safe from the Internet nasties.

They say you can't have your cake and

it eat too, but it seems like Apple once again has innovated, giving businesses some great options. Now you can have the safety security and reliability of the Mac and retain the ability to run Windows as well.

- DoctorDave has been servicing Northeast Kansas's onsite Macintosh, PC, and network needs since 1990 and may be reached at dave@calldrdave.com or 785-218-9676.

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STRATEGIES

What critical conversations do YOU need to be navigating?

"How can I raise my salary?" the career-minded person asks. "How can I raise my revenues?" the business-minded person asks. Are these not the same question? Yes, they are, but the thought processes behind each one are typically very different. The employee would focus on jobs "out there" or think about getting a promotion, or a different job, or asking for



Lori Keegan

a raise. That kind of thinking represents most people's idea of a "career mentality." There's nothing wrong about it, but it can be inefficient and not the most direct and focused path to the change you want. A business-minded person, on the other hand, would focus first on himself or herself, assess what marketable talents/services/products he/she has and look for the their potential profitability in the marketplace. The "business mentality" would be more strategic from the outset, looking for the match between their talents and their potential customer base.

Imagine for a moment that you were offering your talents to the marketplace not just as an employee, but as a business owner of your own talent-based services. Who would your potential customers be? How would you market yourself? How would you justify the price of your talents in the marketplace? How would you grow your business? (i.e., how would you grow YOUR revenues?) Who would you look for as business alliance partners?

If you are already a business owner or CEO, how might you view your career

as taking it to the "next" level of business? I'm not talking about your company right now; I'm talking about YOUR talents and YOUR career path as a business executive! Business owners rarely see their businesses as their "career" but the same questions apply on a personal level. If you are burned out or hate your "job" as a business owner, did you ever consider assigning your self a different job? (!!!) Yes, you make career decisions every day!—about YOURSELF!—not just your employees! Maybe you need to re-organize your business a bit and hire someone to do the job you don't like, then assign yourself work that you really love to do. Might that dramatically change how you experience your own company? What a concept!

Here's the catch. Ironically, even successful people don't know EXACTLY what their talents are and how their updated talent list would fit into today's market place. If you really think you know, try listing your talents SPECIFICALLY with supporting impact statements. Most people are outdated about themselves—whether they are career-minded or business-minded. Regardless of whether you own a piece of the company or not, you owe it to yourself and

your own potential to nudge yourself out of your slumber regarding your own career development.

Perhaps you know what your talents are, but have lost track of your passion. It's your passion that allows you to wake up every morning and NOT have to reinvent the motivation to go to work every day. Passion is one of the easiest things to rediscover if you know how. We help most people re-define it in an hour or two—or much less time than that. Imagine what that one simple thing would do for the clarity of your career path!

Maybe you are one of the few who knows the above, but doesn't quite know how you would conduct the CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS that would get you there. Critical conversations are required to get you to the almighty job interview LONG before you ever get there—and ARE the reason you DO get there. In those critical conversations, you'll need to communicate the updated picture about your talents and how you are marketing them AND you'll need to have that critical conversation about how the marketplace will be buying them.

Maybe you need to figure out how to navigate those critical conversations with your business partner or key indi-

viduals on your staff to make the changes you most want to make in your own life. You could be experiencing loyalty binds and other such dilemmas that really put you in an awkward position. Those critical conversations are what can unlock you out of your stuck and/or uncomfortable situation. The business should be there to SERVE not just your staff and customers, but you too! When you become a slave to your business, the business is running you; you are no longer running it.

OR . . . Maybe those critical conversations need to be with your spouse and you dread what he or she will say and what position any given conversation might put you in. Marital and dual career concerns impact EVERY individual that has a life-long mate. These are complex and very central issues that you need to face to get out of your unstuck place. Critical conversations are so powerful that they can save both your marriage and your business/career. Critical conversations profoundly accelerate what needs to happen.

- Lori Keegan can be reached at mail@transitionbydesign.com or 785-235-2500. Other business/career strategy articles can be found in TBD's free library at www.TransitionByDesign.com.

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DOLLARS & SENSE

Managing tenants and managing your real estate

If you manage properties, you know that the only thing your tenants have in common is the building they're in. Whether you're a property owner, fee manager, developer or managing real estate some other way, you know the lease terms are all over the board, the spaces vary, and each of your clients has a different business to run. And no matter how many properties in the mix,



Karen & Dean Smart

every manager has distinctly different issues, whether on-site or off. I'll start with property management for long-term tenants and then wrap up with property management software for short-term stays. Hotel, vacation rentals and B&B's just to name a few. Like the other columns we write, they are meant to make one aware of the specifically defined accounting and management software features that are available to business owners in their niche and to inform them on how to choose the best solution.

Involving the right people in your decision-making process can be the difference between success and failure of your project. System users are the people who will use the system daily. These people will need it to be intuitive, user-friendly and have easy, logical navigation and workflow. Managers will require specific financial and operations reports for themselves and upper management. If you're trying to set up a Web site where users can make reservations, requests for repairs or information, it should be easy to interface to your business systems. Examining your current processes, considering improvements to your current system and locating areas of inefficiency in your current system is vital to selecting the right components in a property management system.

The ease with which contracts or reservations can be drawn up quickly can greatly improve the guest/tenant experience. The elimination of manual processes can reduce or eliminate errors and speed up access to important information for decision making. Maintaining more detailed information about your tenants allows you to provide a higher standard of service and to customize marketing efforts. Having a scalable solution allows you to grow with your new system without having to change systems and retrain staff. The ability to seamlessly integrate to your accounting systems will further reduce the requirements for manual interven-

tion and the common mistakes guaranteed with human error when something has to be entered twice to accommodate two separate systems.

Long-Term Tenants

From tracking construction costs to improving tenant relations, finding the right software can mean the difference between time-consuming work-arounds and keeping a firm grip on tenant improvements or losing out to lost revenues and lost time.

Leases are the heartbeat of any successful property management system. The application you choose should be able to accommodate virtually any lease agreement, including multiple leases per tenant, multiple units per lease and multiple tenants per lease. Tracking pending move-ins and move-outs from lease start to lease finish can mean the difference between idle property and revenue producing property. In addition to flexible lease options and write-ups, you should expect to be able to track nearly an unlimited number of tenant address types for mailing, billing forwarding addresses and don't forget the ability to produce 1099-INT's for interest and deposits issued to tenants.

If you are managing properties, you also know that a good solution for tracking, managing and reporting daily site activities is vital to the upkeep of your property and the well being of happy tenants. Preventative maintenance tracking, scheduling and dispatching is standard on most property management packages. Efficiencies in staffing and a reduction in expenses can be greatly improved when management by exception is ruled out.

Asset tracking is also key to good property management software. Being able to pull up a list of installed assets, including model number, service history or warranty length should be par for the course. Knowing the skill levels and availability of technicians and being able to assign other assets to your property is vital to good operations and should be a standard feature of good property management software.

What's coming for you industry? Graphically being able to access your property locations and units and electronic dispatch of technicians and service crews are just a few of the new features some software manufacturers are adding to the punch bowl of features for property managers.

Short-Term Tenants

The more you know about the elements of a great property management system, the more likely you are to select the right solution for your business. Many of the same elements above can be applied to your field. Exclusively different though, is guest experience and

ease of reservations. Your main concern is most likely ensuring a good "front office" exists where guests can book their stay and learn about your hotel and its features. If you have multiple locations you'll be looking for a flexible solution for front desk, resource and guest management. Reservation control should provide room availability and status details at a glance. Seamless integration to accounting, POS, F&B, on demand video, mini bar, central reservation and credit card processing are also features you might require in your search. Other things like memberships and guest loyalty are also important

areas. You should also be able to manage resources that your hotel provides from your property management solution, such as spa availability, dinner reservations, banquets or meeting room reservations to name a few.

It is important that you are clear on the reasons for implementing any new Property Management System. Determine why you want to change, then examine the business case and, most importantly, your return on investment.

- Karen and Dean Smart run Smarte-Solutions Inc in Lawrence and can be reached at 785-832-0007, or the via Smarte-Solutions.com

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TUESDAY, MAY 9 – THE RIGHT START

A group learning session

Interested in starting a business? Or new to business ownership and want to do an overview? This introductory seminar covers a wide range of topics including registering your business, legal structures, taxes, insurance, business planning, accounting, financing and marketing. A fast-paced introduction to the topics of business ownership.

Location: KU-SBDC CONFERENCE ROOM (4:00 – 6:00 pm)

Fee = \$20 (pre-registration) \$25 (walk-in) Includes extensive reference notebook.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24 – THE SMALL BUSINESS TUNE-UP

Bumping up your performance and fuel efficiency

This class is recommended for any small business owner or potential owner. Specific areas covered are marketing strategies, money, and management concerns. An assessment is used in which the participant ranks their business on each of the 33 key points. This helps the participant assign their business a score between 1 and 100. The program then seeks to increase the score for better profitability and overall business health.

Location: LAWRENCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (1:00 – 5:30 pm)

Fee = \$40 (pre-registration) \$50 (walk-in)

TUESDAY, MAY 30 – MARKETING TO EMPLOYEES

How to take a marketing approach to employee management and supersize your profits!

Learn how to increase profits, increase employee retention, get and keep better people, reduce management frustrations, improve customer satisfaction, and build your team.

Location: LAWRENCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (1:00 – 4:30 pm)

Fee = \$40 (pre-registration) \$50 (walk-in)

Call 785-843-8844 to register!

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Settlement agreement entered into by city, 6Wak and Wal-Mart

The City of Lawrence, 6Wak Land Investments, L.L.C., and Wal-Mart have entered into an agreement in connection with the pending lawsuits regarding the proposed development at the northwest corner of 6th Street and Wakarusa Drive. The agreement was approved by the City Commission at its special meeting on April 21, and is an effort by the parties to resolve all of the litigation involving the three parties.

Under the terms of the agreement, the parties have agreed to ask the Court to issue an Order staying the litigation for six months to give them the time needed to review a new zoning application for the property. During the six month period, the City is expected to initiate a rezoning of the property in which the maximum commercial square footage allowed at the site would be reduced from the 154,000 square feet previously approved to 128,000 square feet, and the maximum size of the enclosed area of the largest building on

the site would be limited to 99,990 square feet. All parties have agreed to such square footage conditions, and will work with the City to redesign the site accordingly.

In addition, the parties have agreed that the project will incorporate enhanced design and construction standards such that the physical appearance of the project will be in keeping with the highest levels of aesthetics and design incorporated by these developers in other locations and in keeping with City

design standards. The agreement also provides that Wal-Mart will also pay for two-thirds of the cost of a stoplight to be installed at intersection of Sixth and Congressional streets, at the southwest corner of the site. In addition, 6Wak will refund to the City the attorney fees that the City was directed by the Court to pay to 6Wak in connection with the initial lawsuit.

Negotiations toward a possible settlement have been ongoing, but have intensified in recent months, following

completion of street improvements on west 6th Street, leading to the agreement. "We are optimistic about a successful completion of the planning process and will work with the City to achieve that result", said Bill Newsome, a partner in 6Wak Land Investments.

"We look forward to the consideration of the proposal advanced by the settlement as we seek to ensure the best development at this location which benefits the community," Mayor Mike Amyx stated.



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