

First Impressions

Smith Center, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership with
The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



Smith Center Demographics (2013)

- Population – 1,610
- Median Household Income - \$35,996
- High School Education –86.4%, College Education – 14.7%
- Males – 47.4%, Females – 52.6%
- Median resident age is 51.3 years
- Poverty rate is 15.4% (Smith Co.)



Web Presence:

SMITH CENTER
HEART OF THE NATION STILL BEATING STRONG!

- www.smithcenterks.com
- Nice web site – expected more than what we found
- Good to find listing of churches and civic organizations
- Discover Smith Center Facebook page is regularly updated
- Smith Center Athletics appears high on the google list



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Nice community – some overgrown areas that aren’t lived in
- Love the tall Smith Center sign – location of sign not the best
- East entrance leaves something to be desired
- The town looked pleasant enough



- Great school pride is exhibited
- Consistent welcome signs into the community
- Downtown banners are welcoming



Downtown Business Area

- Great directional signs
- Downtown building being painted shows desire for improvement
- Limited variety of businesses but quality was great!



- Good customer service
- Parking was good
- Hand rails are good for elderly population
- Benches are nice



- Observed an appliance store, flooring, drug store, home décor/gift, and restaurant
- Several buildings were in need of maintenance
- Good advertising murals



- Mini park good to fill an empty lot
- Planters are attractive
- Great to see restoration of a Main Street building



- Clean-up or restoration needed to some businesses



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Many services and businesses have left downtown for Hwy 36
- Variety of business
- Grocery store is nice



- Variety of eating options on HWY 36
- Any plans for the Alco building?



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- Coop off of HWY 28
- Airport along HWY 28
- Variety of commercial businesses along downtown on HWY 28



- Implement dealerships along HWY 36
- Peterson Industries??



Health Care Services

- Hospital located along South HWY 28
- Needs Updating
- Long Term Care in same complex
- Family Health Clinic



Health Care Professionals

- 4 Doctors, 1 Dentist, 2 Optometrists, 2 Chiropractors, 4 Nurse Practitioners (info pulled from city web site)



- EMS located along HWY 36
- Gardner Wellness & Therapy Center
- Srader Fitness Center



- Public Health on Main Street
- Public Transportation
- Health and Rehab
- Senior Meal Site



Housing

- Total Number of Housing Units – 934
- Median house value in 2013 - \$62,628
- Home owned – 79.8%
- Homes rented – 20.2%



Housing observations

- Good mix of houses for all income levels
- Many small older homes
- Number of houses for sale



- A number of large homes with several for sale



- Income based housing units
- Senior housing units



Schools

- Buildings in good condition
- Great school pride in the community
- Good playgrounds



- Strong athletic program



Childcare

- Preschool and Day Care located downtown



Faith/Religion

- Eleven churches listed on the city web site
- Those observed appeared well kept and vital





- **Hardly Used Shop – Excellent community service!**



Civic

- Good listing of civic organizations on web site
- Kansas PRIDE Community



Public Infrastructure

- Streets in good condition
- Good street signage
- Minimal landscaping and streetscaping



- Some areas in need of clean up
- Some sidewalk work needed
- Some curb and gutter work needed



- Historic Courthouse with Veterans Memorial
- Sheriff's Office
- Nice Fire Department



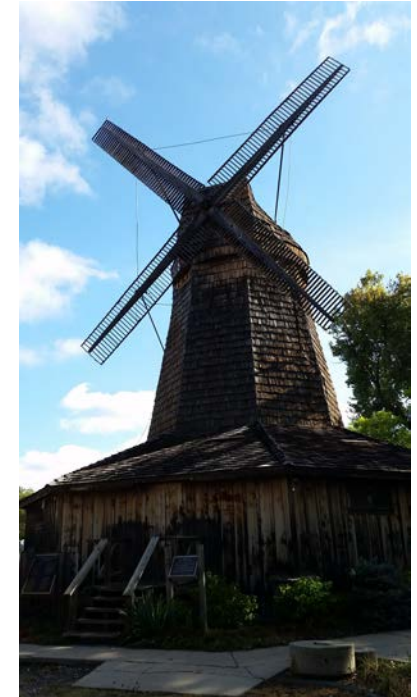
- Signage for City Hall difficult to read
- Nice library facilities
- Signage for library is unclear



- Pool appeared to be nice and clean
- Ball parks and playgrounds very well maintained
- Roadside Park in good condition



- Wagner Park with old Dutch Mill is very attractive!



- And the old water tower comes down!

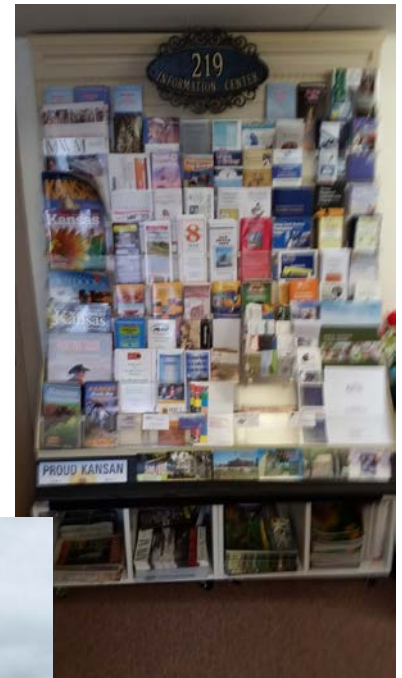


Recreation/Tourism

- Sunflower Fitness Trail
- Downtown Movie Theater
- Municipal Golf Course
- RV Park



- Slogan – “Smith Center, Kansas - Heart of the Nation Still Beating Strong!” Is the slogan used throughout town?
- Good literature rack at the Chamber of Commerce
- Chamber Office wasn’t easy to see



- Website has a good list of historic sites. How are they promoted throughout town?
 - Higley Cabin
 - Home on the Range Campground and RV park
 - Geographical Center of the US
 - Old Dutch Mill
 - Little Miss Liberty
 - Indian Fights at the Forks of Beaver Creek
 - Ingleboro Mansion
 - Historic Homes Walking Tour



- Neither web site or the visiting team mentioned the Smith County Historical Society Museum!



Restaurants, Specialty Shops or Attractions that would bring you back

- We had lunch at Paul's – food was great – but wouldn't travel back to Smith Center just to eat there.



Most Positive Observations!!

- Everyone we talked to was super nice and helpful!
- Great Smith Center Sign
- Good Directional Signs



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- The lack of shopping
- The lack of nice home to purchase
- Closure of major employer and businesses
- Smith Center has a great high school sporting reputation – not sure if you can capitalize on that or not

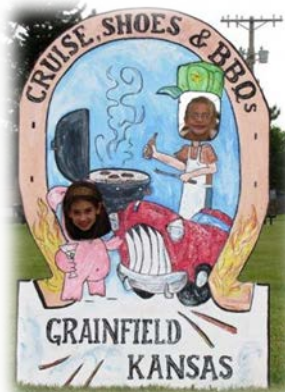


What will you remember the most in six months from now?

- Smith Center was a nice, clean little town
- The number of churches
- Consistency in entrance signage



Kansas PRIDE is helping communities create the type of place they want to call “Home”



- 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/>