

NEWTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2025 DOWNTOWN PROMOTIONS REPORT



Downtown Promotions Committee - The Chamber's Downtown Promotions Committee meets monthly and includes 22 business representatives from the Central Business District. The committee is affiliated with the Main Street Kansas Program and leads efforts to promote downtown businesses, plan special events, and enhance the overall vitality of Downtown Newton.

"Snow Much Love" - February 2025 - The Chamber and Downtown Promotions Committee partnered on the "Snow Much Love" Valentine's campaign, promoting local shopping through posters, social media messaging, and newspaper advertising that encouraged residents to shop and dine locally.



Third Thursdays - In 2025, the Chamber continued Third Thursday events, with downtown businesses staying open late and collaborating on monthly themes. These events create consistent evening activity downtown and encourage year-round local shopping. New initiatives included a March Wine Walk, which sold 100 tickets, raised \$1,200 after expenses, and donated proceeds to the Newton Foundation's Downtown Beautification Campaign.



Summer Slaes "Main"ia - The Chamber collaborated with downtown businesses to promote summer sidewalk sales and local engagement through social media. Due to weather challenges, businesses adapted by bringing sales indoors while maintaining strong community participation.



College Night - August 21 - College Night welcomed area college students to Downtown Newton at the start of the semester. Students participated in Business BINGO with 30 participating businesses. A total of 123 BINGO cards were submitted, 18 prizes were awarded, and 100 students received goodie bags. The event drew an estimated 200+ students from Hesston College, Bethel College, Hutchinson Community College, and other institutions.



Taste of Newton - October 2nd - Taste of Newton brought an estimated 7,400+ attendees with cell phones to Downtown Newton, with total attendance estimated closer to 8,000. The event featured 69 vendors and six block sponsors across four blocks of Main Street and received live coverage from KSN throughout the evening.



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Main Street Christmas Decorating - Each year, Chamber staff and Ambassadors decorate Main Street light poles from the 400–800 blocks with locally purchased red bows, creating a unified and festive downtown atmosphere throughout the holiday season.



Seven Saturdays of Christmas (Taste of Christmas) - November 8th-22th - Twenty-six local businesses participated in the Seven Saturdays of Christmas campaign, including 12 downtown district businesses. Participants completed a shopping puzzle for a chance to win \$650 in donated prizes. Two winners were selected—one adult prize featuring local gift cards and Chamber Checks, and one youth prize with toys and art supplies. This was the first year the event was rebranded. However we only had approximately 30 puzzles turned in.

Deck Downtown - December 4th-14th - Fourteen downtown businesses participated in the holiday window decorating contest. Prairy Toy Store won Judge's Choice, and Twisted Bookstore received People's Choice honors. Over 370 votes were cast, a 65% increase from the previous year, with 288 votes submitted in person. Traveling trophies were awarded to category winners.



Ribbon Cuttings - The Chamber hosted 28 ribbon cuttings or groundbreakings in 2025, with approximately 29% taking place in the Central Business District. These events celebrated new businesses and expansions, including Prairy Toy Store on historic Main Street.

NetWork Kansas Loans - In partnership with NetWork Kansas, the Chamber completed one GAP loan in 2025 and began processing two additional loans for completion in 2026. Since 2020, the Chamber has facilitated 14 loans totaling \$432,150—a 53% increase from the previous year. The average loan amount is \$30,868 at an average interest rate of 3.64%, with all loans currently in good standing.



Downtown Beautification Campaign - The Chamber actively supports the Downtown Beautification Campaign through financial contributions and advocacy. The Chamber donated \$5,000, with additional support provided by Chamber board member organizations.

Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC) - The Chamber supported youth entrepreneurship through participation in the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge (YEC). More than 100 people attended the event to visit the trade show, nine volunteer judges donated their time, and 34 local businesses provided support. The program gave students the opportunity to develop business ideas, present to judges, and gain real-world experience in entrepreneurship and innovation.

