

## Erik Pedersen, Director of Entrepreneurship (E-) Communities



As Director of the Entrepreneurship Community Partnership for NetWork Kansas, Erik is responsible for all aspects of recruiting new Entrepreneurship (E-) Communities as well as working with the current E-Communities to ensure successful implementation and growth. An E-Community uses a local leadership team to cultivate an entrepreneurial environment by identifying and developing resources and initiatives to help local entrepreneurs start or grow businesses. In addition, an E-Community has a locally controlled loan fund to assist entrepreneurs and small businesses with capital. To date, the 30 E-Communities have provided over \$2M in matching loans and grants to over 100 businesses, creating or retaining over 310 full time jobs and 220 part time jobs. Erik also has oversight for other NetWork Kansas initiatives such as Kansas Entrepreneurial Communities Initiative (KECI) and Kansas Business Center. Erik's work experience focuses on the overall operation and management of fast-growing businesses and organizations. Erik began his career in 1990 when he went to work for a Wichita-based technology startup company, Brite Voice Systems. At Brite Voice, Erik worked in marketing and business development. In 1997, Erik left Brite Voice to start a manufactured housing dealership with Steve Radley, President of NetWork Kansas. The business was later sold to the largest manufacturer in the country, Champion Enterprises, and Erik remained with Champion as General Manager until May, 2005. A lifelong resident of Wichita, Erik graduated from Friends University in 1988 with a BA in business administration.