

# First Impressions

## Melvern, KS

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership  
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- Axtell asked for First Impressions, we asked Melvern as its partner; 2 hour drive is a challenge.
- Jim Irey received City Council approval and enlisted volunteers.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey and took photos of Melvern on August 21.
- Axtell visitors came in one car October 19 and returned four surveys.
- Results are presented tonight. (~~Feb 11~~, March 5)
- Melvern uses the report to continue conversations and planning.

# 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 385  
(down 10.3% since 2000\*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2017 Estimate 369  
(down 14.0% since 2000 **KS= +8.4%**)
- 83.0% high school or GED, 10.6% college educated,  
— **90.5% HS or equivalency, KS 32.3% college education,**
- Poverty rate is 25.2% **(KS=12.8%)**
- Median Age 34.0 years **(36.3)**
- Median household income is \$36,827 **(\$55,477)**

\* 2000 Census was 429



- Website <http://www.melvernks.com/>



## Melvern, Kansas



### Site Menu

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- [Services](#)
- [Businesses](#)
- [Schools](#)
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- [News](#)
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- [Calendar of Events](#)
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### Recreation

- [Melvern Lake](#)
- [Eisenhower Park](#)
- [Pomona Lake](#)
- [Railroad Park](#)
- [Community Center](#)
- [Riverfront Park](#)

### Submit an Event to the Calendar

Enter Your Name  
Enter Your Event...

### Weather Right Now:

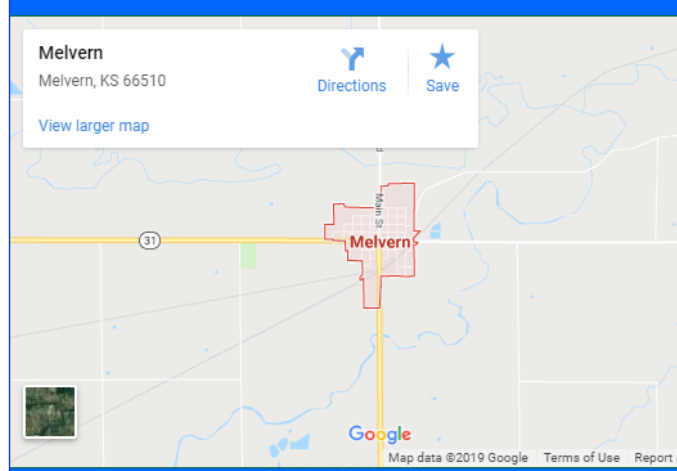
## You are Welcome in Melvern

Welcome to the official site for the City of Melvern, Kansas. We are located on K-31 highway 4 miles north of I-35 (exit 160) and 3 miles east of US 75 bordered by the Marais des Cygnes River. The surrounding rural countryside is made up of creeks, native timber, crop and pasture land. Two branches of the BNSF Railroad come together here. We have close access to several Federal Reservoirs with Melvern Lake being located only 4 miles west of town. The community is very active and committed to maintaining the friendly rural values while moving into the future. While you visit the site, check out the local businesses, recreation opportunities and read our town history.

### News

[Older News](#)

### Directions



### Contact Information

**City Hall:**  
(785) 549-3447  
141 SW Main Street  
PO Box 116  
Melvern, Kansas 66510

### City Council

Mayor: **Nancy Alley**  
City council meets the 1st Monday of the month @ 7:00 PM and Melvern Municipal Court is the 1st Wednesday @ 6:00 PM.

### Basic Information

Zip Code: **66510**  
Area Code: **785**  
School District: [USD 456](#)  
County: [Osage](#)  
Founded: **1868**



A.T. & S.F. Pratt Truss Bridge was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003



The swinging bridge originally erected

- **Website** <http://www.melvernks.com/>
  - A great job of presenting information to new members of the community or those visiting. It does need updated periodically.
  - I don't remember any information about your nature trails. If it's there, it needs more emphasis.
  - It is missing valid information like the City Hall business hours. The website was second on the list when searching yahoo for Melvern, KS.

- Facebook

The image shows a Facebook search results page for the query "melvern ks". The search bar at the top contains the text "melvern ks" and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "All", "Posts", "People", "Photos", "Videos", "Marketplace", "Pages", "Places", and "Groups". The "All" tab is selected. On the left side, there are two blue boxes with numbers "1" and "2" and arrows pointing to specific search results. Box "1" points to the "Melvern, KS 66510" group. Box "2" points to the "Melvern, Kansas" city page. The search results are listed on the right side of the page. The first result is a group named "Melvern, KS 66510" with 599 members and 10+ posts a day. The second result is a city page named "Melvern, Kansas" with 293 likes. The third result is a page named "Melvern Lake Marina" with 597 likes. The fourth result is a group named "Homes for Rent and or Sale in Kansas" with 18K members and 10+ posts a day. On the left side, there are filters for "Your Friends", "Your Groups and Pages", "Posts You've Seen", "POSTED IN GROUP" (with options "Any group", "Your Groups", and "Choose a Group..."), and "TAGGED LOCATION" (with options "Anywhere" and "Topeka, Kansas").

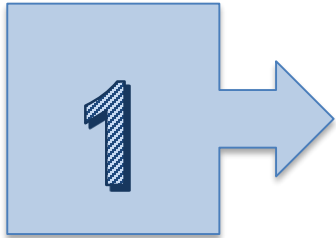
Search results for "melvern ks":

- 1** Points to the "Melvern, KS 66510" group.
- 2** Points to the "Melvern, Kansas" city page.

Search results list:

- Melvorn, KS 66510** (Group · 599 members · 10+ posts a day)  
Melvorn, Kansas · Or, anyone wishing to learn about Melvorn history. Also, a good place to get connected for anyone new that...  
33 members said they went to Kansas State University
- Melvorn, Kansas** (City)  
293 like this · Melvorn, Kansas · City  
Melvorn is a city in Osage County, Kansas, United States, along the Marais des Cygnes River. As of the 2010 census, the city...
- Melvorn Lake Marina** (Page)  
597 like this · Melvorn, Kansas · Sports & Recreation  
Welcome to the Facebook page for Melvorn Lake Marina.
- Homes for Rent and or Sale in Kansas** (Group · 18K members · 10+ posts a day)  
Buy and Sell Group · Kansas · Any rental homes, homes for sale, people looking for rentals, people looking for acreage, things like...  
574 members said they went to Washburn University

- Melvern, KS 66510



Melvern, KS 66510

Public group

About

**Discussion**

Members


Events

Photos

Search this group


Shortcuts

- Kansas PRIDE Pro... (20+)
- Scenic Kansas (15)
- Sky Smeed-Last Minute... (26)
- Allen and Evelyn Knopp... (18)
- Knopp Family Readers
- Brown Bag Marketing G... (18)
- KSRE Difference Ma... (1)
- Axtell Economic Develo... (27)
- Pepper Tree Park Neig... (18)
- KANSAS HISTOR... (20+)
- Our Town Matters (2)
- Start with Love
- Bebermeyer Family News
- Wildcat Salute (20+)
- Topeka History Ge... (20+)




[+ Join Group](#) [... More](#) Join this group to post and comment.

**RECENT ACTIVITY**

 **Ed EV** shared a post. 21 hrs

It's been 2 weeks today:(




**DESCRIPTION**

For Past and Present people of Melvern. Or, anyone wishing to learn about Melvern history. Also, a good place to get connected for anyone new that has moved into the area.

**GROUP TYPE**

Neighbors

**LOCATION**

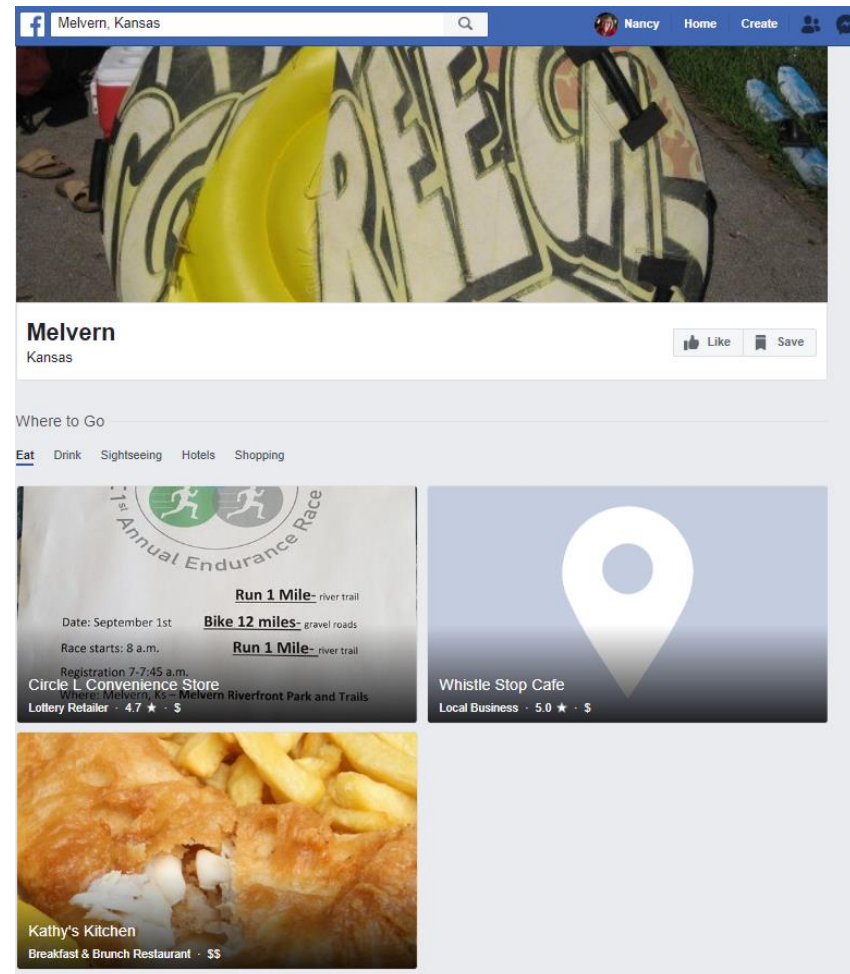
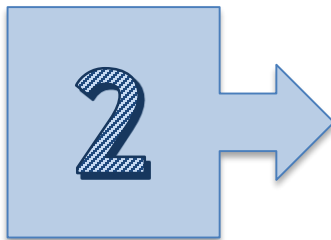
 Melvern, Kansas

**CREATE NEW GROUPS**

Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates. [Create Group](#)

- **A Facebook- generated page**
  - <https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Melvorn-Kansas/104058419630389/>

*It is a good idea to monitor these sites to see how they represent Melvern.*





# “Five-Minute” Impression

- My first impression wasn't a very positive one, I just didn't feel like it was a place I would want to raise a family. I don't know if it was because it was a rainy day but nothing on our initial drive through the town caught my eye and excited me.
- Wondered if there had been storm damage.
- The majority of the housing properties did not have well-kept lawns/landscaping.
- New City Hall building! Looked good and will be a nice addition to the community.

# “Five-Minute” Impression



# “Five-Minute” Impression





# “Five-Minute” Impression



# “Five-Minute” Impression





# “Five-Minute” Impression



- Older buildings had character, some need up-keep.
- The bar is closed and for sale.
- We had lunch at Kathy's Kitchen. Very friendly service. Love the atmosphere of the café.





- Community Building looked nice but not much on the outside (flowers, signs).



- New City Building. What will they do with the old one?
- Town has lots of history.





- The old car shop/filling station on the north end would be neat fixed up. Maybe a town history museum.



# Downtown Business Area

- Everyone was very friendly.
- The old two story grocery store is a neat building.
- Also visited the bank. Loved the bank, friendly teller. Again, lots of history.





- Also visited the bank. Loved the bank, friendly teller. Again, lots of history.
- Kramer Photography has some excellent photos on display







- *Nice to have a car wash*



## Downtown Public Amenities

- Street and sidewalks seem bare. Maybe add planters along main street and at memorial park. Clean up downtown sidewalk. Saw mouse traps along sidewalk.





## Downtown Public Amenities

- Plenty of parking available. It was easy to park and walk.
- Free Wi-Fi at Library.
- Glad for an ATM.



# Other Retail Shopping Areas

- A convenience store on the way to the lake (still in town) didn't have any signage explain what it as. Just looked like an old gas station. No explanation of all the things available inside, especially for lake customers who won't know.





# Industrial Parks/Commercial

- Didn't notice any, except the Co-op.



- No defined area that we could tell but possibly could expand by the co-op.
- *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.*



- Hospitals and physicians are in neighboring communities.
- Volunteer EMS is actively engaged with training high school students to be interested in EMS.
- There are no long-term care facilities.

*Health Care Access:  
One city notes distances  
to various health care  
services on its website.*



- So many homes seemed uncared for. Boarded up windows, missing shingles, missing paint/poor siding.
- There are a large number of trailer homes in similar conditions.
- Yards are not taken care of throughout town.

- Few homes in good shape that would appeal to middle to upper income families.
- There are homes that would appeal to all incomes if they weren't afraid of renovations
- Perhaps look into available grants that would provide assistance to replace bad siding. A neighboring city did this, and the grant covered half the cost of new siding.
- A city-wide clean up would do the town good.



















## Rental Property

- City Hall clerk spoke of privately owned rental houses and trailer homes.
  - Do you have a list of landlords?





## KANSAS

### Per 2017 census estimate:

• Total Housing Units	217	(2017 estimate)	
• Total Housing Units	202	(2000 census)	
• Total Occupied Houses	185	(85.3%)	(89.3%)
• Vacant Houses	32	(14.7%)	(10.7%)
• Owner Occupied	128	(69.2%)	(66.3%)
• Renter Occupied	57	(30.8%)	(33.7%)
• Family Households		75.1%	(65.4%)
• Non-family Households		24.9%	(34.6%)

- Jr high- high school building looked nice and well kept. Very little landscape. Might look into a beautification project the students could do to help.
- Looks like a lot of school spirit in the community which is always nice to see.
- LOVE the painted parking stalls for the students.



- Very nice looking school that houses JH-HS.







- KSDE has building report cards.
- Lots of home schoolers come to high school here.
- There is a link to the schools on the Melvern website.

*Love it when the local schools or towns tell their story, "Why we love our schools."*

M	D	C	V	
<b>The District</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Junior High</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<a href="#">Emergency Safety Intervention</a> <a href="#">USD 456 School Board</a> <a href="#">Administrators</a> <a href="#">Wellness Policy</a> <a href="#">District Calendar</a> <a href="#">Contact Us</a> <a href="#">About Our Community</a> <a href="#">Alumni</a>	<a href="#">Emergency Safety Intervention</a> <a href="#">STAFF DIRECTORY/EMAILS</a> <a href="#">Burkdoll, Peggy</a> <a href="#">Carson, Linda</a> <a href="#">Crique, Melissa (Missy)</a> <a href="#">Kitselman, Jill</a> <a href="#">Lacey, Judy</a>	<a href="#">Daily Bulletin</a> <a href="#">Emergency Safety Intervention</a> <a href="#">STAFF DIRECTORY/EMAILS</a> <a href="#">Junior High Schedule</a> <a href="#">Dayhoff, Kim</a> <a href="#">Lingenfelter, Jeremy</a> <a href="#">Reeser, Lisa</a>	<a href="#">Daily Bulletin</a> <a href="#">Emergency Safety Intervention</a> <a href="#">STAFF DIRECTORY/EMAILS</a> <a href="#">Organizations &amp; Clubs</a> <a href="#">Canon, Dirk</a> <a href="#">Geitz, Ali</a> <a href="#">Guy, Lillie</a>	<a href="#">District Student Handbook</a> <a href="#">School Supplies</a> <a href="#">Academics</a> <a href="#">USD 456 Staff Email</a> <a href="#">Library Resources</a> <a href="#">Athletics</a> <a href="#">Resources</a> <a href="#">Accelerated Reader</a>

**on County League tournament games for Tuesday, January 22**

**2019 HS Lyon County League Tournament**

The 98th annual Lyon County League Basketball Tournament starts Monday, January 21st in Emporia at the William L. White Civic Auditorium. Admission for adults is \$5 and students is \$3. Click the link below to see the schedule of when games are being played: [2019 HS LCL Basketball Bracket](#)

[read more](#)

**January Super Scientist at MdCV Elementary**

Five students were recognized at the January pep rally for bringing in some pretty cool STEM projects during the month of December. Since there were only a few students participating during the very busy and short month, Mrs. Carson announced that EVERYONE WOULD GET TO BE SUPER SCIENTIST!!! First grade students - Landon Roy, Levi Arb, third grade student - Amelia Arb, fourth grade student - Nathan Greer, and fifth . . .



[read more](#)

## Comments:

- There are 2 childcares available outside of town and since most parents commute, this appears to be adequate.

### Osage County Data:

- Number of Children Under Age 6: 1,215
- Children with all parents in the workforce: 78%
- Desired Capacity of Child Care Centers 346
- Extent that desired capacity meets potential need 36%
- [Creating a Child Care Action Plan](#)

*Contact [ks.childcareaware.org](http://ks.childcareaware.org) to get access to your local child care specialists.  
785-823-3343*



- 3 churches- Methodist and not sure of the other 2 denominations. Physical appearance of churches- clean, well-maintained, adequate parking.
- No church sponsored services for the community were observed.







- Saw notices on PRIDE meetings, Legion meeting, and Ladies Aux. meetings.
- Phenomenal job. I think it is great to have a PRIDE organization that cares so much for their community. The community center looks amazing right in the heart of the town with the automated sign.





- There were a couple unmarked dead end streets.
- Not much for sidewalks other than downtown.



- Public restrooms were available at park and near the trails.
- Parks and ball fields landscaping and up keep were good.





- Brand new building. Very friendly staff with a wealth of information. The brochures at the entrance are nice.





# Fire, EMS and Police Services

- One part time police officer and volunteer fire.
- Volunteer fire department that is active with the youth of the community.



Link - Facts | Calculators & Converter | 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

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.iso.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



- Private library run by an older couple- they were out of town so the library was closed. Free Wi-Fi at the library. Conveniently located/connected to Kathy's Kitchen.





- Nice walking trails north side of town.





- Two city parks.





- Skate Park was a nice surprise. Maybe add some color to the skate park?





- *A dog park!*





- Nice baseball diamonds west of school. Add some landscaping and benches/shaded seating around the memorial park.



## Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Melvern Lake
- Fall Festival was coming soon.



- *Consider: How do we attract Melvern lake campers to town?*



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

- Melvern lake- camping, fishing, and watersports.
- Riverfront Park and trails- there is a really nice and informative map with brochures and rules about the park and trails located at the entrance.
- Downtown there are several older buildings that have historical relevance that could be restored as museums or bed and breakfast, restaurant, etc.

## Visitor's Center

- City Hall- Friendly and informative, clearly visible.





## What would bring you back?

- Walking trail.
- Melvern Lake
- Loved the atmosphere at Kathy's Kitchen. The staff was very welcoming and friendly even though we were "out of towners."

# Most Positive Observations

- Friendly. Seemed like a community that cared and looking to do more.
- The nature trails would be a good draw for visitors. Maybe do seasonal special activities... story book forest or haunted trails for example.
- Very friendly people and the bank. It is fantastic that the bank has been maintained all these years to look much like what it did back in the “old days.” Visiting the inside of the bank was a highlight of the trip.



# Most Positive Observations

- Very welcoming people. Everyone we met was friendly. Be proud of your parks and trails. They sure add a lot to your community. The Community Center seems like the heart of the town that holds a lot of events.

# Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Downtown revitalization and community clean-up. Curb appeal of houses brings down the climate of the community. The community looks like it doesn't care, but when you talk with residents, it is completely different.
- Housing properties that are deteriorating. There were several homes with boarded up windows. Many properties need to have the excess clutter or old unused items removed from the property to make it look cleaner and more appealing.



## What will you remember?

- I will remember the condition of the houses. I know that it sounds bad but it stuck out to me.
- The high number of run down homes and lack of new construction.
- The old buildings downtown. I would have loved to go through them to see all the history. Sounds like the one building downtown has been renovated. You have a GREAT town and GREAT residents. We never felt unsafe or not welcome so thank you. Be proud of your town and always strive to be better.

## ***Thank our leadership team:***

- *Jim Irey*
- *Darrel Schultze*
- *Carter Burns*
- *Cindy Burns*

## **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/>

## 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






- <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!](#)

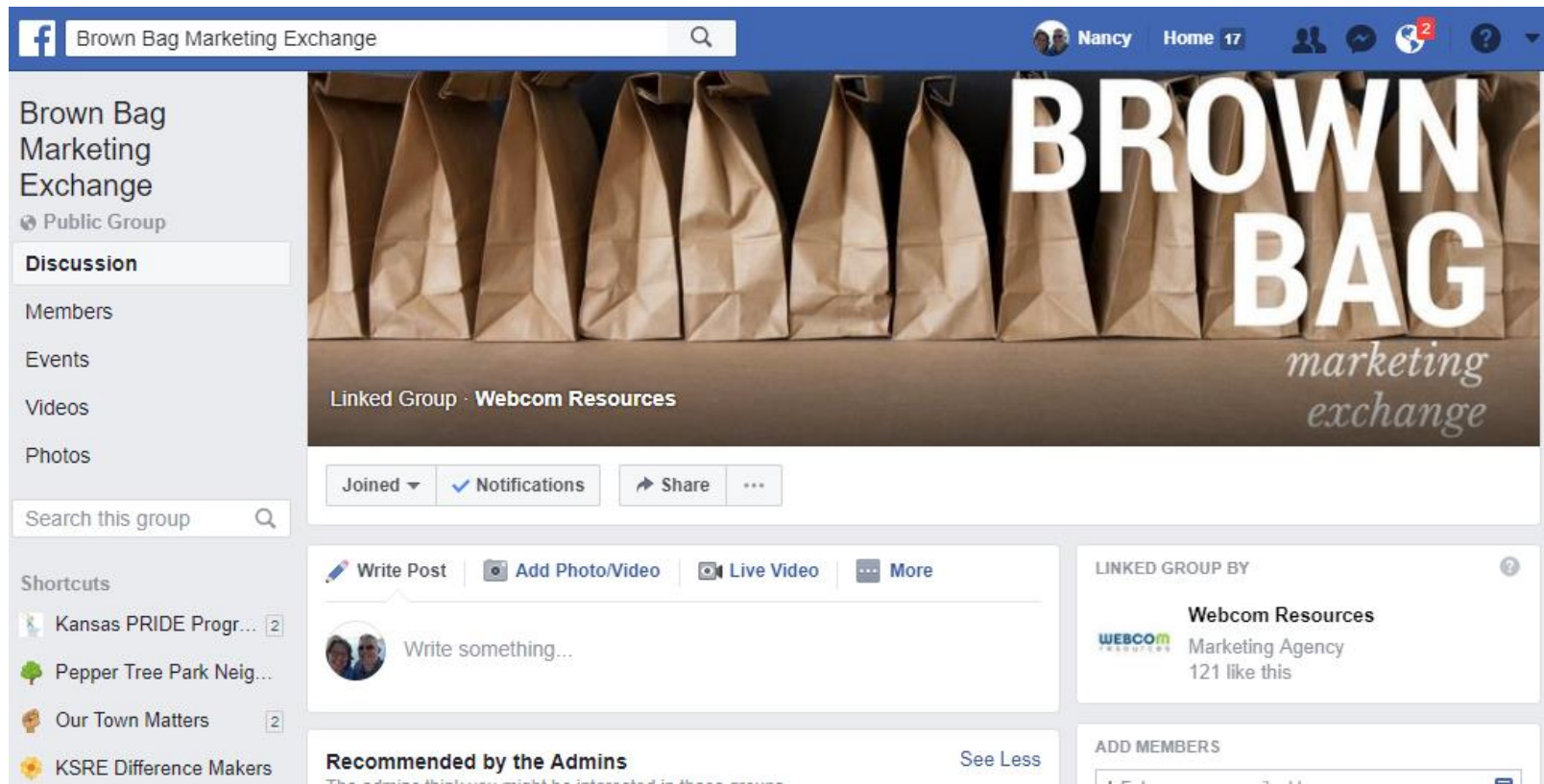
[CONTACT](#)

[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)





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

- 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.
- 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.
- Don't buy in to someone else's narrative.
- 1/5 of dollars come from transfer payments—not employers.



- 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*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOIMRJ-jc14>

*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/  
\[nkdaniels@ksu.edu\]\(mailto:nkdaniels@ksu.edu\)](https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/nkdaniels@ksu.edu)*

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