

First Impressions



Weir, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- Weir asked for First Impressions, Mound City agreed to be its partner; 1 hour, 12 min drive.
- I trained the volunteers about the visit and survey on September 10 and took photos.
- Three visitors came in one car on September 29.
- Results presented by video recording.
- Weir 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/>

- 2018 Estimate 624 2010 Census: 729
(down 18.9% since 2010) **KS= +2.1%**
- Median household income is \$34,028 (**\$62,087**)
- 82.2% high school or GED, 15.4% college educated,
91.8% HS or equivalency, KS 34.0% college education,
- Median Age 36.9 years (**37.2**)
- Poverty rate 24.1% (**KS=11.4%**)

- **Website**

- The page was down, and said it was being worked on.
- Facebook page is active and informational.

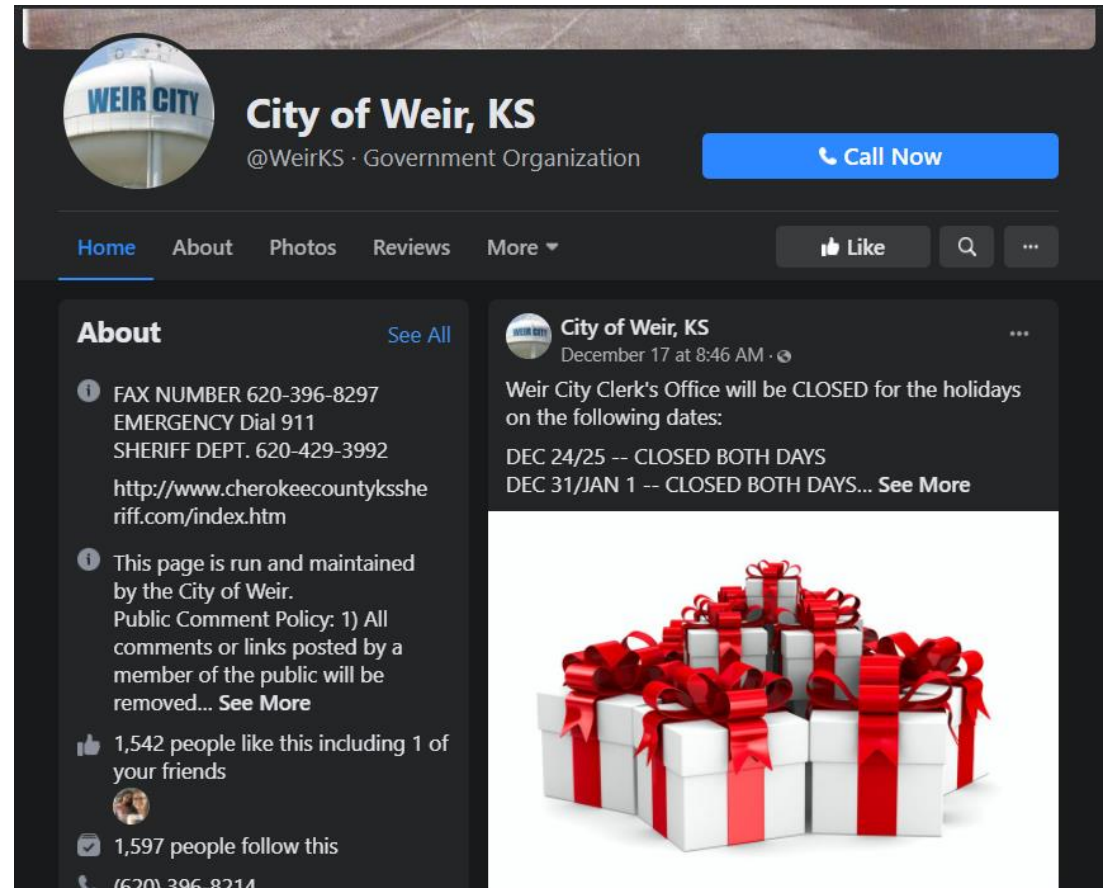
Cool historic photos at

<https://www.kshs.org/index.php?url=km/items/view/448101>

- **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/WeirKS/>

The official site comes up at the top of the search.

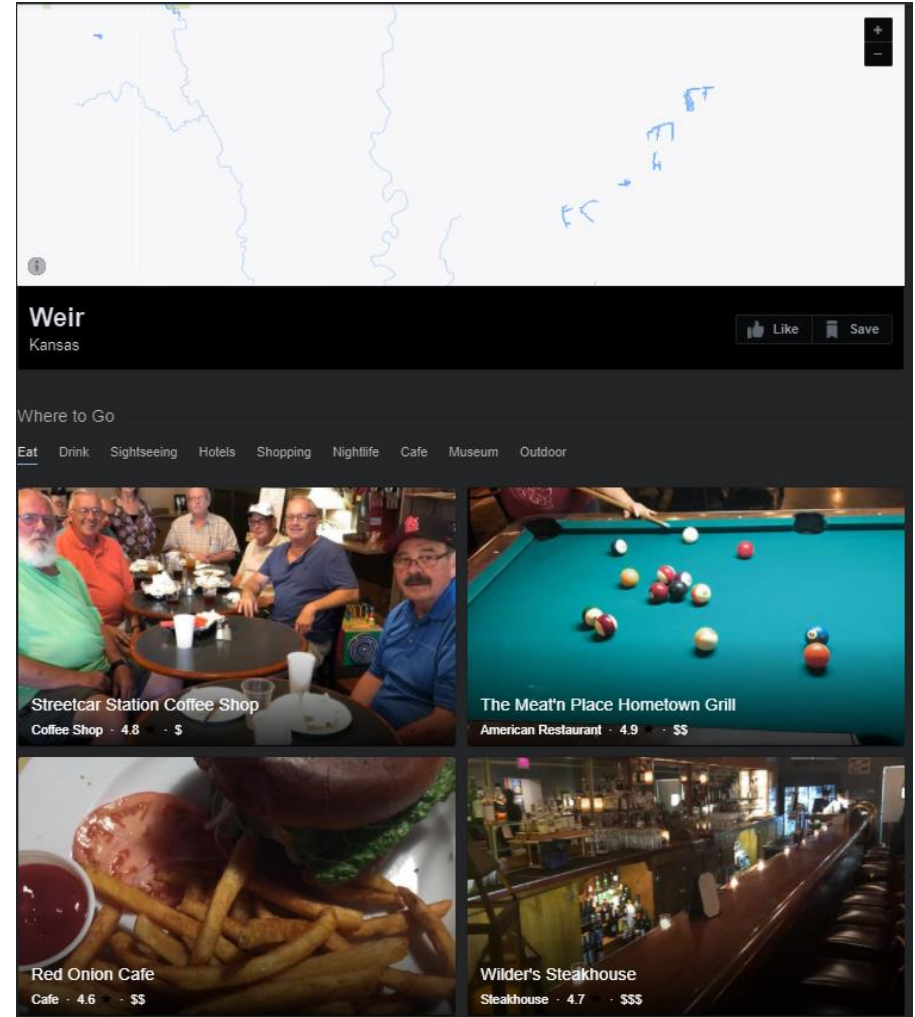
- *Sheriff's link is broken.*
- *Nice link to state and federal government resources*



Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Weir-Kansas/112566088754788/>

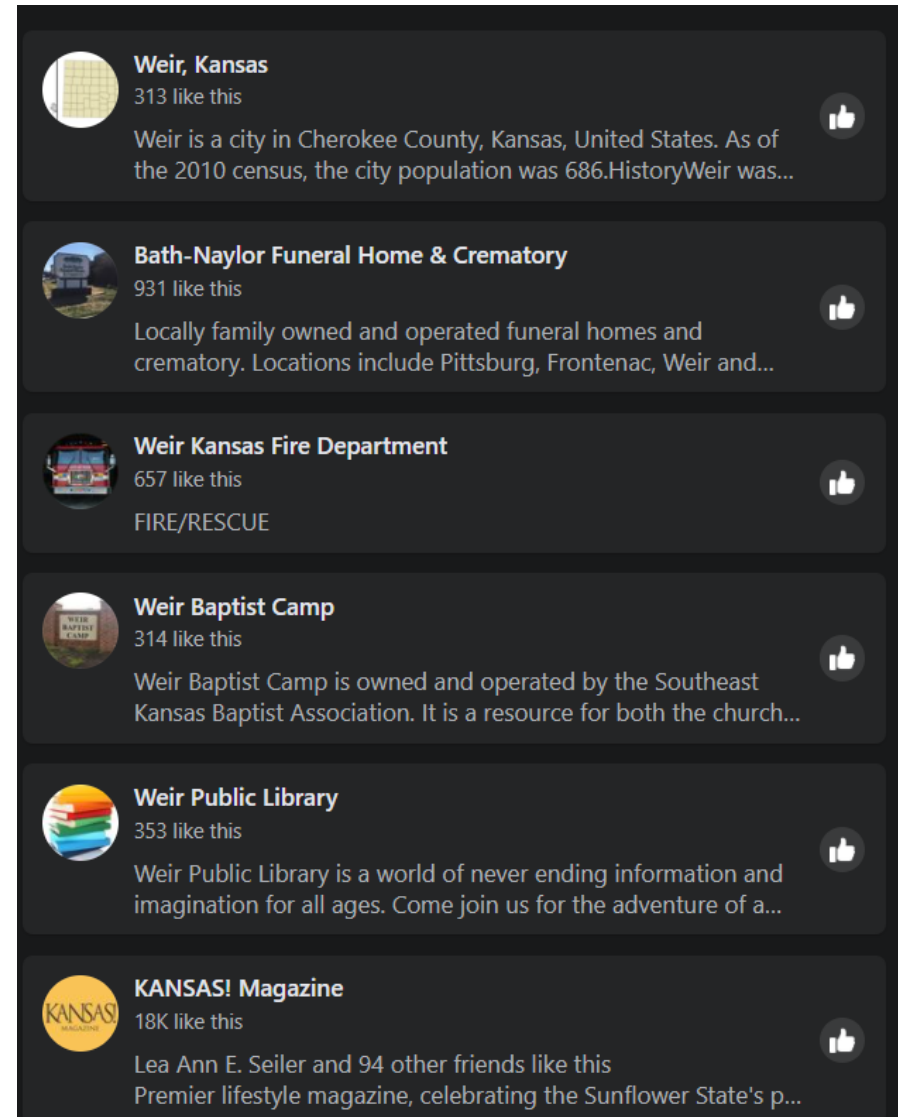
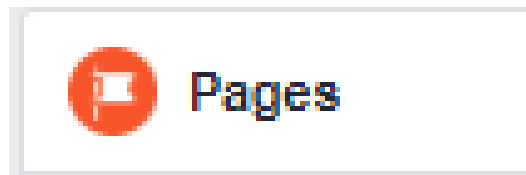
*A Facebook-generated page
Can be taken over and personalized.
Shown in dark mode for contrast.*



FaceBook

- Weir-linked pages
- *An opportunity for co-marketing.*

Shown in dark mode for contrast



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Not many businesses, but the ones they have are in decent condition.
- A lot of trailer homes.
- Yards that need to be cleaned up.
- Entry signs that say Welcome to Weir.



“Five-Minute” Impression



Downtown Business Area

- A library, bank, post office, Quik Shop, funeral home, and Ag Choice.
- Friendly customer service at the Quickstop.



Downtown Business Area

Amenities and parking:

- Chip and seal streets in decent shape.
- Business access is ok.
- Public restrooms, trash containers, benches, play area.









Downtown Business Area





Other Retail Shopping Areas

- Ag Choice was very nice. It looked kept up and organized.



Ag Choice: Google Earth, March 2014, retrieved from Internet, 12/21/2020



- Didn't see an industrial park.
- *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.*

- Hospital and medical services are available in Pittsburg, Joplin and Girard.
- There are no long-term care services in Weir.

- I noticed a few really nice homes, but definitely noticed many homes and trailers in poor condition.
- Not sure the housing market would appeal to all income wages.
- Many homes lacked curb appeal
- One or two homes for sale in the city.

Rental Housing:

- I didn't see any apparent rental housing, no ads or signs.











KANSAS

- Total Housing Units 318
- Total Occupied Houses 258 (81.1%) (88.8%)
- Vacant Houses 60 (18.9%) (11.2%)
- Owner Occupied 204 (79.1%) (66.3%)
- Renter Occupied 54 (20.9%) (33.7%)
- Family Households 61.2% (65.1%)
- Non-family Households 38.8% (34.9%)

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/> Family data at DP04

- Elementary School was new, very nice, but no high school.



- There is a website for USD 247

<https://usd247.com/category/news/southeast-elementary-school-ses/>

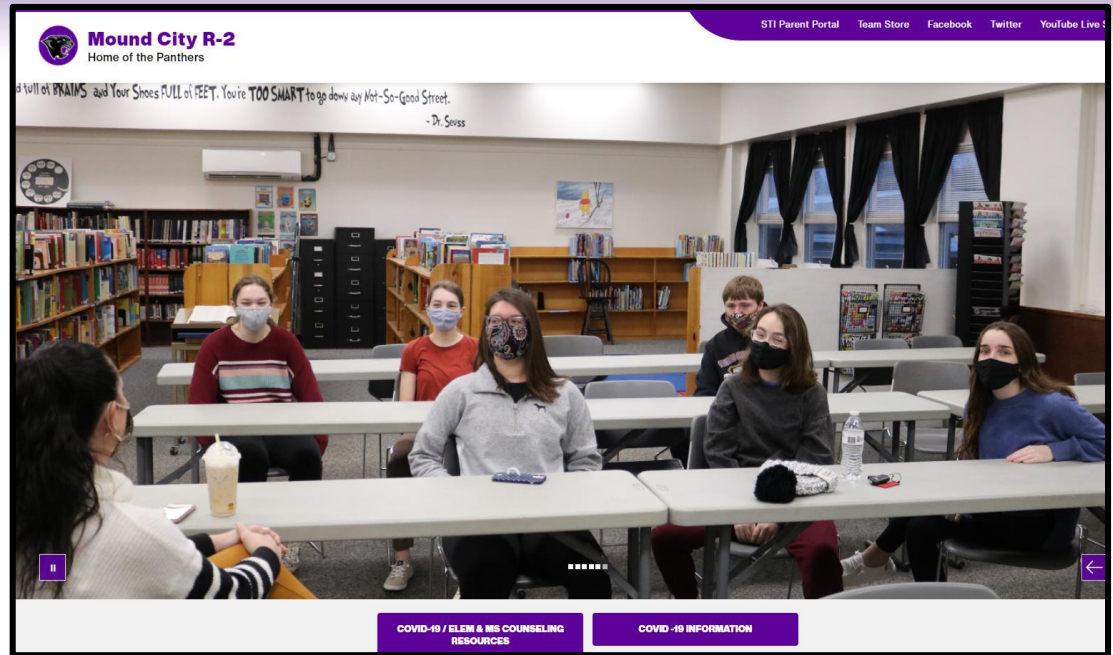
- *Prospective students and families are one of your audiences.*
- *Tell us why you love your schools.*

Loved seeing this inclusive, socially-distanced holiday program.

The screenshot shows the USD 247 Southeast Lancers website. The header includes navigation links: Home, Calendar, Contacts, Honors, Menus, PowerSchool. Below the header is a dark navigation bar with links: District, Students, Staff, Parents & Community, Sports, Sitemap, Counselor Information, Parents As Teachers, Wellness, School Supply Lists 2019-2020, Academics, ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS, Returning To School Information, and COVID-19 Dashboard. The main content area shows a news article titled "Southeast Elementary School (SES)" with a sub-header "Southeast Elementary School Winter Music Program 2020". The article text reads: "Dear Parents, Due to COVID-19, we were unable to have our regular Christmas program this year; however, we have put together a program that we are able to share with you on ... [Read More]". The date "December 17, 2020" is displayed below the article. To the right of the article is a "Follow USD247.com via Email" section with a form to enter an email address and a "Receive new posts via email" button. Below that is a "Calendar" section with a "PLEASE NOTE: These activities & events are TENTATIVE and may change." message. At the bottom right is an "Upcoming Events" section showing "Monday, December 21" and a "Look for earlier events" link. The bottom left of the screenshot shows a "the Spirit of Giving" logo with a gift box.

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:

- There are a couple options for child care, but I'm not sure of the names of the providers.

Cherokee County Data:

- **Desired Capacity of existing Child Care** **488**
- **Number of Children Under Age 6 potentially needing care:** **739**
- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential need** **66%**
- 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>

- Visitors were aware of three churches: Baptist, Methodist and Faith Tabernacle.



Faith Tabernacle Photo taken from
Google Earth 3/2014, retrieved from
Internet 12-21-2020



- A civic center and Masonic Lodge. Maybe a 4-H club.
- There is a civic center. We heard they just put on a movie for the town to come out and watch.



- The streets are mostly chip and seal but they are in good shape. The streets are marked and seem to have good signage all over town.



- No comments about the Senior Center.*



- Good information was available. The City Clerk and City Superintendent were very nice and very informative.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- There is a fire department attached to City Hall. No police department; Cherokee County covers Weir.



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department

Home Contact Us

GO

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

- There is a newly built library. Sadly, we were not able to go inside, it was closed, but it looked very nice.



- There is a baseball field which is in decent shape, three different parks: one is the city, one is the church's and one at the school. There is also an arena owned by the saddle club.





Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- There are no particular attractions or events that the city is known for. The City Clerk did tell us that Weir is the “home of the fly swatter.”



Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- There is an old brick hand laid water tower that is pretty cool.



Visitor's Center

- The only place I saw would be City Hall. There were no signs showing how to get there and it wasn't located on Main Street. Not necessarily hard to find, but not right in front of you either.



What would bring you back?

- No restaurants or specialty shops.
- No attractions to bring us back.

Most Positive Observations

- Weir had a nice school district and library.
- School was very nice. City clerk and staff seemed to be trying to get community involved in things.
- There is room for expanding and the town is trying to get the community more involved in public events.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- The biggest obstacle facing this community is the fact that they are so close to other big cities.
- Small town with a lack of funds to move forward very fast.
- Dealing with the EPA on the smelting issues and being so close to such a big town.

What will you remember?

- I will mostly remember how kind and welcoming the staff was at City Hall.
- Staff was very friendly.
- The old water tower and the very friendly people, didn't see very many people but the ones we did were nice.

- School website:
 - Why do people love your schools?
 - Quotes. Facts. Anecdotes.
 - Consider Search Engine Optimization (SEO).
 - #5 in my web search “Weir Kansas Schools”
- Get to know each other. Create opportunities to decide, “Why do we love our town?”

- Thank you visiting volunteers and leaders.

Set Next Steps:

- Which group will lead the discussion?

Contact me if you need resources or have questions:

Nancy Daniels

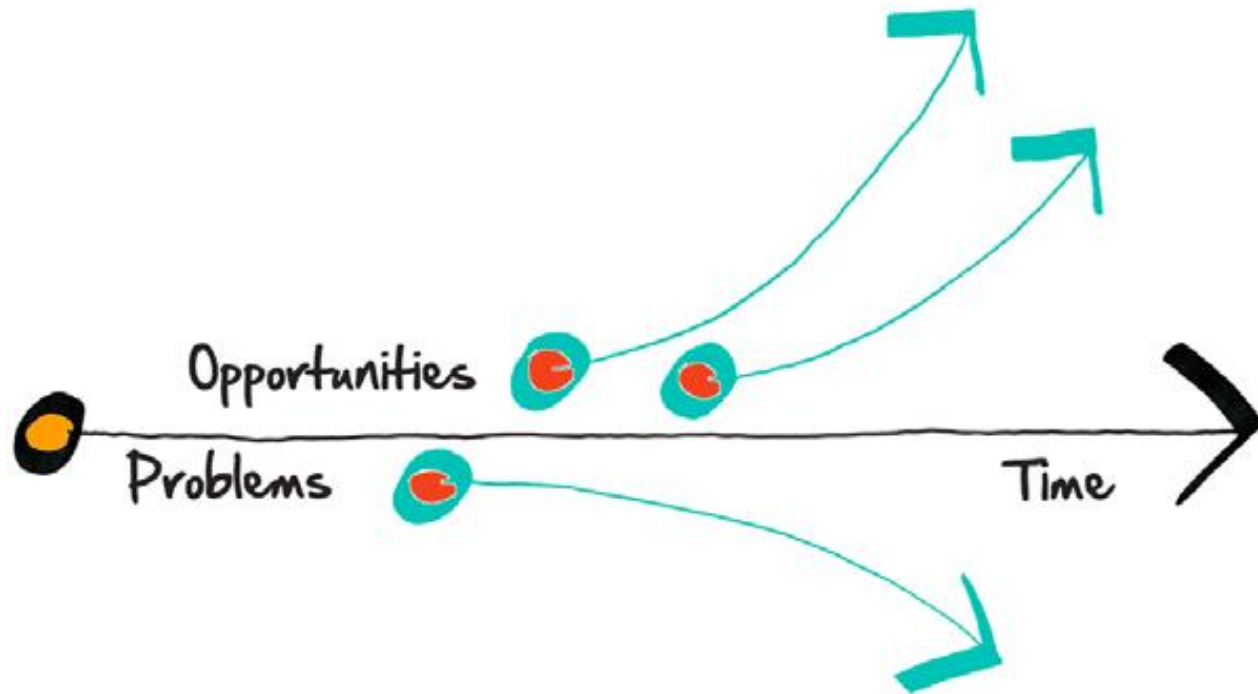
Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension

785.410.6352

nkdaniels@ksu.edu

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.



K-State Research and Extension

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 to participate.
 - 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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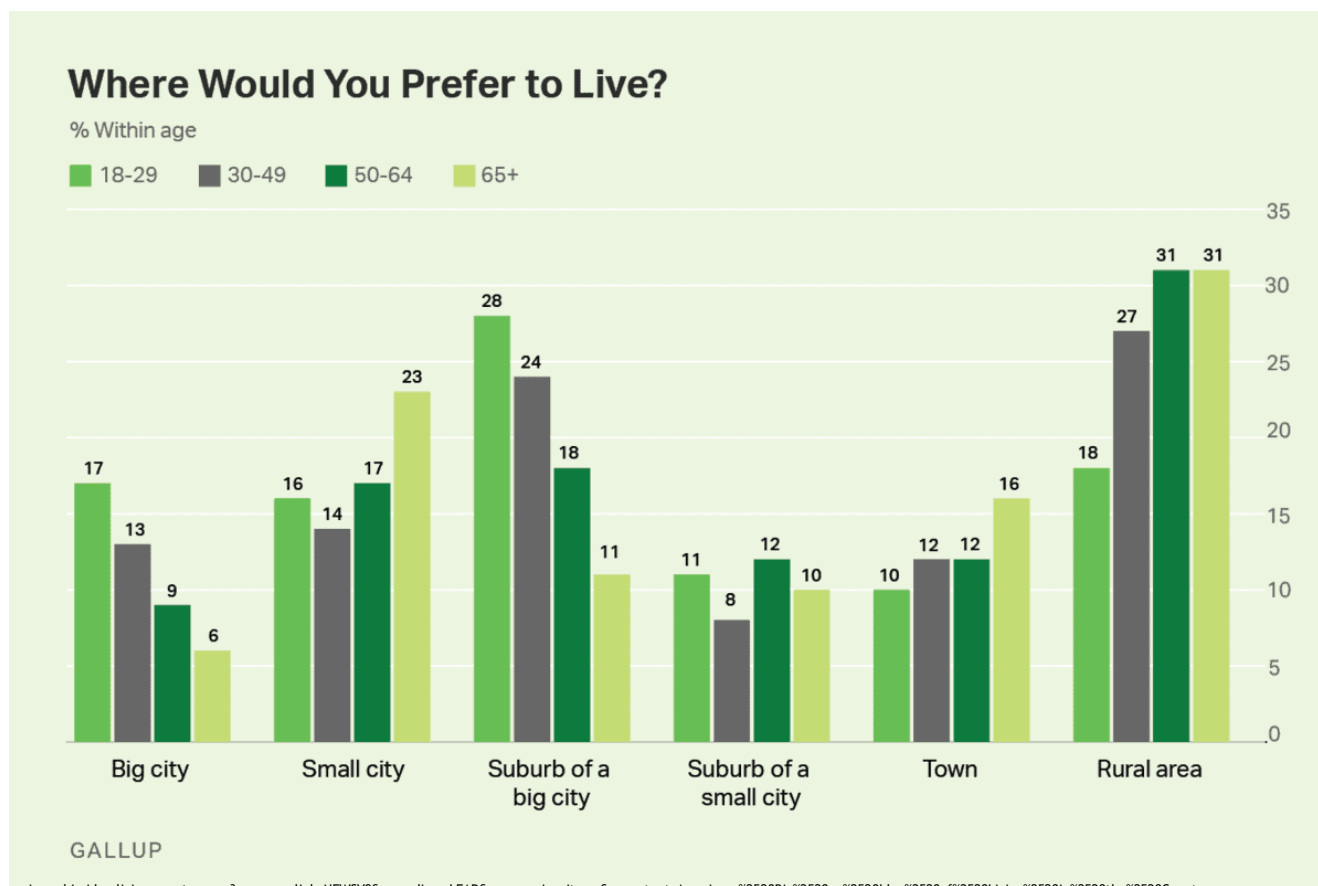
RSS

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.



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. He 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.”

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.

A graphic for the 'GROW IN KANSAS' Strategic Growth Initiative. It features a collage of various agricultural and technological images, including a sheep, wheat, a cow, a pig, chickens, a drone, a green tractor, a circuit board, a horse, a person in a lab coat, and various fruits and vegetables. The text 'GROW IN KANSAS' is prominently displayed at the top in white on a 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

Kansas 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

KHFI Technical Assistance Coordinator





Nancy Daniels

Community Vitality Specialist,
K-State Research and Extension

785.410.6352

nkdaniels@ksu.edu