

# First Impressions

## Goessel, KS



A report by

**K-State Research and Extension**

January 21, 2020

- Burden asked for First Impressions, obtained Goessel as its partner; 1½ hour drive.
  - I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey and took photos of Goessel on October 17. \*
  - Four Burden visitors visited in October/November.
  - Results are presented tonight, January 21, 2020
  - Goessel uses the results for further discussion and action plans.
- \* A visitor took photos two weeks later and some of her photos are included.*

# 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 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 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
  - Low housing cost
  - ***“A job,”** isn’t in the top 10 reasons.*
- “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 must 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, our guest on the  
**March 2019 First Friday Call and again March 2020**  
See the recording at:  
<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/>*

- 2010 Census Population 539  
(down 4.6% since 2000\*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2017 Estimate is 503  
(down 11.0% since 2000) **KS= +8.0%**
- 91.5% high school or GED, 23.7% college educated,  
— **KS: 90.5% HS or equivalency, 32.3% college education,**
- Poverty rate 3.0% **(KS=12.8%)**
- Median Age 47.6 years **(36.3)**
- Median household income is \$50,625 **(\$55,477)**

\* 2000 Census was 565

- **Website**
  - <https://www.goesselks.com/>
- Finding information was simple. The newsletter on the City website is informative.
- The websites gave me an accurate picture of what I'd find.
- Lots of online sources of information.



- **Website**
- <https://www.goesselmuseum.com/>
- The best website is the Mennonite Heritage Museum.
- The site has many nice photos and easy to find information about the museum hours.





- **FaceBook Get Goessel**

<https://www.facebook.com/goessel.kansas/>

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile for 'Get Goessel' (@goessel.kansas). The profile picture is a circular image of a white water tower with 'GOESSEL' written on it. The cover photo is an aerial view of a suburban neighborhood with green fields and houses. The page has a blue header with the Facebook logo, the name 'Get Goessel', a search bar, and navigation links for 'Nancy', 'Home', 'Create', and notifications. On the left sidebar, there are links for 'Home', 'About', 'Photos', 'Events', 'Notes', 'Posts', 'Community', and a 'Create a Page' button. The main content area features a 'Photos' section with a large image of a car show at night, with text overlaying the image that reads 'YOU MUST BE FROM A SMALL TOWN IF :'. Below this, there is a promotional banner for 'IT'S FOODS' with text about gift cards and a 'Don't Forget to Fall Back! Daylight Savings Time' message. On the right sidebar, there is a 'Community' section with links to 'Invite your friends to like this Page', '829 people like this', '835 people follow this', and a list of people who liked the page. Below that is an 'About' section with contact information: '620-367-8111', 'Send Message', 'www.goesselks.com', 'Community', and 'Suggest Edits'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Page Transparency' section with a Facebook logo and text about showing information to help understand the purpose of the page.

300532254/?type=3&eid=ARBoV...

- **FaceBook**



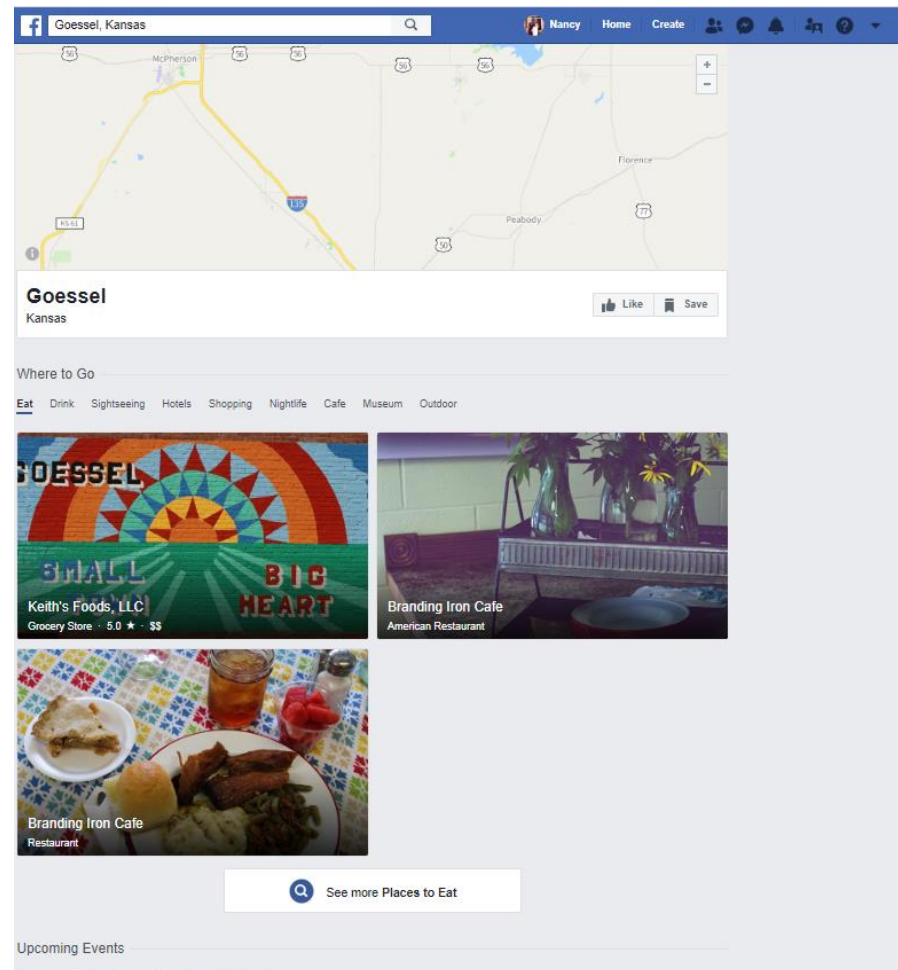
Facebook search results for "Goessel, Kansas". The search bar at the top shows "Goessel, Kansas" and a search icon. The navigation bar includes links for All, Posts, People, Photos, Videos, Marketplace, **Pages**, Places, Groups, and Ap. The "Filter Results" section on the left includes filters for Location (Anywhere, Topeka, Kansas, Chapman, Kansas, Choose a City...), VERIFIED (Verified), and CATEGORY (Any Category, Local Business or Place, Company, Organization or Institution, Brand or Product, Artist, Band or Public Figure, Entertainment, Cause or Community). The main results list several pages:

- Get Goessel** (Page): Goessel is a small rural town with a population of approximately 53... (342 likes)
- USD 411 Goessel Schools** (989 like this)
- Goessel, Kansas** (342 like this)
- Bethesda Home of Goessel, Kansas** (378 like this)
- Goessel Public Library** (215 like this)
- Porter Farms Goessel Kansas** (Page)
- Goessel Mennonite Youth Group** (148 like this)
- Goessel Elementary School** (24 like this)
- City of Goessel** (37 like this)



- **FaceBook**

- <https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Goessel-Kansas/108579869166757/>
  - *A Facebook generated page.*
  - The Get Goessel page ranks higher; the City of Goessel page ranks lower.
  - This page could be taken over, if you choose to.



# “Five-Minute” Impression

- I kept telling myself “this is a quaint little town.”
- Housing stood out as well-kept with a variety of options for everyone’s budget.





# “Five-Minute” Impression

- No downtown, most businesses are located along the highway which is the main street.
- Attractive Welcome signs as you enter.



# “Five-Minute” Impression

- All signage was in good condition with adequate signage to places of interest.
  - One detractor from the overall attractive appearance was a vacant lot that wasn't mowed and a sign that seemed unfriendly.
- “PRIVATE PROPERTY.”





# “Five-Minute” Impression

- The Alexanderwohl Church is a beautiful landmark on the outskirts of town with signage about its significance.



# Downtown Business Area

- No downtown area. The highway through town has the business district.
- Several historic buildings on main street appear in decent shape; some are being utilized.





# Downtown Business Area

- Lincoln Perk: a small eatery just inside the Bethesda Home.
- Grocery Store, Tire Store with an attached gas pump, two banks, Post Office, Library, City Office and Electric business.



# Downtown Business Area

- Keith's Foods: all visitors expressed great appreciation for the grocery with everything you'd need, a neat appearance, clean restroom, lunch items and friendly help. The owner has diversified his services to make the store sustainable and keep prices competitive.





## Amenities:

- Parking is easy, benches in front of Bethesda Home and City hall, wi-fi and public restrooms in the city building. There's a trash can in front of Keith's Foods.



# Other Retail Shopping Areas

- No other retail, unless you count the gift shop at the Mennonite Museum. One visitor noted the items she purchased at the gift shop there.
- *Help people know what's inside: How can they leave some cash as they drive through?*

# Industrial Parks/Commercial

- A variety of commercial property on the main street, industrial properties are primarily on the east side of town.
- The abandoned hospital used to be a print shop and may have a new owner with plans.





## ***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 the world.*



- Goessel does not have any emergency medical services, but Newton and Moundridge are close with full-service hospital and medical offices.
- *Consider putting a “Medical Services” tab on City website with “Minutes of travel” to the services your town needs.*

## Long-term Care

- Bethesda Home: 43 rooms of long-term nursing care and 10 assisted living rooms. Numerous independent living facilities in the surrounding area.





- This is where Goessel shines.
- Only 2 or 3 blighted homes in town.
- A great selection of good quality, well-maintained homes that appeal to a variety of incomes.
- Neatly manicured lawns and well-kept homes.
- Nice to see construction underway.







- I saw only one home for rent and one business building for rent.





- I noticed an income-eligible housing and Bethesda Home rental for seniors. I saw numerous duplexes but didn't notice any "for Rent" signs.



## KANSAS

- Total Housing Units      312
- Total Occupied Houses 286 (91.7%)      (89.1%)
- Vacant Houses              26 (8.3%)      (10.7%)

*\*In 2010, there were 206 occupied housing units*

- Owner Occupied              230 (80.4%)      (66.4%)
- Renter Occupied              56 (19.6%)      (33.6%)
- Family Households              62.9%      (65.4%)
- Non-family Household      37.1%      (34.6%)

- Private preschool, Elementary, Junior and Senior High Schools in Goessel.
- The buildings are nice and, as a parent I would feel safe sending my child to school.
- Signage wasn't sufficient to be clear which building is which.





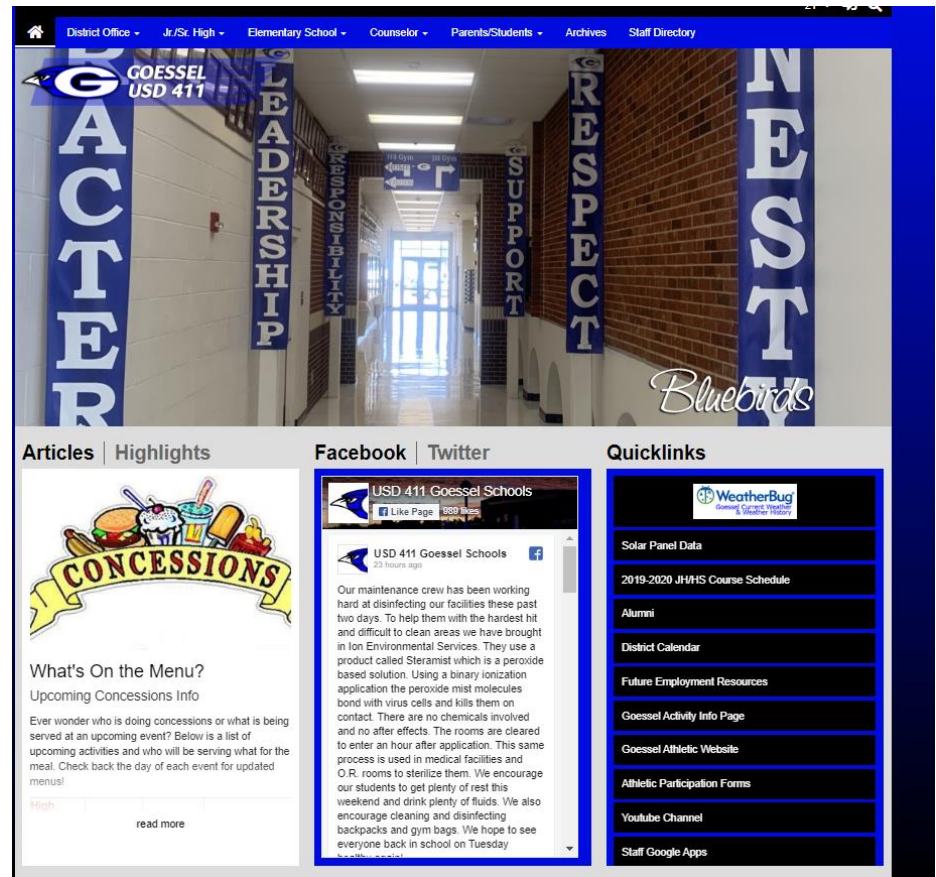
- Preschool didn't appear to have much play equipment.
- Solar Panel on the school gave the school an impressive sense of being progressive. The school website monitored how much energy it produced.



- Not much signage to the school or “school pride” exhibited at the school.
- Keith’s Foods had a “Bluebird Backers” membership form.
- Visitors quoted various sources of statistics that prove the schools are good.

- Student accomplishments are not evident on the school website.

*What do you love about your school?*  
*School websites are helpful to potential students and their families.*



- One childcare home
- The school has taken over the preschool.

## Marion County Data:

- **Number of Children Under Age 6:** **850**
- **Children with all parents in the workforce:** **68%**
- **Desired Capacity of Child Care Centers** **233**
- **Extent that desired capacity meets potential need** **40%**
- **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](https://ks.childcareaware.org) to get access to local child care specialists.  
785-823-3343*



- Visitors reported 2-3? Mennonite Churches, one could use a fresh sign.



- 4-H
- Goessel Community Foundation
- Senior Center was a project of the Community Foundation.





- Streets varied from gravel to paved.
- Parts of town have gravel roads which were dusty and had a wash board. (see “Five-Minute” Comments)



# Public Infrastructure

- There is a current CDBG project for wastewater system improvements.
- Street signage was good; adequate and in good repair.





- The city clerk and Public Works Director and even the volunteers who helped with elections, were helpful.
- There is a wall of brochures at City Hall even when the City Clerk is not in.
- *Is there information on rental housing and childcare?*



# Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Saw 2 fire department buildings.
- Police Chief works a few hours per week.



*What is your Insurance Services Office's (ISO) Property Protection Classification (PPC)?*

*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.*

Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department Home Contact Us Search

Kansas Insurance Commissioner  
Vicki Schmidt

Kansas Insurance Department  
1300 SW Arrowhead  
Topeka, Kansas 66604  
Consumer Hotline: 800-432-2484 (KS only)  
Email Us | Phone: 785-296-3071

**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 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 safety education, and fire investigation programs

**Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) Overview**  
The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) is a manual containing the criteria ISO uses in reviewing the fire prevention and fire suppression capabilities of individual communities or fire protection areas. The schedule measures the major elements of a community's fire protection system and develops a numerical grading called a Public Protection Classification

Office of the  
Kansas Insurance Commissioner  
A Division of the Insurance Department

8-Minute  
TOP-RATED  
DEPARTMENT  
OF INSURANCE  
WEBSITE

- The library was not open when any of the visitors stopped; library hours are posted and on the website.
- A professional looking library, much larger than expected for a town of 500.
- Website showed numerous activities and services at the library.
- Seed library, STEAM, Robotics, Music, Rockets.



- # Goessel Public Library

[illegible]

- If you didn't know the park was there, you wouldn't find it. Needs more signage.
- Volleyball, basketball, disc golf and playground equipment.
- There was a pavilion for activities.



- Most recreation – sponsored sports and activities are in Newton or Wichita.
  - *Make the information available on the website.*
- Didn't find a walking trail.
- Does a community garden exist or hold appeal?





## Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum.
- Annual Country Threshing Days (August).





## Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Mural on Keith's Foods "Small Town, Big Hearts"



## Visitor's Center

- City Offices serve this purpose and has good signage.





## What would bring you back?

- Mennonite Museum
- There are no restaurants to bring me back but may be adequate for town.





# Most Positive Observations

- Progressive, willing to see things that need improvement and offer solutions to meet the town's needs.
- **Housing**
- Bethesda Home is a major employer with a new business moving into a vacant building.
- Reputable museum.
- People are friendly and take pride in their homes and businesses.
- Businesses are few and small but meet all the needs.
- I loved the community.

# Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Lack of restaurants/food options.
- Lack of recreational opportunities for youth in town
- No swimming pool.
- Largest business in town is tax-exempt and generates no tax revenue.
- Reliance on one well for the entire town's water supply creates challenges in times of drought.
- Possible flooding issues during rainy seasons.

## What will you remember?

- Small town charm and friendly people.
- Lots of positive aspects and still striving.
- Easy to get to and very clean.
- The museum is worth the trip back.
- I wish we had a grocery store like Keith's Foods in our community.



1. Help people know what's inside your businesses:  
How can they leave some cash as they drive through?
2. Add a "Medical Services" tab on City website with  
"Minutes of travel" to the services your town needs.
3. Tell your story: What is the new business coming to town?
4. Tell your story: Why do we love our schools?  
Photos of student activity/achievement help us picture our students enjoying being a Goessel Bluebird.

5. Link school information to city website.
6. Co-market as much as possible: Your school's achievements are your city's achievements.
7. Consider Youth Community Perceptions program as a 4-H or class activity.
8. Support the grocery store and other current businesses you value: Is there a succession plan?
9. Support people to work: Childcare is not available. Is remote work a possibility? (Research is currently being done on a remote work certificate through K-State Research and Extension.)

***Thanks to our volunteer leadership team***

## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

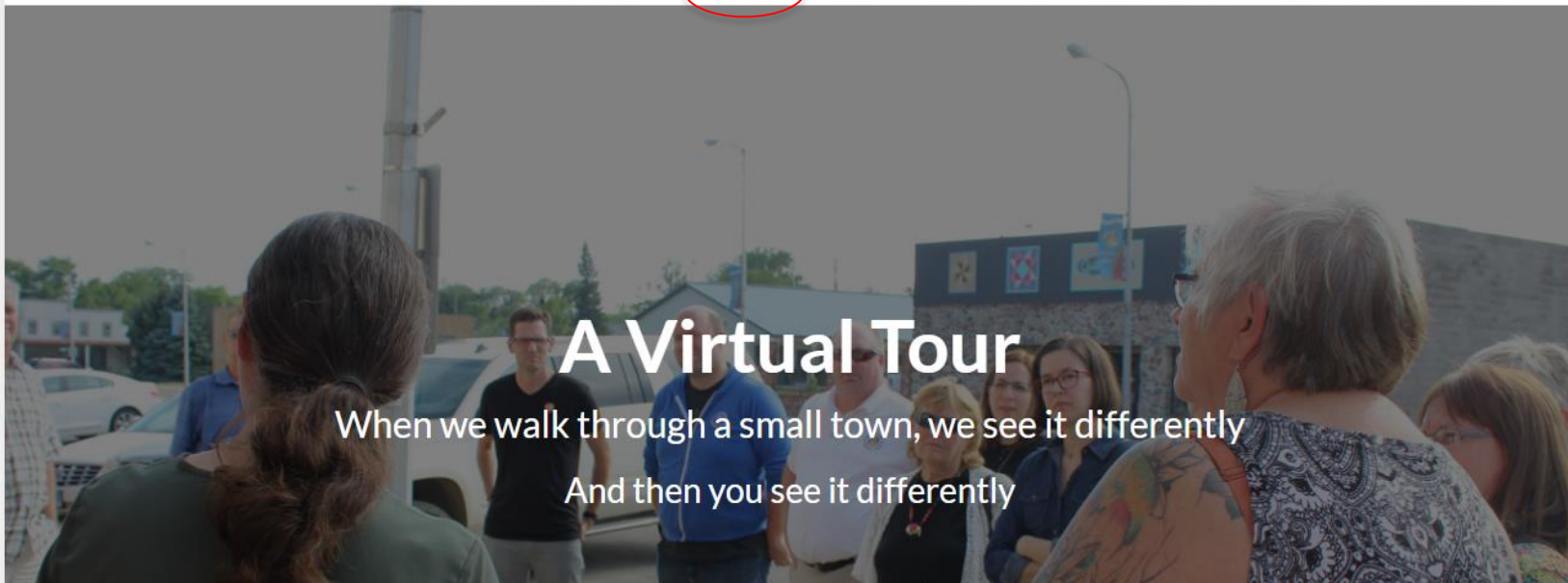


## Resources I like:

- <http://saveyour.town/>
  - Monthly live webinars; available on recording.
  - Pay once and show as many times as you want.
  - Watch parties encouraged.

**SAVEYOUR**.town

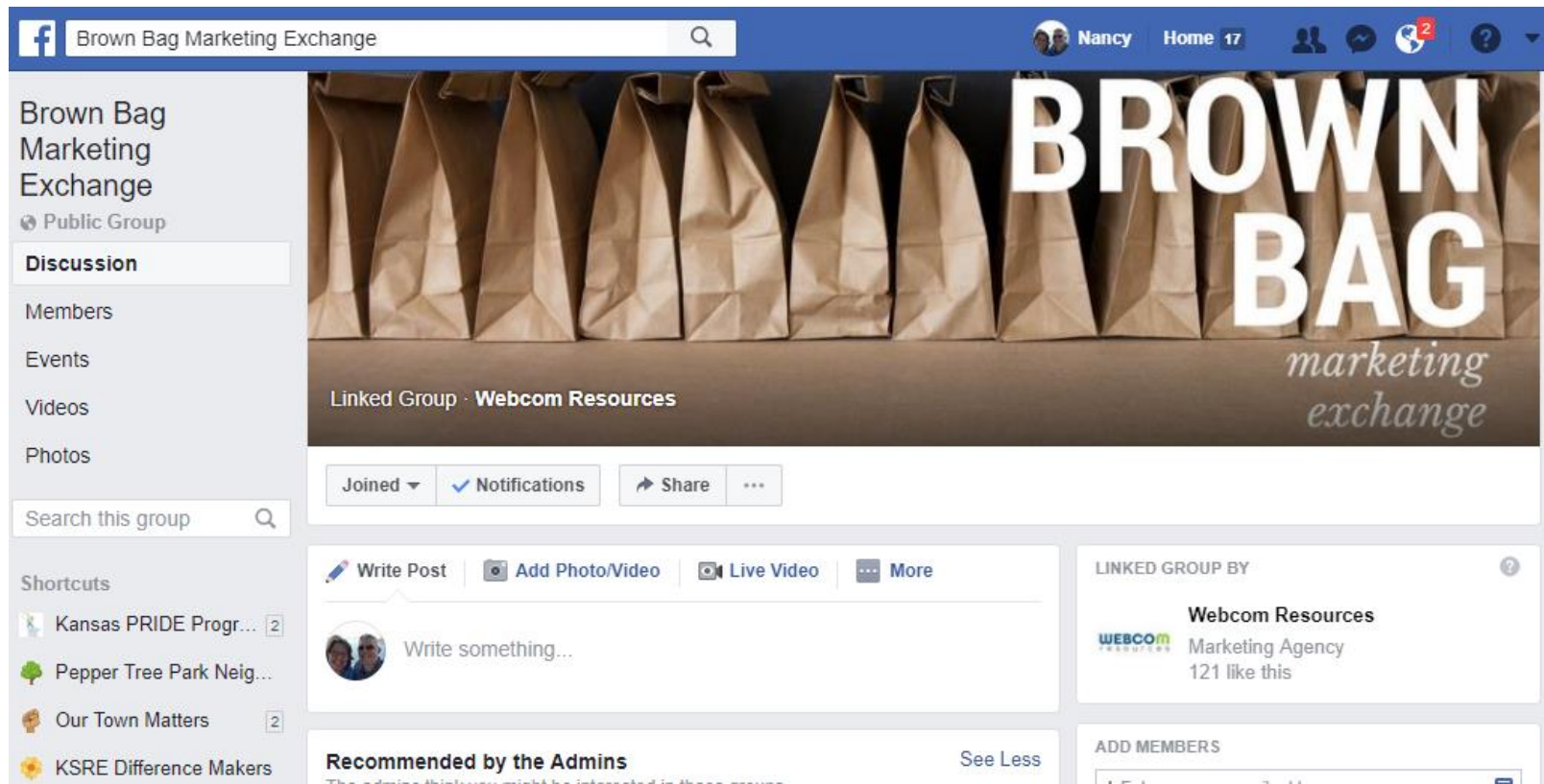
[HOME](#) [ABOUT DEB & BECKY](#) [WEBINARS](#) [TOOLKITS](#) [WORK WITH US](#) [I DON'T HAVE TIME!](#) [CONTACT](#) [MEMBERS LOGIN](#)



### 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](mailto:ibusenitz@ksu.edu),

KHFI Technical Assistance Coordinator, 785-532-6868





## Nancy Daniels

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