

First Impressions

Downs, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation

The logo for the Dane G. Hansen Foundation features a large, stylized, light brown arch that frames the text. The text "DANE G. HANSEN" is written in a bold, dark blue, serif font. Below this, the word "FOUNDATION" is written in a smaller, dark blue, serif font, with each letter separated by a small space. The entire logo is set against a white background.

DANE G. HANSEN

F O U N D A T I O N

Downs Demographics

- Population – 873
- Median Household Income - \$39,922
- High School Education – 88.3%, College Education – 15.8%
- Median resident age is 53.1 years
- Poverty rate is 12.4%

Source: factfinder.census.gov



Web Presence:

- www.downsks.net
- www.downschamber.com
- Facebook page
 - Looks good with updated information
- Has lots of information
- Great and easy to use websites
- Listed events and businesses



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Downs is cute, simple, small, and quiet
- Full of busy friendly people
- Entrances are good and downtown is easy to find



- Roads are well maintained with nice curbs and gutters
- Gazebo area, stage coach, yard art, and cabins capture attention and look nice



Downtown Business Area

- Buildings have old style look, but well maintained
- Landscaping is good, but more is always good
- Lots of flyers posted in windows promoting events



- Some buildings need a paint job
- Street/curbs in good condition
- Yards are good



- Very clean main street



- Nice variety of downtown stores
- Good customer and friendly conversations
- Parking is easy and plenty of it



Other Retail Areas

- Along HWY 24
- Two convenience stores but they had an industrial feel to them



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- Plenty of room along main entrance on the highway for growth
- Looks like new industry for the town



- Some of the ag services located in the heart of the community
- Diversion of truck traffic a good safety feature



- Many services located along HWY 24



- Some industrial or commercial areas could use to clean-up to improve appearance as you enter town



Health Care Services

- There are two medical clinics close to one another
- Nice looking and well-maintained



- Decent availability, but nothing like an actual hospital
- In addition to the clinics, there is also a dentist and assisted care living facility (Golden Living Center???)



- Downs Pharmacy
- Downs Senior Center
- What about places for physical activity & exercise??



Housing

- Total Number of Housing Units – 508
- Occupied housing units – 424
- Vacant housing units – 84
- Owner occupied – 78.8%
- Renter occupied – 21.2%



Housing observations

- Many houses ranging for various prices
 - Extremely affordable
- Very nice HUD complex with several units
 - There is a waiting list



- As all towns, there are some housing areas needing clean-up or improvements



- Shortage of houses to rent
- Only a few to buy



Schools

- Schools looked nice, but needs greenery
- Schools are adequate in size



- Good website with lots of information
- Neat alumni building on Main Street



Childcare

- One childcare facility
- The building was well maintained and had awesome metal art
- Looked vacant



Faith/Religion

- Several churches with a variety of denominations
- All were nice and well maintained





Civic

- Not apparent
- Noticed Chamber of Commerce and possibly a Lion's Club
- No known activity



Not noted by visiting team but of significance

- Scout Program
- 4-H Program
- Summer Feeding Program



- Several memorials were noticed around town



Public Infrastructure

- Most streets appeared in good condition
- Good handicap accessibility
- Streets signs were dark not easy to read
- Directional signage for City Hall is needed



- Sidewalks in the core of community but a big chunk of the community didn't have any
- Some sidewalks need work



- Fire protection and EMT services are evident in the community
- The historic Carnegie Library is a marvel. The librarian was very passionate about her job
- Impressed with all the events the library puts on



- The park was good and could be used as rest stop
- Access to ball fields, tennis courts, playground equipment, restrooms, picnic areas, etc.



- Pool and downtown park not noted by visiting team



- Community garden is not advertised
- Shooting range is hidden
- South ball fields not mentioned



Recreation/Tourism

- One hour from 5 different lakes
- Lots of fishing, hunting, boating, and camping
- Good central point for activities
- Sod & Stubble self-guided tour



- Also has Richardson Pipe Organ
- 111 year old Carnegie Library
- Missouri Pacific Depot
- Nice golf course
- In need of a good restaurant



- Strikers Bowling Alley was not mentioned
- Several lodging accommodations



- Cute little rental cabins



Attractions mentioned or promoted

- Annual celebration in June
- Storytelling Festival in April
- Many class reunions in July
- Annual Tree Fest in November



Most Positive Observations!

- Small, peaceful, and safe to raise a family
- Strong sense of pride
- Carnegie library stood out
 - Would love to come back and spend more time



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Needs more signage and a nice restaurant would help
- Need more rental property



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

- The friendly atmosphere surrounding the community
- The library and the gracious librarian
- Very fun, marvelous day



Recommendations:

- Wayfinder signs
- New reflective street signs
- Some updating of the website
- Fitness Facility
- Improvements to Memorial Hall
- Nice restaurant

- The Dane G. Hansen Foundation wants to help communities in Northwest Kansas become the best they can be and take great PRIDE in who they are and what they can be.



- <http://danehansenfoundation.org/>