

Thrive
Allen County

Building A Stronger Allen County

Allen County Community Well-Being Report 2008

Neosho River Bridge at Humboldt, 2008



Dear Neighbor:

As the old saying goes, in order to know where you're going you first have to know where you are. This report attempts to tell where we are, and to give us a road map for where we hope to go.

Much of what you find in this report is numbers and data. But there's more to it than that. Allen Countians are down to earth and practical. We are creative, energetic and talented. We work hard. We are closely tied to the land. We lend a helping hand when disaster strikes. We believe in the importance of community.

Life is also hard for many of us. Some of us have difficulty making ends meet. Our physical health and well-being causes many to suffer physically and emotionally. Some of us may not have families that can help. Others may not have the skills needed to compete in our workforce.

We cannot begin to tell everything there is to know about the individual people who live here, but we can talk about who we are *collectively*. This report presents information about population, age, health and poverty levels in Allen County, first on a countywide basis and then, on a limited basis, by each community in our county. *(Note for residents that live in Bayard, Geneva and Petrolia: we are sorry that your communities could not be included. We could not find enough data about your communities through the census bureau or other reliable sources to include here. In the future we hope to do a detailed report focusing on the unincorporated communities with 100 or fewer residents, including Bayard, Geneva and Petrolia).*

This report has been made possible through a grant from the REACH Healthcare Foundation. REACH has been a true partner to Thrive, and to organizations throughout our community, in the effort to improve health conditions in Allen County. We are fortunate to be one of the six counties in REACH's service area, and to have the support of REACH's Board of Directors, CEO Brenda Sharpe and their top-notch staff. Thanks, REACH!

In closing, we want to warn you that you're going to see lots of bad news in this report. You'll see some good news, too, but you may be left feeling overwhelmed by the challenges we're facing as a county. If so, remember that many Kansas counties have the same situation, or even worse, than what we're facing here. **What makes Allen County different is that we're doing something about it.** It's not too late. We can turn this around if we just make up our minds to do it, and if we agree to work together around a common vision for what our county can be.

We hope you'll join us in the effort. Allen County is our home, and it's worth fighting for.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Wolfe".

Dr. Brian Wolfe
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David C. Toland".

David C. Toland
Executive Director

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OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

Allen County is a community of 13,414 people (2007 U.S. Census estimate) situated in the southeastern corner of Kansas. The county has a total area of 505 square miles, 2 square miles of which is water, and extends 21 miles from north to south and 24 miles from east to west.

Established in 1855 as one of the first 33 counties in territorial Kansas, Allen County was named in honor of United States Senator William

Allen of Ohio on land inhabited in part by Osage Indians. The county was settled by its first Caucasian settlers in 1855, and the county's first town and county seat, Cofachique (pronounced "coff-a-chee"), initially flourished.

In the days of "Bleeding Kansas" a struggle between pro- and anti-slavery residents ensued, with the county siding firmly against slavery by 1858. The free state stronghold of Humboldt was sacked and burned by forces loyal to the Confederacy in the early part of the Civil War, but the county was otherwise relatively untouched by violence during the war.

Following the Civil War the county grew steadily, though slowly, for several years with the county's economy and social life based primarily around agriculture.



Allen County Country Club

Allen County's most aggressive period of development came after the discovery in 1893 of natural gas in Iola. This discovery of what was then the largest known gas field in the world led to the rapid industrialization of Iola and the establishment of the towns Bassett and Gas. This "gas boom" period peaked in 1907 and ended two years later when the major gas fields in the county were depleted.

The end of the Gas Boom caused a major economic and population decline from which the county has yet to recover. That said, our county has managed to make significant periodic gains that have slowed or abated the decline for limited periods of time.



Madison Avenue, Iola



Moran Grain Silos, Moran

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POPULATION

Allen County's population has declined in nine of the last ten U.S. censuses. From a peak in 1910 of 27,640 residents, the county has since lost 51% of its 1910 population.

The one period of demonstrable population growth in the last century was in 1980, when industrial recruitment efforts that occurred in the 1970s resulted in a 4% increase in residents over 1970. Otherwise, the decline in population

has been relatively steady for nearly a century.

How are we doing?

The slow and steady population decline seen in the 20th century has gained speed dramatically since the year 2000. The Census Bureau estimates that Allen County has lost 971 residents in the last seven years, which represents a 7% drop.



Why is it important?

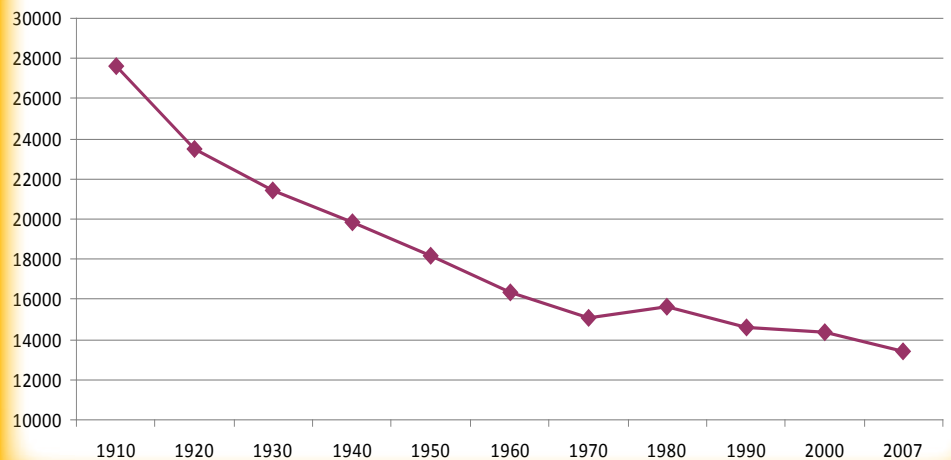
The basic building block of any county is its people. A declining population means less vitality, fewer businesses, and higher tax rates for those remaining in the county just to maintain the same level of public services. *Simply put, the fewer the people, the higher the tax burden to maintain (for example) Allen County's nearly 1,000 miles of roads.*

Declining populations particularly impact our school systems, which in Kansas are funded largely on a per-pupil basis. Fewer students means less state funding, and limits a district's ability to pay competitive wages to attract

the best teachers or to equip classrooms with technologies to keep children competitive in today's technology-based economy.

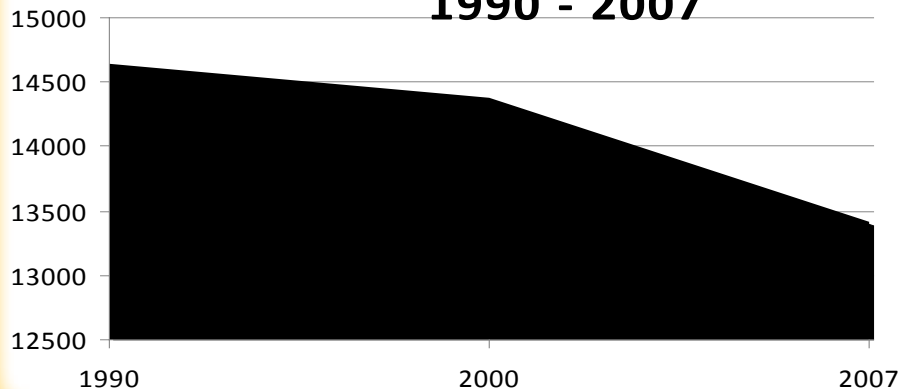


Allen County Population, 1910 - 2007



Source: US Census Bureau

Accelerating Population Loss 1990 - 2007



Source: US Census Bureau

What can we do to improve?

Stabilizing our county's population requires a multi-pronged effort to:

- 1) Construct new housing and rehabilitate old units;
- 2) Improve health conditions among residents in order to prolong lifespans and slow the rate of premature deaths;
- 3) Improve educational systems and invest in quality of life improvements that will attract new residents and;
- 4) Recruit new jobs and retain existing jobs, particularly those that pay higher wages, by investing in workforce training that improves the skill levels of county workers.

Most importantly, we must remember that we have done this successfully before in the 1970s. *We can do it again!*

POVERTY

The nine counties of Southeast Kansas have historically comprised the most impoverished region of the state. The most recent poverty data available (2004) shows Allen and Labette counties tied as the fourth most impoverished counties in Southeast Kansas.

Poverty has been a fact of life in our county for more than a century, with its roots being traced to the Gas Boom era. The availability of low cost fuel during the Gas Boom of 1893 to 1909 resulted in rapid development and industrialization of Iola and surrounding areas. Thousands of heavy industry jobs in zinc smelters, cement plants, foundries and brick plants meant an explosion of population, with Iola reaching a population peak of 14,225 by 1907.

PERCENT OF SOUTHEAST KANSAS RESIDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY (2004)

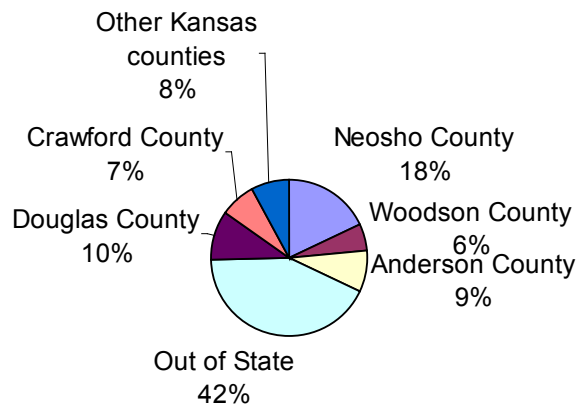
Crawford	16.4%
Cherokee	15.6%
Bourbon	15.2%
ALLEN	14.6%
Labette	14.6%
Montgomery	14.5%
Neosho	14.0%
Woodson	13.8%
Wilson	13.7%
<i>United States</i>	<i>12.4%</i>
<i>State of Kansas</i>	<i>10.5%</i>

Source: US Census 2004



Abandoned building, Bayard

428 People Left Allen County from 2006 to 2007. Where Did They Go?



Source: Missouri State Data Center; data based on IRS tax returns 2006-07.

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But when the gas fizzled, most of these industries closed. Company executives and middle management workers left Allen County, and many blue collar workers soon followed.

Still, a sizeable number of low wage workers either could not or chose not to leave Allen County when their jobs disappeared. This phenomenon planted the seed for the establishment of a body of families and individuals who have lived below the poverty line for four

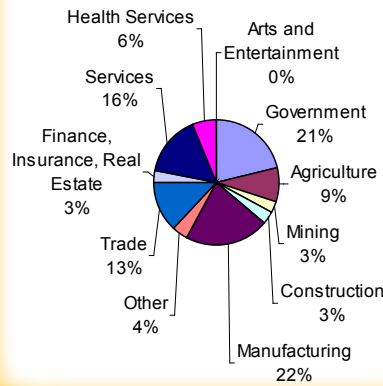
and five generations in Allen County.

Wages also play a role in poverty. The largest percentage of jobs in Allen County are in manufacturing, followed by government jobs. Higher wage white collar jobs are relatively rare in Allen County.



4 Playground at LaHarpe

Allen County Employment By Sector (2003)



Source: KSU Research and Extension, The Importance of the Health Care Sector to the Economy of Allen County, October 2006.

How Are We Doing?

On a positive note, local industry wages grew significantly from 2001 to 2006, with a 17.2% increase in wages seen in Allen County, versus a 17.1% increase statewide and a 15.8% increase nationally. That said, average wages still lag significantly behind the state and nation, as shown on page 5.

On the negative side, poverty is increasing in Allen County. The percentage of residents living below the poverty line in Allen County increased by 15% from 2000 to 2004.

For children, the situation is particularly dire: 49.6% of children in Allen County were eligible for free school meals in 2007, and nearly 20% of children in Allen County lived in poverty in 2004. Though we lack the data, we estimate that this percentage has increased in the past four years. Sadly, Allen County ranks in the top 9% of Kansas counties with children living in poverty, meaning that, *statistically, a child in Allen County would be less likely to live in poverty if she lived in 95 of the other 104 counties in Kansas.*

(See KSU Situation and Trends Report: Allen County, 2008 for more information).

Why Is It Important?

Poverty is a key indicator of community well-being, and it has direct correlations to health and wellness, educational attainment, teenage pregnancy and a host of other indicators. Intergenerational poverty is particularly challenging for a county like ours because those in poverty typically lack middle-class examples to emulate, which increases the likelihood of yet another generation being born into the same situation as their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

What Can We Do To Make It Better?

The most powerful tool for pulling individuals out of poverty is education. As a county we must avoid the “soft bigotry of low expectations” that assumes children born in poverty cannot be expected to perform academically at the level of middle class peers. But we must acknowledge that special services may be necessary to close the achievement gap caused by poverty.

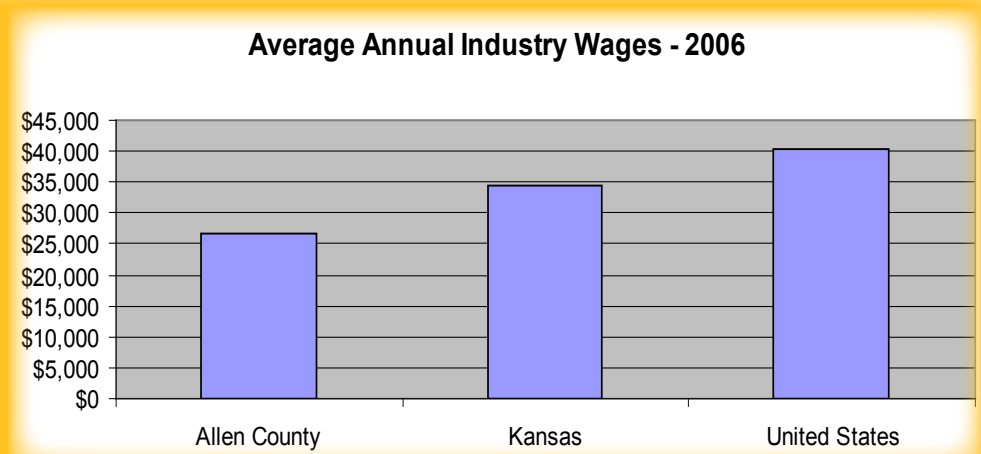
For adults, we must aggressively provide job training that includes the basics of hygiene, how to dress for job interviews, and how to develop a resume. More importantly, though, workers must learn the skills that will make employers want to stay in, or move to, Allen County. In an increasingly competitive economy that relies more and more on outsourcing to lower-wage countries we cannot

automatically expect that Allen County will automatically continue to maintain its current industrial base forever. If we are to overcome this it will require having a **better-educated** and **more highly-skilled** workforce than what is found in communities elsewhere across Kansas and throughout the country.

HEALTHCARE

Allen Countians are dying too young, and they are sicker than they should be. There are exceptions, of course, but the averages show a county in critical condition. It is imperative that we improve health indices for Allen County residents through a combination of education, outreach and improved facilities, as well as increasing the number of healthcare providers in our county.

The availability of good quality healthcare services is a major factor in attracting new residents and businesses, particularly in rural areas. By virtue of their age and relative need for healthcare services, retirees and senior citizens



Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

considering relocating are more likely to move to communities with a state-of-the-art hospital and related medical options. Younger couples of childbearing age may be concerned about the availability of obstetricians, in particular. And the availability of primary care physicians, dentists, optometrists and other medical professionals is also a critical component in attracting new residents of any age.

Allen County is fortunate to have a core of committed medical providers that practice primarily in Allen County. The chart on page 7 shows the number of medical providers in Allen County as of November 2008.

The number of MDs and DOs in Allen County has held steady in recent years, though it has decreased significantly from the early 1980s when a majority of those practicing first established their practices here. The recruitment of Dr. Rebecca Lohman and Dr. Tim Spears represent two recent successes, though they have been offset by the retirement of Dr. Richard Hull and the reduction of Dr. Scott Coates' presence at Allen County Hospital, among others.



How Are We Doing?

There are several bright spots in Allen County's healthcare system. Our county has not had a sudden loss of medical providers; we have a stable and profitable county hospital; and private providers have made multi-million dollar investments in facilities and equipment. This year we increased the number



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of practicing dentists in Allen County by almost 20% (with the addition of 1 dentist!) by recruiting the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas dental clinic to Iola. We have screened a majority of students in the county's three school districts and referred a large percentage of them for further treatment. Clearly, we are making progress.

It's also important to note that many rural counties in Kansas have no hospitals, doctors, dentists or other medical professionals. Allen County is fortunate to have a 25 bed Critical Access Hospital, owned by Allen County and operated by HCA, the nation's largest privately-owned hospital system. Allen County Hospital alone employs 155 people, and has a tremendous impact on our local economy. (A Critical Access Hospital has received a federal designation that allows it to be reimbursed at cost for Medicare patients. In exchange for becoming a Critical Access Hospital, hospitals agree to limit themselves to 25 or fewer beds, and their average acute inpatient length of stay is not allowed to exceed 96 hours annually).



Allen County Hospital, Iola

In other areas, we have work to do. Two of the three medical doctors in Allen County are in their 50s and presumably nearing retirement age. Two of the three doctors of osteopathy are presumably in the same boat, as are two dentists. Perhaps most importantly, our hospital is losing patients to competitors in Neosho County, Anderson County, Coffey County, and Bourbon County. Major facility investments and securing a full time surgeon are necessary if we are to maintain Allen County Hospital as a strong, full service medical center.



Horseshoe pits at Cannon Park, Humboldt

Why Is It Important?

First and foremost, the strength of our healthcare sector and the availability of healthcare services have a direct impact on the health and wellness, and therefore the quality of life, of Allen County residents. Economically, the healthcare sector employs 6% of the workforce in our county and has a significant impact on our local economy. And, as noted earlier, a strong healthcare sector is a key recruitment tool as we work to recruit new residents to Allen County.

What Can We Do To Make It Better?

First, as patients we need to support Allen County-based medical providers and realize that there are consequences to going across the county line for medical services that can be provided just as successfully in Allen County. While it is correct that not all services are available locally, many are. For example, brain surgery is not available at Allen County Hospital, but there is no medical reason to have babies in Chanute rather than at

Allen County Hospital.

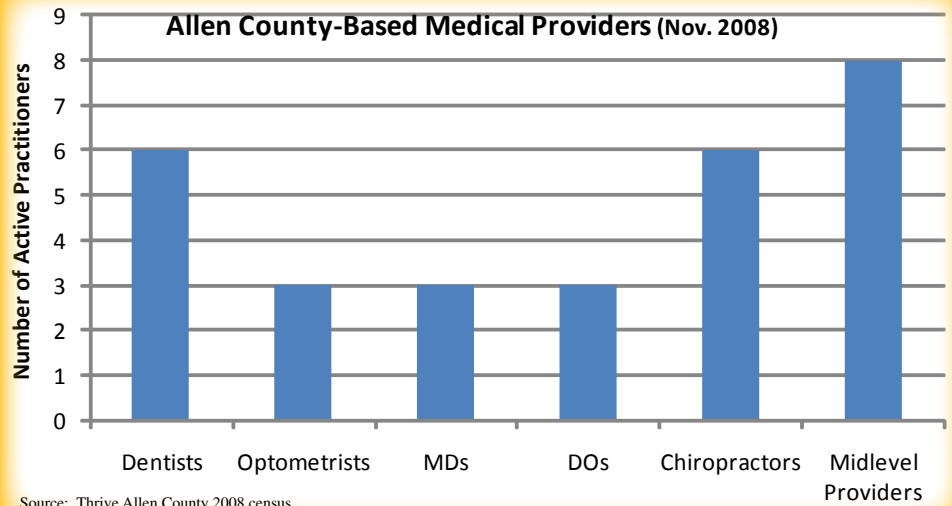
Second, as residents and patients we also must advocate to public officials and HCA executives for improvements to facilities and offerings at Allen County Hospital. Major facility investments have been made by our neighbors in Anderson, Bourbon, Coffey and Neosho counties, and those hospitals have effectively siphoned off a significant proportion of our patient base. Attracting these patients back to Allen County Hospital will require similar investments that meet or exceed what has been done in neighboring counties. This may also require the construction of a new medical clinic in Humboldt, either by a private practice or by Allen County, to directly compete with the Chanute-based Ashley Clinic which has a major presence in Humboldt.

RESIDENT HEALTH

As a county we have major challenges in overall health. According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, in the Southeast Kansas Multicounty Region of Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Linn and Woodson counties:

- Only 42.8% of adults engaged in moderate physical activity daily;
- 23.3% of adults smoke;
- 9.3% of adults have engaged in binge drinking of alcohol during the past month (defined as 5 or more drinks on one occasion).

There are clearly major challenges, across the board, in resident health in Allen County.



Southeast Kansas Mental Health, Iola

However, there are also areas where we are making progress.

Oral health is an area where major improvements have been made in Allen County. The 2006 *Allen County Needs Assessment* showed that 49.3% of residents had no dental insurance, and that 28% of Allen County residents had not seen a dentist in the past two years.

Through the efforts of Thrive, SAFE BASE, the REACH Healthcare Foundation and the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City over 1,000 Allen County students have received dental screenings, with serious cases referred to specialists for further treatment. With studies showing an important link between oral health and general bodily health, it is particularly important that our children start life with sound dental health.

HOUSING

The U.S. Census reports that there are 6,487 housing units in Allen County (2005), including single family homes, duplexes, and apartments. Adjusting for the impact of the 2007 flood, we estimate that there are approximately 6,350 housing units in Allen County.

A lack of good quality housing is a major barrier that limits our county's ability to stop its population decline. Private efforts are underway in Humboldt and Iola, in particular, to attempt to construct and rehabilitate housing units. Local governments have enacted policies to encourage new construction and rehabilitation, including establishing revitalization areas where taxes on new construction are abated for specified periods. Iola currently has 30 units of single family workforce housing under construction, which represents the largest single residential development in Allen County in at least 30 years. All these measures must be encouraged and built upon.

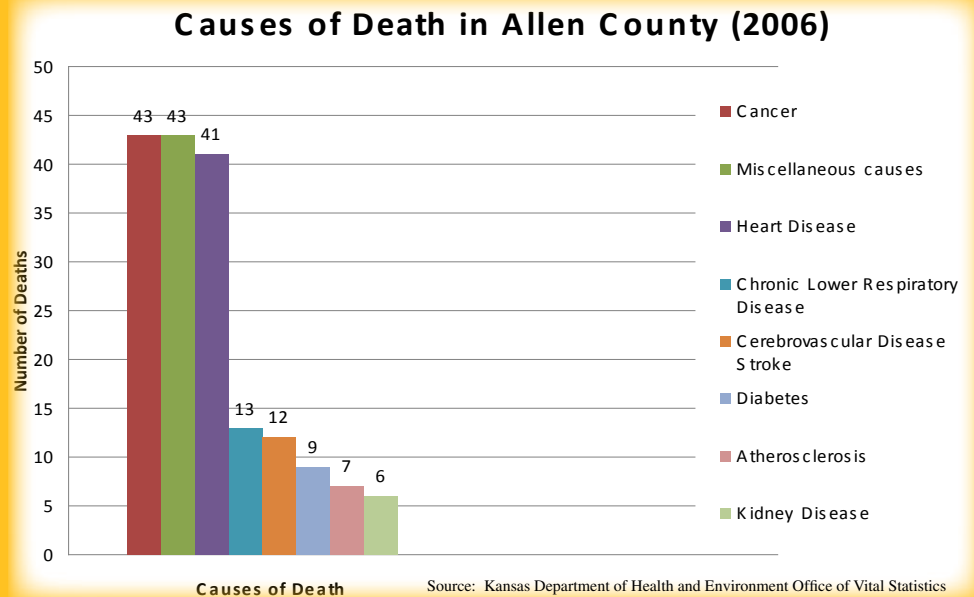
PUBLIC EDUCATION

In Allen County, as in much of America, the education a child receives depends on where the child lives. Though separated by only a few miles, Allen County's three unified school districts (USDs) have significantly different student bodies, funding, per pupil spending, teacher salaries, facilities, and performance on standardized tests.

It is difficult to draw "apples-to-apples" comparisons between the districts. Yet based on the data available we can make several observations about public education in Allen County:

1. Humboldt/USD 258 pays its teachers significantly better than Marmaton Valley and Iola. Humboldt historically has also had higher average test scores than the other districts, though Marmaton Valley has recently been closing that gap.

2. The amount spent per student in Marmaton Valley and Humboldt significantly exceeds what is spent in Iola. On average, both districts also have higher test scores than Iola. (It is important to note that both Marmaton Valley and Humboldt



are significantly smaller districts than Iola, though, and thus could have fewer operational efficiencies that make larger districts less expensive to run).

3. All three school districts are improving their standardized test scores, sometimes by double-digit improvements from year to year (as Iola has done recently).



4. Parents have real choices in Allen County when it comes to educating their children. Iola, with the largest enrollment in the county, has fine arts facilities and sports options that aren't available elsewhere. Humboldt offers a rigorous education in a not-too-large, not-too-small environment. Marmaton Valley offers a close-knit, smaller student body for those that prefer

a more intimate educational setting.

In this section we had intended to present data provided by the Kansas State Department of Education detailing how 3rd and 11th graders in our local school districts have performed on reading and math tests. Space limitations have made that impossible. However, we think that may be beneficial, because the lack of information here will hopefully entice you to review the scores yourself on the Internet at <http://online.ksde.org/rcard>.

USD 256 - MARMATON VALLEY is Allen County's smallest school district, both in budget and number of pupils, but nevertheless a strong academic performer. The district is comprised of students from throughout eastern Allen County, including the towns of Bayard, Elsmore, Moran, Mildred and Savonburg. Both USD 256 school buildings, Marmaton Valley Elementary and Marmaton Valley High School, are located in Moran.

Like all Allen County districts, Marmaton Valley is losing students quickly as the county's overall population declines. Between the 1997-98 and 2007-08 school years Marmaton Valley lost 24% of its student body. That said, Marmaton Valley's enrollment has been helped for many years by attracting students from neighboring USD 257 (Iola/Gas/LaHarpe).

USD 256—Marmaton Valley

At A Glance

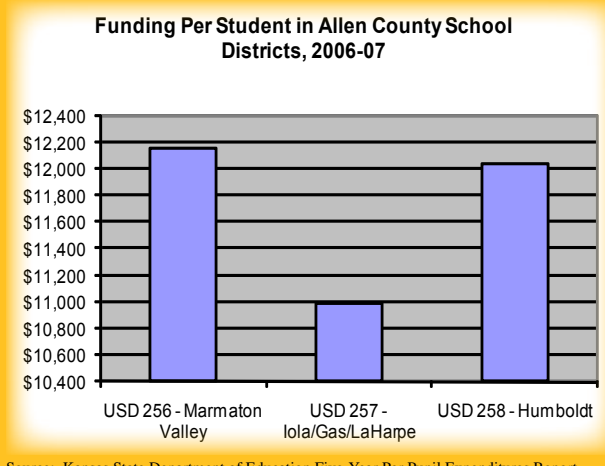
Enrollment (2007-2008)	344*
Number of Free/Reduced Lunch	163
Number of Special Education Students	43
Dropout Rate	0%
Number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers	32

*Note: Enrollment includes students living in the district who are counted in the district's enrollment but attend school in another district.

Performance on standardized tests in USD 256 has been strong and can be reviewed online at the Kansas State Department of Education website at <http://online.ksde.org/rcard>.

USD 257 - IOLA is Allen County's largest school district, both in budget and number of pupils. The district is comprised of students from the cities of Iola, Gas and LaHarpe, plus surrounding unincorporated areas. USD 257 operates one high school, one middle school and three elementary schools in Iola, plus one PK-3 elementary school in LaHarpe and the Crossroads Learning Center.

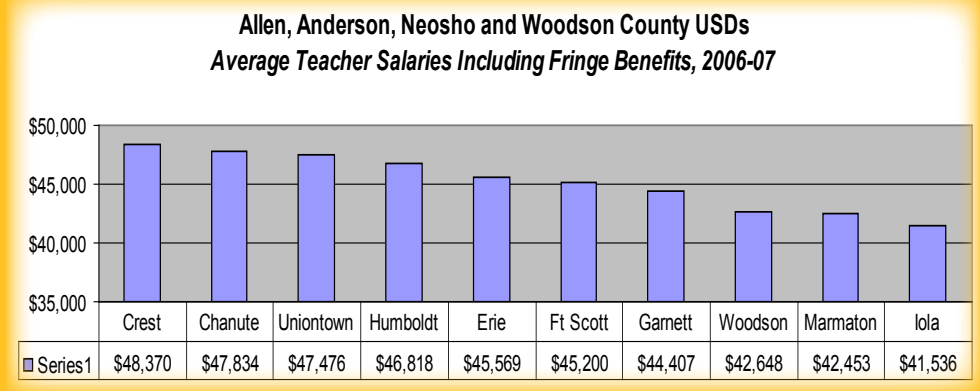
USD 257 has been on a long-term enrollment decline, as have all three districts, as the county loses population. Between the 1997-98 and 2007-08 school years USD 257 lost 14.4% of its student body, which is significantly less than the enrollment decline



Source: Kansas State Department of Education Five-Year Per Pupil Expenditures Report, March 2008



Humboldt Historical Museum



Source: Kansas State Department of Education, Average Teacher Salaries Report 2006-07, 2/22/08

in Marmaton Valley (-24%) but significantly more than the decline in Humboldt (-4.8%) over that period.

USD 257—Iola/Gas/LaHarpe

At A Glance

Enrollment (2007-2008)	1,522*
Number of Free/Reduced Lunch	773
Number of Special Education Students	270
Dropout Rate (2006-07)	1.8%
Number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers (2007-08)	117.5

*Note: Enrollment includes students living in the district who are counted in the district's enrollment but attend school in another district.

Performance on standardized tests in USD 257 has been mixed and can be reviewed online at the Kansas State Department of Education website at <http://online.ksde.org/rcard>.

USD 258 - HUMBOLDT is comprised mainly of students from the city of Humboldt and surrounding unincorporated areas in southern Allen County.

The district operates one high school, one middle school and one elementary school (including Humboldt Elementary Charter School), all located in the city of Humboldt.

USD 258—Humboldt

At A Glance

Enrollment (2007-2008)	521*
Number of Free/Reduced Lunch	236
Number of Special Education Students	81
Dropout Rate (2006-07)	0%
Number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers (2007-08)	46.5

*Note: Enrollment includes students living in the district who are counted in the district's enrollment but attend school in another district.

USD 258 has been on a long-term enrollment decline, as have all three districts, as the county loses population. After a large loss of students in the early 1990s the district has stabilized somewhat, with a decline between the 1997-98 and 2007-08 school years of 4.8%.

Performance on standardized tests in USD 258 has been strong. For more information, please go to the Kansas State Department of Education website at <http://online.ksde.org/rcard>.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Allen Community College, based in Iola with campuses in Burlingame and New Strawn, offers associates' degrees, certificates and vocational programs across a variety of disciplines. ACC enrolls 628 at its Iola campus, plus another 2,354 at sites throughout eastern Kansas (Fall 2008 figures).

ACC has been the fastest growing community college in Kansas this decade, thanks largely to aggressive promotion of online courses and outreach in the greater Topeka area. Although founded and based in Allen County, a significant majority of ACC's revenues come from credit hours taken outside of our county. *This diversification of students enables ACC to have the second-lowest community college mill levy in the state of Kansas (after Johnson County).*



Allen's student body includes a large number of "non-traditional" students, often mid-career workers wanting to complement their education with a specialized certificate or older adults working to complete their associate's degree. This diverse student body also helps to ensure a vital and active campus life and academic experience. Allen's Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Hispanic Center have particularly worked to make inroads in these populations and further diversify the school's student body.

Thrive intends to publish a detailed report on educational services in Allen County that will include additional information on Allen Community College. In the meantime, more information is available at Allen's website: www.allen.cc.ks.us.

LOOKING AHEAD

The general trends and statistics we have presented on a countywide basis give only one perspective on the challenges facing our community. The on-the-ground perspective of real people, living in real towns, will always be more compelling for most of us. Furthermore, while countywide trends are interesting, they don't answer the question most people want to know: "What's happening in MY town?"

The next section of this report is designed to give data about every town that we could find reliable data on, all presented with a focus on identifying problems and proposing solutions. Look for your community in the coming pages. See if our research fits with what you see and know. We want you to think about ways to improve the trends when they're bad, and to keep doing more of the same when they're good.

We also want you to tell us what is important in your community that we did NOT talk about. There are services and trends in all communities we didn't cover due to space limitations (crime, elder care and school test scores, in particular). Maybe we should have made those a priority. Let us know what you think so we can focus on those areas next time.

As you read, please also think about what you can do to help. We need all hands on deck in this effort, particularly including yours.

* * *

bassett

Bassett At a Glance

Population (2007)	21
Median Age (2000)	33.5
Residents with HS degree or higher	62.5%
Median Household Income (1999)	\$14,688
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	9.1%
Residents 18 years and older	86.4%
Residents Aged 65 or older	9.1%

Source: US Census Bureau



Lake Bassola, Bassett

BASSETT is Allen County's smallest incorporated city, with 21 residents calling the community home in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Bassett is located adjacent to Iola, south of Elm Creek, primarily east of Old US-169 and north of Gates Rubber.

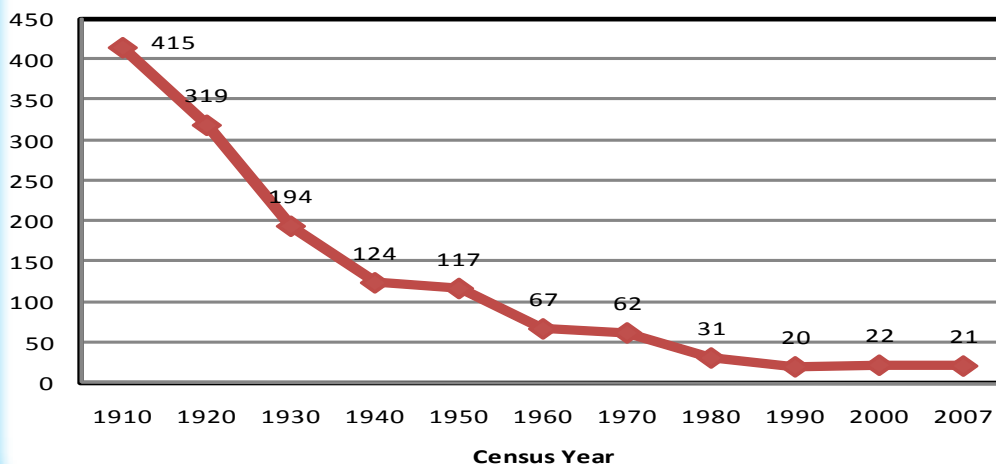
Although the community has only a fraction of its original population and commercial base, there still exists a fledgling sense of place and community in Bassett. Time will tell what the future holds for this small but proud community.

Born as a company "boom" town at the turn of the 20th century, Bassett has lost almost 95% of its population since 1910. Today Bassett remains as a close-knit community of approximately ten homes situated roughly between the former Lehigh Portland Cement Plant that was the impetus for the town's founding, and Gates Rubber, which occupies the site of many former community homes.



Old Lehigh Portland Cement Co, Bassett

Bassett Population 1910-2007



Source: US Census Bureau

carlyle

Carlyle At a Glance

Population (2007)	46*
Median Age (2000)	Not Available
Residents with HS degree or higher	Not Available
Median Household Income (1999)	Not Available
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	Not Available
Residents 18 years and older	Not Available
Residents Aged 65 or older	Not Available

*Sources: Thrive estimate based on 20 occupied homes with 2.31 persons per household; US Census Bureau estimate for Carlyle township



Rail Trail, Carlyle

is available in a larger town. It is difficult to predict Carlyle's future with any certainty, but with an attractive housing stock and its close proximity to shopping and restaurants, the town's quiet nature should allow the community a chance to maintain its identity and existence for at least another generation.



Main Street, Carlyle

CARLYLE, an unincorporated community of approximately 46 residents, is located four miles north of Iola. The town is one of Allen County's oldest communities, founded in 1857 by Presbyterian settlers migrating from Ohio. The community has seen ups and downs since its founding, but it has primarily been a small village from the start.

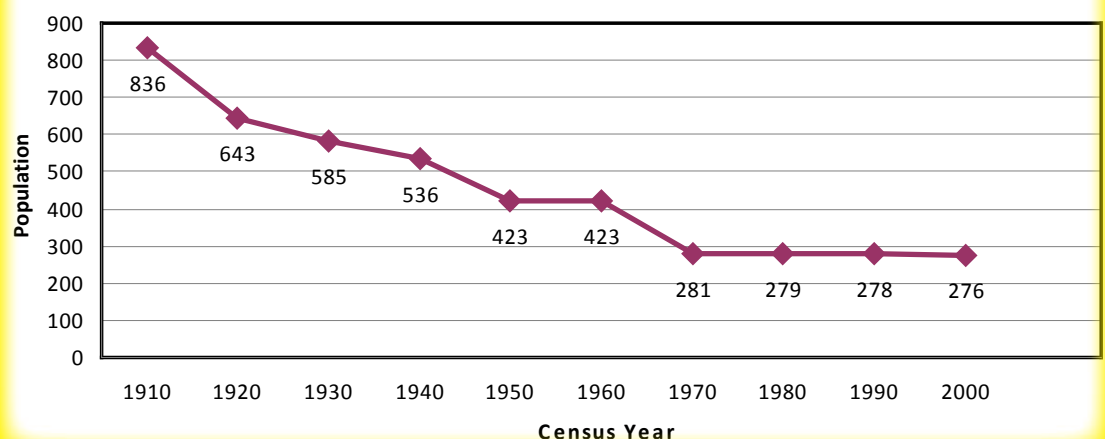
Today Carlyle remains as a neat and well-maintained community of roughly 20 homes. In 2008 the community received a boost when it was added as a stop on the Prairie Spirit Rail Trail. The Carlyle station offers rest rooms, a picnic area and parking adjacent to the trail on the former Santa Fe right-of-way.

Carlyle has a distinguished history of producing prominent Allen County residents, and it remains as one of the county's attractive and quiet villages offering a more relaxed pace of living than what



Carlyle Presbyterian Church, Carlyle

Carlyle Township Population 1910-2000



Source: US Census Bureau; NOTE: The US Census does not report population data for the town of Carlyle; township data is the only data available.

Elsmore At a Glance

Population (2007)	66
Median Age (2000)	51.5
Residents with HS degree or higher	80.9%
Median Household Income (2008)	\$38,174
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	4.1%
Residents 18 years and older	84.9%
Residents Aged 65 or older	30.1%

Source: US Census Bureau 2000 and 2007; ESRI

ELSMORE, a community of 66 residents in southeastern Allen County, is a proud farming center with a strong community spirit and identity.

Cultural norms of moderation and temperance passed down by the original Swedish settlers may contribute to this phenomenon. Or, Elsmore's geographical isolation may provide fewer temptations like fast food restaurants that tend to serve high-fat, high-calorie meals.

HEALTHCARE

Elsmore's aging population is at a disadvantage when it comes to easy access to health care. The nearest medical clinic (The Family Physicians) is located 9 miles away in Moran. Thrive is studying how to bring mobile healthcare options to Elsmore in an effort to ensure that those with mobility limitations are served.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Elsmore lacks public parks, playground equipment and adequate sidewalks. Creating walking paths around the town would not only encourage walking but also provide a safer avenue for pedestrians, while a small park would be an attractive amenity for current and prospective residents. Thrive is studying ways to improve these conditions in Elsmore and other small communities around the county.

HOUSING

An October 2008 study by Thrive counted 58 houses in Elsmore, of which at least 7 are abandoned. The community is almost entirely

comprised of single family homes, including mobile homes. Most single family homes in Elsmore are estimated to have been constructed prior to 1969.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The Elsmore Feed Store and nearby Master Bait and Liquor (yes, that's really the name) are the Elsmore area's primary commercial establishments. The nearest large-scale shopping and employment centers are in Humboldt, Iola or Chanute.

CHALLENGES

Elsmore has Allen County's highest median age—51.5—which has serious implications for the community's future. With such a high median age it is likely that the community will experience a rapid and sudden drop in population due to death in the next two decades. Elsmore should consider offering financial incentives to attract new residents that can help broaden the town's tax base and increase the likelihood the community will survive.

And as with several Allen County communities, geography is a serious challenge for Elsmore, particularly as it relates to accessing healthcare. As residents age and fuel costs increase it will become increasingly important to identify ways to bring healthcare services to Elsmore residents.

OPPORTUNITIES

For many years Elsmore has had a relatively low local property tax rate. While this minimizes costs for residents, it also limits the town's ability to invest in services that would make it more attractive to new residents. Elsmore has an opportunity to raise more revenue to improve its attractiveness as a community *if that is what the community decides is a priority.*

Elsmore's greatest asset is its people. These residents have hope for the future, and they are willing to work hard and fight for their community. With a concrete vision for their future and the hard work of its people, Elsmore has the opportunity to survive for another 120 years.

Like its "twin" city of Savonburg, Elsmore was settled originally by Swedish immigrants and has always been based, economically and socially, around agriculture and the railroad. Now in its 120th year, Elsmore is a neat and tidy community of well-tended homes and civic-minded neighbors.

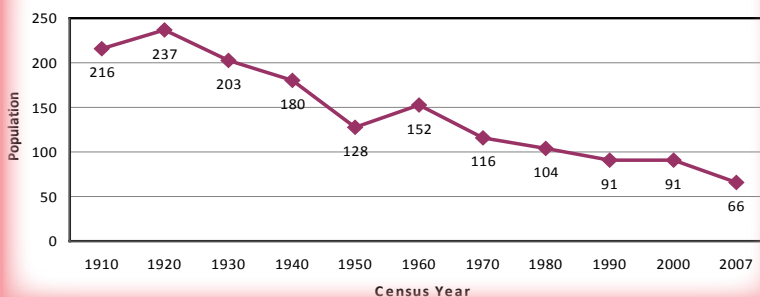
Public life in Elsmore is centered on the town's community center, which boasts a large gymnasium and stage, and the town's religious congregations.

Elsmore's population has followed the track of most Allen County communities in recent years, with a sudden and dramatic drop in population beginning in 2000.

HEALTH

There are no statistics detailing the health conditions of Elsmore residents. Anecdotal evidence suggests, though, that Elsmore is similar to neighboring Savonburg in that it appears to have lower rates of obesity and smoking compared to other Allen County towns.

Elsmore Population 1910-2007



Source: US Census Bureau



Elsmore Days Parade

gas

Gas At a Glance

Population (2007)	541
Median Age (2000)	37.5
Residents with HS degree or higher	83.1%
Median Household Income (2008)	\$45,375
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	5.9%
Residents 18 years and older	73.4%
Residents Aged 65 or older	12.9%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI

GAS, a community of almost 550 residents located between Iola and LaHarpe, is another Allen County community borne of the discovery of abundant natural gas just before the turn of the 20th century.

In recent years Gas has emerged as a community determined to grow, with recent annexations and new housing development contributing significantly to the community's tax base and population. On its surface Gas appears to be primarily a bedroom community for neighboring Iola, but in fact the community has a strong sense of identity and spirit of independence that drives its civic affairs.

Gas' population has risen and fallen at a dramatically different rate than most other Allen County communities. Consistent with every single town in Allen County, Gas' population has fallen since 2000, but not as rapidly as its neighbors. Furthermore, this drop in population followed an increase of over 10% in the 1990s. With its population of 541 (2007) Gas has overtaken Moran (pop. 526) as Allen County's fourth-largest city.

Given its recent growth in population, the addition of attractive quality of life amenities and the construction of new homes to increase the community's tax base, Gas'

prospects appear to be stronger than most Allen County communities of its size.

HEALTH

Detailed health statistics do not exist for Gas. That said, by virtue of its location, its proximity to fast food and having a less homogenous population than towns like Elsmore or Savonburg we estimate that the health conditions of Gas residents are similar to those of the county and surrounding area as a whole (as determined by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment). A lack of physical activity, obesity and cigarette smoking are all contributing factors that lead to poorer overall health conditions among residents. Furthermore, the availability and prevalence of fast food within easy access to Gas is a dietary factor that can further contribute to reduced health conditions among Gas residents.

HEALTHCARE

Gas has no stand-alone medical, chiropractic, dental or optometry clinic of any kind. However, comprehensive medical services are easily accessed in nearby Iola, three miles west of Gas.

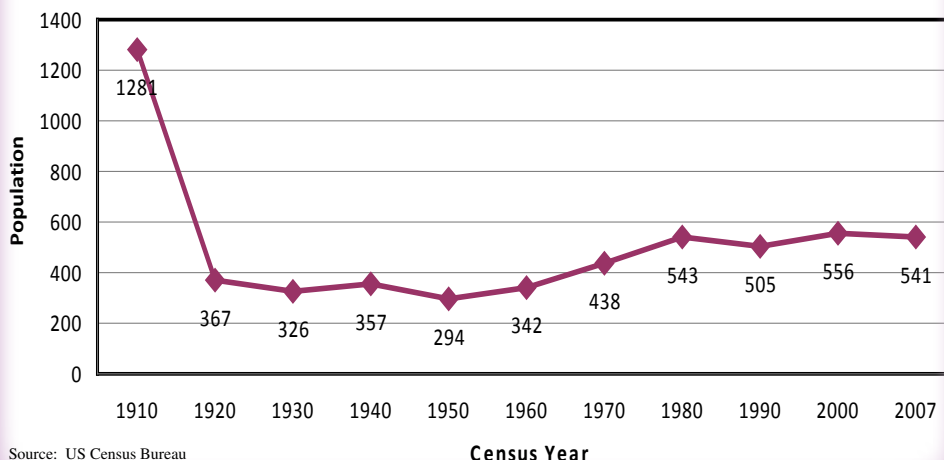
For senior citizens and others with limitations that restrict their mobility these medical clinics are still out of reach. Transportation to healthcare remains a major challenge not only within Gas, but for communities throughout Allen County.

PARKS AND RECREATION

One of Gas' most prominent features is the Walter and Helen Fees Memorial Park, which was constructed in 2005 on land donated by the Fees family to the city of Gas. This spacious park, which boasts some of the newest and most attractive playground equipment in the county, is a frequent destination for families from Gas as well as those driving through the community on US-54.

Gas also has a playground space at the Crossroads Learning Center (the former Gas Elementary) in the northern part of the community, which provides another option for children and

Gas Population 1910-2007





Walter & Helen Fees Memorial Park, Gas

families. Sidewalks are relatively rare in Gas, which unfortunately forces walkers to use the street when walking for recreation or to specific destinations.

The city of Gas has no organized recreation department, but the community's proximity to lola and LaHarpe gives recreational options that aren't available in the community itself.

HOUSING

2008 data provided by ESRI show 336 housing units in Gas, which represents an increase of 3.3% since the year 2000. The average home value in 2008 is \$99,991, an increase of 21% since 2000. Though the Census Bureau found that 48 homes in Gas in the year 2000 were built prior to 1939, the community has one of the newest and most habitable housing stocks in Allen County, with more than 50% of units having been constructed since 1970.

The availability of good quality affordable housing is critical to the well-being of any community. Gas is fortunate to have a better overall housing stock than nearly any community in Allen County, a fact which provides the community an opportunity to, at a minimum, maintain its population around existing levels.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Gas has several retail establishments, including a restaurant and convenience store, that provide services and jobs for the community. There

are no large scale employers in Gas, which means that the vast majority of residents travel to nearby lola for employment.

CHALLENGES

Gas is better off than most Allen County communities, but it faces a challenge that is unique in Allen County: the challenge of managing growth. The city's aging infrastructure will require more and more resources to be maintained at existing levels, while annexing new properties that generate new tax revenue will also require maintenance and the delivery of new city services. Establishing and adhering to a sensible growth policy that does not overly burden existing residents will be important to Gas in the coming years.



Gas Church, Gas

Gas also faces the challenge of being tied heavily to lola's economic fortunes. The ripple effects of economic conditions in lola are serious for Gas. This leaves the community somewhat at the mercy of its larger neighbor's fortunes, which has served the town well in recent years but which is not a good long-term approach to community sustainability. Developing a larger jobs base within Gas itself can help to lessen this dependence.

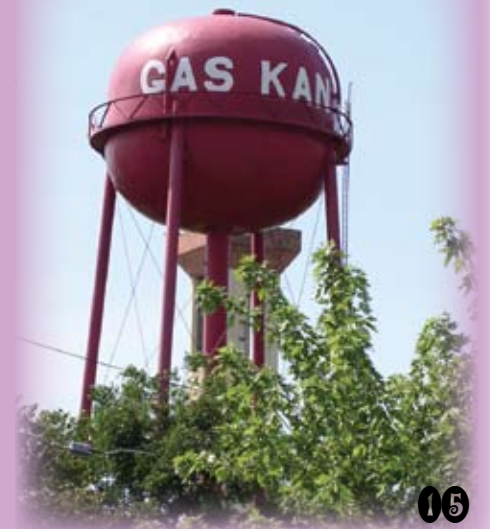
OPPORTUNITIES

Thanks to its proximity to the Allen County Country Club

and an abundance of beautiful topography around its city limits, Gas and the surrounding area has become an attractive location for new home construction. These new rooftops improve not only the community's tax base, but also increase the community's population. Achieving a "critical mass" of new home development provides Gas the opportunity to position itself as THE place for residential construction in this part of the county.

Gas' physical attractiveness also presents opportunities for the community to grow. The quality of life amenities in and around the city—a first-class public park, nice playground equipment, a country club—provide the type of amenities that have been consistently shown to attract new residents and businesses. Gas has an opportunity to position itself as a community that offers a higher standard of living than other communities if it chooses to leverage its existing assets and construct new ones.

Gas' fortunes are bright, which is rare for most communities of 550 people in rural Kansas. With continued investment in itself, and a smart approach to growth, the sky is the limit for Gas.



Humboldt At a Glance

Population (2007)	1,854
Median Age (2000)	40.5
Residents with HS degree or higher	82.8%
Median Household Income (2008)	\$37,846
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	5.9%
Residents 18 years and older	76.4%
Residents Aged 65 or older	20.4%

Source: US Census 2000 and 2007 estimate; ESRI 2008 forecast from census data.

HUMBOLDT, an historic community of 1,854 people (Census 2007 estimate) stands proudly as a progressive town of civic-minded residents, stately homes and strong religious congregations.

Located eight miles south of Iola, Humboldt is a self-sufficient community that maintains its own retail and industrial base while also providing significant numbers of workers for manufacturing and service employers in neighboring communities.

Humboldt residents are proud of their community. They take particular pride in the quality of their school system, which consistently performs in the upper tier of school districts in Kansas. Significant investments in educational facilities have been made in recent years, including the 2006 issuance of bonds to construct the Humboldt Community Fieldhouse, which provides a first-class fitness venue for students and the general public.

Another major quality of life investment made by Humboldt was the 2008 approval by voters to issue a quarter-cent sales tax to finance improvements to the community swimming pool. Furthermore, the City of Humboldt

has taken an aggressive approach in targeting nuisance properties and code violations in an effort to improve the community's overall appearance, a move which has been welcomed by many.

Much is going well in Humboldt. The community has its challenges, however. The community's housing stock is aging, with 67.5% of homes constructed before 1969. Humboldt's population is falling quickly, with a 7.3% drop since 2000. And the median age in Humboldt is 40.5 years, which is slightly higher than the county median (38.8) and 15% higher than the national median age. This means that the community is likely to experience a sudden and drastic drop in population in coming years if new families are not recruited to town to replace those who will die or move elsewhere.

Humboldt residents have opted to fight these forces. Through groups ranging from the CIA

(Citizens in Action) to the Lions Club to Rotary to GALS FCE to the Humboldt Rebuilding the Public Square Committee, Humboldt is determined to be a small town that not only survives, but grows and thrives in the 21st century.

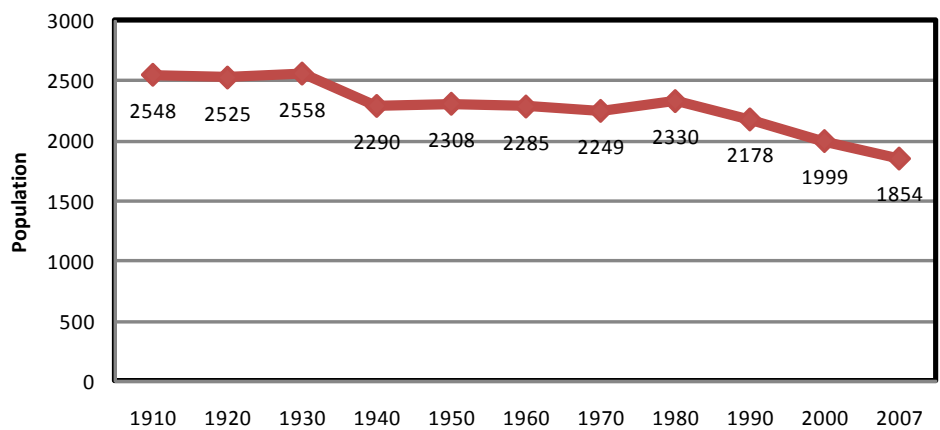
HEALTH

Very little detailed statistical data exists about the specific health conditions of Humboldt residents. Based on discussions with medical providers and firsthand observation, health conditions in Humboldt appear to be similar to those of residents throughout Allen County, however. Obesity ranks as the community's most obvious health challenge, with heart disease, diabetes and smoking negatively impacting the quality of life of many Humboldt residents.

Childhood obesity is a growing problem in Humboldt and throughout Allen County, with less physically active children choosing television or video games over riding bikes or the playground. These sedentary lifestyles, combined with poor diets, have resulted in a generation of children that maintain unhealthy weights and whose life expectancies will be diminished as a result.

In response to these conditions Humboldt has aggressively

Humboldt Population 1910-2007



Source: US Census Bureau

confronted the challenge of improving public health among ALL members of their community. Through a grant funded by the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City the "Healthy Humboldt" initiative has established a unique school/community partnership to educate students and the broader community about healthy lifestyles while providing an array of new fitness and exercise programs for residents.



Healthy Humboldt BMI Testing, Humboldt

Healthy Humboldt's programming includes weightlifting and exercise classes targeted to women; the "Walktober" program to encourage (and measure) walking; and Senior YogaStretch. The tremendous demand for these programs, and its eager acceptance by Humboldt students and residents, has far exceeded even the greatest hopes of its organizers. According to Healthy Humboldt Health Education Coordinator Erin Kepley, "Our community has needed programming like this for a long time. We will make a huge impact with Healthy Humboldt if everyone jumps on board and takes advantage of the opportunities this grant brings to improve public health."

Healthy Humboldt has been successful for a number of reasons. First, it bridges the gap between school and community, which helps provide a critical mass of participants that would be difficult to achieve with only one partner. Second, thanks to funding provided by B&W Trailer Hitches, Inc. of Humboldt the

program has purchased a new BMI (Body Mass Index) machine to easily track and measure the progress of its participants. And third, Healthy Humboldt has a strong and effective leader, and the political support of school and community officials, to build it into a model program. The result has been an initiative that in a few short months has directly touched over one-third of all Humboldt residents and planted the seeds for longer, healthier and more productive lives.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

By most statistical measures, Humboldt does not have enough doctors or dentists for a community of 1,854 residents. Yet the community is fortunate to have a base of medical providers that have invested in Humboldt, giving the community an advantage over many other small towns in rural areas.

Primary Care

Primary care services are relatively limited in Humboldt. The Ashley Clinic of Chanute operates a clinic in downtown Humboldt that provides services through a Physician's Assistant (PA) on weekdays. This is the only stand-alone primary care clinic in Humboldt. The Ashley Clinic includes the Humboldt Pharmacy, the sole pharmacy in Humboldt.



Humboldt Library & Community Room

Dental Care

One dentist, Dr. Sean McReynolds, provides full dental services at his clinic in downtown Humboldt. Dr. McReynolds is a second generation in his family to practice dentistry

in Humboldt, having joined his father, Max, in practice in 1990. McReynolds has remodeled and expanded his practice multiple times, including in the past year, and he has a staff of three dental hygienists to serve their patients.

Optometry

Dr. Robert Smith has provided optometry services to Humboldt for over 25 years through his clinic on Bridge Street. Dr. Smith is the only Allen County optometrist to maintain two offices: one in Humboldt and one in Iola.

Chiropractors

Humboldt is also served by three chiropractors, Drs. David Weilert, Stephen Weilert, and Robert Weilert from their Bridge Street clinic. The Weilert Chiropractic Clinic represents another multigenerational family commitment to healthcare in Humboldt, with Dr. Robert Weilert joining his father and uncle in 2004 as the third generation of Weilerts to practice in Humboldt.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Community recreation services in Humboldt are coordinated by the Humboldt Recreation Commission, an independent body which receives its funding through a levy issued by USD 258. The Recreation Commission is led by Director Larry Mendoza and supported by many community volunteers.

The Commission also maintains the community's two baseball fields, Sweatt and Manion Fields, plus an additional field that is under construction.

Humboldt has approximately 57 acres of parkland distributed between the city's six main parks: Camp Hunter, Cannon Park, City Square Park, River Park, the swimming pool complex, and the Sweatt and Manion baseball complex.

Humboldt voters approved in 2008 the issuance of bonds to expand and improve their city swimming pool. These improvements, which will be completed in 2009, will expand access for seniors and those with mobility limitations through the addition of a zero-depth entry, construction of a new ADA accessible bathhouse, and a 1,500 square foot addition to the pool.

And finally, the Humboldt Community Fieldhouse, a \$3.5 million facility completed in 2007, is the crown jewel of Humboldt's recreation infrastructure. The Fieldhouse boasts a competition gymnasium, indoor elevated walking track, two cardio rooms and a weight room. The facility is made available to the general public through a \$5 lifetime fee, and it receives heavy use by students and the public alike.

HOUSING

The availability of good quality affordable housing is a major challenge to Humboldt. There are approximately 926 housing units in Humboldt, of which approximately 10% are vacant, and the vast majority of which were built prior to 1969. Communities with aging housing stocks must proactively attack housing deterioration before it spreads and damages entire neighborhoods and property values. In the past two years the City of Humboldt has undertaken an aggressive program to raze substandard homes and abate code violations, with more than two dozen substandard structures being razed in this period.

Humboldt has had relatively few houses built in recent years. The annual rate at which houses are being built is exceeded by the number torn down, with three permits issued in 2008 for new homes and 17 houses razed.

Efforts are underway in Humboldt to identify opportunities to build new housing, in conjunction with recruiting new residents to town (or getting former residents to return). This effort includes a survey conducted by the Rebuilding the Public Square Housing Action Team. This survey showed that there is interest from some who work in Humboldt but live elsewhere in moving to Humboldt if the right opportunity presented itself.

Humboldt offers tremendous quality of life advantages, particularly including education. When combined with the right package of incentives the community has an opportunity over the next decade to reverse the decline in housing units and attract new residents.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Humboldt's economy is anchored by two key manufacturers: The Monarch Cement Company, and B&W Trailer Hitches, Inc. These employers dominate the economic landscape of Humboldt and are the community's largest private sector employers. Yet while these manufacturers employ a large number of Humboldt (and other Allen and Neosho county) residents, 45.7% of Humboldt

residents are employed in "white collar" occupations, including management, financial services, sales, or administrative support.

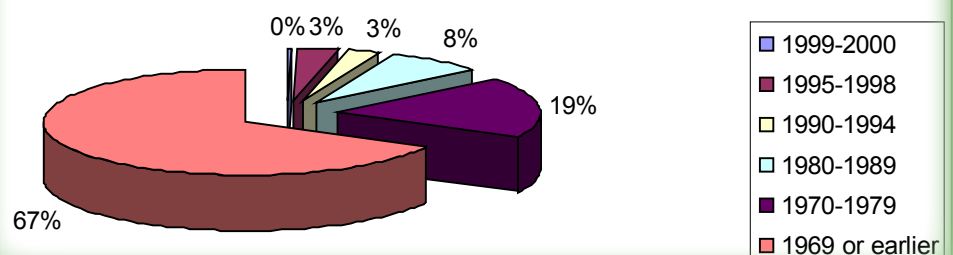
CHALLENGES

It could be argued that Humboldt's biggest challenge now is to sustain and grow the momentum that has brought so much positive change to the community over the past two years. This enthusiasm among residents, if properly channeled and sustained, is the fuel needed to meaningfully tackle the community's problems, but sustaining it over the long-term will require focus, determination and stamina.

Housing lies at the root of many problems in Humboldt. With the construction and rehabilitation of homes Humboldt has an opportunity to attract new residents that can add to the momentum and help reverse the community's declining population. That said, wages in Humboldt are generally too low to justify the construction of large new subdivisions without significant public incentives. With the current economic slowdown it is possible, however, that the community could lure private developers to Humboldt if the right package of incentives were assembled.

Retaining and recruiting new business to Humboldt has been a longstanding challenge. In order to maintain itself as a self-sufficient community Humboldt must be able to offer a full array

Humboldt Housing Units by Year Built (2000)



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing

of retail services to serve its residents. This is difficult, though, because the community does not have the volume of customers to enable many stores to compete, on a price perspective, against large volume discount retailers in Iola and Chanute. Encouraging Humboldt residents to support local merchants, particularly by stressing the service advantages that local retailers offer, is critically important to allowing Humboldt to maintain its existing retailers and to attract new ones.

Finally, citizen health, and the availability of healthcare, will remain a major challenge for Humboldt into the foreseeable future. Efforts like *Healthy Humboldt* must identify sustainable, long-term funding sources if they are to remain viable. Investments must continue to be made in recreational and walking infrastructure, including sidewalks, in order to encourage healthy lifestyles. And Humboldt would be well-served to provide incentives for the construction of a new Allen County-based medical

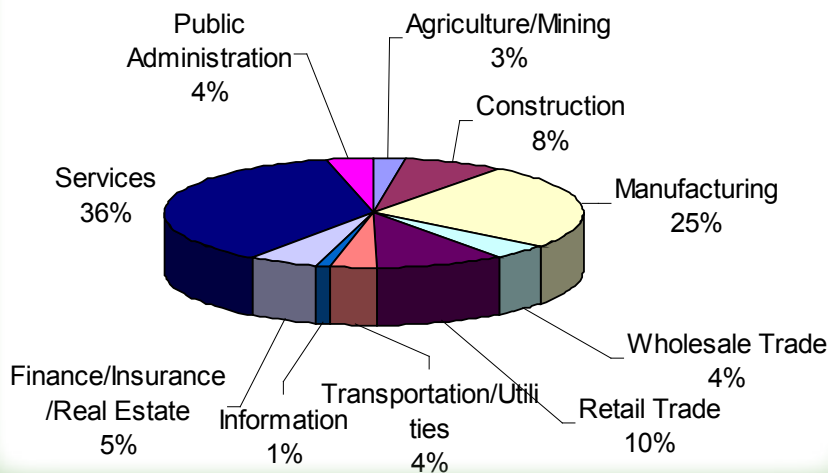


Humboldt, KS

out, Humboldt has discovered that geography is actually its greatest opportunity. Being centrally located between two larger communities gives Humboldt an excellent opportunity to provide a major employment base for Iola and Chanute industries and businesses without bearing the financial burden of providing the incentives to recruit these employers. If Humboldt is successful in developing new housing it stands to compete well against surrounding towns in recruiting young families moving to this area to work in Iola or Chanute, thanks to the performance of its

strongest in the county, if not the region. It seems likely that the community could recruit some portion of those who grew up in Humboldt but left for other opportunities back “home” if it engages in a concerted effort to do so. There are many advantages to living in Humboldt—access to high quality schools, a low cost of living, very little crime—that make a return potentially attractive for some, particularly retirees. *(Attracting retirees in larger numbers may require new and expanded medical services in Humboldt and hospital facility improvements in Iola, however).*

Humboldt Employment By Industry (2008)



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing; ESRI 2008 forecast

clinic with a doctor available on a full-time basis.

OPPORTUNITIES

Conventional wisdom might say that Humboldt’s greatest weakness is geography. As it turns

school system. With modern and well-maintained highways there are few disincentives to living in one community and working in another.

Humboldt is blessed with a sense of community that is among the

And finally, Humboldt is fortunate to have strong leadership at a time when it desperately needs it. Humboldt’s Mayor and City Council, in conjunction with its city administrator, have made difficult, and often controversial, decisions about public infrastructure investments, code enforcement, and city services. These difficult decisions have come at a cost, but have been made out of a belief that investing in one’s community is necessary in order for the community to survive. It is repeated often at City Council meetings that “we don’t want to leave this burden on our children,” which is a refreshing approach that is not heard often from elected officials. With this forward-only approach Humboldt has a fighting chance not just to grow, but to thrive.

Iola At a Glance

Population (2007)	5,843
Median Age (2000)	35.9
Residents with HS degree or higher	82.2%
Household Median Income (2007)	\$37,803
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	7.2%
Residents 18 years and older	74.5%
Residents Aged 65 or older	18.1%

Source: US Census Bureau

IOLA is a regional industrial and economic hub not only within Allen County, but also southeast Kansas.

Located eight miles north of Humboldt and twelve miles west of Moran, Iola is the population and jobs center of the county, with 44% of residents living in the city of Iola, and more than half of all Allen Countians living within a three mile radius of Iola.

As the county seat Iola is the home to a majority of the public sector jobs in the county, and it is likewise Allen County's service and industrial center, with a total of 3,625 jobs based in Iola and the areas immediately surrounding. Iola is also the primary shopping center for Allen County, southern Anderson County and Woodson

County, with local and "big box" retailers attracting large numbers of shoppers to town.

Iola has the county's strongest economy and largest population, but the community is nevertheless faced with serious challenges. Perhaps most importantly, Iola's population is dropping at a rapid rate. At the beginning of this decade the U.S. Census showed 6,302 residents. Just 7 years later Iola was down to 5,843, a decrease of 7.3%, or approximately 1% per year.

Iola's status as a retail center comprised primarily of local merchants has diminished over the past 15 years, with the closing of the community's last standalone shoe store and hardware store, the loss of longstanding, locally-

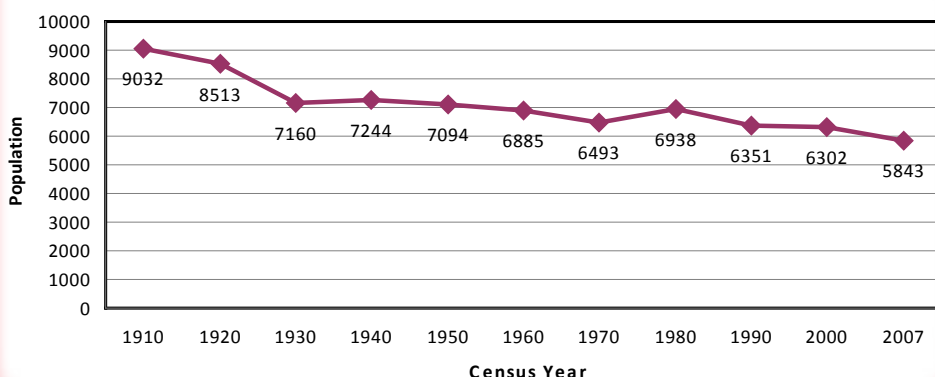
owned clothing stores, and the realignment of the Iola square away from retail stores and toward office and non-profit uses. Iola faces the prospect of several retirements of long-standing merchants in the coming years as well.

While local ownership of retail stores in Iola is significantly less common than it was even 20 years ago, Iola's retail sector remains the envy of many communities. A 1% local sales tax generates over \$1.1 million annually (50% for street improvements and 50% for the general fund) to fund street improvements and general operations of the city of Iola. Retail is an important magnet that brings both dollars and jobs to Iola.

Iolans are proud of their community. They spring to action when help is needed, as demonstrated by the enormous outpouring of assistance that came from local residents during the Great Flood of 2007. Iolans are strong supporters of the arts, with a city band, the Iola Area Symphony Orchestra, the Iola Community Theatre and the Bowlus Fine Arts Center playing central roles in the lives of many residents. And they are proud of their status as an important industrial center for this region, thanks to the efforts of local businesspeople and groups like Iola Industries and the Iola Area Chamber of Commerce.

Iola has had its share of difficult times, particularly recently. But the community remains determined to hold onto its status as a leading town within southeast Kansas. With the

Iola Population 1910-2007



Source: US Census Bureau

right leadership and a concrete vision for where it wants to go, it can happen.



Jefferson School Carnival, Iola.

HEALTH

With a median age of 35.9, Iola residents have the third-lowest median age in Allen County and are only slightly above the national median age of 35.3 years.

Given the correlation between age and health it is possible that Iola residents may be, on average, somewhat healthier than the average Allen County resident. That said, we believe that Iola residents do not differ significantly from the average resident of any community in the county, with obesity and smoking ranking as major health challenges, and heart disease, diabetes and lower respiratory diseases all posing major challenges to community health and well-being.

Obesity, as with most communities in the county, is a growing problem in Iola. This is particularly true among children, many of whom increasingly choose video games and television over more traditional physical activities like riding bikes or playing on playgrounds. Sedentary lifestyles, and the

poor diets that often accompany them, sentence many children to shorter, less productive and less fulfilling lives.

Though we lack city-level statistics, cigarette smoking is prevalent in Iola, and there are no restrictions--beyond those in state law--on smoking in establishments that serve the public, namely restaurants and bars. Smokeless (chewing) tobacco use is also prevalent, particularly among high school students and other youth. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment reports that 23.3% of residents in Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Linn and Woodson counties smoke cigarettes; we estimate that Allen County generally, and Iola specifically, are at or above this figure.

Iola has the most recreation and wellness facilities in the county, 100% of the MDs, and DOs and the county's only hospital. Yet Iola has not made a focused community effort to tackle the challenges of improving public health and encouraging healthy lifestyles through an effort like the *Healthy Humboldt* Initiative. (Thrive is a focused community effort to improve public health and is headquartered in Iola, but it is a *countywide* organization that works in all communities, not just Iola). The substantial infrastructure and expertise that exists in Iola could—and should—be applied toward addressing health challenges in that community.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Iola is the healthcare center of Allen County, with Allen County

Hospital and all medical doctors (MDs) and doctors of osteopathy (DOs) in the county practicing in Iola, along with a majority of the county's dentists and optometrists.

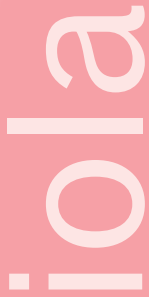
Primary Care

Allen County Hospital is a 25-bed critical access facility comprised of 14 doctors on staff that include primary care physicians, specialists in general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, radiology and urology. In 2008 ACH employed 155 full and part-time staff, making it one of the larger employers in Iola. As a Critical Access Hospital ACH has the potential for enhanced revenues from Medicare, which provides improved financial viability for hospitals in rural areas like ours.

The impact of Allen County Hospital on the county's economy is tremendous. The Kansas Rural Health Options Project (2006) identified the hospital sector in Allen County as having an employment multiplier of 1.57, which means that for every job at Allen County Hospital another .57 jobs are created in other businesses and industries in Allen County. Using this approach, with 155 employees ACH's actual impact on area employment is 243 jobs ($155 \times 1.57 = 243$).



Farm City Days, Iola



On the economic side, ACH has an income multiplier of 1.31, meaning that for every dollar of income generated by the hospital another \$.31 is generated in other businesses and industries in Allen County. Using 2003 figures, ACH's \$5.4 million payroll, with a 1.31 economic multiplier, had a total impact on Iola and Allen County of \$7.14 million dollars, including \$2.3 million in retail sales. As a private hospital operator HCA also pays property taxes to Allen County.

ACH is owned by Allen County but leased to HCA, the nation's largest privately owned hospital chain, and it plays a major role in the Iola community both as a healthcare provider and economic engine. Under the leadership of new CEO Joyce Heismeyer ACH has taken highly positive steps to regain its status within Iola and the county as a leading voice for healthcare and healthy lifestyles. The hospital is profitable, and it is actively recruiting new medical professionals to Allen County to expand the range of services it offers. Discussions are underway within the community about the potential for a major renovation/expansion project or construction of an entirely new facility.

Private Physicians

Primary care services are also provided by two private medical clinics in Iola: The Family Physicians, with four practicing physicians, and

Preferred Medical Associates, with two practicing physicians. The Family Physicians, in conjunction with Iola Pharmacy, recently completed a new \$3.6 million facility in East Iola to better serve their patients. Preferred Medical Associates is currently recruiting a new physician to replace Dr. Richard Hull, who retired this year. Both clinics provide a full array of primary care services, including obstetrics, and attract a patient base from Allen County and beyond.

Iola-based practicing physicians in 2008 are:

- Rebecca Lohman, MD
- Glen Singer, MD
- Tim Spears, DO
- Wesley Stone, DO
- Earl Walter, DO
- Brian Wolfe, MD

Dentistry

Iola is served by a total of five dentists, four in private practice and one through the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas' (CHCSEK) Iola dental clinic:

- Jerry Chambers, DDS
- Vernon Lee, DDS
- Richard Potts, DDS
- Kelly Richardson, DDS
- John Travers, DDS

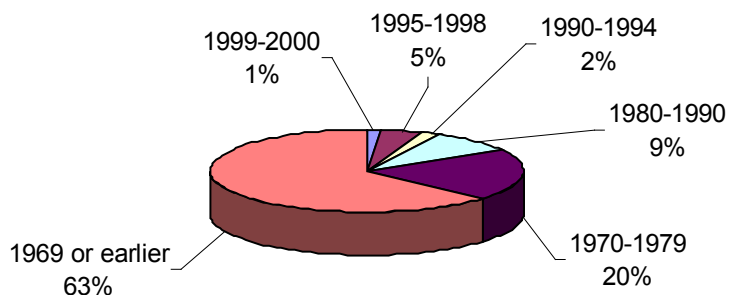
Improving oral health is a key priority of Thrive Allen County. The Thrive 2006 *Allen County Needs Assessment* showed that 27% of Southeast Kansas residents had not visited a dentist in the past 2 years. We estimate that these statistics have been improved for the children of Allen County through the annual dental screening conducted by the county's dentists in conjunction with the SAFE BASE program.

Medicaid is now accepted at a majority of the county's dental practices, which increases access to dental care for children. And finally, the CHCSEK's Iola dental clinic (at the Family Physicians/Iola Pharmacy clinic) provides a vital link in serving the uninsured and indigent, regardless of age.

Optometry

There are two optometry practices in Iola: Dr. Robert Smith, and Iola Vision Source. These practices provide a full array of optometry services to their patients. Iola Vision Source is also a participant in the See to Learn program, which provides free eye exams to children 3 years of age regardless of whether a family has insurance.

Iola Housing Units by Year Built (2000)



Source: US Census Bureau

Iola's practicing optometrists in 2008 are:

- Douglas Donnelly, OD
- Matthew Skahan, OD
- Robert Smith, OD

Chiropractors

Iola has three chiropractic practices:

- Dr. Larry A. Buck
- Dr. Steven Leonard
- Dr. Cary Minor

Iola's chiropractic practices serve large numbers of patients from Iola and a multi-county region, and are an important part of Iola's health care infrastructure.

Mental Health

Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center (SEKMHC), established in 1961, is based in Iola and serves as the mental health safety net for the poor and underserved in 6 counties, including Allen. SEKMHC's mission is to provide, advocate, and coordinate quality mental health care services and programs for people in its service area. The Center and its staff are currently pursuing an expansion of programs to include mental health services targeted to the 18% of Allen County residents who are 65 or older.



Public Health

The Iola office of the SEK Multi-County Health Department provides a variety of reduced-cost health services including

flu shots, immunizations, blood pressure and blood glucose checks, physical exams and family planning. Established in 1972, the Iola office also provides services for children with special health care needs and acts as a "safety net" to ensure that uninsured and underinsured residents' basic health needs are met.

Pharmacy

Iola is served by two pharmacies: The Iola Pharmacy and Wal-Mart Pharmacy.

Iola Pharmacy, with two Iola stores and a pharmacy at Allen County Hospital, has emerged as a major regional pharmaceutical provider. Wal-Mart Pharmacy is located inside Iola's Wal-Mart store and provides full prescription services and the volume discounts of a large national retailer.

Both pharmacies have a reach well beyond Iola, serving a trade area throughout this region.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Iola is fortunate to have over 100 acres of public parks, indoor and outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, a two mile walking trail, a variety of recreation programs and annual public funding through the City of Iola to support these important quality of life services.

The City of Iola Parks Department maintains the city's five parks (East Iola, Cofachique, Meadowbrook, North Walnut Road and Riverside), the local portion of the Prairie Spirit Rail Trail, and other public space throughout Iola. The

newly established Recreation Department provides a variety of recreation services ranging from basketball leagues to coloring contests to yoga classes and is an important part of Iola's quality of life infrastructure.

Unlike many communities, Iola has the resources to maintain a full-time recreation department that coordinates recreational programming for the community, and a relative abundance of facilities available throughout the city. Recent moves by the City of Iola have elevated the prominence and importance of the city's recreation department, which gives hope for an expansion of services, better coordination of facilities and a more robust menu of rec services, year-round, for all residents.

It is also important to note that recreation services in Iola, as in most communities, tend to be focused around summer activities for children. This limits the ability of all residents to achieve an important health goal: year-round exercise. And, while Iola has several gymnasiums and other public spaces, the lack of low-impact exercise venues, particularly including a public indoor pool, stands as another area for improvement that could not only help existing residents stay healthy, but also help attract new residents and businesses to Iola.

HOUSING

The availability of good quality affordable housing presents a major obstacle to stabilizing Iola's falling population, just

lola

as it does in communities across Allen County. Accounting for the destruction of nearly 100 homes in the Great Flood of 2007 there are approximately 3,250 housing

units in lola, with an average household size of 2.29 people.

Approximately 1,100 of lola's housing units were built prior to 1939, with many of these likely being built in the first decade of the 20th century. lola has a higher percentage of renters than other communities in the county, with 30% of lolans renting, 60% owning their homes and a 10% vacancy rate.

A 10% vacancy rate would normally suggest an abundance of housing options. In fact, this rate reflects the overall poor quality of housing in lola rather than a lack of demand. These vacant units, many of which are "smelter houses" built for industrial workers at the turn of the 20th century, are typically small, energy inefficient homes that lack modern amenities that would make them attractive to buyers in today's market.

A further complication is that the economics of new home construction make it difficult to construct new units on a large scale in a community where 33% of households have incomes of less than \$25,000 per year. That said, some limited home construction by private

developers has been underway in lola in recent years, and the announcement in 2008 that a private developer would construct 30 single family rentals targeted to workers at 80% of the area median income (AMI) at Cedarbrook was greeted enthusiastically by lola officials and businesses.

More must be done, however. Aggressive and thorough code enforcement is a critical element in convincing builders to invest in existing neighborhoods. lola would be well-served to follow Humboldt's lead in aggressively citing code violations and razing properties where violations are not addressed by their owners.

Incentives to construct new housing are important as well. lola wisely pursued state grant dollars to build the infrastructure required for the Cedarbrook development; this enables the developer to build more units than had originally been planned. The City of lola also refunds almost the entire cost of razing dilapidated houses to owners who apply in advance and agree to build a new house on the site within one year. Other incentives the city could consider include:

- Purchasing and "bundling" residential properties and selling them below cost to developers that would be required to build new homes on them within a specified period (i.e., 12 months). The property taxes generated by the new homes would, over time, cover the

gap between what the city paid and the discounted price to the developer. This same approach is used by cities nationwide to incentivize new home construction, and has been used locally in industrial recruitment.

- Refunding the cost of the city razing dilapidated homes *regardless* of whether the current owner had signed up prior to the home being razed.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

As noted throughout, lola is the commercial center of Allen County, with a majority of the jobs, stores and businesses in Allen County located within its city limits. lolans are more likely than the average county resident to work in the manufacturing sector, with a total 30% of lolans employed in one of lola's industries.

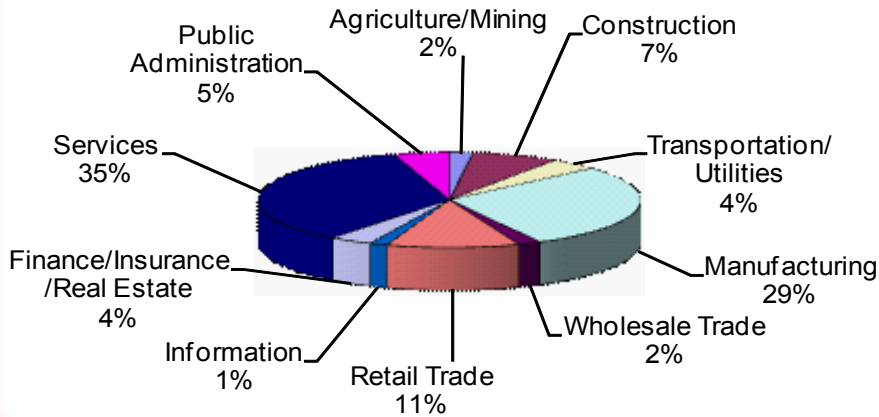
CHALLENGES

lola has experienced more than its share of challenges in recent years. The impact of the Great Flood of 2007 on lola's physical infrastructure, housing stock, economy, and, most importantly, *real people* is difficult to overstate. Though the waters have long since receded, the aftereffects of



Precision Downhole Pumps, lola

Iola -- Employment by Industry 2007



Source: US Census Bureau

the flood continue to manifest themselves in the daily lives of Iola residents.

Housing is Iola's primary challenge. The City of Iola and the business community must develop a comprehensive approach for building new housing in the city to stop Iola's population decline.

Just as importantly, there is no specific vision for where Iola is going and what type of community it wants to be. The community should undertake a visioning process to develop an action plan for the next decade.

And finally, with the exception of Precision Downhole Pump's relocation in 2004 from Humboldt, Iola has not had a major industrial recruitment since the 1994 decision by Russell Stover Candies to build a new facility. Yet attracting new jobs, particularly those



Iola Water Plant

paying competitive wages, is difficult without a better qualified workforce. Recent layoffs and the elimination of manufacturing lines at industries in Iola is likely to result in a larger pool of qualified workers than Iola has seen in many years---IF those workers stay in Allen County. A workforce development effort designed to train local workers in the skills they need to be competitive is critical if Iola is to retain its existing employers and recruit new businesses.

OPPORTUNITIES

Iola is the envy of many Kansas communities. It has established itself as a regional shopping center, and it has a sizable industrial base that anchors the community's economic fortunes.

Iola has an opportunity to attract new residents by marketing itself to the large percentage of workers who live outside of Iola and Allen County. With a threatening global economy and gas prices at historic highs this year, it is likely that more families are feeling financial



Iola Fire Department

pressure to move closer to their jobs. If Iola can construct affordable housing that meets the demands of the market it has a reasonable chance at converting these workers into residents.

Iola also offers an arts and cultural scene that is rare for small towns in the Midwest. These unique offerings can and should be better marketed as a reason for living in, and visiting, Iola.

Iola has strong business and community leaders who can accomplish nearly anything they set their minds to. These are the leaders who have recruited industries to Iola, led charitable drives, and pushed for the public works projects that make communities more attractive for business. If the efforts of these leaders are FOCUSED around one to three goals for improving Iola, particularly in conjunction with a strategic plan for the community, there is nothing they cannot accomplish. Iola has done it before and it *can* do it again.



Jefferson Avenue, Iola

LaHarpe At a Glance

Population (2007)	648
Median Age (2000)	34.4
Residents with HS degree or higher	73.9%
Median Household Income (2008)	\$38,079
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	5.8%
Residents 18 years and older	71.4%
Residents Aged 65 or older	10.6%

Source: US Census Bureau 2000 and 2007; ESRI

LaHARPE, the third largest community in Allen County, is a former boom town and center of heavy industry that has returned to a quieter existence in the 21st century.

gas fields, LaHarpe's population has held relatively steady for the past 70 years. Yet since 2000 the community's recent population trends have been downward, like all communities in Allen County, with LaHarpe falling at roughly the same rate seen in larger communities like lola and Humboldt.

HEALTH

There is no detailed statistical data available about LaHarpe residents' health. Based on lower than average educational levels and a higher than average poverty rate, we estimate that LaHarpe has health conditions that are below average, with obesity, smoking, alcohol abuse and lack of exercise contributing to a diminished quality of life and poor resident health.

HEALTHCARE

LaHarpe has no medical clinics of any kind. Most residents are believed to travel to nearby lola for medical care, whether to private practices or Allen County Hospital.

PARKS AND RECREATION

LaHarpe has a small city park with older playground equipment in need of maintenance and repair or replacement. There are shelters and older picnic tables located in the park near the playground equipment, along with a well-maintained softball complex adjacent to the playground.

LaHarpe's sidewalk infrastructure is very limited. Many of the sidewalks that exist are in fair to poor condition and pose hazards to walkers. This forces many residents to walk in the street, which increases their likelihood of injury or accident. In most areas of the community sidewalks are non-existent.

HOUSING

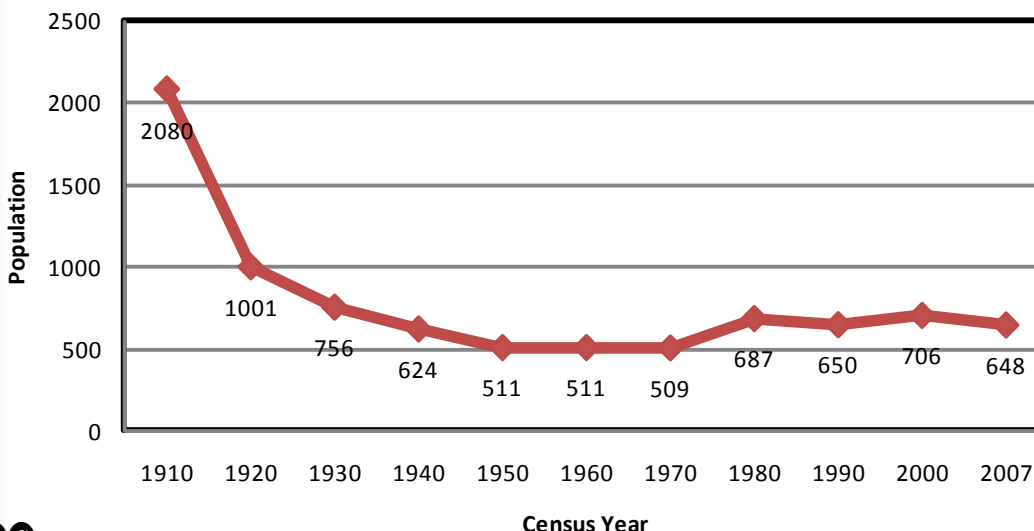
LaHarpe has 313 housing units in 2008, which represents a net loss of only one home since the 2000 census. The majority (75.4%) of homes in LaHarpe are single family detached homes, with the remaining 24.3% of the community's housing stock comprised of mobile homes.

The majority of single family houses are 50+ years old, with the average LaHarpe home in the year 2008 having a value of \$77,295. Housing values have risen in LaHarpe over the past decade, despite a 11.5% vacancy rate in the city.

LaHarpe is unique, at least as compared to other Allen County communities. It has the second-lowest average age in the county (after Bassett), and fewer residents aged 65 or older than even the national average. Yet the community also suffers from low educational levels, poor resident health and significant housing challenges.

After a precipitous drop following the depletion of Allen County's

LaHarpe Population 1910-2007



LaHarpe has aggressively incentivized construction of new homes in the community by providing free building lots for use by USD 257's building trades program, which constructs one house annually. These new homes have helped the community maintain the number of homes in the city while most other Allen County cities have lost housing units.



Sunday walkers, LaHarpe

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Though once Allen County's second largest jobs center, LaHarpe today has a fairly limited commercial base. Geography is a double-edge sword for LaHarpe; its proximity to lola allows the community to provide a home for workers in lola, yet this same proximity makes it difficult to support many service or retail establishments. The community is proud to still have a restaurant, major lumber yard, convenience store, a greenhouse and a metal salvage yard, among other businesses.

Given the employment breakdown of LaHarpe residents it appears that most working residents are employed by businesses and industries located outside of the community, likely in lola or Humboldt.

CHALLENGES

LaHarpe is challenged on multiple fronts, including the quality

of its housing stock, relatively low educational levels among residents, a high poverty rate and limited amenities to attract new residents.

With comparatively little economic activity located in LaHarpe the community's fate, like that of Gas, is closely tied to lola since a large number of jobs there are held by LaHarpe residents. Should economic conditions in lola worsen it will have a negative ripple effect that may hit LaHarpe especially hard due to its poverty level. To the extent that LaHarpe can develop business in its own community it will improve its likelihood of weathering economic storms that hit employers in surrounding communities.

Housing is a challenge for every Allen County community, but perhaps nowhere more than in LaHarpe. The city of LaHarpe has taken good steps to recruit new residents and incentivize home building, as described above. These measures must be continued, and should be combined with aggressive code enforcement campaigns to eliminate blight. Community appearance is a challenge that puts LaHarpe at a competitive disadvantage when attempting to attract new residents, particularly those with higher educational levels and household incomes.

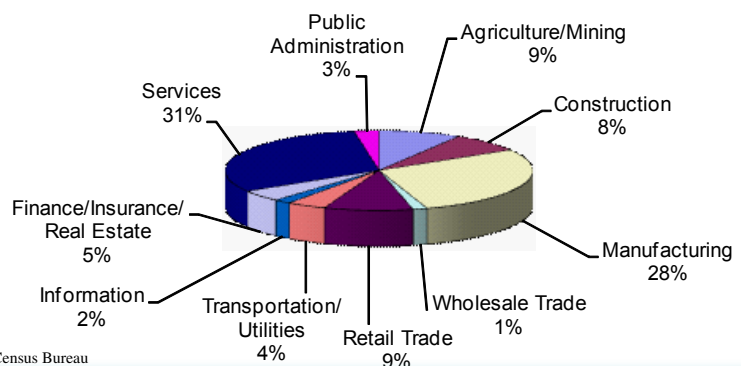
OPPORTUNITIES

LaHarpe has been savvy in recruiting new residents dislocated in the Great Flood of 2007 to their town, welcoming these residents to their town with open arms. A number of these residents have stayed, which will help the community in the 2010 census. These new residents could be enlisted as "ambassadors" to talk about the advantages of living in LaHarpe, whether its lower cost of living or the town's quiet nature, through a word-of-mouth marketing campaign.

LaHarpe is also the home to three businesses that draw retail shoppers and others to town: TLC Greenhouse, Diebolt Lumber and Ray's Metal Depot. These three businesses help keep LaHarpe "on the map" by attracting county residents who might not otherwise have a reason to visit LaHarpe. These important community businesses should be recognized for the positive impact they have on raising the LaHarpe community's visibility.

And finally, despite having some challenges, LaHarpe is still the third largest town in the county—and by a significant margin. This may come as a surprise to some—even some residents of LaHarpe. This very fact can be a source of community pride to help build momentum for making improvements that will benefit LaHarpe over the next decades.

LaHarpe Employment by Industry (2008)



Source: US Census Bureau

Mildred At a Glance

Population (2007)	35
Median Age (2000)	40.5
Residents with HS degree or higher	71.4%
Median Household Income (1999)	\$21,250
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	8.3%
Residents 18 years and older	77.8%
Residents Aged 65 or older	16.7%

Source: US Census Bureau



Charlie Brown's Store, Mildred

MILDRED, a small community of 35 residents, is located on US-59 just south of the Anderson County line. The town was founded

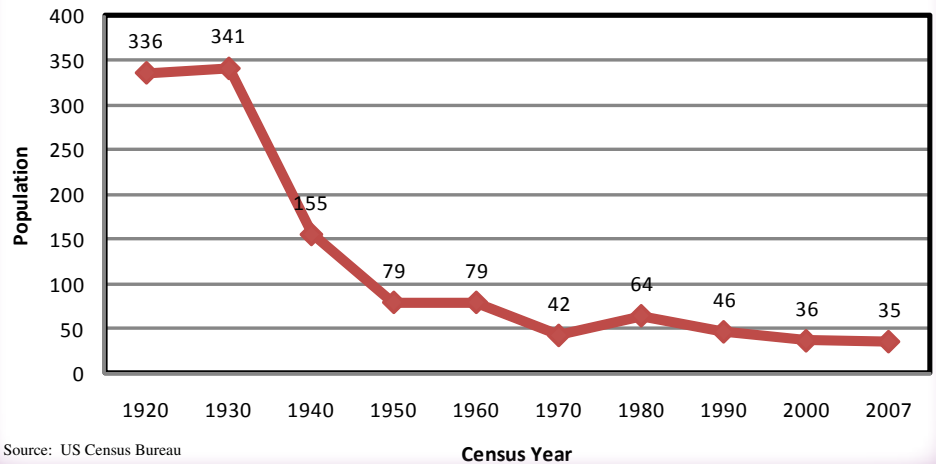
Mildred's population and economic base have dwindled with time, but the town still supports the famous Charlie Brown's Market on the town's main street. Aside from this center of commerce and

community news, Mildred is quiet today. Only time can predict what the next century will bring for this small but proud Allen County community.

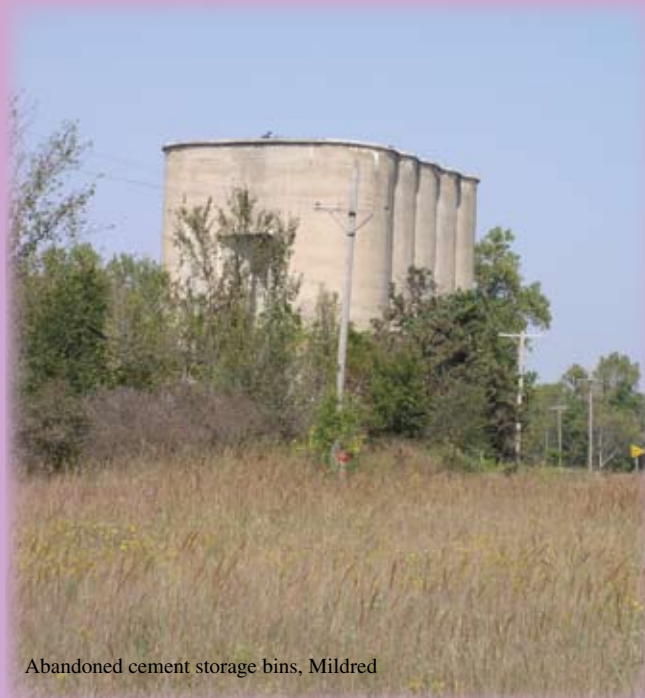
in 1907 as the home of the Great Western Portland Cement Company and named after the daughter of Great Western's president.

Mildred's founding and early development were centered almost entirely on the cement plant, which by 1912 employed approximately 375 workers. However, the general slump in the cement industry prior to World War I caused the plant to close in 1917. The plant would reopen later, only to close permanently in 1930. Mildred's high school graduated its last class in 1944, and the community now falls within the Marmaton Valley School District.

Mildred Population 1920-2007



Abandoned barn, rural Mildred



Abandoned cement storage bins, Mildred

moran

Moran At a Glance

Population (2007)	526
Median Age (2000)	41.6
Residents with HS degree or higher	83.5%
Median Household Income (2008)	\$37,712
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	3.9%
Residents 18 years and older	75.3%
Residents Aged 65 or older	25.3%

Source: US Census Bureau 2000 and 2007; ESRI

MORAN, located at the intersection of US 54 and US 59 east of Iola, is the educational, shopping and social hub for Eastern Allen County. Going to Moran means “going to town” for the surrounding rural area and the communities in the eastern portion of the county, including Elsmore and Savonburg to the south and Bayard and Mildred to the north.

Moran is primarily an agriculture-based community that doubles as an employee base for larger employers located in nearby communities. Moran is also home of the Marmaton Valley Schools (USD 256), making it the education center for children throughout the eastern portion of the county.

Moran has consistently maintained a population of between 500 and 700 people for the past century. Unfortunately, Moran’s population is at a 100-year low of 526 and falling quickly, which presents a serious challenge to the community. Furthermore, the realization that Moran’s population has now fallen below that of both LaHarpe and Gas, making it the 5th largest town in Allen County, is cause for alarm to Moran residents.

HEALTH

There is no detailed statistical data available about Moran residents’ health. Anecdotally, and based on discussions with local medical providers, however, Moran appears to have similarly poor health indices to residents throughout the county. Obesity, smoking and lack of exercise all

negatively impact the health of Moran’s residents. Moran has no fast food restaurants, but with many residents working in Iola where fast food is prominent the community is not immune to the effects of these food types.

HEALTHCARE

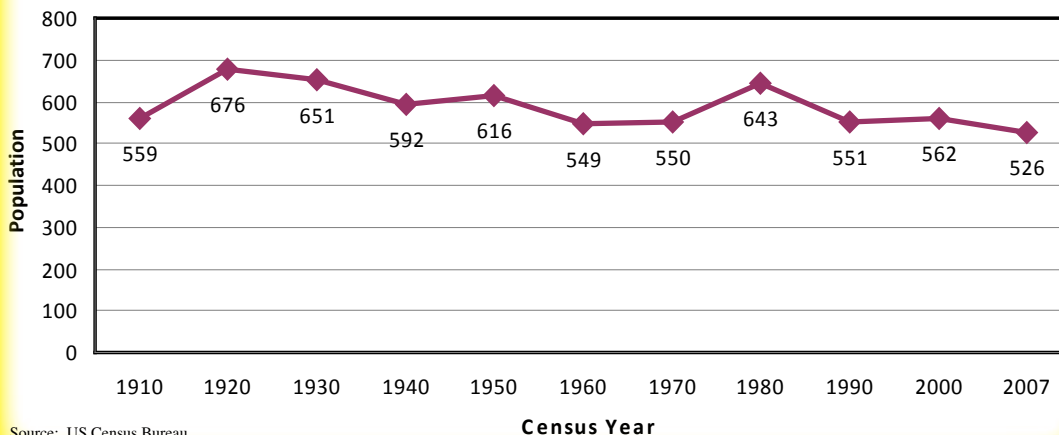
Unlike the other cities in the eastern portion of Allen County, Moran is not without healthcare services. The Family Physicians of Iola also has a clinic located in Moran. One nurse clinician staffs the clinic in addition to weekly office hours kept by a physician from the Iola office. Allen County Hospital located in Iola (12 miles away) is the nearest available acute care facility.



Resident and Staff, Moran Manor

Moran is also home to Moran Manor, a 47-bed Americare facility that has been a community anchor for at least three decades. Moran Manor has consistently received high marks for its level of care, and the facility attracts residents not only from Moran and the east side of the county, but also from Iola and beyond.

Moran Population 1910-2007



Source: US Census Bureau

PARKS AND RECREATION

Moran has an attractive and well-maintained city park. Playground equipment, baseball fields, tennis courts and picnic shelters are located in the park, providing a variety of options for residents regardless of age. There is also playground equipment located at Marmaton Valley Elementary School, plus the football field and track at Marmaton Valley High School. Moran is also fortunate to have a nine-hole public golf course, Sunny Meadows, which provides another recreation option for Moran area residents.

Sidewalk infrastructure in Moran is relatively limited; many of the sidewalks that exist are in fair to poor condition and pose hazards to walkers. This forces many residents to walk in the street, which increases their likelihood of injury or accident.

And while libraries are not typically classified with Parks and Recreation, Moran is fortunate to be served by a well-stocked public library located downtown that serves as a hub for young and old alike. This is complemented on Cedar Street by one of the newest and nicest senior citizen centers in Allen County, which provides a modern and spacious facility for seniors and other residents and visitors to congregate.

HOUSING

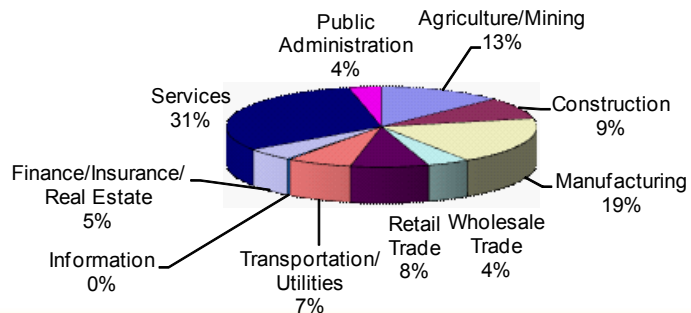
Moran has 265 housing units in 2008, a reduction of 7 housing units since the 2000 census. While some new homes have been built in recent years, the majority of the housing stock in the town is 50+ years old. Housing values have remained relatively steady in Moran, with homes vacated by older residents being replaced in some cases by new families, but the community still has a 13.2% vacancy rate in 2008, according to ESRI. And finally, Moran is dominated by owner-occupied homes, with only 15.1% of the housing units in Moran being rented.

Marmaton Village provides housing specifically to senior citizens and residents with

commercial center Moran has the third largest business base in the county after Iola and Humboldt. Moran still has a bank, grocery store, funeral home, a large grain elevator, convenience store and two family restaurants, among other businesses, giving the community a core of basic services they can access without driving to another town.

There are 295 employed residents of Moran 16 years of age or older. The majority of these work in services, with 25% of residents traveling 10 – 19 minutes to work. Evidence suggests that many Moran residents are employed in Iola, with others traveling to work in Fort Scott: ESRI data show that 21% of Moran residents drive 25 – 34 minutes to work.

Moran Employment by Industry (2008)



Source: US Census Bureau

disabilities. This complex includes 24 one-bedroom, income-restricted apartments. Marmaton Village has undertaken an aggressive modernization program to enhance the facility, and it currently has units available for rent.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

As Eastern Allen County's

CHALLENGES

Moran is faced with double trouble: a population that is falling rapidly, and one of the highest median ages in the county. In light of these forces it is imperative that Moran take steps to attract new residents, particularly young families, if it is to survive. This will require economic incentives to construct new homes which provide the

amenities that buyers want, and a concerted effort to market Moran as a lower-cost, yet still attractive, alternative to more expensive communities.

Moran also has managed to maintain its key commercial establishments, but in an era of belt-tightening and business consolidations it will become increasingly difficult for Moran to hold on IF local residents do not support their local establishments. Volume of customers is critically important in any business, and it will only be through a determined "shop local" effort that Moran will be able to keep some of its current businesses if the town's population continues to drop.

OPPORTUNITIES

Marmaton Valley Schools are the pride of the Moran community, and with good reason. USD 256 students consistently outperform their peers on standardized tests, and the strong sense of community that comes with a smaller school district is attractive to many parents. The presence of good schools is consistently ranked as a top reason parents give for choosing one community over another. This asset gives Moran a tremendous tool to use in actively recruiting new residents, particularly families, in an effort to reverse its downward population trends.

On the school funding side, USD 256 has attracted a large number of students from USD 257, which has been critical to keeping its per pupil funding relatively stable as the county loses population. This phenomenon,

though negative for USD 257, is an opportunity that holds continued promise for USD 256.

Geography also presents opportunities for Moran. The community's location at the intersection of two US highways gives the community a logistical and transportation advantage, whether for residents that want to work in lola but live in Moran or for potential employers that rely on transportation to move goods or materials. Moran is also one of the few communities left in Allen County that has an active railroad (the Union Pacific), which could provide another logistical advantage the town can use in business recruitment.



Moran Days Parade, Moran



Moran Manor, Moran



Marmaton Valley High School, Moran



Main Street, Moran

savonburg

Savonburg At a Glance

Population (2007)	87
Median Age (2000)	40.5
Residents with HS degree or higher	80.5%
Median Household Income (2008)	\$36,507
Residents Under 5 years (2000)	3.3%
Residents 18 years and older	75.8%
Residents Aged 65 or older	17.6%

Source: US Census Bureau

SAVONBURG is a community of 87 residents in eastern Allen County. It's a small town with a big personality, taking pride in its Swedish heritage and strong sense of community.

Settled originally by Swedish immigrants, Savonburg never experienced the booms that other Allen County communities have. But it hasn't experienced the busts, either. Today Savonburg boasts one of the best community centers in the county, an outstanding and heavily used public library, and an active citizenry.

Perhaps most surprising, anecdotal evidence suggests that Savonburg is experiencing a boom of children. Savonburg's median population is 40.5, which is a full 11 years less than its "twin" city of Elsmore, and identical to the much-larger community of Humboldt. Residents have estimated that there are currently 40 children living in and around Savonburg, which, if correct, shows a community that is bucking the trends that are emptying many towns throughout the Midwest.

HEALTH

Like most small communities in the county, there is no detailed data available to describe resident health in Savonburg. What is particularly interesting about Savonburg is that, based on local residents' observations, little or no childhood obesity exists in the community. Savonburg's adults also appear to be less overweight than residents in other parts of the county, and

to use fewer tobacco products. One could speculate that the preservation of Swedish customs contributes to these healthier lifestyles, as could the inaccessibility of fast food restaurants. Whatever the causes, Savonburg seems to be one of the county's healthier communities.

HEALTHCARE

Located at the southern edge of Allen County, Savonburg is geographically isolated from healthcare services, with the nearest medical clinic (The Family Physicians) located 13 miles away in Moran. The nearest hospital is Neosho Memorial Regional Medical Center in Chanute, a distance of 22 miles. There are no practicing doctors, dentists, optometrists, or chiropractors in the city of Savonburg.

With transportation costs increasing, and with a large number of senior citizens, Savonburg residents have significant barriers that limit their access to healthcare. Thrive is studying options for bringing mobile healthcare options to Savonburg and other smaller communities.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Savonburg's recreation infrastructure is relatively limited. The community does have basketball goals that are used somewhat by children, but otherwise the town itself serves as one large playground for children. Bike riding through Savonburg's streets is a common pastime of children, and residents can be seen walking on Savonburg's streets many mornings and evenings.

HOUSING

The 2000 US Census showed 47 housing units in Savonburg; an October 2008 study by Thrive counted 57 houses in Savonburg, an increase of 17% in eight years. We are unable to explain this increase, except through noting that Savonburg has benefited from the return of retirees and

younger families in recent years, including some that may have built new homes. Despite this good news, the Census Bureau estimates that 20% of Savonburg's housing units are vacant.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

There is very little commercial activity in Savonburg. The nearest communities of any size are Moran and Stark (Neosho County), with the nearest shopping and employment centers located in Humboldt and Chanute, both of which are over 20 miles away.

CHALLENGES

Savonburg has Allen County's highest poverty rate—41%—meaning that 41% of individuals living in Savonburg live at or below the federal poverty level. Countywide, approximately 14% of residents in 2004 lived in poverty, meaning that Savonburg's poverty rate is nearly triple that of the county as a whole.

Geography remains a serious challenge for Savonburg, particularly as it relates to accessing healthcare. As Savonburg residents age, and with fuel costs rising, it is important to identify new options for bringing healthcare to the community.

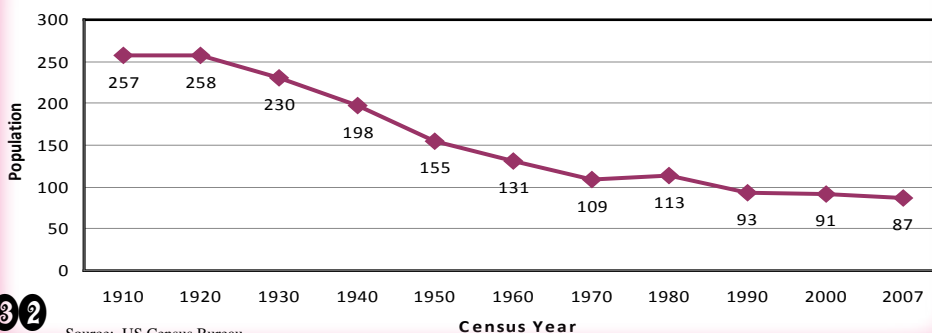
OPPORTUNITIES

Savonburg has invested in itself, as demonstrated by its new library and community center that was constructed in 2000 using local funds. This facility stands as one of the finest community centers in Allen County, and it acts as an anchor and gathering place for the entire community, from young to old. This immaculate facility is a selling point for Savonburg and is a model for other small communities to emulate.

Savonburg has maintained its traditions and sense of community, thanks in part to the presence of multiple families that trace their roots in the area back to the 1870s. This sense of community cohesion and spirit allows Savonburg to do things that other less tight-knit communities of this size could not do.

Savonburg may not be a jobs center or shopping mecca, but it is a strong community of which its residents can be rightfully proud.

Savonburg Population 1910-2007



Savonburg

ACH
Allen County Hospital

Your HCA Midwest Hospital

101 South First ~ Iola ~ 620-365-1000 or 800-444-0535
<http://www.allencountyhospital.com>



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Our experienced staff includes Dr. Kelly Richardson DDS (center) assisted by Jenny Powell, Serisa Edwards, Samantha Hurlock, Paula Miller and Janice Elder.



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