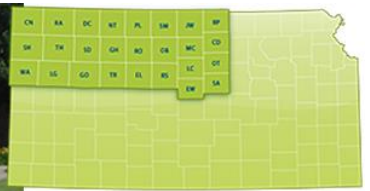


# First Impressions

## Waterville, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership  
with

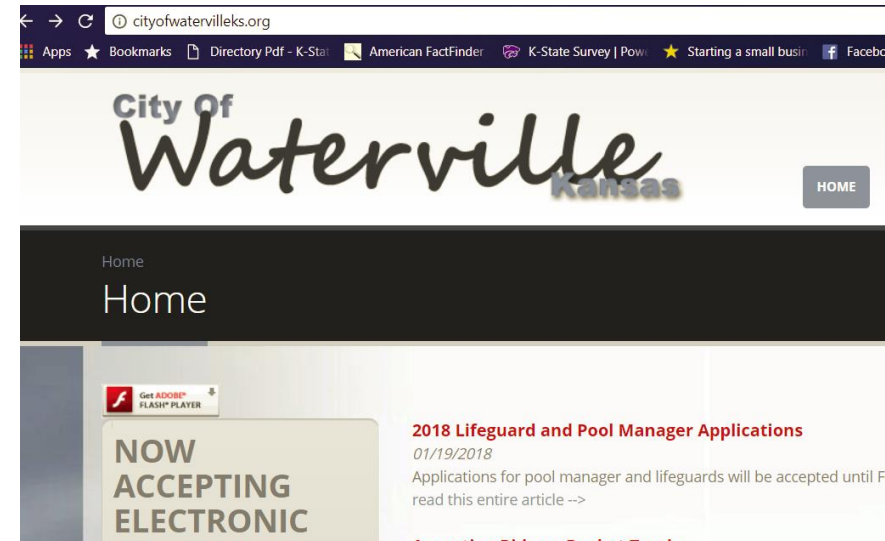
The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



- 2010 Census Population 680  
(-.1% since 2000\*) **KS +6.1%**
- 2016 Estimate is 644  
(-5.4% since 2000 **KS +8.1%**)
- 13.0% college educated, 95.1% high school or GED  
– **KS 31% college education, 90% HS or equivalency**
- 75.3% family households, 24.7% non-family
- Poverty rate is 10.5% (**KS=13.6%**)
- Median Age 46.9 years (**36**)
- Median household income is \$46,136 (**\$52,205**)

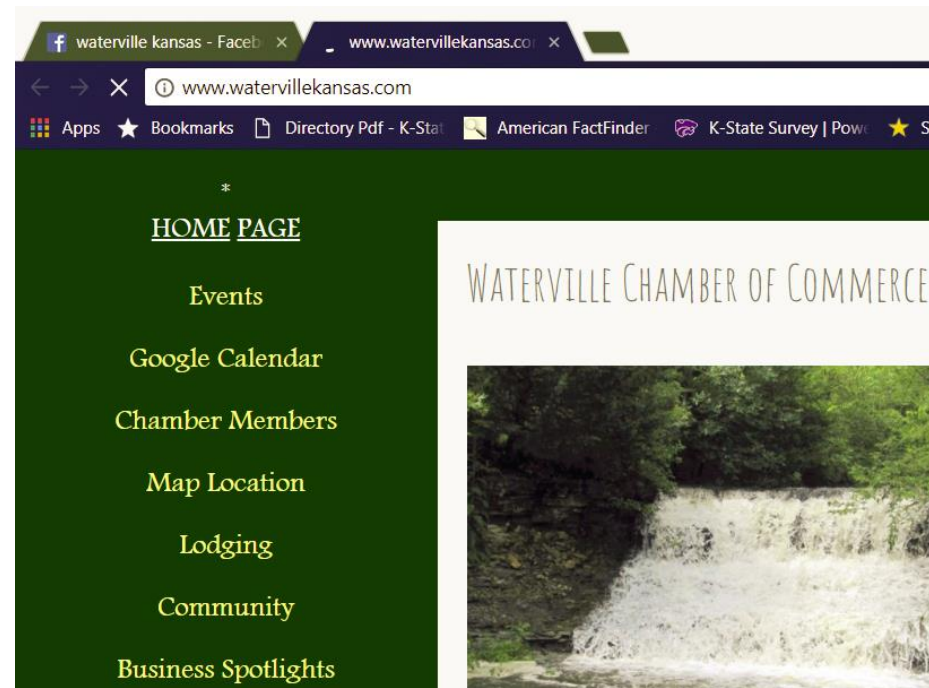
<http://cityofwatervilleks.org/>

- Came right up when I searched. I like that their rates and budget are on the web site. We should do that.
- Very easy to find information.
- There was nothing about the School District on site.
- List of activities and events. Links to Library, Community Center and golf course.



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

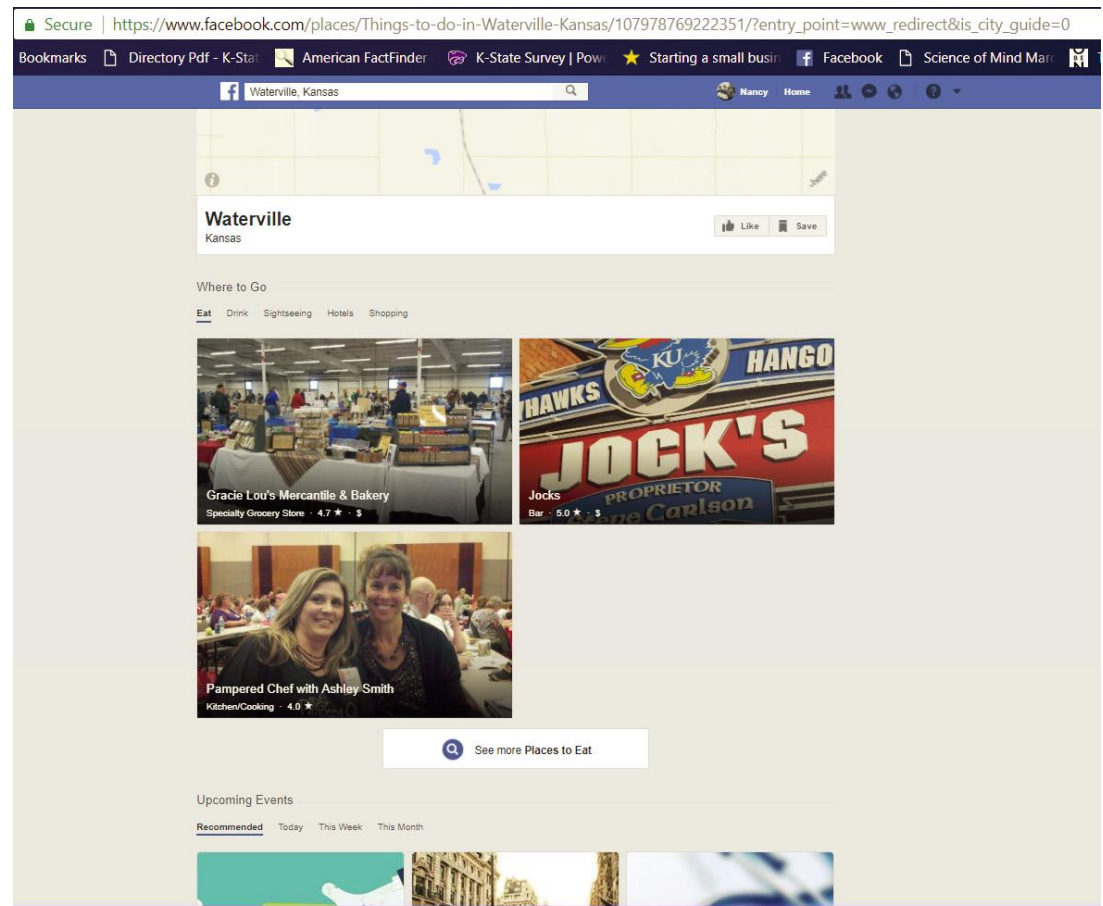
- Google search brings you to the chamber web site. I liked the pictures (scenes from the community), but the color combination seemed hard to read.
- Visitors offered constructive review of dated items.
- Easily found information that helped know what to expect in the community.
- “Your Move!” has a LARGE overview of the area.
- “Our History” was interesting.





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

- *Facebook-generated page shows out-of-date information.*



## The “Five-Minute” Impression

- The community appears larger than its population, with good manufacturing presence and most of the storefronts appeared occupied.
- Neighborhoods were well-maintained with better housing than you see in some small towns. The usual mix of well-maintained and “less than desirable” existed.
- Sidewalks in most, if not all neighborhoods.

## The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Definitely a farming community with grain bins everywhere.
- There was a large manufacturing plant to the east.





# The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Enjoyed the sign, “Waterville, next 5 exits.”



# The “Five-Minute” Impression

- A nice stock trailer business from the south gives an industrial, but positive impression.





## The “Five-Minute” Impression

- The west entrance has no sign.
- Signage is practical but not uniform in appearance.
- The sign across from the gas station is extremely busy and not easy to read.
- Nice to see home remodeling and fix-up in process.

Visitor observations: October 2017

Photos: November 29, 2017





## Downtown Business Area

- Vibrant, active well-identified businesses alongside vacant, worn-down buildings.









Customer service  
varied from store to  
store.







## Downtown Business Area

- Building with iron bars on the front stands out negatively. “What is the crime rate here?”



## Downtown Business Area

- Solid Bar Fitness: Manufacturing weight-lifting bars. Probably online sales, but not good curb appeal.





## Downtown Business Area (amenities)

- Restrooms at the park
- No fountains or benches.
- *Is there Wi-Fi?*



## Downtown Business Area (amenities)

- Despite attempts at streetscaping, downtown looks a bit unkempt.



## Downtown Business Area (amenities)

- In places, the quantity of trash cans and decorative planters make the sidewalks look crowded.





## Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Gas station is the highway stop for visitors and not a good impression. Floors are dirty, good service, but did not want to eat there.



Google Maps: May 2014 (when gas cost \$3.38/gal)  
Retrieved from Internet February 2018

## Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- **Asset:** Two trailer companies located here.
- Visitors could not tell if there was open industrial space. Chamber says, “No.”

### ***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.”
- *The same UPS truck who competed with your downtown can help your entrepreneur serve the world.*

## Health Care Services

- Health Care services are not provided in town.
- A small eye doctor sign downtown.

*One visitor noted the LARGE amount of information on the “Your Move” page of Chamber: including proximity to health care.*



### Medical and Health Care

Ambulance service: Waterville

Beauty shops and barber shop: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Blue Rapids Dental Clinic

Blue Rapids Medical Clinic: Physicians and physician's assistants

Community Memorial Hospital: Marysville

EMS services: Waterville

Eye doctor: Waterville

Mercy Regional/Via Christi Hospital: Manhattan

Pharmacy: Blue Rapids

Terry Christie Funeral Home: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Prairie Valley Vet Clinic, Blue Rapids

Wellness Weavers: Waterville



# Long-Term Care

- An Independent Living facility





# Housing

- A nice amount of market-rate housing. A mix of newer homes, large Victorians and a few eyesores.



# Housing

- Discovered 3 stately homes to the far south. Very nice! Would love to know the story behind them!





# Housing

- Did not see anything for rent, possibly the Sunny Side homes?





- Several houses for sale.





- Several houses were being updated.





- Generally, a good mix of housing!







## Housing data

**KANSAS**

|                       |             |         |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------|
| • Total Housing Units | 357         |         |
| • Occupied Houses     | 292 (81.8%) | (89.5%) |
| • Vacant Houses       | 65 (18.2%)  | (10.5%) |
| • Owner Occupied      | 238 (82%)   | (66.7%) |
| • Renter Occupied     | 54 (18%)    | (33.3%) |



# Need for clean-up





# Schools

- Pre-school and elementary school in Waterville,
- Elementary school appears nice with a nice playground.



# Schools

- Great to have a preschool in a community.
- Middle School in Blue Rapids and High School in between.

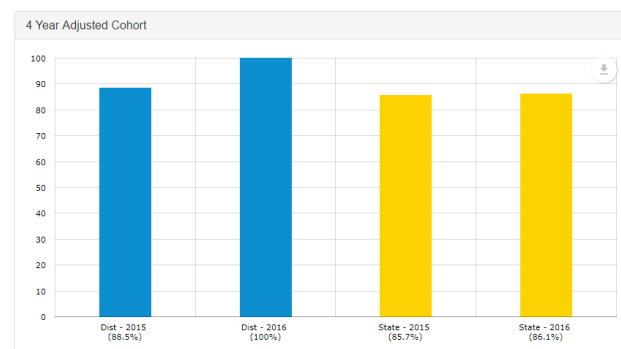


**Schools-** *were you able to find online information to help you assess the quality of education system?*

- No link to the schools from City or Chamber website.
- *Many schools have links to quality indicators on their website, USD 498 does not.*



Graduation Indicators

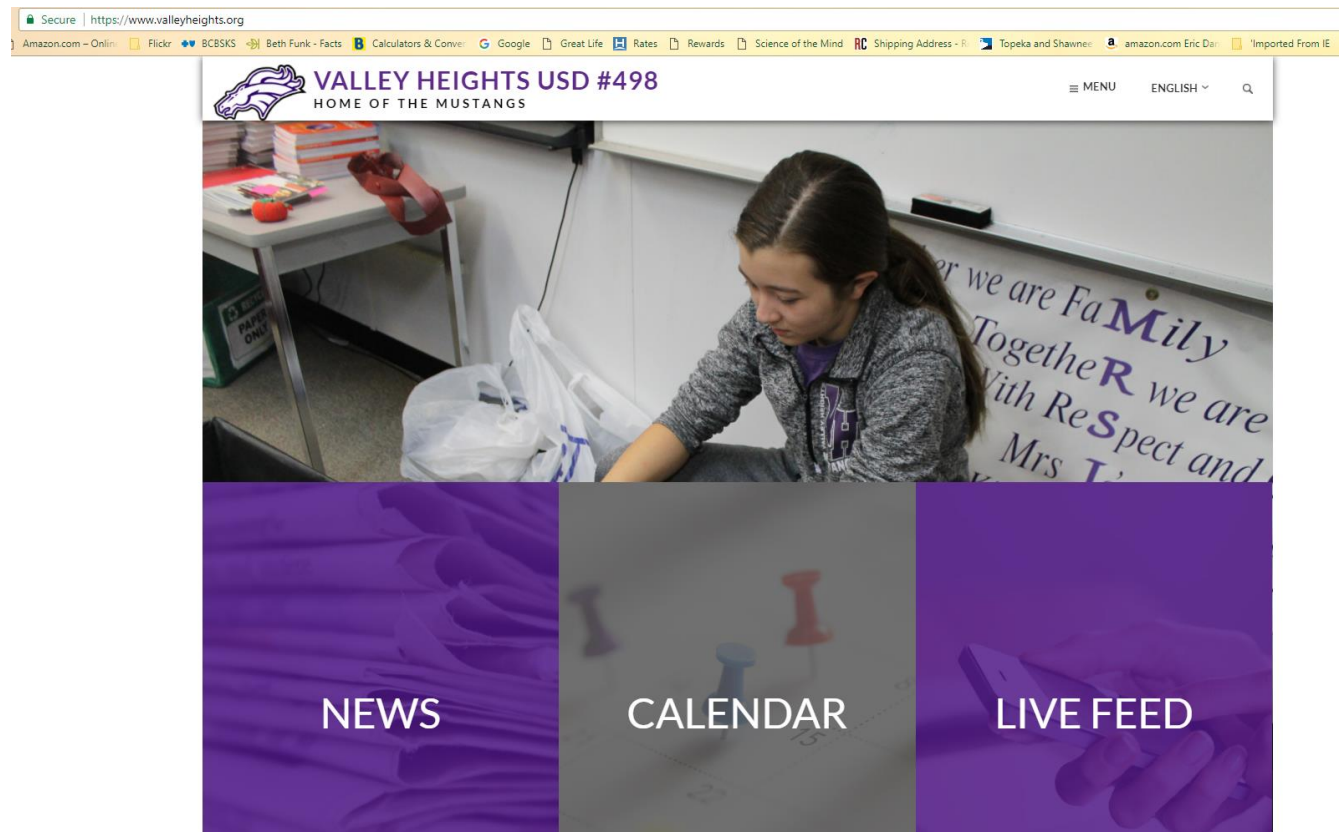


Kansas State Department of Education,  
Building Report Card  
Retrieved from Internet 2/3/2018



# Schools

- School website is fun to look at with lots of evidence of student involvement in its creation. (live feed)



## Childcare

- Childcare wasn't apparent to visitors, except for school district preschool.



## Faith/Religion

- Saw a Lutheran and Methodist churches. Well-maintained in nice neighborhoods.
- Did not see evidence of church activity.



## Civic

- Lion's Club on sign at entrance.

*Nice listing on Chamber Site does not include Masonic Lodge.*



### Waterville Chamber of Commerce Clubs & Associations

#### Community Page

**Assoc:** Chamber of Commerce  
**Time:** 12:00 P.M. Every second Tuesday  
**Where:** Weaver Hotel  
**Desc:** Striving to make our community better  
**Dues:** Ten dollars individual, forty dollars business  
**Contact:** Ann Walter-President

---

**Assoc:** Friends of the Waterville Library  
**Desc:** Working to make a better library and learning center. Maintain books and tapes offered for sale at the **library:** Sidewalk book sales throughout the year. Always fresh material. Donations gladly accepted.  
**Dues:** Adults: \$10.00. Teens: \$5.00 Students: \$3.00. Families: \$15.00. Patrons: \$20.00. Lifetime: \$100.00  
**Meets:** Third Tuesday at 4:00 P.M. at the Library.  
**Contact:** Sharon Tteagarden-King and Jeanette Bergquest 785-363-2236 [dhking@bluevalley.net](mailto:dhking@bluevalley.net)

---

**Assoc:** Valley Heights Leo Club Ages 12-21  
**Time:** Every first Sunday 4:00 P.M. or 7:00 P.M. depending on school activities  
**Where:** Alternates: Teen Center and United Methodist Church, Waterville.  
**Desc:** Community involvement supported by Lions club  
**Dues:** Five dollar entry fee. Three dollars annually  
**Contact:** Advisor: Sharon Tteagarden-King 785-363-2236



# Public Infrastructure

- Streets were covered in sand.
- Sidewalks weren't always present or consistently in good shape.





## City Hall

- None of the visitors went into city hall but saw it as the source for visitor information.



# Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Police presence was noticed
- Nice Fire Station, EMS Building.

*What is your ISO Rating?*



so.php

Beth Funk - Facts | Calculators & Conve... | Google | Great Life | Rates | Rewards | Science of the Mind | Shipping Address - R... | Topeka and Shawnee | amazon.com Eric

Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

Home | Contact Us | search | GO

## Kansas Insurance Commissioner

Ken Selzer, CPA



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.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 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 safety education, and fire investigation programs

  
Office of the  
Kansas Insurance Commissioner

# Library

- An active library in the downtown area.
- Building looked a little outdated.





# City Parks

- Open restrooms were appreciated by visitors.
- Picnic area.
- Gazebo needs repairs.





## City Parks

- Visitor took a child along and spent a lot of time having a picnic and running around the park. Tractor was a unique attraction for the 5-year-old.





## City Parks

- Park is mostly welcoming, but needs a little revitalization of equipment and pool house.



## City Parks

- Waterville Campground on the east side of town. There is a sign there to inform visitors of major attractions of the town and provide a phone # to get more tourist information.





## Recreation/Tourism

- Didn't see any particular event or attraction.
- No community slogan.
- Weaver Hotel and museums are in Waterville.
- Golf Course, not well kept nor well-known by residents.
  - *Built and maintained by volunteers!*

### Waterville Kansas

[www.watervillekansas.com/](http://www.watervillekansas.com/) ▼

**Waterville, Kansas** is a prairie town with a foot in the past and an eye to the future. Meanwhile, we have fun! Events. Tourist Information.

You've visited this page 2 times. Last visit: 2/3/18

- “Your move!” Page of Chamber Website

## **Recreation and Entertainment**

9-hole grass green golf course: Waterville

Astro Theater: Marysville

Biking and hiking: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Bowling: Marysville

Competitive softball, baseball and swimming: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Hunting and fishing/deer and turkey: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Interactive museums: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Lake Idlewild/fishing/ Waterville

Libraries: Waterville and Blue Rapids (BR library oldest working museum west of the Mississippi)

Little/Big Blue River/ fishing and canoeing: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Marshall County Fair/July: Blue Rapids

Summer recreation programs: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Swimming pools, parks and playgrounds: Waterville and Blue Rapids

Wild West Days~Waterville

Nickel Days~Waterville

Christmas Gala: Weaver Hotel, Waterville



# Are there events that will bring you back?

- Some events were listed on the website, but outdated.
- Nickel Days





## Lots of interest in “story”



### Brief History of Waterville

West Marshall County on the Little Blue River. Highways US 77 and K-9 intersect here. Tree-lined streets, a mix of turn-of-the-century buildings make this a pleasant place to visit.

In 1867 as a pioneer town at the end of the railroad and beside the Little Blue River. When the railroad was extended 100 miles from Atchison, KS, the site for the city was determined. It was named by William Osborne, a railroad superintendent, for his hometown of Waterville, New York.

As an "end of the line" town, **Waterville** served as a supply center for the area and as a shipping center for livestock, grain and other local products. It also accommodated travelers in several hotels. As churches and schools were built, this rowdy cow town took on a more serene and gracious tone. Soon, many new homes and businesses were established. Through the years, **Waterville** has cherished and cared for many of these features while keeping pace with the times.

Today, you will find the Victorian homes, the railroad station and many other historic buildings along tree-lined streets. Come discover other secrets of **Waterville**. A museum, a new community center, a nine-hole golf course, a public swimming pool, lighted tennis courts, beautiful Lake Idlewild one mile north of town, two lighted ball fields, a modern school system and a relaxed place where friendly people still have time to listen to the serenity.

The Opera House was built in 1903 at a cost of \$8,000. It's used now as a theater for community and school productions. Tours of **Waterville** are available. Levels are Chocolate, Red Delight and On the Road. For more Information call (785) 363-2515 or send us an email from the main page.

The Train Depot, built in 1907, has been restored and houses a museum of **Waterville** collections. The Game Fork one-room schoolhouse is also a historic site.



- [http://www.wellnessweavers.com/our\\_water\\_village\\_facilities](http://www.wellnessweavers.com/our_water_village_facilities).

*Lots of wonderful area historical information is on the Wellness Weavers' website.*



The Blacksmith Shop Livery Barn



- Built in 1885, it has served as a livery barn, buggy assembly factory, an automotive repair shop, and Santa's storage and workshop.
- The barn is the featured setting for *The Goldstone Inn* books by Marilyn White. Unlike in the book, it will not be dismantled and moved.
- Basic weatherization work that sealed the broken windows has been done at this point. Repointing of the rocks is needed and removal of the bat guano and to figure out a way to house the bats in alternative living arrangements is on the agenda. The bats are part of our natural pest control team and their guano is excellent for the gardens. The "Travel the World" Barn Door Quilt on the South side is visible from Hwy 77 if you look North at the United Methodist Church corner on Main St and Nebraska Ave. It is included on the Kansas Barn Quilt Tour website.
- For 44 years it was "Santa" Hanson's workshop and storage facility...his suit is on display in the Waterville Train Depot Museum. It houses the 1920 Gere Biplane that was built by Marc Lamoureux (left wing) and the motor by Malcom Staum (right wing). The actual wings are wired to the ceiling to keep them safe until the Plane Built TEAM arrives. Darren Perillo, is the tail section and has 20 hours fixed wing aviation from Purdue University (where my Dad was a graduate assistant before Amelia Earhart was there with her Flying Laboratory, the Electra that did not return from the final stretches of the World Flight in 1937).



# What would bring you back?

- Hotel/opera house area has a ton of potential.
- Little Blue River and Idle Wild Lake are a few miles away. (Couches under the shelter are disgusting.)
- Railroad Park.







## Most Positive Observations

- Neighborhoods were well-maintained with good market rate housing.
- Location is tremendous- proximity to Marysville and Manhattan and other recreation.

*One visitor noted the  
LARGE amount of info  
on “Your Move” page:  
Including proximity to  
other locations.*

### Location and Map

[Click MAP](#) [Click](#)

| City         | Miles from Waterville | Minutes from Waterville |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Blue Rapids  | 4 Miles               | 4 Minutes               |
| Marysville   | 18 Miles              | 18 Minutes              |
| Manhattan KS | 45 Miles              | 45 Minutes              |
| Topeka KS    | 95 Miles              | 2 Hours                 |
| Lincoln NE   | 90 Miles              | 2 Hours                 |

Excellent highways (77 and 9) surrounding area, as well as graded county roads running throughout the rural region



## Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Downtown could use some renovations to frontage.
- There is nowhere to sit and eat.
- Main street needs some work to make it more attractive.
- Unbelievable potential of Opera House, hotel, railroad area and Settlement House. Tell the story!





- The closeness of Blue Rapids could be seen as a challenge or a benefit.
- The things that are missing in Waterville (grocery store, restaurants, medical services) are found in Blue Rapids.
- With only 4 miles between them, the towns could be considered as a whole vs separately to bring people here to live.

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

- Much nicer than I expected. Nice neighborhoods, good manufacturing base.
- No health care services.
- A lot of dead ends and no signs to tell you.
- Streets need work.





## Next Steps:

### *Thank our leadership team:*

- *Ashley Jacobson*
- *Sammie Parker*
- *Rachael Bargdill*
- **Set next steps!**
  - Which group will lead the discussion?
- *Contact me if you need resources or help:*
  - 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.





## **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*



## K-State Research and Extension

### 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.






## 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 |  |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------|---------------|--|


# SMALL BIZ SURVIVAL

THE SMALL TOWN AND RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE




|            |                |       |             |           |         |         |     |  |
|------------|----------------|-------|-------------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|--|
| FRONT PAGE | LATEST STORIES | ABOUT | GUIDED TOUR | SUBSCRIBE | PODCAST | CONTACT | RSS |  |
|------------|----------------|-------|-------------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|--|

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**

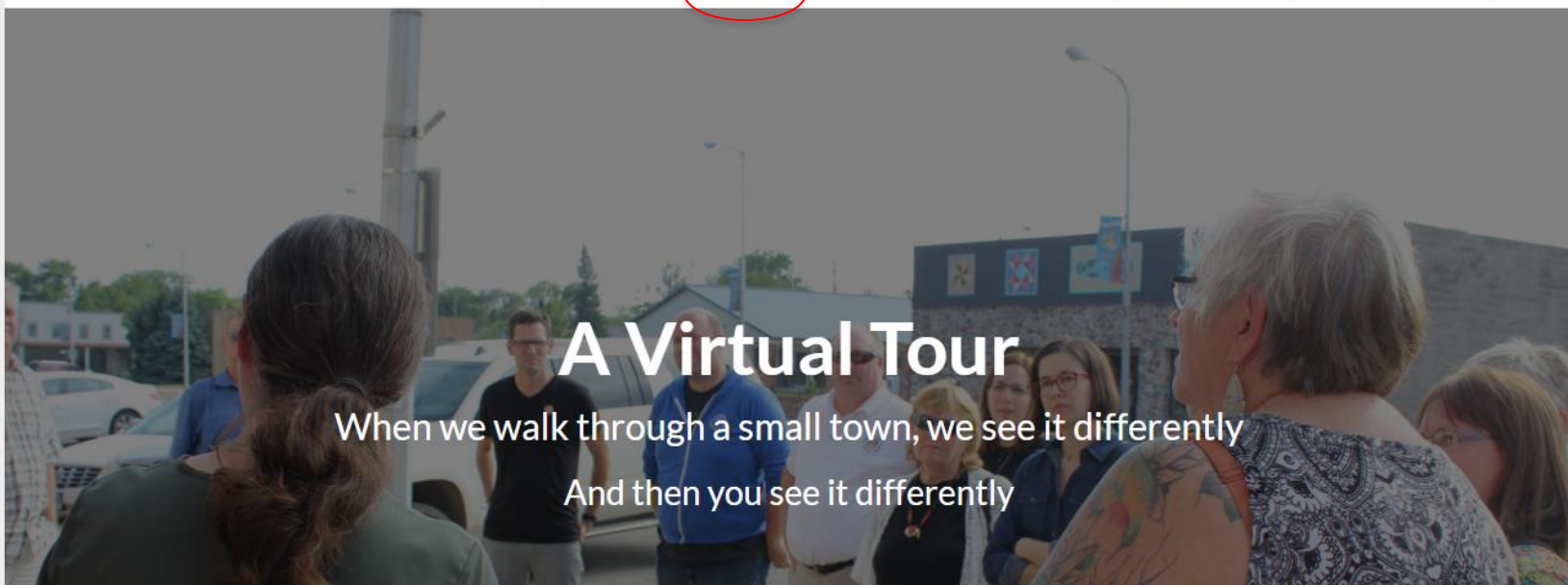
I will never sell or rent your email.

## 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)

