

First Impressions

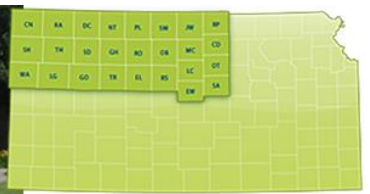
Blue Rapids, KS

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



*Knowledge
forLife*



- 2010 Census Population 1,019
(down 6.3% since 2000*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2017 Estimate is 966
(down 11.2% since 2000 **KS= +8.4%**)
- 90.9% high school or GED, 12.2% college educated,
– **90.3% HS or equivalency, KS 31.6% college education,**
- Poverty rate is 9.2% **(KS=13.3%)**
- Median Age 40.3 years **(36.2)**
- Median household income is \$50,833 **(\$53,571)**

* 2000 Census was 1,088

Website <http://www.bluerapids.org/>

- Didn't have much info for someone who wants to move there.
- Couldn't find much information about school rankings/outcomes.
- Easy to find information; could use more pictures, I went to Marshall County site for attractions.



- **FaceBook**

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

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile of the City of Blue Rapids, Kansas. The header bar is blue with the Facebook logo, a search bar containing "City of Blue Rapids Kansas", and navigation links for "Nancy", "Home", and user avatars. The main cover photo is a black and white image of a park with large trees and a gazebo. To the left of the cover photo is a smaller profile picture of a park path. Below the profile picture, the text "City of Blue Rapids Kansas" and "@bluerapidsks" is displayed. A vertical menu on the left side lists: Home, About, Photos, Reviews, Posts, Community, Events, and Info and Ads. Below the cover photo, there are buttons for "Liked", "Following", "Recommend", and "Send Message". The "Related Pages" section features five cards: "Marshall County Fair" (with a green can and purple ribbon), "Tryon's Pour House & Grill" (with a burger and fries), "Find new Pages near Topeka, Kansas" (with a map icon), "Blue Rapids Auto & Hardware" (with a photo of two people), and "Mustang Motors" (with a wooden sign). Each card has a "Like Page" or "Get Notified" button. At the bottom, there is a "Write a post..." text area and a status bar showing "City in Blue Rapids, Kansas".

City of Blue Rapids Kansas

@bluerapidsks

Home

About

Photos

Reviews

Posts

Community

Events

Info and Ads

Liked Following Recommend ...

Send Message

Related Pages

See More Suggestions

sin Marshall County Fair

Tryon's Pour House & Grill

Find new Pages near Topeka, Kansas

Blue Rapids Auto & Hardware

Mustang Motors

Like Page Like Page Get Notified Like Page Like Page

Write a post...

City in Blue Rapids, Kansas

Many Facebook Pages in Blue Rapids...

- Blue Rapids, Kansas
- Get Blue Rapids!
- Blue Rapids Museum
- Blue Rapids Mercantile
- Blue Rapids Free Press
- First Baptist Church
- Blue Rapids Swimming Pool
- St. Mark's Episcopal Church
- Blue Rapids Auto & Hardware
- Waterville/Blue Rapids UMC
- Blue Rapids Public Library
- Blue Rapids Greenhouse & Flower Shop
- Blue Valley Senior Living
- Valley Heights Schools
- Marshall County Fair

... creates the opportunity for co-marketing.

The “Five-Minute” Impression

- “A tale of two cities” with beautiful houses and dilapidated ones.
- Beautiful setting, interesting circular main street.



Google Earth July 2015, Retrieved from internet, July 2018

The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Love the limestone buildings.
- Liked the ballfields, pool, fairgrounds all in the same area.



Most photos: 4/19/18; Observations were made 5/10/18 and 5/17/18

The “Five-Minute” Impression

- A neat and clean community. It looks like a good place to live.
- I would love to see the little diner on the east side restored.



Downtown Business Area

- Downtown business area needs investment. The circle drive is nice, new library addition is first rate, but there are buildings that need to be revived.



Downtown Business Area

- We saw historical society, pharmacy, library, bank, diner, and city office, which the people were very friendly and helpful. We were greeted and they were very nice and helpful.



Downtown Business Area

- Oldest public library west of the Mississippi.
- Glacier display.



Amenities in Downtown Business Area

- Benches in the downtown circle. There are no parking issues.
- City Hall and Community Center had restrooms and drinking fountain.
- Downtown streetscaping could be improved.









Other Retail Shopping Areas

- The grocery, Casey's and car lot were easily accessed and looked well-kept. The antique store looked pretty full.



No sidewalks; took photo through windshield.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Grocery store was easy to access, could use some updating (water-stained ceiling tiles).
- Green house with retail sales, large variety of plants.



Greenhouse photo 8/6/18



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- I found it odd that “industrial” area wasn’t limited to the outskirts of town.



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- New industrial park. Sharp Trailer Manufacturing has built a new plant in the park. Plenty of room for expansion.



Observation:

- “Makers/doers/dreamers who choose to start their small businesses are responsible for 63 percent of net new jobs created in the United States every year.”
- *The same UPS truck who competed with your downtown can help your entrepreneur serve the world.*

“Empty business” open house is a great thing!

Health Care Services

- We located the medical and dental clinics but there wasn't any signage on Main Street or the highway.
- Hospital is 12 miles away in Marysville. (noted in brochure)



Long-term Care

- Blue Valley nursing home is in a beautiful setting on the edge of town.



Housing

- It looks like there are homes for all price ranges. The majority of homes are in good repair.







Housing Availability

- Didn't see any houses for sale or rent.
- Small apartment building (maybe former motel?) not too pleasing in appearance.



Housing

- Blue Rapids needs quality housing. Most quality homes are sold without going on the market.



- There are a good number of substandard homes that need to be fixed or demolished.



Housing data

KANSAS

• Total Housing Units	430	
• Total Occupied Houses	364 (84.7.8%)	(89.3%)
• Vacant Houses	66 (15.3%)	(10.7%)
• Owner Occupied	294 (80.8%)	(66.3%)
• Renter Occupied	70 (19.2%)	(33.7%)
• Family Households	67.9%	(65.4%)
• Non-family Household	32.1%	(34.6%)

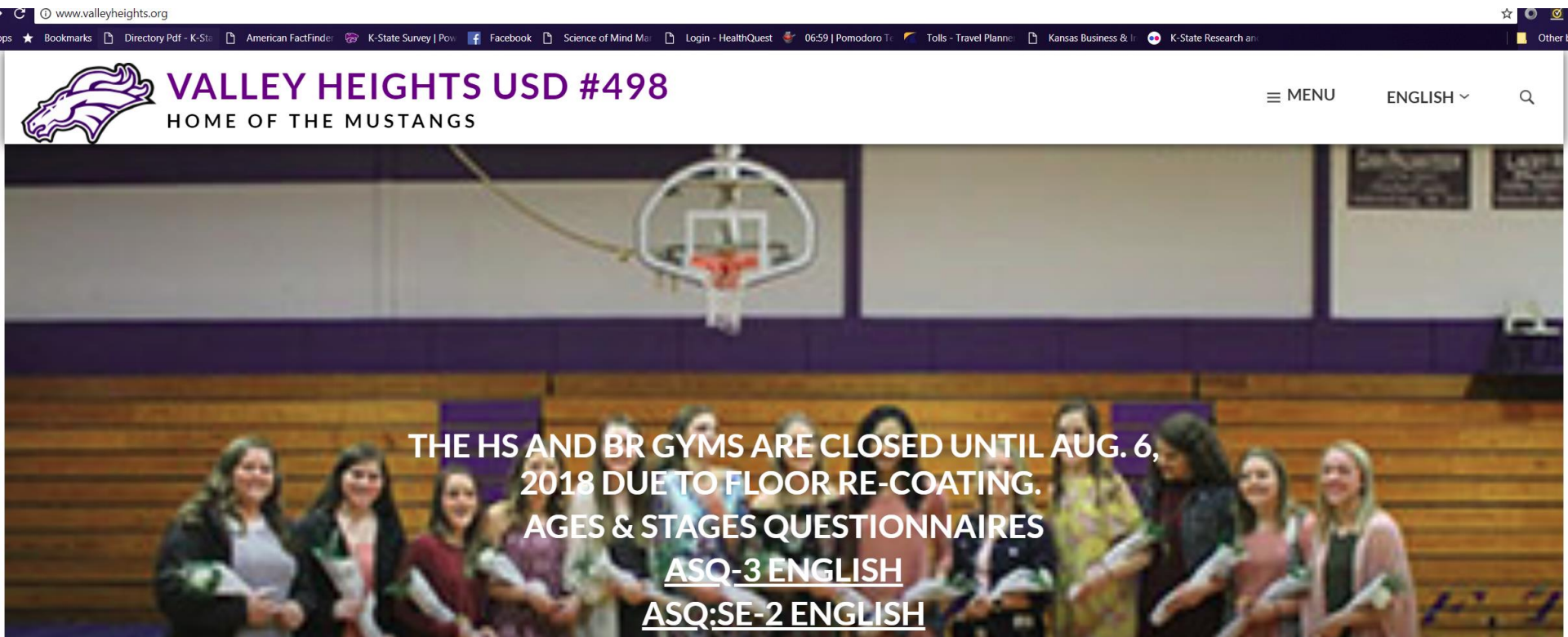
Schools

- Grades 3-6 are in Blue Rapids. Nice, well-maintained buildings and grounds. K-2 in Waterville, 7-12 buildings located between the two.




Information About School Quality?

- No. Didn't find it on the town website.
- There wasn't a link to schools from city website.
- Could not find any rankings or scores for the school district.





There are simple quantitative and qualitative solutions.



Kansas Report Card 2016-2017

[Home](#)
[Assessments & Accountability](#)
[Performance Indicators](#)
[Teachers](#)
[Demographics](#)
[Board Goals](#)
[Other Results](#)

Select Organization

Select a District:

D0498 - Valley Heights

Select a Building:

District Totals

[Report Help ?](#)
[Advanced Search](#)

District Totals

[District IDEA Perf. Plan](#)

[Similar Schools](#)
[Additional Contacts](#)

USD 498

Grade Range:

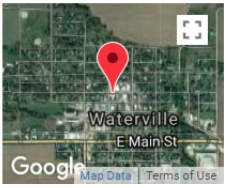
Title 1 Status:

Accreditation Status: Accredited

Website: <http://www.valleyheights.org>

Email: jbergkamp@valleyheights.org

Phone: (785) 363-2398



Enrollment

Building: N/A District: 401 State: 485185

Performance Level Reports

Subject: Math Subgroup: All Students Grade Level: All Grades Student Population: Accountability

*To protect student privacy, when a subgroup has fewer than 10 students the data is not displayed.

Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Dist - 2016	19.23%	36.05%	32.69%	12.01%
Dist - 2017	19.62%	31.3%	32.71%	16.35%
State - 2016	26.33%	39.21%	24.61%	9.83%
State - 2017	27.64%	38.18%	24.68%	9.48%

Childcare

- Found 4 daycares from web search.
- *Your leadership team said that access to quality childcare is an issue. A team is at work.*

Faith/Religion and their activities

- Five well-maintained churches.
- The Presbyterian Church was absolutely beautiful with a neat landscaped lawn.





- Abandoned? A home? An opportunity?



Civic organizations and their activity

- 10 organizations + Marshall County Historical Rail Road Society and Habitat for Humanity, plus 4-H and church fellowships and summer ball.
- I read in the brochure about parade, Easter Egg Hunt, 4th of July celebration.



Public Infrastructure

- City parks are a highlight. A nice setting and unique location.



Public Infrastructure

- Street signs were hard to see. (T-shirt sales will help!)



City Hall

- City Clerk was very inviting and a wealth of information.
- While some visitors saw no printed information, others found a wealth of it.
- City Hall has a nice meeting room, restrooms, water fountains and kitchen.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Nice facility for Police and Fire
- SO many bays, wow!
- Police chief and full-time officer(s).



Library

- Very pretty building!
- On the National Register of Historic Places.



Photo 8/3/18

City Parks

- City Park, Ballparks, playgrounds, sportsplex



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- None. City needs to promote itself better.
- City hosts the county fair.
- Baseball game of 1913, First Round-About.
- Read about lighted horse-drawn parade, Marshall County Fair & Parade, 4th of July Celebration.



Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- City park is a gem.
- Big Blue River— well-known for fishing.
- Alcove Springs, Museum, park
- Murals, museum, campgrounds, Oregon Trail camp site.



Visitor's Center

- City offices. People were friendly and helpful! Need better signage. City Office sign in window is hard to see if vehicles are parked in front.



What would bring you back?

- The green house.
- Alcove Springs.
- Need a good café. Antiques and collectibles.



Most Positive Observations!!

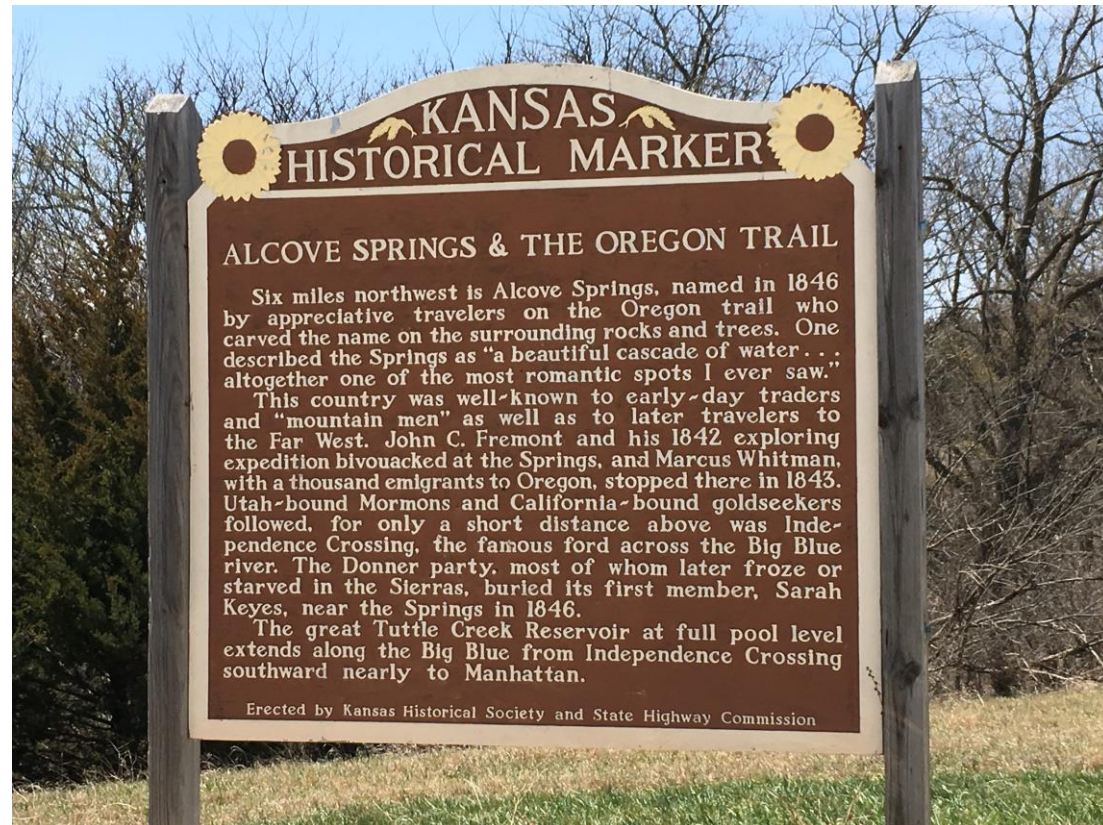
- This is a lovely town that needs to capitalize on the natural beauty of the flint hills and river.
- Several active, successful businesses. Have a pool and nice ball fields. Love the city's website. Engaged city clerk.
- Strong manufacturing presence. Friendly people.
- Pretty, clean, and friendly.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Housing. Need a plan to market the town. Blue Rapids is anonymous.
- Businesses within residential houses.
- Distance from major cities.
- A good restaurant that would bring us to town. Very few choices, we ate at Subway.

What will you remember the most in six months from now?

- The park, green house, eastern entrance to town, the limestone church (awesome!)



What will you remember the most in six months from now?

- The greenhouses, circular main street, dumpy houses, Sioux quartz rock in town center.
- Positive- the friendliness, the circle main street, and the nursery.



What will you remember the most in six months from now?

- Museum and Mercantile Store.



What will you remember the most in six months from now?

- The friendly people—limestone buildings. With several manufacturing facilities believe there might be good paying jobs locally. Housing problems. Areas of town need major clean-up. Main business area seems to be on the highway.
- The beauty and friendly people. I would come back. I would like to take grandkids to the park. A swimming pool would be a great addition. Overall positive, keep up the good work!

Next Steps:

Thank our leadership team:

Laura Musil

Will Clark

Liz Miller

Janice Rowe

- **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
 - 785.410.6352
 - nkdaniels@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

<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/>

Next workshops:

Holton Sept. 21

Beloit Oct. 23

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.

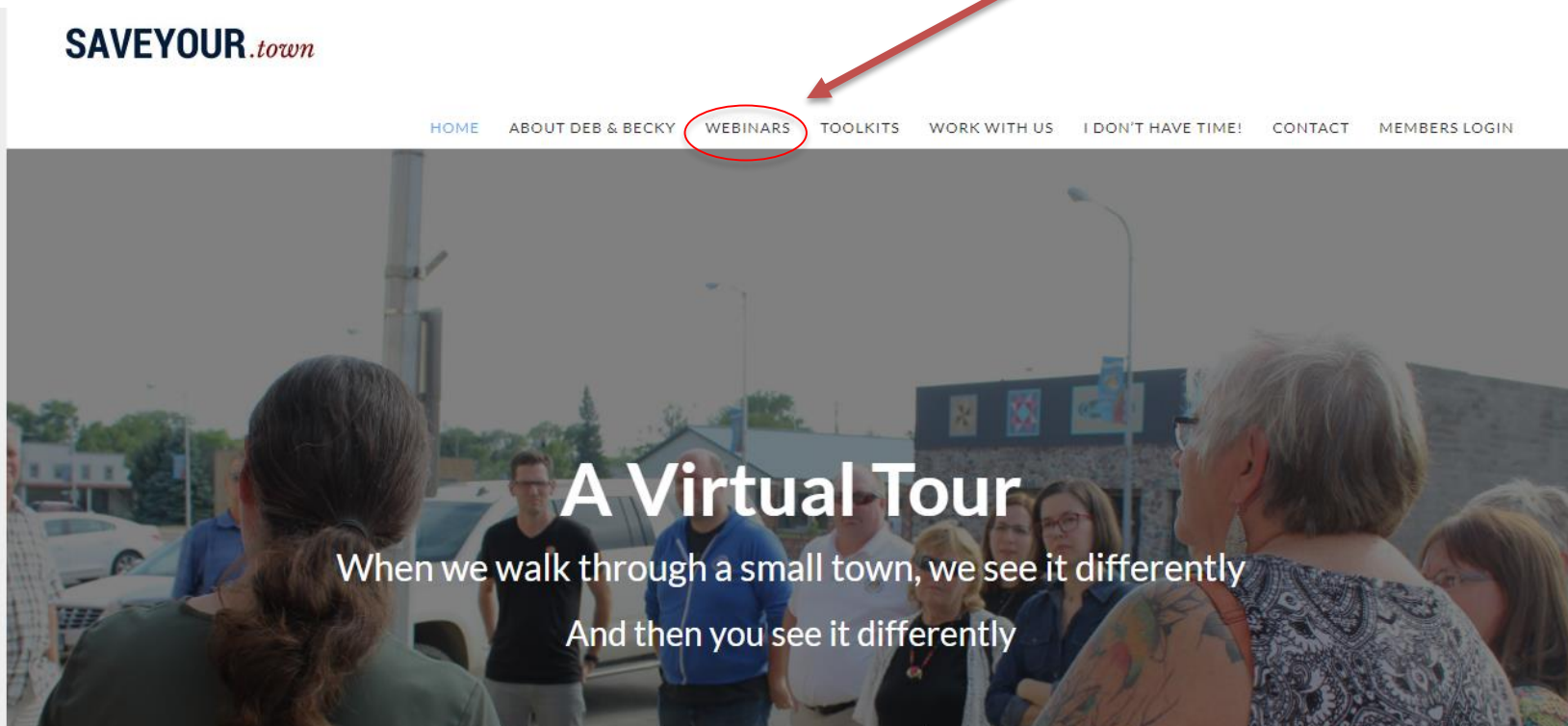
Newsletters
☒ Small Biz Survival
☒ Positive View of Rural
☒ Building Possibility

JOIN

I will never sell or rent your email.

<http://saveyour.town/>

- Monthly live webinars; available on recording.
- Pay once and show as many times as you want.
- Watch parties encouraged.



About Deb Brown & Becky McCray



Hi, I'm Deb Brown.

And I'm Becky McCray.

We believe small towns can be saved — including yours.

Small towns thrive when they set themselves apart. We've joined forces to show you practical steps to help you shape a brighter future for your small town.

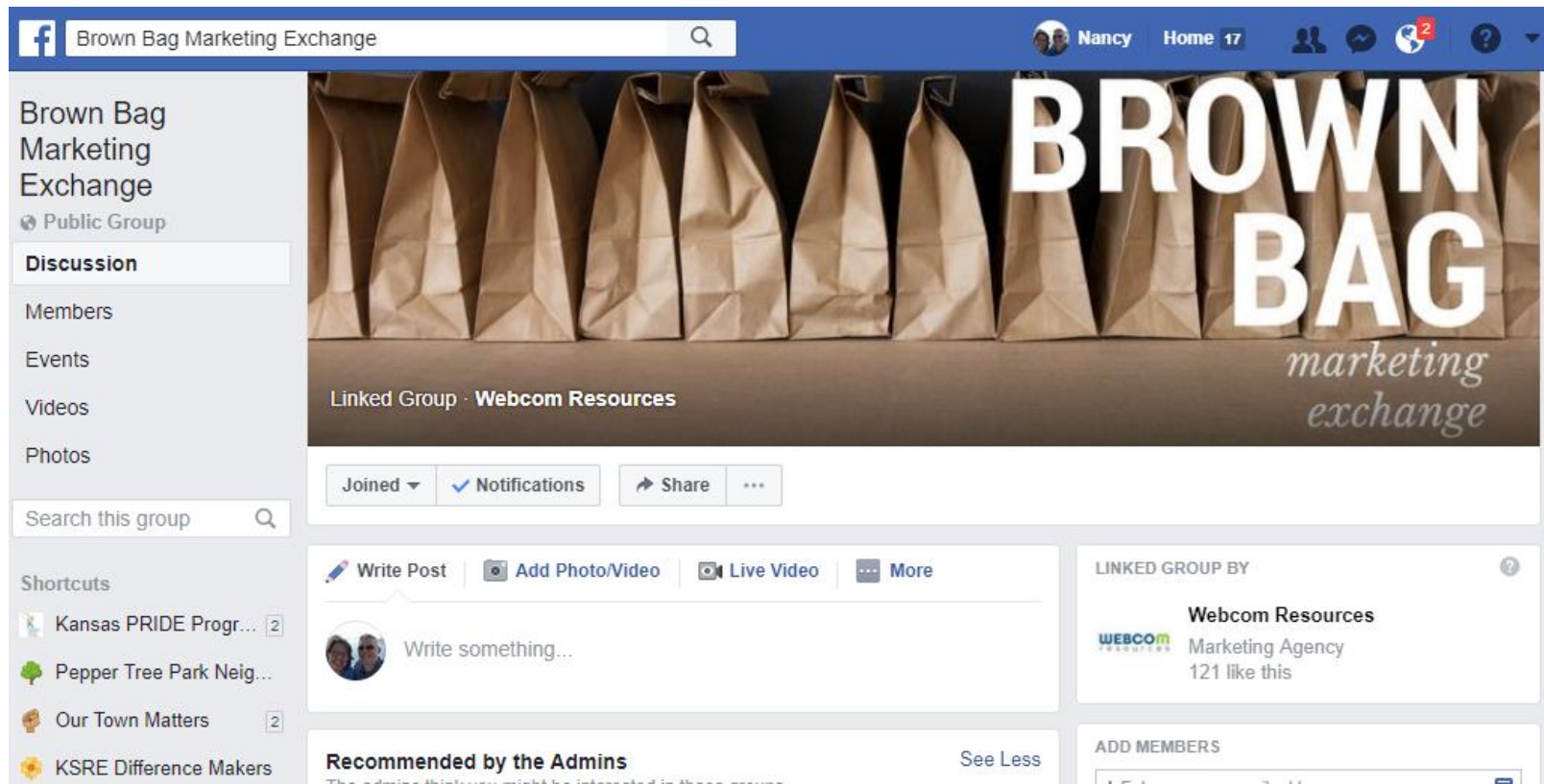
Tool Kits:

- Tour of Empty Buildings
- Pop-Up Fair
- Shop Local Ebook

Webinars:

- Downtown after 5
- Attracting Youth
- Embedded Community Experience
- Jobs Creation
- Downtown is Dead
- Stories that Sell
- Arts

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



Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOIMRJ-jc14>

- 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.
- 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.
- People research a number of places before they move to a rural town.
- Only 1/3 of the people who move rural have a previous connection with that area.

- 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! It matters!
- The number of people who live in rural areas is increasing—from 54M to 60M from 1970-2010. The relative % of people who live rural is smaller (19% instead of 26%) but the real number has increased.
- Don't buy in to someone else's narrative.

- 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.
- 1/5 of dollars come from transfer payments—not employers.

*- Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow,
University of Minnesota*

