

First Impressions

St. John, KS

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation

The logo for the Dane G. Hansen Foundation features a stylized tan arch above the text. The text "DANE G. HANSEN" is in a bold, dark blue serif font. Below it, the word "FOUNDATION" is written in a smaller, dark blue serif font, with each letter separated by a small gap. A second, larger tan arch is positioned behind the word "FOUNDATION".

DANE G. HANSEN

F O U N D A T I O N

- Conway Springs asked to participate in the program and St. John applied to participate as a partner community.
- Volunteers were trained in each community.
- Eight visitors visited St. John on three separate dates: 8/8, 8/24, 8/26/2019.
- Results are presented to the public tonight.
- St. John uses the results for further discussion and action plans.

- **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

- 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 1,295
(down 1.74% since 2000*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2017 Estimate is 1,410
(up 6.98% since 2000 **KS= +8.0%**)
- 89.2% high school or GED, 24.8% college educated,
 - **90.5% HS or equivalency, KS 32.3% college education**
- Poverty rate 11.5% **(KS=12.8%)**
- Median Age 42.7 years **(36.3)**
- Median household income is \$50,060 **(\$55,477)**

* 2000 Census was 1,318

- **Website**

- <http://www.stjohnkansas.com>

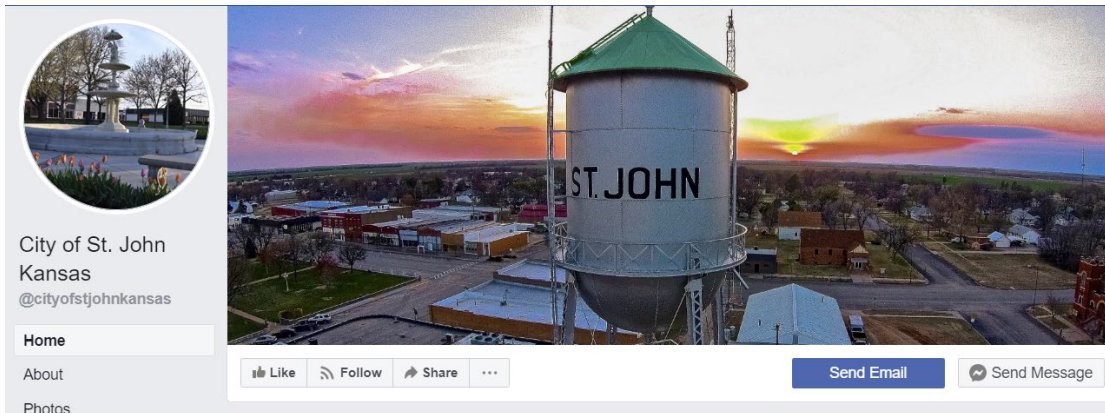
- Easy to navigate.
- Comprehensive.
- Up-to-date information.
- “Impressed with the ability to pay utilities, tickets, and fines... as well as apply for license permits, job openings, library card, and zoning changes online.”



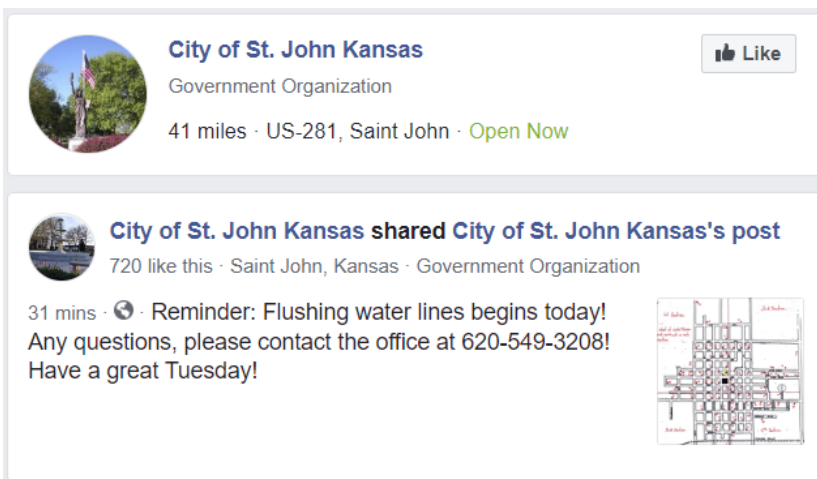
- **Facebook**

“City of St. John Kansas”

<https://www.facebook.com/cityofstjohnkansas>



- Visitors didn't mention finding the official Facebook page, but it does exist.
- In a search a 2013 version of the page comes up first and posts from the current page are second.
- 391 people like/409 people follow the 2013 version.
- 720 people like/745 people follow the current version.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- St. John appears to be a cute little community.
- Very historic feel, but not dated.
- Kind of run down but a lot of potential.
- Seems to be a lot of resources.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Some signage wasn't clear. Hard to read the sign about sports while driving into town.
- Town appeared to be well maintained.
- Streets were clean for the most part.
- Highway into town was smooth.
- Not many people out and about.



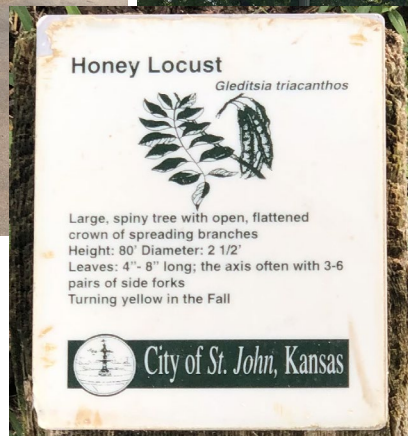
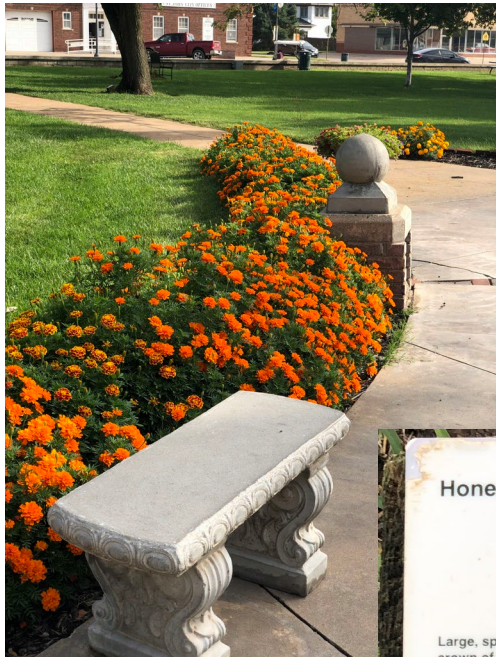
“Five-Minute” Impression

- One visitor came with children and they were excited to see goats and horses on the way into town.
- Welcome signs were nice.
- Well-mowed.
- Business district sign noted.
- Not much is there coming in from the south.
- North has more commercial activity.



Downtown Business Area

- Town square was beautiful. Very nice place.
- Nice park benches and grass. Fountain was being repaired.
- Great landscaping and trees in the square.
- Impressed with some of the nameplates for trees.



Downtown Business Area

- Nice sidewalks and benches.
- Some very nice buildings, some historic, but some appeared to no longer be in use or run down.
- Adequate parking.



Downtown Business Area

- “County building is amazing!”
- Landscaping and streetscaping was minimal outside of the square.
- Streets not in great shape in all places.
- Town appeared just “not busy”.
- Not much open on Saturday.
- Didn’t notice public bathrooms or WiFi.



Downtown Business Area

- Downtown had banks, attorney office, thrift store, restaurants.
- Pizza restaurant staff was friendly and helpful.
- Thrift store staff also friendly.
- This is a “very welcoming community”.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Equipment sales
- Gas stations
- Restaurants
- Dollar General and White's Grocery
- Liquor store and auto repair
- Chiropractor
- Lumber yard
- Beauty salons
- USDA Service Center
- Pratt isn't far if there's something you can't find here.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- “Really can’t say enough about the grocery store.”
- Very nice variety. Healthy foods, ethnic foods, great produce.
- Staff was excellent.
- Owner or manager was handling the staff kindly and waiting on customers. Polite and professional.



- *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

- Didn't seem to be concentrated in one area, or not sure.
- Another observed that industrial areas were easy to spot. Perhaps some former industrial areas became surrounded by residential over time.
- Plenty of room to expand around the outside of town if land is for purchase or lease.



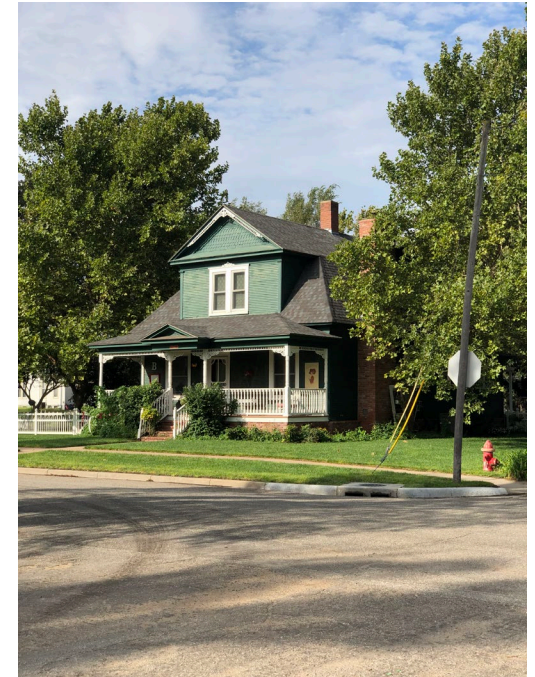
- One visitor couldn't find any obvious hospitals or emergency medical services while driving through town.
- Hospital was observed by others, as well as chiropractors, dentists, and county emergency services.
- Nursing facility and senior living also observed.
- All appeared to be in good condition and well maintained.



- Housing was a little dated in some areas, some needed maintenance. Overall a welcoming small town feel.
- Broad range of options – apartment living to multi-level homes and ranches.
- Looked online prior to visit and found properties to purchase at various price levels, but didn't see a lot of evidence of for sale or rent upon visiting.



- Many very beautiful, big houses in town.



- There doesn't seem to be a lot of enforcement of ordinances as there are nice homes mixed with some very run down places. That can hurt when people are looking for places to live. Possible cleanup or demolition of older properties?



- Some apartments were observed.

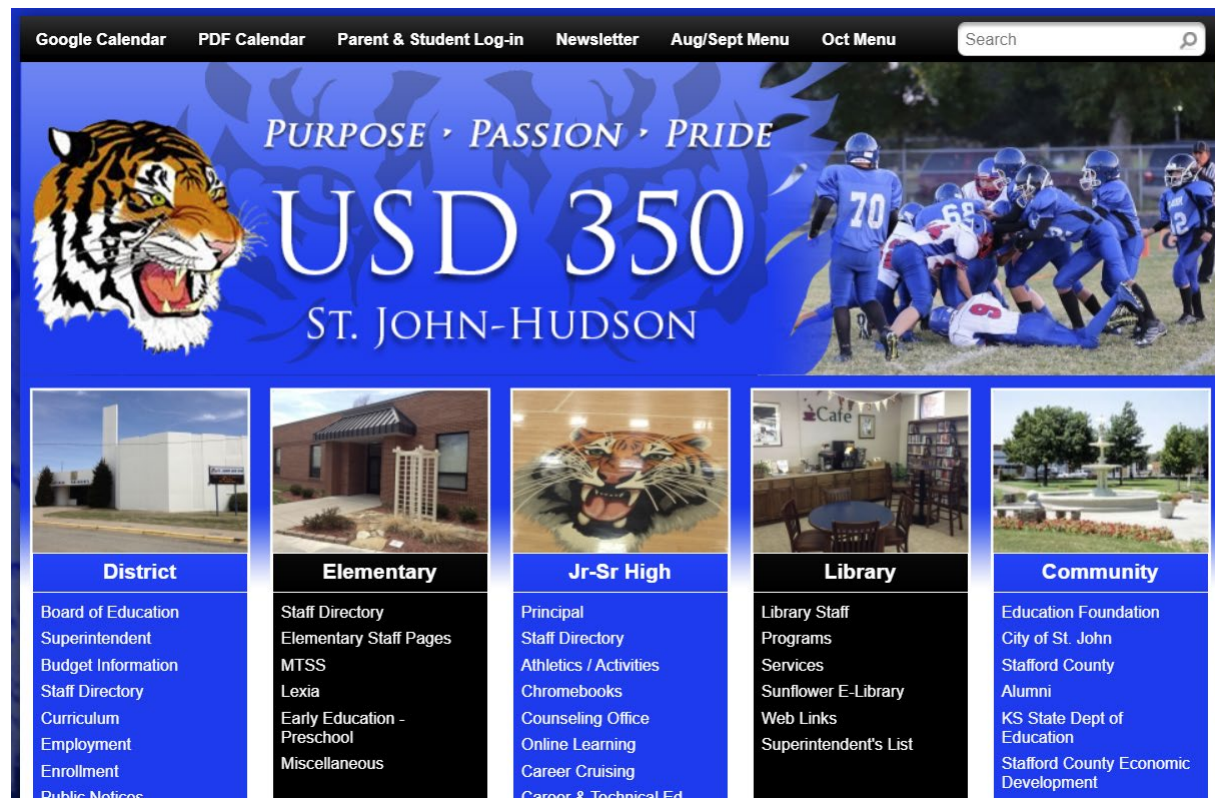


KANSAS

• Total Housing Units	642	
• Total Occupied Houses	534 (83.18%)	(89.1%)
• Vacant Houses	108 (16.82%)	(10.7%)
• Owner Occupied	404 (62.93%)	(66.4%)
• Renter Occupied	130 (20.25%)	(33.6%)

(Source: American FactFinder, 2010 U.S. Census Data)

- School website was very comprehensive and helpful.
- www.usd350.com
- Information could be found in minutes online and in the community.



- One visitor didn't notice the middle school.
- Elementary through high school observed, and preschool.
- K-12 appeared to be older buildings with some paint needed. Buildings and grounds could be updated.
- Signage hard to follow, hard to find parking.
- Like slogan of *Purpose, Pride, Passion*



- Toured football complex. Limited parking but well maintained facility.



Comments: There were three daycares observed, but did not know if they were affordable or not.

Stafford County Data:

- **Number of Children Under Age 6:** **313**
- **Children with all parents in the workforce:** **61%**
- **Desired Capacity of Child Care Centers** **50**
- **Extent that desired capacity meets potential need** **26%**
- **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 get access to local child care specialists.
785-823-3343*

- A few different churches observed.
- Good representation of denominations.
- Methodist church was nice.
- Couldn't find evidence of faith-based community service in town.



- Senior Center
- Odd Fellows
- No other evidence of civic groups observed.
- No evidence of civic organization activities other than the buildings (events, services, contributions, etc.).



- Appreciated the brick streets.
- Most sidewalks were walkable.
- Signs were in good condition and streets good.
- Most yards were in good shape.
- A few houses and yards that needed attention.



- City hall was very welcoming.
- Informative.
- Exchanged information about water plants, sewers, unkept property and unclaimed dogs.
- “Truly enjoyed our visit”.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Noticed police patrolling.
- Saw emergency services building – appears to be adequate coverage.
- Fire station.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

Home Contact Us

GO

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

› The Department

› Auto/Home

› Health/Life

› Insurance Fraud & Education

› Producer/Agency Services

› Company Services

› Other Services



HOME : ISO

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

- One visitor didn't go in the library because they felt it was part of the school and wasn't sure if it was acceptable for the public to go in.
- Others loved the library. Well maintained grounds, big building.



- Apart from the park in the town square, there is another nice city park.
- Some of the equipment is new, some is dated, but kids were having fun.
- Tennis courts, swimming pool, ball field, disc golf.
- More tree labels. Memorial water fountain.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- The town square and fountain.
- There's a farmer's market in the square. Some visitors came on the market date and were able to shop.
- There's also a banner advertising the farmer's market downtown.



Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Proximity to Pratt, lakes, Quivira Wildlife Refuge, and RV parks.
- Library is awesome.
- Fountain in park once repaired, possibly. The square is beautiful, but may not quite be an attraction just yet.
- Farmer's market might bring people in.



Visitor's Center

- Not a specific visitor's center or chamber office observed.
- Would start at City Hall or courthouse for visitor information.
- City building had information about the town and very helpful staff.



What would bring you back?

- The thrift store.
- If the town was closer to our own we would definitely visit again.
- Feel of the town is so nice.
- There's enough to do – might make the trip back and go camping.

Most Positive Observations

- The farmer's market.
- Sense of community.
- Town square
- Thrift store
- Library
- Grocery store and access to basic needs.
- Town layout is convenient and easy to navigate.
- Close enough to Pratt for anything else you'd need.
- Beautiful older homes.
- Museums.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Far away from major cities.
- Several blighted properties that need to be managed.
- Enforcement needed of property ordinances in the city.
- Downtown buildings need sprucing up.
- Fill downtown buildings with shops.
- Some streets in rough shape.
- Shopping local. Just close enough to a larger city where people might go to shop – might be hard to keep people at home to buy things.
- Bring back youth to open businesses and expand city.

What will you remember?

- Town square
- Weekly farmer's market.
- Amazing library.
- Fantastic grocery store.
- Neat ranches/farms on the north side of town.
- Lovely old homes.
- Friendly city workers.
- Empty buildings, like old theater that must've been gorgeous once.

Thank our leadership team and volunteer visitors!

Set Next Steps:

- Which group will lead the discussion?

Contact me if you need resources or have questions:

Jan Steen

Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension

620.200.0665

jmsteen@ksu.edu

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

Youth Community Perceptions: <https://bit.ly/33GGwGS>

Helps youth learn to identify needs and opportunities in their community while working with local leaders to make a difference!

Assists Youth and Communities in:

- Creating opportunities for youth to have a voice in the community.
- Involving and familiarizing youth with local government and community processes.
- Bridging the gap between youth, local government, and the community.

YOUTH
COMMUNITY
PERCEPTIONS



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.

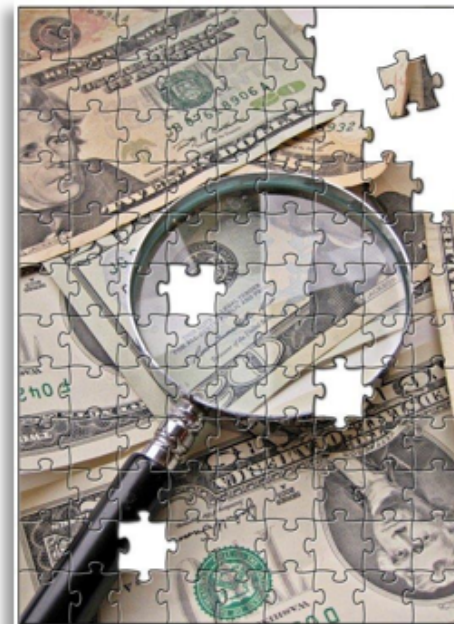
K-State Research and Extension's Community Vitality Team offers grant writing workshops for local communities.

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.

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



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