

# First Impressions

## Randolph, KS

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership  
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- Randolph asked for First Impressions, I asked 3 similar cities to partner, but all declined; so we enlisted a campus team of highly engaged visitors.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey and took photos of Randolph on April 18.
- Three campus visitors came in separate cars in April
- Results are presented tonight, August 5, 2019.
- Randolph 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 163  
(down 6.9% since 2000\*) **KS= +6.1%**
- 2017 Estimate is 150  
(down 14.3% since 2000 **KS= +8.0%**)
- 97.1% high school or GED, 24.3% college educated,  
**90.5% HS or equivalency, KS 32.3% college education**
- Poverty rate 1.4% **(KS=12.8%)**
- Median Age 31.8 years **(36.3)**
- Median household income is \$52,500 **(\$55,477)**

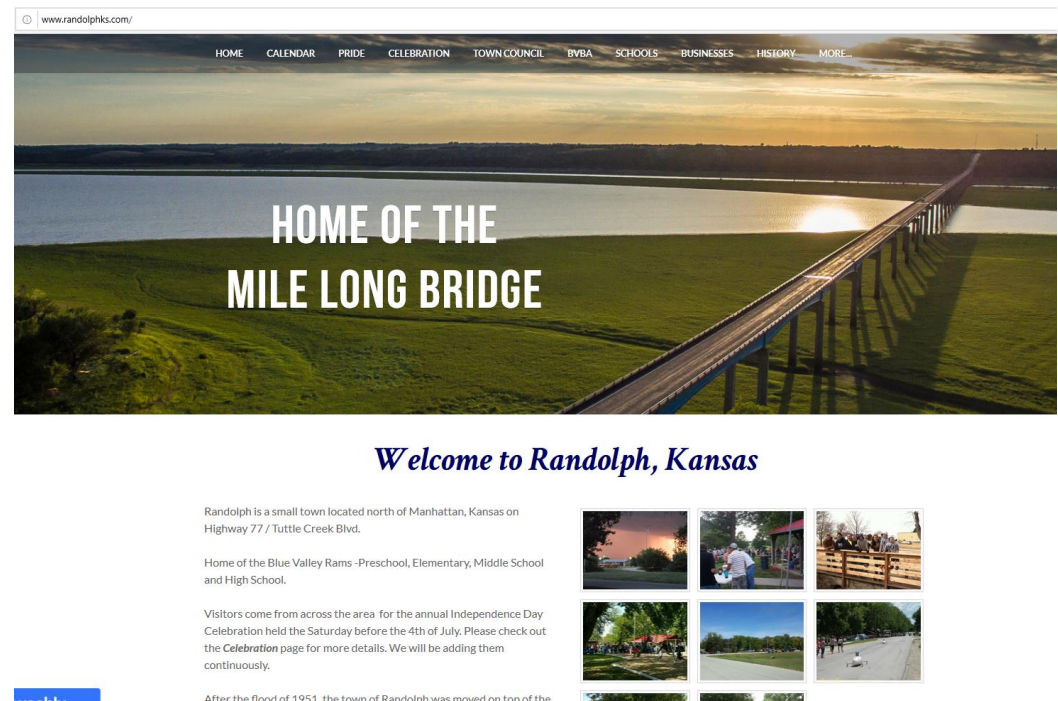
\* 2000 Census was 175

- **Website**

<http://www.randolphks.com/>

Visitors reviewed the web pages during a time of transition and gave very concrete ideas of what would improve visibility of the assets they read about:

- Fitness Center
- Senior Center
- Civic Clubs
- City Hall
- Tuttle Creek tourism

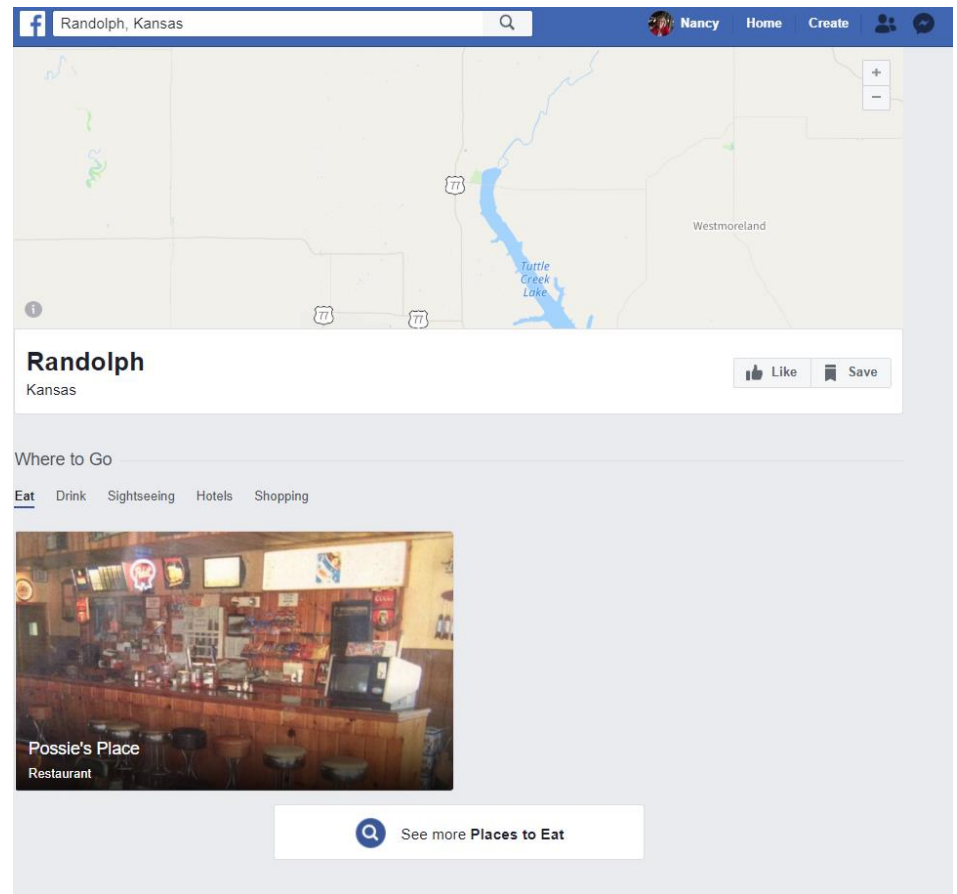


- **FaceBook**

Randolph, Kansas

<https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Randolph-Kansas/109629819062501/>

*A Facebook generated page.*



- **FaceBook**

- <https://www.facebook.com/randolphks/>

*Maintained*

*By*

*Randolph  
PRIDE*





# “Five-Minute” Impression

- Clean, small community. Not a lot of businesses.
- The streets are wide and well-maintained.





# “Five-Minute” Impression

- City park is fantastic, but the park sign is less so.
- Yards are attractive and clear of clutter.





# “Five-Minute” Impression

- There are no “Welcome to Randolph” signs from any of the four highways.
- The highway frontage needs additional color to make them inviting. It could come from paint, signage, benches, flags or pots of flowers.



# “Five-Minute” Impression

- Boxcars on the west side were being used for storage or possibly retail space for antique sales.
- There are newer homes in all directions from town.
- An old stone house sitting in disrepair blocks the view of the bank. If it is historical and there are no plans to tear it down, maybe some signage would be nice to explain its significance. It's a bit of an eye sore.





# Downtown Business Area

- Because of Tuttle Creek displacement, there is not a downtown, but most buildings and signs are in good condition.
- Buildings that line the highway on the west were a bit in disrepair and not very welcoming.







# Downtown Business Area

- Downtown includes frontage along Highway 77 as well as the first block along West Randolph Street.



## Downtown Amenities

- A very nice park with very nice public restrooms isn't visible from the highway.



*I recently saw this sign on Hwy 75  
in Yates Center.*



## Downtown Amenities

- Trash receptacles were available in the park, as well as in front of the gas station.
- Plenty of parking in “business” area, with limited sidewalk access throughout town.





# Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Other retail is the same as “downtown.”
- The frontage strip along Highway 77 does not “sell” the town. From the highway there is nothing that would pull you off the highway towards the city park. You might stop for gas because it is convenient, but it is not attractive or welcoming.

# Industrial Parks/Commercial

- There was not a defined area for manufacturing but appears to be room for more.



- *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.*

- Due to the small size of this community, there is no hospital or EMS services. We saw a fire station.
- *Other small communities communicate ample access to healthcare by talking about how many minutes it takes to get to various health care locations.*





- There are no long-term care, assisted living or nursing facilities. There is a senior center next to Highway 77.



- Most housing appears decent with varying sizes and price ranges.
- Most of the available housing and construction lots for sale appear to be available along the bluffs of Tuttle Creek Reservoir.





- Saw one home for sale in Randolph online and observed the “For Sale” sign in the yard.
- If one were to purchase a lot and build a new home in this area, there appears to be limited options for temporary housing/apartments while the home is being built.



- Zoning ordinances appear to allow for a variety of home maintenance.
- If I were looking to move to the community, I would be concerned that my neighbor would not be required to keep their house and lawn maintained.\*









- Rentals were only apparent at the Cedar Flats Motel, which could use some sprucing up. While low in cost, they did not appear to be the quality that one would choose to live in while waiting for a house to be built.



## KANSAS

- Total Housing Units      60
- Total Occupied Houses   60 (100%)    (89.1%)
- Vacant Houses              0 (0%)        (10.7%)
  
- Owner Occupied            45 (75%)      (66.4%)
- Renter Occupied           15 (25%)      (33.6%)
- Family Households        61.7%        (65.4%)
- Non-family Household    38.3%        (34.6%)

- This is a highlight for the community: preschool, middle school, high school are present and well-maintained. Improvements to various facilities show the community's commitment.
- Class sizes are small ranging at this time from 5 to 25 in the high school.



- The school properties appeared well-kept and included a community fitness facility behind the high school.

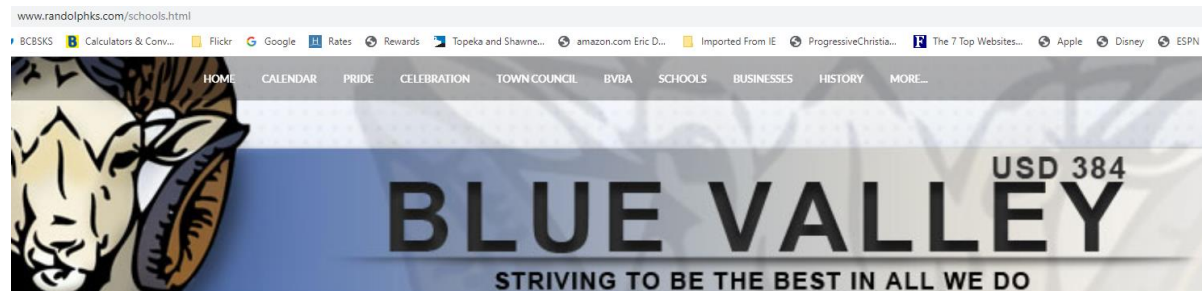




# Schools



- City website noted that the school system was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the best school districts in Kansas but no citation is given for the ranking.
- *Citation is now there, but the rankings changed.*
- *Adding the year of the designation is still credible.*



Blue Valley USD #384 ranks #12 in best school districts in Kansas!

<https://k12.niche.com/rankings/public-school-districts/best-overall/s/kansas/>

Preschool - Randolph, KS

McCormick Elementary School - Olsburg, KS

Blue Valley Middle School - Randolph, KS

Blue Valley High School - Randolph, KS

The district office is located in the Middle School. Phone number is 785-293-5253.

<http://www.usd384.org/>

#### School Board

James Peter

President

Position 7, At Large - Term ends January 13, 2020

[jpeter@twinvalley.net](mailto:jpeter@twinvalley.net)

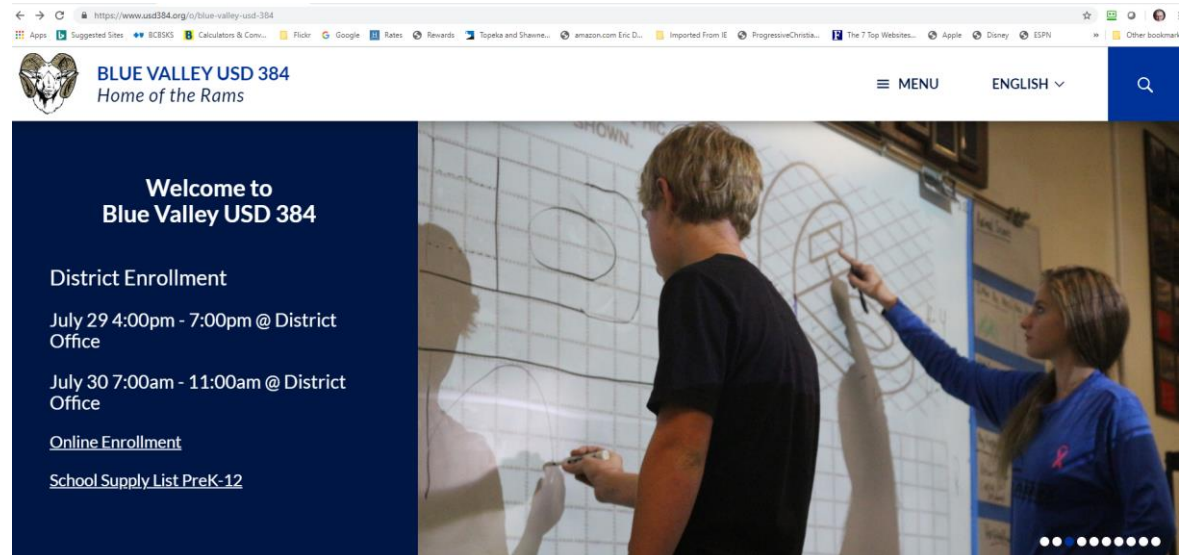
Mitch Innes

Vice President

Position 2, District 2 - Term ends January 13, 2020



- *School District website is attractive and up to date; it features diverse activities and ages of participation in art, academics, athletics and music.*
- *Most communities know why they love their schools, but they don't tell the story well. People who are considering whether to live in Randolph will want to know this story.*





## Comments:

- An online search revealed two childcares with 10 children each. The cost appears to be less than most care within larger communities.
- 

## Riley County Data:

- **Number of Children Under Age 6:** **5,631**
- **Children with all parents in the workforce:** **53%**
- **Desired Capacity of Child Care Centers** **1,799**
- **Extent that desired capacity meets potential need** **61%**
- **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*

- Only one church: the United Methodist Church.
- Signs in the gas station promoted a prayer breakfast in Green, KS. No other faith-based community services were observed.



- Lions Club, VFW, and local 4-H club.
- The community's PRIDE Facebook page promotes an annual city-wide garage sale, city-wide clean-up day and 4th of July Celebration. There were numerous flyers and announcements at the convenience store.
- Senior Center.
- One visitor said that the civic visibility was only online.





- Limited curb and gutter so it is possible that drainage could be challenging during major storm events.
- Public restrooms were clean and well maintained.



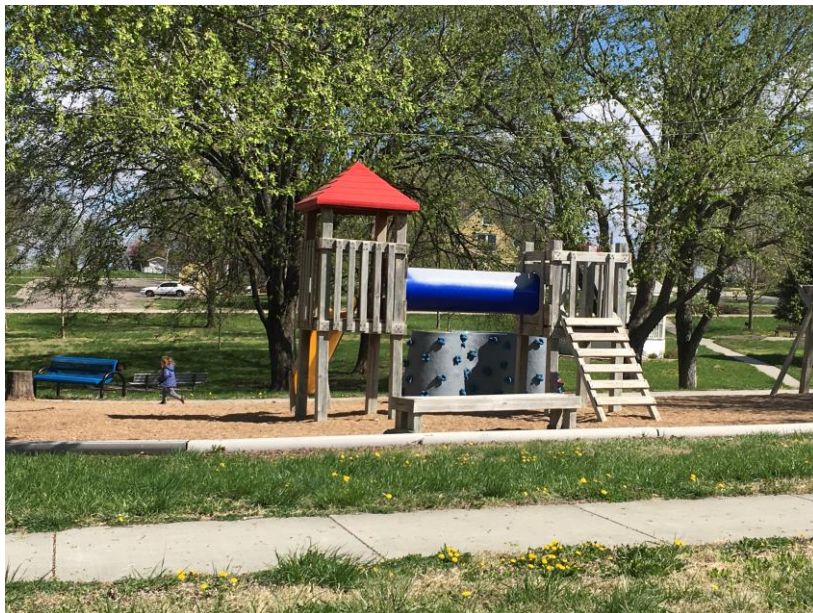


- Day visit limited our ability to comment on lighting.
- The streets were wide and marked with signs, parking was possible all along the streets in a parallel fashion, and public restrooms were in the park.





- Sidewalks were minimal – around the church and school.
- Minimal landscaping and streetscaping – at the bank, church, and school then evident at many of the homes.





- Despite online searches and asking at the store, none of our visitors (including me) found the City Hall.

# Fire, EMS and Police Services

- A fire station and Riley County public works is located along the frontage of Highway 77.
- No police in town - Randolph is covered by the Riley County Sheriff's Department. A volunteer fire department exists.



→ [www.kinsurance.org/otherservices/iso.php](http://www.kinsurance.org/otherservices/iso.php)

Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

**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

**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

- There is no library, but an online search finds libraries in Olsburg, Riley and Leonardville.
- Most signs and advertisements posted in the gas station for activities were for other towns (Green, Waterville, Olsburg).
  - *This marketing across towns is a sign of a friendly, open city. Visitors like it.*



- Very nice park with multiple seating and open areas to enjoy.
- Playgrounds, picnic areas disc/Frisbee golf. Nice basketball courts west of the church.
- Walking trails are located on lake property at the edge of town.



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

- Online, their 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration was featured as being a big draw for tourism with an antique car show, fireworks, firework sales, homemade ice cream and other food vendors. Tuttle Creek provides a source of recreation and tourism year-round.
- Randolph PRIDE Facebook page shows: Easter Egg Hunt, City Wide Garage Sale, Quarter Craze, and PTO fundraiser. These events were not publicized with signage during our visit.

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

- Tuttle Creek Reservoir offers a multitude of outdoor recreation opportunities and is a significant draw.
- The community appears to cater to hunters and fishers.
- Because of the proximity to the lake and state park property, visitors can enjoy shooting sports, ATV trails, camping, fishing, water sports, walking/biking trails, Frisbee courts, and more.



## Visitor's Center

- There is none, but the business we stopped in provided good information about the community and what it has to offer.
- What if there was a community kiosk near the highway that could provide visible community information 24-7?

## What would bring you back?

- Unfortunately, there are no stores or restaurants that would bring us back.

# Most Positive Observations

- The community is small and clean with friendly people, has lots of outdoor recreation opportunities, and has a nice school with impressive new investments in facilities.
- The City Park is a wonderful feature of this community. Other positive aspects of the community include reasonably nice residential areas, great schools, and the proximity to Tuttle Creek Reservoir.
- The people there take care of their community and want it to thrive.



- Not having a local restaurant, though one is said to be opening soon. There is a business that provides rooms, probably for hunters, that could be better maintained.
- The town lacks the charm from the highway to pull you in to the community. Poor visible marketing of their positive features. Lack of visitor attractions such as a restaurant and shops.
- Retail business to attract shoppers and gain tax dollars to support their community.

## What will you remember?

- The friendly people at the convenience store (complete with ice cream) and the quality of the new building at the school.
- The beautiful city park and the disappointing downtown.

## What will you remember?

- I was pleasantly surprised at all there is to offer in the region surrounding the small town. There was evidence of numerous ag and cattle operations, a breeding business, activities tied into the lake property, and overall a nice clean community in which to raise children.

The drive to neighboring towns is pretty in any direction. I drove over to Green and had lunch in their café. People in the area seem happy and are friendly to visitors.



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

- ***Janie Dunstan***
- ***Sandi Redding***
- ***Tamie Redding***

## **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**

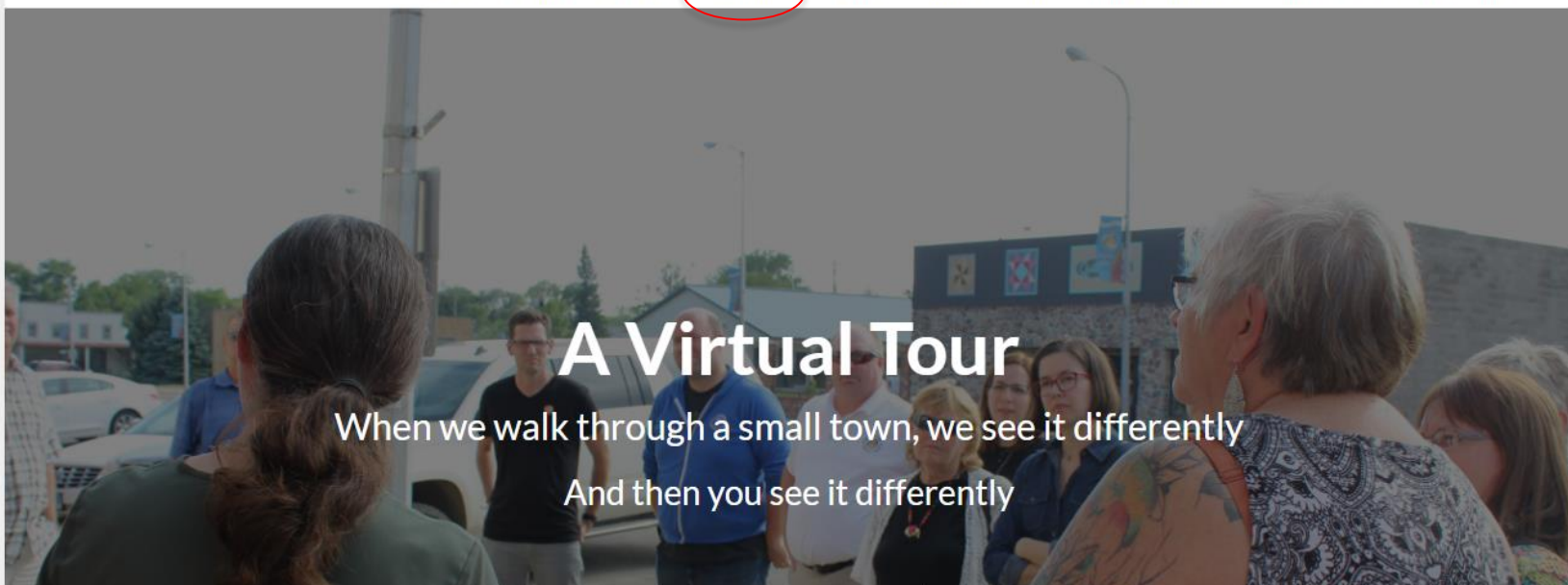
I will never sell or rent your email.

## 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.

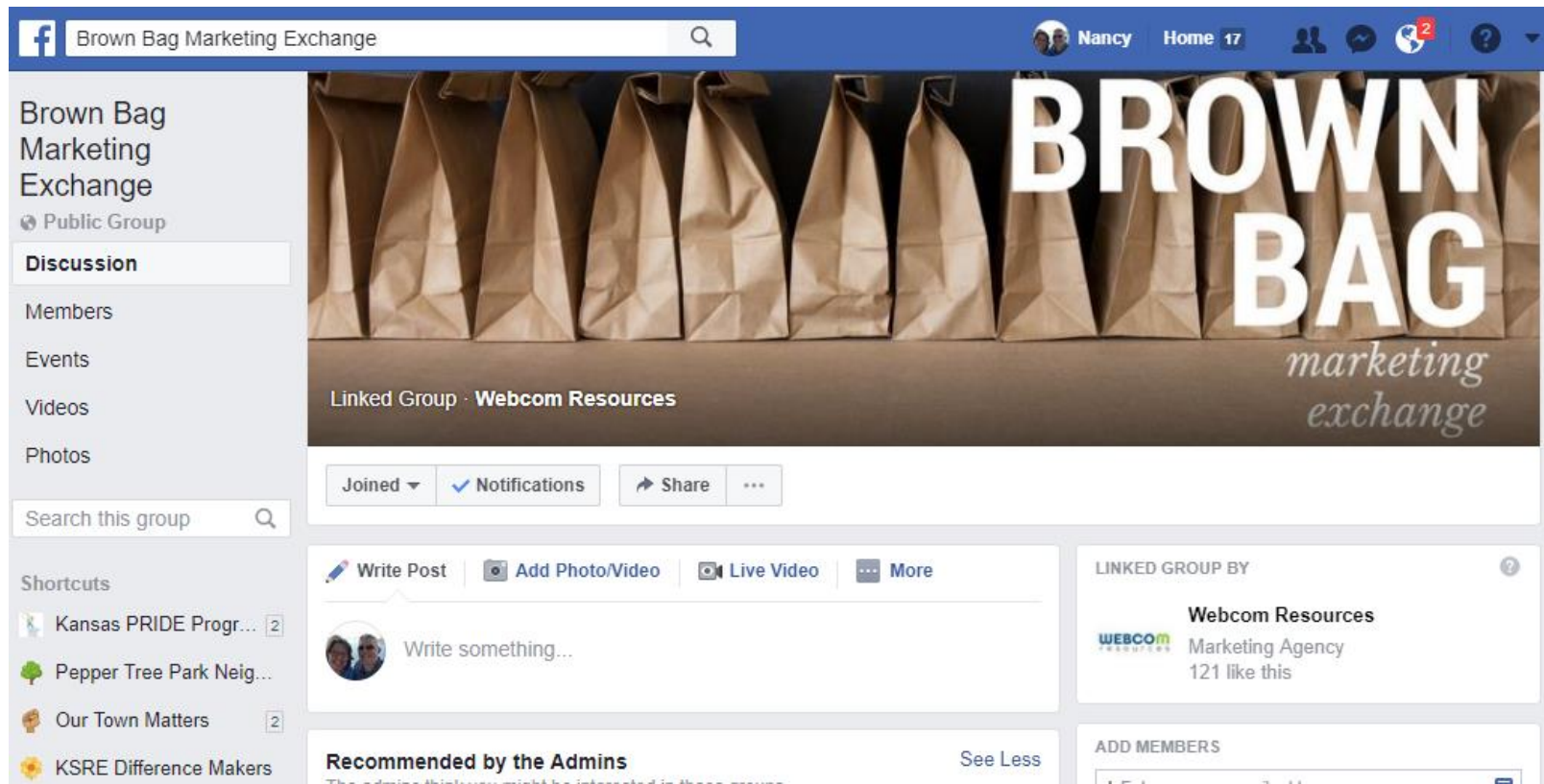
**SAVEYOUR**.town

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





- <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**

Community Vitality Specialist,  
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