

First Impressions

Leon, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- Canton asked for First Impressions, Leon agreed to be its partner; 1 hour, 20 min drive.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey on July 17 and took photos.
- Four Canton visitors visited in September, October
- Results presented December 13, 2023.
- Leon uses the results for further discussion and action plans.

Why: First Impressions?

- **Feedback:**

How does a first-time visitor view my town?

- Evaluate successes,
- Set goals and priorities for next steps.

- **If you don't agree with the observation:**

- ***Be curious,*** Why does the visitor see it this way?
- Is the observation worth considering?
- What can we do to change it– or the perception?

Curiosity: A strong desire to know or learn something.

-Oxford Living Dictionary

Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN

We need to change the narrative about rural.

- Rural is *changing*, not dying.
- Brain Gain (30-49 year olds moving to rural) is a “new trend” that has been happening since the 70’s.
- People research a number of places before they move to a rural town.
- Rural is in the middle of ***everywhere***. You live one place, work another and play another. With transportation and internet, it’s all accessible to you.

Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN

- 46% of Kansas households moved between 1995-1999
- In a survey of newcomers to rural areas, the reasons they come are:
 - Simpler pace of life,
 - Safety and security,
 - Affordable housing,
 - Outdoor recreation,
 - Quality schools
 - ***“A job” isn’t in the top 10 reasons.***
- Communities can work together to attract newcomers and create quality of life for everyone.

- “In small towns everyone knows each other.” *false*
- *Get to know each other*, invite them to a newcomers’ meal.
- If you bring 7 people to a 700-citizen town every year in 10 years, you’ll have a 10% increase. It matters! It is a challenge with housing, but it is achievable.
- We are our own worst enemies. We have to monitor our customer service and what we say. It matters.
- Don’t say, “You have to live here twenty years to be an insider.” And don’t act like it either.

- 75% of rural homeowners are Baby Boomers and older. 30% are over 75.
- Housing will be freed up as the baby boomers retire and move closer to medical services.
- Rural communities need retirement housing (not nursing facilities, but maintenance free) to retain seniors.- *Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, University of Minnesota*



*Ben Winchester was our guest on the
First Friday Call.*

See the recording at:

<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/>

- 2022 KS Certified Population: 657 (Sec of State)
- 2020 U.S. Census: 669 ↓ 25.2 % since 2010
- 2010 U.S. Census: 855
- Median household income: \$51,000 **\$64,521**
- High school or GED 85.7% **91.6%**
- At least a B.S. Degree 15.8% **35.4%**
- Median Age: 43.2 years **37.6 years**
- Persons 65 and Over 15.8% **17.2%**

<https://budget.kansas.gov/population/> Retrieved 11-28-23

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data <https://data.census.gov/> Retrieved 11-28-23

- **Poverty rate**

(Poverty, All people in Kansas)

20.2%

12%

Race/Ethnicity

One Race:

- White: 87.0%
- All Other Races: 2.2%

Two or more races: 10.8%

Not Hispanic or Latino:
94.3%

Hispanic or Latino:
5.7%

- **Website**

Alert



Non-Perishable items

11/29/2023

We are collecting non-perishable food items to make for the Tree recipients. Please help us out to provide these for the Holiday break. You can bring them to the City of Leon Mercantile, Dirty Hands Tire and Auto, Leon Senior Center, or Lovesee Pizza.

Okay, Got It!

Few clouds 50°/30°

CCR report now available under the Residents tab in the Water section.

[Contact Us](#)



City of Leon Kansas

[Home](#)

[Community/Businesses](#)

[Government](#)

[Residents](#)

[Library](#)

[Pride Committee](#)



By Mail.



By Phone.



In Person.



Online.



Check out our Bill Payments options.



Payment
Options



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Problem



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FAQ



New
Residents



Pages



Leon Ks

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Leon Ks

Lives in Ratno, Volyns'Ka Oblast', Ukraine

[View profile](#)

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Pages



Leon, Kansas

City · 402 likes

Leon is a city in Butler County, Kansas, United States. As of the 2010 census, the city population was 704. HistoryLeon was founded in 187...

[Like](#)



City of Leon, Kansas

City Hall · 1K followers · 10+ posts in the last 2 weeks
Welcome to the City of Leon.

[Follow](#)



Chadoy Leon •

Digital creator · 5 out of 5 · **Always open** · 334K followers
• Official Facebook page • IG @ChadoyLeon

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Groups



LEON, KS

Public · 1.6K members · 5 posts a week · 28 members said they went to Kansas State University

This is for Leon news, city activities, lost and found, council meeting news, and anything else relating to the happenings of the communit...

[Join](#)



Leon Cupra K1 Owners Club

Private · 8K members · 2 posts a day

A place for all Seat Leon Cupra k1 owners to come to show what they have and be part of the owner's community. WhatsApp Group:...

[Join](#)



Leon Kansas. News and concerns.

Private · 801 members · 2 posts a day

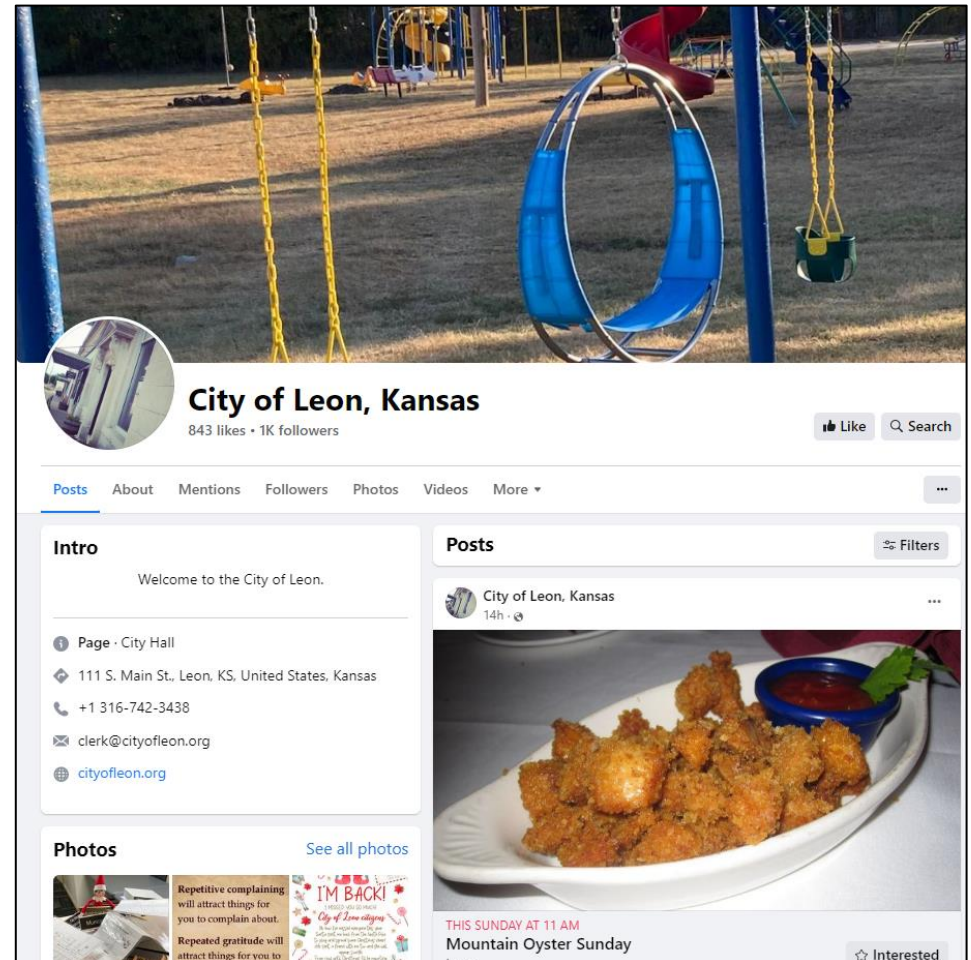
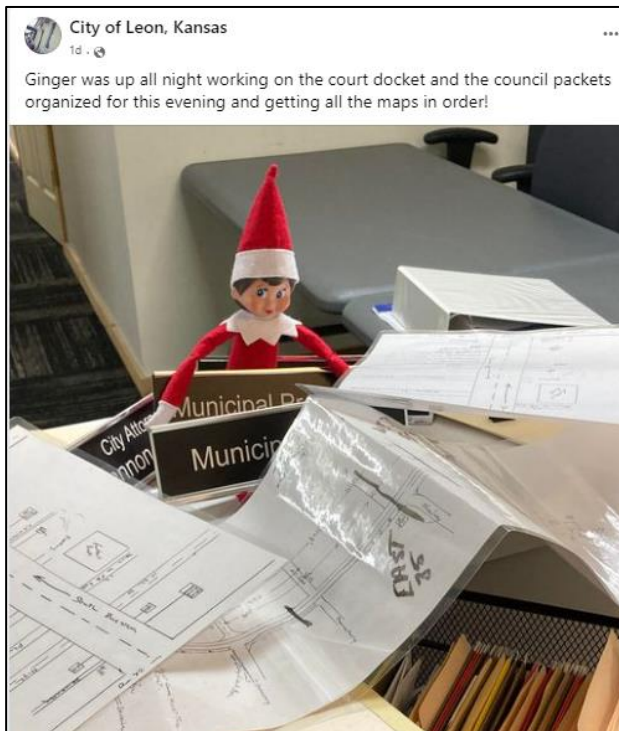
This is a place to come in, chat, share news, and voice your concerns. No racist or religious bashing. We are here to discuss any matters...

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[See all](#)

- **FaceBook**

<https://www.facebook.com/cityofleon.org>



- **Facebook**



LEON, KS

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Featured ⓘ



Jodie Laidler

November 11 at 4:30 PM · 🌐

What is one thing you NEED but cannot afford right now? Everyone check to see what others say. Maybe you have it and don't need it or have a connection to get it. Never know who we can help or how we can help each other.❤️

NO REQUESTS FOR MONEY!!

(I saw this in another towns group and thought it was really cool to watch people connect and help each other🥰)

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas everyone! 🍂🍷

👍❤️ 35

36 comments 2 shares

[Share](#)

About

This is for Leon news, city activities, lost and found, council meeting news, and anything else relating to the happenings of the community. NO GOSSIP, NO COMPLAINING, NO NEGATIVE COMMENTS WHATSOEVER. Anyone not following these guidelines will be REMOVED from the group w/o warning. See less

🌐 Public

Anyone can see who's in the group and what they post.

👁 Visible

Anyone can find this group.

[Learn more](#)

- “Positive Facebook” mentions by others

Kansas Community Empowerment
Published by Jan Steen · July 27, 2021 ·

The Lion PRIDE committee in Leon, Kansas wanted to share a recent success with us all. 7 PRIDE committee members teamed up with 3 City of Leon workers and the Bluestem Lions football team and a service on July 23rd. The community service day consisted of painting parking stalls on Main Street, painting poles in front of the school, trimming trees, and cleaning up a community member's yard.

Together We Can Make A Difference




Community Service Day
July 23, 2021



Community Service Day looked a little different this year.

Leon Lions football coach Ethan Haworth started community service day 3 years ago. In Coach Haworth's last post on the Lions Facebook page he stated, "Community Service Day in Leon! This year is sure to be the best year yet! This year we will be working hard and with the Leon PRIDE Committee! Little do we know he was right."

Over 12 football players participated in Community Service Day. This year that number totaled: 24 football players, 5 coaches, 3 city of Leon workers, and 7 Lion PRIDE members came together to help the community in Leon. The Lions PRIDE Committee looks forward to working with the Bluestem Lions Football team at next Community Service Day.




Rural Grocery Initiative
March 29, 2021 ·

The Bluestem Mercantile in Leon, KS is owned and operated by the Bluestem School District. This innovative grocery store gives students all kinds of educational opportunities, while providing an essential amenity for the Leon community.

The Bluestem Mercantile has taken advantage of the flexibility that can exist in small towns, and they are a model for other school districts that may want to take on similar projects.

Read the Success Story here: <https://www.kansassampler.org/>



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Rural Grocery Initiative
July 22, 2022 ·

The [Kansas Sampler Foundation](#) is hosting a rural grocery DO-ALOGUE next week Wednesday, July 27 at the [Bluestem Mercantile](#) in Leon, KS.

What is a Do-ALOGUE, you ask? Read more about this event below and don't miss this chance to see an innovative rural grocery model in action. Registration is required to attend!

Kansas Sampler Foundation
July 18, 2022 ·

The dilemma. Leon (in Butler County, pop. 464) needed a grocery store. There was no solution in sight.

The solution. The Bluestem School District stepped up. St... See more

[KANSASSAMPLER.ORG](#)

Special Events | Kansas Sampler Foundation

The Kansas Sampler Foundation is a public non-profit 501(C)(3) organization. Our mission is to preserve and sustain rural culture by educating Kansans about Kansas...

“Five-Minute” Impression

- It is a town with character, relatively clean, feels rural.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Homes are older; some need love. Welcome signs are nice. Not much signage for schools, parks, or the city building.
- The only sign was on Highway 400. It’s hard to see if I wasn’t looking for it. Didn’t see a sign from the north.



Public Amenities Downtown



- We noticed some flowerpots but didn't notice anything else.

3 out of 4 visitors didn't notice any flower pots or other amenities.



Downtown Business Area

The buildings are old;
nothing stands out.

Some buildings were nice
and well-kept, but some
were rundown and needed
attention.







Downtown Business Area







Downtown Business Area

-



None of the visitors mentioned the pizza place.



The farm store was very nice.

Other Retail Shopping Areas

- When we train our visitors, we tell them this is the other retail area besides downtown.
- Many towns your size don't have two retail areas, but when they occur, it's the convenience store by the highway or the Dollar General.

- *A drive-by is not how industry will find you, check with your local Eco Devo director to make sure your site is listed on LocationOne @ Kansas Department of Commerce.*

Observation:

- “Entrepreneurs who choose to start their small businesses are responsible for 63 percent of net new jobs created in the United States every year.”
- *Global marketing makes your town accessible to purchases all over the world.*

- Visitors didn't see any health or emergency medical services.

We don't expect your town to have every service!

If your website allows for it, a great way to talk about “access to health care services” is to identify how many minutes/miles people travel to get services.

- There is a mix of varieties; most appear to be affordable for the average wage earner.
- There appeared to be no houses on the market.
- Many of the houses I noticed needed repair and were small, but also saw lovely updated homes.
- Visitors weren't aware of rental properties, and the city office did not have a list of landlords.





Total Housing Units:	268*	Kansas 1.15m
• Owner Occupied:	71.8%	65.3%
• Renter Occupied:	28.2%	34.7%
• Vacant Housing Units	23.1%	10.4%
• Average Household Size:	2.31	2.48

*This estimate has a 90% margin of error.

KANSAS
COMMERCE

The Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) is a self-assessment guide for communities to gather and analyze data on their housing inventory, partner with relevant stakeholders, and develop priorities for local housing investment.

Kansas

- Average Travel Time to Work: 27.4 mins **19.6 mins**
- Households without a computer*: 37 (18%) **6.8%**
- Households without an internet subscription: 24 (14.2%) **7.7%**

* Includes smartphones, tablets, and other wireless devices.

* ***Internet and computer estimates have high margins of error.***

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: MCDC ACS PROFILES: 2017-2021 5-year estimates

- Kansas Housing Corporation is a resource to learn about housing grants and other tools for homeowners and renters.
- Resources to address homelessness.

<https://kshousingcorp.org/>



- There is an elementary and high school. The size looked great and very well maintained.
- The schools are a high point for the town.
- Visitors didn't see anything about preschool.





- Voters recently passed a bond issue to add classrooms and programs.



- Yes, I saw some [information] available.
- Not much information. I didn't feel able to assess the quality of education.

The website is technically complete with links to Kansas State Department of Ed (KSDE) Accountability reports, news items, activities, an events calendar, a downloadable app, and photos of children of all ages.

“Potential Students” are an audience for your website.

- This is Mound City, **MO**:
- “Why choose us” info on home page.
- With rotating photos of all ages of students, academic, athletic, and cultures.



ABOUT US

Why Us

Graduation Rate

100%

Technology Ratio

Computer to Student Ratio: 1:1

Teacher Ratio

1:9 Teacher to Student Ratio

Career Ed. Programs

Agriculture Education, Business Education, Family Consumer Sciences and Human Services



Comments:

Our visitors won't "see" child care, but it is important to highlight the issue for your community.

High-quality child care fulfills two important goals: keeping children safe while their parents work and nurturing and developing children in ways that prepare them for school and beyond.

Butler County Data:

- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need** **37%**
- Contact ks.childcareaware.org to access local childcare specialists.
785-823-3343

Data Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/data-research/> Retrieved from internet 12/7/23

- I saw three churches. The grounds were maintained. We did not see evidence of faith-based services.
- The churches were easy to find.



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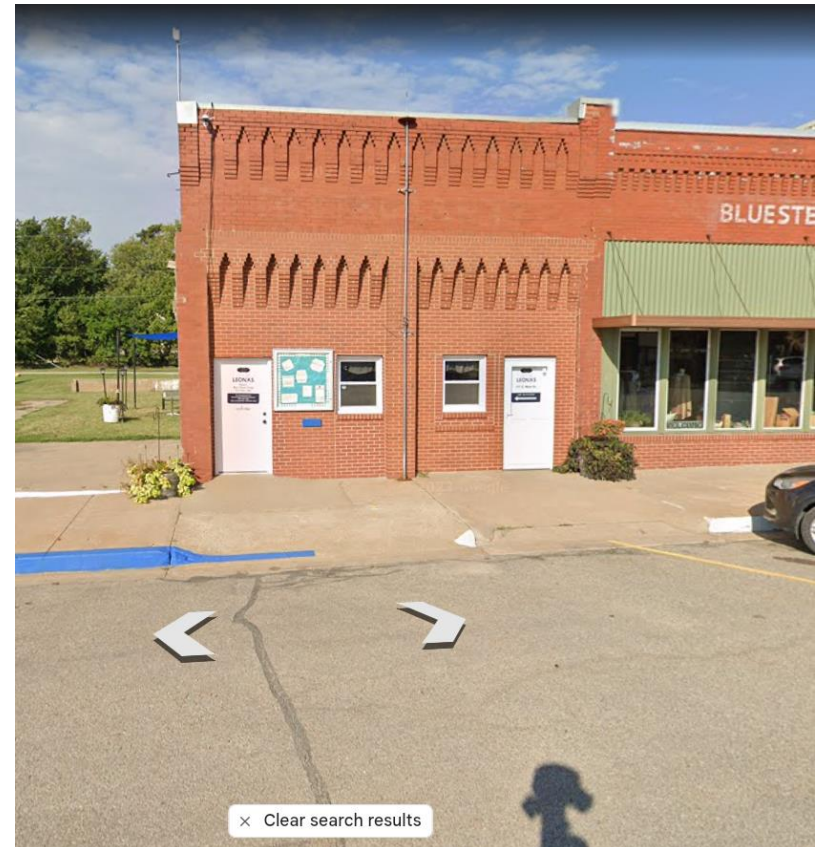
- We didn't see any nonprofit organizations, clubs, nor civic activity.
- We saw the Senior Center and the Masonic Lodge.
- We didn't see any civic activity today.



- Streets are generally chip and seal. Sidewalks were decent. Did not notice a park or streetscapes.
- Streets were good, and street signs were ok. Streets were narrow with no curb and guttering.
- Signage wasn't great, some streets need help, trees need trimmed, not lots of lighting.
- Street signage was poor and hard to read and find at some corners. We were there in the daytime but didn't see many lights.



- People were friendly, especially the lady at the mercantile. No information about the town was visible.
- Didn't go in as they weren't open.
- City Hall was hard to find.



2023 Google Earth <https://bit.ly/3uL9EyB>

Retrieved 12-7-23

Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Saw the volunteer fire department on Main Street.
- I did not see a police station.

This may be an opportunity for website information about who provides police protection.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

Home Contact Us

Kansas Insurance Commissioner Vicki Schmidt

[f](#) [t](#)



Kansas Insurance Department
420 SW 9th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1678
Consumer Hotline: 800-432-2484 (KS only)
[Email Us](#) | Phone: 785-296-3071

- > The Department
- > Auto/Home
- > Health/Life
- > Insurance Fraud & Education
- > Producer/Agency Services
- > Company Services
- > Other Services



HOME : ISO

ISO Public Protection Classification

Most U.S. insurers of home and business properties use Insurance Services Office's (ISO) Property Protection Classification (PPC) in calculating premiums. In general, the price of insurance in a community with a good PPC is lower than in a community with a poor PPC, assuming all other factors are equal.

PPC Program: <https://www.isomitigation.com/program-works/how-the-ppc-program-works.html>

A community's PPC depends on:

1. Emergency communications systems, including facilities for the public to report fires, staffing, training, certification of telecommunicators, and facilities for dispatching fire departments
2. The fire department, including equipment, staffing, training, and geographic deployment of fire companies
3. The water supply system, including the inspection and flow testing of hydrants and a careful evaluation of

- The library was not impressive. It seemed to be built in an old grain elevator. It was not open at this time.
- The other visitors didn't find it.



- We didn't see any parks. Only the football and baseball fields.
- The park has some playground equipment. WE didn't see a walking path.
- Very hard to find; the signage was poor.





Well-known for an attraction or event?

- None that I'm aware of.
- I saw they were having a Harvest festival and a donkey basketball game coming up.
- We didn't see any.



Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Nothing was seen.

Visitor's Center

- Nothing but city hall.
- Only thing I saw was a senior center.

What would bring you back?

- The café was nice; if I were going that way, I would definitely stop to eat.



- The café/lounge was busy and good.
- The Farm Store, Mercantile, and jelly stores were awesome.
- The Senior Center is well-supported.
- The schools were a centerpiece.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Lack of housing
- The town looks run down.
- Lack of businesses, streets, signage.

What will you remember?

- The Bluestem Mercantile had a neat business approach.
- This town could be very cute if it looked more loved.
- Mercantile and the jelly farm store.

- Add “Why we love our schools” stories to the school page.
- Add photos to your city website of your citizens enjoying time together.
- Add your “assumptions” to the web page:
 - Where do citizens get health care, emergency response, and police protection?
- Find a project you are excited about and get people to join you.

**NO ONE CAN DO EVERYTHING,
BUT EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING.**

Thank you to our volunteer visitors.

Set Next Steps:

- Start talking! Find ways to discuss what you heard in small groups of every kind.

Contact me if you need resources or have questions:

Nancy Daniels

Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension

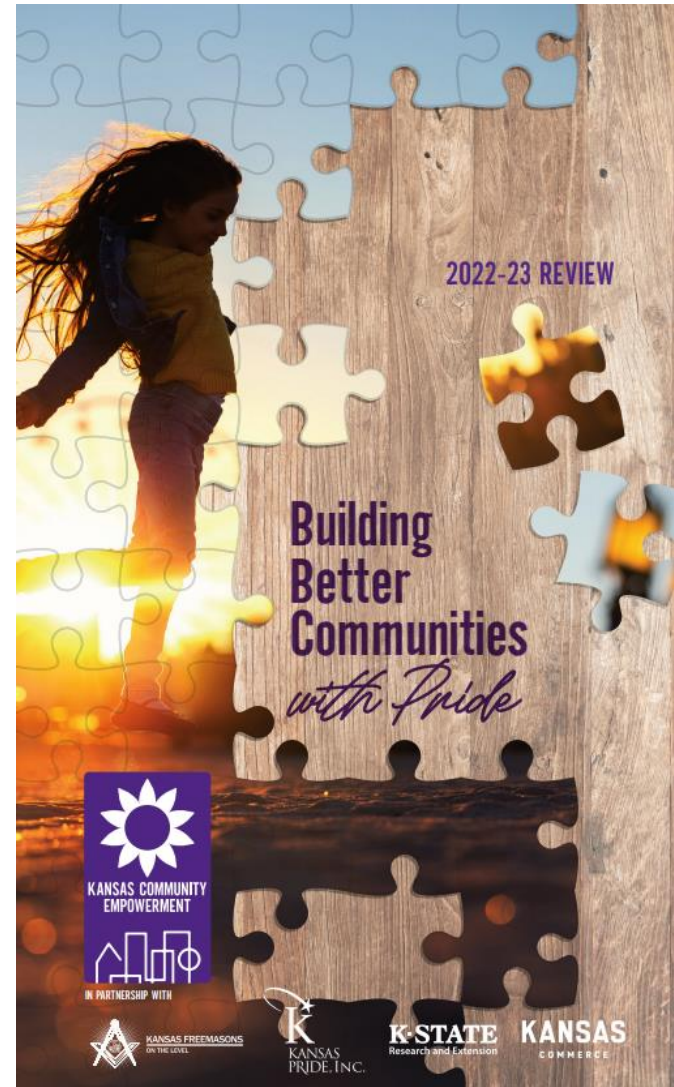
785.410.6352

nkdaniels@ksu.edu

Kansas Community Empowerment

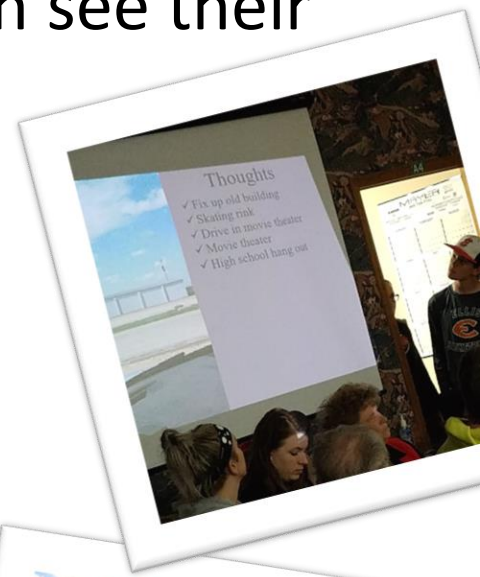
<http://kce.k-state.edu>

- Local communities identify what they would like to preserve, create, or improve for their future and volunteers pull together to create their ideal community future.



Youth Community Perceptions <https://bit.ly/ks-ycp>

- Youth-Based Community Assessment.
- Gives communities insights on how youth see their community.
- Creates opportunities for youth voices in the community.
- Allows youth to become involved in local government and community process



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Community
Vitality

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Grant Writing Classes and Support

Contact

KSRECV@ksu.edu

to participate.



5 GRANT WRITING RESOURCES

K-State Research and Extension provides resources to help you write and submit successful grant proposals to improve lives, livelihoods and communities across Kansas.

- 1 ONLINE GRANT WRITING CLASSES**
Class alum reported receiving \$28 million in successful grants. 
- 2 A PROFESSIONAL LEVEL GRANT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COURSE**
An 8-week course dedicated to helping you complete a fundable proposal. 
- 3 A LIST OF CONTRACT GRANT WRITERS**
Professionals willing and ready to write grants on a contract basis.
- 4 SUPPORT FOR KANSAS PRIDE COMMUNITIES**
Excellent resources for those wanting to bring more to their communities.
- 5 ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT BY K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS**
Our professionals are prepared to help you find grants and review your grant proposals.

Small Business and Community Development

- **First Friday e-Calls 9:30-10:30 am**

Connecting small businesses and communities with the resources to make them successful.

— Register here: <https://ksre-learn.com/ecall>

— Previous calls are recorded at

<https://ksre-learn.com/entrepreneurship>

- Now people have a choice, and millions of them are planning to move.
- **“The pivot to remote work is the biggest, fastest transformation of the labor market since the World War II mobilization.”**
- **Major cities will see the biggest out-migration:** 20.6% of those planning to move are currently based in a major city.
- **People are seeking less expensive housing:** Altogether, **more than half** (52.5%) are planning to move to a house that is significantly more affordable than their current home.
- **People are moving beyond regular commute distances:** 54.7% of people are moving over two hours away or more from their current location, which is beyond daily or even weekly commuting distances for most.

UpWork October, 2020 <https://www.upwork.com/press/releases/economist-report-remote-workers-on-the-move>, retrieved from Internet 12-12-20, UpWork October, 2020

- Kansas Remote Online Initiative
 - Certified Remote Work Professional
 - Certified Remote Work Leader
- *Certification in 4-weeks*
- Monthly Classes: <https://kansasremotework.com/>



Rural Grocery/KS Healthy Food Initiative

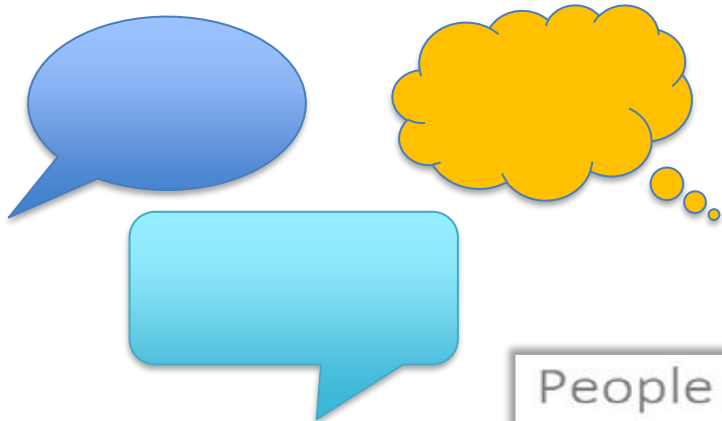
- **Goal:** Increase access to affordable, healthy food and to improve the health and economic development of Kansans and their communities.
- Technical assistance and financing to develop new or renovate fresh food retail in underserved communities throughout Kansas.

<http://kansashealthyfood.org/>



What will we do?

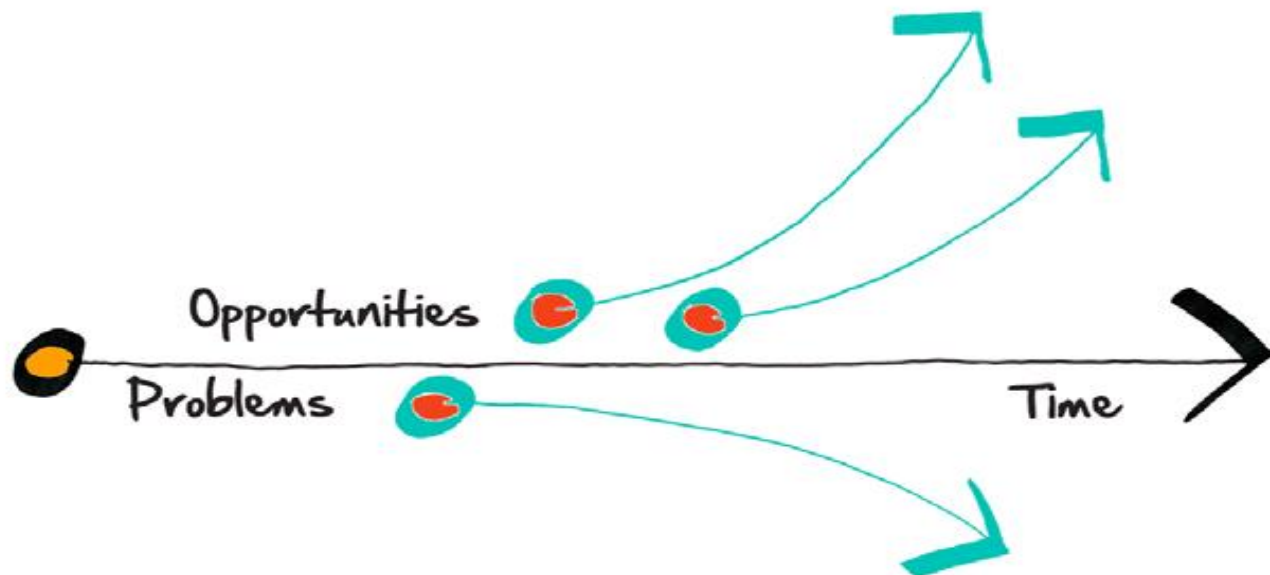
What did you hear?



What will we do?



People move in the direction of their conversations





Nancy Daniels

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