

First Impressions

Ellsworth, 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

Ellsworth Demographics

- Population – 3,120
- Median Household Income - \$37,324
- High School Education – 85.9%, College Education – 21.1%
- Median resident age is 43.2 years
- Poverty rate is 8.8%

Source: factfinder.census.gov



Web Presence:

- Ellsworthchamber.net
- Ellsworthks.net
- Ellsworthcounty.org

Very Comprehensive sites

Distinct lack of photos showcasing the community

All three sites rely very heavily on text

Ellsworth County

Official Government Website



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Good welcoming signage upon entering and leaving the community from all directions



- Ellsworth appears to be a very “neat” community
- Well-kept town with parks and verges mowed
- Little to no trash
- Downtown area in very good repair



Downtown Business Area

- Very eye appealing historic downtown
- Nice use of banners and light poles
- Good variety of merchandise



- Welcomed into local flower shop – ladies were courteous and polite
- Greeted, invited into bank for coffee/newspaper – wonderful service
- RX store had a friendly clerk who was very helpful



- Nice streetscaping
- Plenty of benches in good condition/colorful
- Appealing downtown sidewalks in excellent repair



- Public restrooms available
- Easy to find parking in a central location



- A number of downtown spaces available



Other Retail Areas

- Highway area on the east side of town
- Newer businesses seem to be locating there

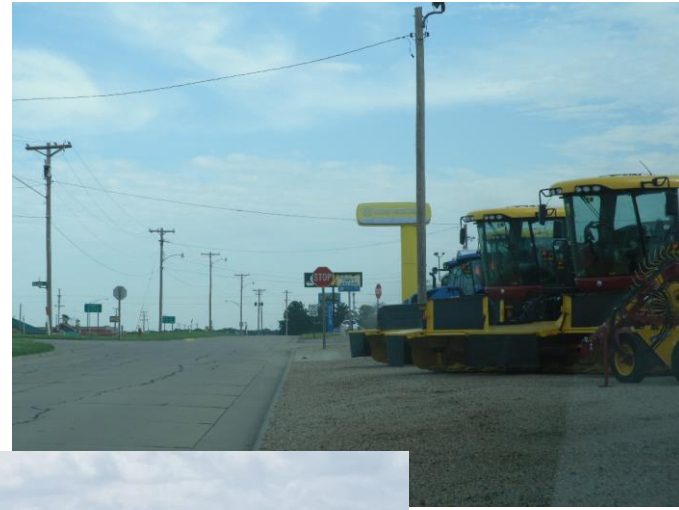


- Well maintained
- No direct link to the downtown



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- Highway area on the east side of town
- Adequate to accommodate growth



- Great Industrial/Commercial businesses on the North side also



- Ellsworth Correctional Facility – Two campuses north and east



- Ag services located in the heart of the community
- Veterinary clinic found north of town but no signage



- Some industrial or commercial areas could use to clean-up to improve appearance



- What are some potential uses for these facilities?



Health Care Services

- Apparent new medical facility on north east side of town
- Comprehensive list of services provided
- Easy to navigate website



- Nursing home; assisted living facility to the south of town – very nice facilities!
- Welcoming design/layout – pleasant living environment



- Senior Center just off of Douglas
- Chiropractor, Dental, Vision, Pharmacy



Housing

- Total Number of Housing Units – 1,150
- Occupied housing units – 1,055
- Vacant housing units – 95
- Owner occupied – 71.6%
- Renter occupied – 28.4%



Housing observations

- Nice mix of newer and older neighborhoods
- Homes listed with two realtors from \$25,000 - \$285,000
(approx. 25 residential properties listed)



- Older neighborhoods well maintained for the most part
- There are some which need clean-up or improvements



- Lovely new neighborhood now sits where the building lots were once free



- Not many individual rental properties seen but (income based) seen on Chisolm Trail and Kirkendall Heights.



Schools

- Schools look well-maintained
- Separate facilities for Elementary and Jr & Sr High School



- General school information was found online
- Lack of practice space (gym) for the size of the school



- School facilities could use some additional signage
- It feels like you are selling yourself short with the incredible athletic facilities you have
- May want to consider repairs to the tennis courts



Childcare

- Nice, newer community daycare facility on the east side of town
- Private daycare businesses operating out of homes
- Care is available and reasonably priced



Faith/Religion

- Churches were located throughout the community – a wide variety of denominations were represented
- All were nice and well maintained



- Nice church welcome sign but the area surrounding it needs attention
- Youth Center downtown, who sponsors??
- What is the Family Connections Center?

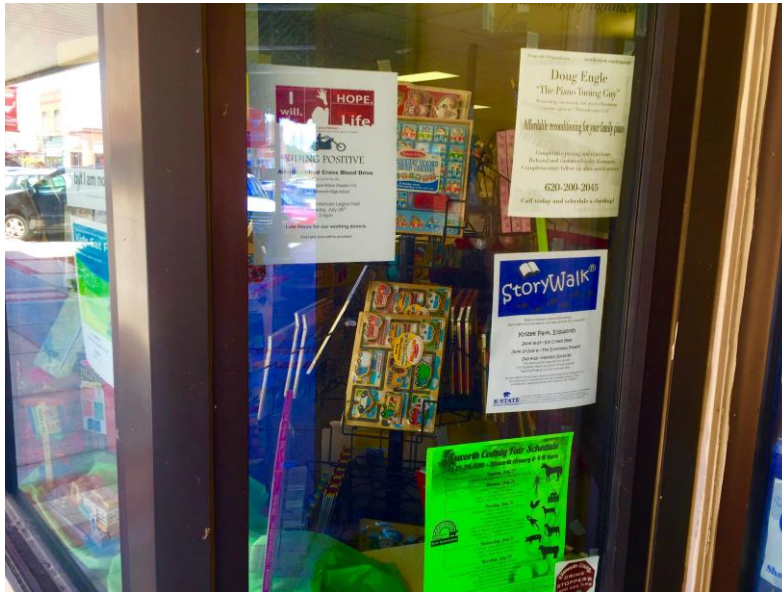


Civic

- Volunteers, Kiwanis, Ambassadors Club, Eastern Star, Masons, Lions, VFW, American Legion, Mosaic, Boy Scouts, Arts Council



- Lots of charitable type-posters; events in store windows, etc.



Public Infrastructure

- Overall, the streets and sidewalks were in good to excellent condition (even the “dirt” roads to the west side of town were incredibly well maintained with mowed verges.)



- Nice landscaping throughout the community – adequate parking seemed available in all areas
- Planning shows residential/commercial development on East side.



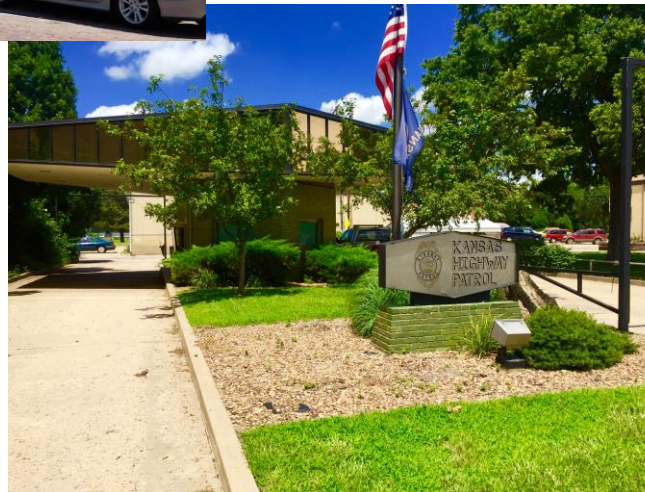
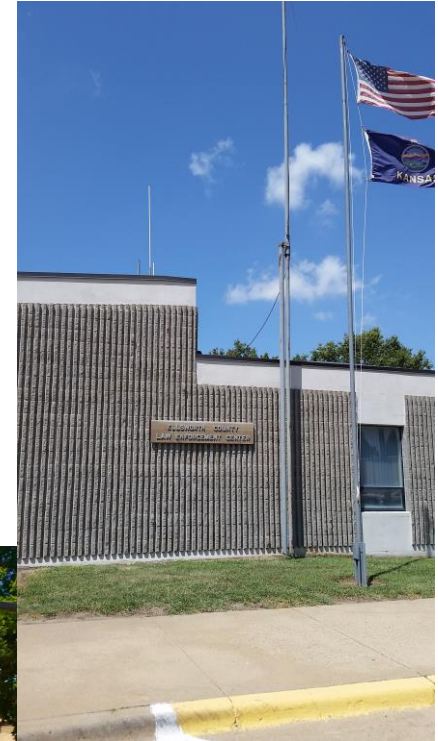
- There are some areas of clean-up needed, both downtown and residential



- Did not visit City Hall
- Went to Chamber/ED office for local information
- Chamber director was very new to the job and was very helpful, welcoming and courteous



- Police – comprehensive service: Patrol, K-9, Animal Control, Code Enforcement, etc.
- Ellsworth County Law Enforcement
- Kansas Highway Patrol Center



- Library was small but well maintained. Good variety of books, magazines and videos. Great kids section. Very friendly staff/
Public restrooms
- Fire – Full service and great facilities



- Krizek Park – Incredible Facility: Disk Golf, Walking Trail, Shelters, Play Equipment, Courts



- Preisker Park – Nice historic feel



- Hoyt Park and Pool



Recreation/Tourism

- Variety of events – Cowtown Days, Star Spangled Spectacular Fireworks, Follow the Star, Rodeo, Throw for the Soul...
- Ellsworth – Right in the Heart of Kansas (Chamber)
- Ellsworth, Kansas – A Community with Pride (City)



- Recreation Complex – Rodeo Grounds & Ball Fields
- How do folks know where to find it?



- Fairway RV Park



- The museum complex/ Fort Harker/Hodgden House



- Nice looking golf course
- The city park has small hills, a creek, bridges, walking/biking trail, playgrounds – good attractions for families with kids



- Chamber office provides good area information (print) for visitors
- Visiting team made no mention of Kanopolis or Wilson Lakes



Attractions mentioned or promoted

- Many pleasant, owner operated stores and restaurants but not much different from other small rural Kansas towns. Sugar Shack was fairly unique.



Most Positive Observations!

- Very clean, well maintained, mowed, picturesque community!
- Progressive with east side development
- Beautiful downtown maintenance/revitalization – upkeep of storefront properties
- Awnings, sidewalks, lighting, welcome banners on light poles, all compliment the main street.



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- There is no natural movement or “feeding” from one top to the other (distance/geography)
- Are 36 hotel rooms (Americas Best Value Inn) enough space for a progressive community to attract visitors?
- Signage



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

- + Beautiful downtown area and well-kept community
- + Growth potential
- +Plenty of green space – park area, etc.
- - Not a wide variety of shops in downtown district to attract shopping



Summary:

Overwhelmingly positive impression!



Recommendations:

- Adding photos to website
- Signage – Wayfinder and Promotional
- A link from North and East Businesses to Downtown
- Clean-up of properties in East side of town
- Sprucing up the West entrance

- 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/>