

First Impressions

St. Francis, Kansas

K-State Research and Extension in Partnership
with

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation



DANE G. HANSEN

F O U N D A T I O N

St. Francis Demographics

- Population – 1,329
- Median Household Income - \$36,394
- High School Education – 90.9%, College Education –23.9 %
- Median resident age is 53.3 years
- Poverty rate is 5.4%

Source: factfinder.census.gov





Web Presence:

- www.stfranciskansas.com
- www.stfrancisks.com (Old site)
- Tab for community organizations had no listings, the old site or hacked site had a nice listing.



- <http://www.cncoks.us>
 - Site has great info – really impressive and helpful!
 - County connections tab has a wealth of information
- There are several St. Francis facebook pages

County Connections



County Services



The “Five-Minute” Impression

- Pleasantly surprised and impressed by what St. Francis had to offer
- From HWY 36 there is a totally different tone than what you feel, see and experience once you get downtown



- Good signage coming into the community
- Clean-up around signs could make it more inviting



- Nice way finders signs on HWY 36
- Could use clean-up on the frontage road



Downtown Business Area

- Very nice, well-kept and maintained
- Nice LED sign



- Benches along main street
- Brick and concrete sidewalks with nice light poles
- It is apparent that businesses owners take pride in their stores and the community



- A very nice, clean, friendly grocery store with a great selection
- Jewelry, coffee shops, hardware/home repair/lumber yard, feed store/coop
- Businesses typical of a small rural community



- Everyone extremely friendly, on the street and in the businesses
- Businesses very supportive of each other
- Good promotion of the community and its attractions



Other Retail Areas

- Most of other retail is along HWY 36
- Not as welcoming as downtown



Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- Team did not see anything in the way of an industrial park
- Nice storage units
- Some ag services on HWY 36



- Saw several ag service on the north side of town
- Only manufacturing observed was Ross



Health Care Services

- The health care center looks really progressive
- The clinic and hospital have a well maintained appearance



- Variety of health care services provided – chiropractor, eye care, dental, pharmacy as well as the clinic and hospital



- Good Samaritan Society
- Home Health Care Services
- Nice EMS Facility



- Senior Center located downtown
- Could use some paint
- Wondered what types of services were provided from the center



- Website mentioned a Wellness Center
- Is this the facility?



Housing

- Total Number of Housing Units – 777
- Occupied housing units – 667
- Vacant housing units – 110
- Owner occupied – 76.5%
- Renter occupied – 23.5%
- Median house value - \$80,400



Housing observations

- Comments were made that housing availability was tight
- Team noticed at least 20 houses with for sale signs
- Variety of types of houses available



- Rentals might be a different story
- Did not find any HUD or housing authority



- Some newer construction
- Overall nice yards



- As in all communities, some homes could use some improvements



Schools

- Maybe it is intentional, but there are no signs on the schools
- Team didn't recognize the grade school building and thought it was abandoned, looked unwelcoming
- The high school looks well maintained



- Nice athletic fields
- Great website with current pictures and articles



- Both facilities look adequate in size
- Playground equipment looks a little sparse at the grade school



Childcare

- Team did not dig into this. They heard daycare was difficult to find but wondered if that was perception or reality
- One daycare facility was observed



Faith/Religion

- Most churches well cared for
- 9 churches listed on the website





- United Methodist Thrift Store
- Good recognition of donations back to the community



- Saw several old, smaller churches converted to businesses!
What a neat idea and a great way to preserve and put to use a piece of heritage!



Civic

- The <http://www.stfranciskansas.com> website has nothing under the Community Organizations tab
- Good information can be found on the Cheyenne County website
- Evidence of civic organization activity was seen everywhere around town – memorial benches, shelters in park, aluminum benches.





Public Infrastructure

- The community has great signage
- The sidewalks are throughout the community
- Wide streets make parking and getting around easy



- City Office and Courthouse nicely landscaped
- Staff in both facilities very helpful



- Cheyenne County Community Development building looks busy but they were closed
- Chamber of Commerce Office in the Courthouse was wide open but no one there



- Police is across the street from the courthouse, well maintained and looks current
- Fire is located on HWY 36 with EMS
- Did not find the library. There is information on the St. Francis website under “Meet Us”



- The park by the Courthouse has some great history and is a wonderful asset to the community
- However it was in disrepair with some benches needing paint, a rusty fountain and broken flower pots



- Very nice playground equipment at the city park
- Sand volleyball court really awesome
- City pool has a nice building next to it. What is its use?



- Tennis Courts
- Ball Fields
- Mud Volleyball



Recreation/Tourism

- They have really utilized the Arikaree Breaks in businesses and handouts
- Seems to be two slogans – “The land of open spaces and friendly faces” and “As Good As It Gets”



- Riverside Recreation is a great facility – very relaxing and well kept



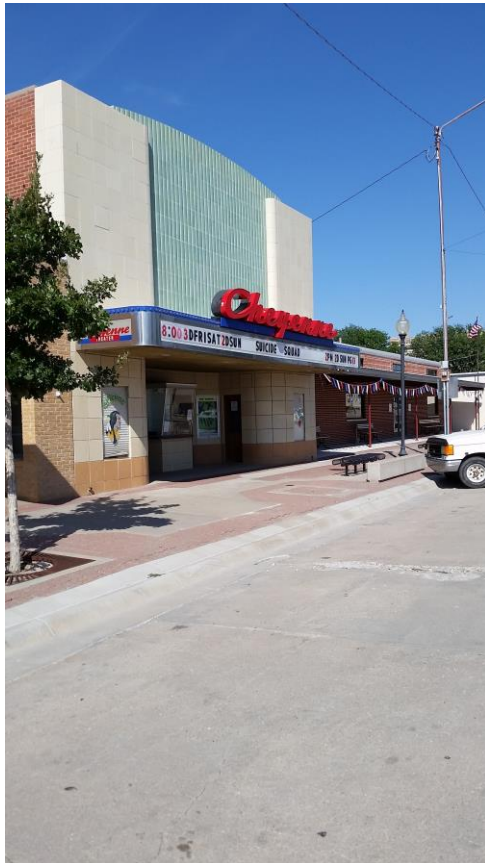
- HWY 36 has a wealth of things to do, but seems to be overlooked
- Historical Museum



- Roadside park & rest area
- RV Park



- Motorcycle Museum
- Movie Theatre



- Art Hub
- Quincy Gallery
- Dance Studio



- Fairgrounds with hometown carnival
- Keller's Pond – hard to locate



Attractions that would bring you back:

- Deann's Gift Shop
- Coffee Shop – neat place
- Motorcycle Museum
- Jewelry Store
- Arikaree Breaks
- There was so much to do we couldn't fit it into the short day we came. Several of us will come back.



Most Positive Observations!

- Pleasant, friendly, helpful people everywhere
- Well established downtown main street that includes nice businesses and the majority take pride in their appearance
- The cleanliness of the parks



Biggest Obstacles/Challenges

- Getting people to turn off of Highway 36
- Signage is great on 36 but first impression isn't the best
- HWY 36 needs clean-up, realize this is difficult to accomplish when privately owned



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

- Folks have great pride in their community and what they have to offer
- Very supportive of each other
- Unique variety and number of businesses available
- St. Francis has some great features – park, Arikaree Breaks, nice town
- But honestly, the friendly people are what made this community so wonderful during our visit!

Recommendations:

- Clean-up of HWY 36
- Completing transition from old website to new
- Signage for the schools or improvements to the grade school to give it a more welcoming appearance
- Repairs in the downtown park
- Signs placed on business doors when they are closed during normal business hours
- Painting the exterior of the Senior Center

- The Dane G. Hansen Foundation wants to help communities in Northwest Kansas become the best they can be and take great PRIDE in who they are and what they can be.

The logo for the Dane G. Hansen Foundation features the name "DANE G. HANSEN" in a bold, dark blue serif font. Below it, the word "FOUNDATION" is written in a smaller, dark blue serif font, with each letter separated by a wide space. The text is framed by two light brown, curved lines that sweep over the top and bottom of the name.

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F O U N D A T I O N

- <http://danehansenfoundation.org/>