

First Impressions



Hoisington, KS

K-State Research and Extension

- Kingman asked for First Impressions, Hoisington agreed to be its partner; 1 hour 40 min drive.
- Volunteers in both communities were trained and photos of Hoisington were taken at the end of February of 2024.
- Three visitors visited in November of 2023.
- Results presented 6/24/2024.
- Hoisington 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/community/business/entrepreneurship/>

- 2022 KS Certified Population: 2,642 ↓ 2.37 % since 2010
- 2020 U.S. Census: 2,699
- 2010 U.S. Census: 2,706
- Median household income: \$48,110 **\$68,925**
- High school or GED 97.1% **91.6%**
- At least a B.S. Degree 21.1% **34.4%**
- Median Age: 38.1 years **37.6 years**
- Persons 65 and Over 21.5% **17.2%**

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

- Moved since Last Year (2021):

21.8%

14.6%

Consider the margin of error. For example, the Census lists 2,051 (78.2%) lived in the same house but give a +/- 166 margin of error for that total.

- Poverty rate

(% of people below poverty line)

15.7%

12%

Race/Ethnicity

White: 90.4%

Black: 2.4%

Asian: 0 %

Other: 0%

Not Hispanic or Latino: 94.5%

American Indian: 0%

Native Hawaiian/Other

Pacific Islander: 0%

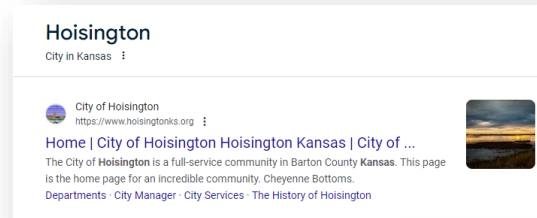
Two or more races: 1.7%

Hispanic or Latino: 5.5%

Blue: Kansas Comparison Data

Source: 2022 ACS 1-year estimates <https://data.census.gov>)

- City website was easy to find and easy to use.
- A lot of information on the website about departments and what they do. While contact information was available, no addresses were seen on where to find the departments.



ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION

The City of Hoisington provides electric power to about 1611 customers, including about 52 customers located outside the City but within the City's Electric Service Territory. The City purchases wholesale power from Western Electric. This power is delivered to Hoisington at 34.5 kilovolts via an interconnection, and stepped down to the City's two distribution voltages: 2,400 V and 7,200 V. The City owns and maintains about 36 miles of distribution lines, mostly overhead lines and some underground lines.



ELECTRIC GENERATION

The Electric Generation Department is responsible for the electrical power requirements for customers in the City's distribution area. These power requirements are provided from City-owned and operated generation units and from a 12.47 kilovolt interconnect with a power provider. The City's Plant is operated and maintained by two full time employees, which take care of four generating units and all auxiliary equipment.

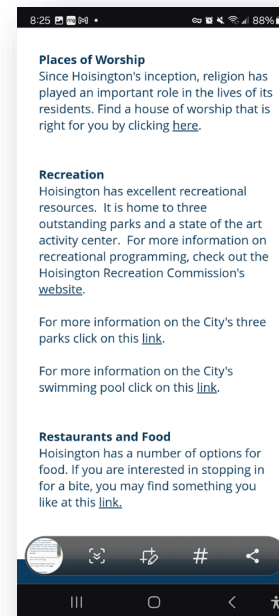
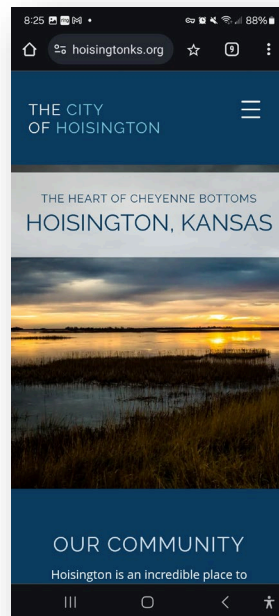
The City's ability to generate its own power is a valuable asset when the city is disconnected from the electrical grid due to emergency situations, bad weather, or maintenance repairs.



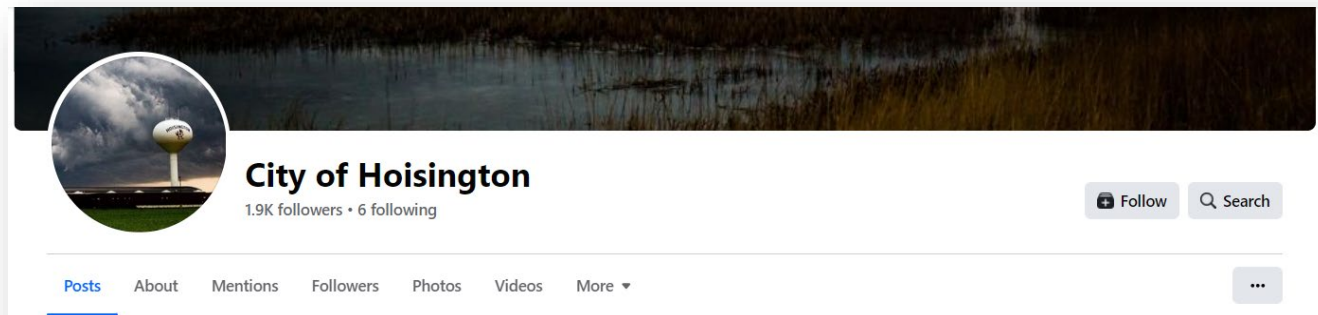
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Hoisington Emergency Medical Services provides 24-hour-a-day, 911 emergency medical care throughout Hoisington and Northwestern Barton County area. Hoisington EMS is committed to providing high quality basic and advanced patient care. Hoisington is proud of its history of skilled volunteer technicians. If you have questions about EMS, call (620)653-4150.

- Website was compatible with cell phones and easy to navigate on mobile devices.
- Sections were seen for places to dine and local attractions but not for realtors if people are interested in housing.



- Some found the Facebook page for the city and felt it, and the city website, promoted the community well.
- There was a note made that there's not a community Facebook group where people could go to find out more about local businesses and community event information.



- The signs entering and leaving town looked to be older, color was faded.
- It’s a peaceful town. Not a lot happening at 11 AM.
- Several empty buildings were seen along Main. This section of town could be utilized more.
- Neighborhoods looked clean.



- The hospital looks to be a huge asset to the community.
- The school is old but looks to be very well maintained.
- Metalwork banners on Main were amazing.
- Similar size and infrastructure to Kingman.



- Some dilapidated properties and a few empty businesses were seen when coming in from the south.
- Some cute businesses were noted as well.
- The hardware store and boutique were observed to be nice.
- North end of town was newer and in good shape.



Downtown Business Area



- Some felt the occupied buildings had nice signs and well-kept exteriors.
- Other buildings were bare and run down.
- Not many of the buildings had shops, and some felt that signage was lacking in some cases, making it difficult to see what was there.
- Visitors saw the painted stars on the sidewalks and noted some had names and some did not.

Downtown Business Area

- Main Street Metal is a great concept and more appealing than the banners some cities put downtown.
- The power lines are somewhat of a distraction. Couldn't they be buried?
- A façade improvement program might benefit some of the buildings.
- Buildings used as storage were an eyesore.



- Businesses observed include:
 - Apparel shop with local team clothing.
 - Tap Room.
 - Hardware/feed store. Some items available other than hardware.
 - Boutique with a salon, snacks, clothing, and more. Stock seemed to be trendy.
 - Mi Tierra.
 - Thrift store.
 - Some professional services.
 - Several vacant buildings.



Downtown Business Area

- Mi Tierra had good food and nice staff.
- Overall, a nice variety of goods in town and staff encountered were friendly.
- At every business visited, visitors were greeted. Great customer service.
- All questions answered and suggestions on things to do while in town were offered.



- Public restrooms were found in the municipal building.
- Several benches along Main. Also trash bins surrounded by the metal art.
- There was a bike rental program at city hall - very positive observation.



- The streets were wide and parking was easily accessible for all sizes of vehicles.
- No problem parking one place – everything was within easy walking distance.
- Nice and clean area.



Other Retail Shopping Areas



- Shopping was mainly downtown but there were a few options for groceries and dollar store type items north of town.
- East – a grocery store, food chains, and a bowling alley. West – Dollar General, Family Dollar.
- Several restaurants and retail options north in the newer area of town. All appeared to be well-kept and accessible.
- A hotel was also noted to be on the west side of town.

- *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.*

- No specific industrial park was observed, however the Power Plant east in town and Superior Essex outside and to the east of town were industrial.
- There was a newer plant on the outskirts of town, but not sure if it was in the city limits or not.



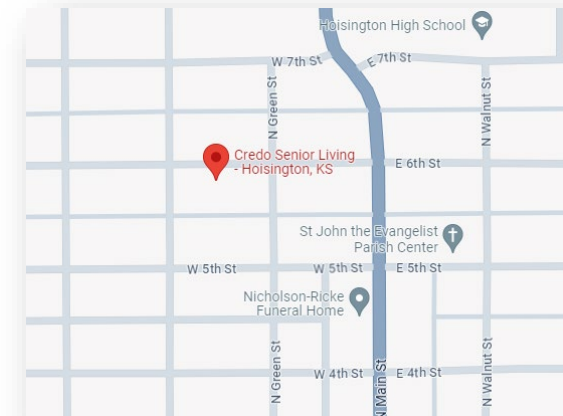
- The hospital was large and looked nice. Grounds and building maintained well. Appropriate amount of parking available.
- You could tell there were some older and newer parts of the hospital due to renovations after the tornado.
- This looks to be a quality healthcare system.



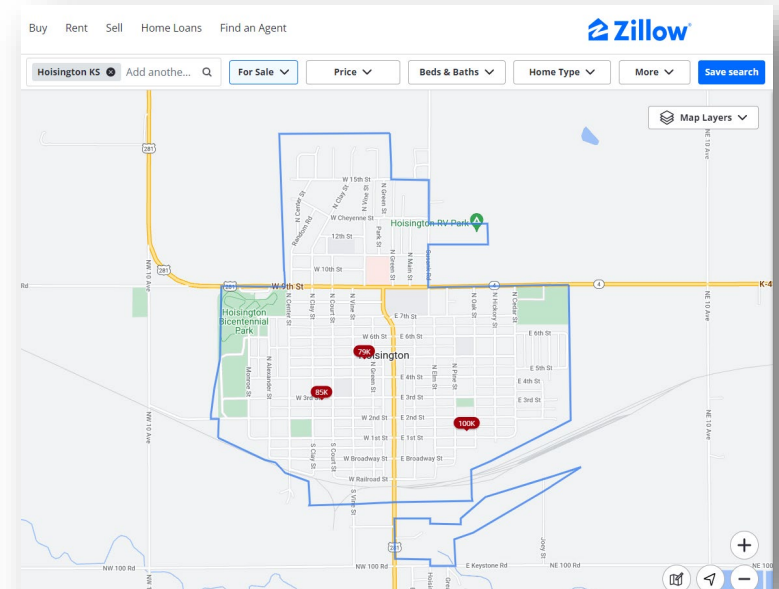
- A local chiropractor was noted.
- The pharmacy was a nice facility.
- No dentist or optometrist was seen during the visit.
- A Google search indicated healthcare services beyond just the hospital. Probably no need to travel unless someone needed specialty care.



- Some felt they saw a nursing facility and senior living units.
- Others felt they didn't see anything when they visited, other than what used to be an old nursing home that had been sold to an individual.



- Equal Housing Apartments were seen by visitors.
- Several newer homes and new additions on the outskirts of town.
- Zillow indicated the prices were lower than what visitors were accustomed to in the Kingman area.
- When visiting the Chamber, some blighted structures were mentioned.



- Good mix of housing overall.
- Not a lot of homes for sale, either identified in person or online. Is there available inventory if people wanted to move here?
- Some new development but most of the housing seemed older.
- Nothing seemed terrible, so code enforcement must be doing decent work.
- Sidewalks in these areas seemed to be in good shape and easily walkable.





- No rental signage was seen by visitors.
- When businesses were asked about housing availability, workers mentioned rentals were easy to find and affordable.
- One visitor indicated the city office offered a list of landlords. Another visitor said upon asking the city for such a list one was not available.

	Kansas
• Occupied Housing Units: 1,115	1.15m
• Owner Occupied: 67.2%	65.3%
• Renter Occupied: 32.8%	34.7%
• Vacant Housing Units: 196	124k
- For rent: 38	
- For sale: 41	
- Sold, not occupied: 0	
- Seasonal/recreational: 0	
- All other vacants: 117	
• Average Household Size: 2.3	2.48

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: Census.gov 2020 Census
& ACS 5-year Narrative Profile (Household Size)

Kansas

- Average Travel Time to Work: 14.2 mins 19.6 mins
- Households without a computer*: 157 (13.6%) 45k (3.8%)
- Households without an internet subscription: 262 (22.7%) 108k (9.2%)

* Includes smartphones, tablets, other wireless devices

- 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/>



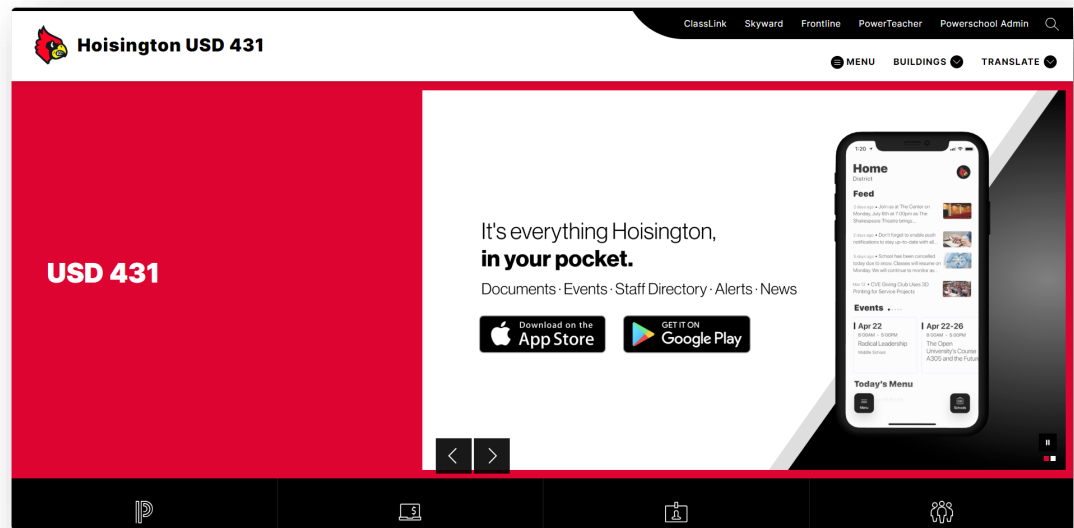
- High school football field was a great facility.
- Buildings and grounds were all well-kept. Nothing looked overcrowded.
- Limestone bleachers were pretty cool!



- High School: Older building, but in good shape. Large from the outside and nice pro-football style field directly behind the school.
- Middle School: Newer building.
- Elementary School was also observed. Visitors were told a preschool existed in the elementary school.

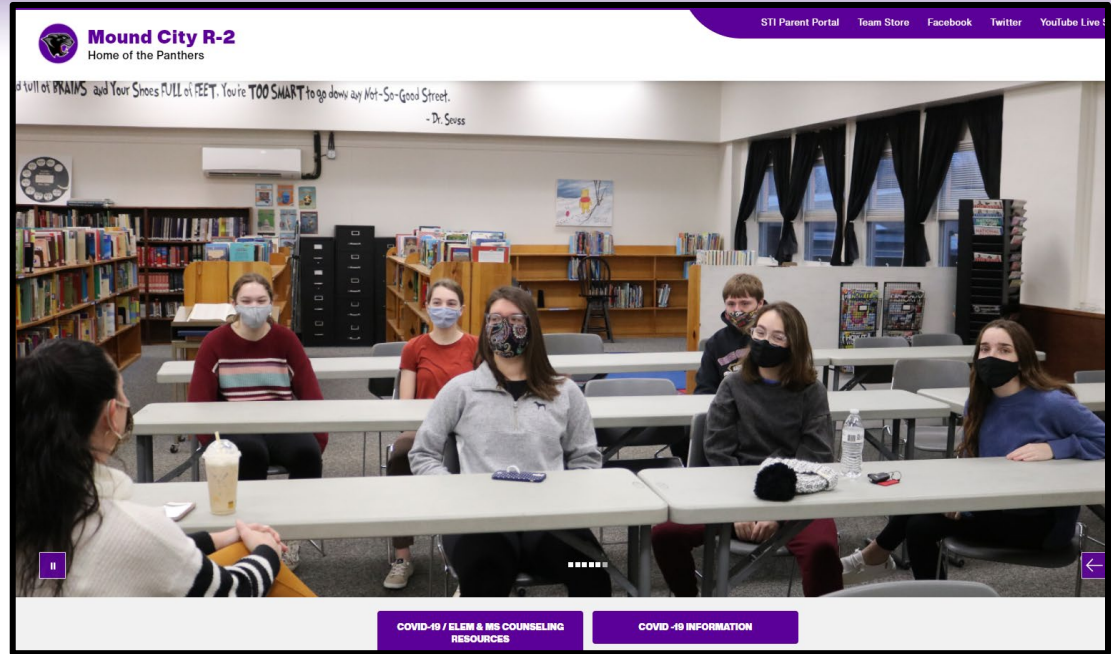


- Information was available online about the quality of education in town.
- The city's website linked to the school district page and was very convenient.
- One resident in town mentioned the run at a football championship and an upcoming pep rally.
- Much of the information on the school website required a login.



“Potential Students” are an audience for your website.

- This is Mound City, MO:
- “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:

- Childcare is an issue in town, according to conversations visitors had with locals.
- There are childcare providers available, Kid's Club for example.
- For those working at the hospital, there is a lack of childcare, but they are looking to get a place for employees.

Barton County Data:

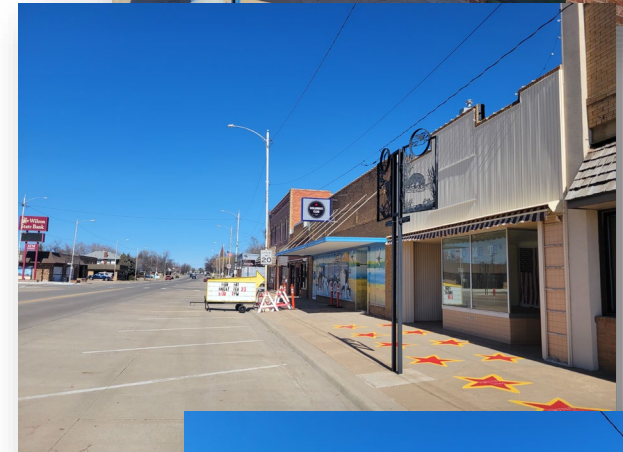
- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need** **47%**
- Contact ks.childcareaware.org to access local childcare specialists.
785-823-3343

Source <https://ks.childcareaware.org/data-research/> Retrieved from internet 5/28/2024

- There appeared to be many churches and denominations represented.
- There was a gathering hall attached to the Catholic Church. Knights of Columbus noted.
- There were signs for a food bank. The assumption was it was faith-based.



- Signs were seen while driving around: American Legion, Knights of Columbus/Columbus Club, Masonic Lodge.
- The Chamber of Commerce was also noted – the director had a lot of information about the community.
- There was a Toys for Tots flyer and some local information about the Community Basket.
- There was a shopping night for ladies, and the booster club was sponsoring several events.





- Street signs were easy to read.
- Some streets were kind of narrow in spots which might make parking on the street difficult for 2-way traffic.
- Appeared to be a nice park system with play areas for kids, a dog park, and baseball fields.
- Yards looked to be well taken care of.
- Sidewalks in good shape.
- Restrooms at the park were clean.
- All roads well maintained, even the dirt ones.
- City is on municipal power.

- Some felt no signs were observed to direct people to City Hall.
- It's in an older building.
- Signage once in the municipal building was also difficult since the building held multiple entities. Maybe more signage at the entrance would help.
- Information was available in the clerk's office.
- Good customer service at City Hall. Information was provided and questions answered.
- No list of realtors or rental providers.
- Visitors appreciated the trap/spay/neuter program.
- Visitors learned there's public transportation available and a new activity center.



Fire, EMS and Police Services

- Police and fire services were both observed.
- Police and fire are both attached to the municipal building with access to the police by the front door.
- One visitor felt there was a fire department apart from the city building (were they thinking EMS?).



Welcome to Kansas Insurance Department Home Contact Us search 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

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

- > 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 was one of the entities in the municipal building and had a separate entrance from the outside. It was closed during the visits.



- Bicentennial Park was noted – the larger of the two parks observed. It had walking trails, a playground, pickleball, demolition derby arena, and several ball diamonds. The swimming pool was also in this area.
- Heritage Park was smaller with a playground but had good equipment for the kids.
- A dog park, disc golf, and a golf course were also observed. All nice facilities.



Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Multiple mentions about the Labor Day Celebration held each year.
- Also heard about Bike Barton which seems like a neat opportunity to experience town and the surrounding area.
- Close to Cheyenne Bottoms. Local wildlife is used in the artwork on Main.
- Heart of Cheyenne Bottoms – the pamphlet listing tourist attractions was really dated, but they do have one.
- There were signs around for an upcoming turkey bingo event.
- Everyone was eager to talk about the town's events.

Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- The Historical Museum in town.
- Main Street Metal.
- Cheyenne Bottoms.



Visitor's Center

- The Chamber office would fit this role.
- Visitors drove by the first time as there were no cars there but then stopped after lunch and had a good conversation. Good information and very helpful staff.
- Signage made the Chamber office easy to locate.
- Hoisington is also an E-Community and a Main Street Community.

What would bring you back?

- The Farmhouse – salon with clothing, décor, things for kids, and snacks.
- Rec Center looked like a great asset to the community.
- The Tap Room – would like to see what it's like at night.
- The Labor Day Celebration sounded like it would be a fun time!



Most Positive Observations

- The large park and sports complex would be good for softball/baseball tournaments given the amount of ball diamonds.
- The people of the community are super friendly.
- Neighborhoods and streets were clean.
- You can tell people here want their community to thrive. They'll give you a long list of the reasons you should move to Hoisington.
- Metal art is incredible!
- Classic small town with all the perks that go with it.



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- When asked what there was to do in Hoisington, several people said “nothing” and didn’t seem too interested in talking it up or encouraging visitors to the community.
- Housing and childcare.
- Several buildings on Main need work.

What will you remember?

- Hearing about the Labor Day Celebration. It seemed like it would be a good experience and lots of things to see. Might make the trip for the next one.
- A nice town on Highway 281 – great place to stop if you're on the road.
- The people who just moved to Hoisington seemed like the ones most likely to mention all the wonderful things about the community.
- Metal on Main.

- Visitors report spending the following while in town: \$15.00, \$75.00 for a total of: **\$90**

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 me if you need resources or have questions:

Jan Steen

Community Vitality Specialist, K-State Research and Extension

785.532.5840

jmsteen@ksu.edu

Kansas Community Empowerment

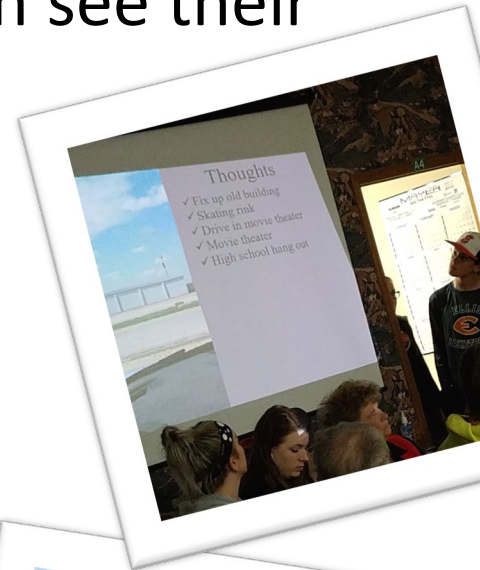
<http://kce.k-state.edu>

- 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 <https://bit.ly/ks-ycp>

- 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.



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 \$28 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 PRIDE 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.

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>

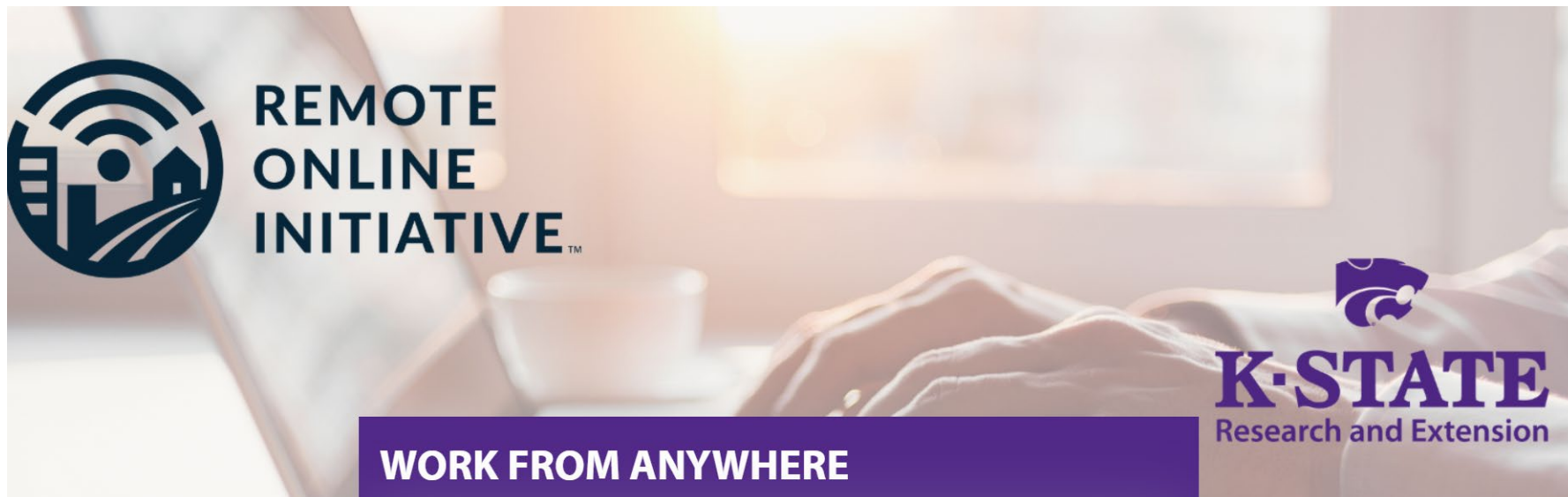
– Previous calls are recorded at

<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/>



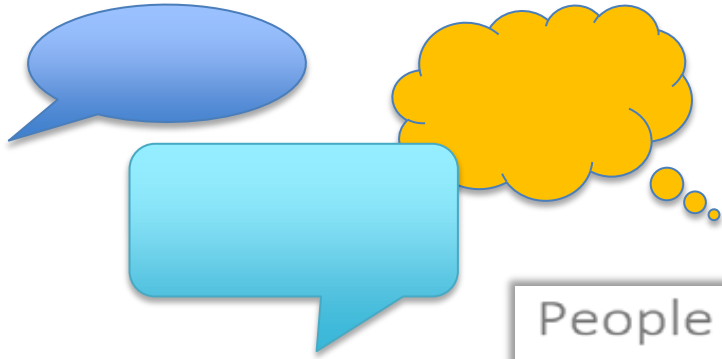
Rural Grocery/KS Healthy Food Initiative

- **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

