

First Impressions

Arkansas City, KS

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- Haysville asked for First Impressions, obtained Arkansas City as its partner.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey and took photos of Ark City on July 17.
- Three Haysville visitors came in one car on Aug. 27.
- Results are presented today, November 7.
- Arkansas City 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

- 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
 - 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/>

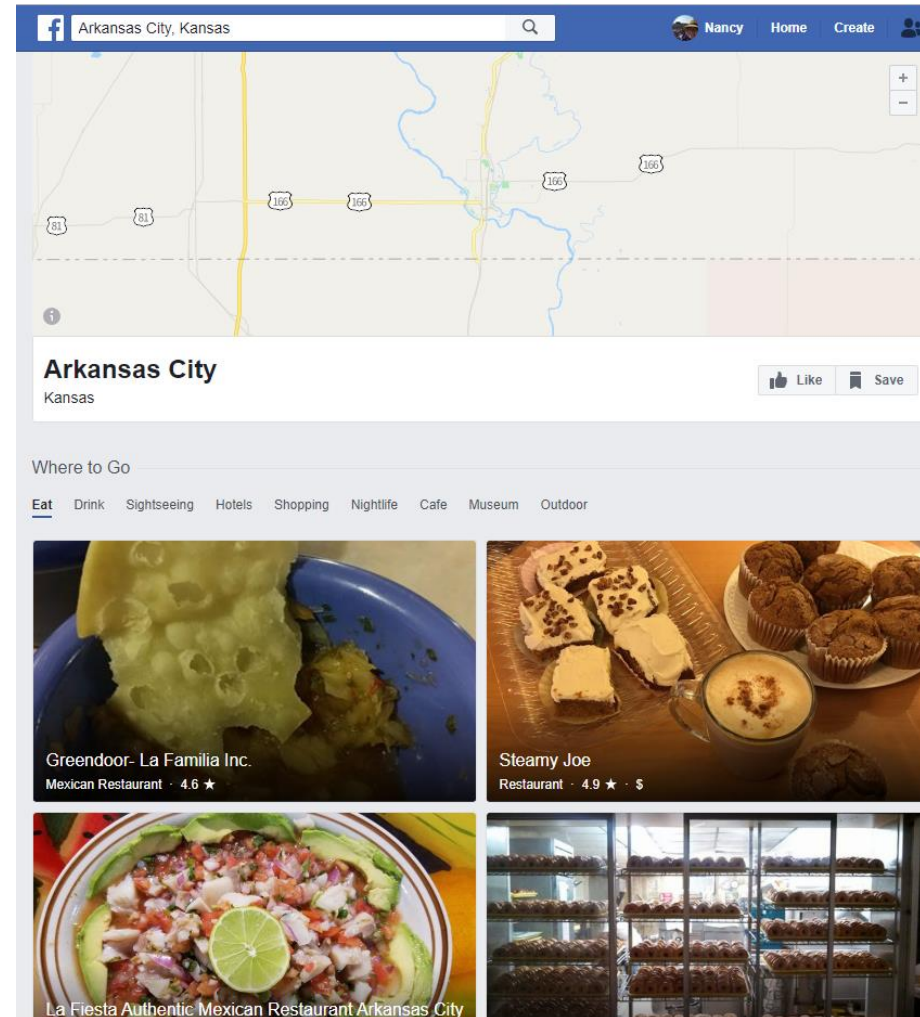
- 2010 Census Population 12,415
(UP 3.8% since 2000*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2017 Estimate is 11,864
(down .8% since 2000 **KS= +8.0%**)
- 87.7% high school or GED, 17.2% college educated
– **90.5% HS or equivalency, KS 32.3% college education,**
- Poverty rate 20.5% **(KS=12.8%)**
- Median Age 33.4 years **(36.3)**
- Median household income is \$38,958 **(\$55,477)**

* 2000 Census was 11,963

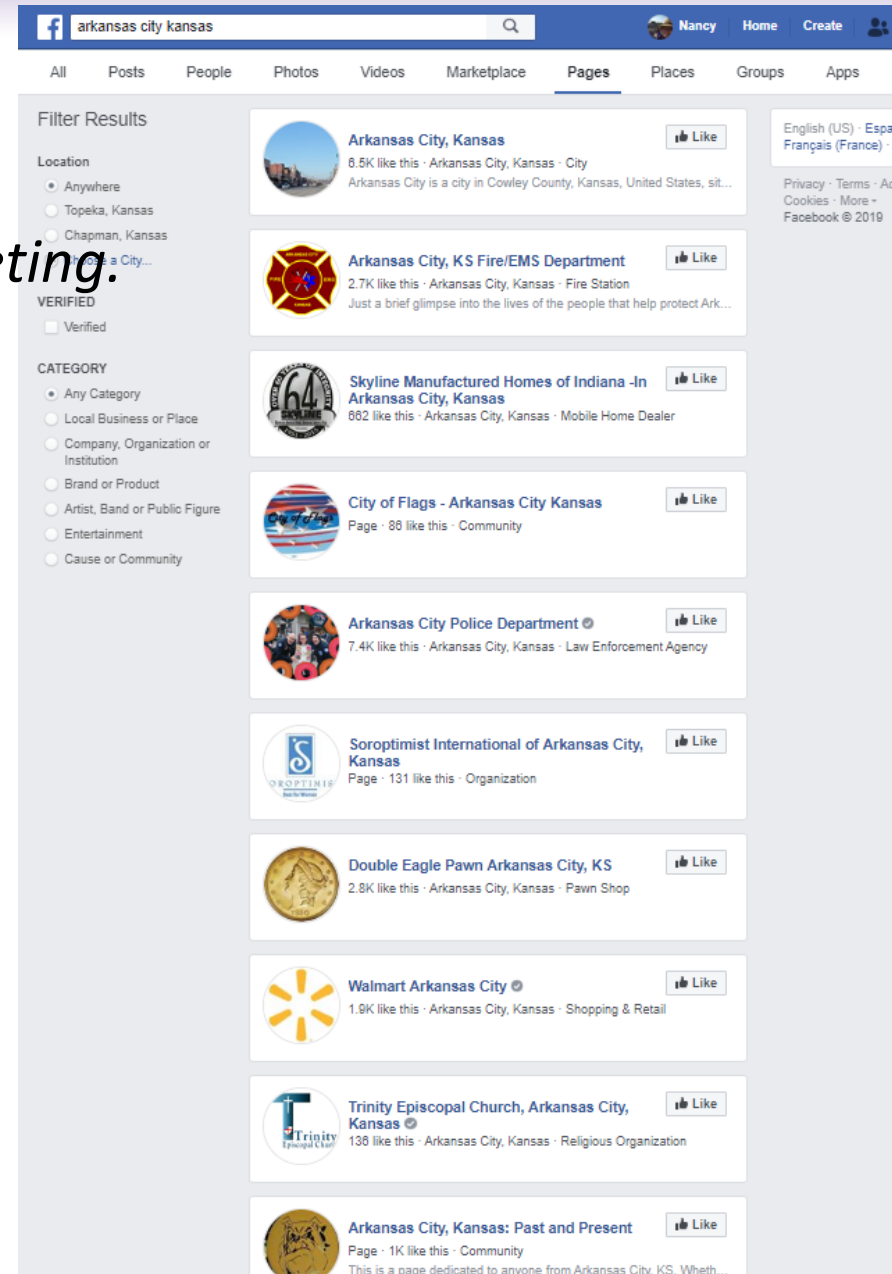
- **Website** <http://www.arkcity.org/>
- Easy to find information. Liked: Upcoming events, news articles and information about clubs and activities.
- Has some dated information.
- Several concerns about links to other pages-
not replicable on my desktop PC in October.



- **FaceBook** <https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Arkansas-City-Kansas/109663345727195/>
 - *A Facebook generated page.*
 - *These can be converted into a city-maintained site.*



- **FaceBook**
 - About 15 local pages.
 - *An opportunity for co-marketing.*



“Five-Minute” Impression

- North side of town was busy even on Tuesday.
- Impressive number of national chain stores. Saw welcome signs from the north and south.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Wayfinding signs blended in with downtown trees, but they were nice.
- At the chamber office, we heard about an impressive effort by volunteers to fill downtown.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Trees covered many downtown storefronts so that we couldn't tell what they were.
- Busy large box store area on the north, beautiful buildings downtown.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Signs on the north and south need a little TLC.
- Didn't find signage on east and west.



Downtown Business Area



Downtown Business Area



Downtown Business Area

- Storefront parking made downtown businesses seem fuller than it felt on foot.
- Some storefronts were disappointing on foot.



11 am- Wednesday, July 17



4 pm

Downtown Business Area



Downtown Business Area

- Good customer service in most locations, exceptional at Graves Drug Store.
- If a store was closed, there was no signage to tell us when they'd be back.



Downtown Business Area



Downtown Business Area





Public Amenities

- Liked the music downtown.
- Displays on Main street with the map and list of events were a good idea.
- Nice murals on some of the buildings.
- The list of activities didn't have dates or even designated weekends.
- "You are Here" stars would be nice.



Public Amenities

- Flowers in planters were nice and we saw them being watered and maintained by city crews.



Public Amenities

- We saw drinking fountains, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, designated bike paths throughout town.



Public Amenities

- Parking was adequate and easy to walk to stores.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- These businesses were easy to get in and out of despite heavier traffic than downtown.
- Appeared clean and neat, with many national chain stores. Some empty space.



Industrial Parks/Commercial

- Strother Park seems to be the designated industrial park, but we saw ADM, the railroad, the beef plant and other big businesses spread throughout.



Industrial Parks/Commercial



Industrial Parks/Commercial



- *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.*

- New hospital on the north side and we saw medical offices throughout the community.



Health Care Services

- Everyone we spoke to had great things to say about the medical services. Surprised at 6 pharmacies.



- We found several long-term or assisted living services from the locals. I don't think we would have found them without help.
- Everyone had good things to say about these services.



- Many areas we drove through were run down and not very attractive.
- Found newer additions west and south of Creekmore.



- The housing is good if you were a college student living on campus, but it is hard to find rentals for the public and we're told the waiting lists are long.



- One active subdivision with houses in the \$150,000s.
- Rent and sale properties seem to be fair market.











KANSAS

- Total Housing Units 5,670
- Total Occupied Houses 4,825 (85.1%) (89.1%)
- Vacant Houses 845 (14.9%) (10.7%)

- Owner Occupied 2,610 (54.1%) (66.4%)
- Renter Occupied 2,215 (45.9%) (33.6%)
- Family Households 60.1% (65.4%)
- Non-family Households 39.9% (34.6%)

- Head Start, half and full-day preschool through high school.



- The crown jewel is the community college.



- Impressive high school, well-kept middle school and 5 elementary schools that we didn't see.





Private Schools:

- Ark City Christian Academy and Sacred Heart.



Google Earth, photo taken 2012, retrieved 10-30-2019



- The web sites were very helpful for both public and college.
- *Photos are inclusive of all ages and activities and helped us picture our students being happy here.*



- We spoke to the public information officer who spoke about increasing enrollments and awards they've received.
- *The website could make the awards more apparent and visual.*
- *Potential students are an important target audience.*

Home Our Schools Our District Parents & Students For Staff Employment

Arkansas City Usd 470

Our District / About Us

About Us

Contact Information

USD 470
2545 Greenway
Arkansas City, Kansas 67005
Map
Phone: 620-441-2000
Fax: 620-441-2009
Send Message

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Arkansas City Public Schools is a results-producing public school district. Our district holds a tradition of excellence in all matters related to student achievement and true, well-rounded education. Ark City students have been on the front lines of achievement and continue the tradition of exceeding learning targets suggested by the state.

Efforts by all staff members, students, and community members, have helped the district be recognized for excellence by the U.S. and Kansas Departments of Education, the Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the EPA, and many more.

Mission Statement

USD 470 is committed to excellence in teaching and learning for all students. We will provide effective instructional leadership and quality learning environments which promote improved student outcomes. Our district holds high expectations for students and staff. We share with the community the responsibility for educating all students so they will be prepared to live, work, and continue learning how to learn in an ever-changing world.

Contact Us

Arkansas City Public Schools
USD 470
2545 Greenway
Arkansas City, KS 67005

Quick Links

- 2019-2020 Calendar
- 2019-2020 Calendario
- PowerSchool
- Menus
- BOE Agenda
- Budget
- Head Start Annual Report
- Emergency Safety Intervention (ESI)
- Disclaimers
- #KansansCan
- AVCTL Calendar
- Patriot League Calendar
- Current RFPs

- We heard about only 2 childcare centers, it seemed to be mostly homes.
- We weren't sure whether people weren't aware of childcare or if they had it covered.

Cowley County Data:

- **Number of Children Under Age 6:** **2,910**
- **Children with all parents in the workforce:** **62%**
- **Desired Capacity of Child Care Centers** **643**
- **Extent that desired capacity meets potential need** **36%**
- **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 childcare specialists.
785-823-3343*

- We saw numerous faiths and many buildings.



- Some denominations I've never heard of and a few that needed a little love and attention.







- Couldn't identify any faith-based activities.



- Lions, Optimist, Kiwanis, Soroptimist International, Knights of Columbus, Rotary, American Legion, and Friends of Wilson Park.



- American Legion has a free-standing building, Lions developed a skate park and the Kiwanis have a pancake feed during Arkalalah.



- Streets were decent throughout town. We didn't drive down any failing streets. The older brick streets are a little rough, but that is every old brick road ever built! The hike/bike paths all had lighting, racks, trash cans, benches, and restrooms were at the parks.



- Somewhat welcoming. Signage on the outside was lacking and when we got inside it was even worse. The only signage was on the doors, so you had to go to the door to see who or what was in each room.
- There were zero printed materials about the city at City Hall.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Police station is a newer building across from City Hall. We saw police presence throughout town.
- The fire station looked like it covered the entire block.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department Home Contact Us Search 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: ksid@ks.gov | 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.

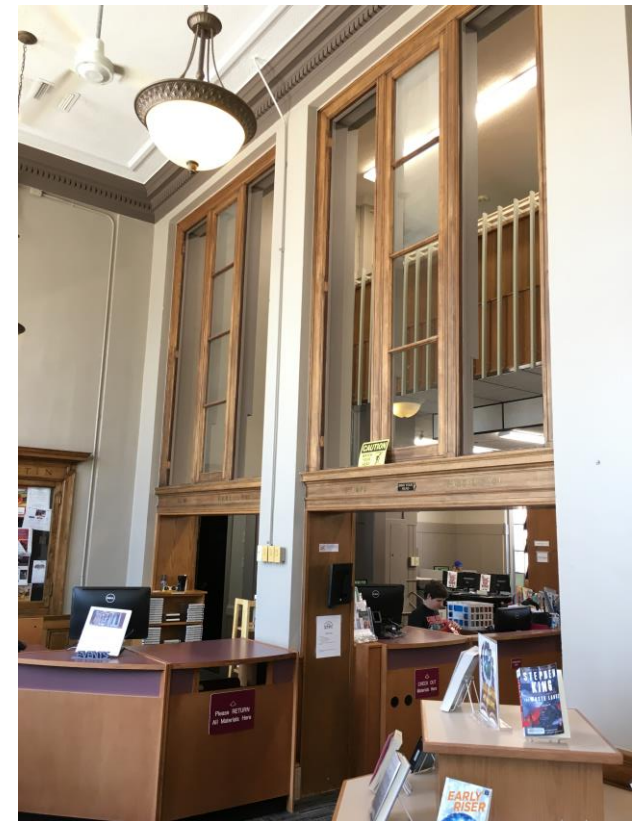
PPC Program: <https://www.isomitigation.com/program-works/how-the-ppc-program-works.html>

A community's PPC depends on:

1. Emergency communications systems, including facilities for the public to report fires, staffing, training, certification of telecommunications, 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 amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires
4. Community efforts to reduce the risk of fire, including fire prevention codes and enforcement, public fire safety education, and fire investigation programs

Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) Overview
The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) is a national standard that ranks fire departments on the basis of their performance in various areas.

- Nice retrofit of the old post office. The Makerspace is very cool, and free! Two floors of books with space to meet, study and read.



- *The old Carnegie Building- what's next?*



“You don’t know how important it is until your newspaper goes away.” Baldwin City citizen, First Impressions Meeting.



- Average rating for sports, parks seemed lacking in play equipment.



- Needed additional way-finding signs to the parks.
- Veterans' Pond would be a prime location for adjacent new housing.





- Liked the bike path.





Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Arkalalah is the last weekend in October. Slogan?
“Gateway to the Cherokee Strip?”
- Locals point to the Cherokee Strip museum and a new archeological dig (Etzanoa). The Cherokee Strip museum has never been open when I’ve been there, not sure of their hours.
- The downtown kiosks listed all the events but didn’t give any dates.





Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Etzanoa
- Cherokee Strip Museum
- Community College: Surprised the community didn't embrace students more. I expected to see "Welcome Back Students" signs or college mascots in windows, etc. Reader boards that co-marketed college and community events.

Visitor's Center

- Chamber is natural visitors' spot with plenty of printed information and helpful service.
- The map could use more location info.
- Jancie at Graves Drugstore knocked it out of the park with her knowledge and enthusiasm about Ark City.



What would bring you back?

- Arkalalah.
- As far as shops and restaurants, there wasn't anything that would bring me back.
- Etzanoa.

Most Positive Observations

- The town has an impressive number of national chain stores. Nice downtown. Everything I would need to live here, except mid-level housing. Current residents express a sense that it is a great place to raise a family and that it is friendly affordable, and a place to call home.
- Summit street is somewhat inviting and clean; loved the murals. Liked the planters and the music downtown. If you like the old towns built in the early 1900's, you will love Ark City. Good highways leading into town. They have a large area to pull customer base with major employers.

Most Positive Observations

- I love downtown and the fact that it coexists and is thriving with the big box national stores. A great school system. Has all the amenities of a big city but retains its small-town feel. Great park system, connected by hike/bike pathway. Everyone we spoke to mentioned pride in their city. The sign purchased at Graves Drugstore about treating your neighbors with kindness and respect was a theme I saw throughout town.



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- They appear to be locked into being what they were 100 years ago. I could see a number of specialty stores with eye-appealing store fronts while promoting both the college and USD activities.
- Entertainment for the younger generation.

What will you remember?

- All the trees in the downtown area and empty buildings that have a ton of potential downtown.
- The beautiful downtown and their community spirit.

- *Do a tour of empty buildings. Your downtown has gorgeous 2nd and 3rd floors, perfect for lofts.*
- *Put “generic” dates on signage about events.*
- *Your schools look great! Make sure the world and your students know how great they are.*
- *How would “improving access to child care” improve employment?*
- *Where would improved signage help?*
- *Would tree trimming help downtown visibility?*
- *Be visible and try to engage participation in city efforts: e.g. What’s next for the Carnegie Building, developments at Etzanoa.*

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/>

- <http://smallbizsurvival.com/>
– THE SMALL TOWN AND RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE

NEW! SURVEY	BOOK BECKY TO SPEAK	THE BOOK: SMALL TOWN RULES	SHOP LOCAL EBOOK	SAVEYOUR.TOWN	
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SMALL BIZ SURVIVAL

THE SMALL TOWN AND RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE




FRONT PAGE	LATEST STORIES	ABOUT	GUIDED TOUR	SUBSCRIBE	PODCAST	CONTACT	RSS	
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WHAT BUSINESS STAGE ARE YOU IN?



Dreaming

For those who are dreaming or planning to start a business of their own. ... [Get started.](#)



Doing & Growing

For those who have a business and have grown to the point that it's

Get our articles plus special bonus emails, a positive view of rural once a week:
Join me and 3546 rural friends.

Newsletters
☒ Small Biz Survival
☒ Positive View of Rural
☒ Building Possibility

JOIN

I will never sell or rent your email.

Resources I like:

- <http://saveyour.town/>
 - Monthly live webinars; available on recording.
 - Pay once and show as many times as you want.
 - Watch parties encouraged.

SAVEYOUR.town

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[WEBINARS](#)

[TOOLKITS](#)

[WORK WITH US](#)

[I DON'T HAVE TIME!](#)

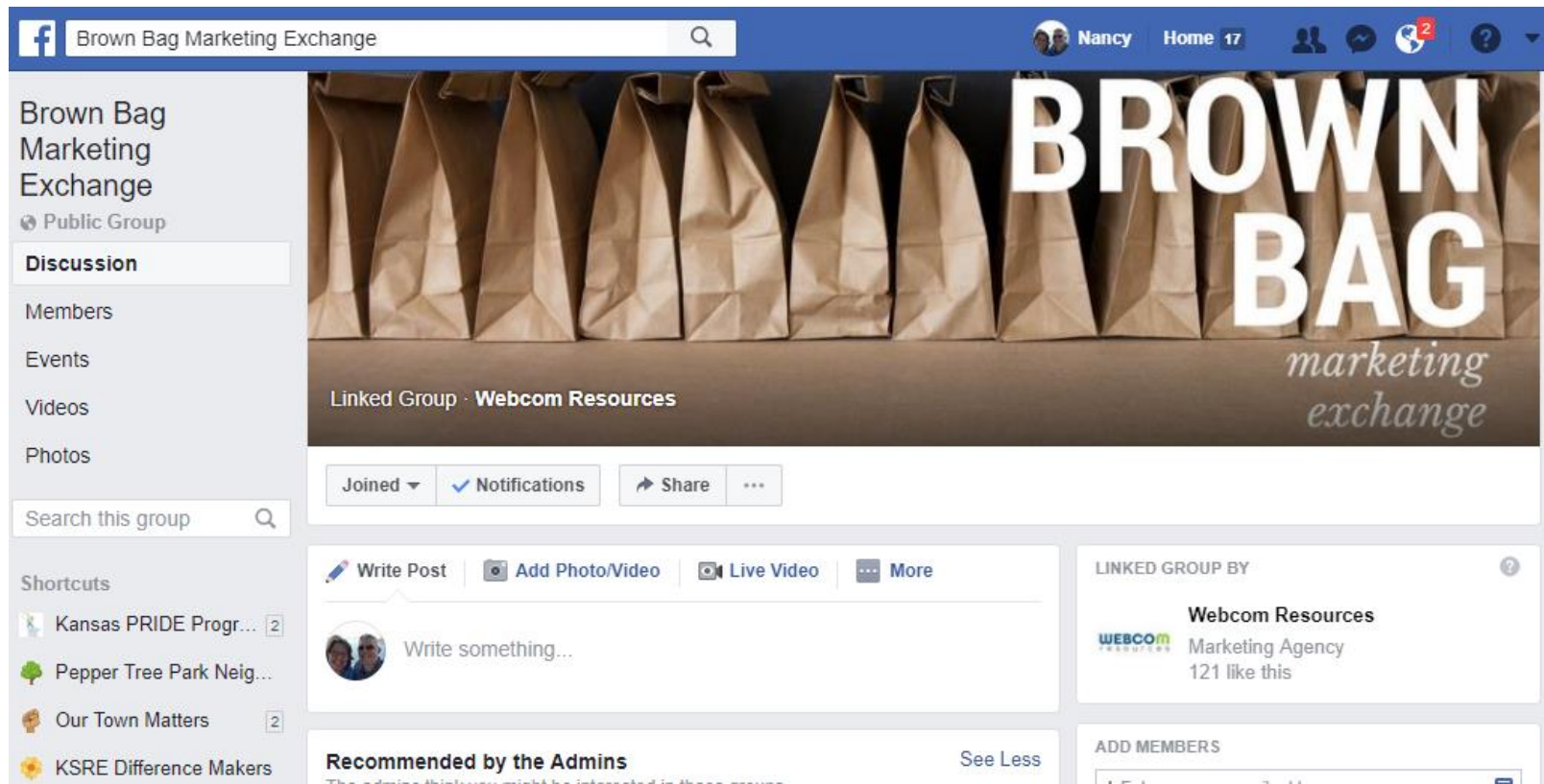
[CONTACT](#)

[MEMBERS LOGIN](#)

A Virtual Tour

When we walk through a small town, we see it differently
And then you see it differently

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/brownbagmx/>
Brown Bag Marketing Exchange
(Atchison, KS Co-Marketing group)



Kansas Healthy Food Initiative

- **Goal:** Increase access to affordable fresh food and to improve the health and economic development of Kansans and their communities.
- Technical assistance and financing to develop new or renovate fresh food retail in underserved communities throughout Kansas.

<http://kansashealthyfood.org/>

Isabelle Busenitz, ibusenitz@ksu.edu,

KHFI Technical Assistance Coordinator, 785-532-6868



Nancy Daniels

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