

First Impressions

Vermillion, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- Vermillion asked for First Impressions, Delia agreed to be its partner; 58 min drive.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey on May 28, 2021 and took photos.
- Four visitors and their drivers visited on June 30.
- Results presented by zoom and video recording October 3, 2021.
- Vermillion 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 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/>

- 2019 Estimate 73 2010 Census: 89
(down 18% since 2010 **KS= +2.1%**)
- Median household income is \$28,750 (**\$62,087**)
- 96% high school or GED, 20% college educated,
91.8% HS or equivalency, KS 34.0% college education,
- Median Age 42.3 years (**37.2**)
- Poverty rate 17.8% (**KS=11.4%**)

- Wikipedia gave the population and listed as being in Marshall County. Bing had some images of the town.
- The Friends of Vermillion Facebook page was very informative. It gave details of the celebration and activities that were held on Memorial Day. The FB page also gave information about city hall and the library.

- **Facebook**


Vermillion

<https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Vermillion-Kansas/107922269228495/>

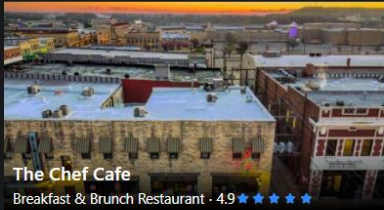
A Facebook generated page.
This can be taken over and personalized.

Where to Go


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




Tallgrass Tap House
Brewery · 0.0 ★★★★★



The Chef Cafe
Breakfast & Brunch Restaurant · 4.9 ★★★★★




HAPPY HOUR
MONDAY - FRIDAY 3-6PM
Coco Bolos
Tex-Mex Restaurant · 3.0 ★★★★★




Wagon Wheel Cafe
American Restaurant · 4.9 ★★★★★
Voted on "Best Local" by KANSAS! M
WAGON WHEEL

Upcoming Events

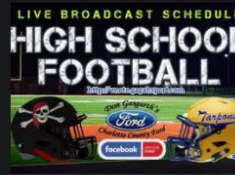
[Recommended](#) [Today](#) [This Week](#) [This Month](#)



OCT 30 4th Annual Dakota Farrant Memorial Cornhole Tournament
Sun 11:00 AM - KS-9, Frankfort
533 guests are going



SEP 24 Frankfort vs. Blue Valley High-school Football 2021
Sat 7:00 PM
1 guest is going



LIVE BROADCAST SCHEDULE
HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL
SEP 24 Nemaha Central vs. Atchison County High-school Football...
Sat 7:00 PM
1 guest is going

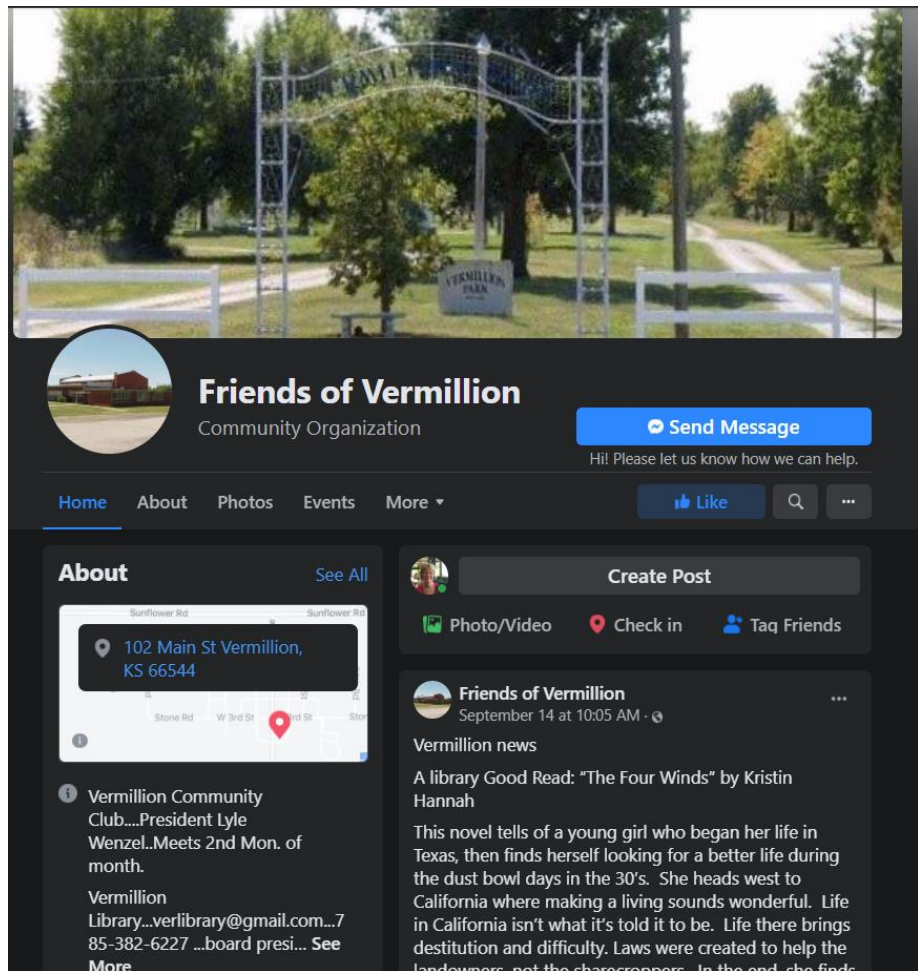
- **Facebook**

Vermillion, KS

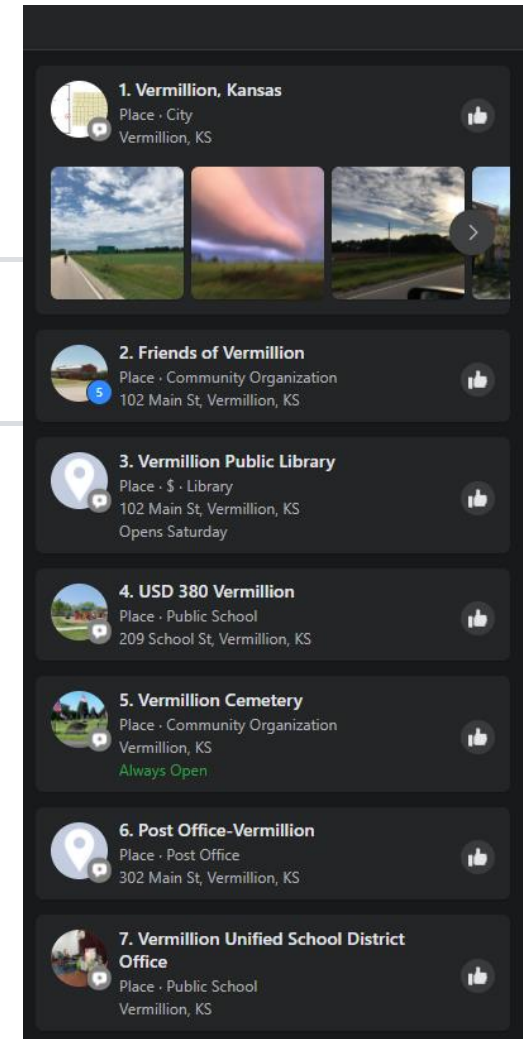
<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Vermillion-146900222083495>

Shown in dark mode for higher contrast.

Image retrieved 9/22/2021



- **Facebook**
 - 7 Vermillion FB pages
 - *An opportunity for co-marketing.*



Collaboration between Businesses:



On Wednesday morning, Sam Capoun, owner of Mesa Collection, 216 Main St. in Maple Hill, shows off one of her bags she sells. Capoun has coordinated with other local businesses to adjust hours to align and help drive more customers into the small Kansas town. *Evert Nelson/The Capital-Journal*



Mike Babb clears the final bits of snow in front of his restaurant, Flint Hills Smokehouse, on Wednesday morning, coordinated his hours to align with those of Mesa Collection's so that visitors to Maple Hill can eat at the restaurant go shop, or vice versa. *Evert Nelson/The Capital-Journal*

Maple Hill, population 600. Two businesses struggling during the pandemic coordinated their social media and their hours for the benefit of both.

“It’s so much better to love thy neighbor, this is a unique and limited market.”

“Five-Minute” Impression

- A nice first impression with beautiful well-kept homes.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Nice park that would accommodate a large crowd.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Older homes. Many well-maintained. Many old and run down, some needing yard maintenance.



- Wonderful bank building, nicely restored City Hall, library and museum.
- Several buildings are now used for storage.
- Saw no merchandise for sale.
- Volunteers and employees were gracious and helpful.









- We used the public restrooms at the park. They were very nice and spacious.
- We noticed water hydrant and electrical hookup for campers in the park.
- We loved the flowers planted in the old drill on Main Street.



We don't expect you to have health care services in a town this size.

A tip from other small towns:

Highlight how close you are to medical services.

- Many homes were in ill repair with overgrown yards, abandoned farm machinery and cars on the lots.
- About half the homes are kept up well.
- There were quite a few properties that could be cleared and used for modular homes.





Parked Cars and Machinery



KANSAS

Total Housing Units	53	
• Total Occupied Houses	34 (64%)	(88.8%)
• Vacant Houses	19 (36%)	(11.2%)
• Owner Occupied	29 (85%)	(66.3%)
• Renter Occupied	5 (15%)	(33.7%)

Rental Housing?

- There was no way for us to know which properties might be rentals.



Need for clean-up/demolition of older properties

- Overgrowth of trees and bushes contributed to messy appearance of abandoned homes.
- Clearing some properties would make way for newer modular homes or mobile homes.
- Small potential for some of the unlivable homes, which were vacant and untrimmed.

- Early Childhood classrooms were present in the old high school which now serves as the district office.
- Very Well maintained preschool. Loved everything about the school.

- They are in the Frankfort and Centralia School district. Data about schools is available.



Vermillion USD 380
What's Best for Kids!

District Vermillion Pre-K Centralia Frankfort

EXPLORE ▼ LINKS ▼ ENGLISH ▼

STAFF ▼ PARENTS ▼ STUDENTS ▼ SCHOOL BOARD ▼ STATE REQUIRED INFORMATION ▼

Welcome to USD 380 Vermillion Schools

What's Best for Kids

2021-2022 CALENDAR

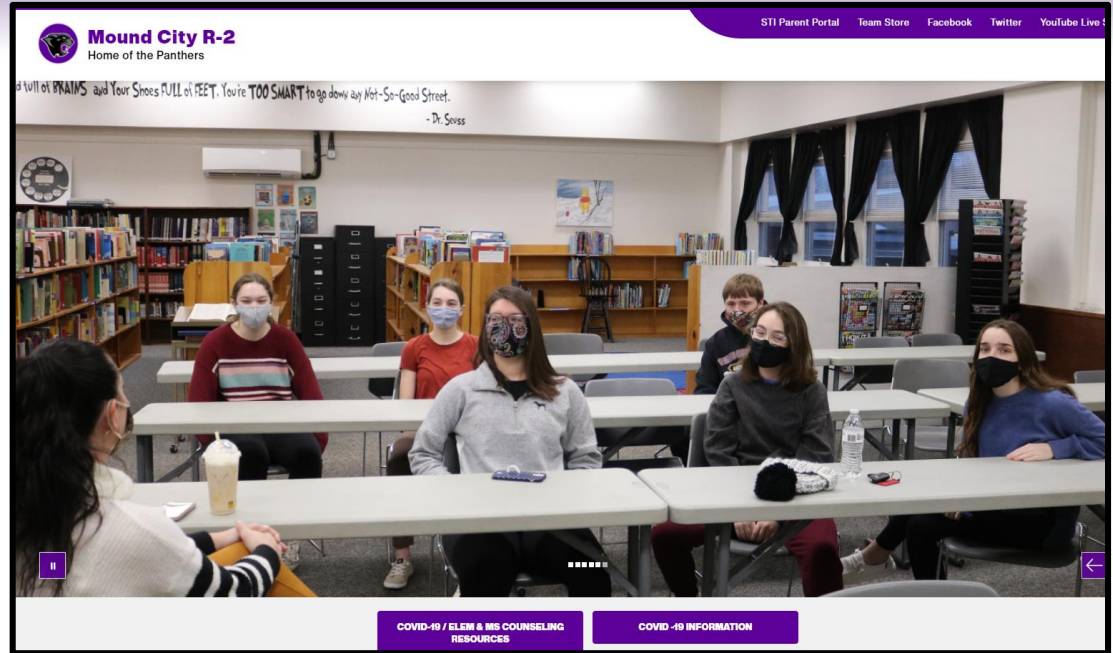
USD 380 STRATEGIC PLAN 21-26

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

Be mindful that “Potential Students” are an audience for your website.

- This is Mound City, **MO**:
- Current photos show emphasis on science-based. (masks & COVID info)
- “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:

- 3- and 4-year-old preschool was held at the district office. Free

Marshall County Data:

- **Desired Capacity of existing Child Care** **424**
- **Number of Children Under Age 6 potentially needing care:** **573**
- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential need** **74%**
- 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 to access local child care specialists.
785-823-3343

Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/Supply-Demand-2019-FINAL.pdf>

- There were two churches. They apparently take turns having services.
- We didn't see evidence of faith-based community services.



- There is a group that does events, takes care of the museum, library, Memorial Day program.
- Library/History Museum—well-done. In use and the star of the town.



- Red street signs. Restrooms were nice. Streets were typical of rural Kansas small towns.
- Streets were free of potholes.



- We were warmly greeted by the librarian. She gave us a newsletter and historical brochures.



- Nice fire department building.
- No fire truck.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

Home Contact Us

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

- > The Department
- > Auto/Home
- > Health/Life
- > Insurance Fraud & Education
- > Producer/Agency Services
- > Company Services
- > Other Services



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.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

- Very nice, well maintained and had a nice variety
- Loved it. In use- well kept.

*Hours posted, welcoming,
wireless internet made available*



- Nice picnic area, bathrooms, concession stand, and grandstand at the park. We reminisced about the older equipment because it was like what we had growing up but we also saw the potential for accidents. The playground at the district office was nice and looked like it would be open to the public.
- Nice Clean, RV Hook up, Showers and nice rest rooms.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Well-known for its Memorial Day celebration. The wide variety of events seemed to be well attended by locals. We didn't see any community slogan.
- July 3rd Tractor Pull was coming up.

Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Very Nice museum, lots of work went into it. Campground is very nice, with shower and rest rooms and hook-ups.
- Museum above the library. Campground \$10 per night in city park- has electric hook ups.



Visitor's Center

- City Hall/Library – Staff very helpful and pleasant, nice facility, not sure of hours of operation.
- There were handouts in the library for upcoming events.

What would bring you back?

- Peterson Brothers, next Memorial Day.

Most Positive Observations

- Very friendly, helpful citizens. Nice playground for the community at the district office. Well-kept City Hall and library. Nice event space at the park. Beautiful cemetery. Some gorgeous homes. Nice bank, fire station, museum and depot.
- They have a new well dug with good water and they are getting a new tower this year. Next year they will get new water lines.
- School District Office and Preschool. A bank, library, museum in city hall. A restaurant bar.



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Biggest obstacle for attracting new residents to the community would be the abandoned and deteriorating homes and businesses.
- Obstacles for solving this problem would be the cost to demolish the old homes.
- Abandoned property, some could be health hazard from rodents and other vermin.

What will you remember?

- Friendliness and helpfulness of community members. Park, library, museum.
- Negative would be the abandoned buildings, cars and farm equipment.
- The people we saw were very nice. There are many old buildings and homes that need to be torn down and over grown with trees, etc.

- Continue the excellent events and your efforts to make them visible.
 - Ask locals to re-post the events on their social media.
- Residents, consider whether you've done your part to keep your property attractive.
- Don't be shy to ask for donations for events.

**NO ONE CAN DO EVERYTHING,
BUT EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING.**

Thank you to our volunteer visitors!

Set Next Steps:

- Discuss what you heard in small groups of every kind.

Contact me if you need resources or have questions:

Nancy Daniels

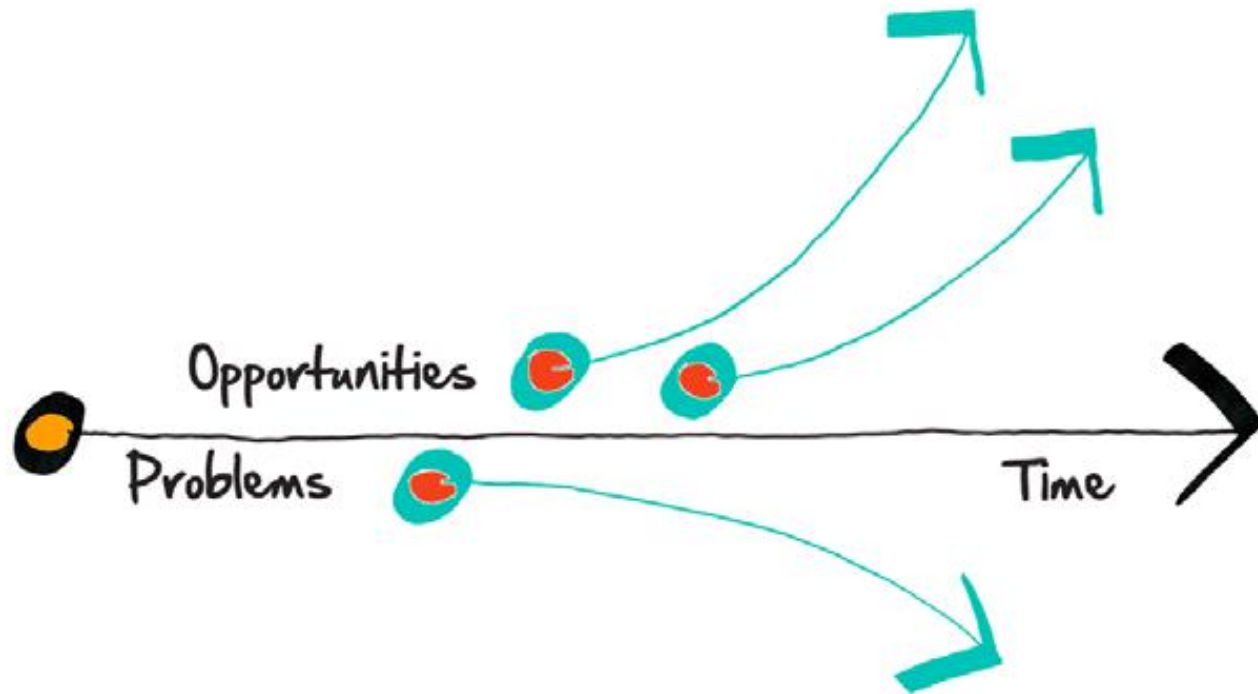
Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension

785.410.6352

nkdaniels@ksu.edu

Asset Based Community Development

People move in the direction of their conversations



Climate Change Refugees



There isn't a community in America, particularly in coastal America, where we are not seeing a transition from the coast to higher ground.

- Jesse Keenan, PhD, Tulane University

CBS Sunday Morning, January 24, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SByFy9R6320>

Retrieved from the Internet, 2-8-2021



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.



Youth Community Perceptions

- 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



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Contact

Nancy Daniels

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 or [Register here](#)
 - Community Vitality Calendar of events:
<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/>
 - Previous calls are recorded at
<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/business/entrepreneurship/>

- <http://smallbizsurvival.com/>
– THE SMALL TOWN AND RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE

SURVEY	BOOK BECKY TO SPEAK	THE BOOK: SMALL TOWN RULES	SHOP LOCAL VIDEO	SAVEYOUR.TOWN
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SMALL BIZ SURVIVAL

THE SMALL TOWN AND RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE



FRONT PAGE	LATEST STORIES	ABOUT	GUIDED TOUR	SUBSCRIBE	PRIVACY POLICY	CONTACT
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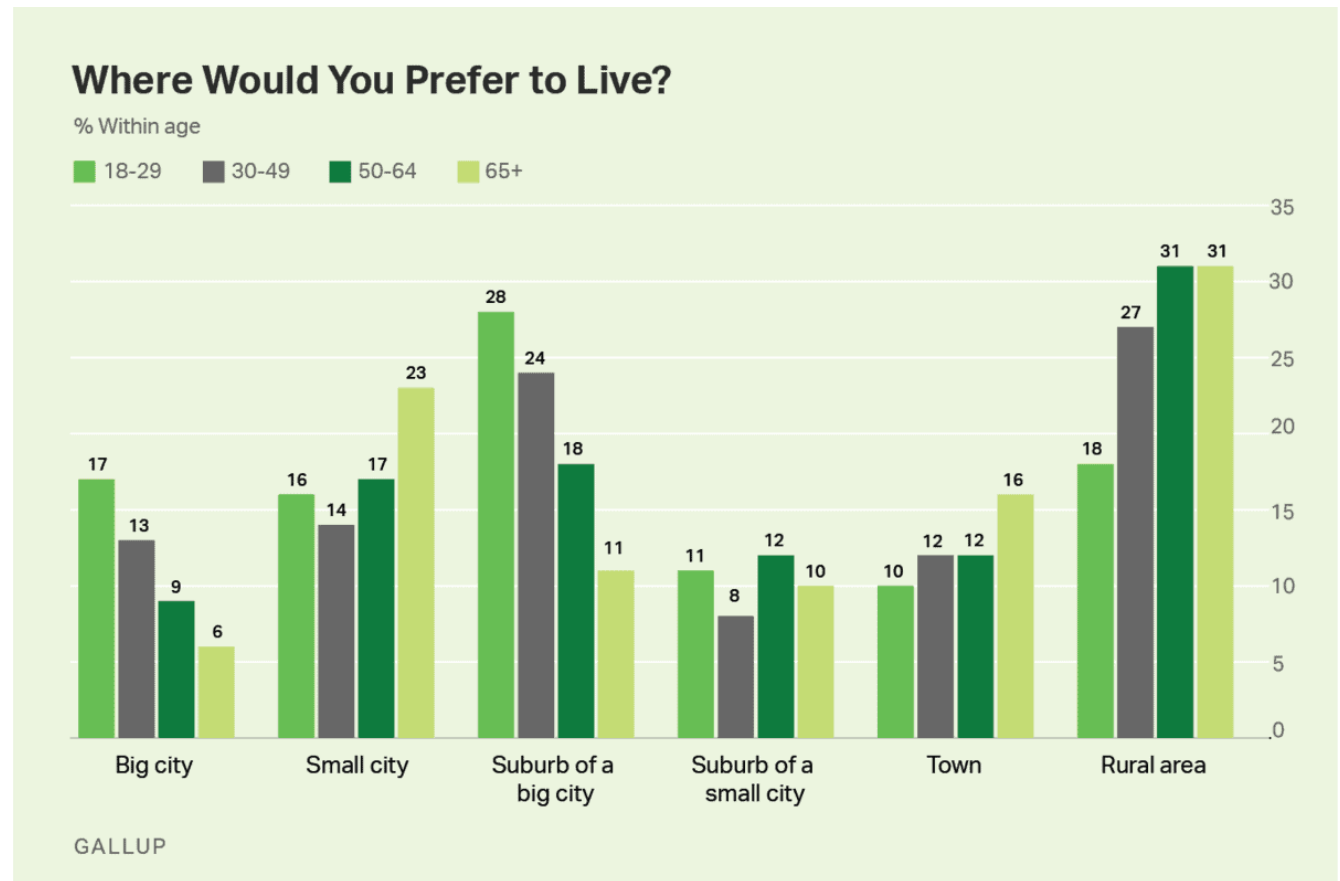
RSS

Zoom Towns: attracting and supporting remote workers in rural small towns

BY BECKY MCCRAY — 1 COMMENT

People have been saying for years that they would prefer to live in rural areas.

- Americans under age 30 are the only group whose top desired place to live is *not* rural; rural was #2, even for them.



- 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.

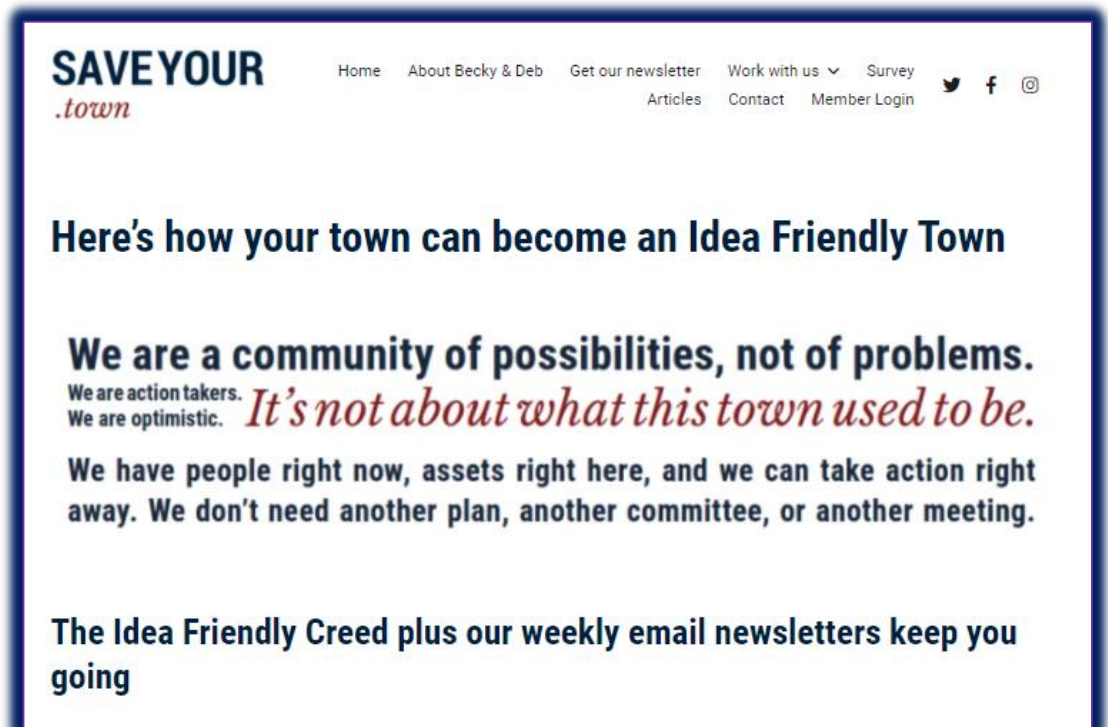
UpWork October, 2020 <https://www.upwork.com/press/releases/economist-report-remote-workers-on-the-move>, retrieved from Internet 12-12-20, UpWork October, 2020

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.

10 Tools:

<https://saveyour.town/workwithus/>



The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'SAVE YOUR .town' website. The header includes the logo 'SAVE YOUR .town' and a navigation menu with links: Home, About Becky & Deb, Get our newsletter, Work with us (with a dropdown arrow), Survey, Articles, Contact, and Member Login. Social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are also present. The main content area features a headline 'Here's how your town can become an Idea Friendly Town' followed by a quote: 'We are a community of possibilities, not of problems. We are action takers. We are optimistic. *It's not about what this town used to be.* We have people right now, assets right here, and we can take action right away. We don't need another plan, another committee, or another meeting.' At the bottom, it states 'The Idea Friendly Creed plus our weekly email newsletters keep you going'.

SAVE YOUR
.town

Home About Becky & Deb Get our newsletter Work with us Survey
Articles Contact Member Login

Here's how your town can become an Idea Friendly Town

We are a community of possibilities, not of problems.
We are action takers.
We are optimistic. *It's not about what this town used to be.*
We have people right now, assets right here, and we can take action right away. We don't need another plan, another committee, or another meeting.

The Idea Friendly Creed plus our weekly email newsletters keep you going

Kansas Department of Agriculture in partnership with other state organizations, will work with your community to find the best opportunities for growth using the assets of your region.

The graphic features a collage of various agricultural and technological images, including sheep, corn, a drone, a pig, chickens, apples, a horse, a green tractor, a circuit board, and a person in a lab coat. The text "GROW IN KANSAS" is prominently displayed at the top in white on a dark blue background. Below the collage, the text "STRATEGIC GROWTH INITIATIVE" is written in bold, followed by a description of the program as a pilot for recruiting food, agriculture, and UAS/small aircraft businesses to Kansas.

GROW IN KANSAS

STRATEGIC GROWTH INITIATIVE

A pilot program for the proactive recruitment of food, agriculture and UAS/small aircraft business to Kansas.

For more information on the Strategic Growth Initiative, please contact
Russell Plaschka, Ag Business Development Program Manager
785-564-7466 • Russell.Plaschka@ks.gov
agriculture.ks.gov/GrowAg

Rural Grocery/KS Healthy Food Initiative

- **Goal:** Increase access to 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/>

khfi@ksu.edu

Keeping Groceries Alive: [Webinar series for Grocery Transition](#)





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