

First Impressions

WaKeeney, Kansas

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



- WaKeeney – Population 1,890
- 16.7% college educated, 87.8% high school or GED
- 36.3% single, 63.7% married
- Poverty rate is 14.0%
- Median worker income is \$25,181



- Web Presence:

<http://www.wakeeney.org/>

- Very nice website. It is very interactive and had a lot of information on it.
- Background picture is distracting
- Tabs are user friendly
- Might include pictures of the hospital and school in the picture gallery



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Entry points are attractive
- New pocket park plantings and lighting at the railroad tracks on the main street are great
- Good presence from I-70



- Very clean looking
- Nice brick streets, good sidewalks with trees
- Courthouse square makes for a nice center of town



- Wide variety of welcome signage
- New street signs look sharp and are easy to read



Downtown Business Area

- Good mix of independent retail & services for a community of its size
- Nice downtown pharmacy with a soda fountain
- Loved the idea of the information center in the main intersection but it could be improved



- Overall buildings and sidewalks are clean and neat.
- Nice to see a store front salvaged with no building behind
- No directional signs to library, post office, city office, etc.
- Established trees are attractive
- Nice flags and signs



- People were friendly at the pharmacy, gift shop, second-hand store and city hall. Indifferent at the grocery store
- Concern with lack of reception at the daycare
- North Pole Pocket Park is nice but needs some refreshing



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- The I-70 convenience stores were very attractive and easy to access.
- Appearance of building on the southwest side of town need some repairs. This would improve the feeling of the town when you came in from the west entrance.
- Pharmacy along old Hwy 40 is nice



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- Commercial/Industrial areas are well defined and contained
- Easy access to interstate from the east side of town
- Industrial area along old HWY 40 needs to be addressed for weed control and overall clean-up in appearance
- Not sure if there is an “industrial park” or if all the industrial type businesses are just located together along old HWY 40





Health Care Services

- All health care services were attractive and updated with nicely maintained landscaping
- Nice to have clinic and assisted living facility located next to the hospital
- They have a 47 bed nursing home and 24 long term care beds at the hospital as well as senior apartments and an assisted living facility



- The Health Department was conveniently located downtown
- Optometrist was located north of law enforcement
- Transportation for health care services available
- Chiropractor is located downtown



Housing

- 1956 is the median year when homes were built
- \$818 a month is the typical owner cost for a home with a mortgage
- 15.6% of homes are renter occupied; 69.2% are owner occupied; and 15.2% are vacant
- The median number of rooms a home has is 6



- Very diverse mix of housing
- Many small houses
- Most residential areas well-kept
- Residential areas go to the city limits without rural business clutter as the edges



Housing observations

- Not much for sale
- No building sites located
- Good sized low income housing and in fair condition
- Good rentals hard to find



- Very few run down houses
- Northwest corner of town could use some code enforcement



Schools

- School appears to be good sized for the community
- All grades levels are taught in WaKeeney
- Grounds well-maintained with nice landscaping
- School website looks outdated. It provides good information but needs to be updated to become more user friendly.
- School is easy to find from east exit of interstate





Childcare

- One large daycare facility was found downtown by exploring. There was no signage on the building, only a baby blanket in the window. They were not approached when entering the facility and were seen by three people and were not questioned as to why they were. The children were napping and it could have been a safety concern if we were people with ulterior motives.
- There are 3 other daycare in town but there is still need for more.



Faith/Religion

- Very diverse group of churches. Eight different denominations were noticed.
- All had a nice outside appearance and were well maintained.





Civic

- They have four 4-H Clubs in the county
- The VFW and American Legion Buildings were easily located
- Scout Hall was an older Lions Club project.
- The downtown Christmas decorations were made by volunteers



Public Infrastructure

- Nice wide brick streets with new signage that is bold and easy to read
- Good street lighting and very nice vintage lamps in the Railroad park
- Well defined residential, business, commercial and industrial area
- No indication of future residential areas or new housing



- City Hall is beautiful and well landscaped however the signage is small
- Well received by the receptionist and city administrator
- Received good information about a variety of things



- Appears to be a strong police presence. Saw cars on patrol for both the city and sheriffs departments.
- Police station is located on the square by the jail
- The fire station is located on 1st street but the team failed to find it



- Library is a nice newer building
- Difficult to locate however as it is tucked between other buildings
- Pocket park downtown is a good way to use empty space and make it look attractive



- Legion ball park was easy to find but other ball parks were not. Would recommend signage
- City parks were nice and well maintained
- Impressed by the pool/park complex
- Located the sports plex, tennis courts and high school track



Recreation/Tourism

- WaKeeney is known as the Christmas City on the High Plains
- Good to see the theme being carried out throughout the year with the trees
- Rec Center is very involved with the community – Rec Commission sponsors Halloween and Easter activities for the kids
- Indoor tennis courts



Local/Area Attractions not mentioned

- Website lists Cedar Bluffs as an attraction but there is no indication of it being a part of the community. Some signage and information needs to be located in the community.
- The website also mentions the Smoky Hill Scenic Byway but again no mention
- And what is Cedar Point??
- There is a KOA Campground, is information located there??
- Visiting team didn't mention the KOA – not sure they found it



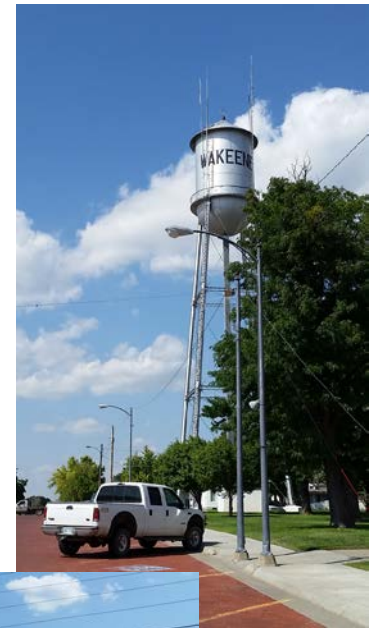
Most Positive Observations!!

- Community pride
- Wide streets
- Friendly well-dressed people
- Beautiful park and pool area
- Large fairgrounds and great tennis courts



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- The biggest obstacle may be location. This area may not appeal to enough people who can create jobs, grow businesses, and have money to invest
- Signage needs for community facilities
- Water tower needs painting
- Housing

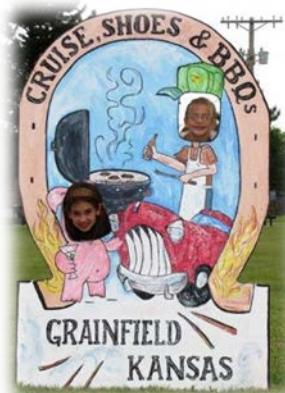


What will you remember the most in six months from now?

- The art store and how they are incorporated into the community
- Beautiful park and pool area
- The presence of community pride that results in a nice looking town



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/>