

# ALLEN COUNTY TRAILS





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## Welcome to Allen County, the King of Trails!

Friends,

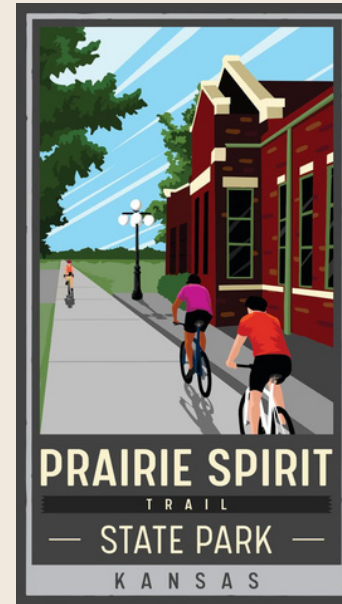
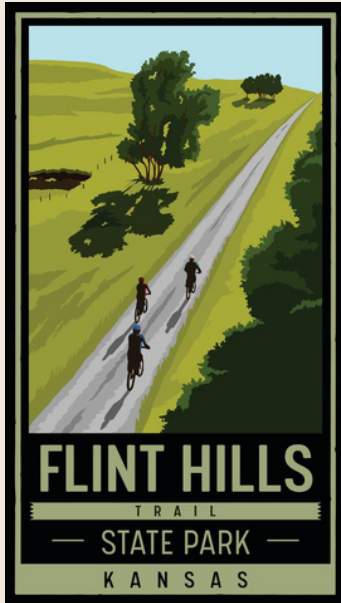
We're so happy to have you here! Trails are a major part of our identity. Whether you're a lifelong resident rediscovering your own backyard or a first-time visitor, we hope you enjoy the beautiful trails in our community. Trails are good for your health, our economy, and the environment.

Thank you to everyone who puts hours into building and maintaining the trails. And thank you for being part of them!

*Lisse Regehr*

Lisse Regehr  
President and CEO  
[Thrive Allen County](#)

# REGIONAL TRAILS/ROUTES





- LEGEND**
- Flint Hills Trail
  - ⋯ Southwind Rail Trail
  - Prairie Spirit Trail
  - - - Prairie Pathways Route
  - - - Bike Route 76



SCAN ME

# PRAIRIE PATHWAYS

## ALLEN, BOURBON, & CRAWFORD

*Our region is beautiful.  
Think safety first.*

The Prairie Pathways Bike Routes between Iola, Fort Scott, and Pittsburg are the first step in a larger Southeast Kansas active transportation plan (formerly the ABC plan). It seeks to improve access to increase physical activity, enhance quality of life, and encourage economic growth across the rural region.

The Allen, Bourbon, and Crawford county routes primarily run on paved roads, with

frequent stops at smaller communities along the way. Signage is installed at turns and regular intervals to ensure motorists follow the 3-foot passing law.

The routes officially opened in 2022. In the future, look for more to interconnect Southeast Kansas communities. You can find updates and information on the designated "Prairie Pathways" Facebook page.



**FORT SCOTT TO PITTSBURG: 39 MILES**  
**IOLA TO FORT SCOTT: 43 MILES**  
**PITTSBURG TO IOLA: 73 MILES**



## HISTORICAL MARKER ON BIG TRAIN BRIDGES

**WALTER JOHNSON BIRTH SITE**

On November 6, 1887, Hall of Fame baseball pitcher Walter Perry Johnson was born on this farm site. In 1901, he moved with his family into the town of Humboldt. During a career with the Washington Senators from 1907 to 1927, he became famous for his fastball and his sterling character.

HANK THOMAS  
GRANDSON AND AUTHOR

Umpire Development Program  
Barney Deary Foundation

HUMBOLDT	IOLA	<b>Piqua Buster</b> — 24.7 miles
		<b>Carlyle Castles</b> — 23.7 miles
		<b>Electric Pike</b> — 37.8 miles
		<b>Big Train Bridges</b> — 18.4 miles
		<b>Tank Farm Tour</b> — 43.4 miles
		<b>Vegetarian Safari</b> — 31.3 miles
		<b>Graves and Caves</b> — 55.5 miles



Over the last decade, Kansas has become famous for cyclists looking to ride gravel roads, largely due to Emporia's Unbound Gravel event. There are more than 98,000 miles of unpaved roads in the state of Kansas. While not all unpaved roads are created equal, the vast majority of these roads have a story to tell and can provide a potential backdrop for year-round gravel cycling tourism.

catalogue the best gravel Kansas has to offer and cement Kansas as a premiere gravel cyclo-tourism destination.

Allen County proudly is home to 7 routes: 3 centered in Iola, 3 centered in Humboldt and 1 shared Iola/Humboldt route. In addition to the breathtaking views of Southeast Kansas, each route is inspired by Allen County's rich history.

LeLan Dains, of Visit Emporia, has spearheaded Gravel Kansas in an effort to

Check out all the best gravel Kansas and Allen County have to offer!



# GRAVEL KANSAS



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# PRAIRIE SPIRIT OTTAWA - IOLA

*It offers a unique experience for riders of all ages and skill levels.*

The Prairie Spirit bike trail is a 52-mile-long state park that runs through the heart of eastern Kansas.

Built on a former railroad right-of-way, this packed limestone trail links the Flint Hills Nature Trail in Ottawa to the Southwind Rail Trail in Iola. It passes through scenic prairie, woodland shade, and a number of historic eastern Kansas towns. A popular destination for cyclists and hikers alike, it offers scenic views of the state's natural beauty.

The trail is open every day from dawn to dusk. It is free to the public for bicycling and walking and is wheelchair accessible. Along the trail, you will find parking, water, and restrooms.

Every year, the Prairie Spirit hosts a myriad of activities including a 100-mile race called the Prairie Spirit Ultra. Check out the QR code in the upper-left corner for more information about this linear State Park.







SCAN ME

## SOUTHWIND IOLA - HUMBOLDT

*"Kansas is a million pockets of beauty. You just have to go find them." -Pat Haire*

The Southwind Rail Trail (7 mi) traces its origins back to the early 1900s when it was a bustling railway corridor. As the railroads' significance waned over the years, it was transformed into a multi-purpose trail, creating a seamless connection between the charming towns of Iola and Humboldt. The trail's well-maintained pathway and gentle inclines make it accessible to people of all ages and fitness levels.

The Southwind Rail Trail offers an escape from the daily grind and an opportunity to connect with fellow adventurers on a memorable journey through Southeast Kansas. You may even find a local bike group heading to the Iola Dairy Queen on Tuesday evenings throughout the summer. Whatever you discover, you're sure to have fun on this rail trail!



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# LEHIGH PORTLAND STATE PARK

There is something for everyone at Lehigh. The nearly 360 acres sit in a prime location, just minutes from downtown Iola. Hikers, biker, history buffs, and all manner of nature lovers enjoy the great outdoors here!

The trails consist of approximately 2.5 miles of wide gravel trails and 12 miles of natural-surface trails that traverse a myriad of ecosystems unique to Southeast Kansas. The trails feed directly into the Southwind Rail Trail/Prairie Spirit Trail, further making Lehigh an accessible destination that connects to over 150 miles of other Kansas trails. Iola is a hop, skip, and jump away via the King of Trails Bridge.

The main feature of the property is the abandoned quarry that has become a 138-acre lake. The lake is surrounded by riparian woodlands along Elm Creek. Glades full of native prairie plants give visitors a glimpse into what the area looked like one hundred years ago. Remnants of early settlers homesteads can still be seen if you look closely enough.

The entire property is a testament to nature reclaiming the former industrial site. While changes to the land are certain, Lehigh Portland State Park will continue evolving for future generations to enjoy.



# Kansas' 28th State Park

JOHN BROWN'S CAVE



**East Trailhead to Southwind** \_\_\_\_\_ 1.6 miles

**East Loop** \_\_\_\_\_ .45 miles

**Creekside** \_\_\_\_\_ 1.25 miles

**Mt. Lehigh** \_\_\_\_\_ 1.15 miles

**Devils Cross** \_\_\_\_\_ .52 miles

**Mountain Goats** \_\_\_\_\_ .5 miles

**Cave Parking to John Brown's Cave** \_\_.18 miles



GRAVEL TRAIL



SINGLETRACK/NATURAL SURFACE





**LEGEND**

- Gravel Trail
- Singletrack/Natural Surface
- Southwind Trail
- ▨ Bike Route
- ▨ Prairie Pathways Route





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# POINTS OF INTEREST

## Prairie Areas



GOATS GLADE



STONEWALL GLADE



LEHIGH PRAIRIE

## Overlooks



ELM CREEK OVERLOOK



WEST LAKE OVERLOOK



EASTLAKE OVERLOOK

# POINTS OF INTEREST

## Art on the Trail



TOM FLYNN'S LIGHTNING BUGS



STEPHEN GILPIN'S MURAL



IR-TA ICONS' MURAL

## Other Features



HEGWALD BRIDGE



BOY SCOUT SHELTER\*



JOHN BROWN'S CAVE\*

\*PHOTOS COURTESY OF



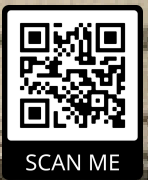
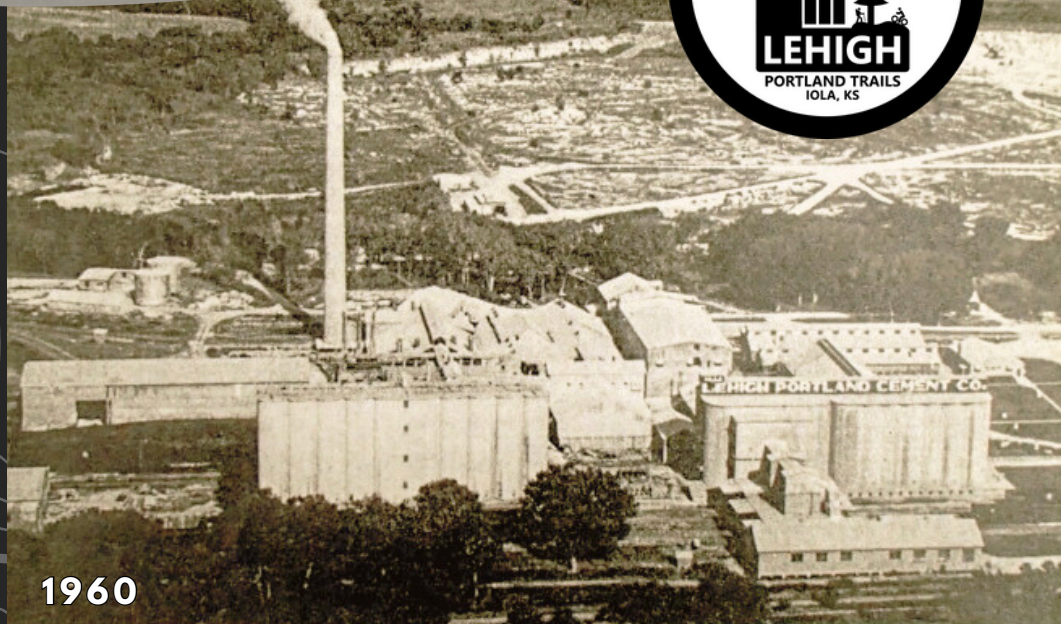
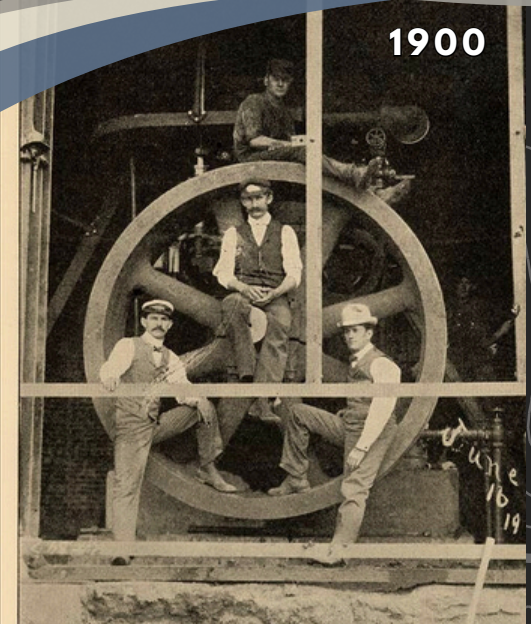
# PAST

This area was once home to one of North America's largest cement plants. By the early 1900s, the Iola Portland Cement Company had transformed Mississippian limestone into top-quality cement. In 1917, the Lehigh Portland Cement Company took over, making it the largest employer in Allen County and becoming the driving force for regional industry. Weathering economic challenges, it eventually closed in 1971. Over time, nature reclaimed the land with trees covering the 300-acre space and water filling the quarry.

John Brown's Cave has historically been a popular picnic spot, with many mentions of Sunday school and scout group outings

between 1899 and the 1970s. While the cave does not have any historical connection to John Brown (the famous abolitionist), the local papers do mention some bootlegger activity during the prohibition.

Today, the Lehigh Portland Trails stand as a remarkable testament to Iola's history. The transformed remnants of the cement quarry and surrounding area are a rare gem, creating a unique community treasure out of the rubble of the county's industrial history. Volunteers from Thrive Allen County ignited this transformation in June 2014, obtaining a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation to breathe new life into the land owned by Iola Industries Inc.

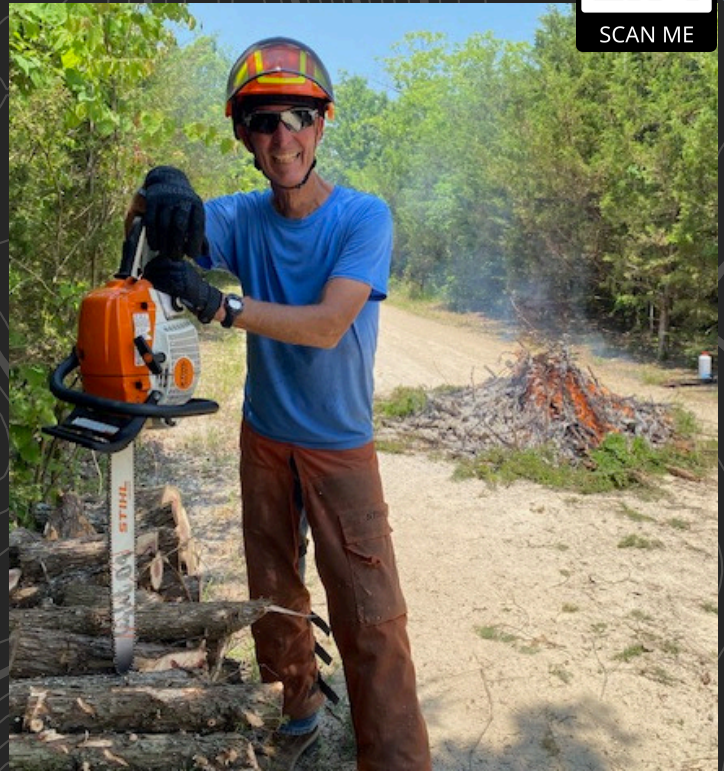




# PRESENT

Volunteers play an indispensable role in the success and maintenance of Lehigh Portland Trails. Their dedication and hard work are essential to preserving and enhancing this recreational gem. These passionate individuals contribute their time and effort in various ways, from trail development and upkeep to guiding visitors and promoting environmental stewardship.

Without the commitment of these volunteers, this network of trails would be challenging to sustain. Their collective efforts help ensure that the Lehigh Portland Trails remain a valuable community resource. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact the Thrive office at 620-365-8128.



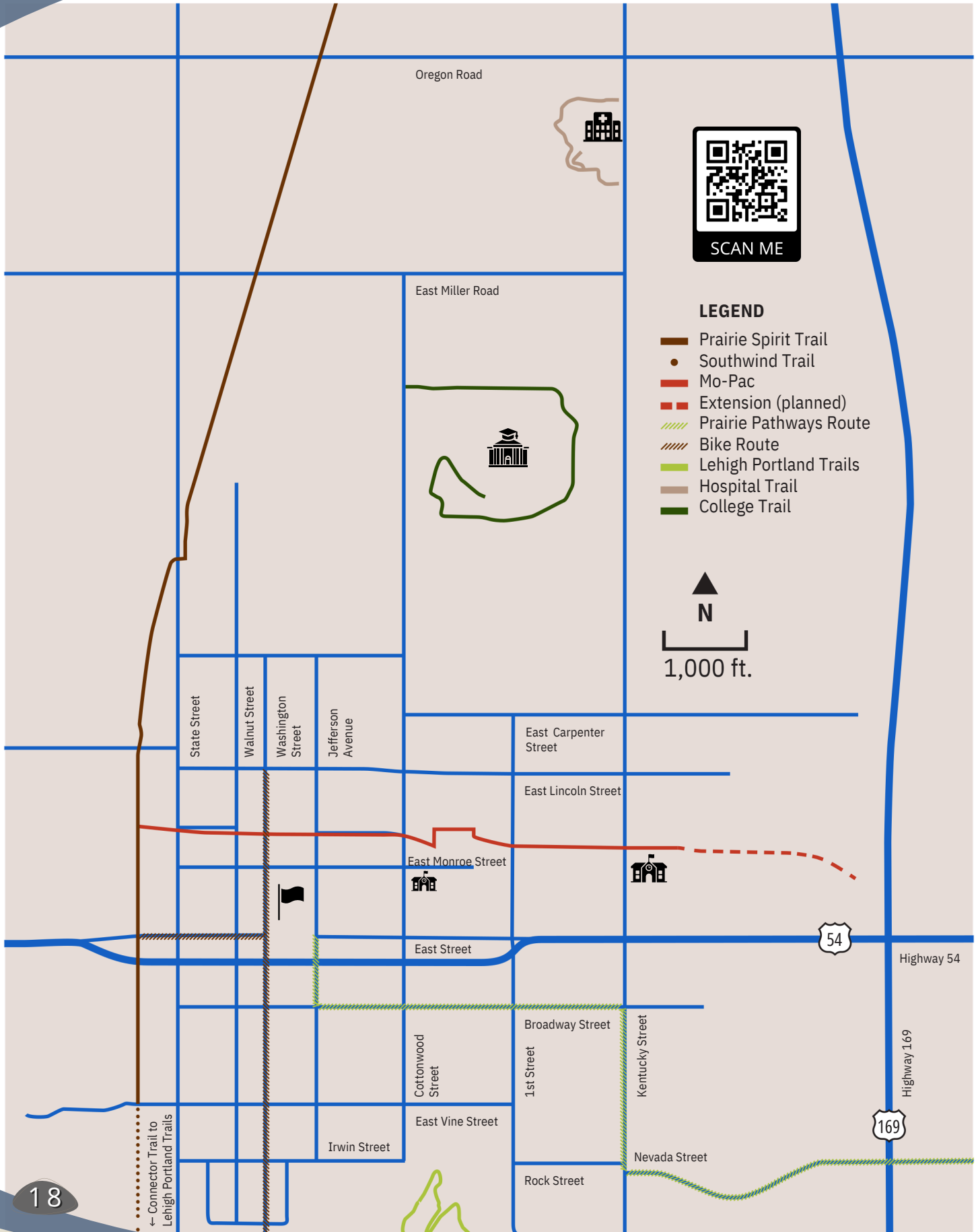
# FUTURE

Lehigh Portland's recent designation as a State Park means this land will be accessible for generations to come, opening the door to all kinds of recreational and educational opportunities.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' plans for the future include a state-of-the-art visitor center, outdoor amphitheatre, floating cabins, swimming beach, and more! These plans also include sites for RV and primitive camping. Fishermen, cyclists, and nature-lovers of all kinds will enjoy what Lehigh Portland State Park has to offer.

There's no telling what the future may hold, but there's one thing we can be certain of: this former quarry's best days are yet to come.

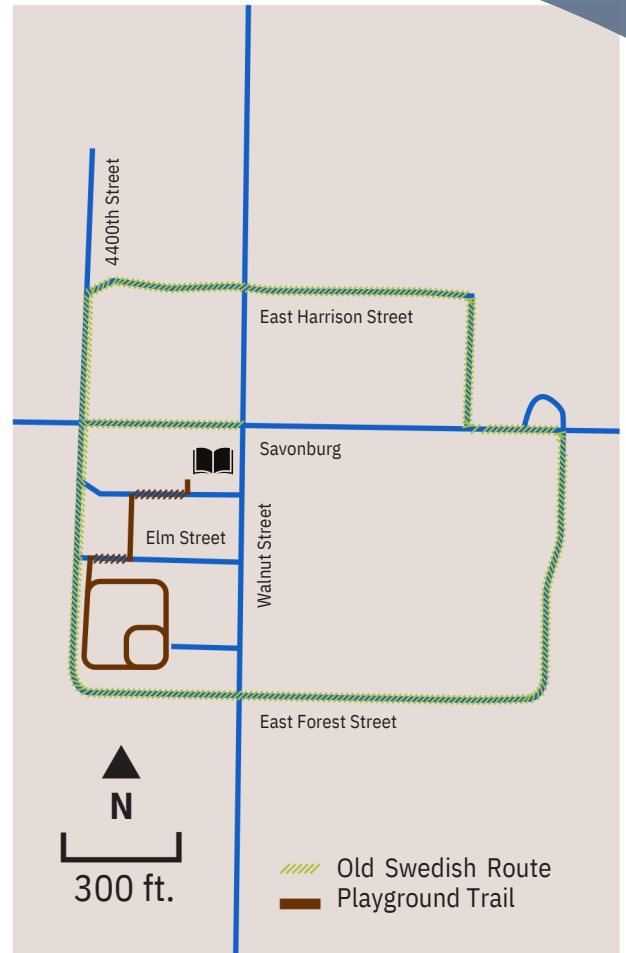




# Humboldt



# Savonburg



# Gas





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# IOLA

Iola is home to the largest downtown square in the country. It is surrounded by vibrant storefronts that offer a taste of local favorites ranging from antique stores and historical attractions to homemade bread and pastries. Several second-story lofts have been transformed into overnight accommodations, putting these amenities all within walking distance for visitors.

You won't want to miss the festivities that take place annually including the Allen County Fair, the Smokin' Hot Cars BBQ Cook-Off, and Farm City Days. The Bowlus Fine Arts Center hosts concerts, plays, and other community events year-round.

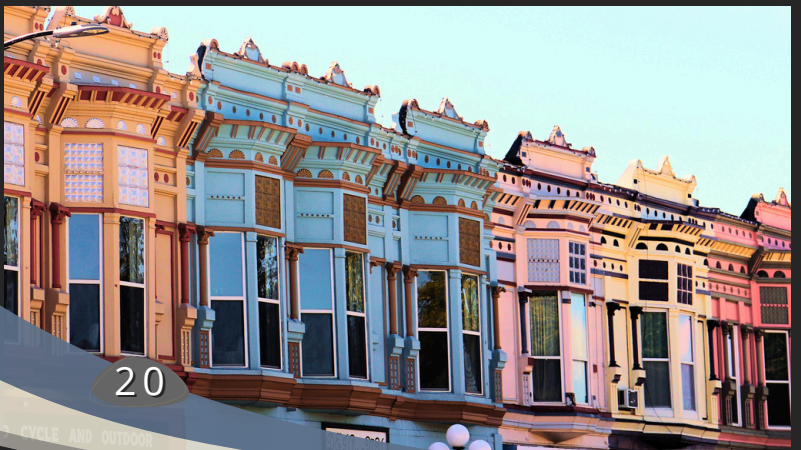
From late spring to early fall, the downtown square features the Allen County Farmers' Market. Shop the local vendors (selling everything from baked goods to fresh produce) and listen to live music on Thursday nights during the summer from one of the oldest continually performing city bands in the country.

Of course, there are plenty of recreational activities as well including a public pool and disk golf course. Lehigh Portland State Park can be accessed by crossing the King of Trails pedestrian bridge heading south on Washington Avenue through the Elm Creek Disc Golf Course.

For more information, scan the QR code.



**KING OF TRAILS BRIDGE**





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# HUMBOLDT

Humboldt, founded in 1857, has a deep-rooted history that is evident in its well-preserved architecture and historic sites. Begin your journey through time with a visit to the downtown area, where you'll find beautifully restored buildings along Bridge street that harken back to the town's early days. The historic downtown offers an array of quaint shops, local boutiques, and charming cafes where you can savor a cup of coffee while soaking in the town's ambiance.

From the Neosho River Park on the west side to the Southwind Rail Trail on the east, Humboldt offers a variety of outdoor activities for nature enthusiasts.

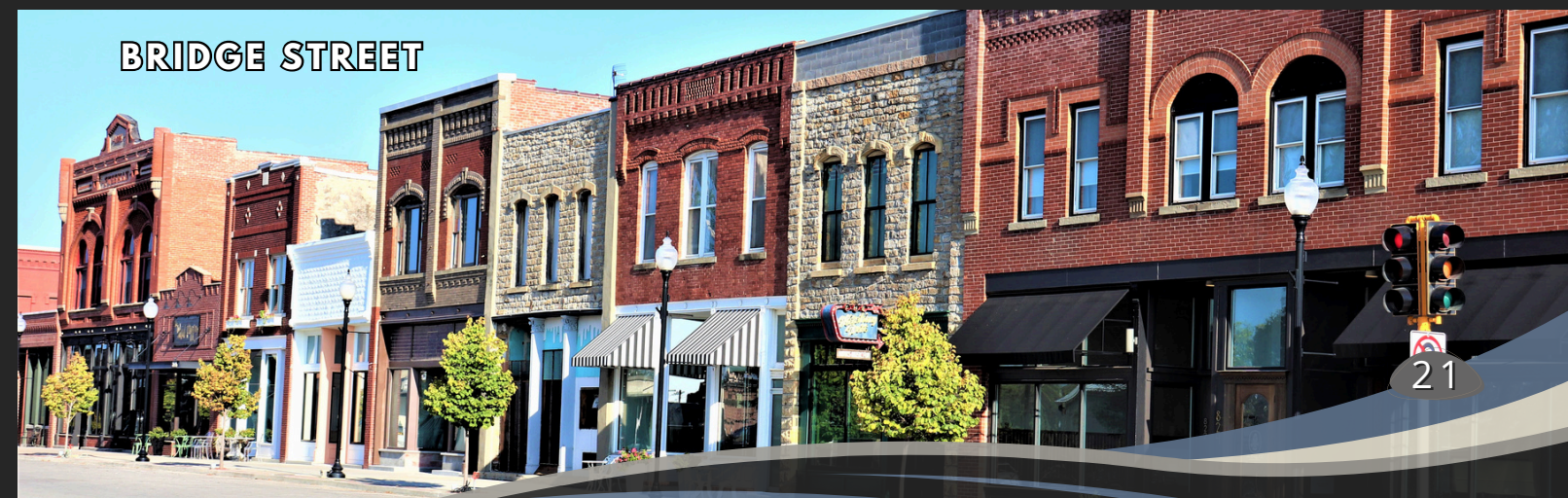
Conveniently placed next to the Southwind Trailhead, you'll find Base Camp Humboldt: a modern take on camping with access to kayaks, fire pits, a bike challenge course, and more.

Camp Hunter is located in the southwest corner of town. In addition to playground equipment and picnic shelters, it also has amenities for camping. Beautiful tree coverings offer shady places to park your RV. Camp Hunter has 17 electrical hookups, a shower house, and free Wi-Fi.

Visit the QR code to discover even more attractions!



**NEOSHO RIVER PARK**



**BRIDGE STREET**



SCAN ME

# GREATER ALLEN COUNTY



## Elsmore

Elsmore is the closest community in Allen County to the Bourbon State Fishing Lake which has camping facilities and waterfalls.

## Mildred

Mildred is the home of The Mildred Store, a unique treasure that serves as a grocery store, music venue, and party spread provider with an RV park and cabin rentals as well.

## Moran

The Marmaton Market in Moran is a perfect stop if you are on the Prairie Pathways bike route from Iola to Fort Scott. It is also the location of one of the Thrive Allen County Public Bike Shares.

## Carlyle

Carlyle is a small community located along the Prairie Spirit Trail. It has a trailhead that includes restrooms and parking.

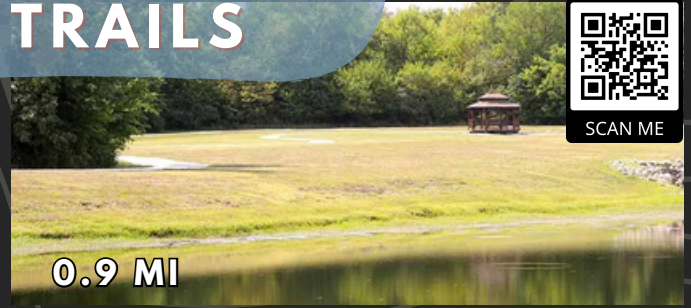
# WALKING TRAILS



SCAN ME

## AC Regional Hospital

This is a half-mile walking trail around the Allen County Regional Hospital in Iola, KS. It is gravel and limestone screenings with a gazebo and healing garden.



0.9 MI

## Iola Elementary School

The Elementary School walking trail (also known as the “Missouri Pacific Recreational Trail”) was built by the city of Iola to provide a safe route to school for many students. It starts at the Prairie Spirit trail and goes all the way to the new elementary school.



1.43 MI

## ACC

The Allen Community College Trail in Iola, KS meanders around Allen Community College athletic fields. The gravel trail is about 1 mile in length.



1.2 MI

## Fees Park

The Walter and Helen Fees Memorial Park in Gas, KS is about a quarter-mile long rubber track that winds around a large play area.



0.3 MI

## La Harpe City Park

The La Harpe City Park Trail was built by volunteers in 2018. The surface is limestone screenings. The trail winds around the park and zipline course, for a total of about a third of a mile.



0.3 MI

## Savonburg City Park

The Savonburg City Park trail starts near the library and leads to a gravel trail that follows the perimeter of a playground. It is about a quarter of a mile.



0.26 MI

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**THE IOLA  
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**THRIVE  ALLEN COUNTY**