

First Impressions

Fort Scott, KS

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- Fort Scott asked for First Impressions, obtained Independence as its partner; 1½ hour drive.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey and took photos of Fort Scott on January 30.
- Three Independence visitors came in one car on February 22.
- Results are presented June 5.
- Fort Scott 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

- 2010 Census Population 8,087
(down 2.5% since 2000*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2017 Estimate is 7,822
(down 5.7% since 2000 **KS= +8.0%**)
- 90.3% high school or GED, 17.3% college educated,
– **90.5% HS or equivalency, KS 32.3% college education,**
- Poverty rate 18.7% **(KS=12.8%)**
- Median Age 37.6 years **(36.3)**
- Median household income is \$31,542 **(\$55,477)**

* 2000 Census was 8,297

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 and no one is noticing or talking about it.
- Only 36% lived there previously.
- 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 Kansans move every year.
- In a survey of newcomers to rural areas, the reasons they come are:
 - Simpler pace of life
 - Safety and Security
 - Low housing cost
 - ***“A job,”*** *isn't in the top 10 reasons.*
- 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.
- "In small towns everyone knows each other." *false*
- *Get to know each other*, invite them to a newcomers meal.

- 75% of rural homeowners are Baby Boomers and older, 30% of those are over 75.
- Rural communities need retirement housing (not nursing facilities, but maintenance free) to retain seniors.

- *Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow,
University of Minnesota* <http://z.umn.edu/braingain/>

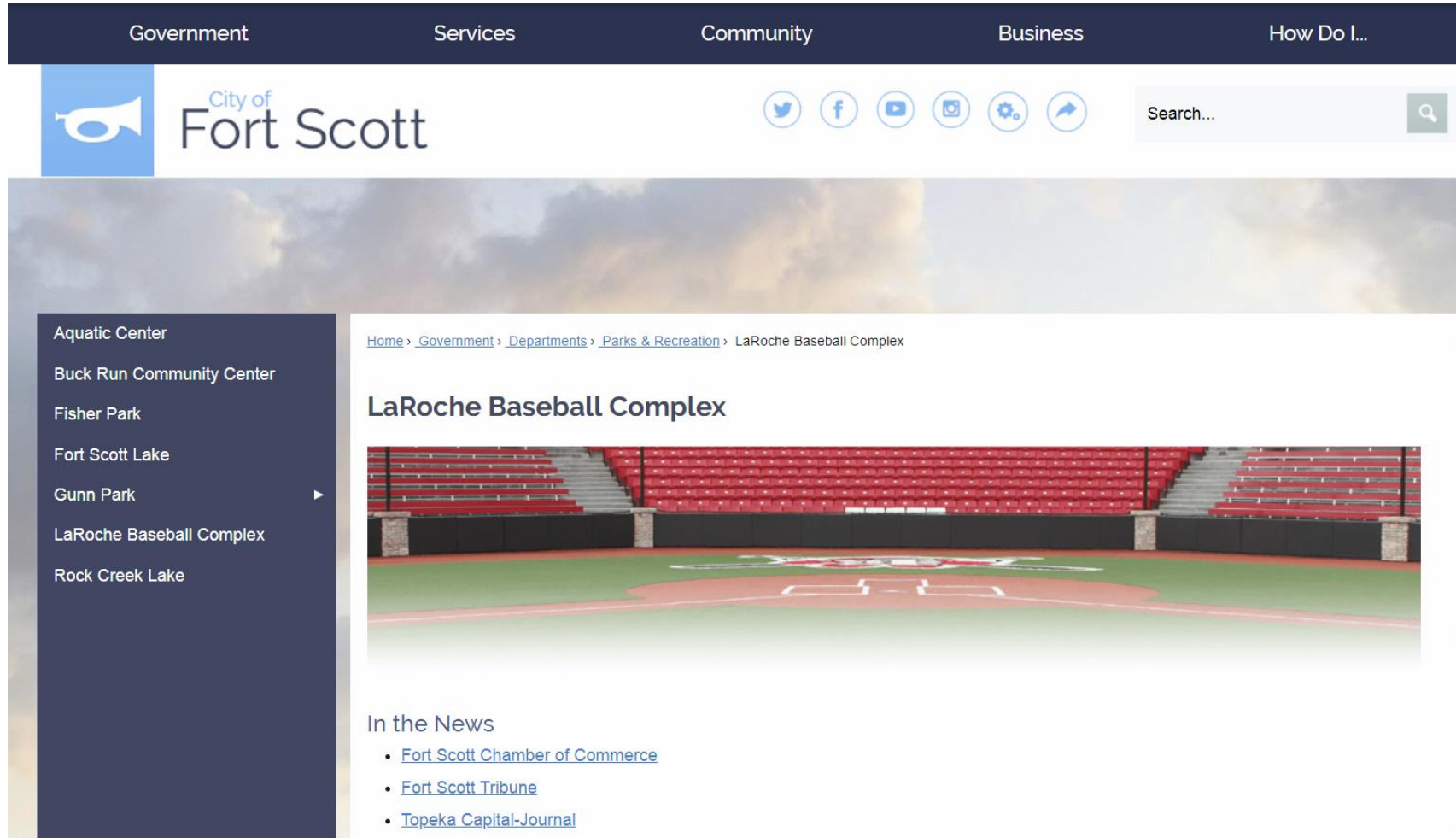


*Ben Winchester was our guest on the
March 1, 2019 First Friday Call.*

See the recording at:

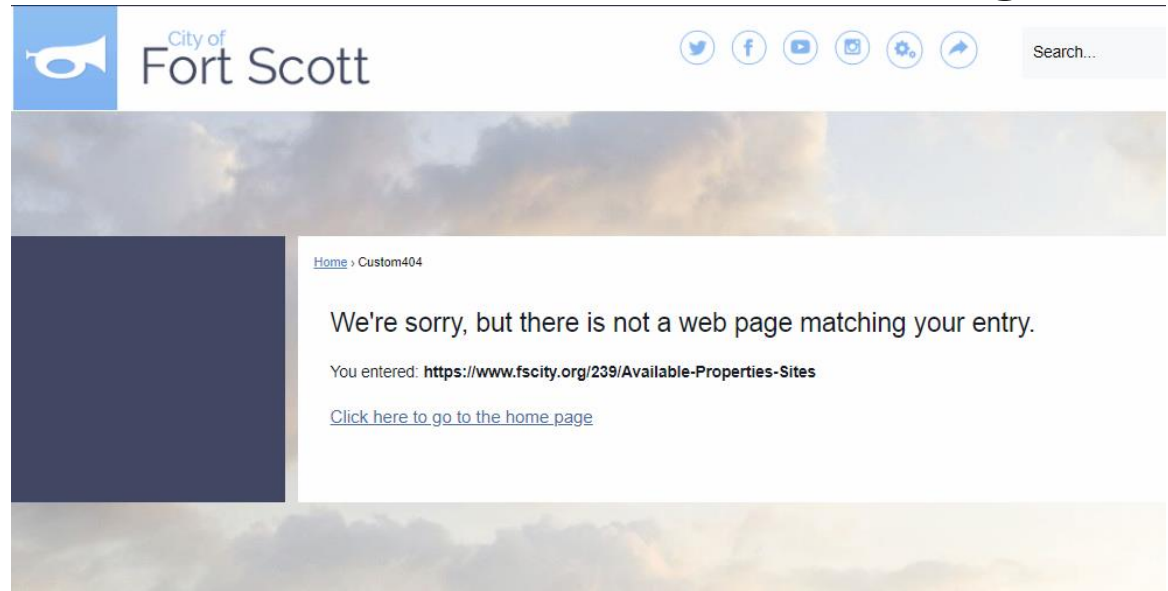
<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/>

- **Website** <https://www.fscity.org/>



- **Website** <https://www.fscity.org/>
- A wealth of information is available online.
- Both the Fort Scott Chamber of Commerce and the City of Fort Scott have very well-designed, easy-to-navigate websites with an abundance of community information and links to additional resources.
- On the city website, the link to available housing is broken.

Link Retrieved 5/30/19



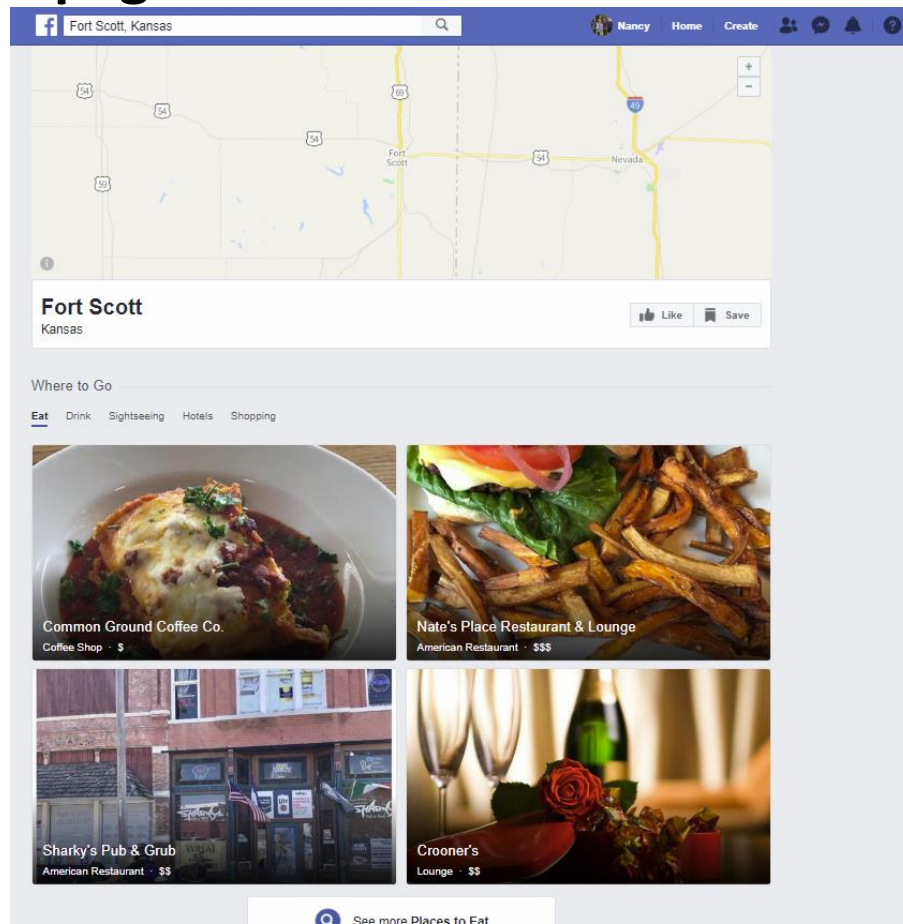
- Facebook “Fort Scott, KS”
- Visit Fort Scott <https://www.facebook.com/visitfortscottks/>



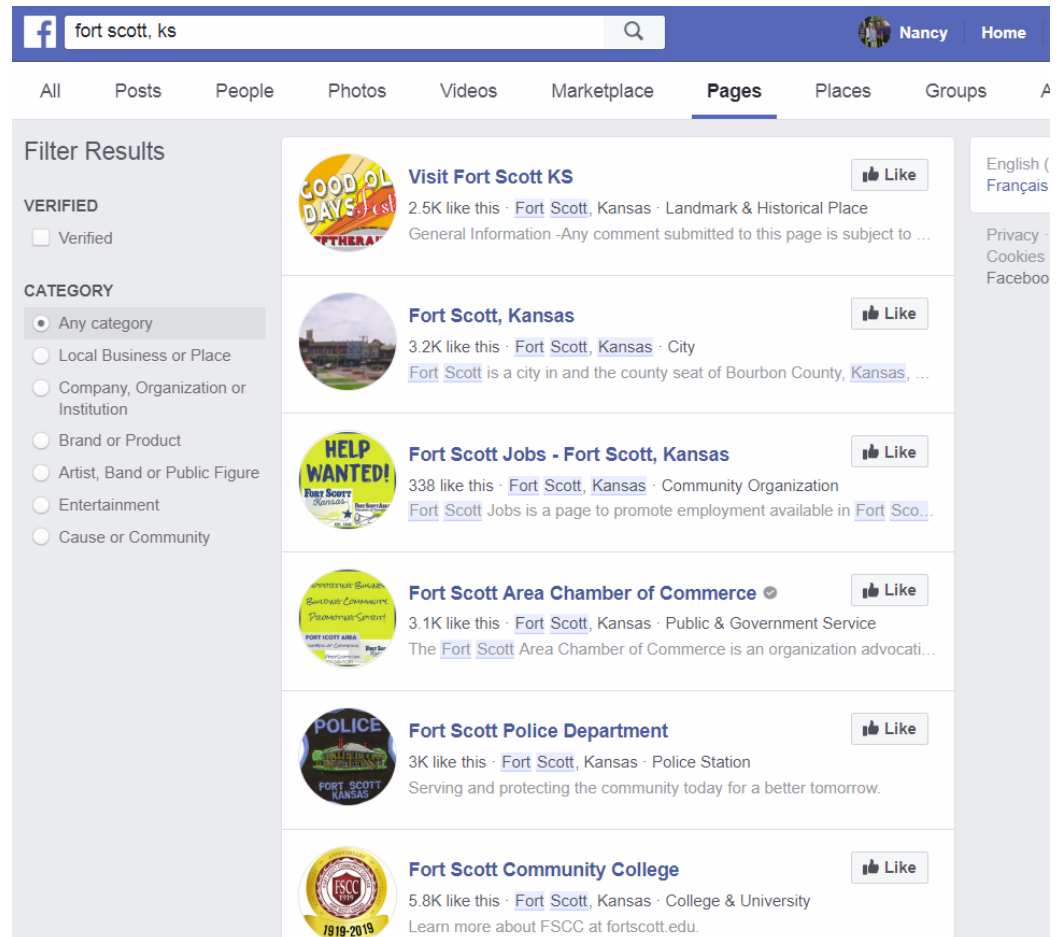
- Facebook “Fort Scott, KS”
- Fort Scott Chamber <https://www.facebook.com/fortscottchamber/>



- Facebook “Fort Scott, KS”
- Fort Scott, Kansas <https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Fort-Scott-Kansas/104051449631199/>
- A Facebook- generated page



- **FaceBook**
 - *At least 85 (!) other Fort Scott pages.*
 - *An opportunity for co-marketing.*



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Traveling straight through on the main highway, it would be easy to miss the best parts of the community.
- Many vacant commercial buildings.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Welcome sign on the south is professional but not colorful, it nearly blends into the landscape.
- Abortion sign is a bit startling and could be a turnoff to visitors.



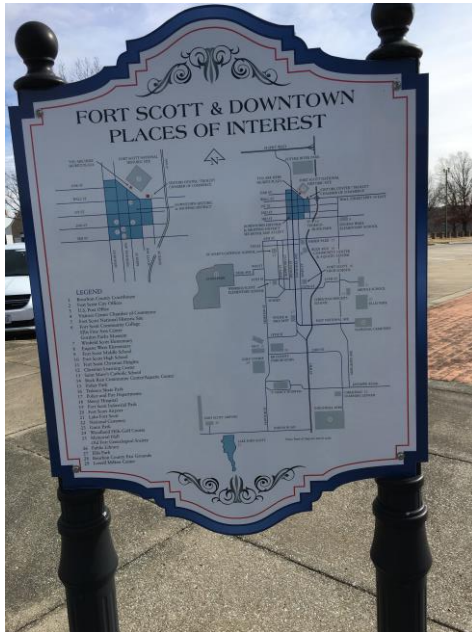
“Five-Minute” Impression

- Entrance from NE side (from Nevada, MO) is not welcoming or attractive.
- The sign at the rec center is hard to see because of bushes.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Historical pride in its history, quaint downtown.
- Great signage for key points in the area.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Rough roads, dilapidated housing.



Downtown Business Area

- Many vacant business buildings and vacant lots between buildings.



Downtown Business Area

- Memorial Hall, county courthouse, large banks and churches all were very attractive and impressive buildings.



Downtown Business Area

- Fort adjacent to downtown is very beneficial and well-kept.
- All brick streets are interesting from a historical perspective, but difficult to maintain.



Downtown Business Area

- Downtown banners were due for a change-out. Some still had holiday banners on Feb 22.
- Not much retail selection downtown, with many flea markets.
- Customer service and product quality was not uniformly good.



Downtown Business Area

- Plenty of trash receptacles and benches, did not locate any public Wi-Fi downtown.



Downtown Business Area

- Most stores had “No Public Restrooms” prominently posted.
- Saw something that looked like public bathrooms, but they had a sign on them that said closed for the winter.
- *Make your restroom fun, with marketing at “eye level” and make your store fun to capture them on the way out.*



Downtown Business Area

- Parking was plentiful, but accessing multiple services was hampered by the number of empty buildings.



I appreciated the displays in the empty windows.



Downtown Business Area



Downtown Business Area



Downtown Business Area

- Quaint and cute architecture reminiscent of an “old west” town.



Downtown Business Area





Downtown Business Area



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- On the highway south of town was Walmart and the typical chain stores that you see in a lot of towns.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Some areas were neat and clean; others faced challenges.
- No boutiques, Goodies or Walmart for clothes.



Other Retail Shopping Areas



Industrial Parks/Commercial

- Visible as one enters town. Nicely marked-- good open space-signage demonstrating room for new growth and expansion.



- *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.*

- Though the hospital recently closed, emergency services have been retained by a new provider and signage was prominent at the south/main entrance.



- All facilities we located seemed to be modern and well-kept.



- We saw assisted living.



- Country Place looked well-kept as did Presbyterian Manor.



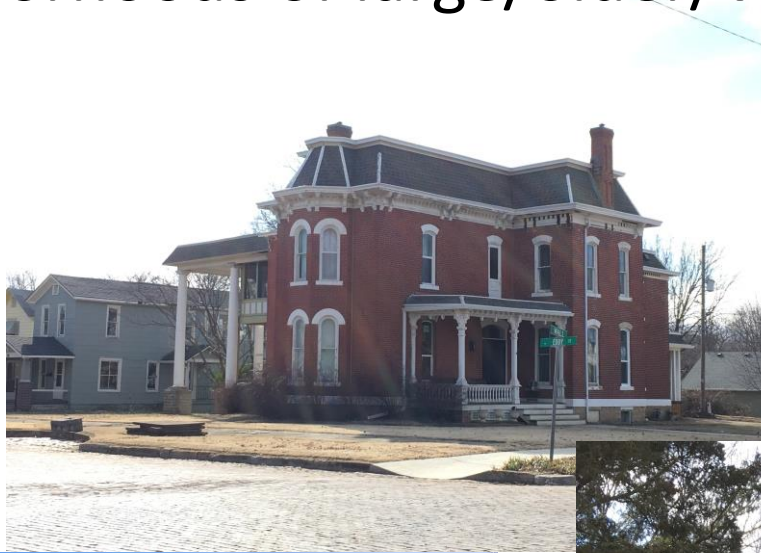
- Several run-down neighborhoods in center of city.



- Appeared to be a lack of middle-income housing.



- Neighborhoods of large/older/Victorian homes.



- High-end housing was found on the outskirts.
- Didn't see newer, moderate housing.



- Did not see many places to rent online or during the drive.
- A few apartments near the college.



- Affordability may not be an issue, but a lack of available houses in good condition is.



KANSAS

- Total Housing Units 3,946
- Total Occupied Houses 3,108 (78.9%) (89.1%)
- Vacant Houses 833 (21.1%) (10.7%)

**In 2010, there were 3,068 occupied housing units*

- Owner Occupied 1,875 (60.3%) (66.4%)
- Renter Occupied 1,233 (39.7%) (33.6%)
- Family Households 60.6% (65.4%)
- Non-family Household 39.4% (34.6%)

**More houses occupied with a declining population.*

- We saw schools for all ages, including a day care. They all seem to be in good shape and had recent work done.



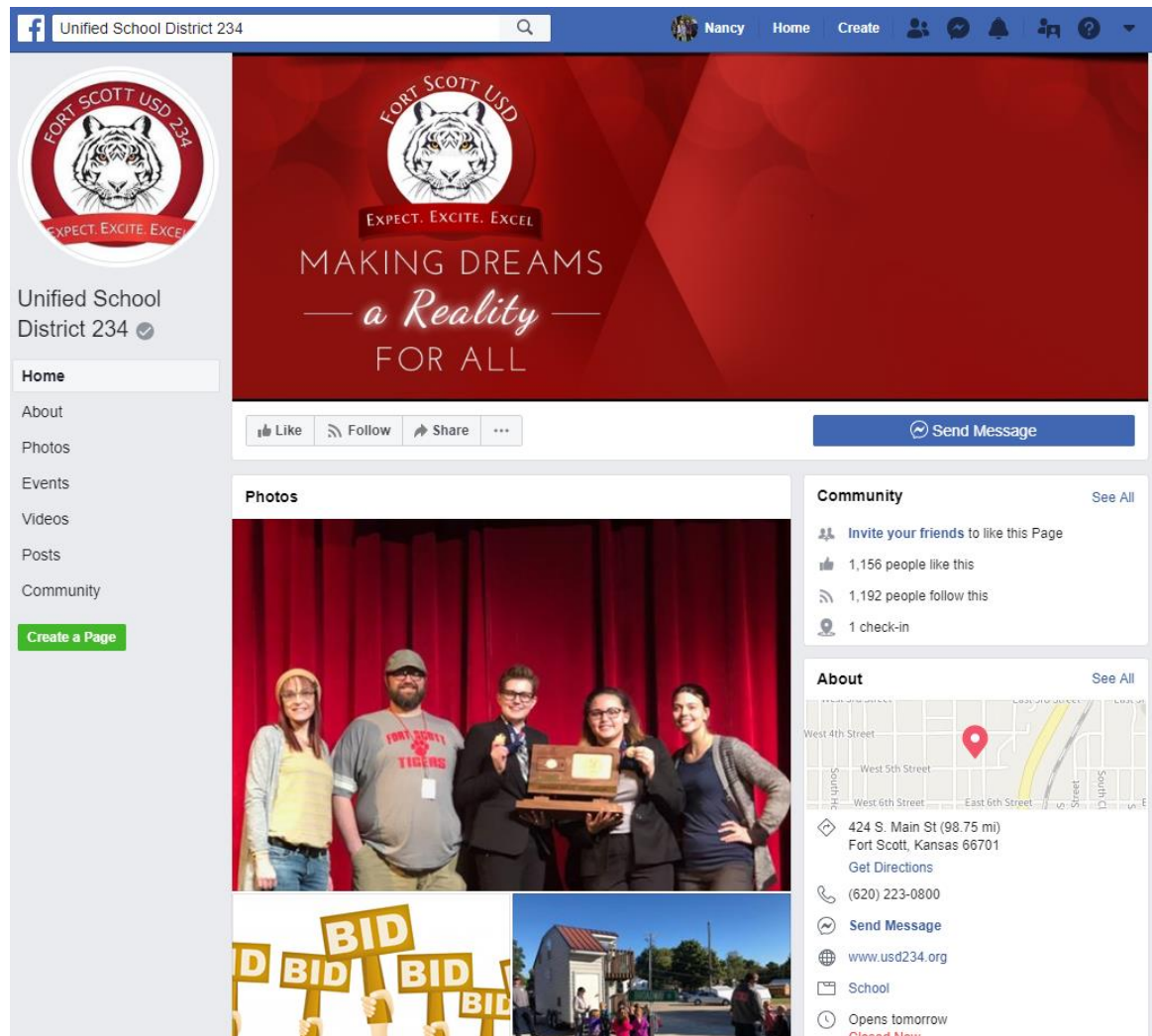


- The USD 234 website is very basic with information on policies, etc., but has few photos and no stories about activities or programs in the schools.
- *This website is also a marketing tool; helping a potential new resident picture their child being happy here.*



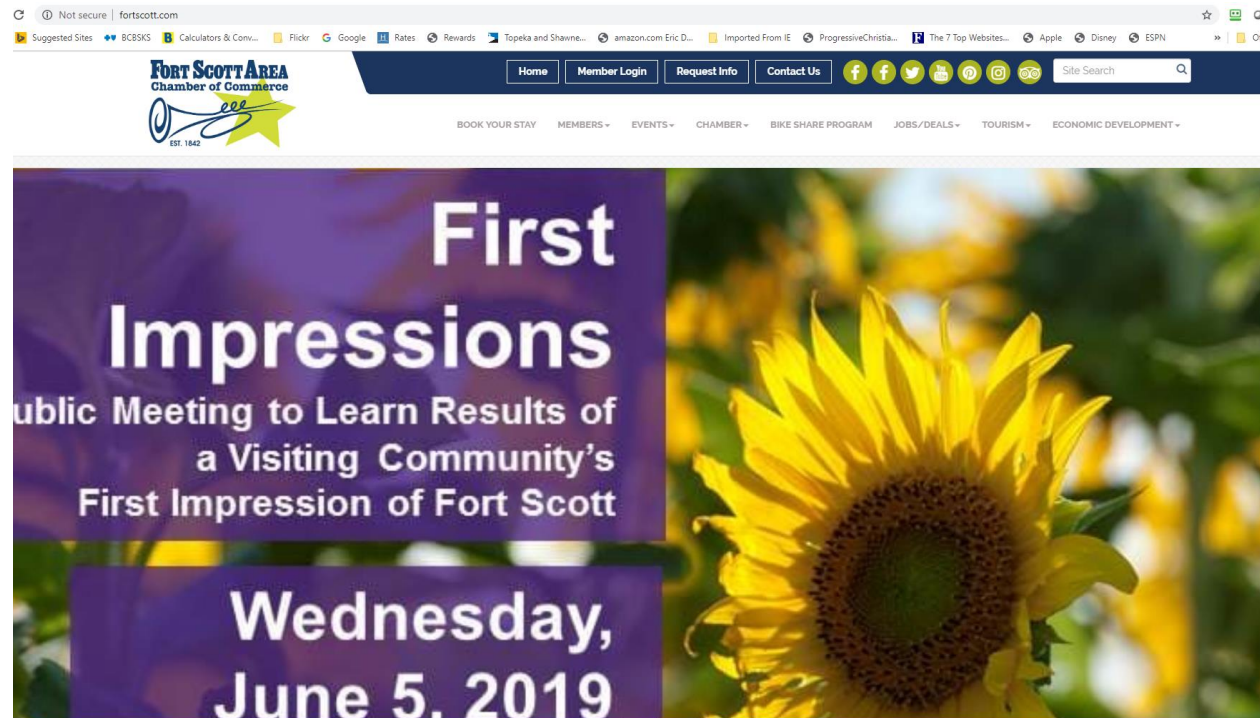
- USD 234 Facebook page is also out of date.
- *“Map of Schools” link did not work.*

2-5 posts per month, including school closings.



Retrieved from internet 5/31/19

- Chamber website seems to only make a brief reference to education in its online quality of life video.
 - *Impressed the visitor found this video at the bottom of the home page. The 1:26 video implies the hospital is open.*



Retrieved from internet 5/31/19

- Fort Scott Community College has an updated, comprehensive website and up-to-date FB page.

FSCC
Fort Scott Community College
Celebrating 100 years * 1919-2019

Search Student Portal Employee Portal

Apply Now Admissions Academics Campus Life Alumni and Endowment Gordon Parks Museum Athletics About Us

2019 Youth Football Camp

Explore 35+ Fields of study

At FSCC, students can earn credits to transfer to a four-year institution or pursue an associate degree or certificate. More than 55 courses are guaranteed to transfer to any Kansas public college or university.

Certified Medication Aide	Construction Trades	Cosmetology	Criminal Justice	Emergency Medical Technician
Environmental Water Technology	Geriatric Certified Nursing Aide	Farm & Ranch Management	Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Tech	Heating, Ventilation, & Air Conditioning
John Deere Tech	Masonry	Nursing	Welding	View All

Retrieved from internet 5/31/19

- Did not see any child care during our visit, but was able to find a few centers online.
- According to information provided at City Hall, it appears they have several child care providers.

Bourbon County Data:

- **Number of Children Under Age 6:** **1,326**
- **Children with all parents in the workforce:** **61%**
- **Desired Capacity of Child Care Centers** **346**
- **Extent that desired capacity meets potential need** **43%**
- **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 get access to local child care specialists.
785-823-3343*

- Numerous churches and denominations.
- Did not observe church-sponsored community services.







- Chamber did not have a list of civic organizations available.
- Saw signs for Kiwanis pancake breakfast.
- Chamber lists civic organization events on its website calendar of events.
- Saw a banner for Kiwanis Club as we entered town.



- Beyond downtown, there were LOTS of brick streets throughout the neighborhoods. The streets were very uneven and uncomfortable to drive.
- This isn't the time of year to comment on landscaping or streetscapes.



- Sidewalks were 50/50 as far as condition.
- *I noticed neighborhoods that had no sidewalks.*



- Signage was excellent.
- There seemed to be a nice lighted walking path out by the college that looked appealing.

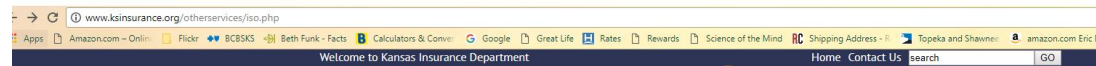


- City hall was kind of hidden in a smaller building but the big sign made it easier to find.
- Engaged immediately, was friendly and helpful and provided great written information that I was able to walk away with.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Saw police officers while driving through town.



Kansas Insurance Commissioner



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
- > Agent/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 telecommunications, 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 amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires
4. Community efforts to reduce the risk of fire, including fire prevention codes and enforcement, public fire

- Historic Carnegie Library- looks like active children's programming. Well kept.



- SEVERAL recreational facilities (ballparks, Buck Run Community Center, Gunn Park, community college walking path and fishing lake, disc golf) were observed. This community has a lot to offer in this regard!





- Plenty of walking space and a place to take your dog as well.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Historic Fort Scott and cemetery
- Signage around “bugle” theme and they tout their 1882 founding.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Didn't see any indication of major events on our visit.
- Saw sign for Gordon Parks Museum shortly after entering town.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Chamber produces a weekly events calendar/flyer, which we picked up at a local motel.

Natural or manmade features that can draw people?


- Fort Scott is the biggest attraction with Gordon Parks and other features contributing.

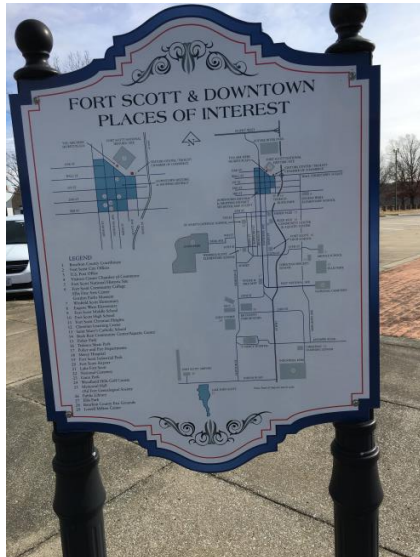
Visitor's Center

- Chamber office is easy to locate, close to the Fort and downtown. Signage is bright and draws you in.



What would bring you back?

- Iron Star Antiques and Such
 - Lyons Twin Mansions/Nate's Place (Didn't try it, but it was suggested by several and the website makes me want to visit.)
 - Fort Scott
 - Gordon Parks Museum
- 



Most Positive Observations

- Most people were very friendly and helpful.
- Residents and employees of convenience stores, restaurants, shops, etc., seem to be pretty well informed about the community and available amenities/activities and spoke positively about them. (Good cross-promotion.)
- Some great recreational facilities. Gunn Park is a huge asset.
- Though several properties are vacant, that means several properties are available

Most Positive Observations

- Excellent signage and good written information packets for new residents and visitors.
- Great opportunity for day trips.
- Nice golf course.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Downtown seems to be struggling with many vacant properties and very limited shopping/services.
- Also seem to be large vacant commercial properties in the south side of the community.
- May be a need for more move-in ready, moderate-income housing.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- The biggest issue I had was the brick roads. 1 or 2 might add a nostalgic feel downtown, but the number of them around town makes it uncomfortable; adds extra wear and tear it on a vehicle.
- Healthcare concerns with loss of hospital.

What will you remember?

- Friendly people. Good experience at the Iron Star shop. Intrigue with Nate's Place restaurant. Impressive Gunn Park. Impressed that successful former residents (i.e., LaRoche) are returning to the community to live and invest.

What will you remember?

- The roads will be the biggest thing I remember. After a few minutes of driving around the bumpiness becomes noticeable and a bit of a headache.
- The opportunities for day trip- will come back to see the Fort/cemetery/Gordon Parks Museum.

Thank our leadership team:

- *Lindsay Madison*
- *Gregg Motley*
- *John Horn*
- *Darcy Smith*

Set Next Steps:

- Which group will lead the discussion?

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

PLACEMAKING

what if we built our cities around places?

Project for Public Spaces, <https://www.pps.org>



- Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community.
- A collaborative process to strengthen the connection between people and the places they share.
- Facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

“Placemaking: What if we built our cities around places?” Project for Public Spaces,

<https://www.pps.org>

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 to participate.
 - Previous calls are recorded at <http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/>
 - Community Vitality Calendar of events: <http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/>

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

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

THE SMALL TOWN AND RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE




FRONT PAGE	LATEST STORIES	ABOUT	GUIDED TOUR	SUBSCRIBE	PODCAST	CONTACT	RSS	
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WHAT BUSINESS STAGE ARE YOU IN?



Dreaming

For those who are dreaming or planning to start a business of their own. ... [Get started.](#)



Doing & Growing

For those who have a business and have grown to the point that it's

Get our articles plus special bonus emails, a positive view of rural once a week:
Join me and 3546 rural friends.

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

JOIN

I will never sell or rent your email.

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.

SAVEYOUR.town

[HOME](#)

[ABOUT DEB & BECKY](#)

[WEBINARS](#)

[TOOLKITS](#)

[WORK WITH US](#)

[I DON'T HAVE TIME!](#)

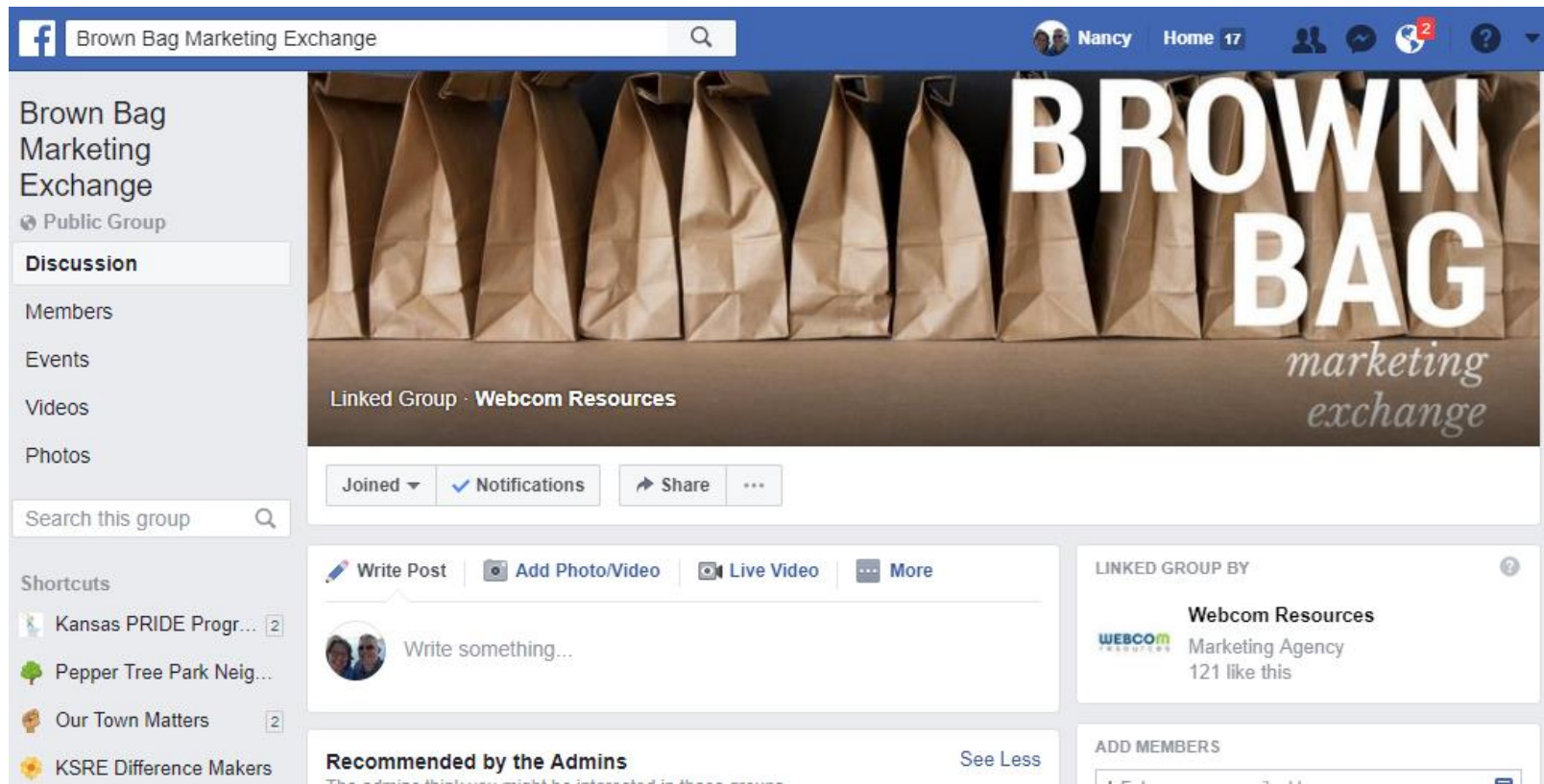
[CONTACT](#)

[MEMBERS LOGIN](#)

A Virtual Tour

When we walk through a small town, we see it differently
And then you see it differently

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



Kansas Healthy Food Initiative

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

Isabelle Busenitz, ibusenitz@ksu.edu,

KHFI Technical Assistance Coordinator, 785-532-6868



"Everyone has the right to live in a great place.
More importantly, everyone has the right to
contribute to making the place where they
already live great."

-Fred Kent, Founder and President of Project for Public Spaces

Nancy Daniels

Community Vitality Specialist,
K-State Research and Extension

785.410.6352

nkdaniels@ksu.edu