

First Impressions

Beloit, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with
The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- 2010 Census Population 3,835
(-4.6% since 2000*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2015 Estimate is 3,780 (-5.9% since 2000 **KS +8.1%**)
- 26% college educated, 95.4% high school or GED
 - **KS 31% college education, 90% HS or equivalency**
- 63% family households, 37% non-family
- Poverty rate is 13.5% (**KS=13.6%**)
- Median Age 40.7 years (**36**)
- Median household income is \$45,682 (**\$52,205**)

* 2000 Census was 4,019

- **Web Presence:**

<http://www.beloitks.org/>

- Needs photos to motivate me to come to the community.
- Fairly accurate. Little Red School House looks freshly painted online, reality is different.
- Thorough information about services and amenities, the calendar is disused.

- Home
- Departments
- Government
- Community
- Calendar

Monday, July 24, 2017 • 91° [Get Beloit Weather!](#)

Search

Contact Us

- Online Bill Pay
- Job Opps
- Living Here
- Moving to Beloit
- Visiting Beloit
- Economic Development

The Heart of the Solomon Valley

THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE - a.k.a. Honey Creek School No. 21 is located in the roadside park on the north edge of Beloit. This unique and original schoolhouse, built in 1871, has been completely restored to 19th century style.

NEWS & HEADLINES

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Beloit Municipal Building
119 N. Honey Avenue
Beloit, Kansas 67520
785-736-3551

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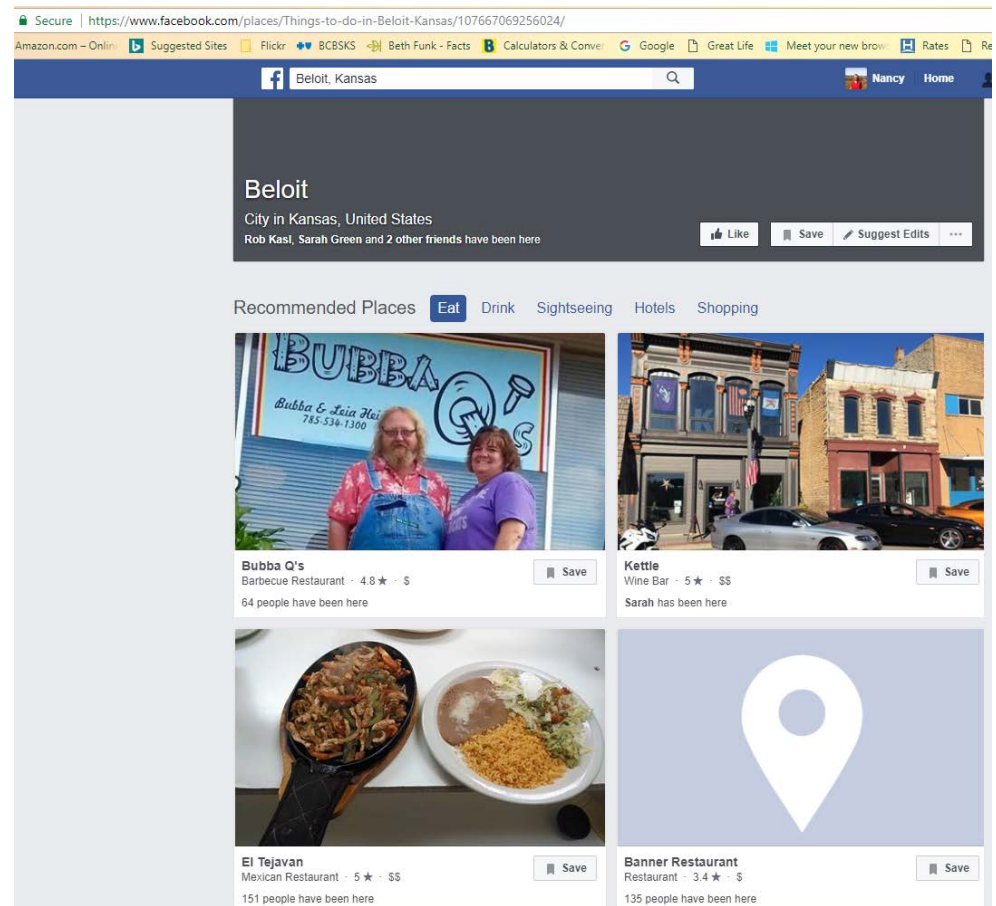
ADMINISTRATION	GOVERNMENT	COMMUNITY	
Administration	Government	Community	Online Bill Pay
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Community Development	Bids / RFPs	Charters	Calendar
Electric	Boards and Commissions	Community Development	Documents
Fire	City Administrator	Living Here	Terms of Use
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- **FaceBook**

<https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Beloit-Kansas/107667069256024/>

- Restaurants
- Events
- Businesses



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Agricultural base is evident.
- Business signs didn't tell me what they do (e.g. OCCK and Brummer Supply).
- Well-marked street signs.



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Loved the brick streets downtown.



2:30 pm Tuesday, May 18



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Well-marked streets and a beautiful stone Court House.



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- **East:** Welcome sign was away from town.
- Irregularly painted barn could be a potential great landmark if repainted.
- Nice Mitchell County signs.



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- **West** entrance on 24: no welcome sign, just city limit notification.



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Motels looked dilapidated.



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Plenty of business on Highway 24.
- Nice town, where’s the business district?
- Could use more signage to downtown, museum, schools, sports complex, city library, fairgrounds.



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- **South:** Hwy 14: No welcome sign; just city limit notification. Large number of well-established trees.
- No signage for Chautauqua Park.





Downtown Business Area

- Older structures.
- Love the lampposts.
- Large downtown area several blocks long with good occupancy.



Downtown Business Area

- Love the brick streets and the sidewalk and pedestrian walk brick inlay.
- Some benches, mostly on the east side.



Downtown Business Area





Downtown Business Area

- Nice flowers in several spots brighten up town.
- Greeted every time, always friendly and asked to help us. Outstanding! (Unanimously reported.)
- Yearbook photos related to the Memorial Day parade and reunions of past High School classes. Cool idea.



Downtown Business Area

- Only one small sign pointing to downtown and that road was closed due to construction.
- In a pre-visit search, I located the address for the Chamber of Commerce, but site doesn't tell you that it is located in the Porter House Apartment. It was closed at 10:30 (Jun 12).



Downtown Business Area

- Streets and curbing are decent. Some improvements are happening.
- Love the architecture.



Downtown Business Area

- Not a lot of merchandise on display.
- Could not tell if empty store fronts were for sale or rent.

Inside the Economic Development section on the city website is a map of available buildings (several “clicks” down). None of the visitors found it and that resource wasn’t visible downtown.



Downtown Business Area- amenities

- Saw benches, 1 large trash receptacle outside.
- No drinking fountains.
- Public restroom at the Court House.
- Had some difficulty locating Thierolf Park next to Municipal Building.
- Some weeds in the middle of sidewalks or beside building.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Shopko, Ray's Apple Market, Dollar General.
- Wide variety of agricultural, automotive, food service, lodging and convenience stores.
- Very little retail shopping.



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- Industrial park north of town on Hwy 24 is clearly marked and several businesses are located in the area.
- *Economic Development section of BeloitKs shows economic incentives, “contact Heather Hartman.”*



Health Care Services

- Beloit has a very nice Medical Center and County Health Services buildings located on the west side of town just off Hwy 14.
- The hospital looked in need of updating.



Health Care Services

- County health- poor sign out front, very small print.
- Visitors disagreed about adequate signage for the hospital and emergency services.



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Health Care Services

- Observed dentist, optometrists, chiropractors, assume there are more in the medical services building.



Long-Term Care

- Sunny Living, Hilltop Lodge, good Senior living choices.
- One (Sunny Living?) used a font and type of sign that reminded me of army barracks. A different sign could make it more homey.



Housing

- Not a lot of “for sale” signs.
- New housing, but there were no sidewalks in the area.



Housing

- Luxury homes: custom built, several under construction, lots are available and posted.



Housing

- Middle class homes- most of Beloit. Very impressed with how well cared-for they are. Show nicely.





Housing

- Lower end, abandoned homes: scattered in neighborhoods, one or two at a time.



Housing

- Saw few rental signs.
- Porter House.
- Abundant apartment homes; Chamber website was a great resource with extensive property listings.



Housing data

KANSAS

• Total Housing Units	1,876	
• Total Occupied Houses	1,554 (83%)	(89.5%)
• Vacant Houses	322 (17%)	(10.5%)
• Owner Occupied	1,069(69%)	(66.7%)
• Renter Occupied	485 (31%)	(33.3%)

- Need for clean-up/demolition of older properties





Schools

- Preschool, K-8, Jr high and high school and technical college. They appeared adequate in size and well-maintained. (Neat mural on the Elementary school!)





Schools

- Saw a portable building southeast of Elementary school. Signage from road didn't indicate, but guessed it was a Head Start or Preschool facility.



Online information about Schools?

- There is school information, but no indication of awards or quality.
- Saw KIDSS program but no explanation of the acronym.
- Found 1:1 Chromebook initiative buried online. This is great— promote it!

Childcare

- Went to Chamber office for this. They gave a handout of the 5 options, but said it was outdated and probably not correct.
- Other visitors commented about child care availability, but not how or where they found out about them.



Faith/Religion

- Saw a number of churches that all looked sharp and welcoming.
- Saw signs for services, but no apparent church- sponsored services.





Faith/Religion

- Found a Blessing Box by the Library that contain numerous personal hygiene products that were free for the taking if you are in need and a donation box.



Civic

- Leadership Mitchell County
- Heart Choices: Pregnancy and Parent Resource Center
- Lions, VFW
- Rotary



Civic

- Relay for Life upcoming event schedule.
- Poster promoting summer library program for kids.
- Lots of Smoky Valley River Festival.
- Free dancing on June 3 from dance company.
- Senior Citizens Center.



This year or last?



Public Infrastructure

- Snow Cone trailer is a little tacky in a residential area.
- Pretty brick streets.
- New improvements being made to streets, curbing.



Public Infrastructure

- Streets clean, overall good signage.
- Sidewalks mostly fine.
- Empty Sperry furniture store had lots of dog poop in front. Store to its south had ratty curtain in front, but maybe it is a secondary door?



City Hall

- One visitor said they never found city hall.
- One visitor said they were well-received and found the information they needed.



Fire, and Police Services

- No sidewalk to police station.
- Found the Law Enforcement Center by accident, no signage.
- Never found the fire station.
- We observed the fire department as a metal building.



Library

- Very small. Parking limited.
- “Port Library” didn’t mean anything to me. I thought it went with the police station or a research library for a special group.



Library

- Lack of signage on Hwy 24 to library.
- Current location is not walkable from residential neighborhoods.
- There was a lot of information about programs and events on their website, but the building itself could be more “prettified.”



beloit public library

Select Language ▼

Log in to My Account

SEARCH THE CATALOG

Keyword 🔍

HOME

HOW DO I?

ABOUT US

BE INVOLVED

BOOKS, MUSIC, AND
MOVIES

DISCOVER, INVESTIGATE,
GROW

DELIGHT AND BEYOND



*Back to School
Storytime*

Wednesday, August 30
10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Children learn through singing, crafts, and interactive stories.
Engaged in the activities, vocabularies grow while the kids have fun.

For ages 6 & younger and their caregivers, siblings welcome.

○○○○

Upcoming Events

[Full Calendar](#)

[Lockerpalooza!](#)

08/09/2017 - 1:00pm

[Super Smash Brothers ...](#)

08/09/2017 - 5:30pm

[Stateline Night Writers](#)

08/09/2017 - 6:00pm

[Stateline Genealogy Club](#)

08/11/2017 - 10:00am

Tech Time 1 on 1

City Parks

- Saw no walking tracks, lots of ball fields, minimal playground variety.



City Parks

- Chautauqua Park: very nice, clean and well-maintained. Signage is non-existent.





City Parks

- Beautiful pool- could be a great draw! Needs signage.



City Parks

- Lovely community garden, actively utilized.
- Roadside Park: nice shaded park along highway with neat historical schoolhouse that needs paint. Given the billboard advertising, I expected to encounter more facilities (restrooms). Billboards have become worn.



City Parks

- Westside Park: Not reported as green space on Google maps. Very large green space in a residential neighborhood. The only park in a neighborhood.
 - Some older and worn equipment that would benefit from upgrade: merry-go-round, slides, swings.



Recreation/Tourism

- Didn't see a slogan.
- Waconda Lake is nearby.
- Little Red Schoolhouse.
- Waterpark, if people can find it.
- Camping available next to waterpark.



Other?

- Dance Night, Relay for Life advertised.
- Mitchell County Tourism site showed Annual Garage sale had just completed.
- Saw advertising for Fair.
- Saw at least one boat ramp on the Solomon River. Great use of river at Chautauqua Park
- Walking Tour of Downtown?

Visitors' Center

- Gals at Chamber Office were EXCELLENT, but hard to find.



What would bring you back?

- The Kettle
(4 comments!)



What would bring you back?

- Gray Drug and Fountain is a throwback Soda/Ice Cream Fountain and Apothecary.

Only one visitor found this and I didn't know what I missed either.



Most Positive Observations

- Friendly people, quaint look of streets and lampposts, health care services appear to be modern.
- Quiet little community. Clean with many brightly painted homes, a wonderful park and sports complex.



Most Positive Observations

- Very impressed with the residential housing. Well-maintained, including landscapes. Nice downtown with newer street surfaces and a wide variety of businesses. Good number of restaurant options, including locally owned options.



Most Positive Observations

- Good lawns, big grocery store, nice park and pool.
- New development for housing. Loved the streetlights downtown. Fantastic water park. The Kettle. A functioning movie theater.



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Nothing really stands out as “HEY! We are known for ____.”
- Need more restaurants where people can gather and chat.
- Locating attractions without a smart phone was a challenge. We had left town before we realized there were fairgrounds there.
- Green space- parks within neighborhoods.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Many places could use paint. Awning, some were really in need of repair. Many places unoccupied.
- Downtown: Not many customers. Streetscapes and “beautifying.” Add benches? Remove weeds from sidewalks.



What will you remember the most in six months from now?

- Brick streets, The Kettle, friendly Chamber staff.
- Gray Drug and Fountain.
- The Kettle! (x2)



Next Steps:

Thank our leadership team:

- *Heather Hartman*
- *Mandy Fincham*
- *Andrew Grabon*
- *Julia Rabe*
- *Carol Torkelson*
- *Brandy Zimmer*

- **Set next steps!**

- Which group will lead the discussion for the follow up?

- **Contact me if you need resources or help:**

- Nancy Daniels
 - Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension
 - 785.410.6352
 - nkdaniels@ksu.edu

Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOIMRJ-jc14>

- Brain Gain (30-49 year olds moving to rural) is a “new trend” that has been happening since the 70’s and no one is noticing or talking about it.
- 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.
- People research a number of places before they move to a rural town.
- Only 1/3 of the people who move rural have a previous connection with that area.

- 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. It matters!
- The number of people who live in rural areas is increasing—from 54M to 60M from 1970-2010. The relative % of people who live rural is smaller (19% instead of 26%) but the real number has increased.
- Don't buy in to someone else's narrative.
- We lose our hardware store, our school, consolidate our churches, etc... but we are still here! In MN, they have only lost 3 towns in 50 years.

- 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.
- 1/5 of dollars come from transfer payments—not employers.



*- Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow,
University of Minnesota*