



# GREAT PLAINS

## TECHNOLOGY & MANUFACTURING CLUSTER

### APRIL 2022 NEWSLETTER

#### Member Spotlight

#### Nutri-Shield Courtland, Kansas



Our member spotlight this month is Nutri-Shield Preservatives of Courtland, Kansas. The company is a small manufacturer and supplier of food grade preservatives made from ingredients such as calcium and sodium propionate, potassium sorbate and more for food manufacturers and bakery businesses worldwide.

Nutri-Shield was founded over 30 years ago out of the interest of food preservation from overseas connections. They develop approximately 9 dry and 1 liquid blend products, as well as custom blends of the ingredients they currently have on hand. What makes Nutri-Shield stand out from other food preservative manufacturers is that they have a patented manufacturing process that eliminates the color, smell and taste that is commonly associated when using chemical preservatives in food. The SQF Certified company also has the capability to run all sizes of orders and will produce made-to-order products for their customers, which allows for flexibility to meet their customer's needs.



The company experienced a number of challenges in regards to supply chain and manufacturing issues throughout the pandemic. They dealt with this by leveraging multiple vendors to bring down costs and improve lead times, and were also diligent about communicating with their current customers about prices changes as well. Through the tremendous help of the Republic County Economic Development organization, Nutri-Shield was able to connect with local and state resources, such as the Kansas Dept. of Commerce (KDC) and USDA, to access grants to make their production lines more efficient and to further expand into international markets through the KDC's Mexico office. *"It is so important to ensure that you have the right people and culture to move your company forward.*



*By tapping into our local and state resources, we have been able to overcome many issues and are preparing for future growth. We greatly appreciate the assistance from our economic development group to help us get these grants!" - Mandi Sandberg, Plant Manger.*

Nutri-Shield's goals for 2022 and beyond are straight forward: achieve steady revenue growth, re-certify the SQF certification, and capitalize on growth opportunities in several key international markets. The company is interested in connecting with new suppliers that can assist with raw materials, packaging and transportation, as well as companies that service stainless steel food grade equipment. If you are interested in connecting with Nutri-Shield, please visit their website at <https://www.nutri-shield.com/>.

#### Did You Know...

...that one in four employees resigned or left the workforce within the past year? - [IndustryNet](#). These numbers make employers question, "Why are our employees leaving?", "What can we do better to keep them around?", "What skills do they need to be successful at our business?"



One of the perks of being a GPTMC member is that we can search for qualified candidates for our members through our Talent Search Program! This allows us to use filters to ensure that our members have qualified candidates that meet their requirements and qualifications for the job. Interested in trying it out? Contact us at [info@greatplainsmcm.org](mailto:info@greatplainsmcm.org) to get started!



## To The Stars Awardees

The Kansas Department of Commerce has celebrated Business Appreciation Month (BAM) in the month of June for the past two decades. These events recognize businesses for the important contributions they make to their community and region, including jobs, amenities, sponsorship, economic impact and more. Unfortunately, these events were postponed due to COVID-19.

In order to continue honoring these businesses, KDC developed a new appreciation program called *To the Stars: Celebrating Kansas Businesses*. Seven award banquets were hosted throughout the state to honor businesses in each region. You can view the awardees at <https://www.kansascommerce.gov/celebrate/>.

Congratulations to the GPTMC members who received an award or were nominated!

- Hess Services - Hays
- RANS Designs - Hays
- Palmer Hargrave - Plainville
- Landoll Corporation - Beloit
- American Packaging - Hutchinson

## Upcoming Partner Events

- 5/19 - How to Hire Your First Employee
- 5/31 - QuickBooks: The Basics and Details
- 6/6-6/9 - Encountering Innovation

## NetWorked for Change Conference Recap

NetWork Kansas is connecting unconnected networks and closing gaps to develop pathways that boldly solve community and business challenges through *NetWorked*. This program is a partnership that connects Community Foundations, Economic Development Organizations, Entrepreneurial Support Organizations, Minority-Led Organizations and more with resources needed to solve challenges and grow entrepreneurship throughout the region.



In an effort to accomplish this, *NetWorked* has had several convenings focused on many areas of impact, and their first "NetWorked for Change" conference in Wichita, Kansas this month. The conference featured speakers from regional resources, interactive huddles that took the place of lectures to solve problems, and networking opportunities. More than 150 "do-gooders", or individuals, businesses and organizations working to make their communities a better place to live, work and play, attended the conference to share ideas and learn about entrepreneurial opportunities.

NetWork Kansas invites you to learn more about the NetWorked organization at <https://www.networkedforchange.com/>. On the website, you can discover their goals, projects, and upcoming convenings and conferences. By engaging with NetWorked, businesses and companies can break silos and share solutions with other resources throughout the network.

## April Website Workshops

The GPTMC partnered with the Kansas SBDC at FHSU to co-host two Website Building Workshops in Concordia and Salina this month. These events were part of the North Central Regional Planning Commission's free business and technical trainings through CARES Act funding. The workshops had a lot of group engagement and hands-on work, including the development of a sitemap and brainstorming ideas so that they could successfully build or at least start building a website during the workshop. They also finished with the tools and resources needed to continue building and maintaining their website.

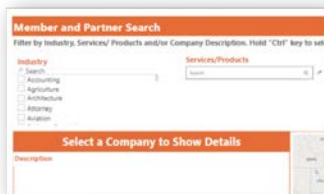


One of the attendees, Amber Cherney, works for LRS Consulting Inc. Her company already has a website, so she decided to use this workshop as an opportunity to learn a different technique in building a website. In the half-day workshop, Amber was able to completely develop a new website for one of her business clients! ***"The workshop gave valuable insight into key website design elements and direction to all experience levels. I enjoyed the allocation of time that included education, and also time for hands-on website creation and questions. - Amber Cherney"***

The GPTMC wants to thank the Kansas SBDC for their assistance with the workshop and NCRPC for allowing us to teach the basics of building a website to individuals of North Central Kansas. If you are interested in utilizing the GPTMC Website Development Program, or want to host a Website Workshop for organizations in your region, please contact us at [info@greatplainstmc.org](mailto:info@greatplainstmc.org).

## Updated Industry Search in Directory

The Great Plains TMC has updated the [Membership Directory](#) to allow companies and organizations to be identified with up to three different industry categories. Members can see what industries their organization is currently associated with by resetting all the page filters, then selecting their company or organization in the list of Search Results. Please email us at [info@greatplainstmc.org](mailto:info@greatplainstmc.org) if you'd like to make any changes to your industry list or other information in your directory entry.



Here are more tips for getting the most out of the Membership Directory:

- **Filter by Industry:** Select the industry you'd like to filter results for, or if you'd like to find organizations from multiple industries, hold the "Ctrl" key to select more than one industry.
- **Filter by Keywords:** Two search boxes allow you to further filter the list of companies by keywords in their services/products and/or description fields
- **View on Mobile:** Below the description search box, there is a "Mobile" view button that configures the directory to work better on a cell phone or tablet. From that page, you can click the "Full Web View" button to return to the normal web view.

## Digitization: Edge Computing - Blog

Experts tell us that there is a data revolution ongoing in manufacturing, and that future success will rely on any given business' ability to effectively use massive amounts of data: to gather it, store it, analyze it, train machines to learn with it, predict and avoid failure with it. Data, they say, can be used to automate and fine tune processes to achieve efficiency levels beyond what we could have imagined only a decade or so ago.

But where do you start? Modern machinery - even old machinery equipped with smart sensors - can generate an unwieldy amount of data, producing up to thousands of data points every second for every sensor. As Murad Kurwa, a Vice President at Flex, put it: "[A single production line can generate more than 70 terabytes of data per day](#)." (Kurwa, 2021). So which data? Where to store it? How to use it? And how much would that cost, anyway? Each of these questions could easily elicit discussions and arguments well beyond the scope of this short article, but, for now, let's focus on a technology concept that's called "**edge computing**".

### EDGE COMPUTING

The practice of using data as close to the source as possible

Edge computing is the practice of using data as close to the source as possible. For example, a computer or processor is set up right next to a piece of machinery. Data is gathered from the machine, processed and analyzed, and then instructions can be sent back to the machine to adjust and optimize its performance. **Want to know more about the benefits of edge computing?** Read the rest of the blog [here](#) or email us at [info@greatplainstmc.org](mailto:info@greatplainstmc.org).

## WSU Matchmaking Program

The GPTMC has connected with a new initiative at Wichita State University (WSU) called the "Matchmaking Program". This program launched at the end of March and is intended to help connect entrepreneurs with cutting-edge technologies and the opportunity for commercialization. Many of the technologies that go through this program are developed through WSU and NIAR.

The Matchmaking Program has competitions of businesses that are interested in commercializing the technologies developed from WSU. The competitors submit a 10-slide pitch deck that includes details of the business and how they are suited to commercialize the chosen technology. The winner receives a 6-month royalty-free development license, resources and support from WSU, and a chance at a full commercial license. The Matchmaking Program plans to have 4 events per year, or as new technologies are developed.

The GPTMC plans to help connect companies and resources that are interested in the technologies with the program. The Live Pitch Event will be May 12th for the finalists. For more information about the program, please click [here](#).

Wichita State University

