

# First Impressions



## Scott City, KS

Kansas State University Extension

[The only town in Kansas founded by a woman,](#)  
Marie DeGeer  
Christopher Kirkham Photography ©

- Lyons applied for First Impressions.
- Scott City agreed to be their partner
- Visitors were trained on what to look for during their visits and how to fill out their assessment reports.
- Three visitors visited Tuesday, July 10, 2025
- Photos taken December 16, 2025 and Jan. 30, 2026
- Results presented on February 5, 2026.
- Scott City uses the results for further discussion and action plans.

## Community Feedback:

How does a first-time visitor view my town?

Evaluate successes,

Set goals and priorities for next steps.



**Curiosity: A strong desire to know or learn something.**

*-Oxford Living Dictionary*

# Why: First Impressions?

- **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?

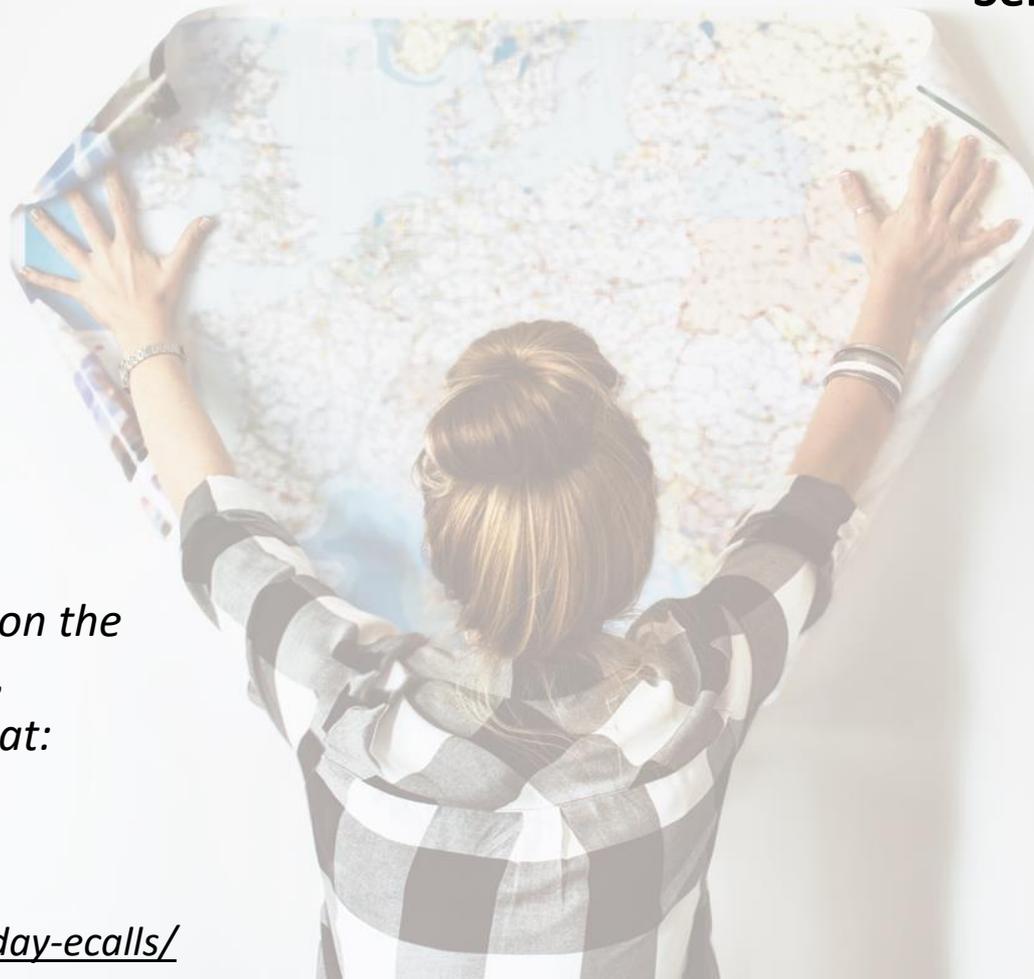
**Curiosity: A strong desire to know or learn something.**

*-Oxford Living Dictionary*



***We need to change the narrative about rural.***

**Ben Winchester,  
Senior Research Fellow,  
U of MN**



*Ben was our guest on the  
**First Friday e-Calls.***

*See the recordings at:*

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

People research a number of places before they move to a rural town.

Rural is in the middle of *everywhere*.



Brain Gain  
(30-49 year olds  
moving to rural) is  
a “new trend”  
that has been  
happening since  
the 70’s

Approximately 14% of Kansans moved during the previous year.

Communities can work together to attract newcomers and create quality of life for everyone.



- Simpler pace of life,
- Safety and security,
- Affordable housing,
- Outdoor recreation,
- Quality schools

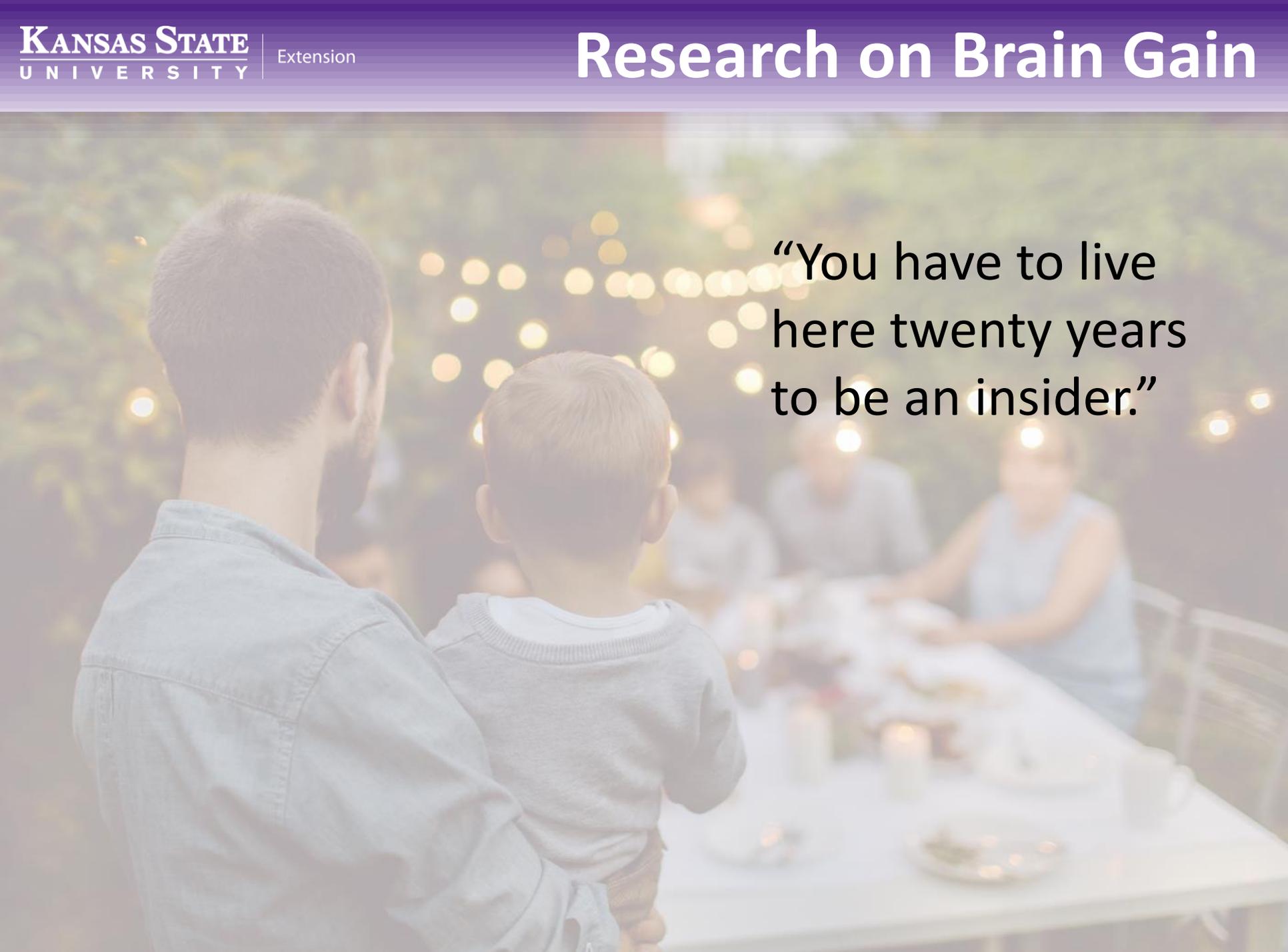
*“A job” isn’t in the top 10 reasons.*

# Research on Brain Gain

“In small towns  
everyone knows each  
other.”

*false*

*Get to know each other,  
invite them to a  
newcomers' meal.*

A photograph of a man and a young boy in the foreground, seen from behind, looking towards a group of people seated at an outdoor dinner table at night. The scene is illuminated by warm, glowing string lights, creating a bokeh effect in the background. The man is wearing a light blue denim shirt, and the boy is wearing a grey sweater. The table in the background is set with white plates, glasses, and silverware, and several people are seated around it, though they are out of focus.

**“You have to live here twenty years to be an insider.”**

A photograph of a man and a young boy in the foreground, seen from behind, looking towards a group of people sitting at a table outdoors at night. The scene is illuminated by warm, glowing string lights, creating a bokeh effect in the background. The man is wearing a light blue denim shirt, and the boy is wearing a grey sweater. The people at the table are out of focus, but their presence adds to the sense of a social gathering.

***Welcome!***  
***We're glad you're here***

# Research on Brain Gain

A photograph of a man and a young boy standing together, looking out over a town square at night. The man is on the left, wearing a denim shirt, and the boy is on the right, wearing a grey sweater. They are both looking towards a table set for a meal in the foreground, which is out of focus. In the background, there are trees and a string of warm white lights hanging across the square. The overall atmosphere is warm and community-oriented.

If you bring 9 people to a 900-person town every year, in 10 years you'll have a 10% increase.

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.





# Data

**Scott City, KS**

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- 2024 KS Certified Population: 3,929      ↓ 2% since 2022
- 2020 U.S. Census: 4,113      ↑ 7.4% since 2010
- 2010 U.S. Census: 3,829
- Median household income: \$54,026      **\$72,639**
- High school or GED 87.3%      **91.9%**
- At least a B.S. Degree 33.1%      **35.2%**
- Median Age: 36.8 years      **37.2 years**
- Persons 65 and Over 19%      **17%**

- **Poverty rate** 7.9% 11.5%  
(% of people below poverty line)

## Race/Ethnicity

White: 72%

Black: 0%

Asian: 2%

Other: 3%

Not Hispanic or Latino: 78%

American Indian: 0%

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific  
Islander: 0%

Two or more races: 1%

Hispanic or Latino: 22%

**In Scott City, ~15% of the population moved since last year.**

**In Kansas, 14%**

*What would it take to attract them to Scott City?*

[Blue: Kansas Comparison Data](#)

(Source: MySidewalk; Census.gov)



# Social Media & Website

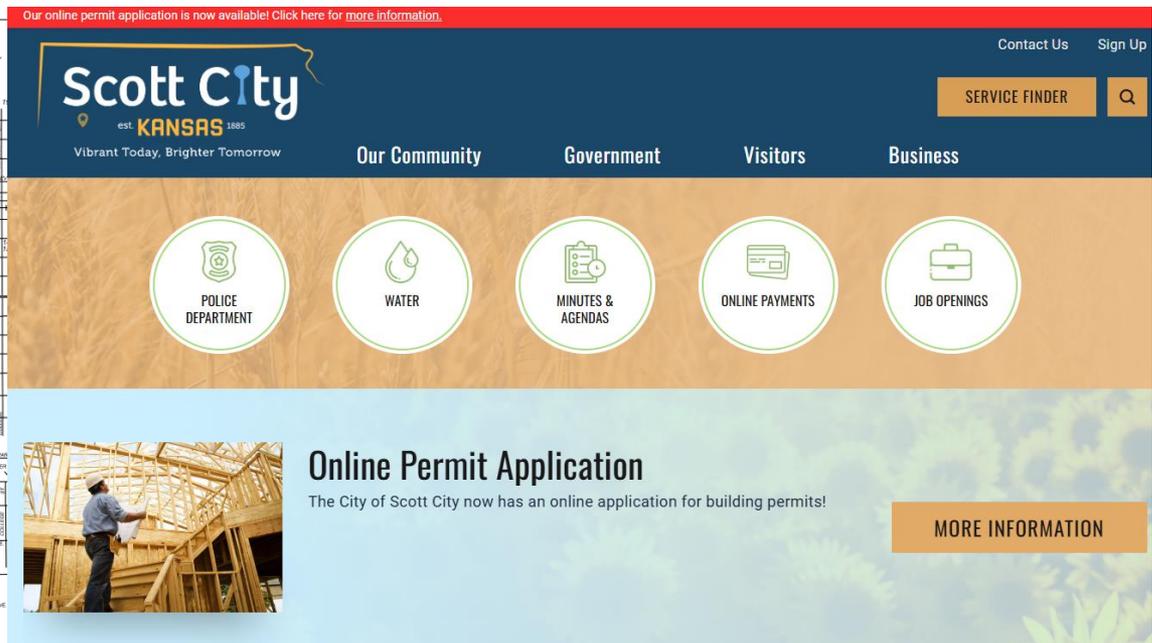
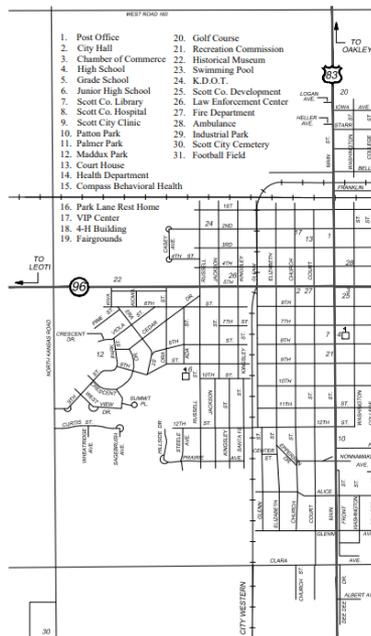
**Scott City, KS**

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## Website: [scottcityks.org](http://scottcityks.org)

- Came up first on the search page
- Colorful pages, city map, permits, payment options, city council information
- Easy to navigate with lots of information

Scott City Street and Location Map



Nice visitor information is included on the website.  
A visitor guide is readable online.

The screenshot shows the website for Scott City, Kansas. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for "Things to Do", "Lodging", "Restaurants", "Discover More", "Visitors Guide", and a "SERVICE FINDER" button. A sidebar on the left contains "COMMUNITY", "FLY IN FOR A VISIT", and "CONTACT". The main content area features a "View the Visitor Guide" link, a promotional banner for Scott City with the text "Where History & Progress Meet SCOTT CITY EST. 1885", and a large image of a desert landscape. Below this, there is a "Community" section with a "Visitors Guide" link, a "Font Size" control, and social media icons. The "About Scott City" section provides details about the city's location and history. A "Community Resources" section lists several links. An image of a Tenaco gas station is also visible on the right side of the page.

Visitors Guide »

## Community

Font Size: + - + Share & Bookmark Feedback Print

[View the Visitor Guide](#)

Where History & Progress Meet  
**SCOTT CITY**  
EST. 1885

The rich history of our Community and the beauty of Scott City is woven with friendly folk in an ideal location, making a tapestry that can only be described as "An Exceptional Way of Life!"

### About Scott City

Scott City, Kansas is located in Western Kansas just 62 miles from the Colorado border. The intersection of US Hwy 83 and Hwy 96 marks the heart of downtown Scott City. Only a short 48 miles south of Interstate 70, it provides a nice diversion for I-70 travelers through a variety of terrain including flat prairies, rich cropland, hills, chalk bluffs and river beds. Scott County is rectangular in shape; 30 miles from north to south and 24 miles wide. Scott City's elevation is 2,979 feet. The County population is 5,080 and City is 3,927 (2014).

The people from Scott City and Scott County reside in one of Kansas's most precious areas. Scott County is abundant in history and archeological finds. Scott City is a town full of comfortable charm that offers a rural, peaceful quality of life...not simply for those who live here, but just as importantly for those who visit or travel through Scott City. It truly is a perfect place to live, work and enjoy.

What makes Scott City thrive and prosper is the effort to maintain traditional family values and a sincere sense of community pride. The business and civic leaders in Scott City place great emphasis on community involvement and "paying it forward". Scott Citians are friendly people who welcome new residents and new business, as well as the overnight traveler. Come visit or stay in Scott City. Let us share our "home" with you.

### Community Resources

- [City of Scott City](#)
- [Scott Community Economic Development](#)
- [Scott City Area Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Scott County, KS](#)
- [Recreation](#)

www.visitscottcity.com  
**KANSAS**  
620.872.5612



# 5-Minute Impression

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Two highways converge:

- Hwy 96: mix of commercial, industrial, including some residential.
- A very nice military monument



- Hwy 83: Retail frontage, high school, churches, and hospital access.
- Low-profile signage, good curb appeal, and the buildings were well maintained.
- Nice family-friendly park with large playground attraction.
- Billboard with a map and local attractions, events.





# Downtown Business Area

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- Business was a mix of restaurants, furniture, hardware, a law office, a gift shop, and thrift store.
- A good mix and variety.



# Downtown Business Area





# Downtown Service & Amenities

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- Customer service was top-notch in each location we entered to eat, shop, or tour.
- Public restrooms were available in each retail location we entered.
- We saw multiple benches and trash receptacles.
- We could not connect to any public wi-fi as a guest.

- Small trees are planted along the sidewalks, not much other landscaping.
- Parking was easy, and one could park at one end of the shopping district and walk to any storefront to restaurant.

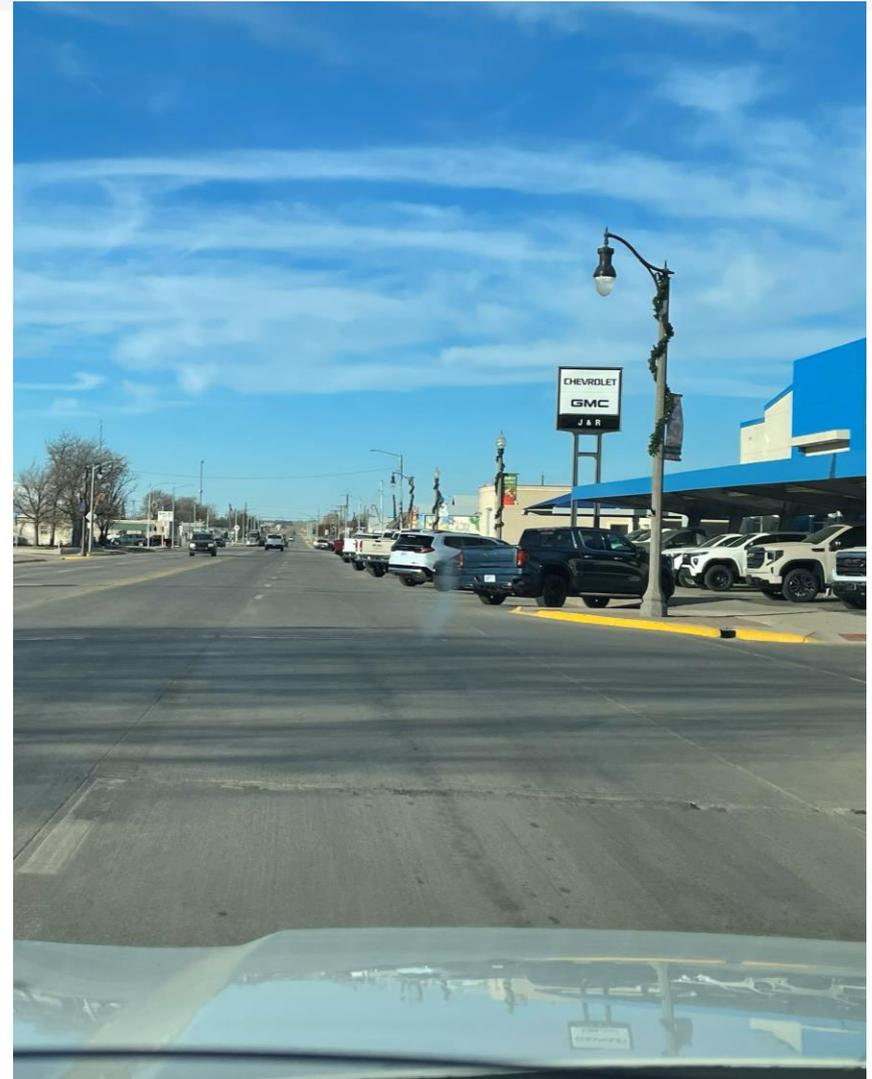


# Other Retail Shopping Areas

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- On Highway 83, an access road made it easy to get to grocery, hardware, eye care, and restaurants.
- Businesses on the west side have easy access to parking.
- All areas were kept clean.





# Industrial Parks Commercial

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- The northeast area has industrial areas that could expand to the north and east of the oil storage tanks, adjacent to the airport.
- On the northwest side, there are commercial sites with expansion area on the west.

*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.*



# Health Care Services

**Scott City, KS**

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- Hospital and long-term care is available. A very nice facility, possibly a recent update.



- Clinics, Medical Transport is available, including a Scott County VIP Senior Bus.



- Dentistry, chiropractic, optometry, eye care, behavioral health, wellness center, assisted living, child development, and sleep disorders.
- All with decent appearance.
- Long-term Care at the hospital, Park Lane, Never Alone Living Assistance.





# Housing

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- Strong mix of high-end housing, small to medium houses, and mobile home parks.
- We saw 6 houses for sale, one was “Sold.”





- Mobile home parks, multi-family units with some small single-family units.



## Kansas

- Occupied Housing Units: 1,691
- Owner Occupied: 48 % 65.3%
- Renter Occupied: 52% 34.7%
- Vacant Housing Units: 81 **(4%!)**
  - For rent: **37**
  - For sale: 0
  - Sold, not occupied: 0
  - Seasonal/recreational: 0
  - All other vacants: **44**
- Average Household Size: 2.28 2.48

## Kansas

- |                                                |           |             |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| • Average Travel Time to Work:                 | 14 mins   | 19.6 mins   |
| • Households without a computer device*:       | 42 (2%)   | 45k (3.8%)  |
| • Households without an internet subscription: | 232 (14%) | 108k (9.2%) |

\* Includes smartphones, tablets, other wireless devices

Blue = Kansas Comparison Data

Data Source: MySidewalk; Census.gov

Housing Assessment Tool (HAT)

<https://www.kansascommerce.gov/housing/>



K-State Housing TransDisciplinary Team (TDT)

Email: [ksecv@ksu.edu](mailto:ksecv@ksu.edu)

# KANSAS

COMMERCE

## Housing Resources in Kansas

For additional funding information, visit the Housing Resources in Kansas page at [www.kansascommerce.gov/housing](http://www.kansascommerce.gov/housing).

DEVELOPERS						
Program	Type	Eligible Grantees	Description / Eligible Activities	Award Max.	Dates	Contact
<b>Startup Housing Opportunity Venture Loan (SHOVL)</b> KDC	Loan	Developers	Funds developer expenses prior to the closing of permanent financing for housing development in communities under 10,000	\$25k	Ongoing (Subject to funding availability)	<b>Kerri Falletti</b> Kerri.Falletti@ks.gov
<b>Reinvestment Housing Incentive District (RHID)</b> KDC	Reimbursement	Developers	Aids developers in building housing by financing housing development infrastructure, renovations of buildings over 25 years old in central business districts, or infill housing. RHID captures incremental increase in property taxes created by housing development projects for up to 25 years.	Varies	Ongoing	<b>Robert North</b> Robert.North@ks.gov  Questions: <b>Kerri Falletti</b> Kerri.Falletti@ks.gov
<b>Affordable Housing Program (AHP)</b> FHLB	Grant	For-profit entities/ Developers	Finance the purchase, construction, or rehabilitation of owner-and rental-occupied housing for low- or moderate-income households through subsidized advances and direct subsidies.	\$1.5 million	Application Period July 1 – Aug. 15	<b>Dustie Humphreys</b> dustie.humphreys@ fhlbtopeka.com
<b>Kansas Historic Tax Credits</b> SHPO	Tax Credit	Developers	Offered for qualified rehabilitation projects on properties listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places.	Varies	Ongoing	<b>SHPO Staff</b> ksks.taxcredits@ks.gov
<b>Rural Rental Housing Program</b> USDA-RD	Loan	Developers	Provides financing for affordable multi-family rental housing for low-income, elderly, or disabled individuals and families in eligible rural areas. Eligible activities include buying and improving land and infrastructure.	Varies	Ongoing	<b>Midwest Regional Mailbox</b> MFHFODMidwest@usda.gov



# Schools

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- Nice looking facilities.
- The size appears appropriate to community.
- No post-secondary schools.

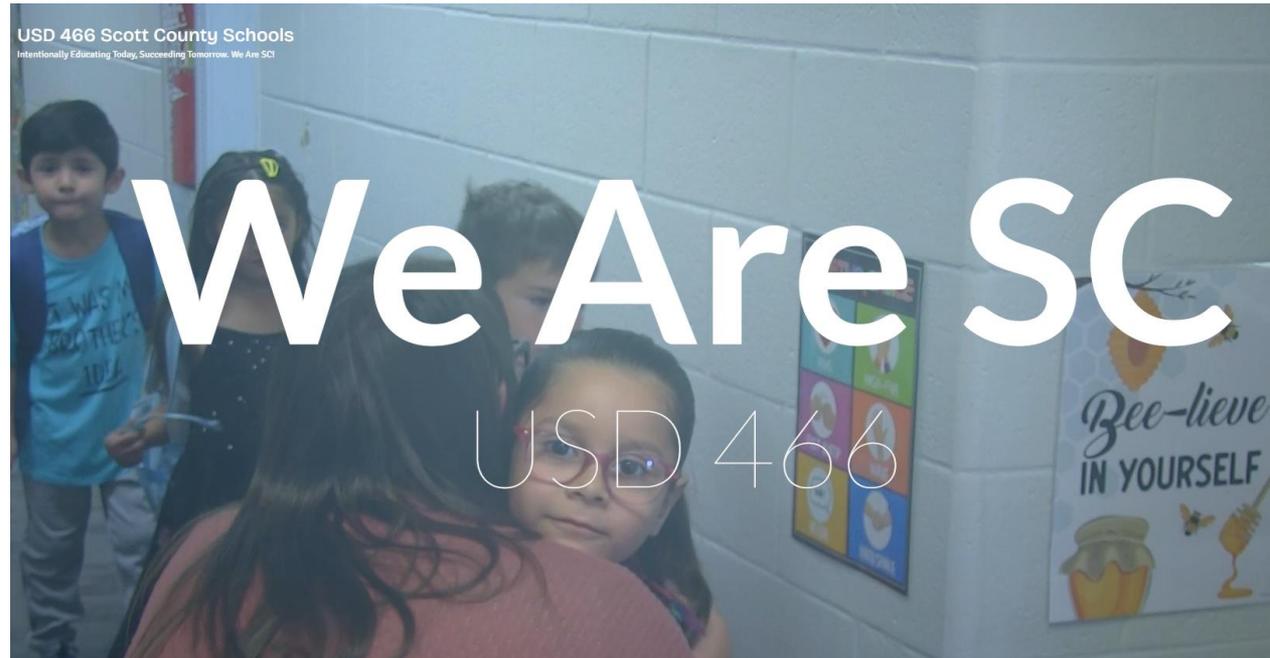




- USD boasts on the school website: 20 students per classroom, 15 faculty, a 5-year graduation rate of 91.5% with a 58.3% post-secondary rate.

USD 466's front page is my new model for

“Potential Students also look at your website.”





# Childcare

**Scott City, KS**

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## Comments:

We saw Russell Child Development.

### Scott County Data:

- **Extent Desired Capacity meets Potential Childcare need: 37%**
- Contact [ks.childcareaware.org](https://ks.childcareaware.org) to access local childcare specialists.  
785-823-3343



# Faith & Religion

**Scott City, KS**

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- There are 17 churches available, all of which have well-maintained buildings and grounds.
- Community services are advertised at the park where the annual Whimmydiddle is held.





# Civic Organizations

**Scott City, KS**

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- Scott County Development
- Shriners
- Scott Community Development
- 4-H
- Anthem Lodge Fraternal Organization
- Masonic Lodge
- Scott County Arts
- Scott County Historical Society



# Public Infrastructure & Services

**Scott City, KS**

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- Most streets, signage, and sidewalks were well-maintained.
- You could lose a bumper in some of the deep dips at intersections.





- City Hall staff were very accommodating and more than willing to give printed materials.
- The receptionist referred us to the Chamber of Commerce

- Scott County Fire Department has 21 volunteers county-wide.
- Scott City Police and sheriff's department operate a consolidated police agency with seven full-time police officers and three full-time sheriff's deputies to provide 24-hour protection.





Scott County Library is a fun place with activities, including reading camp for up to 12 years of age and a teen reading camp for ages above 12.

- The city has converted an unused train track into a concrete walking path.
- Multiple playgrounds were observed.
- Visitors mentioned the event board in the park more than once.



A huge sports complex with a swimming pool, volleyball, tennis, soccer, golf, walking path, and baseball.





# Recreation & Tourism

**Scott City, KS**

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## Well-Known for an attraction or event?

- Whimmydiddle Arts and Crafts Fair
- In July, visitors noted a long list of events scheduled through December.
- Beefiesta BBQ feed, golf tournament, car show, airshow, free fair, fishing tournament, corn hole tournament, barrel races.

## Natural or manmade features that can draw people?

- Monument Rocks
- Scott Lake with cabins available.
- El Quartejejo Museum with locally found fossils.



## Chamber of Commerce

- Located on south Main Street.
- Staff is very accommodating and have all the information about the community and county any visitor would need.



Signage on the East 5<sup>th</sup> Street building was misleading.



## What would bring you back?

- We enjoyed the food at the Act II Majestic and Mom and Pop's Burger
- We toured El Quartejejo Museum.
- Scott City Lake and Monument Rocks are a day's worth.
- We couldn't do it all in one weekend, so we plan to return soon.



- A clean community.
- Friendly people.
- Everyone was ready and able to assist and answer questions about the building we were in or anything in the area.

## Housing:

There isn't a lot here for people to move to, either to buy or rent.



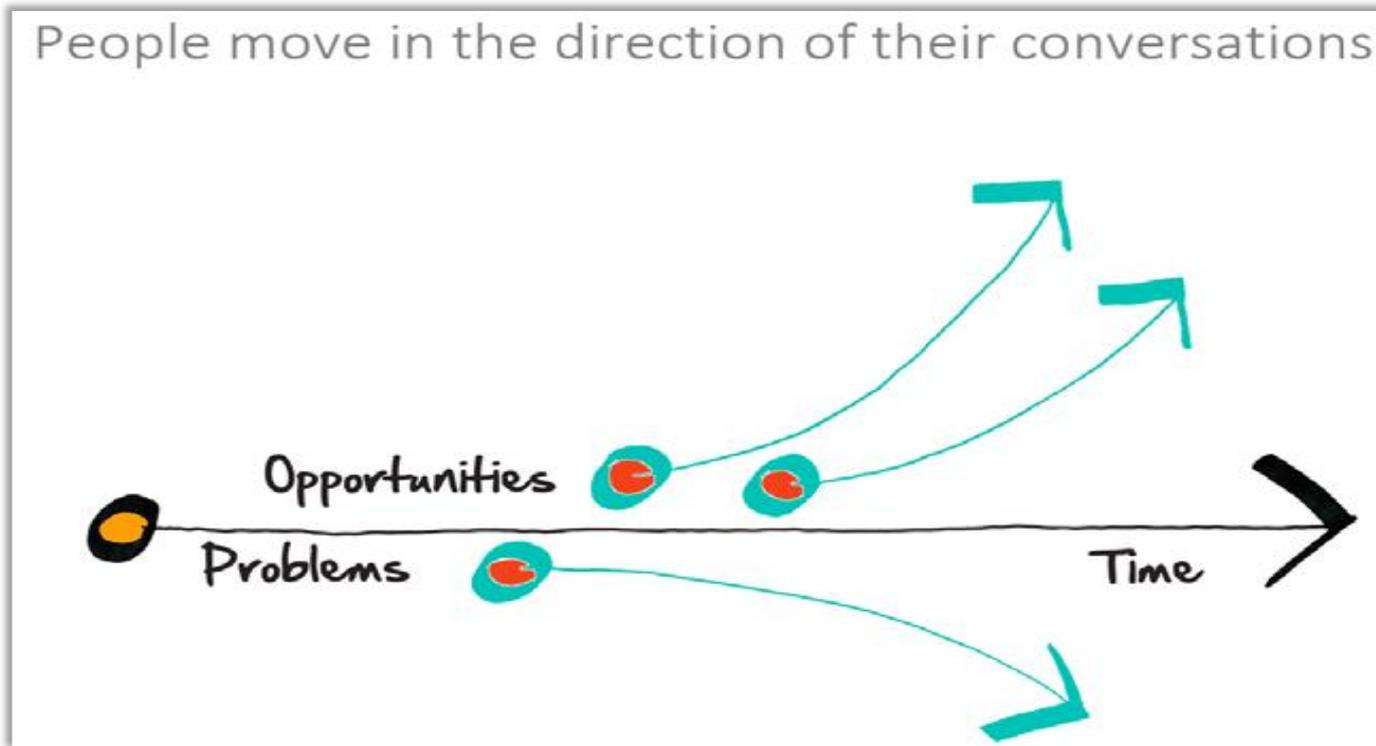
## What will you remember?

- Whimmydiddle from past experience, and Scott Lake, Monument Rocks.

*Visitors spent \$362 while in Scott City.*

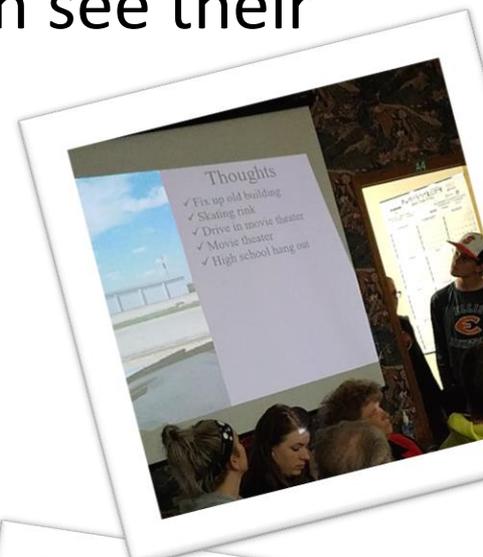
## What did you hear?

## What will we do?



## 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](mailto:KSRECV@ksu.edu)

to participate.



**4 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 GRANT WRITING CLASSES**  
Class alum reported receiving more than \$100 million in successful grants. Discover in-person and online classes at [ksre-learn.com/community-events](https://ksre-learn.com/community-events). 
- 2 A PROFESSIONAL LEVEL GRANT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT COURSE**  
An 8-week course dedicated to helping you complete a fundable proposal. Register for the course at [ksre-learn.com/GrantWriting](https://ksre-learn.com/GrantWriting). 
- 3 SUPPORT BY K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS**  
Our professionals will search K-State's subscription grant databases to suggest grants appropriate for your project. Our staff also offers reviewing of grant proposals.
- 4 GRANT WRITING RESOURCES**  
We have excellent resources for those wanting to bring more to their communities. We can connect you with contract writers to help shape your proposals.

For more information about our grant writing resources, email [KSRECV@k-state.edu](mailto:KSRECV@k-state.edu).

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service  
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25227 | Updated Apr. 2025

## 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.

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



**REMOTE  
ONLINE  
INITIATIVE™**



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

**WORK FROM ANYWHERE**

## 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/>

