

# First Impressions



## Grainfield, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- Grainfield asked for First Impressions, Glen Elder agreed to be its partner; 2 hour and 20 min drive (139 miles).
- Volunteer visitors from both communities were trained.
- Three visitors from Glen Elder visited in early November of 2023.
- Results presented today 4/9/2024.
- Grainfield uses the results for further discussion and action plans.

- **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/>

- 2022 KS Certified Population: 317    ↑ 14.4% since 2010
- 2020 U.S. Census: 322
- 2010 U.S. Census: 277
- Median household income: \$ 43,571    **\$68,925**
- High school or GED    92%    **91.6%**
- At least a B.S. Degree    12.1%    **34.4%**
- Median Age:    41 years    **37.6 years**
- Persons 65 and Over    22%    **17.2%**

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data



- Moved since Last Year (Between 2021/2022): 11.6% 14.6%

Consider the margin of error. For example, the Census lists 29 moved to or within Grainfield between 2021 and 2022 but list a +/- 26.9 margin of error, or a 10.3% margin of error.

- Poverty rate 1.6% 12%  
(% of people below poverty line)

## Race/Ethnicity

White: 95.2 %

Black: 0%

Asian: 0%

Other: 0%

Not Hispanic or Latino:  
99.2%

American Indian: 0%

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific  
Islander: 0 %

Two or more races: 4%

Hispanic or Latino: 0.8%

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

Source: 2022 ACS 1-year estimates <https://data.census.gov>) Retrieved 2/29/2024

## Website

- Searching for Grainfield, KS doesn't lead to much.
- No community website or official city website.
- Gove County site was found and Grainfield was listed there. Clicking there takes you to the city's Facebook page.
- There was some information about Grainfield found on Google, but not a lot and not all accurate.

About 478,000 results (0.36 seconds)

### Grainfield

City in Kansas

**Wikipedia**  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grainfield,\\_Kansas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grainfield,_Kansas)

#### Grainfield, Kansas

Grainfield is a city in northern Gove County, Kansas, United States. As of the 2020 census, the population of the city was 322.

[Demographics](#) · [Education](#)

**Facebook · Grainfield**  
1.6K+ followers

#### Grainfield

community mental health services in Northwest Kansas. It will be a night to remember! Get your tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/> ...

**Tripadvisor**  
<https://www.tripadvisor.com> · ... · Kansas (KS)

#### Grainfield, KS 2024: All You Need to Know Before You Go

A mix of the charming, modern, and tried and true. See all.

**MapQuest**  
<https://www.mapquest.com/grainfield-ks-282035652>

#### Grainfield, KS Map & Directions

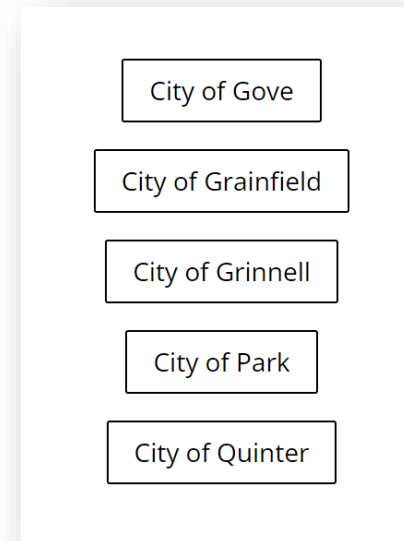
Grainfield Map. Grainfield is a city in Gove County, Kansas, United States. The population was 327 at the 2000 census. Grainfield is located at 39°6'7517

**About**

Grainfield is a city in northern Gove County, Kansas, United States. As of the 2020 census, the population of the city was 322. [Wikipedia](#)

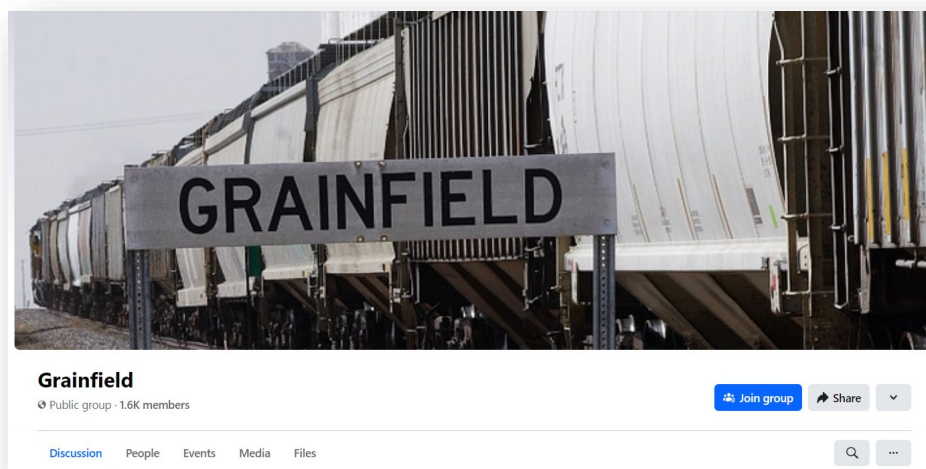
**Population:** 321 (2021)  
**Elevation:** 2,812'  
**Area:** 297 acres  
**Weather:** 50°F (10°C), Wind N at 16 mph (26 km/h), 27% Humidity [Weather data](#)  
**Local time:** Monday 11:47 AM  
**Founded:** 1879  
**Named for:** Wheat fields

Feedback



## Facebook

- Visitors did also note the Facebook page came up in search results, but said not everyone has Facebook, so some may not be able to access information.
- Some felt the Facebook group page itself wasn't really helpful with information or details about the community.



- Visitors felt Grainfield was a quiet town.
- Most houses and properties seemed well maintained.
- Maybe half of the streets were paved and the other half gravel.



# “Five-Minute” Impression

- Some visitors noted the main road through downtown allowed them to see a nice selection of businesses for a town this size.
- Others felt not very many businesses. They thought they found a restaurant online, but it appeared closed when they were driving through town.
- There was surprise to see an active school here.
- Clean, well maintained.



- Coming into town and leaving through major entrances and exits, a small sign was noted at the entrance to town. The entrances to town were well marked.
- Maybe a sign on Hwy 23 is possible since there’s nothing until getting into town?



- Very well maintained downtown with a nice variety of businesses.
- Wide sidewalks, good business signage and appealing window décor.
- Easy to tell what each building was.
- American Legion was not run down like it is in some small towns. It looks to be utilized and had an old trunk/treat sign on the window.



- Some of the businesses observed by visitors while downtown:
  - Meraki Market/Coffee Shop (breakfast, lunch on Mondays)
  - Harvest Market (grocery store)
  - The Feedlot, former bar/grill – appeared vacant
  - Bank
  - K-State Research and Extension
  - Locker plant
  - City office, post office, community building.
  - Parts store
  - Insurance
  - A lot for a small town!





- Visitors were welcomed and questions answered everywhere. Friendly service and resourceful.
- Grocery store was nice overall during the checkout process and helpful when asked where coffee was available in town. Directed to the shop across the street which didn't have any signage.
- Found out the coffee shop was new. The owner was very pleasant and explained that her parents owned the Feedlot Restaurant and were downsizing so the focus was on the coffee shop and catering now.
- Post office was busy and everyone looked up to say hi as they were coming or going.



- Benches were available throughout downtown. Nice looking and labeled to recognize donors.
- Trash bins with lids were also noted.
- Public restrooms were locked, but the coffee shop let a visitor use their bathroom.
- Some weren't able to locate public wi-fi, another saw some available at the restaurant.



- No troubles parking – easily accessible downtown. You could get from one end of the block to the other by walking.
- Sidewalks were noted again to be wide.
- Some planters were seen in front of businesses to add some greenery.



# Other Retail Shopping Areas

- A cute little shop in a residential area was found – Calamity Jane. Didn't stop but had to use Google to find out that it was a salon.
- The convenience store seemed a bit run down, not sure if it's in the city limits.
- NAPA Store and Farm Supply Store were well stocked and appeared that they were busy with customers.
- Seems like all the services you'd need were available.
- Surprised by the small grocery/convenience store to get basic items. The seasoning selection was impressive!



- *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



- The south and east parts of town seemed to be industrial/commercial and it did appear that there would be space to locate or expand.
- Looks to be mostly owned by agricultural industries which may not be in the market to let go of properties they have.
- Railroad/granary area appears obvious for expansion.

- Satellite Healthcare Service (Bluestem) appeared to be a clinic that saw patients once or twice per week. Unclear on the schedule as the sign on the door had October dates and it was closed during the visit. Signage for the office was newer and welcoming.
- The fitness center in the community center was impressive!
- Other healthcare services are within a reasonable driving distance.
- No long-term care, assisted living, or nursing facilities were seen.



- Some opportunities for building on lots looked to be available, but nothing was seen for sale during the visits. Nothing was seen for sale online.
- The housing appeared to be mid- to upper-class, not a lot of lower income households.
- The neighborhoods looked friendly to raise a family in or retire to.





- There was one rental property listed on Facebook.
- The community tri-plex housing that was recently built appeared to be very nice. There was also an apartment complex very near the triplex. It appeared to be older, but well kept. It couldn't be determined whether any units were available at either of these facilities.
- There were lots on the northwest side of town that would provide for additional building of housing. There were also some vacant lots scattered throughout town.

		Kansas
• Occupied Housing Units:	126	1.15m
• Owner Occupied:	69.8%	65.3%
• Renter Occupied:	30.2%	34.7%
• Vacant Housing Units	31	124k
- For rent:	5	
- For sale:	0	
- Sold, not occupied:	4	
- Seasonal/recreational:	12	
- All other vacants:	10	
• Average Household Size:	2	2.48

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: Census.gov 2020 Census

& ACS 5-year Narrative Profile (Household Size) Retrieved 2/29/2024

## Kansas

- Average Travel Time to Work: 15.4 mins 19.6 mins
- Households without a computer\*: 11 (8.7%) 45k (3.8%)
- Households without an internet subscription: 16 (12.7%) 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.

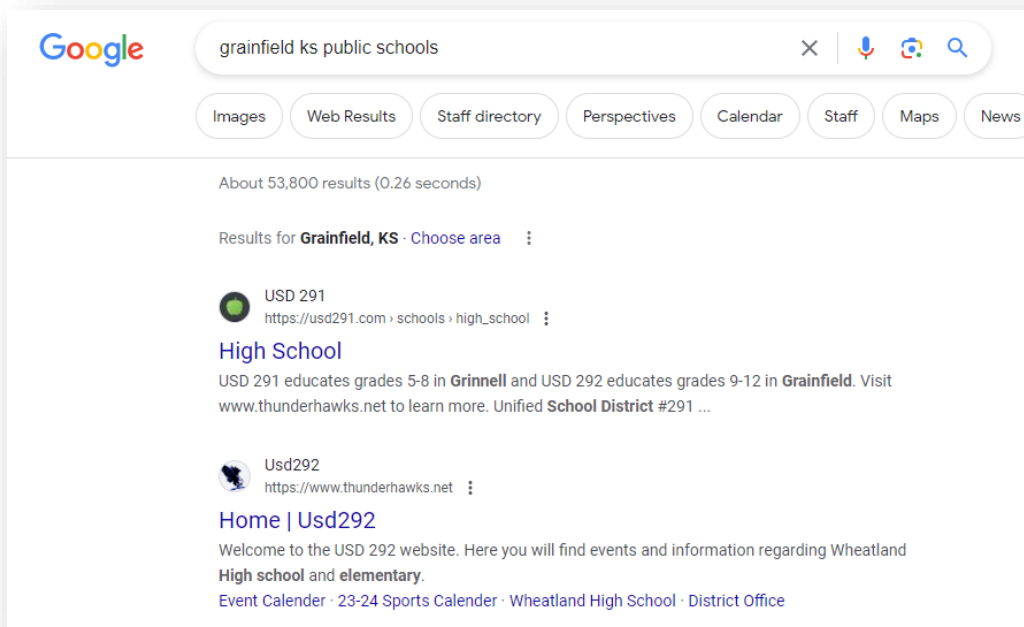
<https://kshousingcorp.org/>



- Wheatland Grade School was observed. It was an older building but looked big enough for this size of town. Large space for activities.
- There were smaller children playing at the school playground later, so visitors weren't sure if they were daycare children or school children.
- Buildings and grounds of the school were well maintained, but there didn't appear to be many vehicles, so not sure what the grades are.

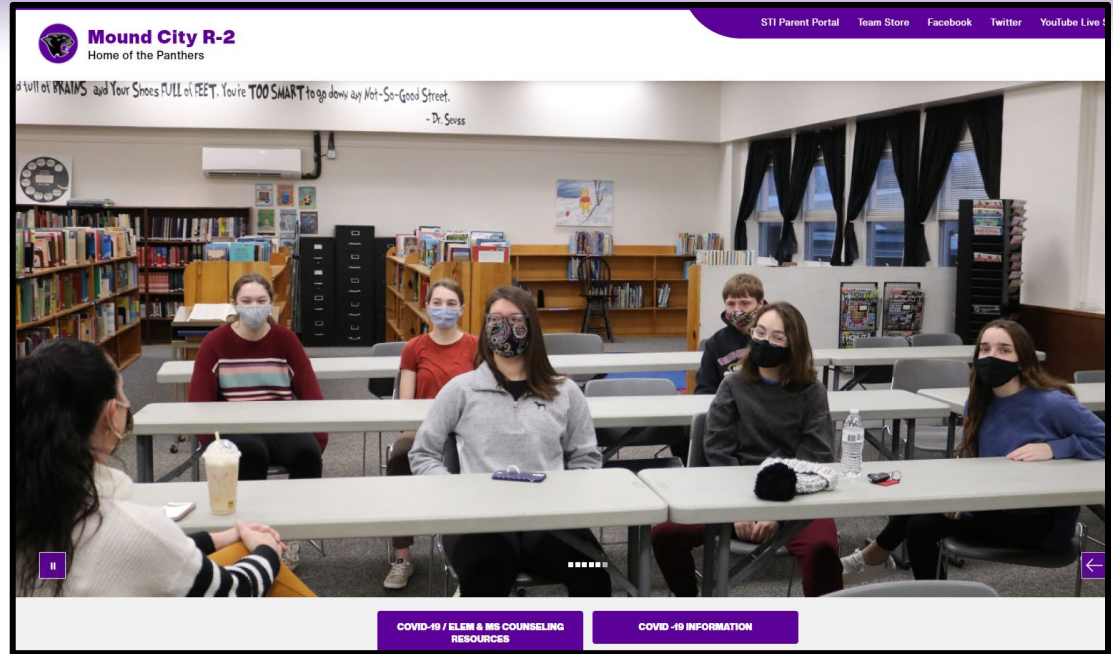


- Some visitors were able to access information, but the results were coming back with USD 291 and USD 292 and where the grades went to school, so it was confusing.
- Others couldn't find any information online about the schools or quality of education.



“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:

- Little Hawks Daycare was observed, but it didn't seem like anyone was there so visitors weren't sure if it was open.
- It's conveniently located on the same block as the school.
- A well maintained facility and playground.
- No information found online about availability or affordability.



## Gove County Data:

- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need** **71%**
- Contact [ks.childcareaware.org](https://ks.childcareaware.org) to access local childcare specialists.  
785-823-3343

Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/data-research/> Retrieved from internet 2/29/2024



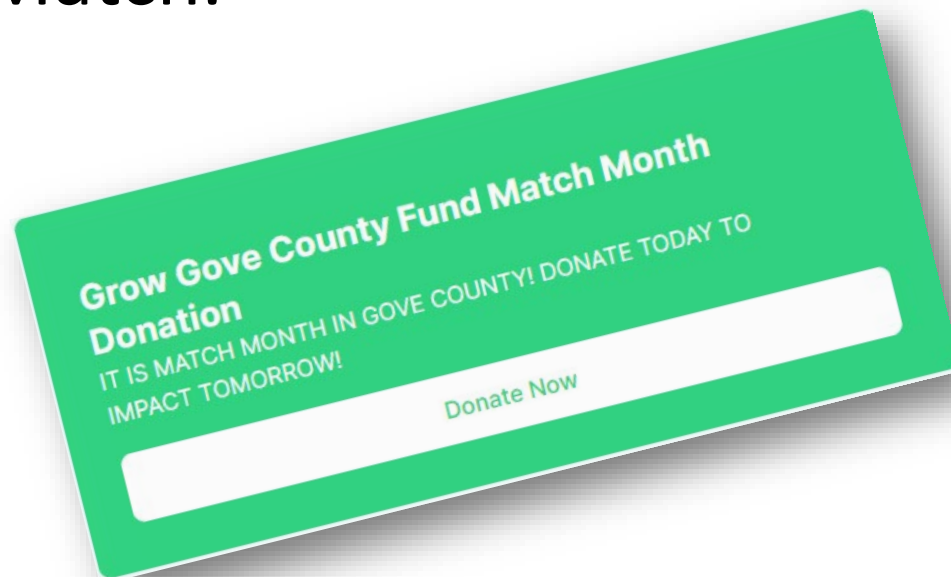


- Two churches were observed and were well maintained.
- One visitor thought the Catholic community building was a school, but then realized it was part of the church across the street.
- The United Methodist Church had a nice building, a large lot and was handicap accessible.
- Visitors appreciated the well maintained cemetery and felt all the flag poles probably look really nice when the flags are up.

- There was a sign for a hunter's breakfast on Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>. Another sign was seen for an event at the Opera House, that was on November 4<sup>th</sup>. A visitor mentioned there was no information about the November 4<sup>th</sup> event online when they did their pre-visit search. Had there been, they would have planned their visit around that because it sounded like a fun time and going into the Opera House would've been enjoyable.
- The American Legion building was noted again.



- One visitor noted an 8-door red station wagon that was kind of cool looking and wondered if it was part of a business or organization.
- Hops at the House Brew Fest.
- Signs were seen for a fundraiser for Gove County Match.



- The residential areas were very well kept up, not a lot of messy yards and most even appeared to try to keep them up. The industrial areas were the same way.
- Most streets weren't paved. The streets were very wide and appeared to be recently sanded by the city crew.
- There were no stop or yield signs at intersections outside of the main street. Even by the school, no stop signs.



- Some of the sidewalks around the park were a little rough, crumbling and raised in spots. It might make it difficult to walk or use a wheelchair in that area.
- Limited street signage for names. Without Google, GPS, or a map app, it might make it difficult to find things.



- City Hall wasn't open during the visits.
- One visitor did peek in the window but didn't see anyone.
- City employees encountered throughout town were very friendly. The city shop at the north end of town was hidden at the end of the street. It was well maintained and not an eyesore.



- It appears a state trooper lives in town which is a great thing to have that presence in the community, even when off duty.
- The fire station on the main street was not open but appeared to be well taken care of and a nice facility.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department Home Contact Us  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 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 during the visits, but the hours were posted and it is open several evenings per week.
- There were pictures on the windows which indicated they are active with the children in the community.





- A nice large park on the main street was observed. It has a picnic area, playground equipment, tennis court, and sand volleyball. This is where the public restroom was that was locked.
- The ballfield on the north end of town had recent updates to the dugouts and concession/equipment building. The little park equipment was older but nice to have for the youngsters attending a sibling's ball game.
- Digital scoreboard was observed.
- The fairgrounds were tucked away at the west end of town but appeared to be well maintained and a place for larger events.



## **Well-Known for an attraction or event?**

- No one noted a slogan for the city.
- There was a “Grow Gove County” sign in one yard, but no others were seen.
- From a web search, Grainfield is mostly known for the grain/agriculture business.
- The Hops at the House Brew Fest sounded impressive with food and entertainment.

## Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Some didn't note any.
- Others indicated the Opera House potentially would draw people to town, but they were unable to go inside while here themselves.



## Visitor's Center

- The city office could serve in that capacity.
- Maybe the community center.
- Good signage and visibility for both.



## What would bring you back?

- The Feedlot – good food and waitstaff – very clean!
- Would stop back at the grocery store to buy seasonings.
- The coffee shop was a cute little place, and the specialty coffee was great. Other than the coffee shop, one visitor felt not much else would bring them back.



# Most Positive Observations

- Small and quiet community.
- Law enforcement was present.
- Very impressed with the auto shop in town.
- Lots of amenities in a town this size offering work options.
- Businesses are helping to bring tax dollars to the community.
- How clean and well maintained the community is.
- The grocery store which isn't very common in small towns these days – hopefully residents support and appreciate it!

# Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- It really depends on what Grainfield's goals are. If it's looking to bring in people, signage and maybe information about what there is in town will bring them there. If it's to maintain, they are doing a great job from what can be seen.
- Being a bedroom community that doesn't offer a lot of industry, the support from the community for businesses to make a living.
- Also having something to keep younger families wanting to raise their kids and live there.

## What will you remember?

- The parts store.
- No stop signs by the school.
- How clean the city was.
- How friendly the people were, whether speaking or waving.
- How nice the cemetery was. The memorial to babies conceived but never born was a neat little area, as was the covered grave directory and service members directory.



## How much did you spend while visiting?

- \$90-\$100
- \$15

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:

**Jan Steen**

**Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension**

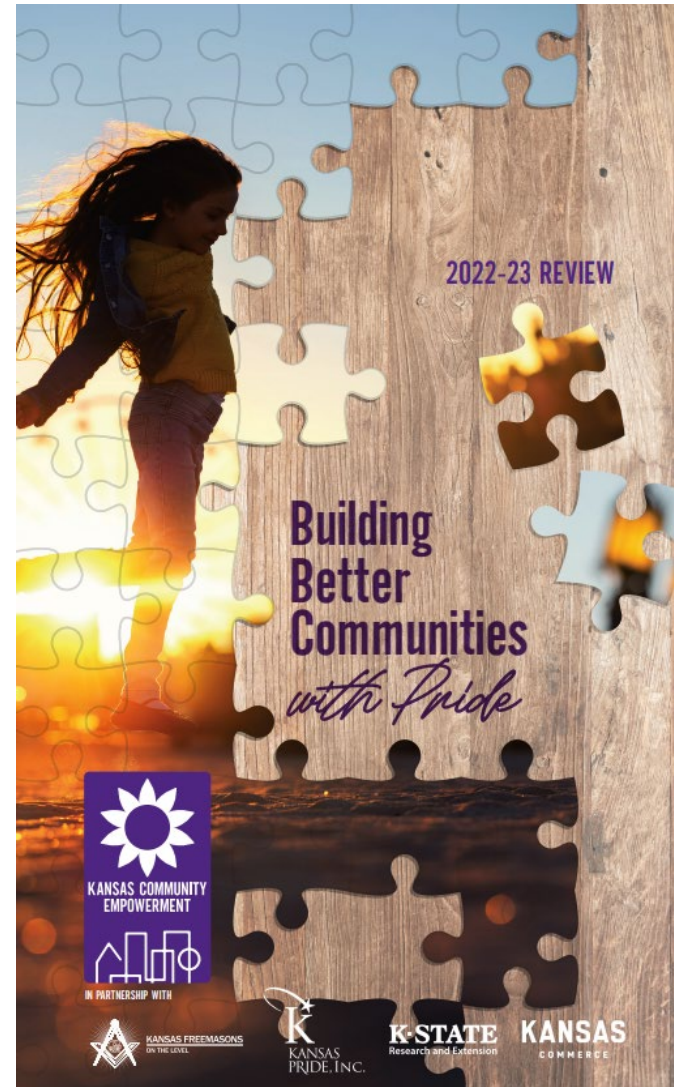
**785.532.5840**

**[jmsteen@ksu.edu](mailto:jmsteen@ksu.edu)**

## Kansas Community Empowerment

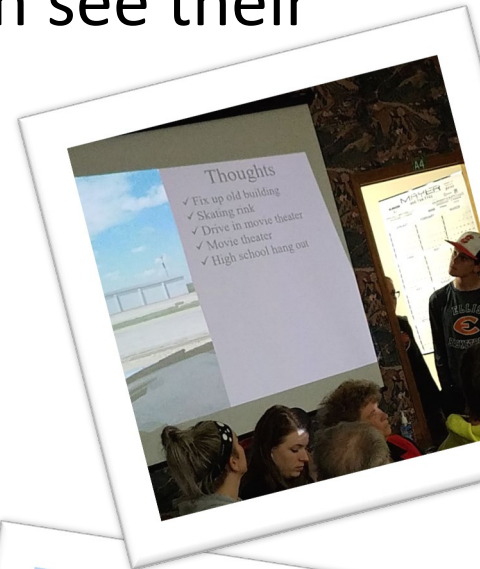
<http://kce.k-state.edu>

- 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



## Grant Writing Classes and Support

### Contact

[KSRECV@ksu.edu](mailto:KSRECV@ksu.edu)

to participate.



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

## 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 \$28 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 PRIDE 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>

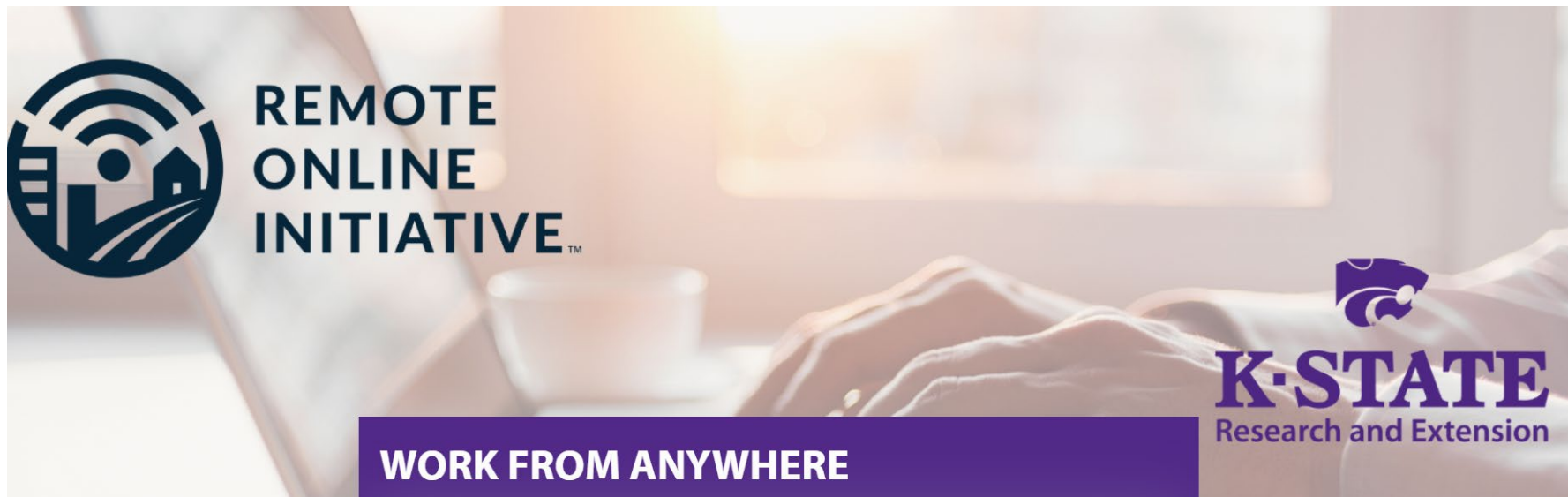
– Previous calls are recorded at

<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

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





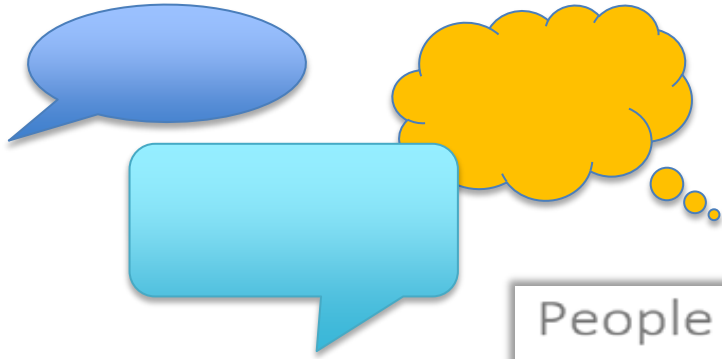
## Rural Grocery/KS Healthy Food Initiative

- **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 did you hear?



## What will we do?



People move in the direction of their conversations

