

First Impressions

Carbondale, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- Yates Center asked for First Impressions, Carbondale agreed to be its partner; 1 hour, 9 min drive.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey on September 16 and took photos.
- Three visitors came in separate cars in October and November.
- Results presented by video recording.
- Carbondale 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

- 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,
 - 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
March 1, 2019 First Friday Call.*

See the recording at:





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

- 2020 Estimate 1,371 2010 Census: 1,437
(down 4.6% since 2010 **KS= +2.1%**)
- Median household income is \$45,833 (**\$62,087**)
- 91.6% high school or GED, 11.8% college educated,
91.8% HS or equivalency, KS 34.0% college education,
- Median Age 32.7 years (**37.2**)
- Poverty rate 20.9% (**KS=11.4%**)

- **Website** <https://carbondaleks.com/>

The City of Carbondale, Kansas Official Website





HOME ABOUT CITY DEPARTMENTS CITY GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS CONTACT RESOURCES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Tonight's Meeting Rescheduled
- Osage County Planning & Zoning Special Meeting
- OS Co Public Transportation
- Boil Water Advisory Rescinded
- Boil Water Advisory Issued

[View All ...](#)

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- City Council Meeting on February 15, 2021 7:00 pm
- Fire Department Meeting on February 18, 2021 7:00 pm
- City Council Meeting on March 1, 2021 7:00 pm
- Municipal Court on March 9, 2021 4:00 pm
- City Council Meeting on March 15, 2021 7:00 pm

[Calendar ...](#)

Welcome to Carbondale, KS

Carbondale is a Northeastern Kansas community with a population of 1,353 people located 12 miles south of Topeka on U.S. Highway 75 in [Osage County](#). The city offers its residents a small town atmosphere with the convenience of being located just 10 minutes from the [State Capital](#).

We are a full service community providing residents with a [medical clinic](#), pharmacy, [chiropractor](#), library, grocery store, bank and many other [businesses](#). Carbondale has two parks, a swimming pool and a sports complex for summer youth activities.

Carbondale is one of three communities served by [Santa Fe Trail School District 434](#) where students receive excellent academic and athletic opportunities.

Carbondale, Kansas, is an great place to live, work and raise a family! Our community has "*Small town comforts, big city connections*".

CITY OF CARBONDALE

City Office
8:00 am-12:00 pm
1:00 pm-5:00 pm
Monday-Friday
234 Main St.
P. O. Box 70
Carbondale, Ks 66414
785-836-7108
[Contact Us](#)

I WANT TO ...

- [View City Council Minutes](#)
- [Pay my water, sewer & trash](#)
- [Pay my Municipal Court fine](#)
- [Receive Email Announcements](#)
- [Sign-Up for Notification Alerts](#)
- [Go to the Library Website](#)
- [Go to the School Website](#)
- [Go to the Newspaper Website](#)

SEARCH

Search

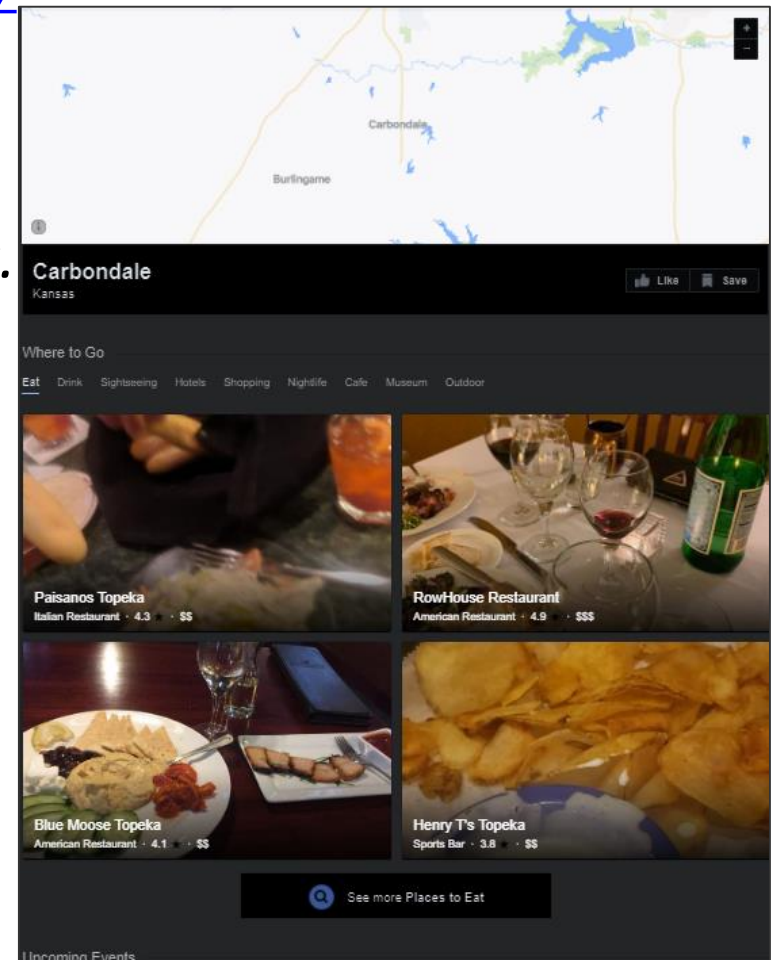
Website <https://carbondaleks.com/>

- The website was informative and helpful, which included links to community events, meetings, the school district, background history of the town and notable historical figures, etc.
- The pages we found seemed to be useful for someone that lived there, but not necessarily someone looking to visit or looking for attractions. They had things like court dates, etc. It was difficult to find much of anything online.

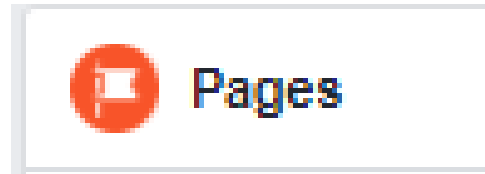
- **Facebook** Carbondale, Kansas
- *This is a Facebook generated page, which can be edited and made into your own. <https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Carbondale-Kansas/103753992996504/>*

All links are to Topeka places.

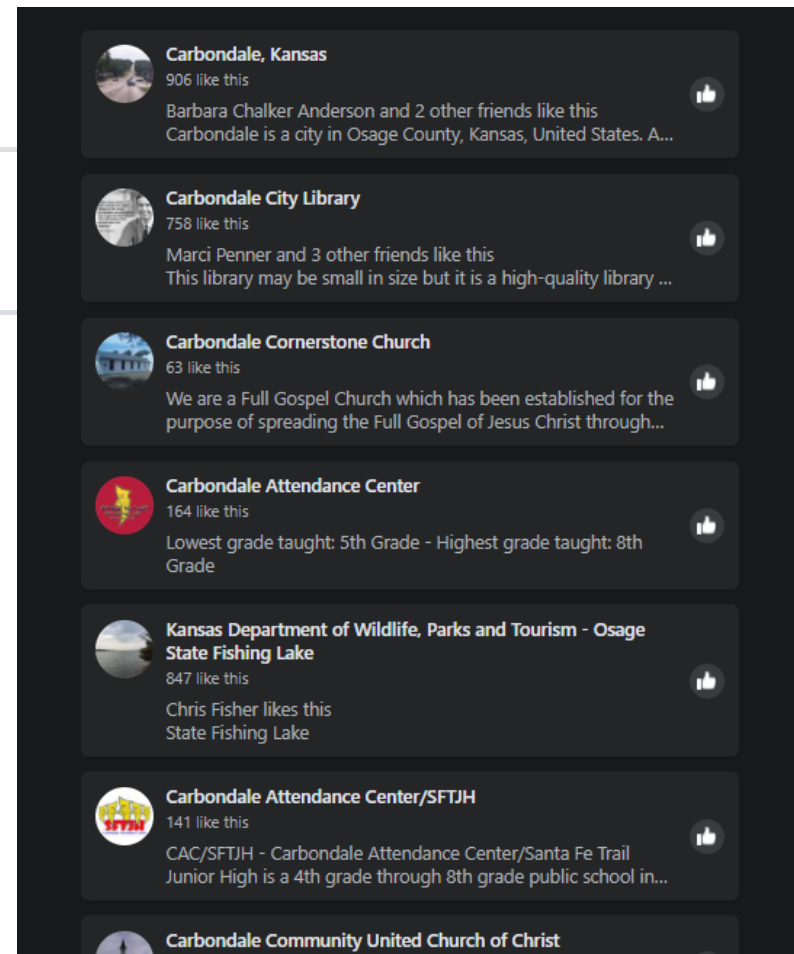
Shown in dark mode for high contrast.



- **Facebook**
 - There were more than 40 FB pages from Carbondale. *This is an opportunity for co-marketing.*



*Shown in dark mode
for high-contrast.*



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Everything is on one of two main roads through town or easily accessed from the main roads. It has two liquor stores and no restaurants or entertainment options.
- The town needs a facelift.
- New library is good to see. I saw a childcare on the east side.
- I kept looking for something to draw my attention, finally found the pool.
- Well-maintained streets stood out to me.

“Five-Minute” Impression



“Five-Minute” Impression



- The new library is impressive!
- There are not many buildings in the business area.
- Historic buildings are not in use.
- It was easy to see what businesses were there.
- I did not see any retail stores except for the grocery and two liquor stores.
- I noticed a barber shop on the main drag.
- Signage was somewhat weak, we had to really look for city hall, which was closed when we were there.

Downtown Business Area







- I saw benches, but not much else. Public restrooms were at the gas station.
- Parking was easy and you could access anything, but not much from one spot.
- Wi-Fi? Not sure. There wasn't really a place to sit down.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- I didn't find too much attraction to the liquor stores, but they weren't awful.



Other Retail Shopping Areas



Other Retail Shopping Areas



Industrial Parks/Commercial

- Visitors speculated about areas that might be available for industrial placement.
- This town is not far from the Topeka Warehouse District.



- *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.*

- They have a medical clinic and a pharmacy in the business district.



- There's a retirement home off the highway that looked in decent condition.



- The majority of properties were kept fairly clean which is appealing for those who want to buy.
- Seemed like a nice place to raise a family, if you don't mind driving to find a place to eat.
- There are very few new builds in the city limits.
- There are few houses actually available to buy.
- Many homes looked like they could use some love.
- The housing was better than expected given the availability of businesses.









Rental Housing

- City Hall provided me with a list of rental owners.
- There was an apartment complex on the south side of town, not sure if they were low income or not.





KANSAS

- Total Housing Units 628
- Total Occupied Houses 536 (85.4%) (88.8%)
- Vacant Houses 92 (14.6%) (11.2%)
- Owner Occupied 353 (65.9%) (66.3%)
- Renter Occupied 183 (34.1%) (33.7%)
- Family Households 365 (68.1%) (65.1%)
- Non-family Households 171 (31.9%) (34.9%)

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/> Family data at DP04

- **Need for clean-up/demolition of older properties**

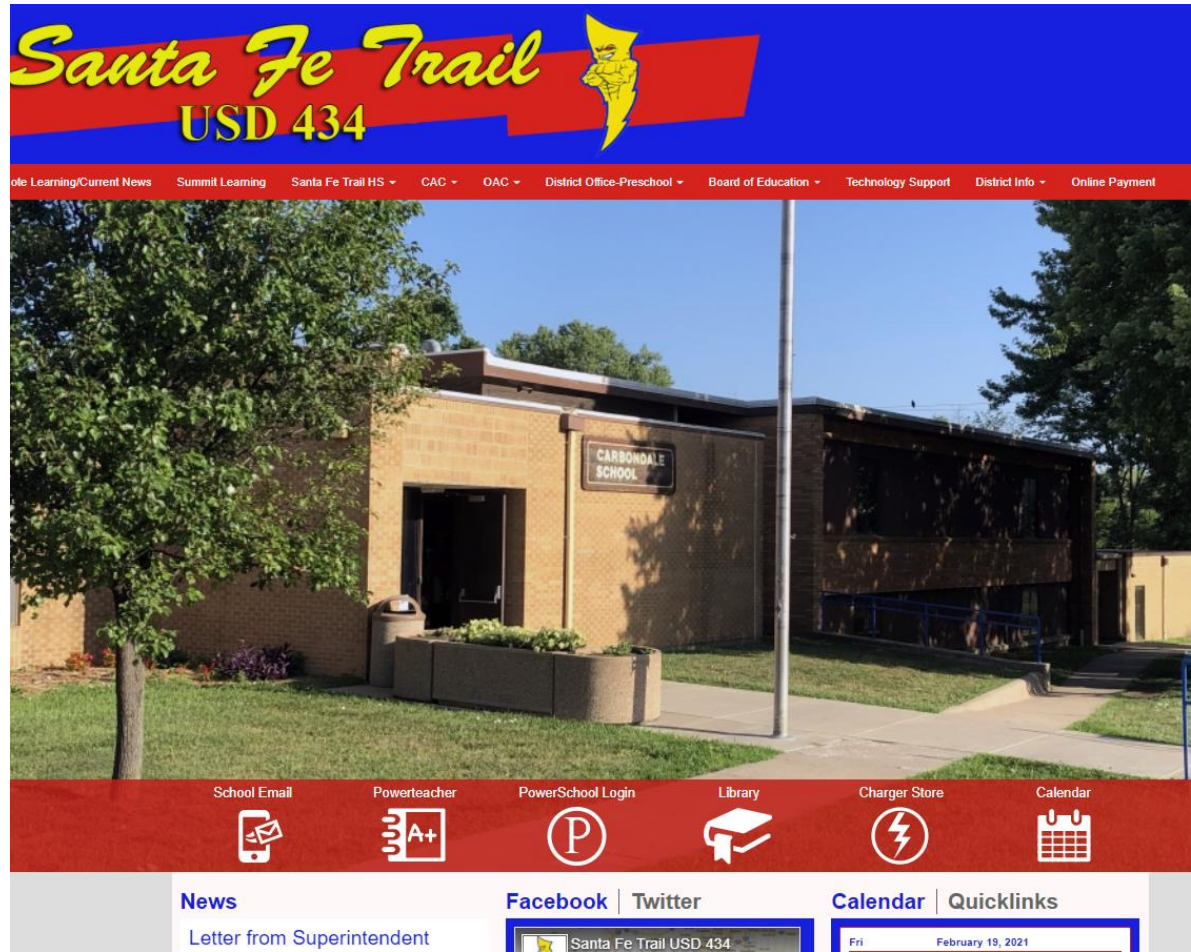


- Carbondale has 4-8 Upper Elementary/Middle School Attendance Center.
- The other two schools are further out in the district.
- The school looks like it could use a good power wash, gives a run-down appearance.
- Has a pretty park-like setting dressed up by trees.



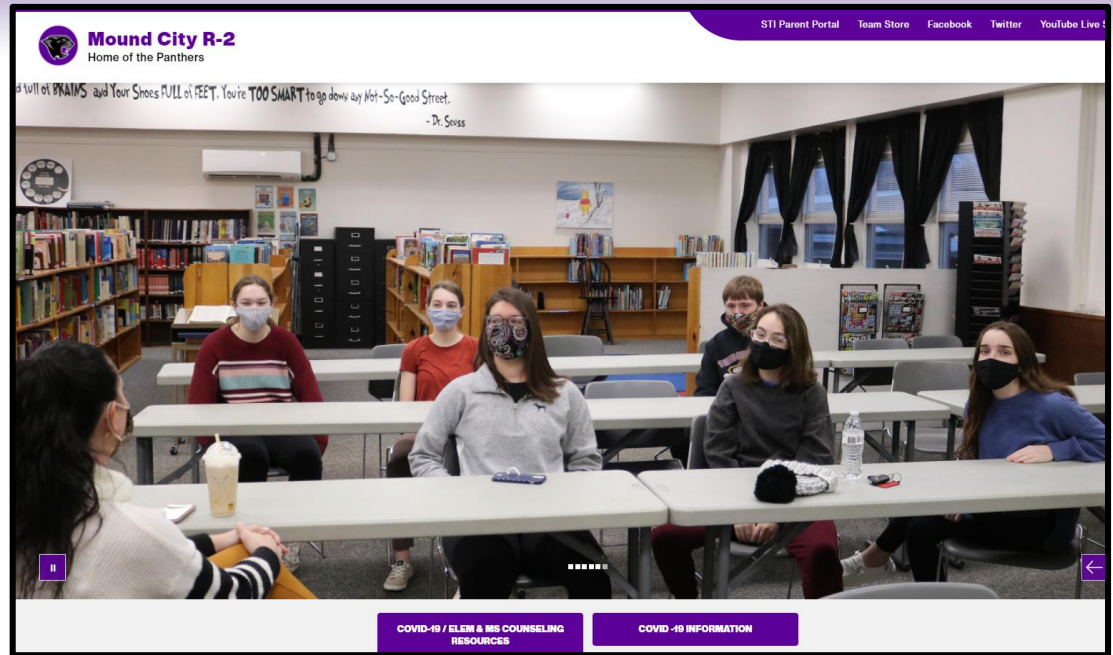


- I found their website, but wasn't able to find any great accomplishments or accolades.
- I didn't find anything that makes their education system stand out.



Be mindful that “Potential Students” are an audience for your website.

- This is Mound City, **MO**:
- Current photos show emphasis on science-based. (masks & COVID info)
- “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:

- All visitors saw the child care center just off highway 75.



Osage County Data:

- **Desired Capacity of existing Child Care** **293**
- **Number of Children Under Age 6 potentially needing care:** **922**
- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential need** **32%**
- 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 access local child care specialists.
785-823-3343

Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/Supply-Demand-2019-FINAL.pdf>

- We found numerous churches, but not the typical churches you would see, the buildings were older but looked to be operating.

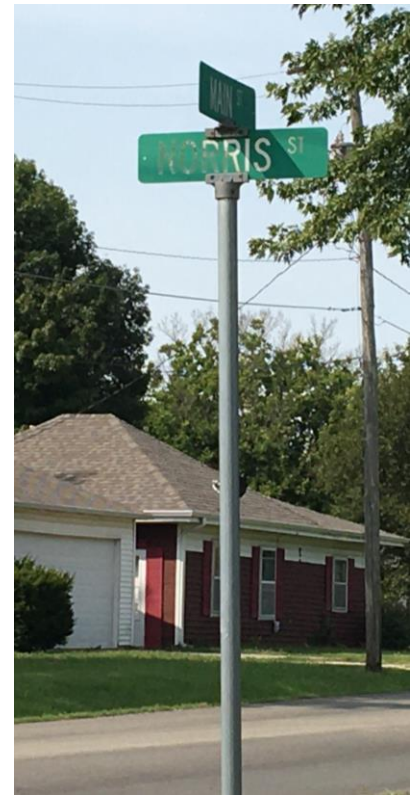




- I saw evidence of the Lions Club; others were listed on the town website.
- There was a community building with things going on.



- All visitors commented on the “really good/decent /not terrible” streets.
- Not many sidewalks were noticed, even to the school.
- Street signage was acceptable.

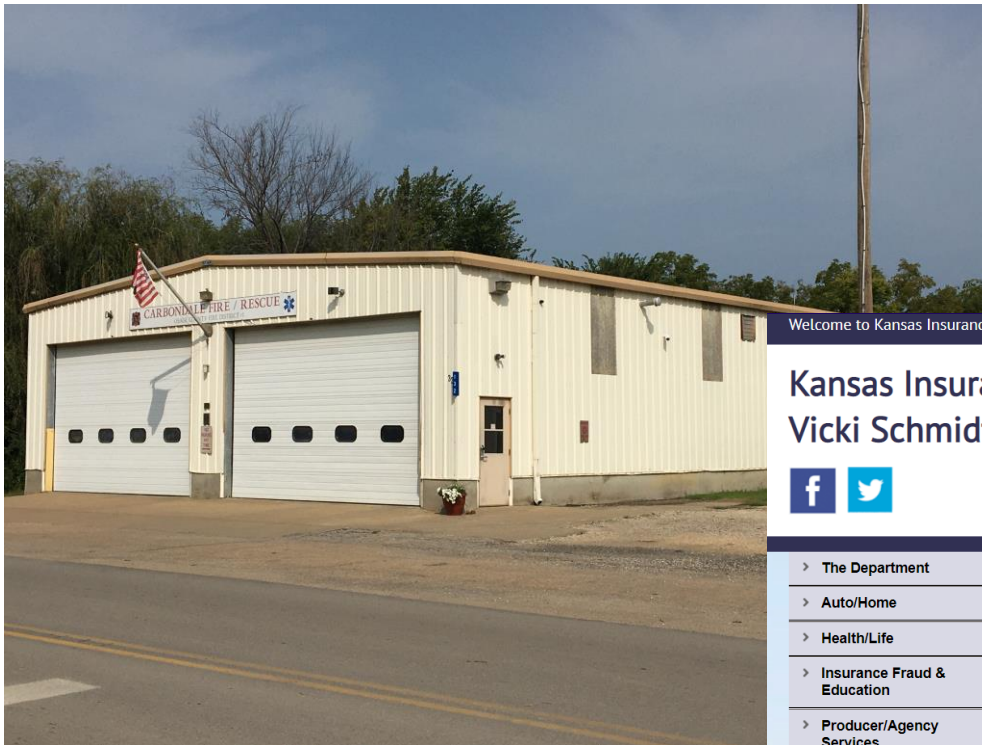


- I was very well received. She offered me a sheet of information I needed if I were to move to town.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Visitors noticed police presence, saw the fire and police stations.
- Both buildings seemed outdated.



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

- Brand new and beautiful.
- The current library is in the same building as City Hall.



- They were nice, but near the active railroad track and outside the main parts of town.
- They were quaint, but could use some love.
- The park was nice, the pool and the ballpark was a nice area for kids to enjoy during the summer months.







Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- There is a nearby reservoir, but it is not accessible.

Visitor's Center

- City Hall was easy to find.



What would bring you back?

- There are no restaurants in Carbondale, visitors went to various spots north and south of Carbondale to eat.

Most Positive Observations

- The park is nice, the retirement facility looks nice, I love that the gas station is updated and the library is going to be amazing. It is a decent bedroom community.
- Potential! Located close to Topeka.

Most Positive Observations

- The thing that I noticed most was, the street maintenance was great. The city park was really nice with accessible public restrooms and trash receptacles. It was small, and quiet. There is a lot of opportunity for their main strip through town. Really reminded me of Martin City in Missouri. They have a street similar to that and they have a brewery, a pizza place, and a steakhouse all accessible from one parking spot.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- It is so close to the state capital, so there is no incentive to have more availability inside city limits. It's only 12 miles to anything you could possibly want: restaurant choices, entertainment, retail shops, specialty shops, etc. So honestly, access to a larger city is its biggest hindrance.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Money! Needs major facelift having mainly to do with clean up. Just sprucing up the place would help; having houses and buildings cleaned or painted.
- The biggest obstacle I feel is being so close to Topeka. They need a restaurant or something to draw in visitors. There is nothing there to speak of that would make me want to stop there again.

What will you remember?

- I probably won't remember much. There is just not much to it.
- Probably how tired the town looked.
- I will remember the streets, mainly because ours are so bad. I will remember the park. And of course I will constantly think about the potential that they have with that main street.

- Put your online slogan everywhere and use it as a guiding principle for the kind of city you want to be.

“Small town comforts, big city connections.”

- Get to know each other. Place emphasis on relationships, connections, and inclusion.
- Focus on low-hanging fruit:
 - Enhance the places you love: the school, park
 - Show photos of your town having fun together.
- Consider walkability issues:
 - Safe Paths to School, Walking Trails.

- Become an idea-friendly town.

We are a community of possibilities, not of problems.

We are action takers.

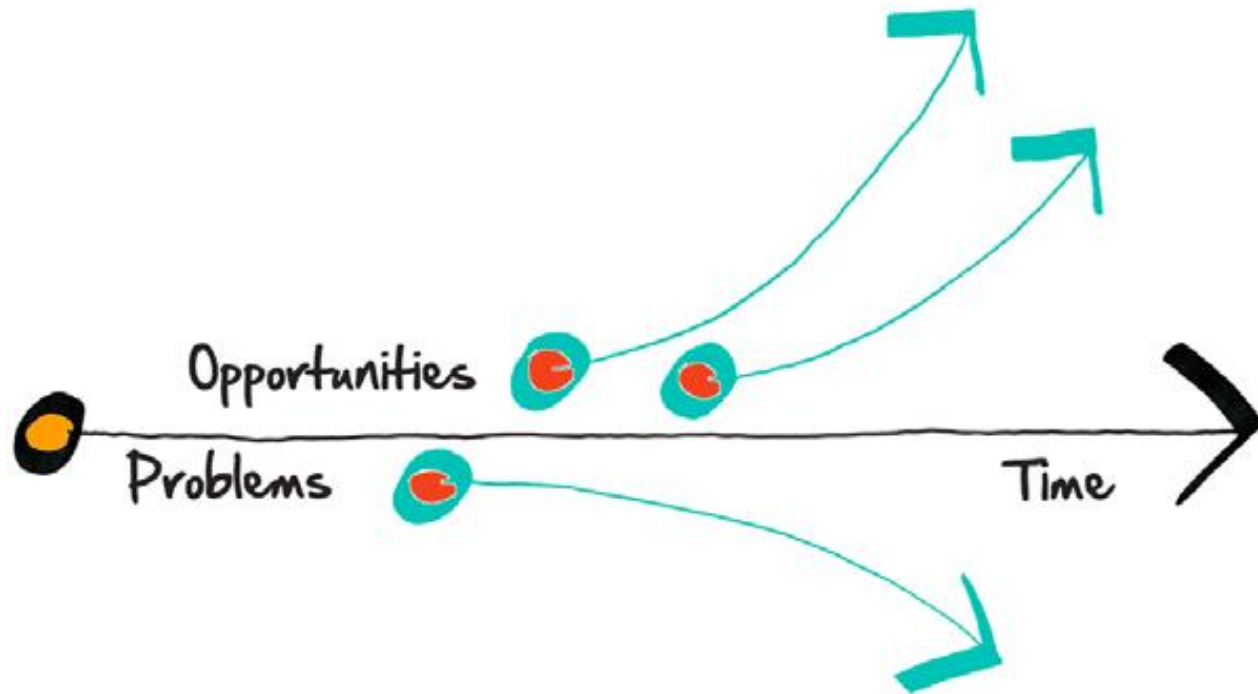
We are optimistic. *It's not about what this town used to be.*

We have people right now, assets right here, and we can take action right away. We don't need another plan, another committee, or another meeting.

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

Asset Based Community Development

People move in the direction of their conversations



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

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 or [Register here](#)
 - Community Vitality Calendar of events:
<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/>
 - Previous calls are recorded at
<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/>

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

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

THE SMALL TOWN AND RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE



FRONT PAGE	LATEST STORIES	ABOUT	GUIDED TOUR	SUBSCRIBE	PRIVACY POLICY	CONTACT
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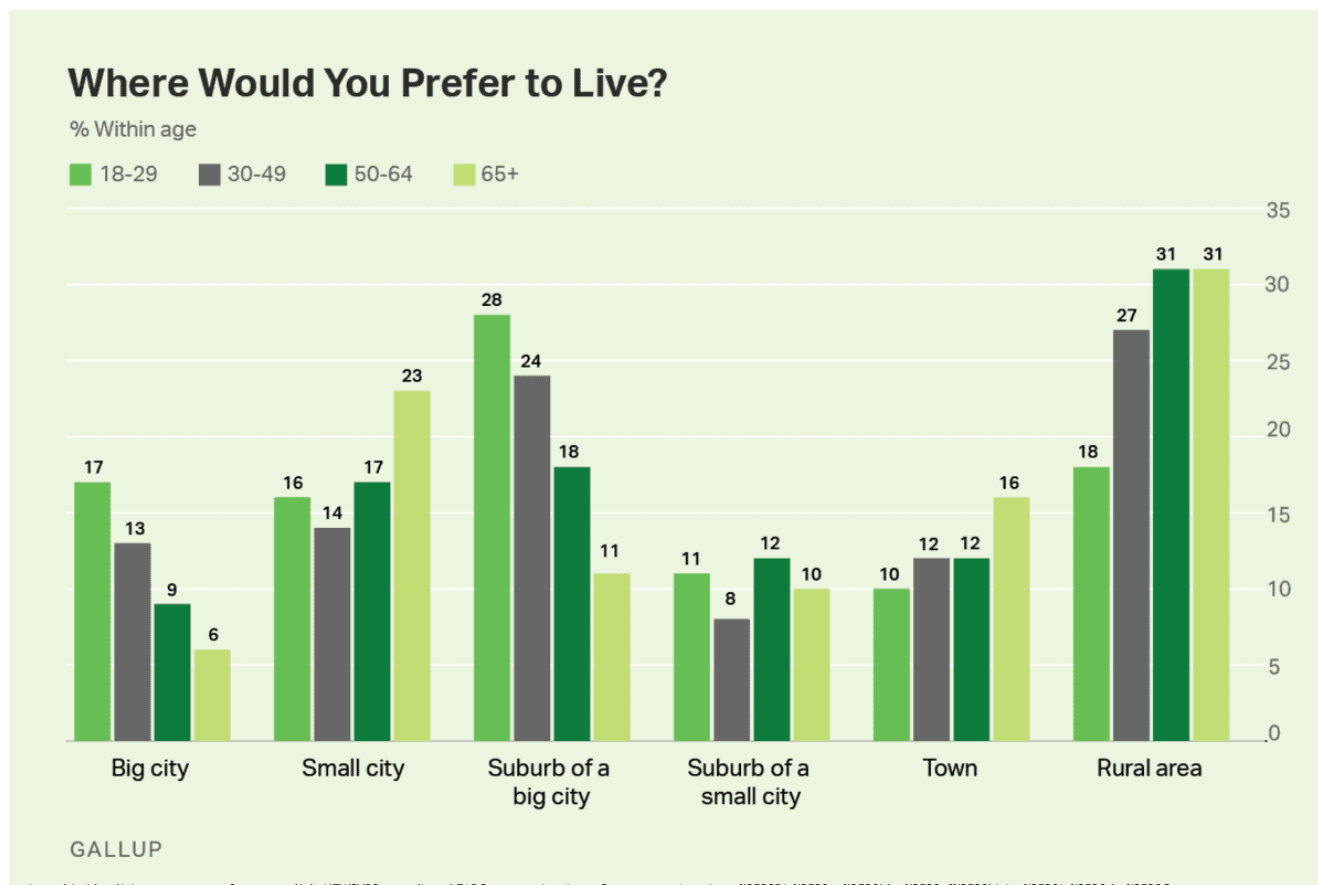
RSS

Zoom Towns: attracting and supporting remote workers in rural small towns

BY BECKY MCCRAY — 1 COMMENT

People have been saying for years that they would prefer to live in rural areas.

- Americans under age 30 are the only group whose top desired place to live is *not* rural; rural was #2, even for them.



- 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.

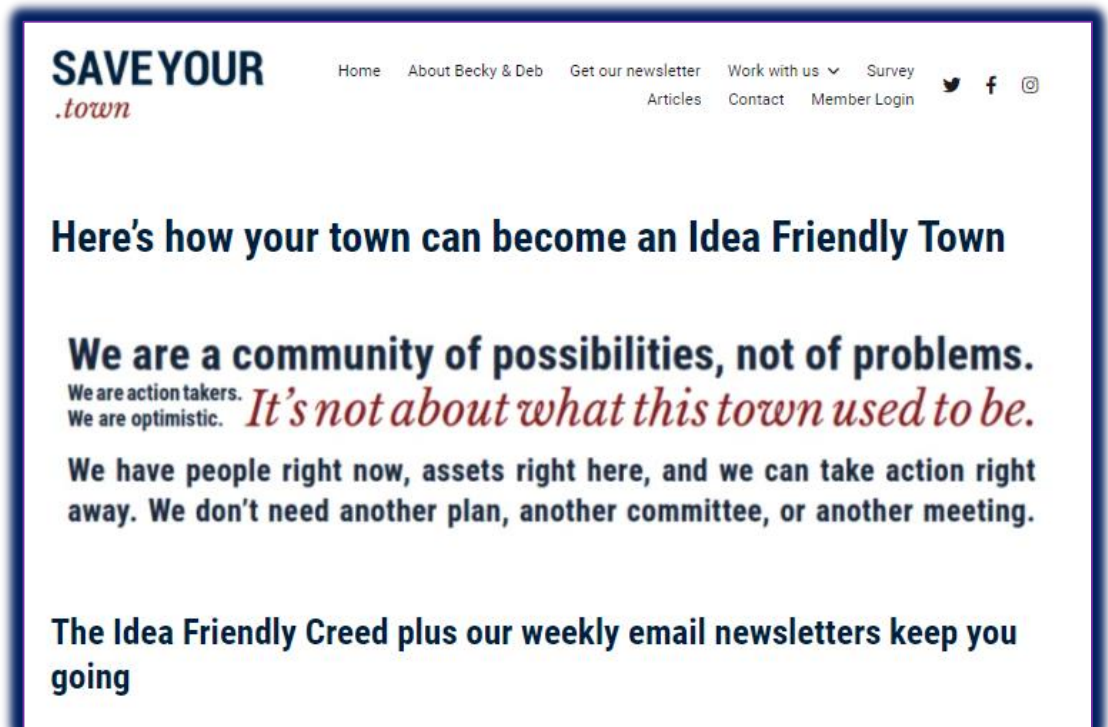
UpWork October, 2020 <https://www.upwork.com/press/releases/economist-report-remote-workers-on-the-move>, retrieved from Internet 12-12-20, UpWork October, 2020

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.

10 Tools:

<https://saveyour.town/workwithus/>



The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'SAVE YOUR .TOWN' website. The header includes the logo 'SAVE YOUR .TOWN' and a navigation menu with links: Home, About Becky & Deb, Get our newsletter, Work with us (with a dropdown arrow), Survey, Articles, Contact, and Member Login. Social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are also present. The main content area features a headline 'Here's how your town can become an Idea Friendly Town' followed by a bold statement: 'We are a community of possibilities, not of problems.' Below this, smaller text reads 'We are action takers. We are optimistic.' and a red italicized phrase: 'It's not about what this town used to be.' Another paragraph states: 'We have people right now, assets right here, and we can take action right away. We don't need another plan, another committee, or another meeting.' At the bottom, it says: 'The Idea Friendly Creed plus our weekly email newsletters keep you going'.

SAVE YOUR
.town

Home About Becky & Deb Get our newsletter Work with us Survey
Articles Contact Member Login

Here's how your town can become an Idea Friendly Town

We are a community of possibilities, not of problems.
We are action takers. We are optimistic. *It's not about what this town used to be.*

We have people right now, assets right here, and we can take action right away. We don't need another plan, another committee, or another meeting.

The Idea Friendly Creed plus our weekly email newsletters keep you going

Climate Change Refugees



There isn't a community in America, particularly in coastal America, where we are not seeing a transition from the coast to higher ground.

- Jesse Keenan, PhD, Tulane University

CBS Sunday Morning, January 24, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SByFy9R6320>

Retrieved from the Internet, 2-8-2021



Collaboration between Businesses:



On Wednesday morning, Sam Capoun, owner of Mesa Collection, 216 Main St. in Maple Hill, shows off one of her bags she sells. Capoun has coordinated with other local businesses to adjust hours to align and help drive more customers into the small Kansas town. *Evert Nelson/The Capital-Journal*



Mike Babb clears the final bits of snow in front of his restaurant, Flint Hills Smokehouse, on Wednesday morning. coordinated his hours to align with those of Mesa Collection's so that visitors to Maple Hill can eat at the restaurant go shop, or vice versa. *Evert Nelson/The Capital-Journal*

Maple Hill, population 600. Two businesses struggling during the pandemic coordinated their social media and their hours for the benefit of both.

“It’s so much better to love thy neighbor, this is a unique and limited market.”

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

Kansas Healthy Food Initiative

- **Goal:** Increase access to 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/>

khfi@ksu.edu

KHFI Technical Assistance Coordinator





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