



First Impressions Caldwell, KS

K-State Research and Extension

- Caldwell asked for First Impressions, Nickerson agreed to be its partner; 1:40 min drive.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey on August 5, 2024, and took photos.
- Three visitors visited on August 29.
- Results presented February 21, 2025.
- Caldwell 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.
- 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,
 - Affordable housing,
 - Outdoor recreation,
 - Quality schools
 - ***“A job” isn’t in the top 10 reasons.***
- Communities can work together to attract newcomers and create quality of life for everyone.

- “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 **First Friday Call**.
7/12/2024; 3/6/2020; 3/1/2019*

See the recordings at: <https://ksre-learn.com/entrepreneurship>

- 2023 KS Certified Population: 1,008 ↓ 5.6% since 2010
- 2020 U.S. Census: 1,025
- 2010 U.S. Census: 1,068
- Median household income: \$40,729 **\$70,333**
- High school or GED 97.6 % **91.7%**
- At least a B.S. Degree 23.7% **35.8%**
- Median Age: 39.7 years **37.9 years**
- Persons 65 and Over 23% **18%**

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data (Retrieved 2/15/2025 <https://data.census.gov>)

- Moved since Last Year
(2023 5-yr):

*10% margin of error

12.8%

13.8%

- Poverty rate

(% of people below poverty line)

18.2%

11.2%

Race/Ethnicity

White: 92.8%

Black: 0%

Asian: 0%

Other: 0%

American Indian: .1%

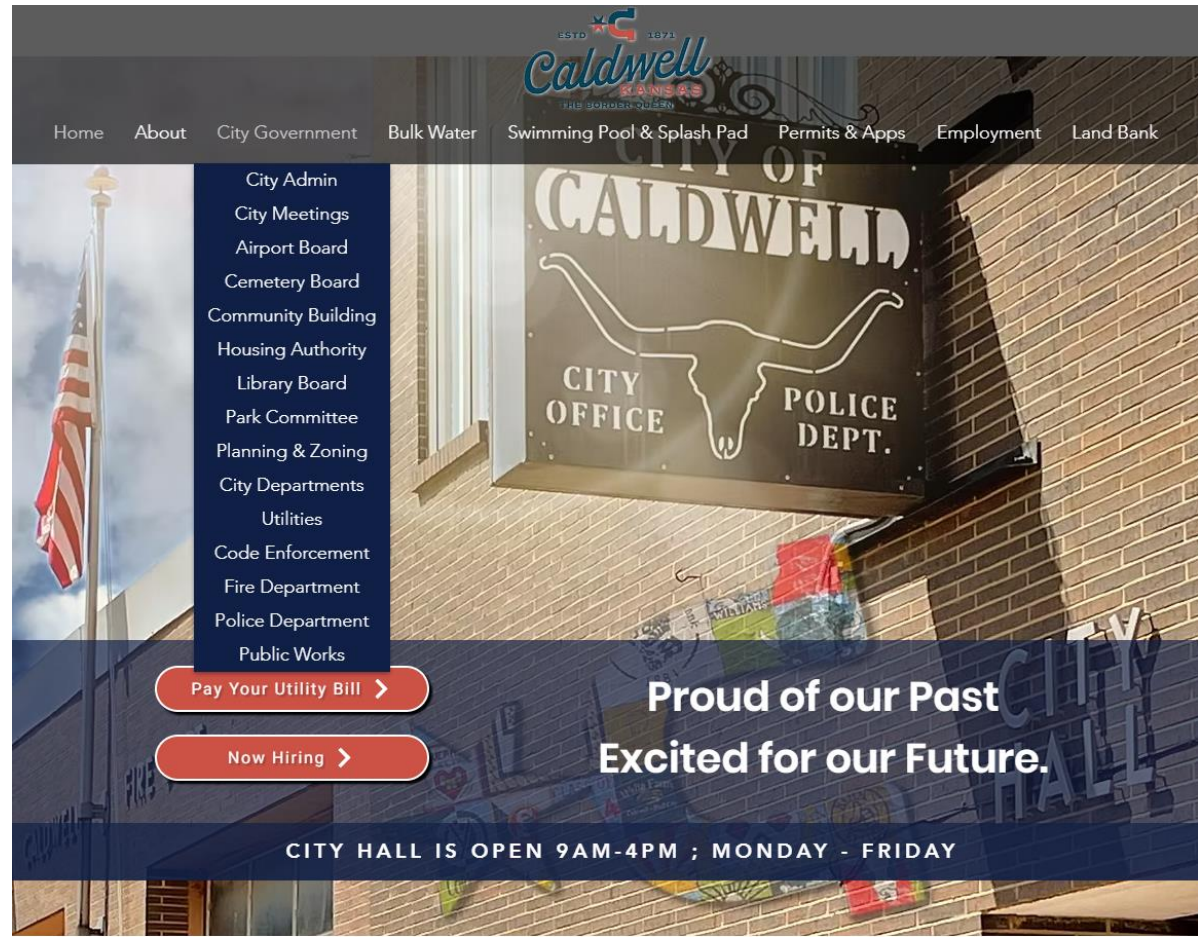
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific
Islander: 0%

Two or more races: 6.4%

Hispanic or Latino: 5.9%

- **Website** <https://www.cityofcaldwellks.com/>

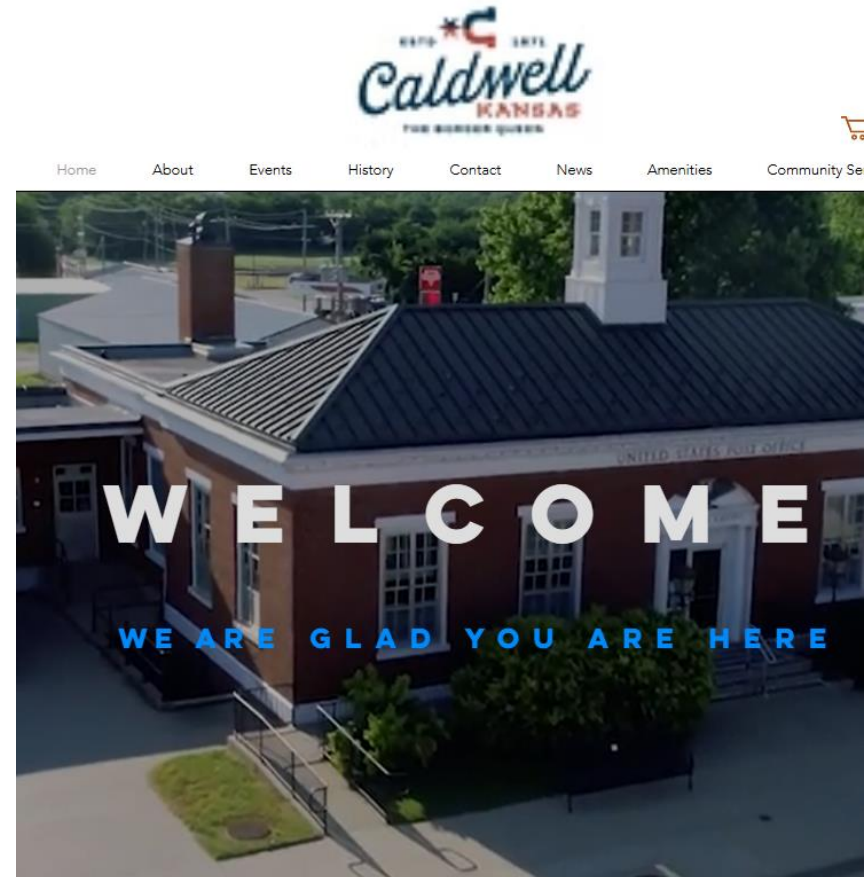
Very informative. I found information about the different departments within the city, ie, cemetery, Board, and community building. From the picture on the website the sign for the city office with a longhorn. City Hall hours are 9 am – 4 pm M-F



Website

<https://www.caldwellkansas.com/>

The Chamber website is beautiful, it is high on the search page, and promotes local businesses, events, murals, and history. Everything about it says, "Welcome."



Music is good for the soul. So are T-shirts!

An outdoor music festival during the Chisholm Trail Fest is in the works! Ticket sales are not an option where every porch in town can enjoy the tunes, so we need band money :)

"Support Local Music" T-SHIRTS with Caldwell's logo incorporated into the graphic. All sizes are available locally for \$25 at What in Carnation floral shop at 8 S Main in Caldwell. For \$5 more, T-shirts can be shipped all over the US for those wanting to support the effort.

- *This feature is at the bottom of the first page.
It's so cool, consider whether it's worth
repeating on its own tab.*

#smalltownlivinglarge



EAT • SHOP • STAY

- Day Trips
- Motorcycle Friendly
- Couple Retreats
- Explore History
- Historic/Rural Event Venues
- 19th Century Old Historical Rooms Recently
- Perfect for Air B&Bs

EVENT VENUES

PLACES TO EAT

PLACES TO STAY

PLACES TO SHOP

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Did it accurately reflect what you saw?

- The website is informative and put together well. I don't believe it is an accurate portrait of the city. I was a little disappointed upon arrival after seeing the website I expected the city to be much more "alive."

All visitors agreed:


- It was easy to obtain information.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cityofcaldwellks>

The page gives city announcements and City Employee Recognition. There are several posts each week.




I counted almost 40 community Facebook sites. This is an opportunity for co-marketing. Have you considered a “Coffee and Calendars” meeting?




City of Caldwell, KS
City Hall · **Closed now** · 1K followers · 4 posts in the last 2 weeks
The City of Caldwell Facebook page is your source for news of City services, projects, and updates.

Follow




Caldwell Chisholm Trail Festival
Arts & Entertainment · **Always open** · 1.9K followers · 4 posts in the last 2 weeks
Celebrating Caldwell's Wild West history, annually every first full weekend in May in Caldwell, KS. Sponsored by Caldwell KS...

Follow




Caldwell KS Central Christian Church
Christian Church · Not yet rated (1 Review) · 292 followers
Jesus wants to be "central" to your life. That is one of the things we do here - make him more central today than yesterday. Join us fo...

Follow




Caldwell Workspace
Business Service · Not yet rated (3 Reviews) · \$\$ · **Always open** · 264 followers · 2 posts in the last 2 weeks
We are a co-working environment where start-up founders, small business owners, freelancers and remote workers share a commo...

Follow




Caldwell Regional Medical Center
Hospital · **Always open** · 1.2K followers · 3 posts in the last 2 weeks
Critical Access Hospital and Rural Health Clinic located in Caldwell, KS.

Follow




Caldwell Regional Health Foundation
Charity Organization · 107 followers · 1 post in the last 2 weeks
The Caldwell Regional Health Foundation was created to support the Caldwell Regional Medical Center, with a goal to ensure and...

Follow



Santa's Mailbox - Caldwell, KS 67022
Community Organization · 121 followers
Santa's Mailbox will be accepting letters from November 27th-December 24th. Children can put their letters in Santa's Mailbox...

Follow




Caldwell ChamberofCommerce
Community · 1.7K followers · 10+ posts in the last 2 weeks
Promoting Caldwell KS, our member business community, and economic development in our great city!

Follow



Caldwell ChamberofCommerce is with **What In Carnation** and **Suzy's Bakery & Coffee Shop** · [Follow](#)
February 13 at 9:35 AM · 🌐

When your small town florist and your small town bakery & coffee shop collab you get the "Day Maker" Available for pick up at Suzy's Bakery & Coffee Shop in Caldwell KS today and tomorrow (until bouquets are sold out!)
[#valentinesdaygiftideas](#) [#supportlocal](#)



Click to expand

11 0:07 / 0:11

“Five-Minute” Impression

- The town was clean where the city maintains, but there were rundown properties on Main Street and many properties need to be mowed.
- Various types of housing. Nice signs in place.
- The entrance was amazing. Love the bull. Downtown was cute, but I couldn't tell which stores were open.
- All entrances were marked “Caldwell.”

“Five-Minute” Impression



“Five-Minute” Impression



*Could this
contribute?
“We couldn’t
tell if the
business was
open?”*



- Buildings appear to be original and provide lots of character.
- A large variety of shops. We were really impressed by the grocery store which had a large variety with reasonable prices.
- Every store we visited was friendly and gave good information on the city.
- Buildings had the feel of Cowtown. Love the bank robbers on top of the bank and the informational signs all over town. I wanted to read every one of them.



Photo: Monday, Aug 5: 3:48 pm



Photo: Monday, Aug 5: 3:48 pm

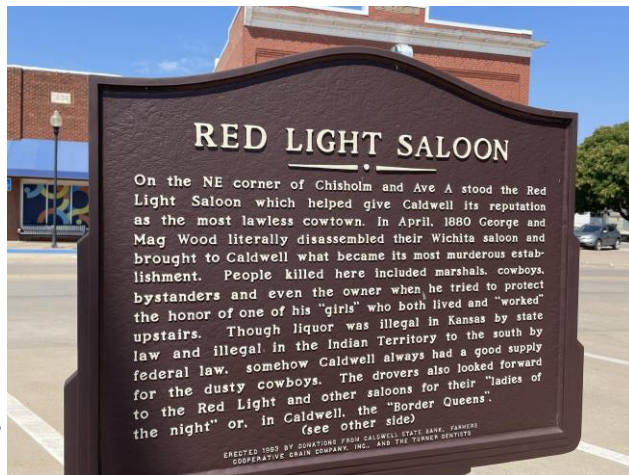
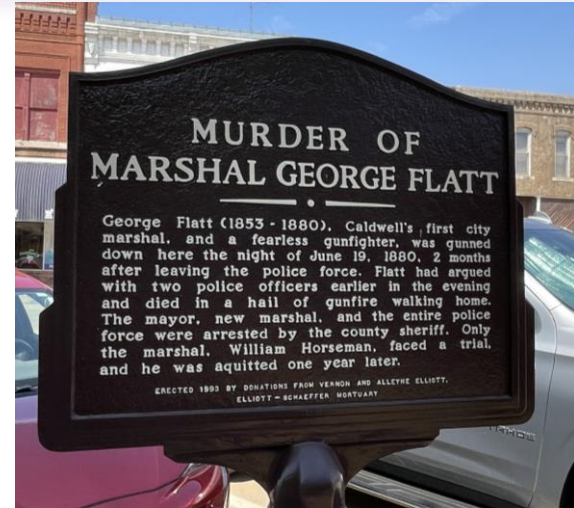




Wow, a co-working space!













- There are plenty of benches, some of the memorial placards were difficult to read. There are trash receptacles placed beside both sides of Main Street.
- There were plantings, but they were dying and looked weedy when we visited.
- The roundabout was landscaped nicely.
- There's a nice little park downtown.
- Verizon cell coverage was spotty



- *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

- I'm not sure if you'd call it an industrial park but there is a lot of open space where companies could build to relocate or expand. Housing would be an issue if it were a new company looking to relocate employees there.



- The county hospital is a beautiful facility located just outside city limits.
- The EMS and Fire Department Buildings were clearly marked and easily accessible.
- We saw the local dentist's office, the Caldwell pharmacy, D.O., and the Nurse Practitioner.
- Visitors were not aware of long-term care facilities, but I am told you have 6 beds designated on the hospital premises.



 **CALDWELL
REGIONAL**
Medical Center

7



*Kudos for those sparkling
windows!*



- We saw several properties listed on Zillow for sale, and we didn't see any rental signs anywhere. There appear to be empty, run-down houses. There were neighborhoods with nicer houses that were better maintained. There appeared to be a lot of open areas where housing additions could be built.
- Low property value, one newer home available.
- The neighborhoods were cute.









		Kansas
• Occupied Housing Units:	537 (89.4%)	1,299,931
• Owner Occupied:	77.3%	67.0%
• Renter Occupied:	22.7%	34.7%
• Vacant Housing Units	64 (10.6%)	9.0%
	- For rent:	17
	- For sale:	0
	- Sold, not occupied:	0
	- Seasonal/recreational:	15
	- All other vacants:	32
• Average Household Size:	2.0	2.48

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: Census.gov ACS 2023 5-year

Kansas

- | | | |
|--|----------|---------|
| • Average Travel Time to Work: | 24 mins | 20 mins |
| • Households without a computer*: | 96 (16%) | 4.2% |
| • Households without an internet subscription: | 129(21%) | 6.0% |

** Includes smartphones, tablets, other wireless devices*

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: Census.gov 2023 ACS 1-Year Estimates

- Kansas Housing Corporation is a resource to find out about housing grants and other tools for homeowners and renters.
- Also has some resources to address homelessness.

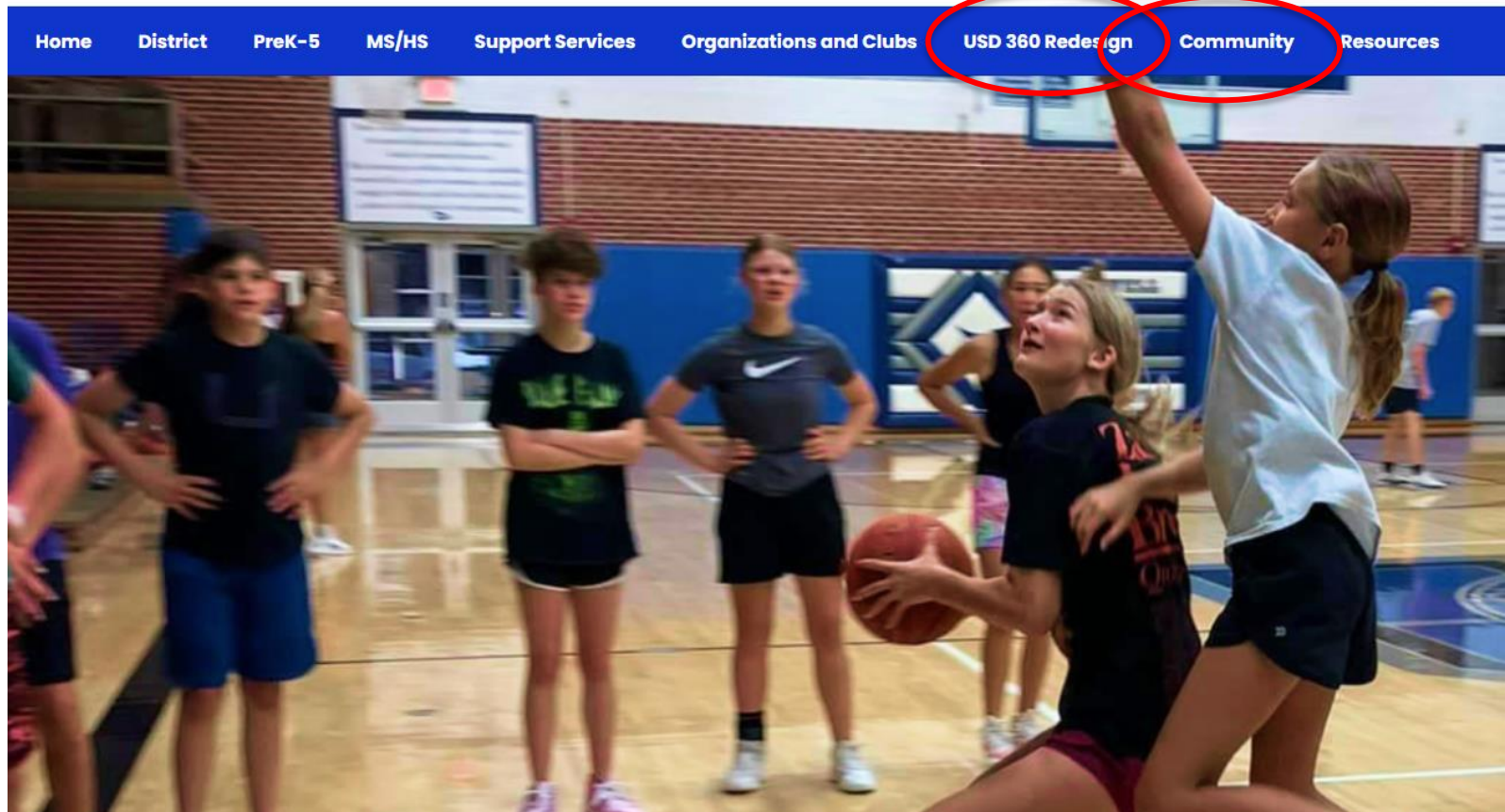
<https://kshousingcorp.org/>



- The school was doing construction.
- The website shows updated classrooms.
- Visitors saw an Elementary School and High School.
- *Your team told me you have Preschool, and CTE: CNA and Welding Certification. I couldn't find it on the website.*



- Visitors noted good information about the redesign.
- I appreciated Community Information



“Potential Students”
are an audience for
your website.

This is Mound City, MO:

- “Why choose us” info on home page.



ABOUT US

Why Us

Graduation Rate

100%

Technology Ratio

Computer to Student Ratio: 1:1

Teacher Ratio

1:9 Teacher to Student Ratio

Career Ed. Programs

Agriculture Education, Business Education, Family Consumer Sciences and Human Services



Comments:

- A new childcare is being built.

Sumner County Data:

	SU	KS
• Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need	24%	(50%)
• Child Care Cost Burden: 21.7% of Median Household Income.		(32%)
• Contact ks.childcareaware.org to access local childcare specialists. 785-823-3343		

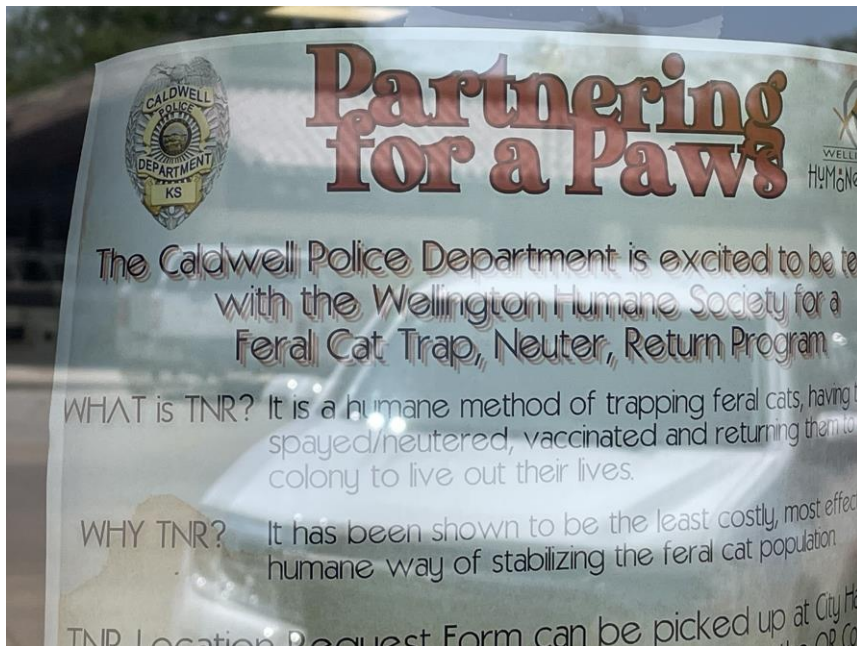
- There are lots of churches that represent most of the denominations.
- A few churches have signs with service times. I wasn't always sure they were still in operation.
- We didn't see evidence of faith-based activity







- The website shows an active Chamber and Recreation Commission, but I didn't see them.
- Saw the Chamber on Main Street, but I didn't notice others.



- The streets are all paved, but a lot of them need repairs, and the gutter areas have grass and weeds growing in them as well as in the cracks in the roads.
- Street signs were present but very small and sometimes hard to read.
- Old streets, fantastic signs with street names, parking was well done. I loved the lights when you enter town.



- The woman at City Hall was very nice and informative. She offered a pamphlet about the city and was knowledgeable about its history. She told her personal story of what brought her to Caldwell and how she'd never leave. She shared information about Dollar General and the local grocery store working together to both thrive in the small community.
- Very friendly at City Hall. There was information about the town available.



Google Street View, August 2024, Retrieved 2/15/2025

- Both facilities were easily located and housed in nice buildings.
- I parked by a police car.

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

- > 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

- The Library was closed by the time we made it there, but the signage made it easy to locate.



- The park and pool were hard to locate just driving through. We had to Google map the location. There is a lot of open space at the park but not a lot of variety for the different age groups. The pool had been drained but appeared to be very nice.
- I saw the sports complex for the high school, the park swimming pool was nice but closed for the season. There was a cute little park.







Well-known for an attraction or event?

- They are very focused on their cow town history, and it is evident downtown.
- Several parades a year.
- Cowntown. The town has a very strong history.





FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

SATURDAY
MAY 4TH

HIGH NOON GUNFIGHT & SALOON SHOW!

12:15 RIBBON CUTTING @ THE ROOST
BANDS, BEER GARDEN, CONSUMPTION ALLEY @ CHISHOLM & 1ST
12:30 GRAYSON KUCHAR TAKES THE STAGE
1:00 DERRICK DOTY: HISTORY OF MUSIC IN TERRITORIAL
KANSAS & FIDDLING @ THE UPSTAIRS DOWNTOWN
1:00 **CORN HOLE** TOURNEY FUNDRAISER \$40/TEAM 1ST AVE
1:00 OLD SKOOL ON STAGE
2:00 WILD WEST CHARACTERS UP IN THE "ROOST"
2:30 WADE WILLIAMS & LOS HOMBRES @ BEER GARDEN
4:00 CASSY KENDRICK ON STAGE
4:00 **MURDER MYSTERY** @ SUGAR SISTERS
5:30 150TH KENTUCKY DERBY FUN: HAT BAR @ RUSTIC LONGHORN,
WATCH @ JOE B'S & BC DISTILLERY, & PINWOOD DERBY RACES
6:00 CHRIS ROSETTI & DOUBLE DOWN BLUGRASS ON STAGE
7:30 SOMETIMES ON SUNDAY ON STAGE
9:30 **HEADLINER: KAITLYN KILIAN MUSIC ON STAGE**

Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Love the downtown area, the arch with the town name along with the bull at the entrance and the park was awesome.



Visitor's Center

- There is a small visitors' center out by the hospital, but we didn't see signage until we stumbled upon it.
- We saw a little building we thought was a visitor center, however it didn't look open. It was a cute building.



What would bring you back?

- We ate at the Red Barn, which was delicious. I don't know if I'd drive 1.5 hours.
- The food at Red Barn tasted amazing, with large servings. The Thrift store was so cute, lots of interesting things.

Most Positive Observations

- The friendliness of the citizens and the dedication to keeping their history alive.
- Friendly. Things to offer. It's removed from the big city.
- Love the community. Very friendly. Started following their Facebook to see what events they have. It seems the city does a lot to promote community togetherness.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Housing. Much like our small town, it has a lot of rundown properties that need to be demolished. The homes for sale are limited so drawing someone in from another area would be difficult.
- No fast food.
- Same as any other community: I saw a lot of homes run-down, yards not clean, and stores downtown with businesses closed.

What will you remember?

- How great we were treated everywhere we went.
- Positive- Friendly, community spirit. Negative- Some run-down housing.
- The community in general. I would like to attend the cattle drive and watch and learn how they do things.



- Coffee and Calendars- co-marketing your community on social media.
- Get to know the newcomers and help them feel included.
- Keep doing great things and telling your story.

**NO ONE CAN DO EVERYTHING,
BUT EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING.**

Thank you to our volunteer visitors.

Set Next Steps:

- Start talking! Find ways to discuss what you heard in small groups of every kind.

Contact me if you need resources or have questions:

Nancy Daniels

Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension

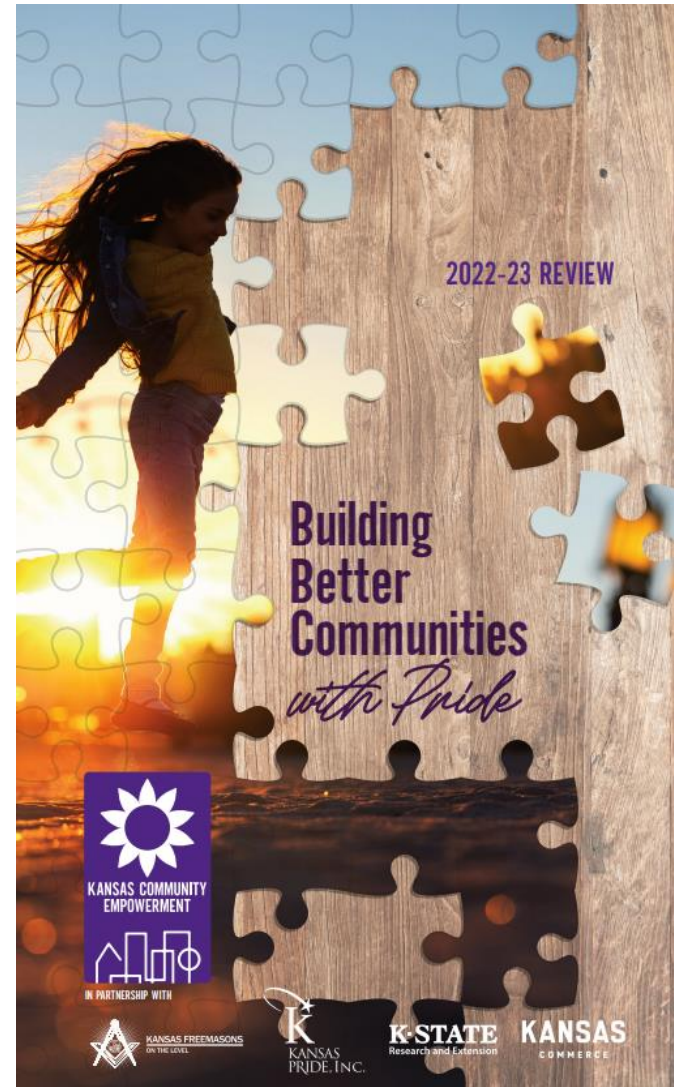
785.410.6352

nkdaniels@ksu.edu

Kansas Community Empowerment

<http://kce.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.



Youth Community Perceptions <https://bit.ly/ks-ycp>

- Youth-Based Community Assessment.
- Gives communities insights on how youth see their community.
- Creates opportunities for youth voices in the community.
- Allows youth to become involved in local government and community process



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Community
Vitality

K-STATE
Research and Extension



Grant Writing Classes and Support

Contact

KSRECV@ksu.edu

to participate.



1

ONLINE GRANT WRITING CLASSES

Class alum reported receiving more than \$52 million in successful grants.



2

A PROFESSIONAL LEVEL GRANT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COURSE

An 8-week course dedicated to helping you complete a fundable proposal.



3

A LIST OF CONTRACT GRANT WRITERS

Professionals willing and ready to write grants on a contract basis.

4

SUPPORT FOR KANSAS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT COMMUNITIES

Excellent resources for those wanting to bring more to their communities.

5

ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT BY K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS

Our professionals are prepared to help you find grants and review your grant proposals.

For more information email KSRECV@k-state.edu.

Small Business and Community Development

- **First Friday e-Calls 9:30-10:30 am**

Connecting small businesses and communities with the resources to make them successful.

— Register here: <https://ksre-learn.com/ecall>

— Previous calls are recorded at

<https://ksre-learn.com/entrepreneurship>

- Now people have a choice, and millions of them are planning to move.
- **“The pivot to remote work is the biggest, fastest transformation of the labor market since the World War II mobilization.”**
- **Major cities will see the biggest out-migration:** 20.6% of those planning to move are currently based in a major city.
- **People are seeking less expensive housing:** Altogether, **more than half** (52.5%) are planning to move to a house that is significantly more affordable than their current home.
- **People are moving beyond regular commute distances:** 54.7% of people are moving over two hours away or more from their current location, which is beyond daily or even weekly commuting distances for most.

UpWork October, 2020 <https://www.upwork.com/press/releases/economist-report-remote-workers-on-the-move>, retrieved from Internet 12-12-20, UpWork October, 2020

- Kansas Remote Online Initiative
 - Certified Remote Work Professional
 - Certified Remote Work Leader
- *Certification in 4-weeks*
- Monthly Classes: <https://kansasremotework.com/>



Rural Grocery/KS Healthy Food Initiative

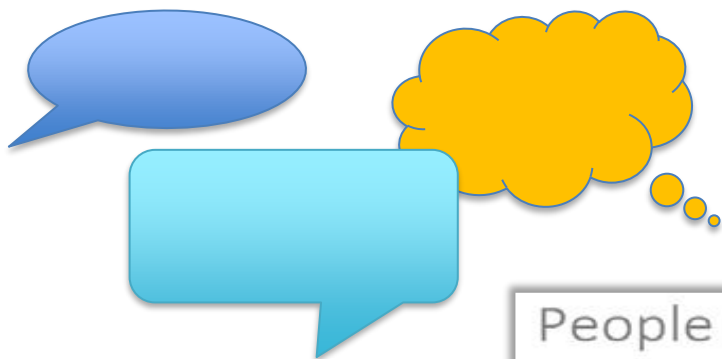
- **Goal:** Increase access to affordable, healthy food and to improve the health and economic development of Kansans and their communities.
- Technical assistance and financing to develop new or renovate fresh food retail in underserved communities throughout Kansas.

<http://kansashealthyfood.org/>



What will we do?

What did you hear?



What will we do?



People move in the direction of their conversations

