

# First Impressions



## Ellinwood, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership  
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- **2010 Census Population 2,131 ( ↓ 1.5% since 2000)**
- 13.6% college educated, 87.1% high school or GED
  - KS 30.7% college education, 90% HS or equivalency
- 70.2% family households, 29.8% non-family
- **Poverty** rate is 15.7% (KS=13.8%)
- **Median Age** 35.7 years (36)
- **Median household income** is \$48,750 (\$51,872)

## Web Presence:



City <http://www.cityofellinwoods.com/>

Chamber <http://www.ellinwoodchamber.com/>

## Web Presence:

### FACEBOOK

- Ellinwood After Harvest Festival
- Ellinwood Police Department
- Ellinwood High School
- Ellinwood Recreation Commission
- Ellinwood Eagles Fan Club
- Ellinwood JR Eagles
- Gathering of the Eagles (Alumni:Updated 10/2015)

## The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Minimal signage off Main Street— where are things?
- Nice looking community.
- Liked the brick streets.
- Small town feel
- Loved the wheat on telephone poles





## Observations from major entrances:

- Streets are in good condition.
- Minimal signage. Mostly well-kept.

*View from the north- Hwy 156*



*View from the west- Hwy 56*



## Observations from major entrances:

- From the east: gave a rundown impression (House that needs torn down)
- Industrial: But a little TLC would make a huge difference.



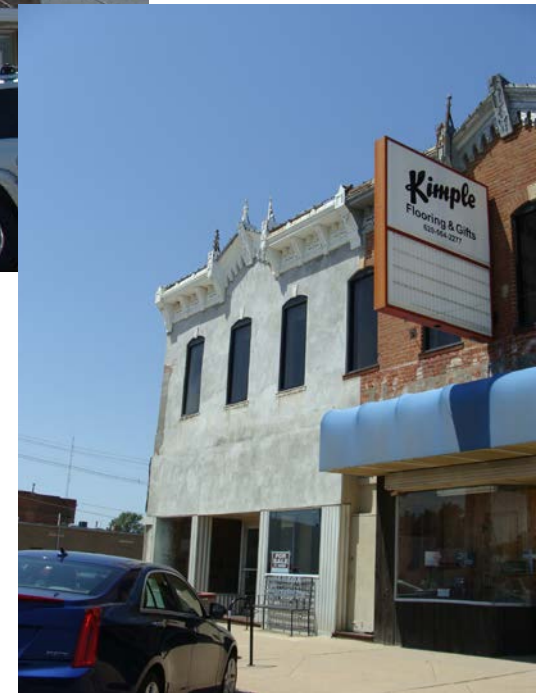
## Downtown Business Area

- Clean and well-maintained. Signs identify businesses nicely. Loved the sidewalk signs. The Gathering's chalkboard on the sidewalk made us come inside.
- A lot of great old buildings. Some could use a little maintenance, fresh paint.
- I was there on Saturday and most businesses were closed so I couldn't go inside.





# Downtown Business Area





















Amazing mural on the Dick Building captures the eye and highlights your history.



Dick Building on the state register of historic places

## Customer Service & types of merchandise

- Draney's: very kind, made us feel welcome. nice variety , a neat store to look at.
- Gathering: great fun, welcomed us as we entered. Great variety at the soda fountain, as well as a small selection of gift items.
- Wolf Hotel: Can you say positive energy and enthusiasm? Chris met us at the door with a smile.
- We were in a few stores a while before we were greeted, but once they did they were friendly.
- Visitor was disappointed with lack of friendliness of employee at Casey's General Store.



## Public Amenities, landscaping and parking

- No drinking fountains, minimal benches, but the bricks around the flower beds could be used for sitting if needed. The flower beds are beautifully maintained,
- The Gathering had restrooms for customers.
- Trash receptacles were available.
- Parking was available.



## Other Shopping Areas

Along Highway 56 there were a number of stores, most of them occupied.





**Pop 'N Shop-** the location of the sign made it difficult to know which building the business was in, the building itself wasn't marked and would have benefited from store front signage. Just to the right of the sign is a house structure.



**Ellinwood Packing Plant (Meat locker)**– “Very nice and clean. Easily accessible from the highway. Was not greeted when I entered, as employees were busy helping others.”



*Retrieved from Google Earth 10-14-16, Image date: 6-2015*





If you like having a local grocery,  
support it. It's tough out there.



# Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- “Not sure which businesses were still in operation.”
- Industrial was spread out– not always well-maintained.



Lovely plantings make me know this is in business; hard to see the signage from the street.





## Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- East (very industrial) entrance takes away from Ellinwood's appearance. Lots of weeds that have been there for a while.



Google photo August, 2015  
Retrieved from Google Earth 10-7-16

# Health Care Services

- Attractive Hospital & Clinic





# Long Term Care

- Woodhaven
- Country Living



*Photos from Google Earth 3/2014  
Retrieved from Internet 10/2016*

# Housing

- There are 1,081 housing units
- 1,008 are occupied (93.2%) (KS= 89.6%)
- 73 are vacant (6.8%) (KS= 10.4%)
- Owner Occupied: 790 (63%) (KS=67.1%)
- Renter Occupied: 218 (37%) (KS= 32.9%)





# Housing observations

- 72% of homes were built before 1959\*
- Housing appears to represent many price ranges
- Saw houses for sale in neighborhoods and on internet that appeared to represent various prices
- The City website provided great information for housing questions.

\*<http://factfinder.census.gov>





## Housing observations

- Houses of various styles and price ranges were generally well-maintained













Overall impression of housing  
was very positive.

One visitor said, “I would  
definitely look at Ellinwood to  
live.”



## Rental Property

- Some rental housing was evident
- Some subsidized housing for eligible residents





## Need for clean-up/demolition of older properties



Sometimes a home owner needs a little help with work they can not do. Sometimes codes need to be enforced.





## Need for clean-up

It makes a difference to the appearance of the neighborhoods- and sometimes safety of the residents.





# Schools

- Attractively maintained
- Nice combination of new and old structures.
- If you are a visitor, no signage helps you find the school.







- Elementary School 4 blocks from Middle and High School Complex and equally attractive
- The building is well marked

- If you are a visitor, no signage helps you find the school.







- St. Joseph's Catholic School was equally well-maintained.
- No signage helped us find the school.

*This photo was retrieved from Google Earth on October 10, 2016. Photo: March 2014.*



## Childcare

- Visitors noted St. John's Child Care which was well-documented on the city page.



## Faith/Religion

- Nice metal signs show the presence of the churches at both east and west entrances





## Faith/Religion

- All are well-maintained.
- St. John's Child Care was the only church-sponsored community activity our visitors noted.



## Civic

- Civic Groups were on a sign on eastern entrance and inside the library.
- Careful examination by a visitor found civic involvement in a Splash Pad update and benches in the park.





## Civic

- Evidence of non-profit organizations was found at the Scout lodge at Wolf Pond and on the East entrance. (October 2016, much construction underway.)



## Public Infrastructure

- Great to still have brick streets, other streets seem in good condition.
- Restrooms in the park, but probably the only ones.
- Did not find street signs to schools, parks, ballfields or pool.





# City Hall

- Lovely downtown City Hall.
- Was greeted and treated kindly. Ladies answered questions and suggested activities for the children as well as lunch spots
- Chamber of Commerce: some visitors found it, others did not notice.



# Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Excellent services
- The city is proud of them





## Library

- Beautiful
- Combined with the school library
- Well-hidden
- Nearly invisible to a visitor
- Visitors received friendly information when they initiated contact.



# City Parks

- City parks were nice, well-maintained.
- Signage would have helped us find them.
- If there were trails, we did not notice them.





## City Parks

- Basketball courts, covered picnic tables, variety of playground equipment for all ages of children.
- Nice benches and a water fountain.
- Close to the football fields, track & Tennis courts. Lots of ballfields around town. The restrooms I noticed were porta-pottys.



## City Parks: POOL

- Needed a sign to help us find it.
- Beautifully maintained.
- Appreciated the inclusion for babies and those with disabilities.
- Appeared well-used in the afternoon.





## City Parks

- Wolf Pond and RV Park on the south side of Hwy 56 is well-maintained, nice facilities for campers.
- Are camping visitors aware of the opportunities to spend money in Ellinwood?



## City Parks

- **Wolf Park** Band Shell is on the National Historic Register
  - We were there in the summer, but couldn't tell what programs would happen there.
- **Pohlman Park:** another well-maintained neighborhood park





# Recreation/Tourism

- Underground tours

Knowledgeable and passionate guide



## Recreation/Tourism

- American Legion is the place to be!
  - But a visitor won't know that.





## Recreation/Tourism

- Saw evidence of the golf course before we realized it was private.
- Eagle Lanes- Bowling



## Significant natural features

- Close to Cheyenne Bottoms
- Quivera National Wildlife Refuge
- Underground Tunnels
  - Does marketing bring visitors into Ellinwood to shop, camp, stay or see the Underground Tunnels?





## Other?

- What a difference a great mural makes!



Art adds interest and is a great indication of community vitality.

## Restaurants, Specialty Shops & Attractions.

- “We ate at the Lone Wolf. The staff was excellent and very kind.”
- “We would like to come back and hit the antique stores and the stores that were closed on Saturday.”
- Hotel and Underground Tours
- A story of kindness from a stranger





## Most Positive Observations

- Visible pride. Well-maintained. Nice small businesses that allow for the majority of needs.
- Nice schools, churches, golf course, playground, park, etc.
- I would definitely look at Ellinwood to live if I had a job in Great Bend. I thought the community had a lot to offer.
- Nancy Daniels: My husband and I experienced exceptional visitor care in our private vehicle with out-of-county plates.

## **Biggest Obstacles/Challenges**

- Housing for people who want to move here
- Getting people to stop and see what Ellinwood has to offer
- Signage
- Being so close to Great Bend



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

- Wolf Hotel: and Chris— energy and excitement was contagious. Unfortunately, I will probably also remember the negativity at Casey's General Store.
- Tunnel tour, history of Ellinwood that we learned on the tour and our guides.
- Library!

## Next Steps:

### *Thank our leadership team:*

- Donna Krug, Agent, Barton County Extension
- Andrea Birzer, Teacher, Ellinwood Public Schools
- Rob Dove, D&D Farms

### • **Set next steps!**

- Which group will lead the discussion?

### • *Contact me if you need resources or help:*

- Nancy Daniels
  - Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension
  - 785.410.6352
  - [nkdaniels@ksu.edu](mailto:nkdaniels@ksu.edu)