

First Impressions

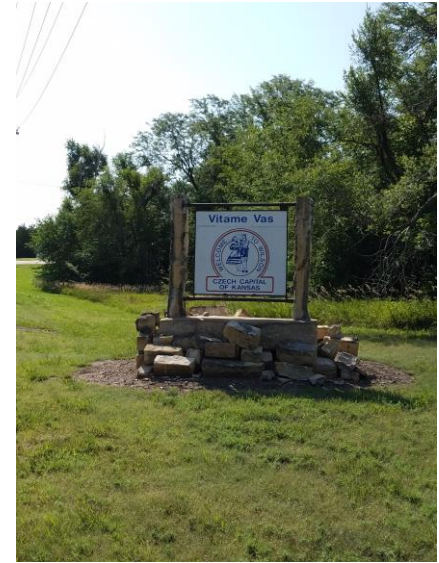
Wilson, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- Wilson – Population 781
 - 21.5% college educated, 93.2% high school
 - Median age of 50.4 years
 - Poverty rate is 19.7%
 - Median household income is \$41,250
- (Source: factfinder.census.gov)



Web Presence

- Pretty easy to find city website
- Info for residents but didn't tell much about the community
- Links to the chamber and Czech Festival
- No pictures



CITY OF WILSON

PO Box J, Wilson, KS 67490, Phone 785-658-2272 Fax 785-658-2319

The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Mixed reaction
- One visitor stated clean downtown, well groomed, residents yards taken care of



- Another visitor stated yards were overgrown, a lot of trees were overgrown and blocking a lot of houses. Several run down houses. There seemed to be a lot of “yard decoration” in most yards.



- From I-70 large newer looking sign looked great
- From HWY 40 we saw welcome signs, church signs, food signs



- Welcome sign from the North was small and unattractive
- Buildings and houses seemed decent
- Visitors did not mention the southern entrance



Downtown Business Area

- Tourist stops with old hotel, Czech egg and opera house



- Antiques, boutique for shopping, hair salon, funeral home, grocery store well stocked



- Four eating establishments in town, all with unique features. Appears they are all known for something special whether it be old fashioned sodas, homemade pies or gourmet dining.



- Some buildings were boarded up
- Some had a lot of stuff in the windows and couldn't tell what they were



- Customer service was mixed. One visitor had a good experience the other not so good.
- Easy access to get from store to store
- Laundromat a nice convenience



- Nice benches, trash cans and plantings downtown
- Public restrooms in the park were nearby
- Liked the novelty of a phone booth



Other Retail Shopping:

- Convenience Store
- Hair Salon
- Are you cross promoting with businesses along interstate?
Boat shop, Kansas Originals?



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- None were noted



Health Care

- Rural Health Clinic downtown
- Senior Center
- Wilson Care and Rehab Center



Housing

- Total housing units – 372
- Occupied units – 307 or 82.5%
- Owner occupied housing units – 73.9%
- Renter occupied housing units – 26.1%
- Vacant housing units – 65 or 17.5%
- Median home value - \$60,700
- (Source – factfinder.census.gov)



- About 45% of houses built before 1940
- Homes available for a variety of income levels
- A substantial number of houses are not well maintained or appear abandoned



- Some houses for sale
- One set of income based apartments
- Old school converted to apartments



Schools

- Grade school and high school in same location



- Grounds well kept
- Nice playground
- Community recycling center
- School website confusing



Childcare

- Lakeside Learning is located in Wilson and associated with the school
- Visitors did not find information



Faith/Religion

- Visitors found 3 of the 5 churches in Wilson
- All churches well kept
- Did not find evidence of church sponsored activities.



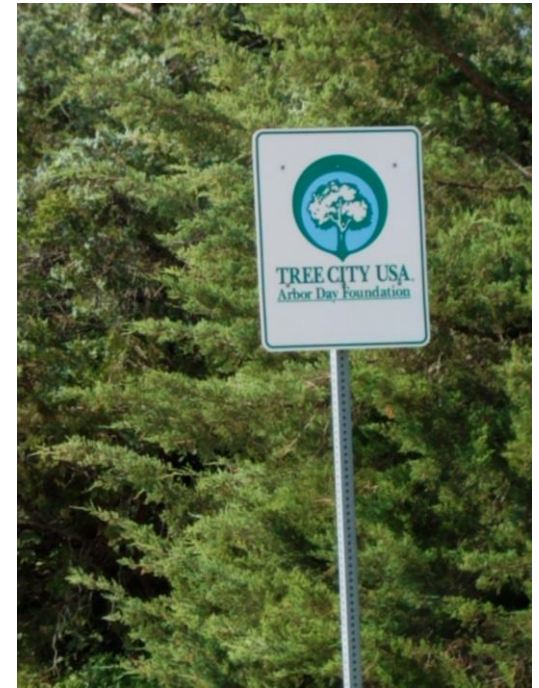


Civic

- Groups noted were the Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce and the PRIDE organization.



- Signs of other visible organizations but missed by the visitors – Wilson FFA, Wilson Winners 4-H Club, Tree City USA



- Recognition of notable locals
- Wilson Economic Development Corporation



- American Legion
- Community Recycling efforts
- Community Garden



- Summer Feeding Program
- K-State Research & Extension – Story Walk



Public Infrastructure

- Streets well kept
- Street signage was older
- Community has a sidewalk replacement plan
- Nice house numbering system



- Community would benefit from way finder signage
- Minimal landscaping or streetscaping



- City Hall was well marked but would benefit from awning repairs
- What is the old city hall used for?
- Clerk very helpful



- Nice fire station and fire trucks
- No comments made concerning police protection
- Nice municipal power plant



- Library appears to be well used and maintained
- Offering more than just books
- Lego night offered for kids



- Way finder signage for the parks is recommended
- The park near downtown was extremely nice and well maintained. A nice memorial park.



- Splash pad and PRIDE park very nice
- Good recognition for donors
- Good location across from summer meal site



- Lions Club Park is well maintained
- Public restrooms in good shape



- Ball field and park on the north end of town are difficult to find

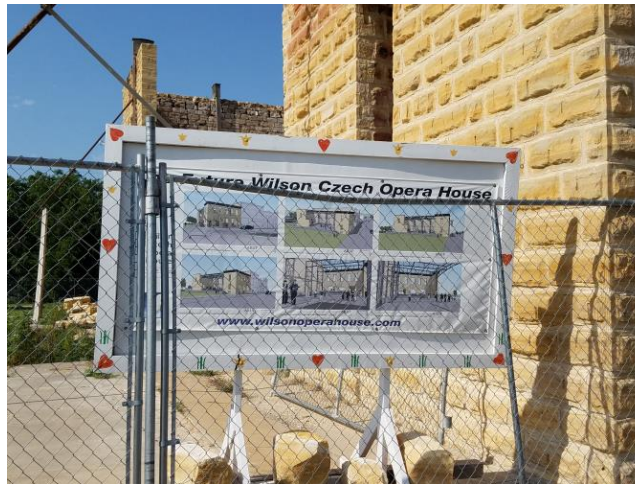


Recreation/Tourism

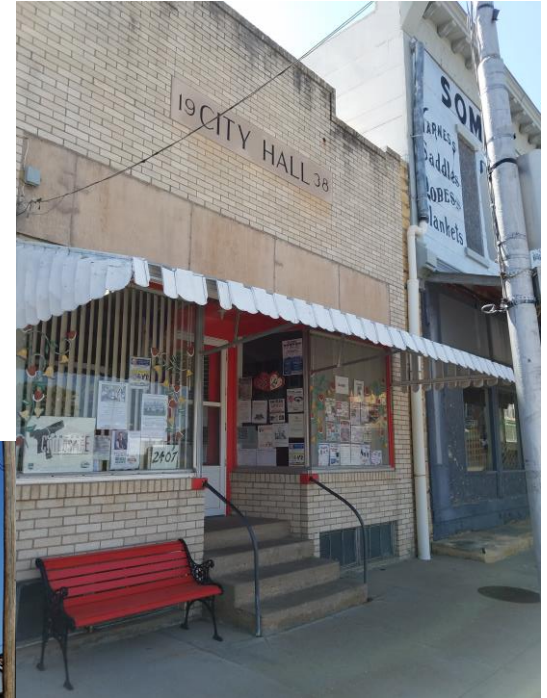
- Czech Capital of Kansas
- Czech Festival
- Large hand painted Czech Egg



- Old Opera House – complete the project or remove the sign



- Chamber Office and Visitor Center very noticeable
- City Hall Very helpful



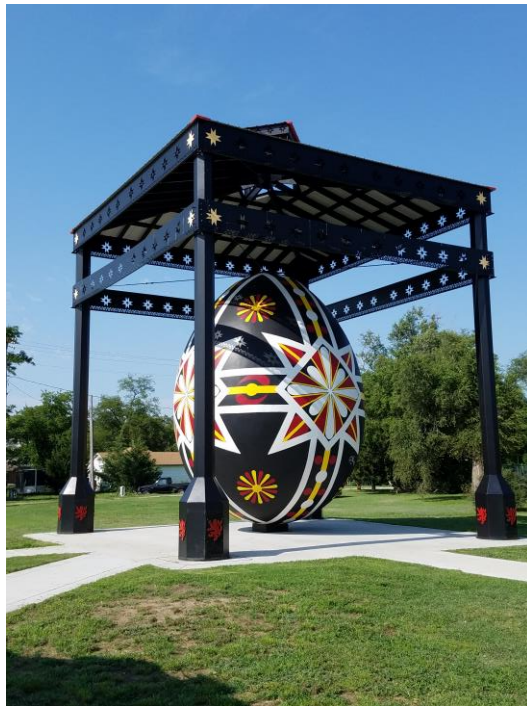
Other opportunities not mentioned

- Heritage museum
- Post Rock Scenic Byway
- Wilson Lake



Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back?

- Maybe the Czech Festival
- Great food options



Most Positive Observations!!

- Town seems community minded
- Sidewalk plan and ordinance enforcement
- Progressive



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- The number of run down and abandoned properties
- Keeping the young involved
- Customer service



What will you remember most in six months?

- The Czech Egg
- How off putting the people in the stores were
- The need to make a decision on the opera house
- Positive memories, I was impressed with the whole town



Recommendations

- Updated signage and way finder signage
- Brochures available in the kiosk year around
- Clean up of properties
- As a Tree City USA, is the tree board active?
- Website improvements



- 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/>