

First Impressions

Paola, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



*Knowledge
forLife*



- 2010 Census Population 5,602
(UP 10.5% since 2000) (KS=5.8%)
- 24.2% college educated, 92.2% high school or GED
 - KS 30.7% college education, 90% HS or equivalency
- 72.1% family households, 27.9% non-family
- Poverty rate is 15% (KS=13.8%)
- Median Age 33 years (36)
- Median household income is \$50,226 (\$51,872)

- Web Presence:

City www.cityofpaola.com

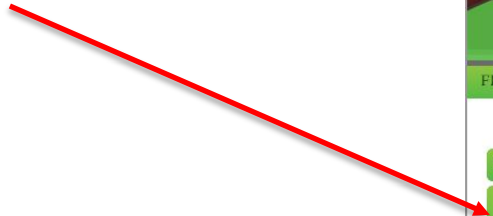
Clear, complete website with community links.



- Web Presence:

Chamber <http://www.paolachamber.org/>

“Phone Friendly”



PCC
PAOLA CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

Home | About The Chamber | Member Login | Contact Us

FIND A BUSINESS | JOIN THE CHAMBER | EVENTS CALENDAR | BUSINESS RESOURCES | MOVE TO PAOLA | VISIT PAOLA

Upcoming Events

- Nov 5 Clover Run 5K
- Nov 10 Chamber Connections First Impressions
- Nov 11 No Chamber Coffee

[view all events](#)

Pure Vegas Casino Night

Location: Town Square
(15 W. Wea St.)

Saturday, November 19th
6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Join us for a trip to the Vegas strip! Great food, wonderful company and classic Vegas music!

Tickets are available at the Chamber Office (6 W. Peoria St.), Citizens State Bank, Great Southern Bank, First Security Bank, First Option Bank, Landmark National Bank and Rockers Pharmacy.

For more information contact: Paola Chamber of Commerce (913-294-4335) or info@paolachamber.org

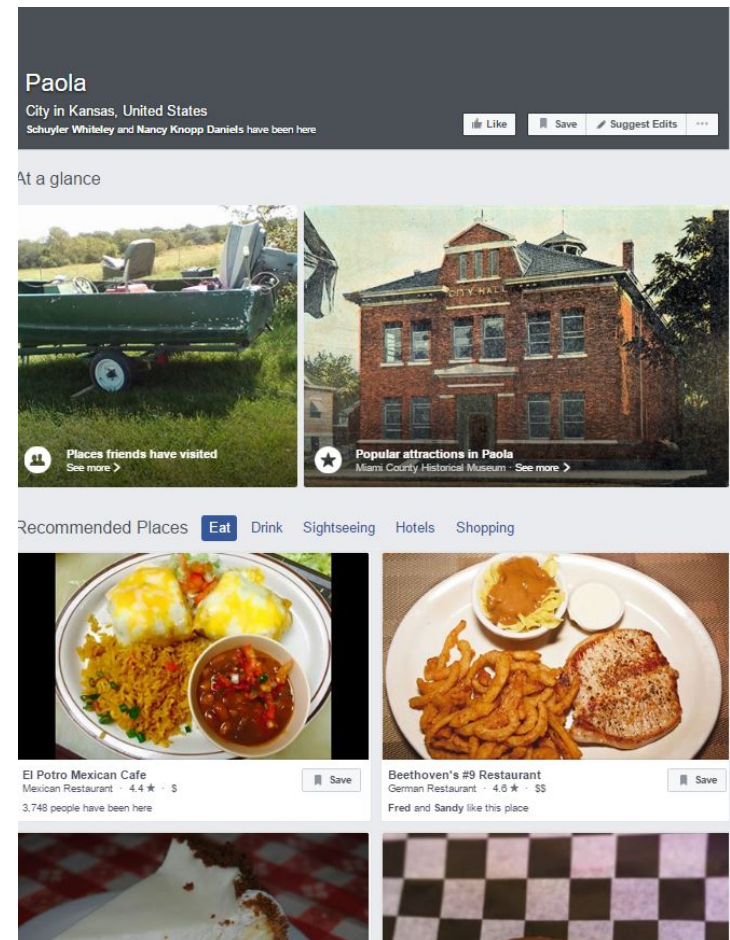
CHAMBER

- Web Presence:

FaceBook

<https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Paola-Kansas/108445219177096/>

- At a Glance
- Recommended Places:
 - Eat
 - Drink
 - Sightseeing
 - Hotels
 - Shopping
- Upcoming Events



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Very clean and well-kept. Nice and appealing city
- Beautiful town square
- Nice signage, Tree City USA
- Historic downtown, overall charm
- Lovely drive on Old Kansas City Road



Downtown Business Area

- Well-maintained whether occupied or not.

Google Earth photo 4-2016, Retrieved 11-08-16



Downtown Business Area

- Stores have individual character while blending together beautifully.



Google Earth photo 4-2016,
Retrieved 11-08-16

“Cohesive signage.”

“Signage wasn’t uniform which added a bit of charm and made it look authentic”

Google Earth photo 4-2016, Retrieved 11-08-16



Diverse, eclectic offering of

- Retail stores selling guns, toys, antiques, quilts and home decor
- Health care (including dentistry, optical, chiropractic)
- Financial services, title companies and legal services
- Restaurants

Google Earth photo 4-2016, Retrieved 11-08-16



Downtown Business Area

- Beautiful Park Square. Loved the historical lights, fountain and gazebo.
- Benches under large shade trees give places to enjoy



Downtown Infrastructure and Customer Service

- Great customer service in stores, City Hall & Chamber
- Sidewalks well maintained and clean
- Some curbing along West Peoria St is in bad shape
- Alley by the sheriff's offices had tall weeds and hodge-podge of electrical wires



Still some opportunities in Paola



Historic Sites



Public Amenities

- Drinking Fountain, Gazebo, decorative water fountain with benches
- Ample parking and clean streets
- Accessible businesses
- Nicely landscaped park.
- Did not see public restrooms

Google Earth photo 4-2016, Retrieved 11-08-16



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Baptiste Drive
- Lots of concrete- landscaping helped



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Liked the look of the low commercial signage
- Clean and well-maintained
- Large variety of shops for the city population





Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- City website describes Industrial Park
- Not noticed by visitors— but they aren't the target audience
- “Industrial Park Drive between Hospital Drive and Hedge Lane Road”
- Nice description of resources, restrictions.





Health Care Services

- Ample hospital signage
 - Hospital, VA, Primary Care
- Impressive medical facilities for a small town



Health Care Services

- Physicians,
- Dentists,
- Optometrists,
- Two pharmacies
- And other health care



Health Care Services

- Lovely senior living center on Hospital Drive
- Assisted Living facilities
- Rehabilitation Services



Housing

- There are 2,117 housing units
- 2,009 are occupied (94.9%) (KS= 89.6%)
- 108 are vacant (5.1%) (KS= 10.4%)
- Owner Occupied: 1,294 (64%) (KS=67.1%)
- Renter Occupied: 715 (36%) (KS= 32.9%)
- Family Occupied: 69% (KS= 66%)
- Non-Family Occupied: 31% (KS= 34%)

Housing Observations

- All kinds: Gorgeous old homes to new build
- Many price ranges



Housing Observations

- Saw a number of existing houses for sale and for rent that would appeal to all incomes
- Well cared for with few exceptions



- **Rental Properties**

- Visitors could see evidence of rental properties available, but your team tells us there are few openings.



Schools

- 2 Elementary Schools, Middle School and High School
- All well-maintained



Schools

- USD 368 Bond issue is constructing new track, football field, MS auditorium and commons, secured entries, tornado shelters, baseball and softball fields



Schools

- Fort Scott Community College is here.



Child Care

- Adequate, accessible and affordable childcare is essential for economic development as well as early childhood education
- Not easily observable by a visitor.
- Your leadership team tells us that more child care is needed.



Faith/Religion

- Many well-maintained churches
- Stunning United Methodist Church
- We noticed a Foster Grandparents Bus and a Preschool as faith-based activities.



Civic

- American Legion, Masonic Lodge, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Optimist, Lion's Club, Senior Center
- Non-profits were not separately identified on Chamber Website.



Civic

- Visitors gave no evidence they knew about the presence of the Community Center.



Public Infrastructure

- Tall stone signage for streets were beautiful and easy to read at a distance.
- Minimum of junky areas
- Thoughtful land use planning
- Landscaping and streetscapes were good.



City Hall

- Cool old Fire House!
- Nice Restroom
- Incredibly friendly and professional, great customer service
- Maps and information supplied there.



Fire, Police, EMS

- Visible police presence, very safe feeling
- Type 1 ambulance service
- On-site training facilities
- Custom made fire apparatus in the bays (wow, fancy!)
- Town clearly cares about community safety and high quality service to their residents.
- Miami Sheriff's office is in Paola too



Library

- According to the website, plans are under way for a new library
- Lovely building with great architecture and details



Parks

- Wallace Park and town square
- Ball fields, pool, walking track, mature trees
- Did not find neighborhood parks



Recreation/Tourism

- Fairgrounds & Skate Park
- Many activities in Park Square
- Hillsdale Reservoir and Lake Miola
- Leadership team told me about Winery tours with trolley cars— our visitors missed it.



Chamber Office

- Just off the square, great ambassadors for city
- Well-maintained



What would bring you back?

- City Hall and Museum!
 - Passionate, sharing people at museum. Great history!
- Beethoven's #9
 - Was closed when we were here, but listed as one of the 11 finest small town eating places in Kansas
 - LOTS of restaurants for a town of 5,600 people
- A long drive, but shopping and many restaurants would be worth a trip back.



Most Positive Observations

- Live music on the square sounds awesome!
- Very self-sufficient, yet comfortable, positive small town
- Small, charming and friendly, has most of everything you need but close enough to Kansas City for all of your “big town” needs.
- Historic area surrounding the Park Square, the friendliness of every person we came in contact with (Amazing, but not an exaggeration).

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Signage from Interstate
- Competing with Kansas City
- Getting visitors from the area near the highway to the historic downtown
 - A difficult question– this community has so much to be proud of.

What will you remember 6 months from now?

- Town Square
- A great town to live in
- Nice people, architecture and charm of the historic downtown.



Thank our leadership team:

- Diane Burnett
- Janet McRae
- Joe Flake
- Jay Wieland
- David Green
- Misty Pratt

Set next steps!

- Which group will lead the discussion?
- *Contact me if you need resources or help:*
 - Nancy Daniels
 - Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension
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 - nkdaniels@ksu.edu