

First Impressions

Pretty Prairie, KS

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



- Minneola asked for First Impressions, obtained Pretty Prairie as its partner; 121 miles or about 2 hours away.
- Volunteers were trained in both communities. Multiple visitors from Minneola came to Pretty Prairie on September 22, 2020.
- Reports were compiled, pictures were taken of observations in Pretty Prairie on November 16th, presentation was designed in December.
- Results are presented tonight, January 4, 2021.
- Pretty Prairie uses the results for further discussion and action plans.

Why: First Impressions?

- **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 and no one is noticing or talking about it.
- Only 36% lived there previously.
- 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

- In a survey of newcomers to rural areas, the reasons they come are:
 - Simpler pace of life
 - Safety and security
 - Low housing cost
 - ***"A job,"** isn't in the top 10 reasons.*
- "In small towns everyone knows each other." *false*
- *Get to know each other*, invite them to a newcomers' meal.

- If you bring 7 people to a 700 citizen town every year in 10 years you'll have a 10% increase. It matters! It is a challenge with housing, but it is achievable.
- 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.

- 75% of rural homeowners are Baby Boomers and older. 30% are over 75.
- Housing will be freed up as the baby boomers retire and move closer to medical services.
- Rural communities need retirement housing (not nursing facilities, but maintenance free) to retain seniors.- *Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, University of Minnesota*



*Ben Winchester was our guest on the
March 1, 2019 First Friday Call.*

See the recording at:

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

- 2010 Census Population 680
(up 10.6% since 2000*) (KS= +6.1%)
- 2018 Estimate is 536 (± 91)
(down 12.8% since 2000) (KS= +8.0%)
- 93.1% high school or GED, 25.7% college educated,
– 91.8% HS or equivalency, 34.0% college education (KS)
- Poverty rate 18.2% (KS=11.4%)
- Median Age 44.6 years (KS=37.2)
- Median household income is \$47,656 (KS=\$62,087)

* 2000 Census was 615

Website

- Most felt the city website had good basic information. One visitor felt the website wasn't complete and was completely resident oriented/not many details for visitors.
- Was a good representation of what visitors saw upon arriving in person.
- A web search turns up several results for the city, school, and rodeo. Facebook search brings up school and rodeo pages that are active.



Other Online Results

- When searching for the city website, it was not at the forefront of the search. The rodeo took up the first several results.
- Information was also found online related to real estate for sale.

pretty prairie, ks

Pretty Prairie, KS Real Estate - Pretty Prairie Homes for ...
www.realtor.com/.../Pretty-Prairie_KS ▼
View 16 homes for sale in **Pretty Prairie, KS** at a median listing price of \$120,000. See pricing and listing details of **Pretty Prairie** real estate for sale.

People also search for

pretty prairie ks zip code	pretty prairie ks rodeo
pretty prairie ks real estate	pretty prairie ks map
pretty prairie kansas	pretty prairie ks funeral homes
prairie sunset home pretty prairie ks	collingwood barn pretty prairie ks

People also ask

What county is Pretty Prairie Kansas? ▼

How big is pretty prairie? ▼

What is pretty prairie? ▼

What is the area of Prairie? ▼

Houses for Rent in Pretty Prairie, KS | Rentals.com
www.rentals.com/Kansas/Pretty-Prairie ▼
50 Houses for Rent in **Pretty Prairie, Kansas** . Sort by: Best Match. 1 of 20. \$1,100. 1707 E 24th Ave Apartments. 1707 E 24th Ave, Hutchinson, **KS** ...

Pretty Prairie, KS Land for Sale - 3 Listings | LandWatch
www.landwatch.com/kansas-land-for-sale/pretty... ▼
LandWatch has 3 land listings for sale in **Pretty Prairie, KS**. Browse our **Pretty Prairie, KS** land for sale listings, view photos and contact an agent today!

- Hard to find out how to get to the main area of town. Didn't see any signs to direct people there.
- First reaction was that it is a lovely, tidy, quiet town. Homes, streets, and businesses seemed to be clean and inviting.
- Helpful resident encountered when asking for directions.



- The town presents itself as a loved community. A feeling of quiet and justified pride.
- Yards well manicured.
- There were a few residential properties in need of attention or vacant, but not many at all.
- Main Street doesn't present itself as well as the rest of the community. Not well marked for those arriving from the west.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Main Street is a fairly long area with few businesses and lacking in life and color.
- Felt a little lost as there wasn't much in the way of directional signage, especially not directing visitors to businesses or schools.
- Did not see any signs indicating the community was Pretty Prairie upon arrival.
- Nothing observed in the way of streetscapes.



Downtown Business Area

- The business district has some old, rather historic looking buildings.
- The post office, bank, and steak house were marked with signage, though the steak house signage was confusing as it had three separate names. Flat front buildings with signs on the windows or doors weren't easily visible initially.
- Other buildings were empty or had signs on the door with a number to call if someone wanted to come in and shop.



Downtown Business Area

- Sidewalks could use some repair. Maybe this area is getting ready for improvements?
- Loved the grassy area with the rail fence by city hall. It was cute and inviting and the metal bronco rider was a nice touch.
- A larger building on the east side of the street had a large hole in the roof giving a negative impression.



Downtown Business Area

- One of the benches on Main Street was worn and had peeling paint but was probably beautiful once. The sidewalk near the closed community theater was really neat with the checkerboard design, but it didn't continue up and down the block.



Downtown Business Area



- Observed city hall/library, steak house, bank, a hardware store that appeared to be going out of business, and the convenience store.
- The restaurant is the primary retail business on Main. Visitors were warmly welcomed at the steak house and had a great lunch. They also were able to have a nice visit with their server and the pizza chef.

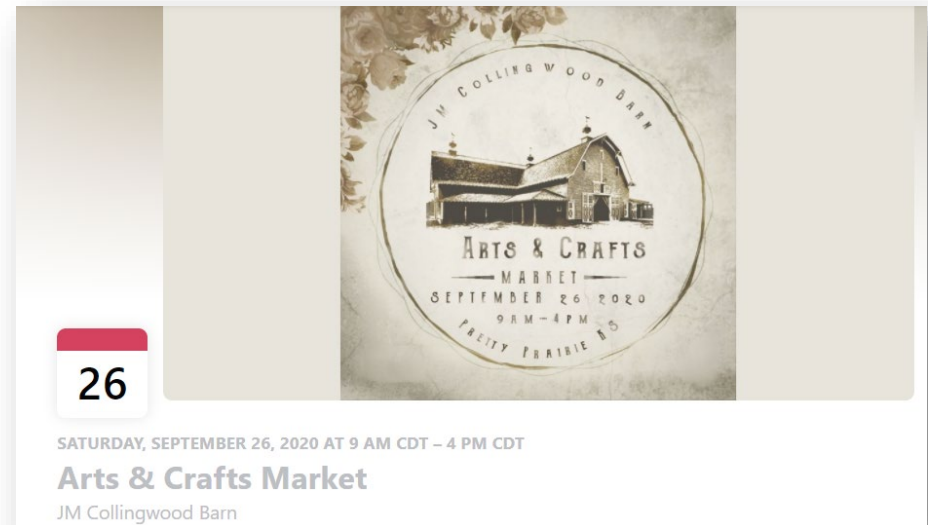


Downtown Business Area

- Visitors would not have guessed the Co-Op service station was also the convenience store.
- Co-Op/convenience store had a variety of options to choose from, was very clean (including the restrooms). The clerk working at the time was friendly and helpful and proud of her community.



- Customer service around town was just great. Greeted everywhere.
- Learned from restaurant workers about nearby AirBnB accommodations and an upcoming arts and crafts show.



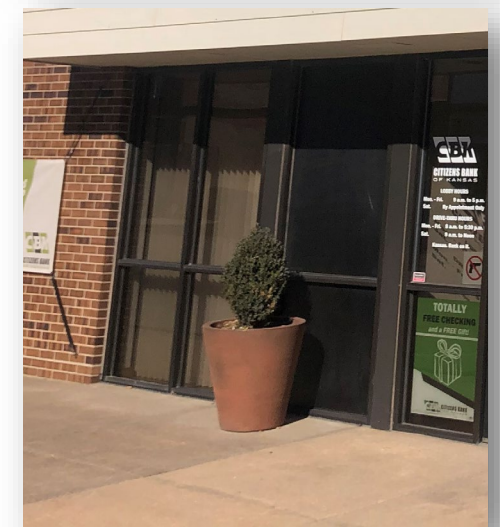
Downtown Business Area

- For public amenities, visitors found benches outside of city hall, some trash bins, and there was public access to wi-fi outside of city hall/library.
- Did not see any access to drinking fountains or public restrooms, though the convenience store had restrooms should there be a need.



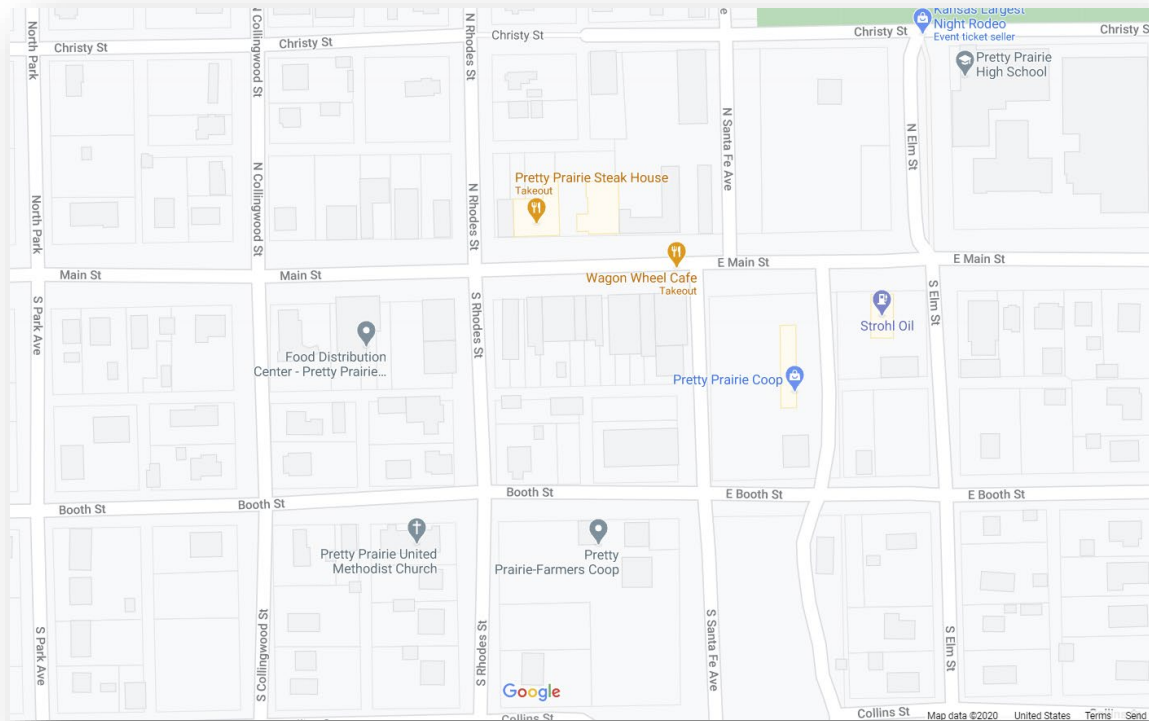
Downtown Business Area

- No real landscaping to speak of except for grassy area next to city hall. Unless you stop right by city hall the metal rider art isn't visible. There were some flower pots seen.
- Parking was abundant.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- There were no retail businesses observed outside of the downtown area.



- *A drive-by is not how industry will find you, check with your local Eco Devo director to make sure your site is listed on LocationOne @ Kansas Department of Commerce.*

Observation:

- “Entrepreneurs who choose to start their small businesses are responsible for 63 percent of net new jobs created in the United States every year.”
- *Global marketing makes your town accessible to purchases all over the world.*

Industrial Parks/Commercial



- Visitors saw no designated industrial areas or manufacturing industries.
- They did note the Co-Op and the older grain elevator – businesses to support the agriculture industry.
- Unlike some communities, Pretty Prairie doesn't seem landlocked, so there was a feeling if industry came to town there would be room for that type of growth.



- No hospital or emergency medical facilities were observed in town, however Kingman and Hutchinson both have such services and are 15-25 minutes away.
- No health clinics, dentists, optometrists or other health services or providers were seen.



- The long-term care facility/nursing home was observed. Visitors thought it was a nice looking facility, appeared relatively new, and the property was well maintained.
- They also noted there was good parking there.
- They did not go in to ask questions or get more information due to COVID-19.



- Overall impressed with homes and property appearance.
- Only 1 “for sale” sign seen in the city and not many empty houses. Looked like it might be difficult to find housing if wanting to move here.
- Web search indicated there were 3 homes for sale and several new builds were noticed which indicates prosperous income and possibly community growth.
- Variety of sizes and ages of homes would appeal to those in low, moderate, or higher income levels.
- No evidence of rental properties noted.

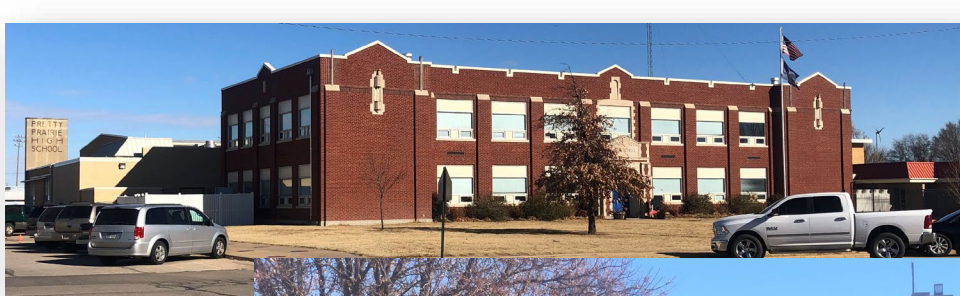


Pretty Prairie

KANSAS

• Total Housing Units	244	
• Total Occupied Houses	197 (80.7%)	(88.4%)
• Vacant Houses	47 (19.3%)	(11.6%)
• Owner Occupied	160 (81.2%)	(66.5%)
• Renter Occupied	37 (18.8%)	(33.5%)
• Family Households	122 (61.9%)	(64.4%)
• Non-family Households	75 (38.1%)	(35.6%)

- School websites not visually inspiring, but provided expected information.
- School buildings were neat and well-kept.
- Appear to be adequate in size.
- General information available online included school details and the sports programs.



Comments:

Visitors thought they found a daycare based on the yard, but there were no signs, so not sure.

No other signs or daycare information seen during visit.

Reno County Data (2019):

- **Number of Children Under Age 6 Potentially Needing Care:** 2,814
- **Number of Licensed Family and Group Day Care Homes:** 73
- **Number of Childcare Centers:** 10
- **Desired Capacity of Childcare Centers:** 1,390
- **Extent that desired capacity meets potential need:** 49%
- **Creating a Childcare Action Plan**

<https://www.ks.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/Child-Care-Supply-Demand-Action-Plan.pdf>

Contact [ks.childcareaware.org](https://www.ks.childcareaware.org) to get access to local childcare specialists.

785-823-3343

- Located the Methodist and Jerusalem Church.
- The Jerusalem Church was well preserved and looked amazing for its age.
- Both churches had well taken care of grounds
- There was mention online of a rural Mennonite church.
- Did not see any evidence of faith-based community services.



- Nothing seen relating to traditional civic clubs or organizations.
- The rodeo takes a lot of community organization and collaboration, so this was viewed as a civic organization. The rodeo brings in thousands of visitors and many vendors and riders, the revenue going back to serve the community.



- The streets around town were a mix of paved and gravel and had some curbs and guttering.
- No sidewalks observed in residential areas.
- Landscaping in residential areas was very nice and all visitors commented that Pretty Prairie looked like a great place to live.
- No comments on lighting since the visit was during the day.



- Only a few areas with clutter observed.
- Parking by the nursing home was crowded.
- Signage was brought up again as a challenge to find.



- The two ladies at city hall greeted visitors and were very friendly and informative. They answered questions about city codes and showed visitors a welcome packet for new residents.
- Great people to have in front of the community!



Fire, EMS and Police Services


- Visitors didn't notice a police station but saw a patrol car so they knew there was protection.
- The fire station was very nice and well maintained.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

Home Contact Us

Kansas Insurance Commissioner Vicki Schmidt

Kansas Insurance Department
420 SW 9th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1678
Consumer Hotline: 800-432-2484 (KS only)
[Email Us](#) | Phone: 785-296-3071

ISO Public Protection Classification

Most U.S. insurers of home and business properties use Insurance Services Office's (ISO) Property Protection Classification (PPC) in calculating premiums. In general, the price of insurance in a community with a good PPC is lower than in a community with a poor PPC, assuming all other factors are equal.

PPC Program: <https://www.isomitigation.com/program-works/how-the-ppc-program-works.html>

A community's PPC depends on:

1. Emergency communications systems, including facilities for the public to report fires, staffing, training, certification of telecommunicators, and facilities for dispatching fire departments
2. The fire department, including equipment, staffing, training, and geographic deployment of fire companies
3. The water supply system, including the inspection and flow testing of hydrants and a careful evaluation of

- The library is in the same building as city hall.
- There wasn't much activity in the library during the visit, but should the opportunity arise the city/library might benefit from more space.
- The library was well stocked for a town of this size.



- No walking trails were observed.
- There was a nice park in the south end of town which contained playground equipment, benches, lovely trees, sand volleyball court and a small restroom.
- No ballparks were seen, but there was a nice playground at the elementary school.
- High school had nice grounds for sports activities.
- Rodeo grounds were visible, but not mowed with grass that was quite tall in spots.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- For the Largest Nighttime Rodeo in the State of Kansas.
- Driving in from several directions there was not much in the way of advertising (signs/billboards) for the rodeo. Maybe having copies of the metal bronco rider art piece near city hall would be nice to have at entrances to town?
- Restaurant staff mentioned there was a large car show and a craft show at a restored barn about 10 miles away. Without the lunchtime conversation visitors indicated they wouldn't have known about these things.
- There was information about art classes noted.



Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Very nice golf course on the west edge of town.
- The large renovated barn outside of town for weddings or large events.



Visitor's Center

- There is no visitor's center, but city hall would have the information needed.



What would bring you back?

- Painting class which they found out about during lunch at the steak house. Minneola visitors are getting together a group of friends to come back for dinner and painting.
- The steak house – the food was DELICIOUS and the service was incredible.
- A return trip is already planned for prime rib on a Saturday evening.

Most Positive Observations

- The ownership and pride people have for their community.
- The friendly people. One even mentioned she was so glad she moved back to Pretty Prairie.
- The town seems safe, is well groomed and inviting – a great place to raise a family.
- Feeling of ongoing prosperity with the new home builds.
- The long-term care facility feels more residential than institutional.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- The city is not on a major highway which would make it difficult to draw in new people, or new business for a limited number of shoppers. Being so close to Kingman and Hutchinson might make retail options difficult.
- Some crumbling sidewalks and old curbing on Main. Minneola had the same issue 5 years ago and got a Mainstreet grant that changed the whole area with sidewalks, curbing, and street lights.
- There's a lack of a grocery store, but with people working outside of town they might not see that as a barrier.
- Signage should be reviewed – visitors drove by things several times before finding them. They were there, just not easily seen.

What will you remember?

- Pretty Prairie is SO peaceful and well-kept.
- Everyone that visitors encountered was helpful, friendly, and provided information they needed.
- The lady managing the convenience store at the Co-Op was so proud to be here and glad she moved back. Could anyone say more?
- How happy everyone was. It seems like a tight-knit community with great friendships and an incredible quality of life.

***Thanks to the volunteer visitors from
Minneola and Pretty Prairie!***

Set Next Steps:

- Which group will lead the discussion?

K-State Research and Extension

PRIDE: <http://kansasprideprogram.k-state.edu/>

- Local communities identify what they would like to preserve, create, or improve for their future and volunteers pull together to create their ideal community future.



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.



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.
 - Contact Nancy Daniels nkdaniels@ksu.edu to participate.
 - Previous calls are recorded at <http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/>
 - Community Vitality Calendar of events: <http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/>

Kansas Department of Agriculture in partnership with other state organizations, will work with your community to find the best opportunities for growth using the assets of your region.

A graphic for the 'GROW IN KANSAS' Strategic Growth Initiative. It features a collage of various agricultural and technological images, including a sheep, wheat, a cow, a pig, chickens, a drone, a green tractor, a circuit board, a person in a lab coat, and various fruits and vegetables. The text 'GROW IN KANSAS' is prominently displayed at the top in white on a blue background. Below the collage, the text 'STRATEGIC GROWTH INITIATIVE' is written in bold, followed by a description of the program as a pilot for recruiting food, agriculture, and UAS/small aircraft businesses to Kansas.

GROW IN KANSAS

STRATEGIC GROWTH INITIATIVE

A pilot program for the proactive recruitment of food, agriculture and UAS/small aircraft business to Kansas.

For more information on the Strategic Growth Initiative, please contact
Russell Plaschka, Ag Business Development Program Manager
785-564-7466 • Russell.Plaschka@ks.gov
agriculture.ks.gov/GrowAg

Pretty Prairie's compiled reports and presentation will be available online through our First Impressions web page. You can get to it here:

www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/civic-engagement/first-impressions



Pam Paulsen – Horticulture Agent

ppaulsen@ksu.edu

K-State Research and Extension-Reno County

620.662.2371

Jan Steen

Community Vitality Specialist

jmsteen@ksu.edu

K-State Research and Extension

620.200.0665