

# First Impressions

## McFarland, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- McFarland asked for First Impressions, Delphos agreed to be its partner; 1:45 min drive.
- I trained McFarland volunteers about the visit and survey on October 7 and took photos.
- 3 visitors from Delphos visited in September.
- Results presented at a community meeting Nov 14, 2024
- McFarland uses the results for further discussion and action plans.

# Why: First Impressions?

- **Feedback:**

How does a first-time visitor view my town?

- Evaluate successes,
- Set goals and priorities for next steps.

- **If you don't agree with the observation:**

- ***Be curious,*** Why does the visitor see it this way?
- Is the observation worth considering?
- What can we do to change it– or the perception?

**Curiosity: A strong desire to know or learn something.**

*-Oxford Living Dictionary*

**Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN**

***We need to change the narrative about rural.***

- Rural is *changing*, not dying.
- Brain Gain (30-49 year olds moving to rural) is a “new trend” that has been happening since the 70’s.
- People research a number of places before they move to a rural town.
- Rural is in the middle of ***everywhere***. You live one place, work another and play another. With transportation and internet, it’s all accessible to you.



## Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN

- 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,
  - 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 3 people to a 300-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**.  
7/12/2024; 3/6/2020; 3/1/2019*

*See the recordings at: <https://bit.ly/ks-first-impressions>*

- Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

(Source: Kansas Secretary of State Division of the Budget Certified Population Data 2024, 2014; Census.gov)

- Moved since Last Year  
(2018-2022)

21%

14.6%

Consider the margin of error of 10%

- Poverty rate

5%

12%

(% of people below poverty line) 17% of Children and  
6% of Seniors below the poverty line

## Race/Ethnicity

White: 83%

American Indian: 0%

Black: 0%

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific  
Islander: 0%

Asian: 0%

Two or more races: 4%

Other: 0%

Not Hispanic/Latino: 87%

Hispanic or Latino: 12%

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

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

- **Website**

<https://www.wbcounty.org/home/pages/mcfarland-kansas>



## McFarland, Kansas

McFarland offers a lovely residential area with easy-access to great schools, churches and businesses. Well-situated along Interstate 70 between Manhattan, Wamego and Topeka- just minutes away to regional employment and service centers!

The history and pattern of McFarland is the same of many small towns in Kansas. It came to exist because of the railroad and has experienced boom and bust. McFarland was founded in 1887 by S.R. Fairfield. McFarland was incorporated in 1903. The town was platted at the Rock Island Railroad point where the rail branched northwest to Denver and the Pacific coast, as well branching southwest toward the Gulf of Mexico. Railroad activity peaked in the 1920's then began to dwindle in the 1950's as railroad facilities were reduced in town. Although there is little business in McFarland, this small bedroom community is actually seeing a population increase in recent years.

Please drive through and consider this small town for your home or even small business! It's a nice, quiet town and home to 253 people!

The McFarland PRIDE organization manages the schedule and maintenance of the Baseball Diamond, helps with the fabulous city park, and hosts family friendly activities as various holidays throughout the year.

Contact a McFarland PRIDE Committee Member for more information: [McFarland PRIDE](#)

## What is the Kansas PRIDE Program?

The Kansas PRIDE program is a volunteer, grassroots effort to improve the quality of life in local communities. Each Kansas community is unique and shares a common bond: a rich heritage based on self-reliance and community pride. Since 1970, the Kansas PRIDE program has assisted and encouraged communities to prepare for the future by building on their past and forming a vision of the future. The goal of PRIDE is to help maximize community and economic development efforts by encouraging all groups to coordinate and work collaboratively for the better of the community.



### McFarland PRIDE Committee Contacts:

Chair - Ed Dillingham 785-765-3785  
edillingham@kdheks.gov

Secretary - Marilyn Ponte 785-765-3477  
mponte1@embarqmail.com

Treasurer - Angie Boeckman 785-765-3651  
PO Box 125  
McFarland KS 66501  
angieboeckman@stockgrowers.biz



## Why Do You Live in McFarland?!

Is it...

*The Quality of Life*

*The Friendly, Small Town*

*A Safe Community*

*Sense of Community*

*A Good Place to Raise a Family*

*Proximity to Interstate*

*A Quiet Community*

*The Good School System*

*The Small Town Atmosphere?!*

## McFarland PRIDE is supported by:

- K-State Research & Extension
- Kansas Department of Commerce
- Wabaunsee Co Economic Development
- The City of McFarland

## What would YOU like to see happen?

- Highway clean-up
- Landscaping
- Park Projects
- Community Projects
- Fresh Paint around town
- Seasonal Festivities: Halloween, Christmas Decor
- Assistance for Elderly - winterizing homes, raking leaves, shoveling snow, mowing, tree trimming
- And Many other opportunities for McFarland !!!

Please fill in the blank and return to the Post Office Suggestion Box:

## Suggestions:

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<https://mcfarlandkansas.com/>



[Home](#)

[History](#)

[Our Community](#)

[Forms and Permits](#)

[Resources](#) ▼

[Contact](#)

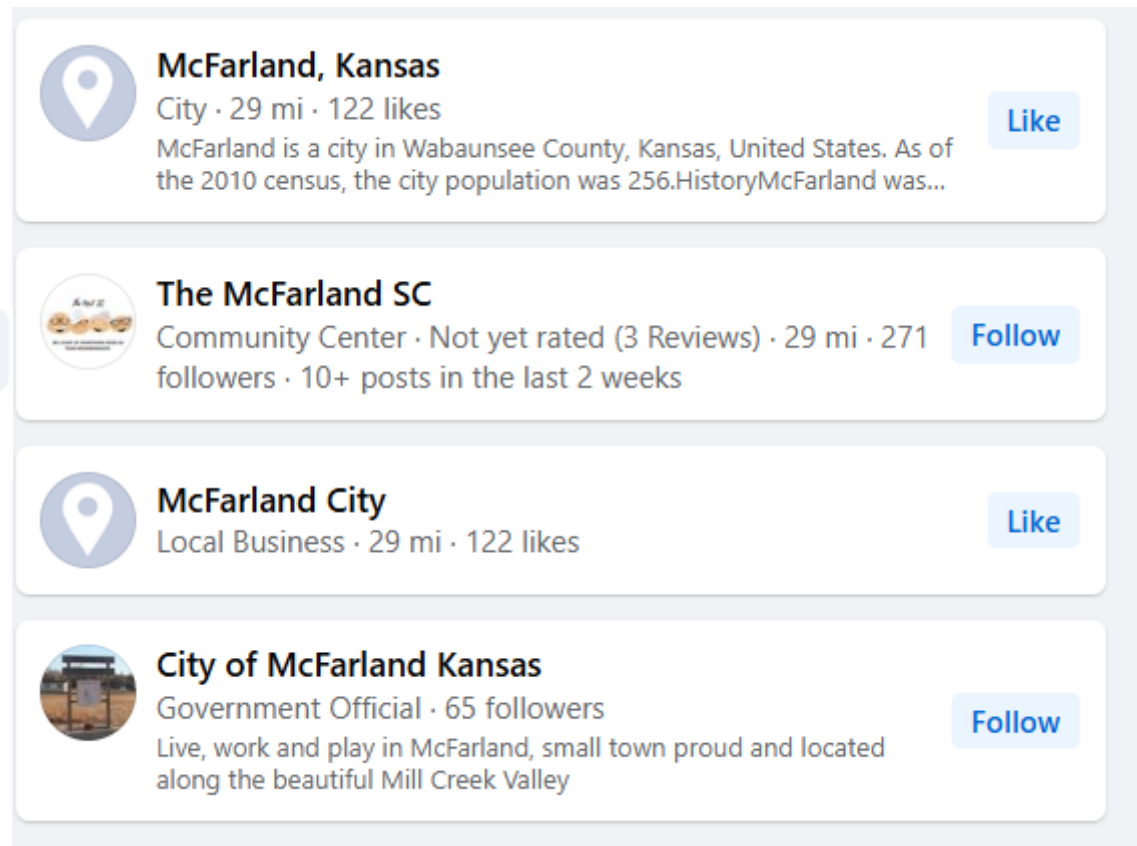
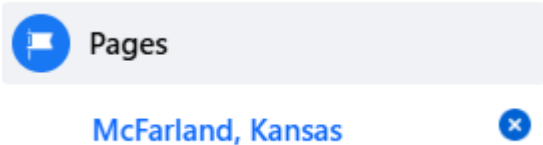
## Connecting You to City Resources

Offering Basic Information to the Public About City and  
Community Services

[Get in Touch](#)



- Facebook




When I search Facebook for “McFarland Kansas,” Alma sites also come up, reminding us that other towns and resources are nearby.

- **Facebook**



<https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-McFarland-Kansas/109292585757304/>



*A Facebook-generated page reminds us of things within easy driving distance in Topeka, MHK, and Wamego.*

**McFarland, Kansas**  
City · 29 mi · 122 likes  
McFarland is a city in Wabaunsee County, Kansas, United States. As of the 2010 census, the city population was 256. History McFarland was...  
[Like](#)

### Where to Go


[Eat](#) [Drink](#) [Sightseeing](#) [Hotels](#) [Shopping](#) [Nightlife](#) [Cafe](#) [Museum](#) [Outdoor](#)


**Blue Moose Topeka**  
American Restaurant · 3.9★  
**Bluestem Bistro**  
Coffee shop · 4.6★

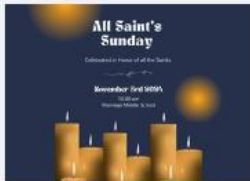
**Paisanos Topeka**  
Italian Restaurant · 4.0★  
**The Little Grill**  
Bar & Grill · 4.3★

### Upcoming Events

[Recommended](#) [Today](#) [This week](#) [This Month](#)

**NOV 5** Wamego, KS - On The Hook Fish and Chips  
Wed 11:00 AM · Waters Harc  
142 guests are going

**NOV 30** Season of Lights 2024  
Sun 4:00 PM · Downtown W  
4509 guests are going

**NOV 3** Worship Service  
Mon 10:00 AM · Wamego M  
3 guests are going

# “Five-Minute” Impression

- “Featured” posts are quite old, but numerous posts were made in October.



## The McFarland SC

181 likes · 271 followers

Message Like Search

Posts About Mentions Reviews Followers Photos More

### Intro

Page · Community Center

503 Main Street, McFarland, KS, United States, Kansas

Not yet rated (3 Reviews)

### Photos

See all photos



### Featured



### Posts

The McFarland SC 14h

In September McFarland participated in the “First Impressions” program through K-State Research and Extension. There will be presentation held at the McF SC on Thurs., 11-14 @ 6:30 pm to discuss the findings.

Background: Volunteers from McFarland recently visited Delphos, KS and visa versa. The volunteers toured both cities and were assigned with providing information on their “first impressions” of the cities.

All citizens are encouraged to attend and learn how others v... See more

*Search: “How to update feature stories in Facebook”*

- Facebook



## McFarland City

Local business · Unofficial Page

Home About Photos

Like

### About

See all



20 people like this  
20 people follow this  
347 people checked in here  
<http://mcfarlandks.com/>  
(785) 765-2265  
Local Business

### Page transparency

See all

Facebook is showing information to help you better understand the purpose of a Page. See actions taken by the people who manage and post content.

Page created - July 9, 2015

Privacy · Consumer Health Privacy · Terms · Advertising · Ad Choices · Cookies · More · Meta © 2024

### Posts about McFarland City

Dorine Schley is at McFarland City.  
February 15, 2019 · McFarland · Margaret J. Schley thinking of you, Todd & Small Fry. Made some delicious K-State blueberry muffins. Want me to bring some next week? 🍪 Yum, yum. Batter tasted good.

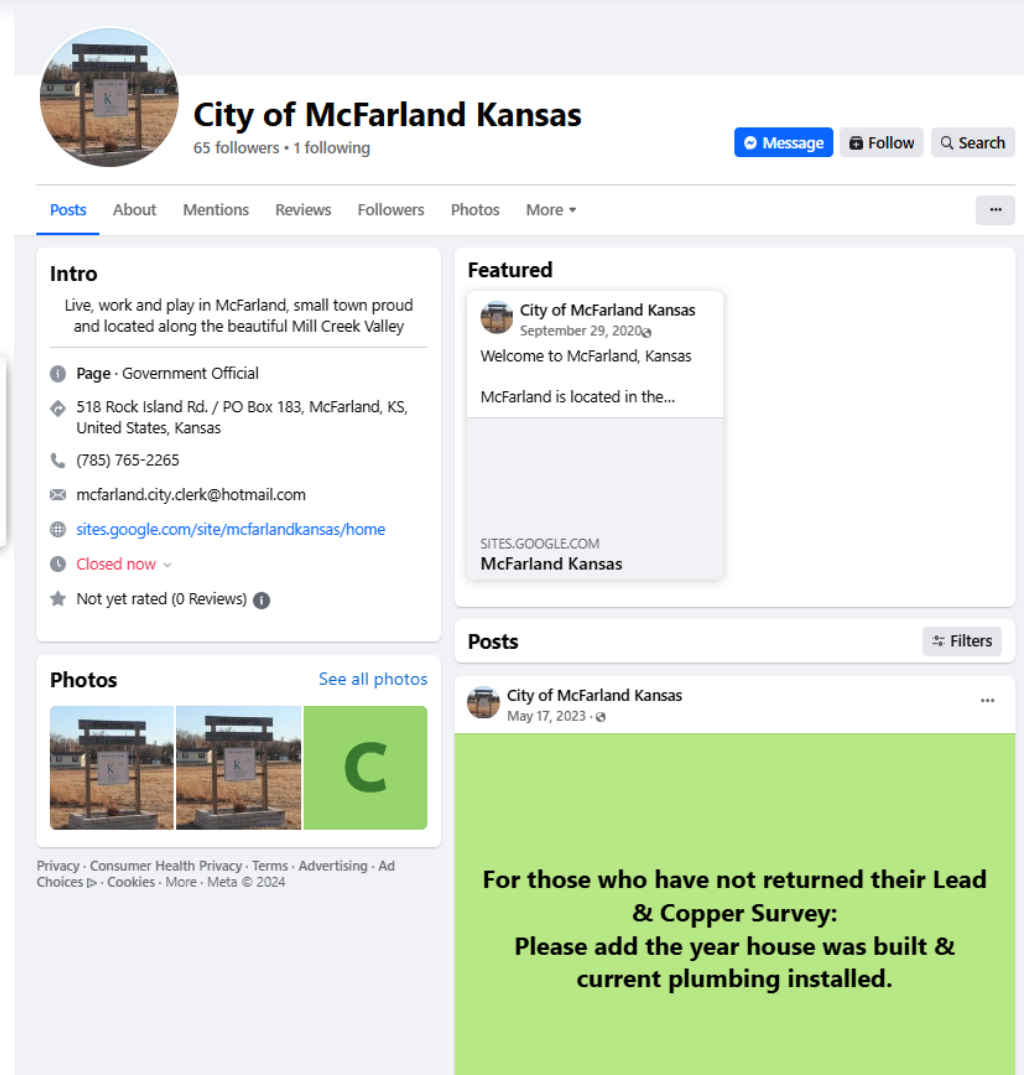


2 1 comment

Like Comment Copy Share



- Facebook



- **Facebook**
  - McFarland City Government has a FB page.
  - One FB page looked official but was kept by a private citizen. When we called, it was not a working number or there was no answer.
  - It would be nice if the FB page listed activities.

# “Five-Minute” Impression

- Two McFarland signs, nice streets, mural- very nice!
- Welcome signs and the area around it were well-maintained.
- The city and most homes were very well maintained.
- Nice street signs, nice cemetery signs.
- City Hall Depot reflected the town’s heritage.
- It was nice not to hear dogs barking.
- Wi-Fi sign was easy to read at entrance.

# “Five-Minute” Impression





# “Five-Minute” Impression



- There is only a post office. Other buildings are vacant.
- Run-down buildings look hazardous. The pop machine worked.
- The bank is being renovated and is beautiful.
- One could imagine Main Street in its booming days. Lovely building structures, street signs, directions to the park, and Alma are clear.
- Lovely historic railroad flags on downtown street poles.





























- Plenty of parking everywhere we went.



# Other Retail Shopping Areas

- McFarland doesn't have "other retail" shopping.
- There are no fuel pumps in McFarland.
- McFarland residents are in the middle of everywhere and get other services from nearby cities.

- Mc Farland is landlocked next to farm ground.

## ***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.*





- Lots of nice, newer homes, as well as middle-to lower-income housing.
- Some homes are not as well-kept as others.
- Many homes are decorated. We saw patriotic and American pride.
- We saw one or two homes for sale.













- Occupied Housing Units: 111
  - Owner Occupied: 86%
  - Renter Occupied: 14%
  - Vacant Housing Units 6
    - For rent:
    - For sale:
    - Sold, not occupied:
    - Seasonal/recreational:
    - All other vacants: 6
  - Average Household Size: 3.27
- Kansas  
1.15m  
65.3%  
34.7%  
124k  
2.48

## Kansas

- Average Travel Time to Work: 20.7mins 19.6 mins
- Households without a computer\*: 12% ( %) 45k (3.8%)
- Households without an internet subscription: 25% ( %) 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/>



- Children attend school in Alma with bus service at the park.

*Consider adding this information to your City page.*



“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:

- Visitors said, “There is no childcare in McFarland.”

According to Child Care Aware, WB County Childcare is in Alma and Maple Hill

## Wabaunsee County Data:

- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need** **78%**
- **Child Care Cost Burden: 18% of Median Household Income.**
- Contact [ks.childcareaware.org](https://ks.childcareaware.org) to access local childcare specialists.  
785-823-3343

- There were two active churches, both well-kept.
- One Church/Child Care Building was for rent





- Saw the TEAM sign at the north end of town.
- The Senior Center is where Bingo is played- a nice community event.



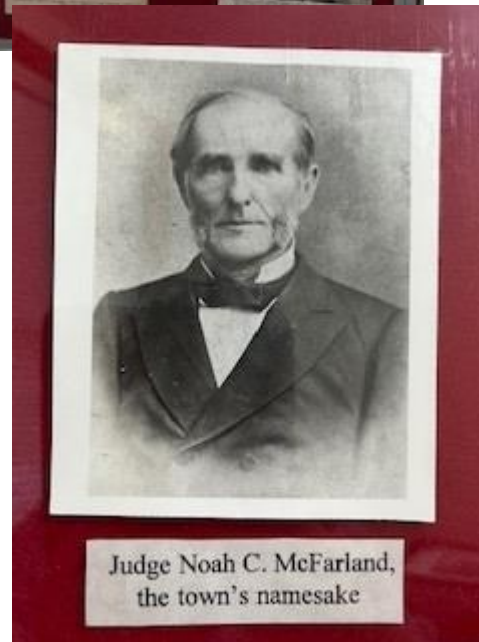
- Streets, sidewalks, and street signs are in good shape.
- Clean public areas.



- The city clerk was extremely helpful and answered many questions. He is a great PR person for McFarland.
- We really enjoyed the display of McFarland History at the City Building.
- Larry was very knowledgeable about city finance goals and challenges.









# Fire, EMS and Police Services

- McFarland has a nice fire station and volunteer firefighters. The County provides police protection.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

Home Contact Us Search 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

**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



- There is no library.

- Visitors were highly complimentary of the park and ballfields. These comments were spread throughout the reports.
- Well-kept ballfield, bathrooms, and a concession stand. A+
- The ballfield is ready to go, but there are no organized town teams.
- There are trash cans, a public restroom, and water fountains.



# City Parks & Recreation







# City Parks & Recreation





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

- Their history with the Rock Island Railroad was their glory days. During our two-hour visit, I saw and heard trains through the edge of town 3-4 times.

## **Natural or manmade features that can draw people?**

- Rock Island Railroad History

## Visitor's Center

- The City Office is a nice facility and clean. The city clerk is knowledgeable and helpful, we enjoyed the historical display at city hall.



## What would bring you back?

- There are no restaurants or shops to bring us here.

# Most Positive Observations

- Nice streets and sidewalks. Lots of very nice newer homes. Community Bingo. The majority of yards were neat and tidy.
- Very well-maintained streets and public buildings.
- Streets are well-maintained with little or no vandalism per city clerk. Patriotic, American pride is reflected in well-kept homes and yards. USA Flag flying. Many political signs and flags, all in good taste.

# Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Probably McFarland's proximity to Alma, Wamego. This is a plus, being so close to medical facilities, restaurants, shopping, and amenities. But it's also a negative because people would live in Alma and Wamego and establish businesses in these towns. Perhaps lack of housing. Has McFarland explored building multiple housing for singles?
- No tax base, but property. It is a bedroom community.
- No retail businesses. Land locked due to no land to expand building houses. Retail was locked due to living in close proximity to larger towns offering industrial, retail, commercial.
-



## What will you remember?

- The City clerk was very helpful and had an obvious love for McFarland. Very nice housing in areas. Streets in great shape.
- The streets, park, museum in City Offices. Walkability with good signage for streets.
- Patriotic Pride. Well-kept streets, lawns, houses. Empty Abandoned Main Street. Rail Road history.

- Promote regional assets on your websites and Facebook pages.
- Continue your impressive efforts to strengthen community relationships.
- Is there a better use for historic buildings?
  - Contact KSU TAB to consider alternatives

**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:

**Nancy Daniels**

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

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

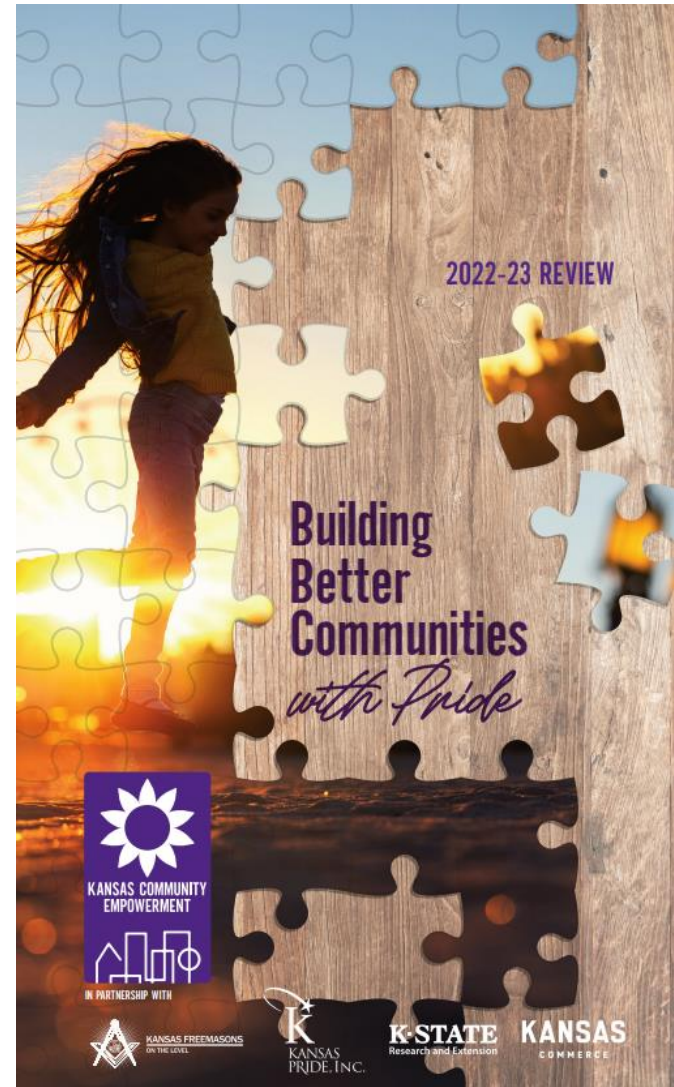
[KSRECV@ksu.edu](mailto:KSRECV@ksu.edu) Community Vitality Team



## Kansas Community Empowerment

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

- Local communities identify what they would like to preserve, create, or improve for their future and volunteers pull together to create their ideal community future.



## Youth Community Perceptions <https://bit.ly/ks-ycp>

- Youth-Based Community Assessment.
- Gives communities insights on how youth see their community.
- Creates opportunities for youth voices in the community.
- Allows youth to become involved in local government and community process



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

Community  
Vitality

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension



## Grant Writing Classes and Support

### Contact

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

to participate.



- 1 ONLINE GRANT WRITING CLASSES**  
Class alum reported receiving more than \$52 million in successful grants. 
- 2 A PROFESSIONAL LEVEL GRANT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COURSE**  
An 8-week course dedicated to helping you complete a fundable proposal. 
- 3 A LIST OF CONTRACT GRANT WRITERS**  
Professionals willing and ready to write grants on a contract basis.
- 4 SUPPORT FOR KANSAS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT COMMUNITIES**  
Excellent resources for those wanting to bring more to their communities.
- 5 ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT BY K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS**  
Our professionals are prepared to help you find grants and review your grant proposals.

For more information email [KSRECV@k-state.edu](mailto:KSRECV@k-state.edu).



## 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

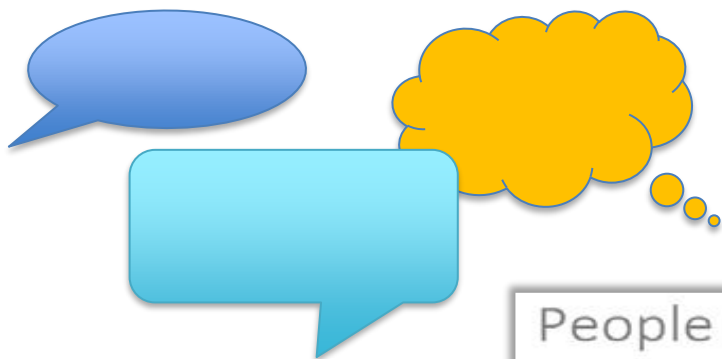
- **Goal:** Increase access to affordable, healthy food and to improve the health and economic development of Kansans and their communities.
- Technical assistance and financing to develop new or renovate fresh food retail in underserved communities throughout Kansas.

<http://kansashealthyfood.org/>



# What will we do?

What did you hear?



What will we do?



People move in the direction of their conversations

