

# First Impressions

## Russell, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership  
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation

The logo for the Dane G. Hansen Foundation features a stylized orange arch above the text "DANE G. HANSEN" 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 wide space. A second, lower orange arch is positioned behind the word "FOUNDATION".

**DANE G. HANSEN**

**F O U N D A T I O N**

# Russell Demographics

- Population – 4,506
- Median Household Income - \$48,567
- High School Education – 88.8%, College Education –23.8%
- Median resident age is 49.0 years
- Poverty rate is 16.6%

Source: [factfinder.census.gov](https://factfinder.census.gov)



## Web Presence:

- <https://www.russelcity.org>
- <https://Russellcountyks.org>



- City website looks new and impressive
- Good links to other entities
- City Facebook page not often used
- Community Calendar on website not updated
- Website helpful and city clerk validated the information
- Advertise website as only a few comments listed

# The “Five-Minute” Impression

- The limestone buildings and homes and brick streets are charming
- Town is disconnected between interstate and Main Street
- Many commercial/chain businesses off interstate





- Good wayfinding signage for the industrial park and downtown
- Businesses had mixed care when entering from the South 281
- West entrance not as welcoming with an industrial feel



- No entrance signage from the North or South
- Signs for RV parks
- Better promotion needed for east park





## Downtown Business Area

- Beautiful old limestone buildings
- Park along main is attractive
- Nice murals

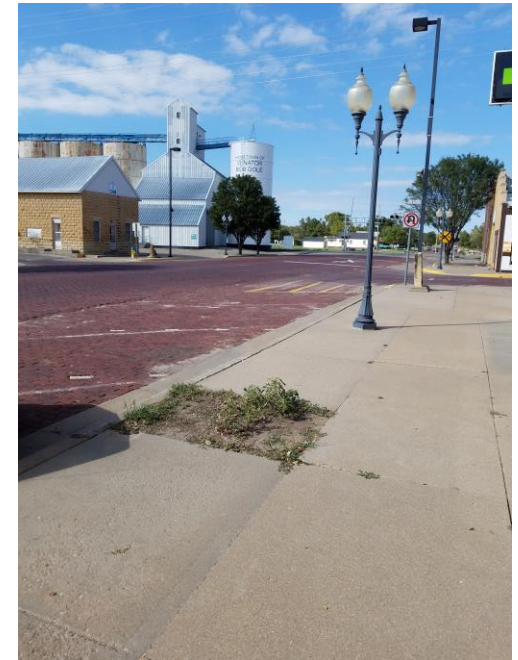


- Variety of downtown businesses – Antique Stores, Theatre, Cultural Center, Furniture Store, Museum, Sports Bar & Grill, Clothing Stores, Pharmacy, Banks and other services





- Benches in the downtown area
- Trash cans along Main Street
- Wi-Fi availability in a few businesses
- Nice planters and limestone posts
- Weeds noted in open cement





- People were nice and helpful throughout town
- Greeted and treated friendly at all locations
- Very inviting and surprising for a rural area



## Other Retail Areas

- Surprised by two Dollar General Stores
- Large grocery store – impressed with the produce section
- Casey's was the only convenience store close to parks, recreation areas and Main Street



- Lumber yard and auto parts on South 281
- Also restaurants, fast food and convenience store





# Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- Signage on 281 led to the east industrial park
- Signage on east business route was misleading
- Ethanol Plant, Purina and Wheat processing



- Airport east of town
- Older oil industry on west side of town





- Ag services – Elevator, Sale barn, Veterinarian
- Mechanized Concepts



# Health Care Services

- Good directional signage to the hospital
- Nice updated hospital
- Clinic connected to the hospital



- County health department close to the hospital
- Great walking trail with exercise equipment





- Variety of health care providers throughout the community – medical clinic, chiropractors, dentists, optometrists, pharmacies



- Long term care, assisted living, senior apartments, home health





- Food Pantry
- Senior Center
- EMS



# Housing

- Total Number of Housing Units – 2,323
- Occupied housing units – 2,015
- Vacant housing units – 308
- Owner occupied – 74.8%
- Renter occupied – 25.2%
- Median Value - \$96,000

Source: [factfinder.census.gov](https://factfinder.census.gov)





# Housing observations

- Neighborhoods were not consistent in the types of properties
- Updated/kept home next to struggling homes



- Saw houses for sale in all neighborhoods





- Rental property options are limited
- As all communities, there are some areas where housing is blighted





# Schools

- Two elementary schools – Simpson & Bickerdyke





- Ruppenthal Middle School – impressive limestone building



- Russell High School







USD 427 BOND ELECTION, \$3,566,000, 9/1/21  
November 23, 2018

**PROJECT #1 - ELECTRICITY**

- Electricity**
  - The electricity currently in each building is currently not meeting the needs of 21st century education.
- What needs to be done?**
  - Absent capacity to be able to power everything from fans, air compressors, to hot dining for students and education to successfully integrated daily tables or projects.
  - Like HVAC, which requires classroom with to do an improvement in the entire 2nd and 3rd floor being (imply) and out of anything that could ultimately be to fit into future addition while 2 1st floor are needed.
  - Absent ability to allow for clock to be utilized in classroom space. Currently, classrooms at which ultimately would receive 2.25 inches per classroom.
  - While the electricity is 100% average but not in classroom this does not include the computer lines or (imply) that have been listed for each school in the 1990's.
  - How?
  - The school will provide USD 427 with the ability and funds to install new transformers, higher voltage conductors and lines, raise poles on the capacitor, and new longer capacity breaker boxes on the capacitor.
  - Although, more could be fitted at needs in the area of electricity, these main components are the extent of USD 427 I will fund.

**PROJECT #2 HVAC**

- Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)**
  - The current heating and cooling systems throughout the attendance centers are aging factor than USD 421 can keep up with maintenance and repairs.
- What needs to be done?**
  - Replace or refurbish the heating systems at all attendance centers to provide consistent heat for all areas of attendance.
  - Replace and/or refurbish a maintenance system that can automatically control the HVAC systems and also do with energy efficiency.
  - And on conditioning throughout the building to manage a heating/cooling environment that is best suited to encourage learning and working in the classroom world.
- How?**
  - The proposed bond will provide the means to install and/or refurbish the heating units that will send economical for quality. This can additionally be added by using variable refrigerant flow (VRF) systems that can both heat or cool with the highest cost and mechanical efficiency.

**USD 427 Bond Election, \$3,566,000, 9/1/21**

**Estimated Levy Requirement: 13.861 Mills**

Appraised Value	Residential Property
\$10,000	\$0.00
\$20,000	\$0.00
\$30,000	\$0.00
\$40,000	\$0.00
\$50,000	\$0.00
\$60,000	\$0.00
\$70,000	\$0.00
\$80,000	\$0.00
\$90,000	\$0.00
\$100,000	\$0.00
\$110,000	\$0.00
\$120,000	\$0.00
\$130,000	\$0.00
\$140,000	\$0.00
\$150,000	\$0.00
\$160,000	\$0.00
\$170,000	\$0.00
\$180,000	\$0.00
\$190,000	\$0.00
\$200,000	\$0.00
\$210,000	\$0.00
\$220,000	\$0.00
\$230,000	\$0.00
\$240,000	\$0.00
\$250,000	\$0.00
\$260,000	\$0.00
\$270,000	\$0.00
\$280,000	\$0.00
\$290,000	\$0.00
\$300,000	\$0.00
\$310,000	\$0.00
\$320,000	\$0.00
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\$340,000	\$0.00
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\$360,000	\$0.00
\$370,000	\$0.00
\$380,000	\$0.00
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\$410,000	\$0.00
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# Childcare

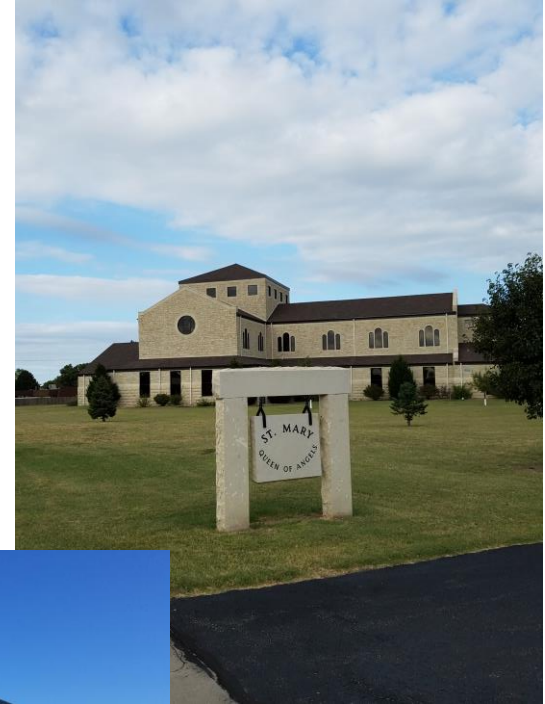
- Daycare information difficult to find
- Laugh N' Learn located on Facebook
- A pre-school contacted but a follow-up call not received





# Faith/Religion

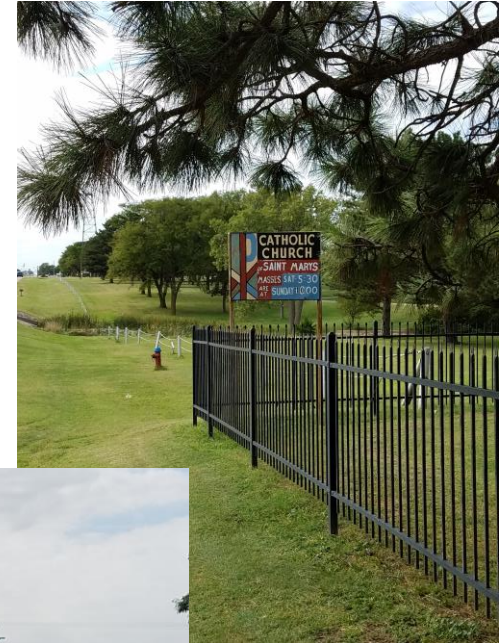
- Many churches found throughout the community
- Small to very large







- Faith sponsored Thrift Shop
- Some faith based signage





# Civic

- Civically active community
- Noticeable signage around town





- Youth serving organizations



- American Legion, VFW, Elks, Masons





# Public Infrastructure

- Side streets narrow with weeds growing in cracks
- Only public restrooms in east park
- Wayfinding signage on the main roads
- Lack of ADA accessible sidewalks





- Area between I-70 and old HWY40 could use some clean-up and landscaping



- City hall signage could be improved
- Provided a wealth of information
- Greeted with skepticism
- Hours posted on the door
- Nice branding with logo





- Fire and Police Stations well-maintained
- Difficult to recognize
- Paid staff at fire department



- Library well-kept with good parking
- Wayfinding signage for the library





- Sports complex and Memorial Park very nice & well-kept
- Great walking path outlining the facility
- Variety of activity courts and other “field” games





- Golf Course, Swimming pool, fairgrounds all in the same area





- Russell Recreation Center
- Russell Recreation Commission



- No mention was made of the other wonderful parks in Russell!!
- Water Tower park





- Fossil Lake





- Bickerdyke Park??









## Recreation/Tourism

- Oil Patch Museum
- Fossil Station Museum
- The Gernon Houses





- Deines Cultural Center
- Russell Community Theatre



- Dream Theater
- Playdium Bowl
- Grassroots Art





- Russell County Veterans Memorial



- Veterans Bricks Memorial







- Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Community event banners hung on the fence
- Ad Astra Music Festival





- Historical Marker
- Hometown of Senator Bob Dole



# Natural or Man-made Features :

- Fossil Lake and the campgrounds





- Native Limestone



- Murals on the sides of buildings





- Wilson Lake



# Restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back?

- Bikes, BBQ event – it sounds fun!
- Antique Stores
- Meridy's restaurant





# Most Positive Observations!

- The vision they shared at the city and visitors bureau
- Friendliness of the people
- The murals, limestone buildings and brick streets
- Parks and schools well maintained



## Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Bringing people to the downtown area
- Cleaning up the southern side of town and making it cohesive
- More housing options
- Renovation and occupancy of historic downtown buildings
- Business attraction





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

- The LIMESTONE BUILDINGS!!!! And houses.
- The Main Street area. Would like to come back to shop the antique shops.
- Memorial Park with the disc golf course
- The desire to come back and learn more about the history of the area



## Recommendations:

- Countywide promotion of the native limestone
- Promote all the parks in the community
- Greater promotion of the cultural arts
- Create a more inviting feel on the south and west entrances
- Increase rental housing
- Increase childcare availability
- Promote local celebrities/heritage figures – Bob Dole, Loa Boxberger, etc.





- 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/>