

First Impressions



Robinson, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- 2010 Census Population 234 (UP 8.3% since 2000)
- 14.8% college educated, 91.3% high school or GED
 - KS 30.7% college education, 90% HS or equivalency
- 75.3% family households, 24.7% non-family
- Poverty rate is 29.6% (KS=13.8%)
- Median Age 41.5 years (36)
- Median household income is \$34,688 (\$51,872)

- **Web Presence:**

<https://robinsonks.wordpress.com/>

- Primarily a link to the community newsletter which did not have January events. (as of 1/26/17)

FaceBook:

<https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Robinson-Kansas/109398835752823/>

- A good start. The more you can put onto this page and link to others, the more likely it is to be used. (First Impressions Community Meeting was not posted as of 1/26/17)
- “Shopping:” Rock Barn Market, Cedar Pot Place and LandMark Signs. (Not all sites appear active.)

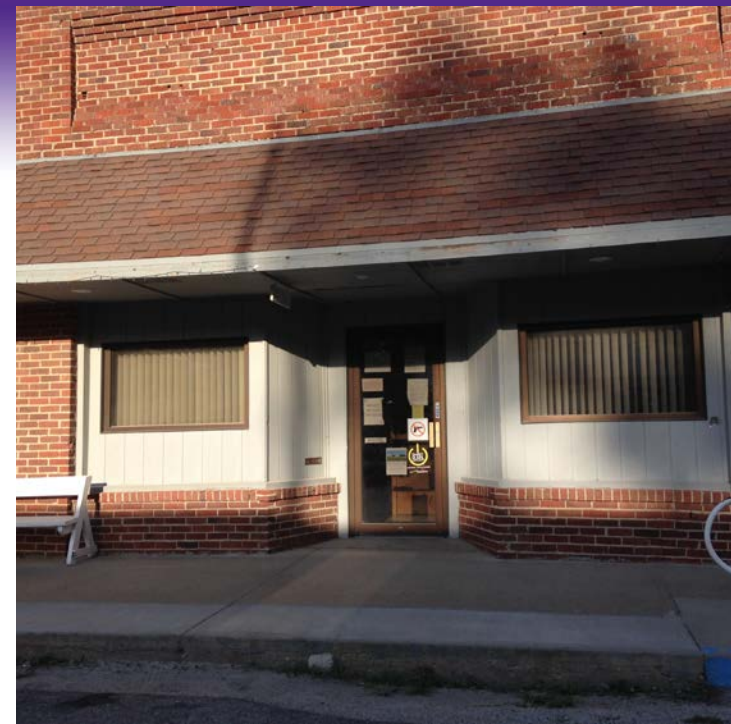
The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Visitors comments note a neat appearance as a first impression.
- Nice Welcome and Entry Signs.
- Barn Quilts add interest
- Home that says they will “kill trespassers” is a downer.



Downtown Business Area

- Nice brick facades
- Couldn't locate City Hall (no signs)
- Community store is manned by volunteers, with phone numbers posted on door.
- Barber Shop by a home.



Downtown Business Area

- Robinson Bank Building is beautiful.
 - Upstairs is being renovated
- Postmaster and local resident were friendly and gave good information about community.
- Bird Cage Theater hosts melodrama.



Downtown Business Area

- AG Partners anchors the town and Hansen Construction anchor the town



Downtown Business Area

- Not all downtown businesses are well-kept



*These buildings
represent
opportunities!*



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- We were not aware of an industrial area, but school building and land appear to offer an opportunity.

Loved that you preserved the high school sign.

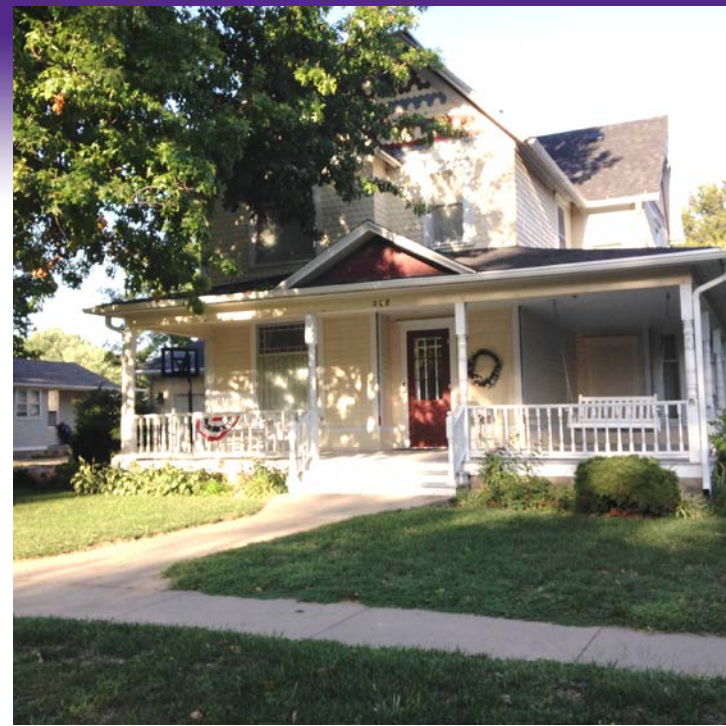


Health Care Services

- Health care is eleven miles in Hiawatha.
- Leadership team spoke of in-home health care.



Housing



Need for clean-up/demolition of older properties



Housing



Housing

- Visitors did not observe evidence of homes for rent.
- One house for sale.



Schools

- Children are bused to nearby communities.
- We saw no evidence of child care available.



Faith/Religion

- A United Methodist Church in town and 3 rural churches were noted in conversations.
- We heard about a Wednesday evening “Church School” that is offered to children downtown.



Civic

- Our visitors heard about community dinners that are served in the building next to the Bird Cage.
- We saw evidence of Lions & Boy Scouts.
- How does the community or a stranger hear about events?



Public Infrastructure

- Our visitors thought the streets were well-maintained.
- There were no plantings in November.



City Hall, Fire, EMS and Police Services

- City hall is where most visitors stop to look for services. As noted earlier, there are no signs to tell our visitors where City Hall is.
- The reception at City Hall was not friendly or helpful.
- We did not see Fire/EMS or Police services, but the leadership team was proud of the quality of these services. The City web page would be an excellent way to tell that story.

Library/City Parks

- No library, but we saw a little Lending library.
- **Two lovely parks:** One downtown and another nearby with nice equipment. The parks communicate a sense of civic pride.



City Parks

- The parks are a tribute to a lot of hard work and show the value the community places on the youth and families with picnic tables and benches for watching kids. Inclusive equipment was noted and appreciated.



City Parks

- Lovely cemetery
- Ball fields are not maintained, but the children play there anyway.



Recreation/Tourism

- We were not aware of any connections to recreation or tourism.
- The leadership team told about a historic house “Bedunnah Guest House” but that wasn’t evident to the team.
- Would love to hear about Robinson’s history! The website and FaceBook would be a great place to tell it.

Events

We heard about a number of Community activities:

- 4th of July Activities
- Easter Egg Hunt and Scavenger Hunt
- Halloween Dinner and Costume contest
- Lions Club Melodrama in February or March
- Christmas: Santa Express.

These events create a sense of place and connection for the community.

When we visited in early November, we saw no evidence of upcoming activities.

The website and FaceBook would be a great place to tell about the menu of annual events and highlight the next one.

Most Positive Observations

- Empty buildings, schools offer possibilities.
- **Active volunteers** who take care of the parks, create events, keep the community store open.



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Utilizing the resources available.
- Welcoming others.
- Off the beaten path– How will you let people know what Robinson has to offer? (website and other communication)
- Public and private clean up

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

- Lovely homes, when well care for
- Community Store in a small town that is maintained by volunteers.



- Congratulations! Your participation with First Impressions means that you're open to a new way of looking at things.
- Our small town isn't dying— the trends are in our favor!
- **Check out:**
 - SaveYour.town
 - Watch this webinar by yourself or with a group of friends to turn your thinking upside down (\$20):
 - <http://saveyour.town/webinar-trends/>

- **Trends:**

- With Internet, we're connected to the world. Business can happen anywhere.
- People want what we have— connections to each other, wide open spaces and low cost of living and starting a business.
- Innovative rural business models
- #Small Town Cool: Travelers and new families are looking for what we have. Since the 1970's Brain Gain (30-49 year olds moving to rural) has been happening and no one is noticing or talking about it.

- **What did you hear??**
- **Set next steps!**
 - Which group will lead the discussion?

- *Thank our leadership team:*

Sharilyn Gilbert, Debbie Allen, Dona Enke, Kristen Allen, Matt Young

- Contact me if you need resources or help:
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