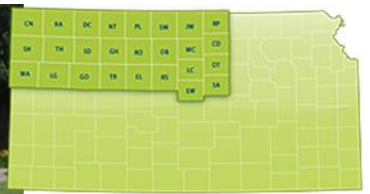


First Impressions

Independence, KS

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- Fort Scott asked for First Impressions, I asked Independence to be its partner; 1.5 hrs away.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey and took photos of Independence on February 4.
- Four Fort Scott visitors came in one car on March 4 and returned 2 reports; two SE Kansas residents were recruited for additional reports and returned them March 27, 28.
- Results are presented April 5.
- Independence 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 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.***
- “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/>

- 2010 Census Population 9,483
(down 3.7% since 2000*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2017 Estimate is 8,983
(down 8.8% since 2000 **KS= +8.0%**)
- 90.3% high school or GED, 19.9% college educated,
– **90.5% HS or equivalency, KS 32.3% college education,**
- Poverty rate 20.6% **(KS=12.8%)**
- Median Age 36.9 years **(36.3)**
- Median household income is \$38,577 **(\$55,477)**

* 2000 Census was 9,846

- **Website**
 - City website is the top hit on the search.
 - The website contains good information but is generic looking.
 - The Chamber website had a better feel as it has more pictures and information, but was 9th in the search when Googling.

- **Website** <https://www.independencesks.gov/>

The screenshot displays the City of Independence, Kansas website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <https://www.independencesks.gov>. The website's header includes the city logo, a search bar, and navigation links for Government, Services, Business, Community, and How Do I... A large banner for recycling features a green recycling symbol, a yellow flower, and text stating: "RECYCLING now available every **TUESDAY** 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. City Sanitation Yard 21st & Maple". Below this, it notes: "In addition to regular recycling collection the first Saturday of each month, 8 a.m. to 12 noon". The footer contains links for Request A Service, Online Reservations, Commission Agendas, Online Bill Pay, and Notify Me. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 4:27 PM on 3/29/2019.

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Web Presence

- **Website** <https://www.independencesks.gov/>

Google Mail - Nancy Daniels - Outlook Kansas PRIDE Program Independence, KS | Official Website Settings

<https://www.independencesks.gov>

Create an Account - Increase your productivity, customize your experience, and engage in information you care about. Sign In

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Government Services Business Community How Do I...

RECYCLING
now available every **TUESDAY**
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
City Sanitation Yard
21st & Maple

In addition to regular recycling collection
the first Saturday of each month, 8 a.m. to 12 noon

Request A Service
Connect with the city

Online Reservations
View current options

Commission Agendas
View latest documents

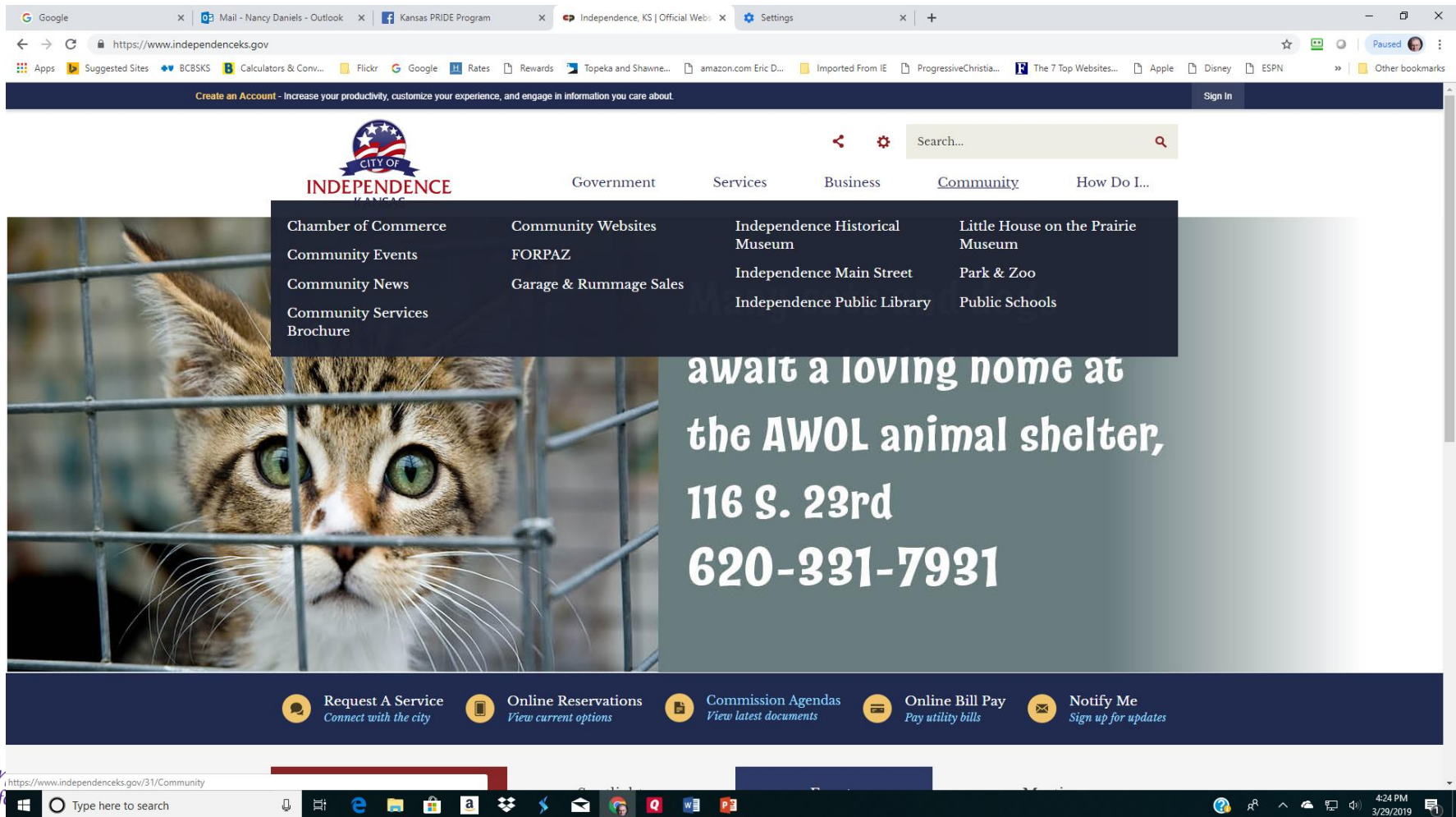
Online Bill Pay
Pay utility bills

Notify Me
Sign up for updates

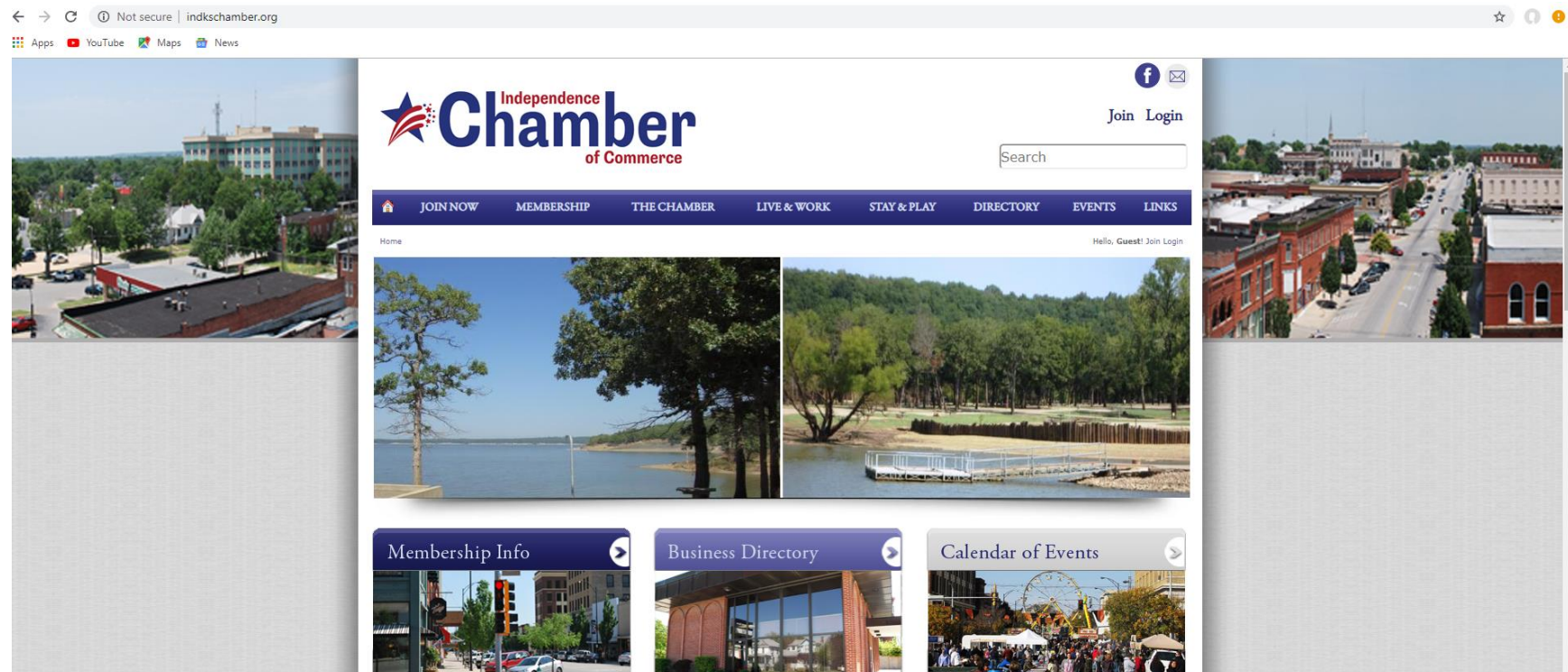
Type here to search

4:27 PM
3/29/2019

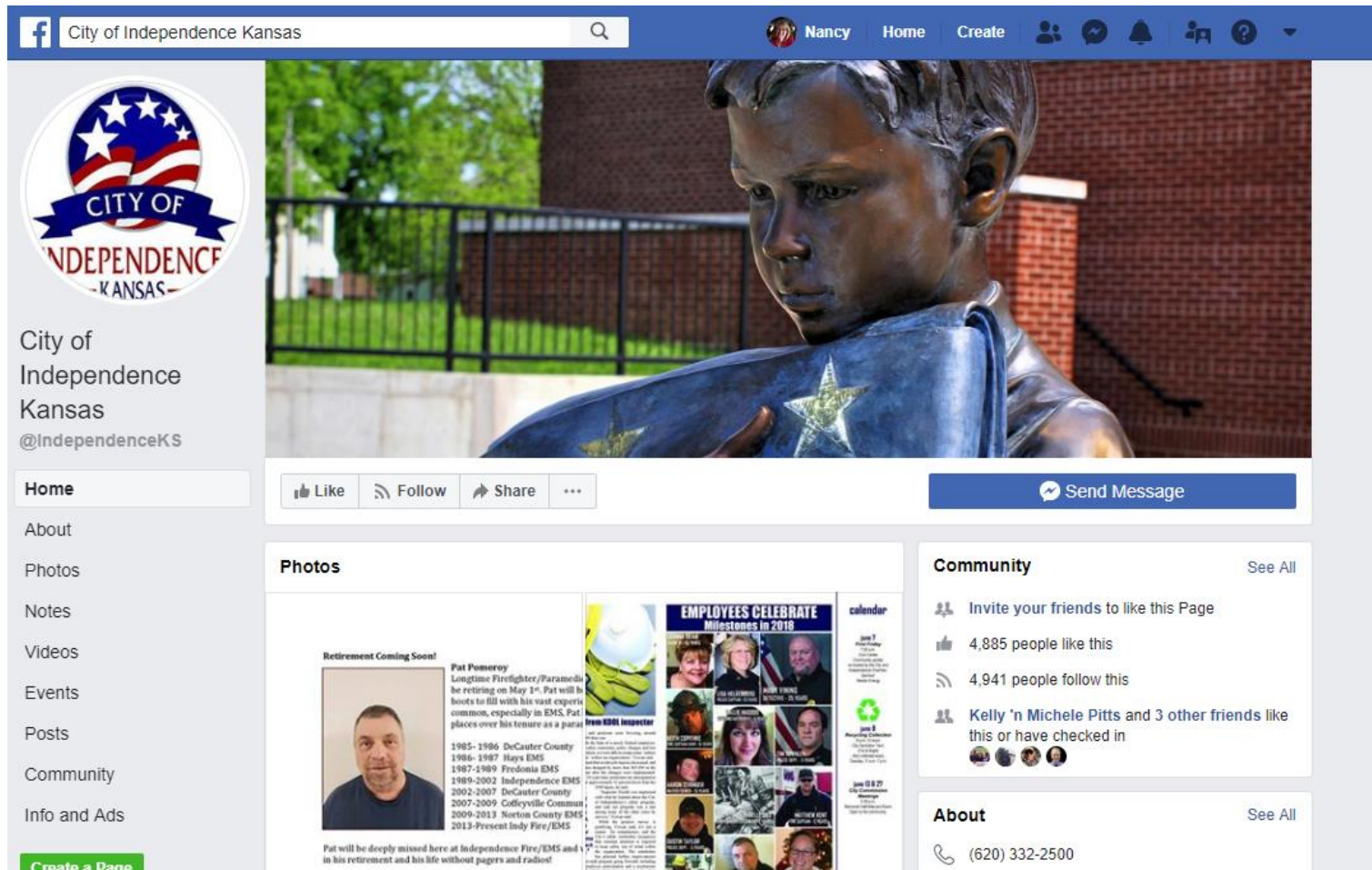
- **Website**
 - *Nice links to other websites, events, attractions.*



- **Website** <http://indkschamber.org/>
 - Even more information on the Chamber Website.
 - The Chamber video is excellent, in fact I found things that I couldn't find driving around.
 - *At the bottom of the page and easy to miss.*



- **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/IndependenceKS/>
- ## City of Independence Kansas
- Official announcements, city council meetings.



City of Independence Kansas
@IndependenceKS

Home About Photos Notes Videos Events Posts Community Info and Ads

Like Follow Share ... Send Message

Photos

Retirement Coming Soon!

Pat Pomeroy
Longtime Firefighter/Paramedic, he is retiring on May 1st. Pat will be boots to fill with his vast experience, especially in EMS. Pat places over his tenure as a paramedic:

- 1985-1986 DeCuster County
- 1986-1987 Hays EMS
- 1987-1989 Fredonia EMS
- 1989-2002 Independence EMS
- 2002-2007 DeCuster County
- 2007-2009 Coffeyville Community
- 2009-2013 Norton County EMS
- 2013-Present Indy Fire/EMS

Pat will be deeply missed here at Independence Fire/EMS and in his retirement and his life without pagers and radios!

EMPLOYEES CELEBRATE Milestones in 2018

Community See All

- Invite your friends to like this Page
- 4,885 people like this
- 4,941 people follow this
- Kelly 'n Michele Pitts and 3 other friends like this or have checked in

About See All

(620) 332-2500

- **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/indymainst/>
 - *Independence KS Main Street*
 - *Promotes shopping and events in Independence.*
 - Facebook, “Typically replies to messages within 1 hour.”



- **Facebook** Neewollah (Independence, Kansas)
- <https://www.facebook.com/Neewollah-Independence-Kansas-146643028730753/>
- Facebook, “Typically replies to messages within a day.”

The screenshot shows the Facebook profile of Neewollah (Independence, Kansas). The page header includes the Facebook logo, a search bar with the text "Neewollah (Independence, Kansas)", and navigation links for "Nancy", "Home", "Create", and various icons for friends, messages, notifications, and settings. The profile picture is a circular logo with the text "FAMILY FUN FOR MORE THAN 60 YEARS", "THE DIAMOND JUBILEE", "Neewollah", and "INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS 2018". The cover photo features two people in white uniforms playing brass instruments, with the text "INDEPENDENCE, KANSAS", "Neewollah", "SINCE 1919", and "1-877-NEE-WOLLAH (1-877-633-9655)". Below the cover photo are buttons for "Like", "Follow", "Share", and "Send Message". The left sidebar shows the "Home" tab selected, with links to "About", "Photos", "Events", "Get Tickets", "Videos", and "Posts". The "Photos" section displays two images: a blue structure and a group of people. The "Community" section shows options to "Invite your friends to like this Page", "9,958 people like this", "9,946 people follow this", and a list of people who liked the page.

Neewollah (Independence, Kansas)

Home

About

Photos

Events

Get Tickets

Videos

Posts

Like Follow Share ...

Send Message

Photos

Community

See All

Invite your friends to like this Page

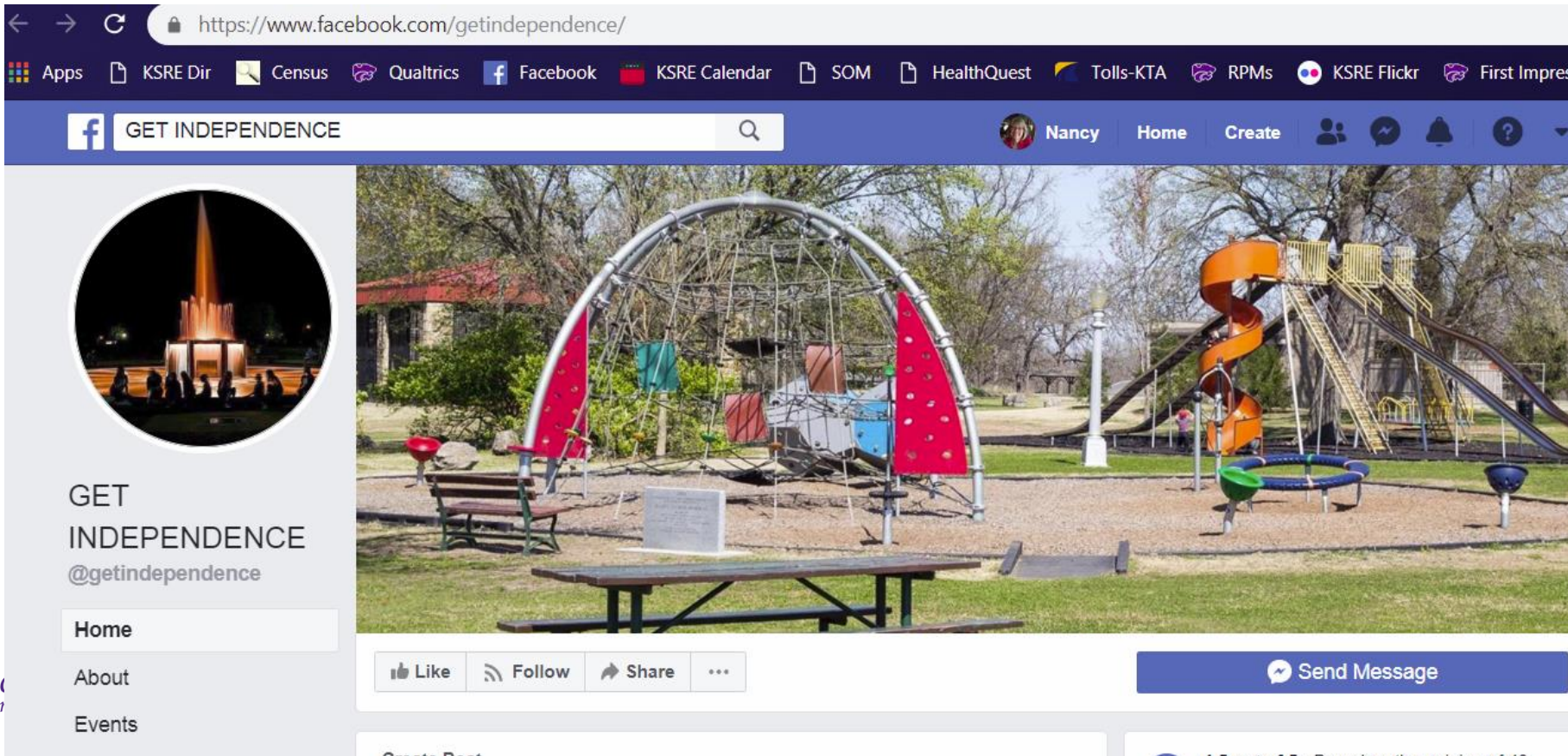
9,958 people like this

9,946 people follow this

Jim Correll and 1 other like this or have

- **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/getindependence/>
- Facebook Link from Chamber website

Did not show up in Facebook searches of pages “Independence KS” or “Independence Kansas”



The screenshot shows the Facebook profile of 'GET INDEPENDENCE'. The profile picture is a circular image of a monument at night. The cover photo is a large image of a playground with a prominent arch structure. The page layout includes a top navigation bar with links to 'Home', 'About', and 'Events'. Below the cover photo, there are buttons for 'Like', 'Follow', 'Share', and 'Send Message'. The page is viewed on a desktop browser, with the address bar showing the URL 'https://www.facebook.com/getindependence/'.

- The community feels spread-out, rather than compact.
- Entrance signs from each direction are consistent, but some need a fresh coat of paint.
- Solar or LED lighting would enhance signs at night.
- There are several pockets of business, Walmart and Orscheln’s, downtown and by the zoo.

“Five-Minute” Impression



“Five-Minute” Impression

- WPA wall is beautiful and cemetery is well-maintained. (Public Infrastructure comment)



Downtown Business Area

- Mural is nice.
- Impressed with the variety of downtown shopping; several nice boutiques, floral shop, furniture store.



Photo at 5:18 pm

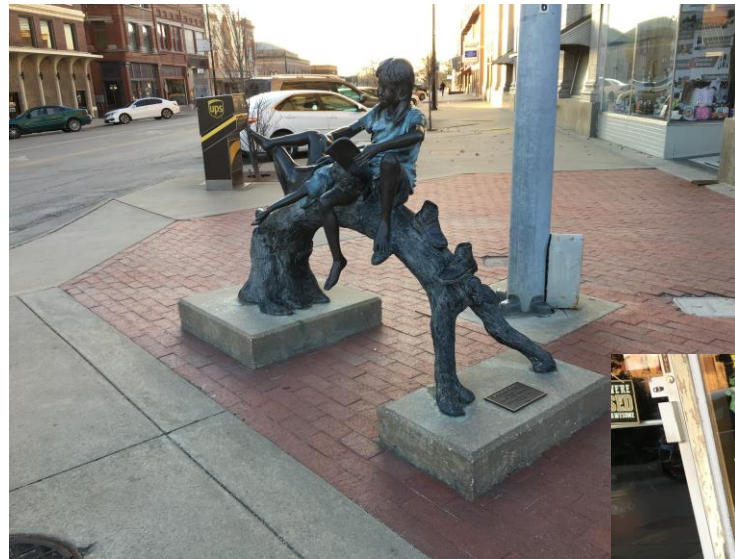
Downtown Business Area

- Some buildings that need to be occupied, but most are in operation look very nice.



Downtown Business Area

- Loved the statues and benches. Welcoming, friendly downtown.
- Lots of local restaurants most communities don't have.



Downtown Business Area

- Feels very local– more than one downtown street. Very friendly. People want to help.





Downtown Business Area



Downtown Business Area





Amenities

- Some WiFi. Could be more trash cans.
- Restrooms available in shops. No problems parking and nice sidewalks to visit many stores at one spot.



Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Nice variety of shopping, retail and hotels.
- Outside the downtown area, retail seems to drop off and is not as attractive as downtown. Easy to access.
- Good customer service.



Industrial Parks/Commercial

- Industrial area sign could use updating.
- Curious about vacated tall, high-rise building close to town. If the building is available, signage would make it clear.



- *A drive-by is not how industry will find you, your local Eco Devo director will list your sites 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.*

- Health Care Center building is very nice.
- Emergency care with ambulance is available.
- Labette Health is widely used and respected in the SE Kansas area. An impressive facility with an excellent reputation.



- Appears to be a tremendous network of physicians.



- Physicians, dentists, eye doctors, the community seems well-covered with health care.



- Tried to use the city website to review health care and the resource directory doesn't work.



Long-term Care

- Many long-term care facilities, that appear inviting and welcoming.



Long-term Care



- Penn Terrace apartments/ public housing is nice, with nice pavilion across the street.



- Nice new housing on the north near the schools.
- Trailers are spread in areas throughout town.



- Homes that would appeal to many incomes.



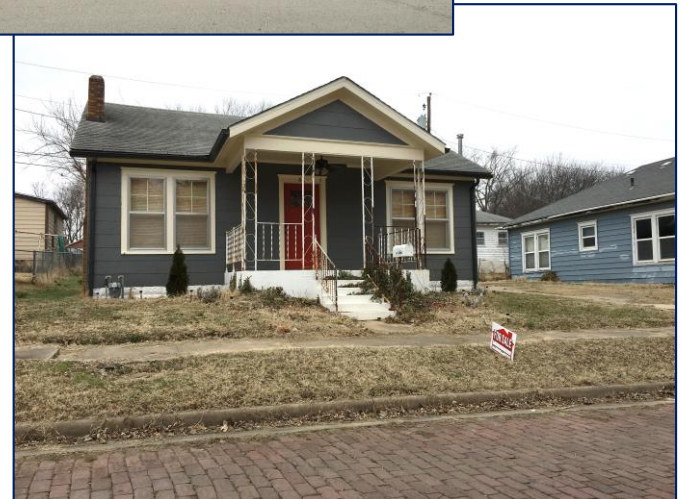
- Variety of modern and historic homes.



- Clean, tidy, appealing homes are more common than the eyesores.



- Variety of homes on the market, with some TLC they would be good rentals or starter homes for newcomers.



- Amazed at how many nice apartments were in town!



- Chamber had a rental/realtor listing.
- Not easy to find rental properties, a web-based enhancement would be helpful.
- Washington Historical Residences looking like a new one. Great to see nice clean apartment spaces available.



KANSAS

- Total Housing Units 4,751
- Total Occupied Houses 3,802 (80.0%) (89.1%)
- Vacant Houses 949 (20.0%) (10.7%)

- Owner Occupied 2,330 (61.3%) (66.4%)
- Renter Occupied 1,472 (38.7%) (33.6%)
- Family Households 61.6% (65.4%)
- Non-family Household 38.4% (34.6%)

- Overall impression of every school is positive; they are well-maintained and did an impressive job of grounds keeping.



We shouldn't have to watch the Chamber video to find out that this community invested \$45 Million in new and renovated schools.

Beautiful interior photos from architect's website market the school well.



“Kansas Preservation Alliance 2012 Honor Award for Excellence for Rehabilitation”
Beautiful interior photos from architect’s website market the school well.





- Independence Community College: Modest, but effective signage. New student housing, some buildings appear outdated.
- It took some driving to find the college, but that campus looked nice too.

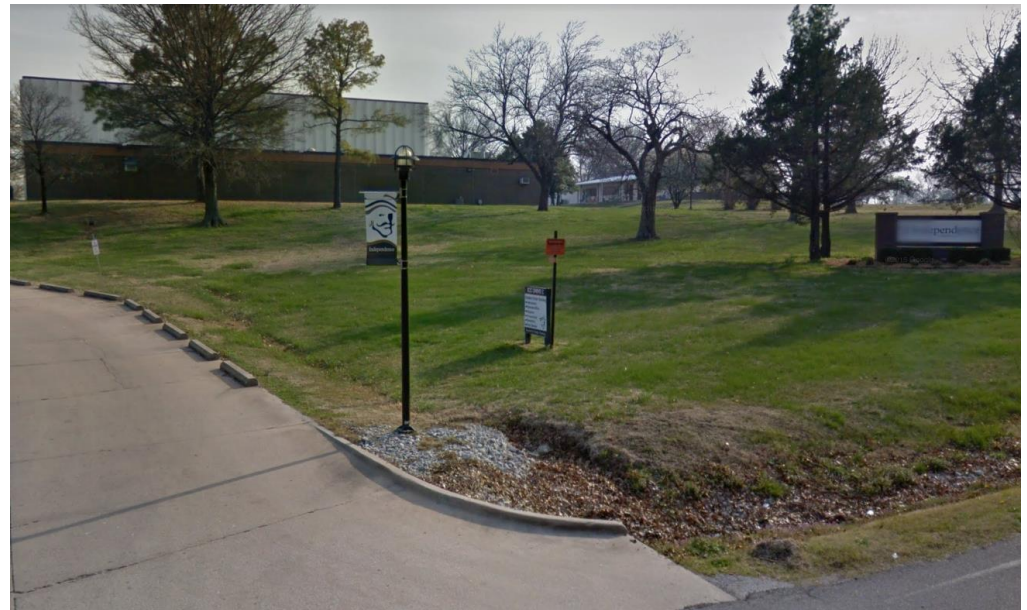
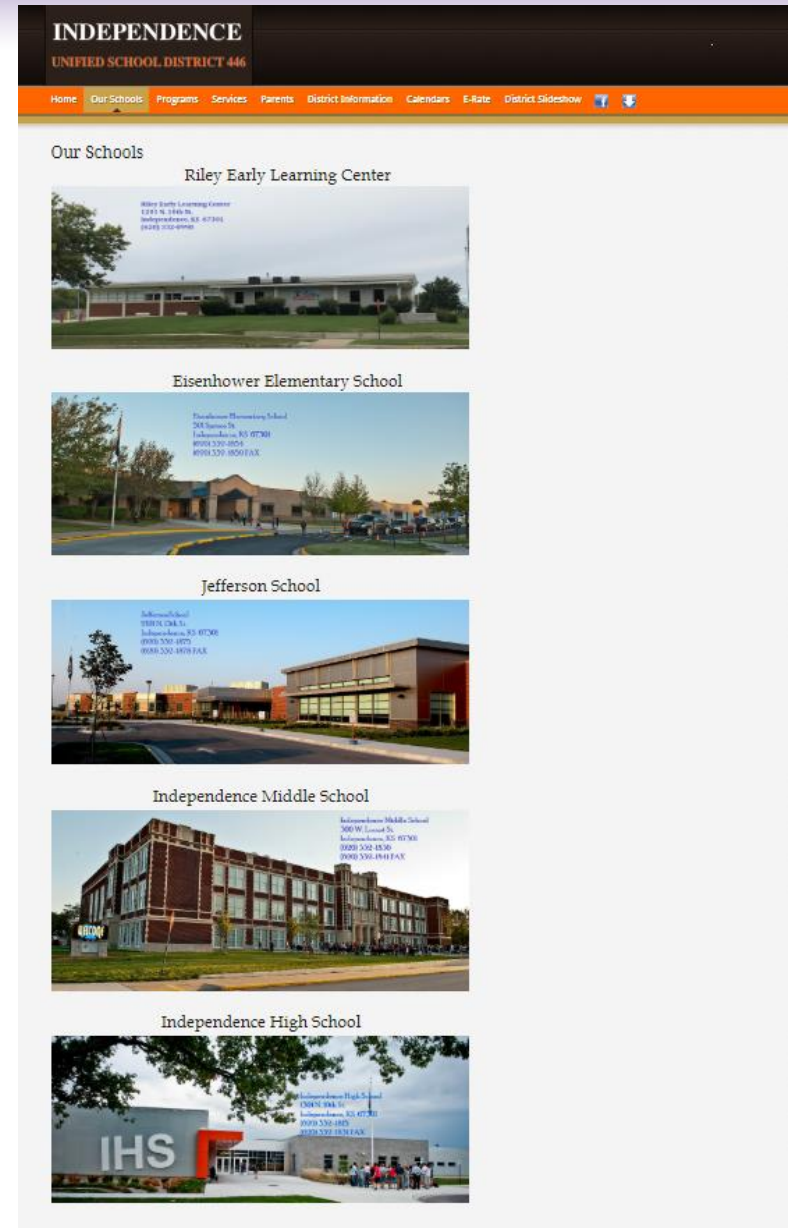


Photo retrieved from Google Earth 3-30-19
Photo taken 3-2016

- Riley Early Learning near other schools.
- 3- and 4-year old early education are part of public schools.



- School website is helpful, but I didn't find anything about the quality of the education on local websites.
- *Photos of students in their learning contexts would help people picture their lives here.*



We did not observe any childcare locations. Could not find on city or chamber website.

Montgomery County Data:

- **Number of Children Under Age 6:** **2,926**
- **Children with all parents in the workforce:** **69%**
- **Desired Capacity of Child Care Centers** **702**
- **Extent that desired capacity meets potential need** **35%**
- **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*

- A variety of well-maintained, historic churches.
- A sense of pride in the buildings.







- We were unable to find much information about civic clubs. Meetings were not noted on event calendars for the city or chamber.
- Signage for Lions Club, Kiwanis and VFW.
- Did not see evidence of activity.



- A blighted area at 2nd and Cherry, A&J Storage. We drove through a huge pothole in this area too.
- Nice streets and sidewalks for the most part. As one leaves downtown it seems to go downhill.

Photo taken June 2016

*Photo retrieved from
Google Earth 3-30-19*





- *No one stopped at City Hall.*
- I was confused where city hall was located.
Temporarily located away from cool brick building.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- The police station is nice.
- Seems adequate fire and police protection.



www.kinsurance.org/otherservices/iso.php
Amazon.com - Online | Flickr | BCSKS | Beth Fink - Facts | Calculators & Conve | Google | Great Life | Rates | Rewards | Science of the Mind | Shipping Address - | Topeka and Shawnee | amazon.com Eric
Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department Home Contact Us search GO

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



HQ/LIE : 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

- Library is old, but remarkably preserved. A new addition tells me that they care about its important educational value.
- Their website isn't loading everything correctly. Good signage to find library.



- VERY NICE Riverside Park and Aquatic Center.



- Truly impressive Riverside Park.
- Nice tennis courts. Rusty trash dumpster needs to go or be rehabbed.



- Golf course with excellent reputation in SE Kansas.
- Ball fields around town.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Didn't notice a slogan.
- Neewollah is one of their well-known annual events.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- A great place for a day or weekend trip. Little House on the Prairie is close by. A great destination opportunity.
- Downtown offers regular events that locals hear about.
- *Photos of these events would make appealing marketing-small towns having fun together so people can picture themselves living here.*
- *No visitor spoke of the William Inge events.*



Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Little House on the Prairie is a neat feature.
- Chamber video online talked of the lakes. I would like to see more signage about campgrounds and lakes.
- The museum looked inviting.



Photo retrieved from internet
3-30-19

<https://www.littlehouseontheprairiemuseum.com/>

Visitor's Center

- Chamber of Commerce has a very nice digital sign.
- I was well-received and given information.



What would bring you back?

- Impressed with a new Brew Pub coming.
- Cinema, Disc Golf and Ralph Mitchell Zoo should be a draw.
- The boutique was a stand-out.
- Apricot Lane.
- Ate at Ane Mae's and will go back again. I found an old-time soda fountain.

Most Positive Observations

- Appearance and condition of the schools.
- Great potential in downtown.
- Impressive health care.
- Amazing park/zoo/aquatic center.
- A community with pride.
- Quaint and lots of local options.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Keeping downtown businesses full.
- Maintaining downtown facades.
- Difficult to find a great downtown local restaurant.
- Lots to offer, but the challenge is to adequately tell the story.

What will you remember?

- Nice sized rural Kansas Community with many amenities.
- Friendly staff in local shops.
- Local artisans on display.
- Hugo's. What an entrepreneurial gem!

Thank our leadership team:

- *Lisa Wilson, Chair*
- *Gary Hogsett*
- *April Nutt*
- *Joanne Smith*
- *Garrett Wilson*

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

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	
------------	----------------	-------	-------------	-----------	---------	---------	-----	--

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.

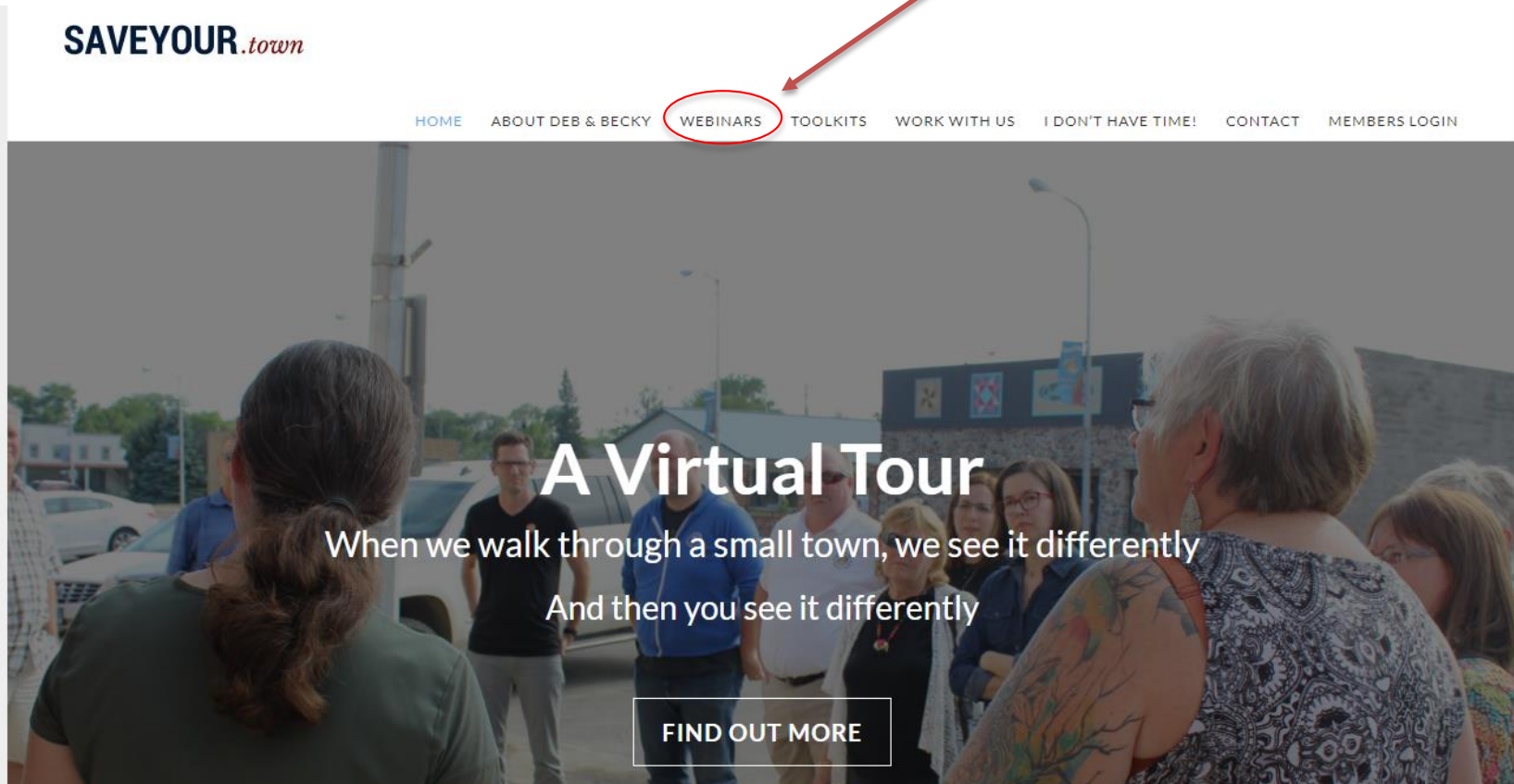
Newsletters

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

JOIN

I will never sell or rent your email.

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



- IdeaFriendly.com

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.

*We can
do it now!*

We create the moments that show what this town could be and the places that take our breath away, if only just for a moment. What we create doesn't have to be permanent to create possibility. We don't care about titles or who holds official positions. The people who do hold titles may not think like us.

*That's
OK.*

*Welcome to _____,
an Idea Friendly town.*

- <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



Nancy Daniels

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