

business solutions

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Spotlight on Kansas Regenerative Medicine Center

The four KRMCC partners talking to many of their current and potentially new patients at the Kansas Livestock Association annual national meeting.



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1559 Pony Express Highway,
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Editorial and Circulation Contact:
Angie Armstrong
aarmstrong@bluevalleyinc.net
785-799-3311

Business Consultants Contacts:
Chad Hiltgen
chiltgen@networksplus.com
800-299-1704

Jake Schulte
jschulte@networksplus.com
800-299-1704

Richard Lincoln
rlincoln@networksplus.com
785-320-0404

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Postmaster send changes to:
Angie Armstrong
Blue Valley Network of Companies
1559 Pony Express Highway
Home, KS 66438



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As the world grows more complex, don't forget about the basics. Things like data safety, worker health, and careful budgeting can get away from you if you don't revisit them every now and then. This issue of *Business Solutions* covers these themes and more, to help you remember what's foundational for your business.

First, on page 3, we present several important **Cyber Security Essentials**. Given the amount of time and effort you put into your business, and how much of it exists in digital form, doesn't it make sense to do everything you can to protect your data?

The Business Spotlight on pages 4 and 5 features **Kansas Regenerative Medicine Center**, which lessens pain and immobility for patients through use of their own stem cells. Networks Plus works closely with this world-class healthcare facility to provide cloud services and IT support.

On page 6, you'll discover some **Tried-and-True Tactics for Saving Money** at your business. No matter what's happening in the economy, it always makes sense to get the maximum value out of every dollar.

Finally, on page 7, we present the details of my **TEDxTopeka Talk**. For many years, I've been passionate about educating others on the role of technology in agriculture. In December, I had an opportunity to share my message with a wider audience.

Whether it's back to basics or expanding your technology, the Blue Valley Network of Companies is here to help. I encourage you to reach out any time to let us know how we can contribute to your business success.

Sincerely,

Brian Thomason

CEO

Blue Valley Network of Companies





Cyber Security Essentials

Is your business taking these important precautions?

You've invested so much time and money into building your business. To protect it, you buy property insurance, put locks on the doors, and install fire alarms. Have you made cyber security a similar priority?

Every computer can be vulnerable to a cyber attack, and the consequences range from simple inconvenience to a devastating data loss. Today's businesses face three major online threats: spam, viruses, and phishing. Fortifying your company against these threats is critical to prevent valuable information from falling into the wrong hands or your computers from malfunctioning.

Taking these small steps today will go a long way toward avoiding trouble down the road:

1. Use antivirus and antispyware software and keep it up to date.

New threats are discovered daily, and keeping your software updated is one of the easiest ways to protect your business from an attack; simply set your computers to automatically update for you. Also activate your firewall and regularly

download the security protection updates (known as patches) that are released by most major software companies.

2. Educate your employees not to open email attachments from unknown sources.

Computer viruses are commonly spread through email attachments, so it's vital to pay attention to the source before opening them. In addition, make sure your employees don't click on links within unsolicited email messages or install any software programs unless they're from a reputable source.

3. Use strong passwords.

Lock your online accounts, computers, and other devices with passwords of at least 14 characters that contain a mixture of uppercase and lowercase letters as well as numbers. Keep passwords and PINs secret, and change passwords frequently.

4. "Look before you leap" with sensitive information.

Make it a policy to check for signs that a webpage is safe before you or your employees conduct online transactions.

Check for an "https" at the beginning of a Web address (URL) and a closed padlock icon beside it. These symbols indicate that the website owners have taken extra security steps to protect your information. Never give sensitive information in response to an email or instant message (IM) request.

5. Take special precautions with laptops and mobile devices.

It's a good idea to have written cyber security practices that address the use of laptops and mobile devices. For example, train employees to confirm the exact spelling of Wi-Fi networks they connect to, and to look for clever, slightly misspelled fakes. In addition, remind them to keep laptops or mobile devices with them at all times, even if they intend to be "right back." Unattended equipment in public places is an invitation for theft and access to your company's information.

For more information about cyber security, visit www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips, www.staysafeonline.org, or contact a Networks Plus Business Consultant at 800-299-1704.



Located in Manhattan, the Kansas Regenerative Medicine Center (KRMC) is one of the only stand-alone stem cell centers in the U.S. Born from the life-changing stem cell therapy its founders received, KRMC helps ease the pain and immobility associated with various inflammatory and degenerative conditions by deploying a person's own stem cells.

World-Class Care

Co-founders John Farley and Ken Woods have had nine knee surgeries between them. At one point, the men were no longer able to fully enjoy sports, work on the ranch, or play with their grandchildren. They finally decided that living in constant pain and taking daily medications was no longer acceptable, and sought other options.

After hearing a lecture by an animal stem cell expert about the amazing successes of animal stem cell therapy, they asked, "Could this work for us?" Farley and Woods decided it was worth a try, and both successfully received adipose stem cell therapy. After waiting several months to confirm their pain relief was genuine and lasting, they wanted to share their success with other sufferers. They opened KRMC in March 2014.

KRMC is an affiliate of the Cell Surgical Network (CSN), with more than 40 of the top multidisciplinary physicians in the world working together under strict Institutional Review Board guidelines. The network shares case information and assists affiliates with unique cases to best serve patients.

Kate Farley-Cisneros, Director of Marketing & Business Development at KRMC, notes, "We are an advanced stem cell therapy center offering treatments that use a person's own fat, which is easy and safe to harvest under local anesthesia and abundantly available. Typically the entire procedure takes under four hours, and with no stitches. Stem cells have the amazing ability to differentiate and replicate - they can turn into bone, cartilage, muscle, fat, collagen, neural tissue, blood vessels, and more. Adult stem cells appear to be particularly effective in improving painful joints, replacing cartilage and ligaments, and even painful conditions along the spine. We've also had some reports of improvement in different areas anywhere from stroke victims to conditions such as asthma, fibrosis, vertigo, and more.

The average KRMC patient typically has two to three joints treated. They range in age from 14 to 90, with most being in their forties through seventies. KRMC receives patients from around the world, and their success rate is so good that 60 to 70 percent of patients come from referrals. KRMC President Pat Farley notes, "We make sure each patient feels like they are the most important person on the planet. It's rewarding to give them hope."

Giving Back to Science and the Community

Together with the CSN, KRMCM's team of doctors emphasizes quality and is highly committed to ongoing clinical research and regenerative medicine advancements. As an affiliate, KRMCM shares data and experiences. This enables higher levels of understanding and care, and helps doctors learn which diseases respond best and which deployment methods are most effective.

In addition to the clinic's commitment to research and medical advancements, Farley says, "We are huge believers in giving back to the community." Last year KRMCM gave thousands to cancer research. KRMCM also sponsors Walk to Cure Arthritis fundraisers and helps Catholic Charities. Farley adds, "We frequently sponsor community events such as inviting high school science classes on tours of KRMCM and providing lectures, encouraging student interest in this rewarding field."

If I need help, I just call an IT guy from Networks Plus who understands our company inside and out. It's taken a big load off my shoulders."

— KATE FARLEY-CISNEROS, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, KRMCM

Data Center Services from Networks Plus

Farley-Cisneros notes that, as with many other businesses, the right technology is key to efficient operations. She comments, "Before Networks Plus handled our data center, I dealt with it all myself, spending untold hours Googling and banging my head against the wall. Now, if I need help, I just call an IT guy from Networks Plus who understands our company inside and out. It's taken a big load off my shoulders. They understand our small business needs, and I love that they're local."

Networks Plus Sales Manager Chad Hiltgen comments, "KRMCM is a growing, innovative company that uses cutting-edge technology to improve network efficiency and ensure better services for patients. For the past year, our cloud services have provided them with the flexibility, stability, and security they need. They no longer have to worry about day-to-day server maintenance and upgrades, allowing them to focus on improving the health and wellbeing of their patients. We're excited to be KRMCM's IT support team and are committed to fulfilling their IT needs as they continue to grow."



Passionate KRMCM members who care for the patients daily



DATA BACKUP VS. BUSINESS CONTINUITY

You may have heard the terms "data backup" and "business continuity" to describe similar services, but the fact is you need both.

Data backup enables you to keep copies of your files safe and accessible in case your hardware fails. **Business continuity** describes a more comprehensive plan. In case of a disaster, to resume working at full capacity, you would need software, and system settings and preferences, in addition to your files—all of which could take days to install.

To find the right business continuity services, determine how much time you can afford to be without full computing power to avoid unacceptable consequences. Then, look for a business continuity solution that can get you back up and running within that time.

The team at Networks Plus can help you plan ahead to ensure your business functions can continue to operate or can be recovered to an operational state following a disaster. For details, visit networksplus.com.



Tried-and-True Tactics for Saving Money

Use these six painless ways to cut costs and stretch budgets

Today's economy requires all businesses to streamline their budgets and get maximum value from every dollar spent. To accomplish this, you may need to do more homework and put more thought into every buying decision. Are you getting the best deal available on office supplies and shipping? Could you take steps to reduce your company's energy use and utility expenses? Are there opportunities to save on your overhead by renegotiating your lease? Sometimes even small changes can save your company big money over the long haul.

Here are some popular money-saving strategies you'll want to try:

1. Save by bundling services with one provider.

Bundling is the practice of doing more business with one company to take advantage of savings opportunities. For example, many banks offer lower loan interest rates and fees if you have multiple account relationships with them. Similarly, insurance companies often give discounts for buying multiple policies.

2. Get equipped to lower energy costs.

One relatively easy way to save is by reducing the amount of energy used for heating and cooling. Does your office have a programmable thermostat? If not, now's a good time to make the small investment. By adjusting the automatic settings even a few degrees during work periods, and further reducing energy use during off hours, your business could see noticeable cost reductions.

3. Pare down paper and printing expenses.

In addition to being environmentally responsible, anything you can do to become a reduced-paper office will save you money on purchasing, printing, mailing, shipping, and storing paper. For the printing you still do, regularly evaluate costs from several suppliers to make sure you're getting the best deal.

4. Reduce rates by extending contract terms.

Take a look at your service contracts and leases for office space, warehouses, and vehicles. You may be able to significantly reduce your monthly overhead expenses simply by renegotiating and extending the length of the term.

5. Talk to your vendors.

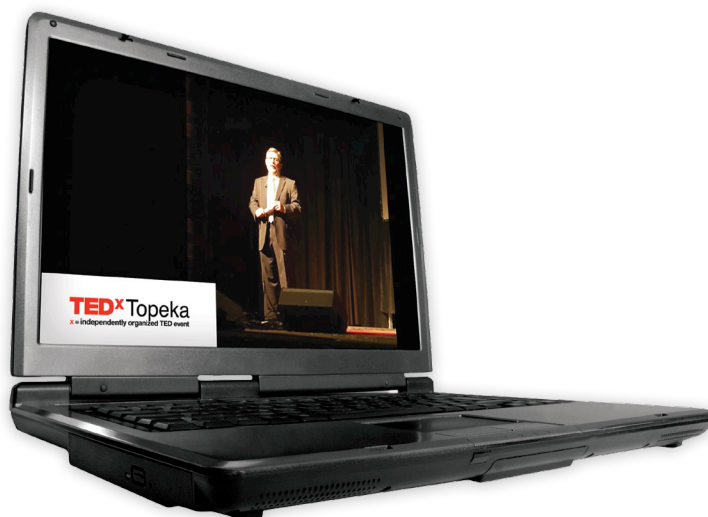
As you examine other areas in your budget, don't hesitate to contact vendors and strike up a discussion on how they might be able to help your business save money. They may be willing to offer creative solutions in order to retain your business.

6. Solicit suggestions from employees.

The financial health of your company matters to everyone, so make economizing a team effort. Ask for ideas from your employees about how to decrease costs and increase efficiency, and then reward their efforts. You may be pleasantly surprised by the suggestions that surface. One company's employees even volunteered to help clean up around the office to save on janitorial services. Now that's dedication!

Brian Thomason's TEDxTopeka Talk

Our CEO shares his passion about technology in agriculture



TEDxTopeka took place on Tuesday, December 8, 2015, at the Topeka Civic Theatre and Academy. The event featured local voices including a talk by the Blue Valley Network of Companies CEO Brian Thomason.

TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. Two annual TED conferences invite the world's leading thinkers and doers to speak for 18 minutes on a diverse mix of topics. Many of these talks are made available for free at TED.com. Launched in 2009, TEDx is a program of locally organized events that bring the community together to share a TED-like experience.

Technology's Important Role

Thomason became interested in speaking at a TEDx event after presenting at a recent national conference. He discovered that one would be held in Topeka, applied, and was chosen as one of eight speakers.

Through his talk, Thomason wanted listeners to consider the impact that technology plays in agriculture. "Technology and broadband aren't just for entertainment anymore," says Thomason, "but a real tool for productivity in agriculture—

as with soil mapping, irrigation monitoring, and more." In his talk, Thomason pointed out how the technology is constantly evolving and becoming more complex. He also noted how technology companies and agriculture experts need to start the discussion and collaboration of helping increase production of food for our growing world.

Emily Ford, Blue Valley Network of Companies Video Production Technician, notes, "Audience members in the agriculture field were excited to have someone bring the topic up to the general public. They feel that technology and broadband issues affect them every day, but that not many people realize the importance and impact."

Thomason hopes that, as a result of his speech, partnerships and alliances will be formed to help deploy broadband in underserved areas.

Keeping the Message Alive

Thomason's speech was very well received. It was thought-provoking and challenged audience members to think about where their food comes from and how it gets to them. Ford says, "We're very excited for the video to be uploaded to YouTube, so that it can reach a wider audience. There's a big movement right now regarding our food, how it's produced, and how it gets to us. We think this presentation will help educate those looking for information on the subject."

Following the speech, Thomason hopes to continue spreading the word. He says, "I'm passionate about this subject, and would love to meet with other companies interested in learning more about the connection between broadband and agriculture." He is also willing to present this topic again, or lead discussions for other groups.

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