

First Impressions

Junction City, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- An innovation on our usual process, with observations by new members of the Ft. Riley military community rather than a partner city.
- I took photos of JC June 24 and July 22.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey on August 31.
- Six responses were returned.
- Results presented by zoom and video recording.
- Recording and written reports soon posted on KSRE [First Impressions](#) archive for your use.

- **Feedback:**

How does a first-time visitor view my town?

- Evaluate successes,
- Set goals and priorities for next steps.

- **If you don't agree with the observation:**

- *Be curious*, Why does the visitor see it this way?
- Is the observation worth considering?
- What can we do to change it– or the perception?

Curiosity: A strong desire to know or learn something.

-Oxford Living Dictionary

Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN

We need to change the narrative about rural.

- Rural is *changing*, not dying.
- Brain Gain (30-49 year olds moving to rural) is a “new trend” that has been happening since the 70’s.
- People research a number of places before they move to a rural town.
- Rural is in the middle of ***everywhere***. You live one place, work another and play another. With transportation and internet, it’s all accessible to you.

Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN

- 46% of Kansas households moved between 1995-1999
- In a survey of newcomers to rural areas, the reasons they come are:
 - Simpler pace of life,
 - Safety and security,
 - Affordable housing,
 - Outdoor recreation,
 - Quality schools
 - ***“A job”*** isn't in the top 10 reasons.
- Communities can work together to attract newcomers and create quality of life for everyone.

- “In small towns everyone knows each other.” *false*
- *Get to know each other*, invite them to a newcomers meal.
- We are our own worst enemies. We have to monitor our customer service and what we say. It matters.
- Don’t say, “You have to live here twenty years to be an insider.” And don’t act like it either.

- 2 people were excited to be here, they chose it or it was close to their homes.
- 1 person was ambivalent, but had previously lived near KC so knew what to expect.
- 3 people were mad, very new to the city, and had a very different background.

“It is a natural human response to judge new environments based on your previous experiences.”

*-Jim Richardson, Retired
National Geographic Photographer
Lindsborg, KS Resident*

- How far I'd have to drive for “nice stores” and entertainment.
- I'd have to buy a car. (2 of 6 don't have a car)
- That there's nothing here worth doing.

Recommendation:

1. *Frame your online presence to acknowledge the regional nature of Kansas and how close (minutes of travel time) other resources and activities are.*

Access to Information

<https://www.junctioncity-ks.gov/>

First on the online search results. Very official.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Junction City, Kansas website. At the top left is the logo for Junction City, Kansas, featuring a building and an American flag. To the right of the logo is a navigation menu with links for Government, Community, Residents, Visitors, and How Do I... Below the navigation menu is a large banner image of a dirt road winding through a green field under a blue sky. A small text box in the center of the banner reads "slideshow field with path". Below the banner is a row of six service icons: Agendas & Minutes (a blue square with a white building icon), Forms & Documents (a brown square with a white document icon), Online Payments (a green square with a white card icon), E - Notifications (a purple square with a white smartphone icon), Recreation Opportunities (a teal square with a white basketball icon), and Report a Concern (a red square with a white wrench icon). Below the icons is the text "News & Announcements" in a cursive font. At the bottom of the page are three smaller images: a map of a residential area with labels like "TRACT B", "JOHNSON 1ST ADD", "DORIS MRS DORANCE SUTTON PLACE", and "BERRYWOOD VILLAGE"; the Junction City logo; and the "LIVE WELL Geary County" logo.

<https://www.junctioncity.org/>

Geary County CVB Site

On Chrome,

1. Junction City, KS
2. “People also ask”
3. Wikipedia
4. Images for Junction City
5. Geary County CVB

FireFox

1. Junction City, KS
2. “People also ask”
3. Geary County CVB

CVB Website

<https://www.junctioncity.org/>

Create an Account - Increase your productivity, customize your experience, and engage in information you care about.



[Sites to See](#) [Things to Do](#) [Stay & Eat](#) [Meet Here](#)



Know
for E.

- Consider adding “Minutes to” information
- Expanding Radius of Information

Home › Things to Do

Things to Do

Junction City/Geary County - It Is That Good

In the Heart of the Flint Hills, Junction City is known for its diverse offerings for "Things to Do." Located directly on Interstate 70 and U.S. Highway 77

Make Junction City / Geary County Your "Hub" for Some Great Kansas Adventures!

- Do some fishing or boating at Milford Lake
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- See a Live Show at the C.L. Hoover Opera House
- Explore the natural wonders of the Central Flint Hills and Milford Wetlands
- Launch your Canoe or Kayak at the Headwaters of the Kansas River
- Visit the [OZ Museum](#) in Wamego
- Tour the [Eisenhower Presidential Library](#) in Abilene
- Watch a Big 12 Conference football or basketball game in Manhattan

In no time you'll be back in Junction City/Geary County and enjoying evening activities or just getting a good night's sleep before another day of exploration. From our beginnings in the 1800s to the present, we have welcomed visitors from around the world and we are eager to welcome you!

- Very classy buildings in old limestone.
- Historic, but maintained well.
- CBD, Tattoos, Guns, hair, and fight gyms.
- Crossfit Gym, Elite Martial Arts, photo studio, gun shop, pawn shops.
- Always greeted and treated well.



Downtown Business Area



USD 475 NEWS Junction City High School teacher chosen Accountability Reports Skyward Enrollment District Calendars FAQ Links f @ t

 785-717-4000 123 N. Eisenhower Drive
Junction City, Kansas 66441

Home COVID-19 Parent Resources Board of Education Schools Departments Programs Careers News RFP

ENROLLMENT

Online Enrollment

Returning Student Enrollment Welcome to or welcome back to Geary County Schools USD 475. Below you will find information on...

[Read More >](#)



1 2 3

Join the Geary County Schools Team

Geary County Schools Unified School District 475 is full of opportunities to learn, to grow, and to impact students from around the nation and the world for both certified and classified staff. Geary County Schools, located in the Flint Hills region surrounded by beautiful Kansas sunshine, lakes, and rivers is home to fourteen elementary schools, two middle schools, and one career academy focused high school serving the communities of Junction City, Grandview Plaza, Milford, and Fort Riley.

[LEARN MORE >](#) [APPLY TODAY >](#)

- Buildings are nice. Streets guarded, and playgrounds clean.
- No kids
- Kids go to school on post.



- *If they catch it in the scrolling photos for USD 450:*

Great for Military Families



Geary County Schools, located in the Flint Hills region surrounded by beautiful Kansas sunshine, lakes, and rivers is home to award winning schools and is made up of fourteen elementary schools, two middle schools, and one career academy focused high school serving the communities of Junction City, Grandview Plaza, Milford, and Fort Riley. Schools located within Fort Riley include Fort Riley Elementary, Seitz Elementary, Ware Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, Morris Hill Elementary, and Fort Riley Middle School.

The district also offers an early childhood program, all day kindergarten, and English Language Learner classes. USD 475 is a diverse district, with over 40 languages spoken by our families and students from all over the world.

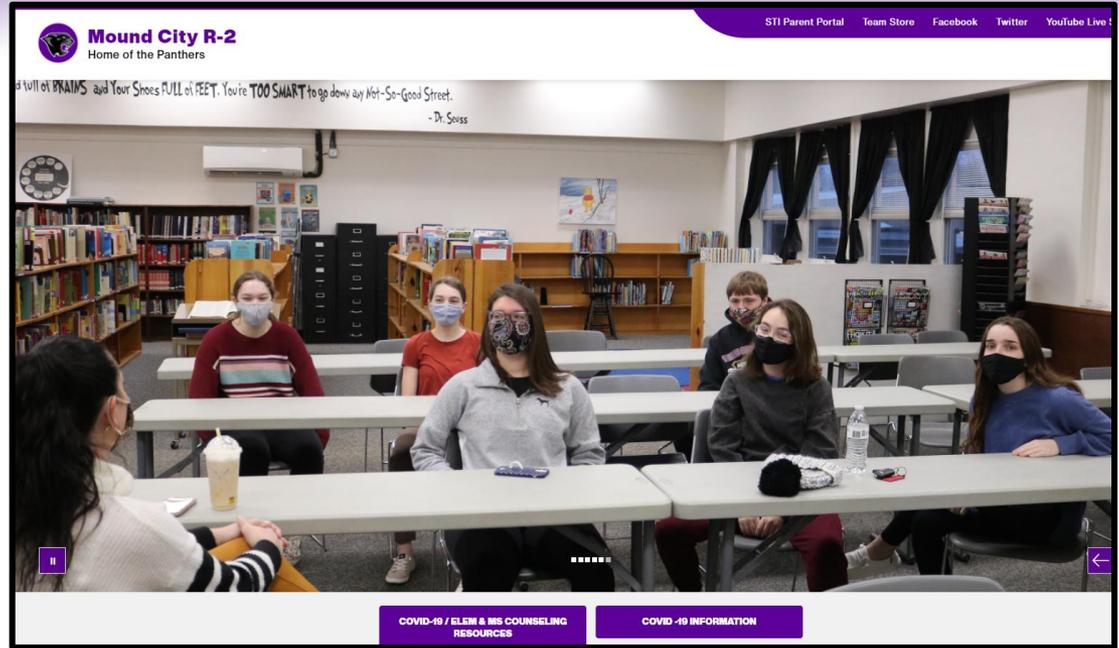
Geary County Schools takes pride in being able to serve the families of those who defend our country, including the Big Red One—the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley. With approximately 60% of our student population having a military connection, USD 475 takes pride in the education we provide and the attention our military students receive as they transition in and out of our district. USD 475 and community partners have many **military family resources**.

Staff in USD 475 understand the military lifestyle and work to provide students with what they need to be successful. Geary County Schools has many opportunities for growth to include athletics, FFA, choir, band, and much more.

Not only is USD 475 a place for students to thrive, it's also a place for families to grow. Geary County Schools employs many military spouses and dependents providing a steady workplace for those who support our nation's heroes.

“Potential Students” are an audience for your website.

- This is Mound City, MO:
- Current Student Photos
- “Why choose us” info on home page.



ABOUT US

Why Us

Graduation Rate

100%

Technology Ratio

Computer to Student Ratio: 1:1

Teacher Ratio

1:9 Teacher to Student Ratio

Career Ed. Programs

Agriculture Education, Business Education, Family Consumer Sciences and Human Services

Comments:

- I live in Manhattan
- My children go to daycare on post.
- I see plenty of services available.

Geary County Data:

- **Desired Capacity of existing Child Care** **719**
Number of Children Under Age 6 potentially needing care: **2,614**
- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential need** **28%**
- Creating a Child Care Action Plan
<https://ks.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Draft-Child-Care-Supply-Demand-Action-Plan.pdf>
- Contact ks.childcareaware.org to access local child care specialists.
785-823-3343

Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/Supply-Demand-2019-FINAL.pdf>

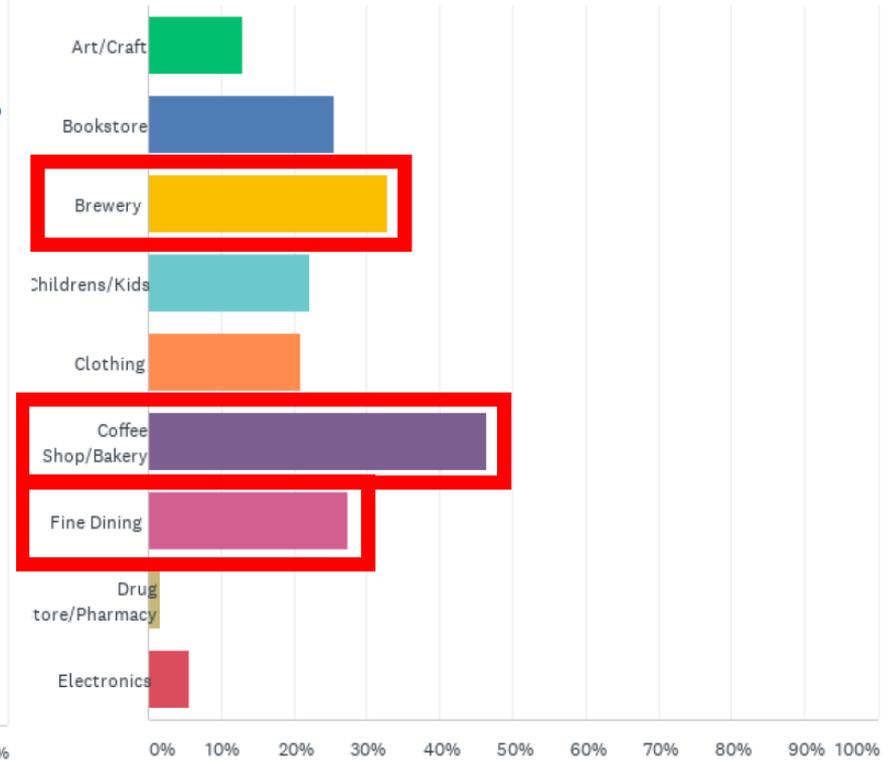
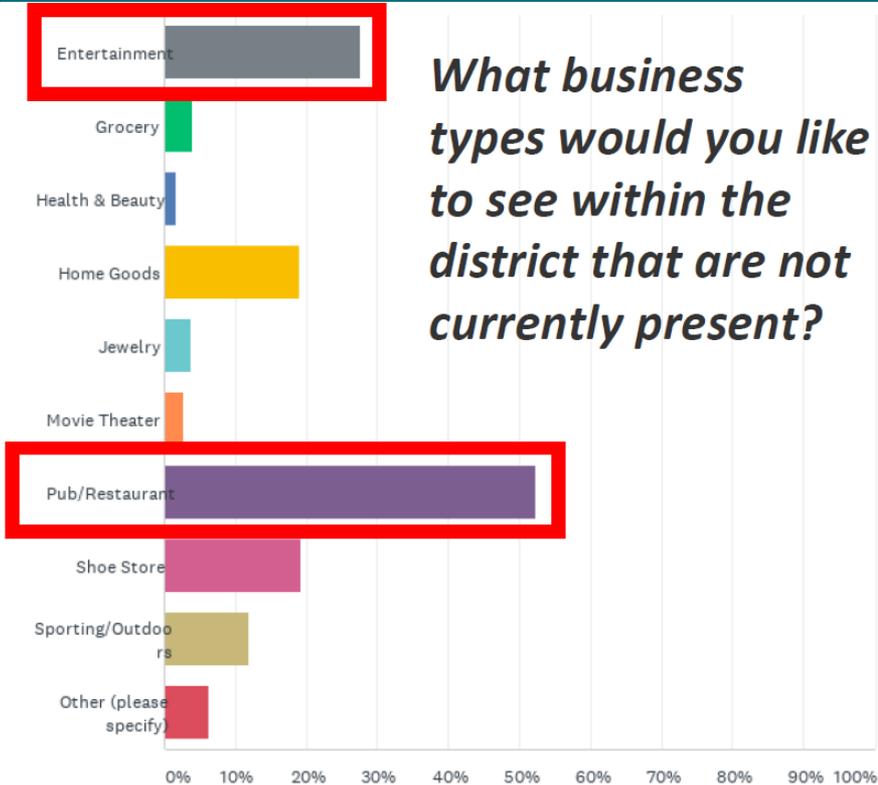
- I see very low income housing. It would be a challenge for a healthy income to join this community.
- I have looked into off-post housing and was impressed by most.
- I was told “Don’t live in Junction City” by previous soldiers because it is “trashy” so we focused on Manhattan.
- I live in a barrack, don’t stress like married folk
- I lived on post for five years, never looked in JC

- Outdoor life.
- Small town feel that means you can get involved and learn/get to know major players/influencers in the area.

- Entertainment availability
- Cleaning up unattractive businesses near the post (Pawn shops, sleazy bars, strip clubs.)
- Attracting unique local businesses
 - Bars, breweries
 - Restaurants that aren't chains.

**COMMUNITY
VISION FOR
DOWNTOWN**

COMMUNITY INPUT THROUGH ONLINE SURVEYS



What will you remember?

- Night life of Junction City
- Too many roundabouts!
- Local leaders are welcoming and friendly giving it a great small town feel.
- *One respondent said, “This is my first time in the Chamber of Commerce in any city.”*

- **Look at online presence from a “Prospective Resident” perspective.**
 - Simpler pace of life,
 - Safety and security,
 - Affordable housing,
 - Outdoor recreation,
 - Quality schools.
- **Capitalize on Midwest Nice**
 - Nearly unanimous: people are kind; gave good customer service.
- **Emphasize Diversity and Inclusion**

A Soldier's Perspective of what he was looking for when he came as a

Soldier Family:

- Houses, Schools, Churches, Activities for kids and adults.

Single Soldier:

- A place to meet girls
- Unique or fun places to drink.

Attractions

Boating

Calendar of Events

Camping

Dining

Fishing

Free Activities

Golf

Hunting

Lodging

Museums

Parks

Sports & Activities

Trails & Riding

Home › Things to Do

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Attractions

[Buffalo Soldier Memorial](#)
[Custer House](#)

Dining

Fishing

[Fort Riley Fishing](#)

Parks

[Heritage Park](#)
[Milford State Park](#)

Princeton Review

The Princeton Review ranked Kansas State University in multiple categories in "The Best 386 Colleges: 2021 Edition"



No. 1 for happiest students

No. 2 for students love these colleges

No. 3 for best health services

No. 3 for best quality of life

No. 4 for great town-gown relations

*“We’re in the middle of **everywhere.**”*

- Flint Hills, Milford, Walking trails.
- Museums: Less than 30 minutes to Children’s and Art Museums, Eisenhower Museum
- 60 minutes to Kansas History Museum, Ks Air Museum, Mulvane Art Museum
- 2 hours to Major League Baseball, Football, Soccer
- 23 Minutes to Kansas State University- 2021
Princeton Review ranked KSU in multiple categories for “Best Colleges.”

Thank you!

Set Next Steps:

- Start talking! Find ways to discuss what you heard in small groups of every kind.

Contact me if you need resources or have questions:

Nancy Daniels

Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension

785.410.6352

nkdaniels@ksu.edu

K-State Research and Extension

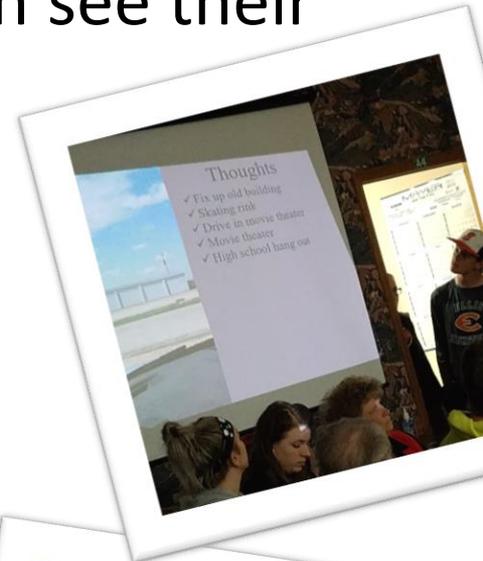
- **First Friday e-Calls 9:30-10:30 am (CT)**
 - Connecting small businesses and communities with the resources to make them successful.

- **See “Filling Empty Buildings”**

<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/>

Youth Community Perceptions

- Youth-Based Community Assessment.
- Gives communities insights on how youth see their community.
- Creates opportunities for youth voices in the community.
- Allows youth to become involved in local government and community process



K-State Research and Extension

Contact

Nancy Daniels

nkdaniels@ksu.edu

to participate.

Grant Writing Workshops

Grants are a vital piece in your community's funding puzzle...and *you* can do it.

K-State Research and Extension's Community Vitality Team offers grant writing workshops for local communities.

Objectives

- Conquer your grant writing fears and start writing.
- Learn new sources of data to document community needs.
- Learn new sources of grant funding.
- Practice developing the Grant Elements: Problem, Outcomes, Activities, Evaluation, and Budget.

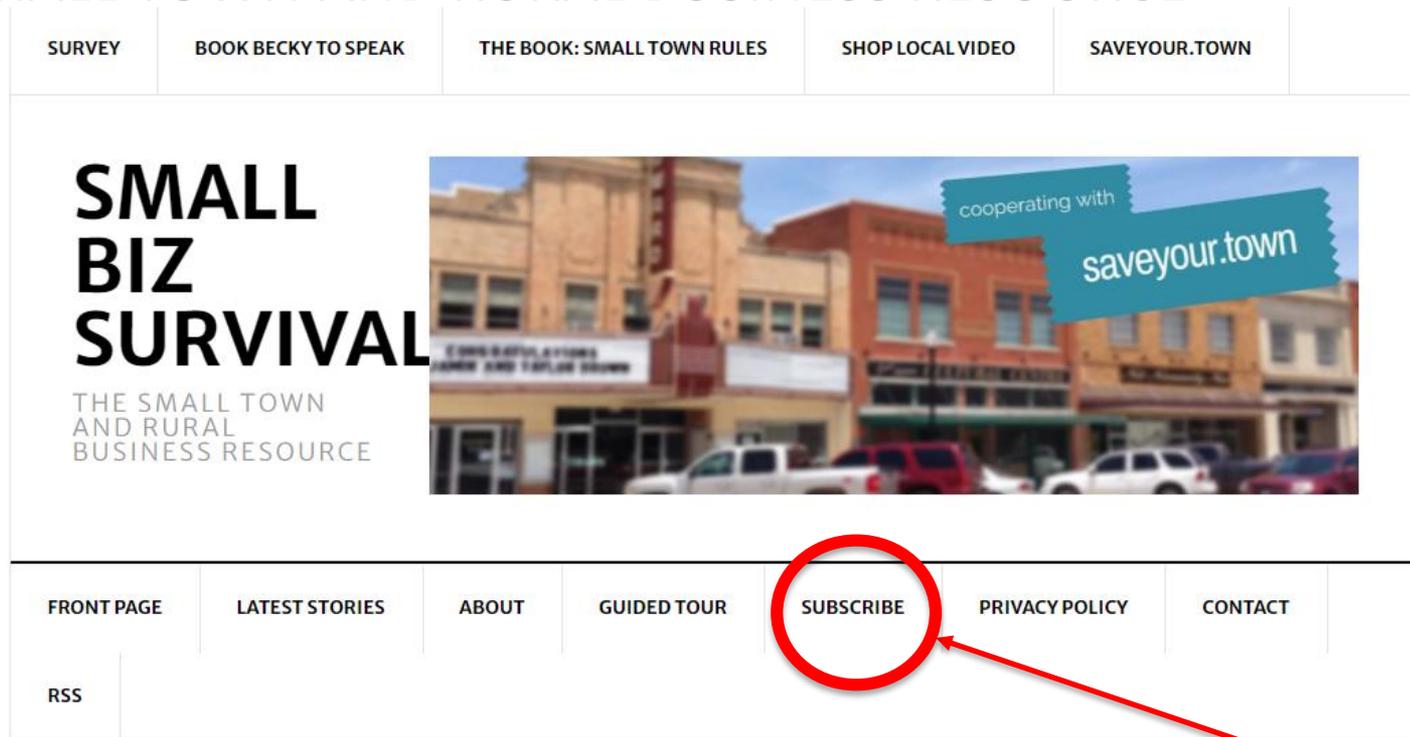
Short Term Outcomes

- 93% have increased confidence to write a successful grant.
- 94% learned new sources of data to document community needs.
- 80% learned new sources for finding grants.
- 91% have increased confidence to develop the elements of a successful grant.



- <http://smallbizsurvival.com/>

– THE SMALL TOWN AND RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE

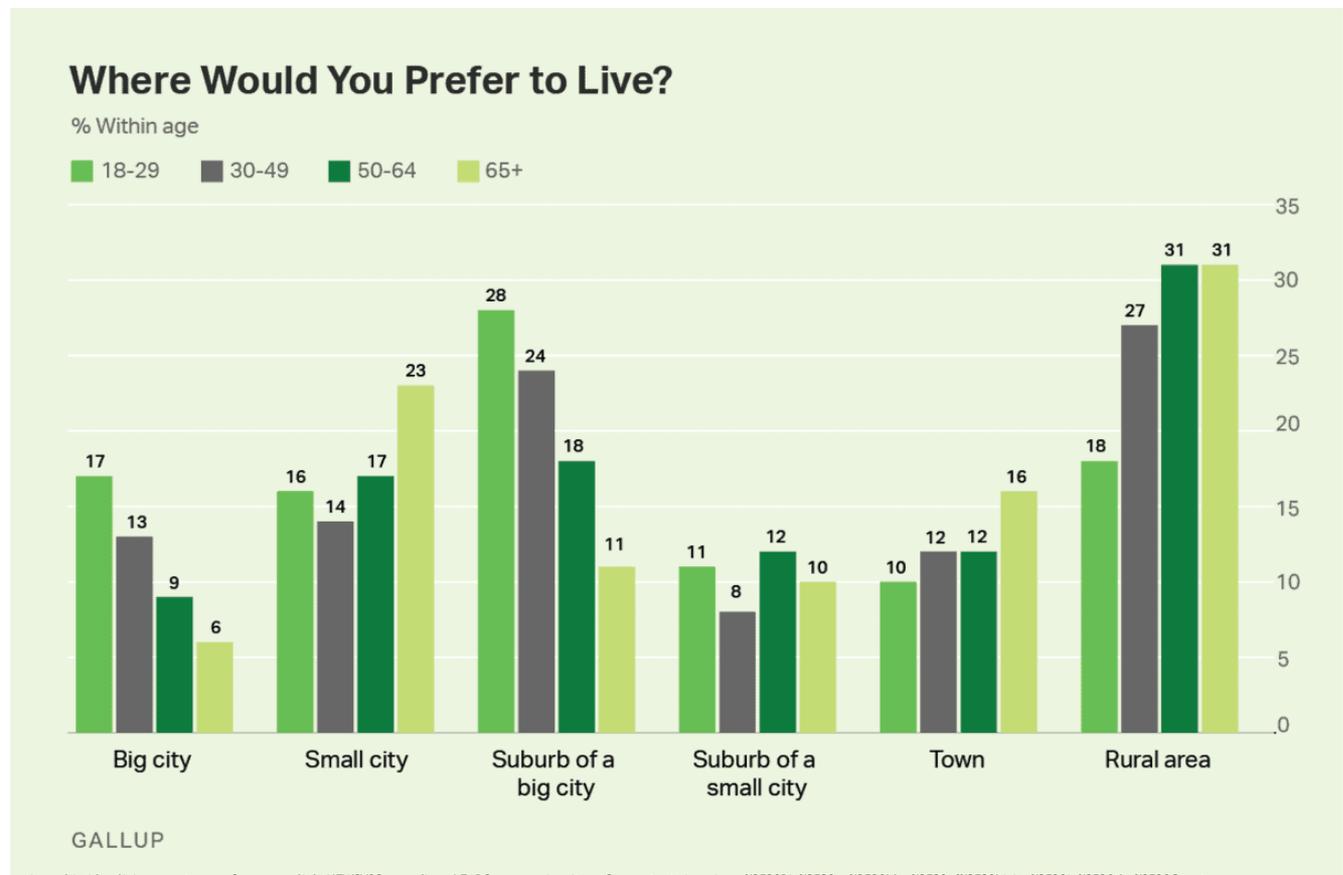


Zoom Towns: attracting and supporting remote workers in rural small towns

BY BECKY MCCRAY — 1 COMMENT

People have been saying for years that they would prefer to live in rural areas.

- Americans under age 30 are the only group whose top desired place to live is *not* rural; rural was #2, even for them.



- Now people have a choice, and millions of them are planning to move.
- **“The pivot to remote work is the biggest, fastest transformation of the labor market since the World War II mobilization.”**
- **Major cities will see the biggest out-migration:** 20.6% of those planning to move are currently based in a major city.
- **People are seeking less expensive housing:** Altogether, **more than half** (52.5%) are planning to move to a house that is significantly more affordable than their current home.
- **People are moving beyond regular commute distances:** 54.7% of people are moving over two hours away or more from their current location, which is beyond daily or even weekly commuting distances for most.

UpWork October, 2020 <https://www.upwork.com/press/releases/economist-report-remote-workers-on-the-move>, retrieved from Internet 12-12-20, UpWork October, 2020



There isn't a community in America, particularly in coastal America, where we are not seeing a transition from the coast to higher ground.

- Jesse Keenan, PhD, Tulane University

CBS Sunday Morning, January 24, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SByFy9R6320>

Retrieved from the Internet, 2-8-2021





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