

First Impressions



Protection, KS

K-State Research and Extension

- Protection asked for First Impressions, Argonia agreed to be its partner; 1 hr. 48 min drive.
- Volunteers in both communities were trained. Photos were taken of Protection on July 17, 2024.
- Three visitors visited in May 2024.
- Results presented 4/23/2025.
- Protection 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.*

See the recording at:

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

- 2023 KS Certified Population: 487 ↓ 7.5% since 2010
- 2020 U.S. Census: 498
- 2010 U.S. Census: 525
- Median household income: \$60,833 **\$68,925**
- High school or GED 95% **91.6%**
- At least a B.S. Degree 25.6% **34.4%**
- Median Age: 45 years **37.6 years**
- Persons 65 and Over 22.5% **17.2%**

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

- Moved since Last Year (2022/2023): 9.5% 14.6%

- Poverty rate 7.6% 12%
(% of people below poverty line)

Race/Ethnicity

White: 95%

Black: 0%

Asian: 0%

Other: 0%

Not Hispanic or Latino:
95%

American Indian: 0%

Native Hawaiian/Other

Pacific Islander: 0%

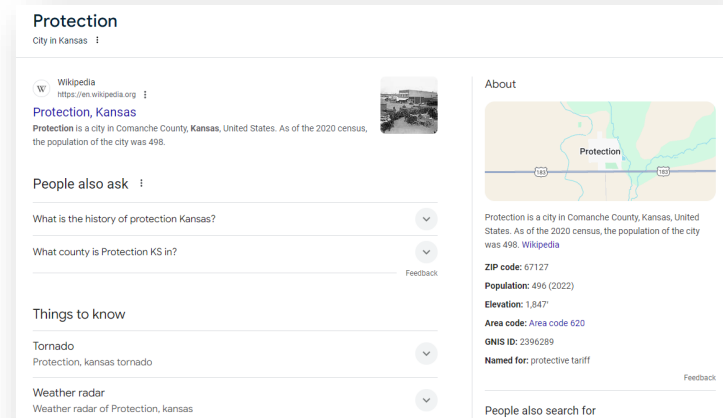
Two or more races: 0%

Hispanic or Latino:
5%

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

(Source: Census ACS 1-year estimates <https://data.census.gov>; MySidewalk.com)

- Some visitors mentioned it was easy to find information about Protection online. Through Google it brought information up about what was in town.
- Another visitor mentioned they didn't see a city website or Facebook page that was managed. They may exist but likely weren't in the first few pages of that visitor's search results.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Visitors felt the town was a nice community.
- There was a nice park and library. People appeared to be friendly.
- Quite a few businesses on Main Street.
- The houses looked well cared for.
- Downtown looked busy.
- Very clean community.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Some big businesses on the highway.
- Very nice houses on Main Street going down towards town.
- Nice large signs for some of the businesses.
- The city sign looked a little dated.
- Lots of cars on Main Street – a bustling area.



Downtown Business Area

- The storefronts looked good.
- Buildings all looked well cared for.
- Signs were legible, neat, and clean.
- There were some areas where the sidewalks were a little rough, other spots good.



Downtown Business Area

- One visitor mentioned going to dinner on Main Street. It was a good experience and people were helpful and friendly.
- There was a manufacturing facility, a diner, insurance agency, grocery store, and gas station.
- Prices were reasonable.
- There was also a co-op, the city building and police station, all in tidy condition and looked nice.



Downtown Business Area

- Good customer service all around.
- The wait staff at the diner was very friendly.
- Businesses had friendly staff that were great to visit with.



Public Amenities Downtown

- Trash cans.
- Benches were observed.
- The city park was well groomed and appeared to have bathrooms.
- The pool wasn't open.
- The ball diamond looked nice.
- Newer playground equipment at the park.



- Downtown had a nice appeal. You could park right in front of the diner and walk down the street easily to look at other buildings and a monument along the sidewalk in front of the old library.
- Areas with grass were mowed and the trash cans were empty.
- Landscaping and streets were very clean and well kept.
- Easy to park anywhere and walk to wherever you wanted to go.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- There was a body shop that was very clean and in good condition.
- The library was very nice.
- The parts store was observed.
- There were antique stores, gas stations, car dealer shop – all attractive with easy access.



- *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.*

- It looked like there was a building that could be part of an industrial area. Maybe it could be purchased and made into businesses.
- There were some empty lots that might be a possibility for expansion or building.
- There were multiple industrial/agricultural parks and commercial businesses – all well kept.

- Multiple visitors mentioned no health care services were seen. Possibly the fire station could provide some emergency services in this area.
- Another visitor mentioned a small clinic was observed.



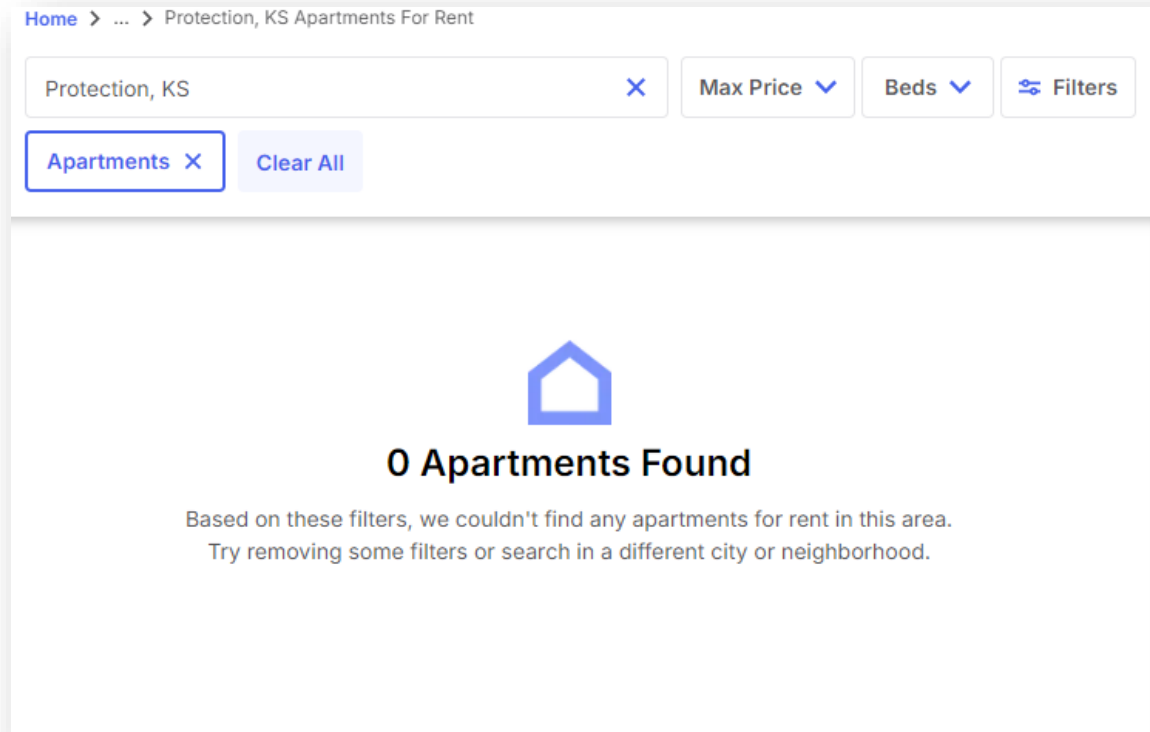
- Each visitor had a different observation about assisted living/long-term care facilities.
- One mentioned no facilities were seen.
- Another saw one facility.
- Another said there were actually two assisted living facilities in town.



- Only one home was for sale during the visits.
- Houses were observed to appeal to all income ranges.
- Housing was nice except on the east side where they were more run down.



- No rental houses or apartments were observed.
- No empty lots available for sale to build.



- Occupied Housing Units: 234
 - Owner Occupied: 81%
 - Renter Occupied: 19%
 - Vacant Housing Units 70
 - For rent: 0
 - For sale: 12
 - Sold, not occupied: 0
 - Seasonal/recreational: 29
 - All other vacants: 29
 - Average Household Size: 2
- Kansas
1.15m
65.3%
34.7%
124k

2.48

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: Census.gov

& ACS 5-year Narrative Profile (Household Size), MySidewalk

Kansas

- Average Travel Time to Work: 18 mins 19.6 mins
- Households without a computer*: 24 (10%) 45k (3.8%)
- Households without an internet subscription: 37 (15%) 108k (9.2%)

* Includes smartphones, tablets, other wireless devices

- 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.

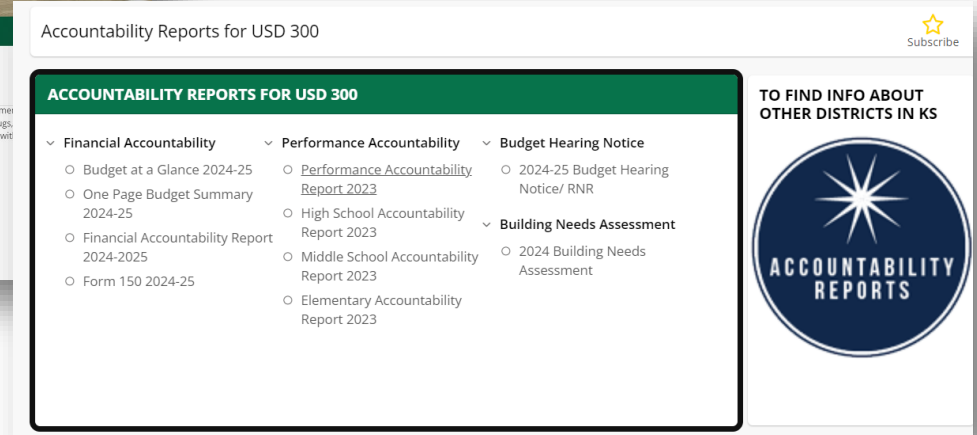
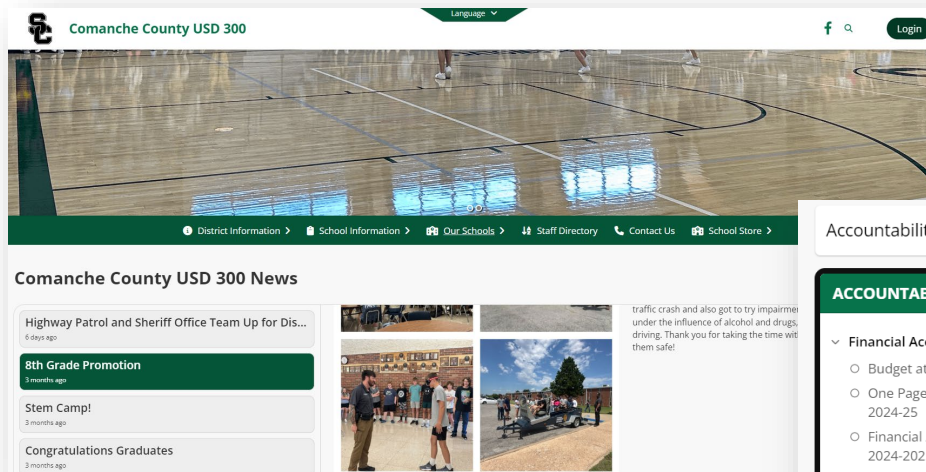
<https://kshousingcorp.org/>



- The K-8 school was beautiful. Very well maintained.
- The grounds were also nice.
- The high school was observed to be in Coldwater.

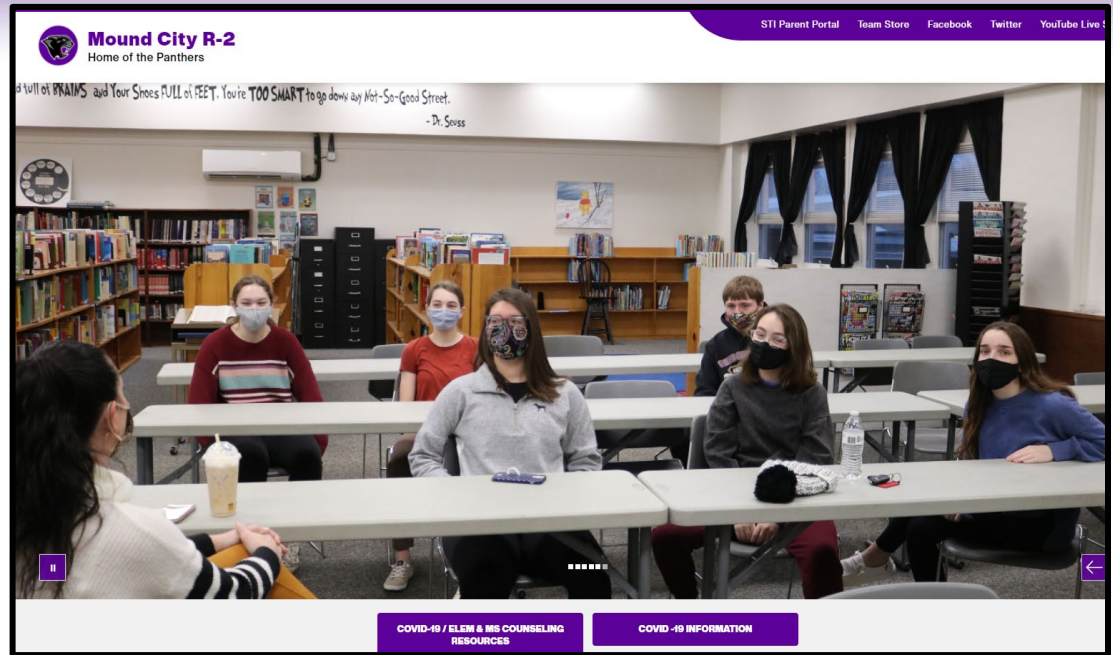


- Some did not find information about the quality of education online.
- One visitor mentioned there was a good amount of information found online related to the schools and quality of education.



“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:

- Multiple visitors indicated they saw no childcare facilities in town.
- Another said they did see one facility.

Comanche County Data:

- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need 34%**
- Contact ks.childcareaware.org to access local childcare specialists.
785-823-3343

Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/data-research/> Retrieved from internet 8/22/24

- There were four churches observed.
- The buildings and grounds appeared nice and well kept.
- No evidence was seen for faith-based community services in town.



- No civic organizations were seen, nor was any evidence of civic organization activities.

- Some side streets were paved, some were dirt.
- They were nice streets. The west side of town seemed a lot cleaner than the east side.
- Overall, the town looked very clean.



- The city building was observed by some, but visitors did not go in.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Some noted the police station and felt it was a good looking facility.
- Others did not notice police.
- The fire station was noted earlier as a possibility for emergency medical services potentially.



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 a big facility.
- Very nice looking.
- One visitor did not see there was a library.



- Park and ballpark both looked to be good facilities.
- They had newer equipment in the park.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Nothing was seen indicating Protection is well known for an attraction or event.
- No events of any type were advertised at the time of the visits.

Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Nothing was noted by visitors.

Visitor's Center

- No official visitors center – however, staff at the diner was able to answer all the questions visitors had about the city, so it's a good place to stop if you need information.



What would bring you back?

- Don's Place Diner



Most Positive Observations

- Was a pretty clean town!
- Streets were very wide.
- There were a lot of people downtown.
- People were friendly.
- Overall things were well kept.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- There were some pretty run down houses.
- Lack of jobs for new people moving in.
- Location in the rural area was a challenge, but this is a strong community.
- The diner appears to be closing in June – this is a huge meeting place.

What will you remember?

- The diner.
- The number of open businesses they had for a small town.
- The clean town.
- Friendly people.

- Visitors spent \$40 while in town.

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 us if you need resources or have questions:

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K-State Research and Extension Comanche Co.

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Jan Steen

Community Vitality Specialist

K-State Research and Extension

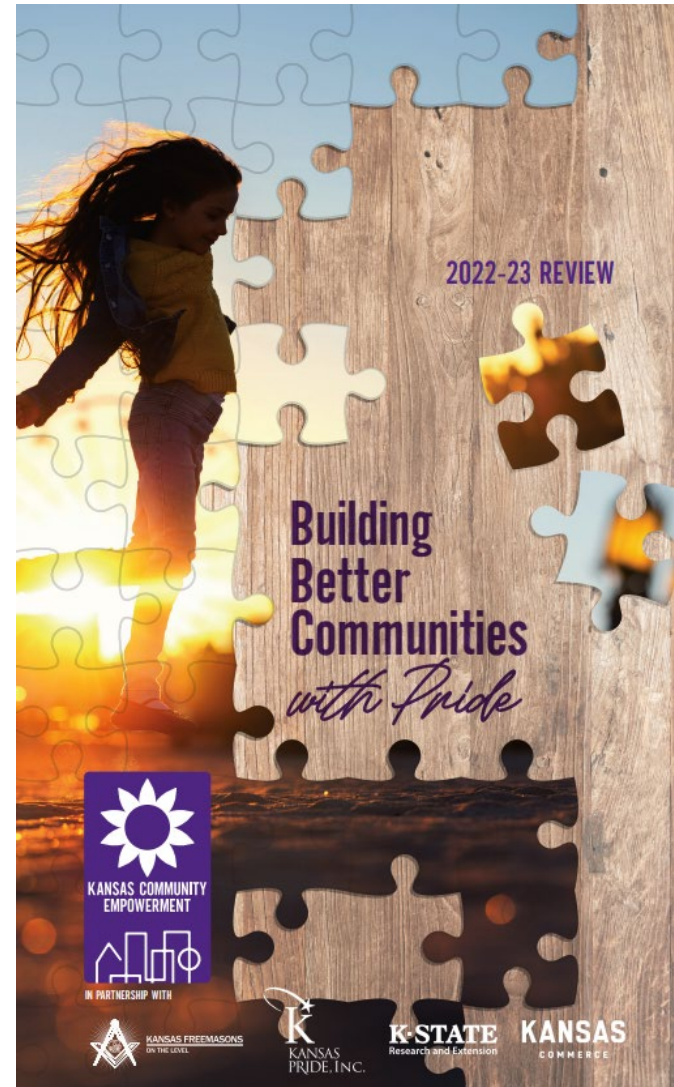
785.532.5840

jmsteen@ksu.edu

Kansas Community Empowerment

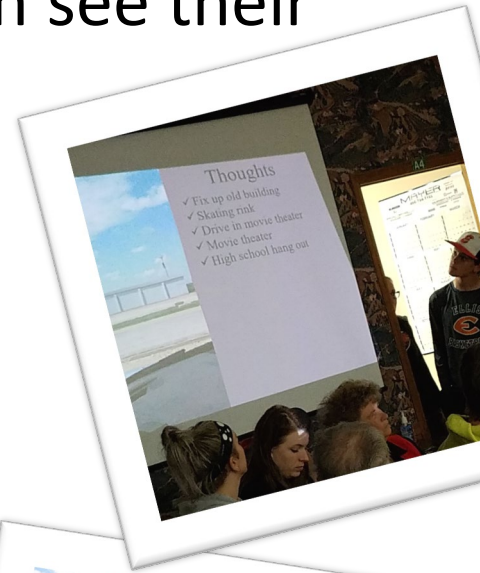
<http://kce.k-state.edu>

- 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.



The graphic features a background image of hands typing on a laptop keyboard. A purple banner at the top left contains the K-State Research and Extension logo. A large white number '5' is positioned on the left side of the graphic, with the text 'GRANT WRITING RESOURCES' to its right. Below this, a paragraph states: 'K-State Research and Extension provides resources to help you write and submit successful grant proposals to improve lives, livelihoods and communities across Kansas.' At the bottom, there is a list of five resources, each with a large number, a title, a description, and a QR code.

K-STATE
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5 GRANT WRITING RESOURCES

K-State Research and Extension provides resources to help you write and submit successful grant proposals to improve lives, livelihoods and communities across Kansas.

- 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.

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

Remote Work Certification

- 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

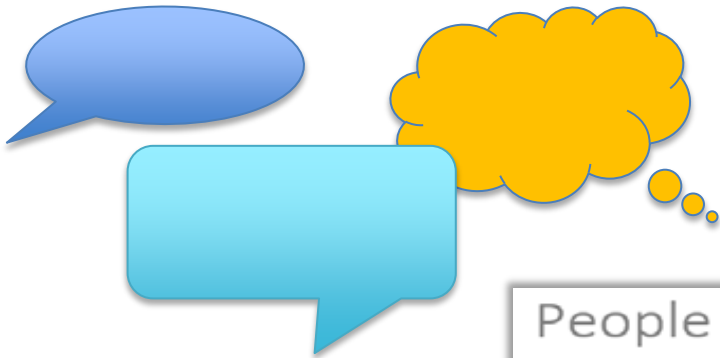
- **Goal:** Increase access to affordable, healthy food and to improve the health and economic development of Kansans and their communities.
- Technical assistance and financing to develop new or renovate fresh food retail in underserved communities throughout Kansas.

<http://kansashealthyfood.org/>



What will we do?

What did you hear?



What will we do?



People move in the direction of their conversations

