

First Impressions



Delphos, KS

K-State Research and Extension



- McFarland asked for First Impressions, Delphos agreed to be its partner; 1 hr. 45 min. drive.
- Volunteers in both communities were trained. Photos of Delphos were taken on 8/27/24
- 4 visitors visited Delphos in September.
- Results presented on 1/8/2025.
- Delphos uses the results for further discussion and action plans.

- **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

- 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
First Friday Call.*

See the recording at:

<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/program-areas/supporting-communities/first-friday-ecalls/>

- 2023 KS Certified Population: 301 ↓ 7% since 2010
- 2020 U.S. Census: 302
- 2010 U.S. Census: 324
- Median household income: \$52,688 **\$68,925**
- High school or GED 90% **91.6%**
- At least a B.S. Degree 15% **34.4%**
- Median Age: 47 years **37.6 years**
- Persons 65 and Over 25% **17.2%**

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

- Moved since Last Year (2022/2023): 14.2 % 14.6%
- Poverty rate (% of people below poverty line) 22.8% 12%

Race/Ethnicity

White: 89%

Black: 1%

Asian: 0%

Other: 0%

Not Hispanic or Latino:
95%

American Indian: 0%

Native Hawaiian/Other

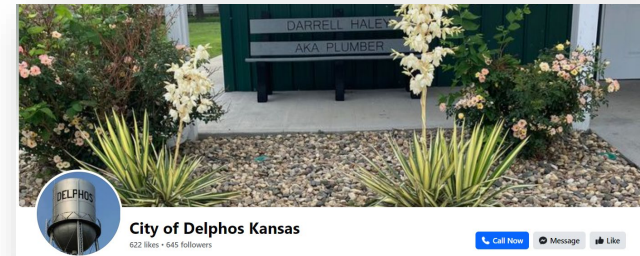
Pacific Islander: 0%

Two or more races: 5%

Hispanic or Latino: 5%

Website/Social Media

- Social media was found.
- Locating information about Delphos was easy. Social media allowed visitors to see photos from previous events and other activities.
- There was a Facebook page that wasn't very active and not updated regularly.
- Visitors learned about the Delphos ALIVE Facebook page while in town and found it to be current with a lot of information about fun activities.
- “You Know You’re from Delphos” Facebook page was also mentioned but visitors never found it.



- Visitors noticed the cemetery outside of town and commend the person responsible for maintaining it. It was freshly mowed and the grounds are well cared for.
- The Lions Club sign was observed and also signs directing to schools and ball fields.
- Many of the roads were in pretty rough shape.



“Five-Minute” Impression

- Many beautiful grand older homes were well maintained and inviting. There were a few eyesores.
- A sharing box was observed and popular with the visitors.
- The town square/park/downtown area was noted to be a positive observation while driving through.
- Visitors were shocked by the number of businesses for a town this size.
- The ballfield was nice to see but the broken-down bleachers gave it the appearance of not being used.



- The Delphos stone sign at the entrance of town had a nice look and design.
- The road into town was well maintained.
- The blue “Welcome to Delphos” banner was a nice touch.
- The grass on the roadside was freshly mowed and made the entrance to the city look tidy.
- No roadside trash was seen.
- Visitors were excited to see the sign on Hwy 81 showing features but saw it at the last minute and only caught something about Lincoln’s beard – which made them curious to learn more.



Downtown Business Area

- Visitors absolutely love the layout of the business district and give big kudos to the Delphos forefathers who planned out this area.
- The businesses and centrally located park give a feel of a Hallmark movie. You can stand in one spot and see so much of the park and business areas.



Downtown Business Area



- So nice! The library and senior center were seen, as well as a bank, post office, gas station, insurance office, auditorium, museum, and a medical clinic and churches close.
- The scrolling sign in the town square was a hit as it lets people know what's going on around town.
- The mural was very eye-catching!

Downtown Business Area

- There are a variety of businesses which is nice to see and there appears to be space to add more.
- Some buildings are in better shape than others – some recently painted or renovated which gives the impression things are moving forward in a positive way.



Downtown Business Area

- Some of the roads had areas of patch and repair making the drive into the business area bumpy.
- Roads are generally wide enough in this area for two vehicles to travel on at the same time.



Downtown Business Area



- One visitor noted their first stop was to city hall. It was impressive – the appearance, clearly marked signage, the potted plants on the covered porch, and benches welcoming folks.
- Visitors learned they had just missed an event at the senior center.
- Another visitor mentions they only visited the post office but no one was there.

- Numerous benches throughout the park area.
- Visitors didn't seek out wi-fi or public restrooms but were able to use the restroom at city hall.
- Others did not notice any amenities downtown.



- The park is maintained and is quite the location for city events as observed in photos on the city's Facebook page.
- Ample parking around the park and plenty of spaces in front of businesses.
- Landscaping was primarily well established and welcoming.



- No other retail areas observed.

- *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.*

- The agriculture area with the silos/elevator were in good condition – neat and tidy. Could possibly expand in this area if land is available.
- There appears to be a large amount of land surrounding the town but may not be available as it looks to be in use as farmland currently.



- A healthcare office is in town and open for limited hours on Saturday. This is a major benefit to citizens.
- Any special medical needs would require traveling out of town.
- No long-term care assisted living or nursing facilities were found.



- Many of the homes appear older. Some quite large and grand with beautiful features and character which adds to the charm of Delphos.
- Other homes are in disrepair with many being overtaken by brush and trees, looking to be vacant for quite a while.
- Some properties have vehicles that appear to be inoperable in yards with junk sitting around.



- A variety of sizes of homes exist, one and two stories.
- Some saw no signs indicating homes were for sale or rent, others saw one “for sale” sign.
- Some noted no rental properties or apartments, others did see an apartment building with maybe 8 units.
- Visitors would recommend visiting with the city clerk or a real estate agent to find out what might be for rent if they have interest.

- Occupied Housing Units: 165
 - Owner Occupied: 70%
 - Renter Occupied: 30%
 - Vacant Housing Units: 63
 - For rent: 13
 - For sale: 0
 - Sold, not occupied: 12
 - Seasonal/recreational: 3
 - All other vacants: 35
 - Average Household Size: 2.1
- Kansas**
1.15m
65.3%
34.7%
124k

2.48

		Kansas
• Average Travel Time to Work:	30 mins	19.6 mins
• Households without a computer*:	(18%)	45k (3.8%)
• Households without an internet subscription:	(20.6%)	108k (9.2%)

* Includes smartphones, tablets, other wireless devices

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: Census.gov; MySidewalk.com

- Kansas Housing Corporation is a resource to find out about housing grants and other tools for homeowners and renters.
- Also has some resources to address homelessness.

<https://kshousingcorp.org/>



- Some felt there was a school in town and assumed it incorporated all grade levels. They felt there were no issues with the building or grounds based on appearance.
- Others realized the school is no longer being used and felt it was a shame the building was sitting vacant and not being used. They understood the building was purchased by someone outside of Kansas.



- When inquiring in town where kids from Delphos would go to school, the answer received was “neighboring towns.”
- Some felt if they had children they’d probably consider living elsewhere at least until the kids were older so they were in the same community as their school.
- No information was found online about the school system or quality of education.

Comments:

- Visitors did not see any information on current childcare offerings but were told there may be a home childcare service offered soon.

Ottawa County Data:

- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need 69%**
- Contact ks.childcareaware.org to access local childcare specialists.
785-823-3343

Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/data-research/> Retrieved from internet 10/25/2024

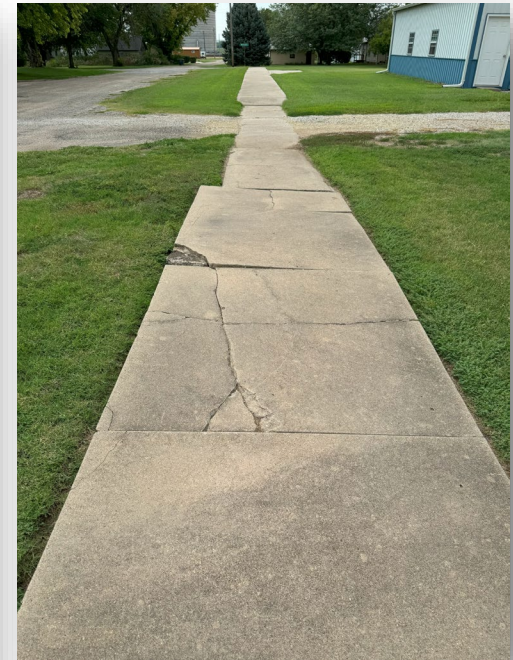
- More than one church was seen. Two, according to one visitor.
- Denominations weren't noted.
- While the church buildings appeared to be older, they were in great condition.



- There was a senior center noted. Upon asking, visitors found it was active and they learned of an event happening there earlier in the day they visited.
- There was also a museum observed. It used to be open more often and at least for an alumni reunion but isn't open as much. There's a need to find volunteers who are willing, dedicated, and able to make things happen. Visitors hope the museum remains open and becomes a pinnacle place for happenings in town.
- Surprise that a community of this size would have a Lions club.
- The flags in the city park were beautiful – is that civic organization activity?



- Some of the sidewalks have cracks and are broken while others are intact.
- There are many areas of patch and repair through the residential areas which makes the drive quite bumpy.
- No city-maintained planters or streetscaping but some landscaping on private property was noted.
- Streets are well marked and are wide which would make it easy for walkers if sidewalks weren't available.



- Impressed by the appearance of the building.
- The city clerk was friendly and helpful, greeting visitors when they entered.
- It's understood that the mayor was involved in constructing the building – great job on the structure. Visitors were impressed.
- The clerk had answers for all questions asked and has a good handle on the nuances of Delphos having been in that position for a long time.
- Some visited on a Saturday and city hall was not open.



- There was surprise that the city employs a part-time officer. That's great! Having dedicated space for him in city hall is great as well.
- There are security cameras throughout town which instills more confidence in public safety.
- Some indicated they saw no police protection.
- There was no mention of fire protection by any of the visitors.

Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department Home Contact Us search GO

Kansas Insurance Commissioner
Vicki Schmidt



[f](#) [t](#)

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



- The library is on a limited schedule but does offer services to the public which is wonderful.
- A lot of potential programming can be offered because the library exists.
- One visitor was a librarian for 4 mini libraries in the region where they live and hopes people in Delphos support the library and use its services.
- This is a wonderful find!



- Visitors loved the bandstand area and the whole city park.
- The amenities like the grill, shelter houses, picnic tables, etc. make the park more enjoyable for people wanting to spend time there.
- Visitors also loved the basketball area.
- The whole park looks to be a great place to gather with family, friends, and neighbors.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Delfest is something visitors learned about and they think it's a great tradition that many look forward to.
- Delphos ALIVE has much to do with Delfest and other family friendly events in town. These events create a sense of community and it's hoped they are well supported.
- The sign on the highway mentioned the reference to Abe Lincoln's beard, and it was the only thing noted by some.
- The digital sign in the park would be a good source for this information, but no advertisements were seen otherwise for events or attractions while in town.

Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- The museum.
- The beautiful mural – love the color and heritage it represented!
- McFarland finds itself in a similar situation, looking for ways to make the city more vital and vibrant and they'd love to share ideas and brainstorm with others in similar situations.
- Some said they were unaware of any of these features that might draw people in.



Visitor's Center

- No obvious visitor's center was observed. The city clerk would be a good point of contact for this information.

What would bring you back?

- No active restaurants or specialty shops were observed.
- There was a restaurant being worked on to be opened soon for a couple days a week.
- Visitors didn't see any restaurant information prior to their trip so they ate breakfast in Miltonvale on their way to Delphos.



Most Positive Observations

- Loved the entrance.
- There's a sense of pride here.
- The city park.
- The potential available for the buildings and spaces downtown.
- Room for growth.
- Could be an opportunity for service oriented businesses which would be a convenience to residents.
- The town square and businesses around it.

Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- The school is closed. Once a school closes many changes take place and usually not for the better.
- Young families may not move to town due to the school situation.
- There appears to be opportunities to work in Delphos, but there is still a lack of businesses and services that would mean there are fewer opportunities to work in town than there possibly could be.
- If people work out of town they are likely shopping and spending more time in those other cities instead of their own community.
- Street conditions.
- Privately-owned property upkeep.

What will you remember?

- It's a quiet town full of potential.
- The couple weeding their yard and getting to visit with them. They were some of the visitors to McFarland as part of this assessment so knew what visitors were up to. So many details about Delphos were shared that weren't available elsewhere – these people are jewels in the community.
- The auditorium that can be used for larger events.
- Events that might happen in the town square.
- This would be a good place to live and raise a family.



- No money was spent by visitors while in Delphos.

No one can do everything,
but everyone can do something.

Thank you to our volunteer visitors.

Set Next Steps:

- Start talking! Find ways to discuss what you heard in small groups of every kind.

Contact us if you need resources or have questions:

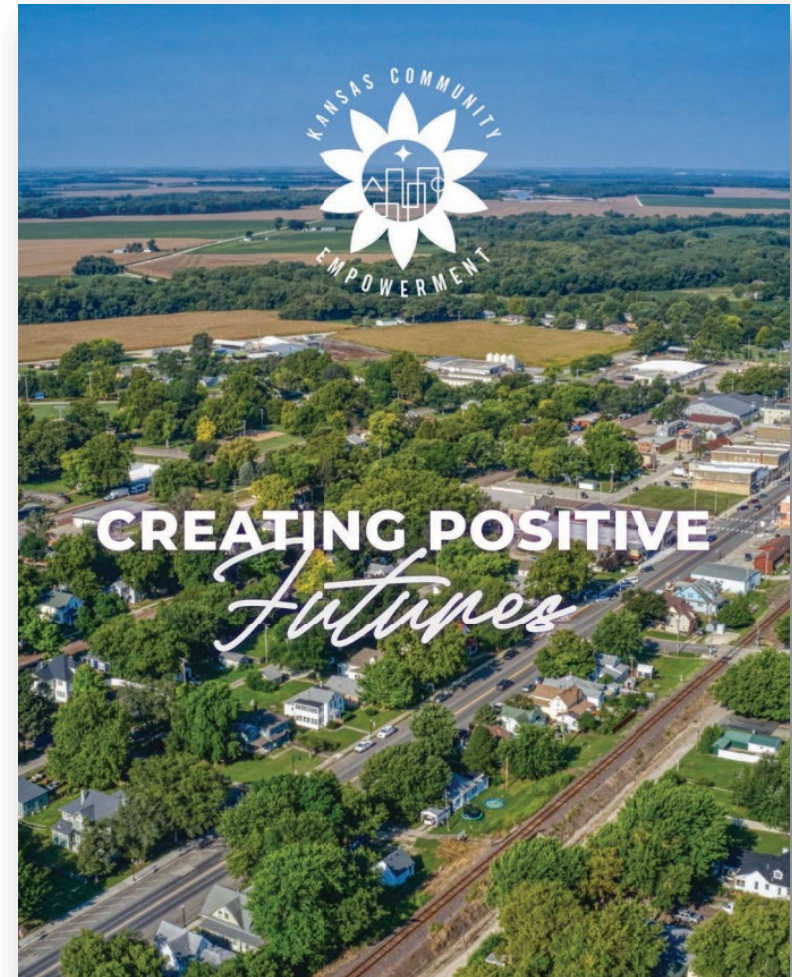
Cade Rensink
Director, Central Kansas District
K-State Research and Extension
307 N. Concord, Suite 190
Minneapolis, KS 67467
785.392.2147
crensink@ksu.edu

Jan Steen
Community Vitality Specialist
K-State Research and Extension
785.532.5840
jmsteen@ksu.edu

Kansas Community Empowerment

<http://kce.k-state.edu>

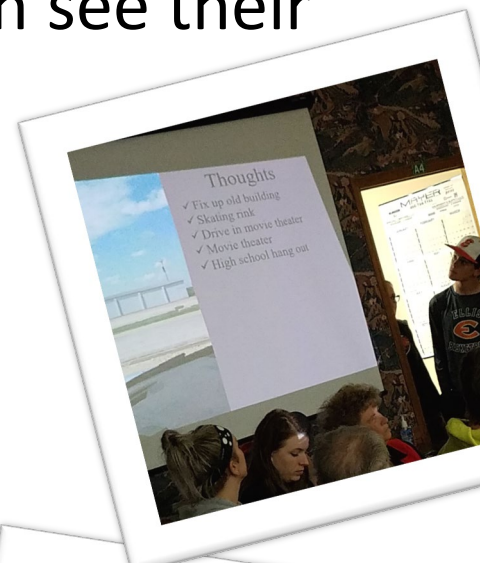
- Local communities identify what they would like to preserve, create, or improve for their future and volunteers pull together to create their ideal community future.



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

<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/program-areas/supporting-communities/community-assessment/youth-community-perceptions.html>



Grant Writing Classes and Support

Contact



KSRECV@ksu.edu

to participate.

K-STATE
Research and Extension

5 GRANT WRITING RESOURCES

K-State Research and Extension provides resources to help you write and submit successful grant proposals to improve lives, livelihoods and communities across Kansas.

- 1 ONLINE GRANT WRITING CLASSES**
Class alum reported receiving more than \$52 million in successful grants. 
- 2 A PROFESSIONAL LEVEL GRANT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COURSE**
An 8-week course dedicated to helping you complete a fundable proposal. 
- 3 A LIST OF CONTRACT GRANT WRITERS**
Professionals willing and ready to write grants on a contract basis.
- 4 SUPPORT FOR KANSAS COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT COMMUNITIES**
Excellent resources for those wanting to bring more to their communities.
- 5 ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT BY K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS**
Our professionals are prepared to help you find grants and review your grant proposals.

For more information email KSRECV@k-state.edu.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity employer and provider

2027 | Updated Aug 2024

Small Business and Community Development

- **First Friday e-Calls 9:30-10:30 am**

Connecting small businesses and communities with the resources to make them successful.

– Register here: <https://ksre-learn.com/ecall>

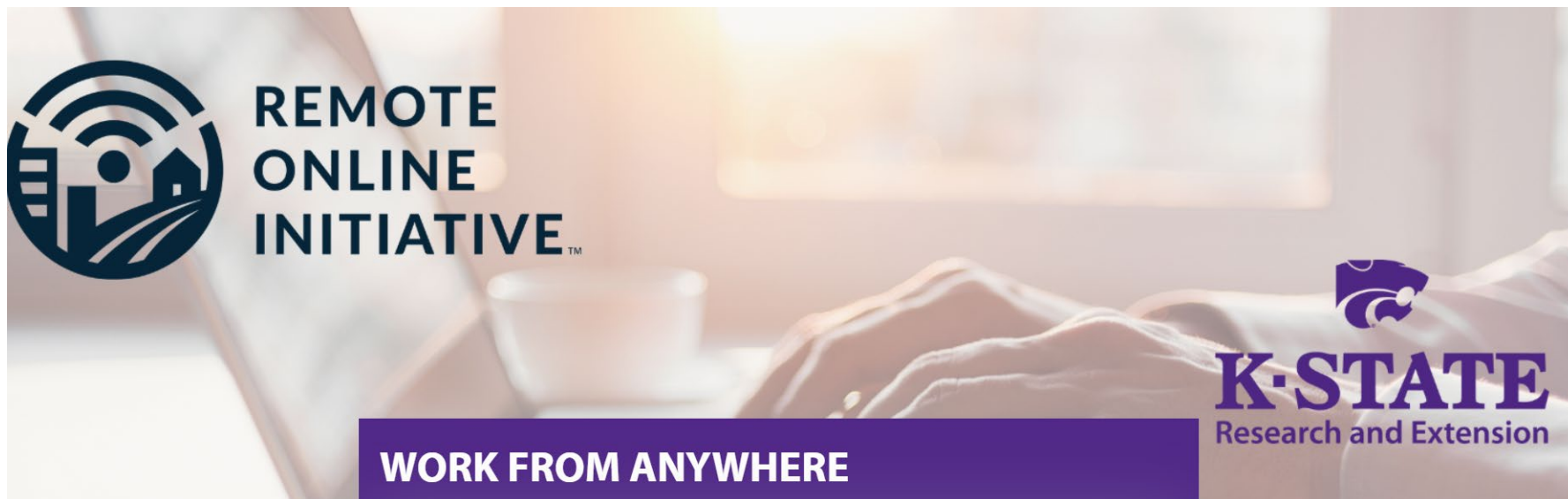
– Previous calls are recorded at

<https://ksre-learn.com/entrepreneurship>

- 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

- Kansas Remote Online Initiative
 - Certified Remote Work Professional
 - Certified Remote Work Leader
- *Certification in 4-weeks*
- Monthly Classes: <https://kansasremotework.com/>



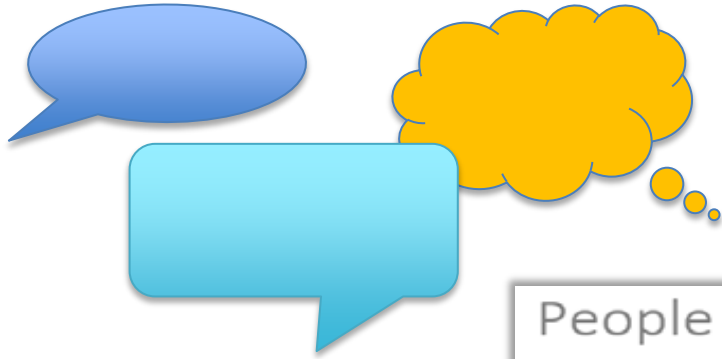
Rural Grocery/KS Healthy Food Initiative

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



What did you hear?



What will we do?



People move in the direction of their conversations

