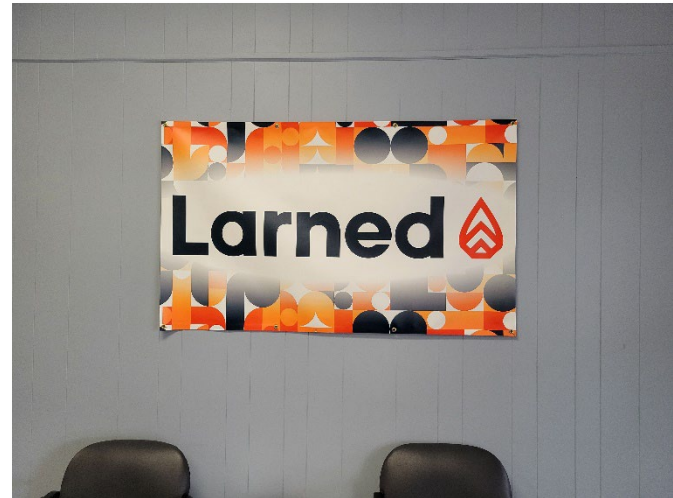


First Impressions



Larned, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- Larned asked for First Impressions, Anthony agreed to be its partner; Distance is just at 2 hours.
- Volunteer visitors in both communities were trained and photos were taken of Larned at the end of June.
- 7 Anthony visitors visited in July.
- Results presented this evening, 10/2/2023.
- Larned uses the results for further discussion and action plans.

- **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

- In a survey of newcomers to rural areas, the reasons people move to a rural community 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 must 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.

- 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: 3,711 ↓ 8.46% since 2010
(~7.0% if using just 2020 data)
- 2020 U.S. Census: 3,769
- 2010 U.S. Census: 4,054
- Median household income: \$45,417 **\$64,124**
- High school or GED 95.7% **91.4%**
- At least a B.S. Degree 23.3% **35.4%**
- Median Age: 51.2 years **37.3 years**
- Persons 65 and Over 25.5% **16.7%**

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

- Moved since Last Year (2021):

13.7%

15.7%

+/- 6% margin of error

- Poverty rate

16.7%

11.5%

(% of people below poverty line)

Race/Ethnicity

White: 85.8%

Black: 2.4%

Asian: 0.4%

Other: 1.7%

Not Hispanic or Latino:
91.5%

American Indian: 0.6%

Native Hawaiian/Other

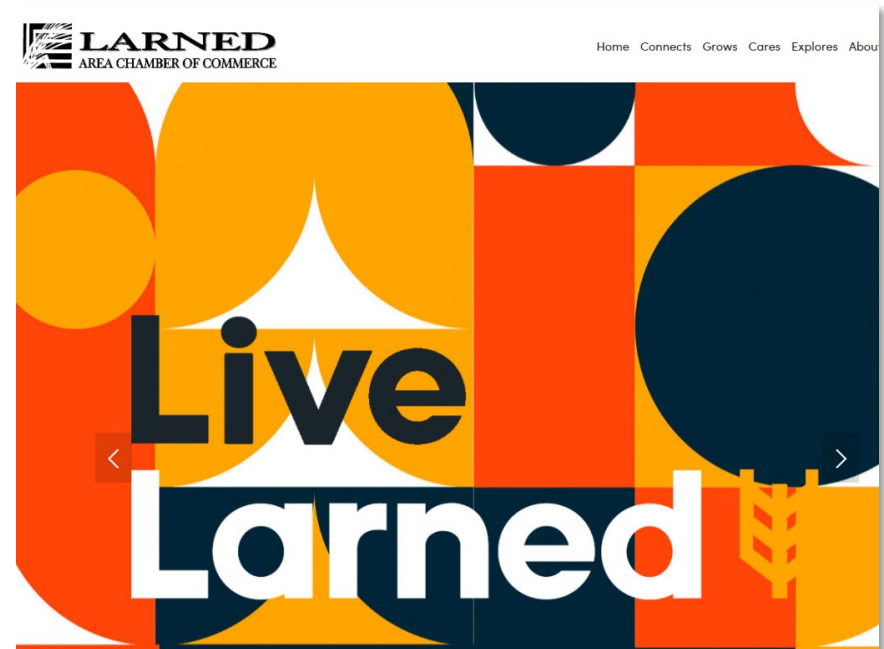
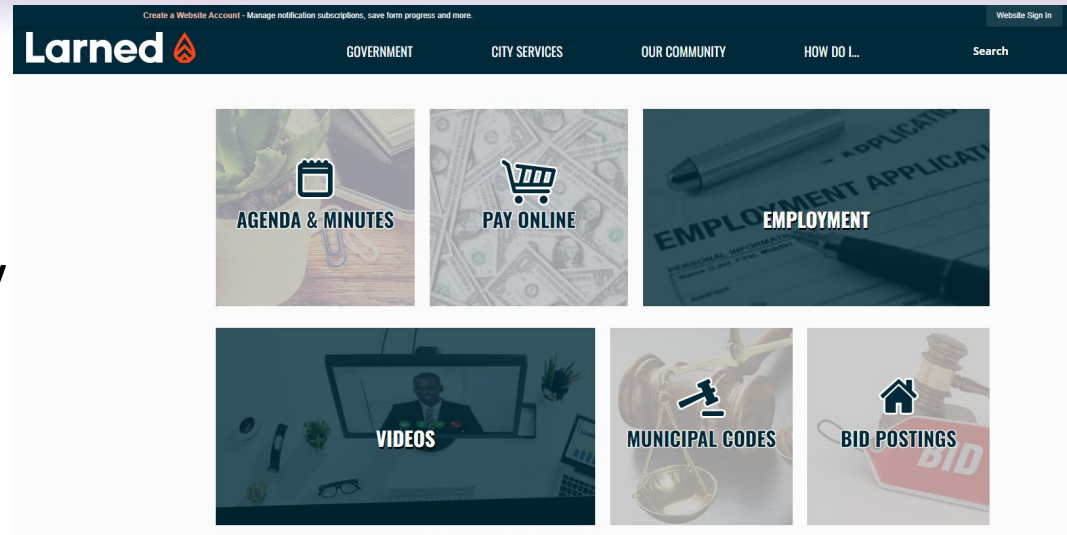
Pacific Islander: 0.1%

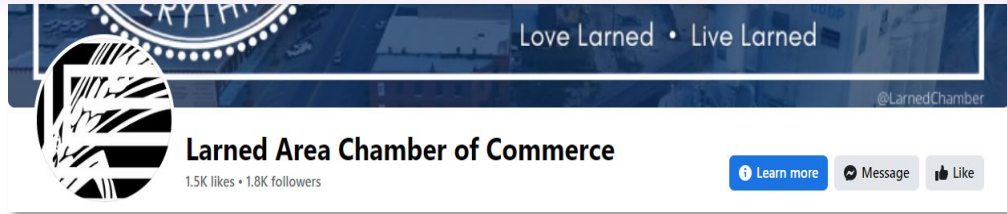
Two or more races: 9.0%

Hispanic or Latino:
8.5%

Website

- Visitors felt that information about the city was easy to find in web searches.
- City and Chamber websites were easy to navigate and users were impressed how they had coordinated designs.
- Calendar on City website had no entries, but the Chamber's site had plenty.





- Positive comments about the Our Community tab on the City website, though to find “Things to Do” was an extra click some might not make.
- Social media was also easily found in searches.

- Other information found in web searches:
 - Housing information from a real estate website.
 - County fair dates, but no location listed for those not familiar with the community.
 - The library’s website.
 - Long-term care facility details.
 - The County Health Department, which did take several steps to locate.

“Five-Minute” Impression

- Visitors did not see any welcome signs as they entered the city but did see signs pointing to different locations once they arrived in town.
- Appreciated the scenery – the hills in town, the well-mowed yards, and how clean the city was. The downtown appeared to be bustling with a lot of people, with cars parked outside of busy shops.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Very few houses were noticed to be in need of repair during this quick drive through the city.
- One house was noted to have a pile of things in the yard.
- Most said it was very easy to get around town, but one commented that there sure seemed to be a lot of dead end streets.
- Some commercial areas were noted when coming in from the south, and that the road was rough after the bridge. Also some commercial areas noted coming in from the northeast.
- There was a building being torn down or was in need of being torn down on the east side of Broadway.
- Banners were noted downtown, but one visitor mentioned that they didn't seem to add much to the area.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- The grain elevators in town are in need of a fresh coat of paint to make the area look nicer.
- There were a lot of signs about local attractions. The passengers noticed them, but the drivers did not due to the size of the lettering making them hard to follow while moving at the speed limit.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Some vacant buildings were observed in the transition area from industrial, to residential, to retail.
- A lot of beautiful buildings on Broadway. Many were empty.
- The train depot was noted.
- The Fort Larned sign was also observed and might benefit from a fresh coat of paint.



Downtown Business Area

- One of the first things observed – brick streets. The roads were in good condition.
- Parking spots were clearly marked.
- There was some construction on the curbs which was later determined to be related to a streetscaping grant.
- Some parts of the streets and sidewalks in the area had some weeds growing.



Downtown Business Area



- There were a lot of storefronts but not all had businesses in them.
- Difficult to tell which buildings had businesses and which didn't, or what the businesses were because several signs were above the awnings, so the only way to know was walk out into the street.
- Flowers were noted to be a nice addition and they were being kept up with by the Larned Garden Club.

Downtown Business Area

- There was one wall noticed that looked like it might fall down.
- Also a faded mural.
- Many historic buildings were in good repair.
- Surprise by some at how many businesses were closed on a Friday.
- Appreciation was given for the music playing downtown!



- Some sidewalks were cracked and some missing chunks, but not all bad!
- Also some areas that were starting to get a little weedy but didn't reflect the entire downtown.



- Businesses observed:
- Offices and a funeral home.
- Insurance, thrift store, gift shop.
- Furniture store, Ace Hardware, ag-related businesses.
- Edward Jones, a beauty salon.
- City offices, library, Chamber, police department.
- Antique store, flower shop, healthcare services.
- “The Bin”
- Scrapbook store and a clothing store.
- Theater
- Not far away – a gas station, Subway, and Sonic.
- Visitors described the merchandise at retail locations visited as excellent in quality.
- Some buildings like the Senior Center, United Way, Wolff Construction could look really nice with some new paint.



Downtown Business Area



- Most visitors were greeted upon entering businesses, or shortly thereafter.
- Majority felt everyone they encountered in the stores was polite.
- Exceptional customer service offered by the Country Seasons Flower Shop, the Chamber of Commerce, the furniture store, and The Bin.

- Benches and trash cans were mentioned by most.
- The benches were affixed to the flower planters.
- A bike rack was observed near one of the flower planters.
- Some noted no public restrooms were downtown, though others mentioned the Chamber had restrooms and there were restrooms at a park if needed.
- No drinking fountains were seen downtown.



- Sidewalks beyond the scrapbook store had some weeds in spots.
- Plenty of parking spaces and it was easy to walk to several places from one spot.
- Due to some storefronts being vacant, moving your car to another spot to get closer to other groups of occupied businesses may be in order.
- One visitor wondered if the brick streets were hard to navigate in the winter due to it being hilly.



- Retail shops were observed from all entrances to town and easy to access, though it didn't feel like there was a designated retail area outside of downtown. Scattered businesses coming into town: restaurants, car dealer, healthcare along 156/Edwards.
- Dollar General was easy to locate and some had trouble finding Dillons.





- A Casey's was visited and the ladies there were very helpful and also gave one visitor some note paper when they needed something to write on. The restrooms were clean.
- Some older motels and a newer motel were noted.
- There were some areas coming through these other retail locations where the east-west highway was not maintained in terms of weeds, but there had been a recent storm which might explain that.

- *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:

- There appeared to be enough areas near the edges of town to expand or locate new facilities.
- No area specifically designated as an industrial park was found.
- A new building appears to be going up on West Edwards with plenty of room for other businesses to build.
- An airport was found and there could be land near there.

- The Pawnee Valley Community Hospital was conveniently located.
- Emergency services at the hospital were easily identified.
- Facility looked to be new.
- State mental hospital was also observed by visitors.



Health Care Services



- Multiple healthcare entities were seen while in town.
- A dentist office on 156.
- Eye doctors, a chiropractor, doctors' offices, and a clinic downtown.
- Facilities looked to be well taken care of.
- Scattered throughout town, not in one area.
- The Health Department was located but kind of crammed into the corner of the courthouse basement.
- One visitor noted multiple different county license plates at these locations indicating people were either traveling to receive medical care or traveling to work at the facilities.
- Pawnee Valley Sport and Health was identified as a place people could come to exercise.

- Some identified three long-term care facilities: Country Living of Larned, Four Seasons Village, and Diversicare. Others did not find Diversicare.
- One facility had dementia care.
- Visitors felt the number and quality of the facilities was just right.
- One visitor noted they thought some construction they saw was for a new senior care/assisted living facility.



- A mix of single-family homes, apartments, duplexes, and town houses were noticed during visits. The west side of town seemed to be the newest housing area.
- Housing ranged from low-income to higher end homes. Something for everyone if someone was looking and the properties were for sale or rent.
- A majority of homes were well taken care of – nice yards, flowers, good décor. Maybe 15% of the properties were run down and needed some paint.



- There were very few for sale signs, there were some sold signs.
- Online search indicated the average price of a home in Larned was about \$87,000.
- One visitor mentioned the “Housing Opportunity” sign at the new duplexes on the north side of town as positive.
- The mobile home park was in a nice area. It needed a little attention but would look good with a little effort.
- Several apartment type complexes and houses with “for rent” signs were seen.
- One single level apartment complex had rentals but appeared to be in poor condition.
- The Santa Fe Trail apartment complex sign is in need of replacement to make the property a bit nicer.



		Kansas
• Occupied Housing Units:	1,704	1.15m
• Owner Occupied:	64.5%	65.3%
• Renter Occupied:	35.5%	34.7%
• Vacant Housing Units	397	124k
- For rent:	171	
- For sale:	41	
- Sold, not occupied:	42	
- Seasonal/recreational:	27	
- All other vacants:	116	
• Average Household Size:	2.04	2.48

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: Census.gov 2020 Census
& ACS 5-year Narrative Profile (Household Size)

Kansas

- Average Travel Time to Work: 9.7 mins 19.6 mins
- Households without a computer*: 157 (9%) 45k (3.8%)
- Households without broadband internet: 312 (17.9%) 108k (9.2%)

* Includes smartphones, tablets, other wireless devices

- Kansas Housing Corporation is a resource to find out about housing grants and other tools for homeowners and renters.
- Also has some resources to address homelessness.

<https://kshousingcorp.org/>



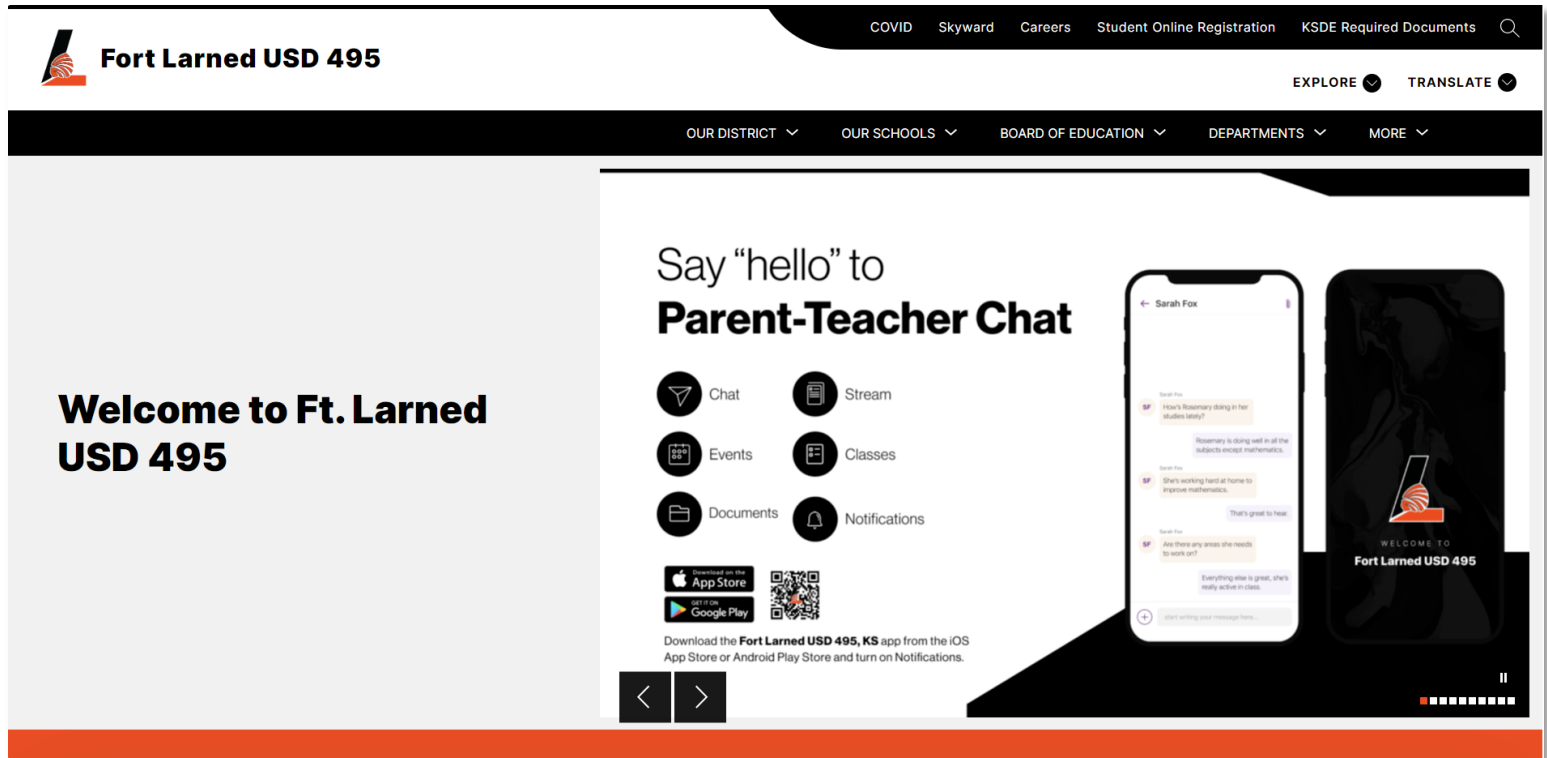
- Preschool, grade school, middle school, and high school were all found during the visits – some online.
- Groundskeeping and building maintenance appeared to be underway at most facilities at the time visitors were in town.
- The high school looked older, but the elementary and middle schools seemed new and unfinished. It took a while to find the new elementary school.
- There didn't appear to be sidewalks at the elementary on the north side of town.



- A wellness center on the north side of the high school was observed.
- The football stadium was getting new artificial turf.
- Schools looked to be large for the size of the community and the grounds and buildings were well maintained.
- Some saw the presence of Head Start, others did not.



- Information was found on the school website with details about the Pre-K program.
- The school system is in the top 50% in Kansas, with a 12:1 student/teacher ratio and about 855 students.
- Other details were found from greatschools.org and publicschoolreview.com – some details found online were out of date.



Comments:

- Some visitors found no indication of childcare in the community, either in person or online.
- Others noted there were seven organizations providing childcare: Little Learners, Morning Out, Golden Rule, Steppingstones Pre-School, Brown's Day Care, Best Day Care, and Caring Hands.
- No indication on pricing or affordability.
- It appears some of the childcare is for workers of the state mental hospital and prison.

Pawnee County Data: Childcare centers-1, Licensed family/group childcare homes-13, Preschools-1.

- Children under 6 with all parents in labor force: 155; Desired capacity of county's childcare facilities: 128
- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need** **83%**
- Contact ks.childcareaware.org to access local childcare specialists.
785-823-3343

Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/data-research/> Retrieved from internet 9/17/23

- Over a dozen churches observed, including Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, and Episcopal.
- No other faiths outside of Christianity were represented in the community.
- One new Assembly of God church was being built.
- All churches appear to be well maintained and welcoming.
- Some visitors noted there were no faith-based services they could identify and no staff in the churches during the visits to ask. Others noted the thrift store is run by the Christian Church volunteers.
- Brochure indicated some local activities in town are sponsored by a community church.



- Some visitors noted they observed one or two civic groups meeting in the community.
- Others noted quite a few more. A combination of 21 different organizations and non-profits, including: Larned Civic PRIDE, Music Club, Hospital Auxiliary, Hospital Foundation, United Way, American Legion, Rotary, Saddle Club, Community Health, Family Crisis Center, Golden Belt Community Foundation, the Garden Club, and Senior Center.





- Larned Civic PRIDE is involved with the parks, including the Veterans' Park which was considered by visitors to be an "awesome" place.
- The Garden Club's work with garden and flower projects around town.





- City and utility crews were observed working on projects when visitors came to town.
- Street signs are present and readable.
- Some streets are rough, but most are in good condition.
- Landscaping was green and lush.
- Sidewalks were good in these areas.
- The stop sign/light at Broadway and the highway intersection was a little confusing, but a good way to get people into the downtown area as they might drive through otherwise.

- Some visitors noted gift bags and being welcomed at the city office, another wasn't greeted, but could hear people talking in the back.
- City Hall itself was easy to access.
- There wasn't a lot of information present for people to take.
- One visitor could not make it to City Hall while it was open and called later by phone for more information. After asking about the good condition of residential areas and how the city was dealing with run down buildings, since not many were observed, the person in charge of those called back to answer questions.



- Some found the police department easily, others had trouble.
- Fire department presence was noted and also a training field south of town.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

Home Contact Us

Kansas Insurance Commissioner Vicki Schmidt



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:

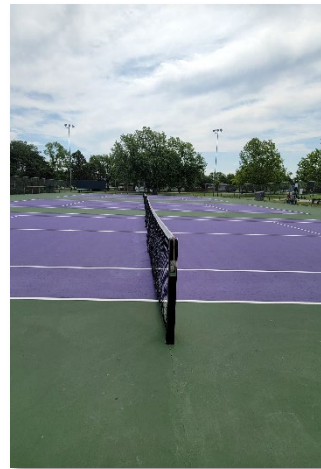
1. Emergency communications systems, including facilities for the public to report fires, staffing, training, certification of telecommunicators, and facilities for dispatching fire departments
2. The fire department, including equipment, staffing, training, and geographic deployment of fire companies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



- The library was located and was an attractive building in a prominent area.
- Information was available in the newspaper about their summer reading program.
- One visitor checked out the genealogy area.
- A lot of overstuffed chairs to read in.
- It was noted that games were available and some people were playing dominoes.



- Parks, playgrounds, and recreation areas were attractive and well maintained.
- Observed were sidewalks in the park areas, restrooms, a memorial, a tennis court, and soccer fields.
- Wayfinder signage pointed where to go to get to parks and the swimming pools, though some felt the words were too small to see while driving.



- The Community Center and display barns for rodeos and other ag-related events were well-kept.
- Seemed like there was a park in every part of town – Larned is not lacking for public activity areas! Some were surprised the city could support so much in the way of public facilities.
- Some of the benches in the Veterans' Park could use some maintenance on the engraving.
- One person noted a skate park and no one noticed any walking trails.
- The park across from the swimming pool had a rose garden in the parking area with lots of swings, slides, and a duck pond. The swimming pool was described as “extra large”.
- Football field and baseball field were noted.
- The splash pad seemed to be very popular.



- Fort Larned was a nice facility that was kept up very well.
- There was a large rodeo grounds.
- Visitors mentioned there was a gun club.
- The Santa Fe Trail museum was observed.
- Slogan: Find Yourself in Native American Country
- There was some surprise that the city itself doesn't capitalize more on the historic sites.
- Larned is known for being the county seat and for the state mental hospital.



- Visitors saw the county fair was happening but didn't notice much in the way of advertising locally.
- Significant features that have the potential to draw visitors to town: Pawnee Rock, Fort Larned, Santa Fe Trail Museum, Sibley's Camp.
- With the statewide emphasis on murals as of late, there was mention that it was surprising to only see the one faded mural in the city and not more types of murals and public art around. They felt there should be more related to frontier history.



Visitor's Center or Chamber

- For one visitor's time in town, the Chamber office was closed for the fair, but there were some flyers about attractions available in the lobby.
- Some Chamber members were observed visiting other businesses in town.
- The Chamber also had several businesses engaged in a shopping promotion that involved a punch card and drawing.
- For those able to visit when the Chamber was open, they were welcomed and found a lot of useful information. Nice architecture on the Chamber building!
- There were visitor centers at Fort Larned and the Santa Fe Trail Museum.



What would bring you back?

- Edwards Street Brew and Bites was a great experience! Good food, good staff, and nice atmosphere. Would bring people back for sure.
- Fort Larned's living history and many restaurants would make for a great day trip, but probably wouldn't stay much longer than a day.
- The furniture store was worth coming back to.
- Would visit the businesses downtown again if in the area.
- Noted were the standard fast food and Mexican restaurants – they weren't necessarily unique to Larned as many communities have them, so they wouldn't be a draw to come back, but they were surprised that a community this size doesn't have a full-service, down-home type of sit down restaurant. Maybe there was one and they missed it?

- Old style and newer homes.
- Fort Larned and the Santa Fe Trail Museum.
- Wildlife sites in the area.
- Friendly people.
- Great looking community.
- Parks and pool.
- Busy retail activity.
- City and utility workers working to improve the community.
- Most businesses were welcoming.
- The community vibe felt new.
- Community pride.
- Recent influx of grants is encouraging.
- Active Chamber director working with Economic Development director to bring businesses and visitors to town.

- Feed lots near town could be a drawback due to smell.
- Being only 30 miles from a larger city like Great Bend might be hard to compete with people going there to shop. Even online shopping would be competition.
- Empty buildings downtown = lack of businesses.
- County Health Department needs larger facilities.
- Well known for the state hospital – people ask if that's where they're going to visit.
- Lack of housing opportunities for rent or purchase.

What will you remember?

- Fort Larned.
- Assortment of housing.
- Clean downtown.
- Good restaurants.
- Friendly people.
- Positive attitudes.
- The parks.
- Lack of response from the city office for some visitors.

- Remember that potential new residents are researching before they come. Use your City and School websites to highlight your many assets.
- What are you proud of? Show us online.
- Tell your positive stories. Make your residents want to contribute to a positive story.

N o o n e c a n d o e v e r y t h i n g ,
b u t e v e r y o n e c a n d o s o m e t h i n g .

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:

Jan Steen

Community Vitality Specialist

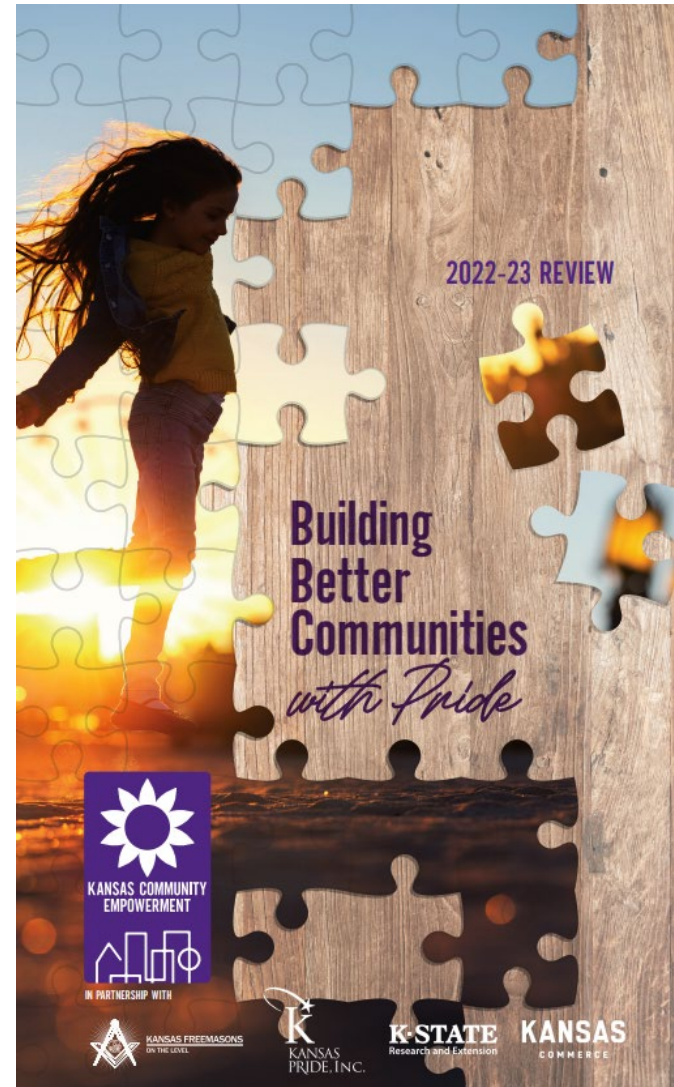
Kansas Community Empowerment Co-Coordinator, K-State Research and Extension

785.532.5840 jmsteen@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

- 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
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Community
Vitality

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Grant Writing Classes and Support

Contact

KSRECV@ksu.edu

to participate.



K-STATE
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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](#)

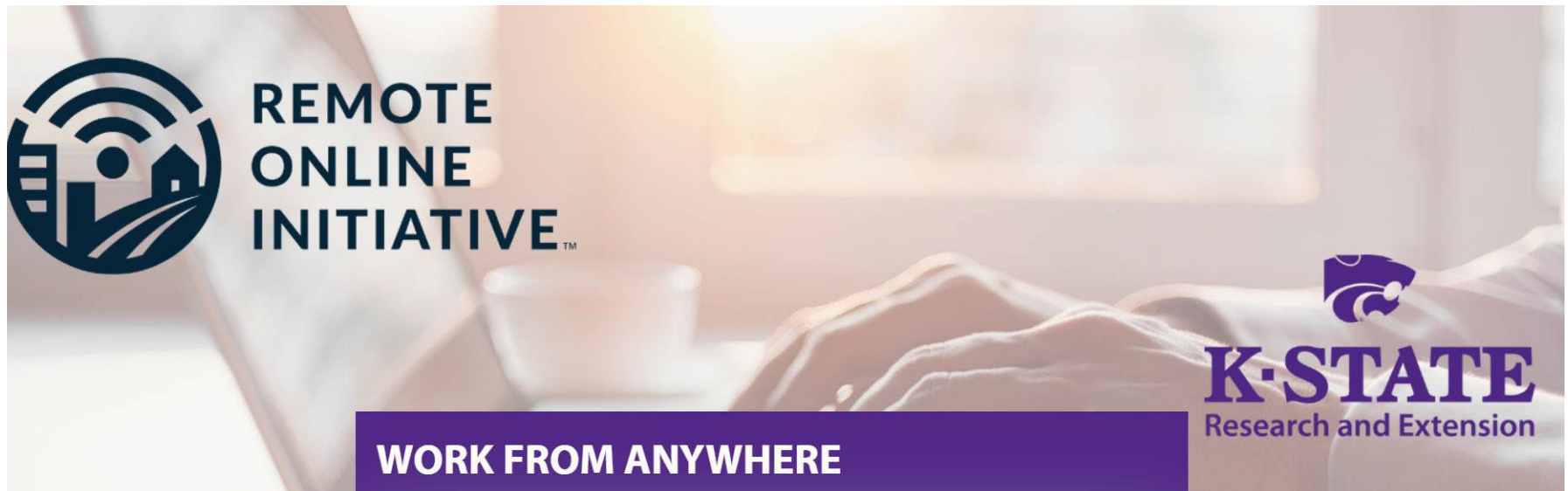
- Previous calls are recorded at

<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/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](https://www.upwork.com/press/releases/economist-report-remote-workers-on-the-move)

- Kansas Remote Online Initiative
 - Certified Remote Work Professional
 - Certified Remote Work Leader
- *Certification in 4-weeks*
- kansasremotework.com



Rural Grocery/KS Healthy Food Initiative

- **Goal:** Increase access to 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/>

