

First Impressions

Onaga, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation

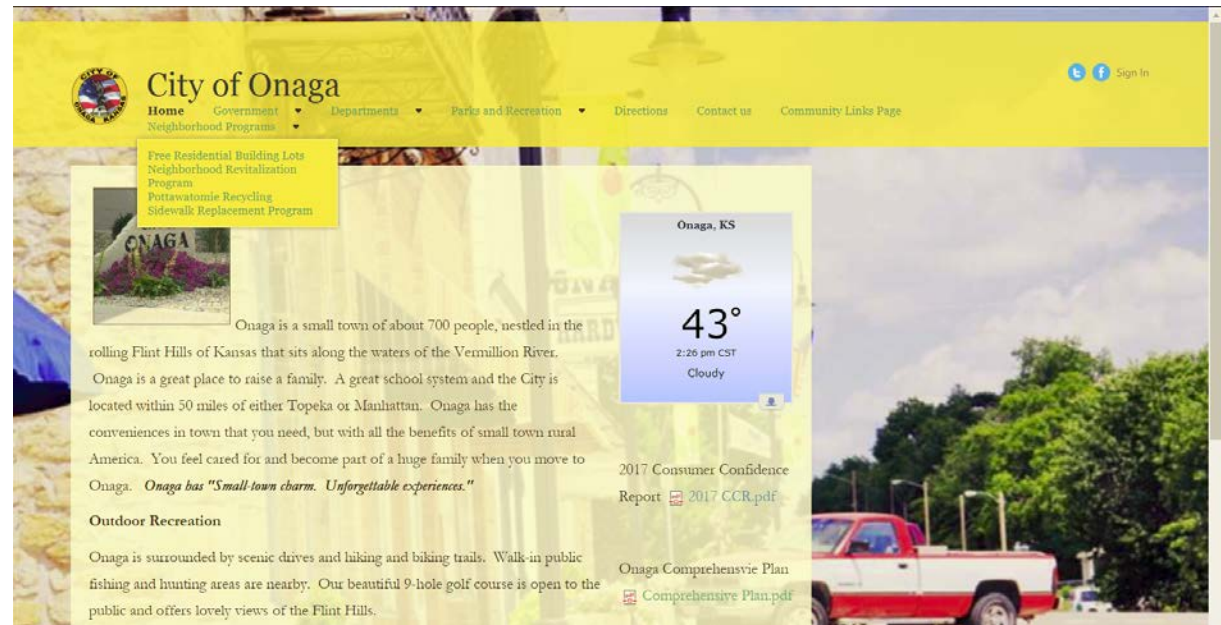


- 2010 Census Population **702**
(-.3% since 2000*) **KS +6.1%**
- 2016 Estimate is **696**
(-1.1% since 2000 **KS +8.1%**)
- 14.7% college educated, 93.5% high school or GED
– **KS 31% college education, 90% HS or equivalency**
- 64.3% family households, 35.7% non-family
- Poverty rate is 9.4% **(KS=13.6%)**
- Median Age 41.5 years **(36)**
- Median household income is \$44,904 **(\$52,205)**

Web Presence: <http://www.cityofonaga.com/>

- I found quite a bit of information on the web.
- Love the simplicity the website, but it wouldn't let me scroll all the way down.
- The website is not mobile-friendly. This visitor identified broken links and opportunities for improvement.

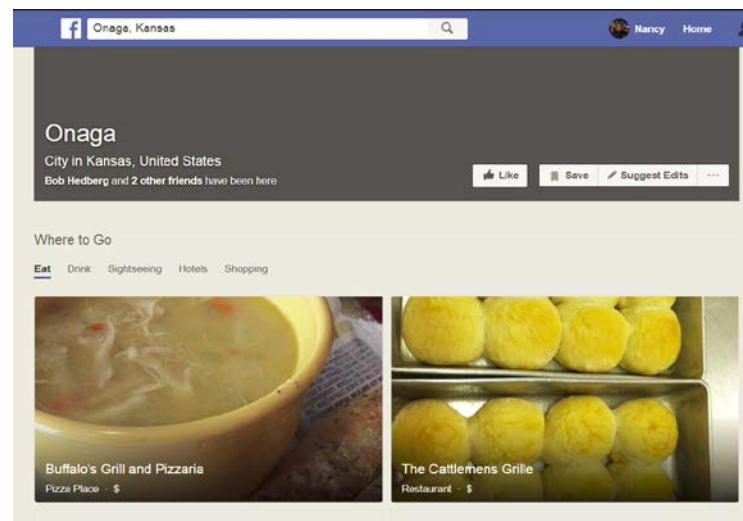
Retrieved from Internet:
12/14/17



Web Presence: *Opportunity for co-marketing*

Facebook: Searched “Onaga, Kansas”

- FB-generated page about Things to Do in Onaga.
 - There is opportunity to edit.
- Onaga Historical Society
- Onaga Country Market
- Onaga Meat Processing LLC
- USD 322 Onaga
- Onaga Health and Rehab
- Kansas Rural Communities Foundation
- 9 others



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Beautiful big trees, very clean and well-maintained town.
- Historic downtown buildings.



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Welcome and “thank you for coming” signs.
- “Welcome to Onaga” sign is in the middle of town.



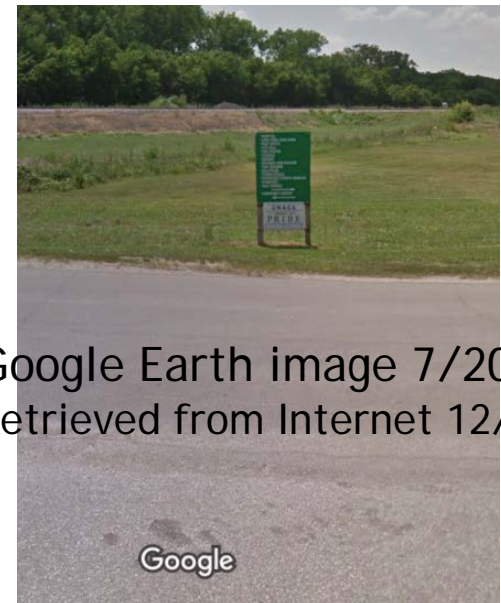
The “Five-Minute” Impression

- The side roads with housing look pretty run down.
- Impressive number of buildings and hospital.



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- The first building/ business I saw turned out to be a liquor store and an eating establishment, but I couldn't tell that by looking.
- Nice to have a directory at the stop sign.



Google Earth image 7/2013
Retrieved from Internet 12/20/17

Google

The “Five-Minute” Impression

- The first block appeared to have buildings that are a hazard to the public.
- It turned out to be a cute town that I could see myself living in.



Downtown Business Area

- Business area was lit, decorated and very clean.
- On Saturday at 1 pm, the only store open was the grocery. Very nice store with friendly people, great sandwiches.



Downtown Business Area

- Impressed with the number of open businesses. All essential services, no stores to shop.
- Everyone was helpful and nice.
- Except for the first block, the buildings were well kept.



Downtown Business Area

- Bathroom, sitting spots, trash, no Wi-Fi.
- Everything was clean and painted.







Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Many buildings with no signs to see what they are.



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- Visitors weren't aware of any industrial areas.

Observation:

- No industrial area isn't a problem, filling downtown spaces is the bigger opportunity.
- Entrepreneurs who choose to start their small businesses are responsible for 63 percent of net new jobs created in the United States every year.* *The same UPS truck who competed with your downtown can help your entrepreneur serve the world.*

*Kansas Department of Commerce, 2016

Health Care Services

- From the outside the quality of the hospital, rehab and assisted living looked spectacular!
- “This is a health care town.”



Long-Term Care

- Long-term care near the nursing home. Appearance was disappointing compared with the hospital.
- Rehab center within the hospital.



Housing

- A great mix of old and new, large and small houses. There appeared to be free land for building new houses.



Housing

- Lots of run-down houses.
- There was a lot of remodeling.



Housing



Rental Properties

- There has to be some rental, but I didn't see any yard signs.
- J-Bird Motel



Housing data

KANSAS

- Total Housing Units 365
- Total Occupied Houses 297 (81.4%) (89.5%)
- Vacant Houses 68 (18.6%) (10.5%)

- Owner Occupied 200 (67%) (66.7%)
- Renter Occupied 97 (33%) (33.3%)

Need for clean-up/demolition of older properties



Schools

- PK-6 and 7-12 in one location.
- Schools seem very up-to-date. Love the fence.
- Would like to see more playground equipment for the children. Bus driveway could use work.



Childcare

- Visitors could find no evidence of child care, but were aware of Pre-K program in schools.
- Your visiting team tells me that Onaga citizens depend on home child cares for birth to age 2.
- *Child care is an important part of school readiness and economic development, but won't be evident to a visitor.*
- *Child Care Aware is the state's child care referral system, but it only includes licensed care.*

Faith/Religion

- Saw 2 Baptist, 1 Lutheran, 1 Catholic church. Each was clean, painted and well-kept.
- Did not see evidence of church activities.



Civic

- Lions Club sign entering town.
- By internet search found American Legion, Masons, Jaycees, Young Farmers, historical society, PAT, VFW. Looks like a lot to get involved in.



Civic



Civic

- There was a railroad museum that was located in the middle of town with nothing but houses around.



Retrieved from Face Book 12-19-17

Public Infrastructure

- The streets are in great shape and clean.
- The streets were somewhat narrow.



Public Infrastructure

- There were tall weeds in most of the drainage system.
- Some neighborhoods lacked curbing and gutters.



Public Infrastructure

- Hoping to see more sidewalks— I saw it in their plan online.



Public Infrastructure

- Water in the pool was still there in October and looked disgusting.



City Hall, Fire, EMS and Police Services

- City Hall looks like an old gym or VA building.
- There were no signs off the main drag for City Hall.
- Police Department is at City Hall and I didn't find the Fire Department.



Library

- Looked nice.



City Parks

- City park is co-located with ballparks, rodeo arena and livestock arena. One visitor didn't know that was the city park.
- Pool is on the smallish side.
- There were no signs directing visitors once you got past the directory at the stop sign.



City Parks



Recreation/Tourism

- County Fair.



Events or features (natural and manmade) that have the potential to draw people to area

- County Fair.
- Centralia Lake isn't too far.
- Craft Show.
- Round Barn.
- Deer/turkey hunting.
- Nice park and ball field.



What would bring you back?

- No obvious location for visitors to stop. Presumably city hall.
- County Fair.
- 3 eating establishments, but one didn't make a good first impression.
- Golf Course.



Most Positive Observations

- Very clean and picked up.
- Many open businesses, 3 restaurants, nice hospital.
- A lot of newer looking houses.



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Mostly older houses, no real retail to shop.
- The gutter/curb system.
- Signage.



What will you remember the most in six months from now?

- Big trees, rich farmland, clean and friendly town.
- Open businesses downtown.
- Town showed growth with remodeling and new construction.



Next Steps:

Thank our leadership team:

- *Sarah McKinsey*
- *Todd Willert*
- *Jessica Venneberg*
- *Scott Venneberg*
- *Alicia Matson*
- *Susie Kufahl*
- *Randy Kufahl*

Contact me for resources or help:

Nancy Daniels

Community Vitality Specialist,
K-State Research and Extension
(785) 410-6352

nkdaniels@ksu.edu

Which group will lead the discussion?


Resources I like:

- <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

Resources I like:

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



Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow, U of MN

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

- 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.
- People research a number of places before they move to a rural town.
- Only 1/3 of the people who move rural have a previous connection with that area.

- 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! It matters!
- The number of people who live in rural areas is increasing—from 54M to 60M from 1970-2010. The relative % of people who live rural is smaller (19% instead of 26%) but the real number has increased.
- Don't buy in to someone else's narrative.
- We lose our hardware store, our school, consolidate our churches, etc... but we are still here! In MN, they have only lost 3 towns in 50 years.

- 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.
- 1/5 of dollars come from transfer payments—not employers.

*- Ben Winchester, Senior Research Fellow,
University of Minnesota*

