

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



## Grand Challenges

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## Grand Challenge: Community Vitality

Title: Marketing Skills Yield Increased Profits for Small Biz

**Why is this issue important?** Entrepreneurs often take a passion or skill and turn it into a small business. But many find themselves lacking the marketing and technology skills necessary to reach potential customers and maximize their profitability.

**How was this issue addressed?** K-State Research & Extension provides coordination to Shawnee StartUps, a NetWork Kansas e-Community that encourages and supports entrepreneurs. That support includes gap funding to start or expand a small business, as well as educational opportunities.

### What was the impact?

Chad Bullock, managing partner for Premier Farm and Home, was selected by Shawnee StartUps to attend Destination Bootcamp in 2018, an intensive marketing workshop taught by Jon Schallert. Schallert later visited the Topeka business on-site, providing personalized recommendations.

"I learned enough in two days that it has taken me two years to implement most of it," says Bullock. Jon encourages businesses to create a unique positioning statement, which for Premiere became, "*Customers can select their grass from a field, not a shelf.*" They incorporated the statement into a commercial, which won a 1st place recognition from the Kansas Association of Broadcasters, and led to their best year ever with sales up 11%.

What's next? Bullock shared, "When Jon visited, he pointed out our back room was wasted retail space. It took time to determine the right products to sell in that space, but the construction shown will open to the public February 16th. We're excited to see the reaction of our customers."

