

Wabaunsee County Economic Scoop

SUMMER 2010

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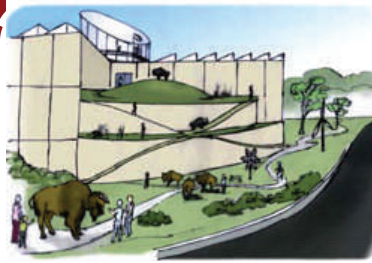
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Manhattan Project to Include Regional Artwork Celebrating the Flint Hills

A Flint Hills region-wide project will be held to celebrate this summer’s groundbreaking for the new Flint Hills Discovery Center to be constructed in downtown Manhattan, KS. As a part of site preparation, a construction fence will be erected for site safety and security. This chain linked fence will provide the perfect “display gallery” for a Flint Hills region-wide art project celebrating the heritage and quiet grandeur of this part of Kansas and the central U.S. About 200 panels will be painted to be displayed on the construction fence. Each mural will be painted on 4 x 4 ft. wooden panels, to be attached to the fence for outdoor display. “There is such richness throughout our entire region, and the Discovery Center’s construction fence is a perfect backdrop to celebrate the diversity of our beautiful area,” stated one committee member. The Flint Hills region encompasses about 4 million acres extending throughout much of eastern Kansas from near the Kansas-Nebraska border south into northeastern Oklahoma, and contains the largest remaining area of unplowed tall grass prairie in North America. The Flint Hills Discovery Center will chronicle the geology, biology, and cultural history of this last major vestige of the Great Plains. The Wabaunsee County inspired mural will portray the role that its residents played in the Civil War, the ranching history, and of course the landscape that embraces it all. The murals will be installed as they are completed, with the first group going up this summer at the groundbreaking. They will remain on view during the 12 months of construction. The Discovery Center, located at Third and Colorado St., is planned to open in spring 2012. Groundbreaking for the center is Wednesday, July 7th at 9:30 a.m. For more information contact Bob Workman at 785-587-2726 or workman@ci.manhattan.ks.us. If your organization or class would like to paint one of the murals, please contact Abby Amick in the Economic Development Office at 785-765-4655.

Meet the Intern-Chelsea Diepenbrock



Chelsea Diepenbrock currently holds the internship position at the Wabaunsee County Economic Development office. She will be a senior at Wabaunsee High School this fall and will graduate in May 2011. Following high school, she plans to attend a four-year college either

in-state or out-of-state. Chelsea enjoys spending her time doing anything from playing sports to reading. She is often kept busy with school, athletics, clubs, and community activities. She has lived in Alma her whole life, making her very familiar with rural Kansas and small

town living. Chelsea finds interest in the history and earlier times of the county. She hopes to help with the promotion and advertisement of Wabaunsee. Chelsea started this internship in May 2010 and will continue until August 2010.

49 News MAIN STREET LIVE! In Alma



Every Wednesday this summer, the 49 News team will hit the road to bring the 6:00PM news LIVE to a Kansas town! Content of the show will focus on the people, places, history, and current events at each stop. The KTKA News Team will have a chance before and after the show to interact with viewers. Everyone can share in the fun of this event!

MAIN STREET LIVE! will be held in Alma on July 7, 2010. The event will begin at 5:30PM, with the news cast giving free Johnsonville Brats for the first 150 citizens in attendance. At 6:00PM, the live broadcast of 49 News from Alma will begin. Join KTKA 49 News for a Wednesday evening of fun!

Rural Grocery Store Summit II

Saving Rural America's Critical Infrastructure

Local grocery stores represent a critical infrastructure for our rural communities. These stores are an important part of the economic engine that sustains rural communities, providing essential jobs and taxes. They are a vital source for nutrition and health, providing a supply of fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, and protein. These groceries are especially critical for the rural young, poor, and elderly. Grocery stores are where we meet friends, catch up on the latest news, build relationships and network with others. Grocery stores, like schools, restaurants, and post offices, are community assets used to recruit and retain citizens, providing a symbol of community

health. A rural grocery summit was held on June 14-15, 2010 at Kansas State University. Store owners, citizen leaders, academic researchers, policy makers, suppliers, and funders were brought together to talk about how to best sustain this critical



piece of community infrastructure. A lot of information was discussed and learned at the summit. 82 of 213 rural grocery stores have closed in Kansas since 2006. A “food de-

sert” is a large, isolated area where mainstream grocery stores are absent. 40% of Kansas counties are classified as “severe food deserts,” meaning residents have to drive more than 10 miles to access a grocery store. 51% of Kansas towns do not have a grocery store. Rural grocery stores impact community stability in terms of infrastructure, social climate, ability to attract/retain new citizens, and are a cornerstone business in a community. Visit: www.ruralgrocery.com/survey to access more information. Also, there will be a link on www.wabaunsee.com to connect you to the rural grocery website for more information.

The Adventure of Geocaching!



GEOCACHING.COM

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS devices. The game basically involves a GPS user hiding "treasure" and publishing the exact coordinates so other GPS users can come on a "treasure hunt" to find it. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, outdoors and then share your experiences online. Geocaching is enjoyed by people from all age groups, with a strong sense of community and support for the environment.

The only rules are: If you take something from the cache, you must leave something for the cache, and you must write about your visit in the logbook. Hopefully, the person that hid this container found a good spot that is not easily found by uninterested parties.

Geocaching is also a form of tourism. Following the coordinates and clues, a person can experience everything in an area, from the history of the architecture to the hidden treasures rarely seen by passers-through. Geocachers do not require directional signage or turn by turn directions, only the coordinates of their "treasure" and a decent road map.

What is treasure to some, may not qualify with others. The hidden boxes have nothing of significant value in them, just mementos of the adventure that brought them to this place. Most geocachers leave small toys, pens or even a piece of their hometown in the box.

Wabaunsee County is not new to the geocaching scene. There are caches spread all across the county, helping adventurers to understand and experience places like Fix Cemetery, the Guardian of the Plains, Stone Fences, Echo Cliff Park, and many other attractions! As each site is visited, the geocacher then logs their trip online. This is an example of a recent log:

[🤖 Found it] **Sunday, 09 May 2010 by keith&deirdre (147 found)**
Well, wasn't that the neatest! Alma is a great little town; thank you for bringing us here. Got gas while here. Wanted a hat with feathers, but no dice today. Maybe another day...TN L- Grosvenor Casino Travelslug and Furby

Many families find this activity to be fun for all ages! It is a world-wide activity that can be enjoyed in every community, along every highway and throughout every region. If you or your family is looking for a new hobby, try out geocaching this summer!

Geocaching is open to everyone with a GPS and a sense of adventure. There are similar sites all over the world. The organization has its home on the Internet. Visit the website if you want to learn more, or have any comments:
<http://www.geocaching.com>.



The Subtle Eye—Alma Community Art Center



Owned by Katherine Settle

A newly established business in Alma has caught our eye. We took a visit and found that owner Katherine Settle has brought to the community uniqueness and passion. The purpose of the art center/gallery is to give members of the



community a place to explore and develop artistically, as well as sell any items that have been created. Katherine says her business is a way to promote herself, as well as educate county citizens and provide them with ways to expand their talents. She wants the center to be accessible and appealing to everyone.

She says her business was started by accident. When the bakery moved, she walked into the building and immediately took an interest in the place. She jumped on the opportunity. She has been working tirelessly from August 2009 to June 2010 to get the building ready for operation.

Her involvement and interest in art started at a very young age. Katherine has previously worked as an RN, but she had become emotionally drained. She then turned to her “first love,” the thing she had been educated in. Art.

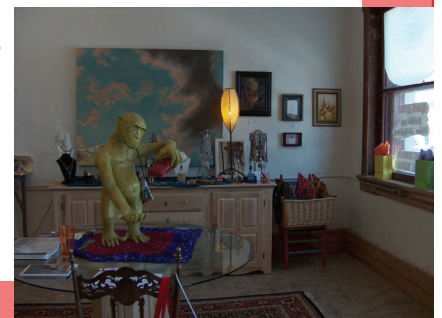
Katherine believes that Wabaunsee County has so far supported her business well. She came to this area looking for a safe and small community and a “quality school system,” which is what she got. Katherine believes the county is a great place to publicize her work and her business, and that she will be able to build very strong connections with others. She would like to have any opportunity she could to further publicize the arts and crafts in her gallery, as well as the function of her business. She would like to expand her activities as well and make herself available to do local portraits of anyone interested.

The majority of Katherine’s customers is split between the local population and tourists visiting the county.

In five years, Katherine hopes The Subtle Eye and the Alma Community Art Center will be very solid, active, and thriving. She hopes to be hosting numerous workshops for anyone wanting to work on their art. She also believes that summers will be very busy with tourists.

To Katherine, the advantages of having her business in Wabaunsee County is the affordable space, convenient location, and the town of Alma itself. She is trying to take advantage of the idea to work together with other businesses in Alma, such as the Wabaunsee County Museum. She believes that there are some core businesses in Wabaunsee County that do very well, and in time hopes to establish hers as a core business also. When asked if there are disadvantages to being a business person in this county, Katherine immediately replied, “Not for me. This is a very welcoming community.”

The gallery is located at 309 Missouri Avenue, Alma, KS 66401. Phone: (785) 765-3773.



Six Myths about the Future of Small Towns

When people of vision work together to get things done, many myths about small towns' viability prove untrue. That's the main point of a pamphlet from the Heartland Center for Leadership Development on six small town myths.

Myth #1. Town that are "too small" have no future.

Reality. *There is no mythical size at which a town can survive. Heartland Center research shows that even very small towns can manage to survive through thoughtful planning, entrepreneurial genius and hard work.*

Myth #2. A community's location is key to its survival.

Reality. *In an information age, leadership, not location, is the most important factor in community survival.*

Myth #3. Industrial recruitment is the best strategy for economic development.

Reality. *Communities must adopt a broad-based economic development plan that supports existing businesses and encourages entrepreneurship.*

Myth #4. Small towns can't compete in the global economy.

Reality. *Small towns throughout America are home to an amazing variety of highly sophisticated, entrepreneurial successes.*

Myth #5. The "best people" leave small towns as soon as they can.

Reality. *Many talented and capable people choose the quality of small town living.*

Myth #6. The rural and urban economies are not interdependent.

Reality. *Many city residents often forget that our essential raw materials need dynamic rural infrastructures to move to an urban market.*

(Taken from "101 More Ideas on Economic Development" by Cal Clark)

Small Business Success

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development has completed a new study on "What's Behind Small Business Success." Heartland researchers interviewed more than 50 Nebraska small town businesses, chosen as the most successful businesses by their local chambers of commerce. The study identified seven reasons for their success.

The study found that successful small businesses:

1. **Utilized a variety of research methods and sources of financing.** Owners looked for advice from other area business leaders, took advantage of training opportunities, and were resourceful in obtaining business financing.
2. **Know their market, its customers, and trends.** Identifying a market niche also helped small businesses compete in a competitive retail environment.
3. **Continually evaluate customer satisfaction through methods such as surveys, questionnaires, or customer interviews.**
4. **Reinvest a large portion of their proceeds back into projects such as remodeling facilities or modernizing equipment.** Long work hours are also normal.
5. **Know their strengths and weaknesses.** They respond quickly to new business developments, which helps them take advantage of other opportunities.
6. **Take qualified risks.** However, their decisions are based on thoughtful analysis, not impulse. They are guided by long-term plans.
7. **Exploit resources and technology to maximize their advantages.** The use of telemarketing, "800" numbers, catalogue sales, fax machines, and commercial overnight shipping capabilities have made it easier to operate a business in rural areas.

(Taken from "101 More Ideas on Economic Development by Cal Clark)

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Wabaunsee County
"Small Towns, Big Opportunities"

Wabaunsee County Economic Development (WCED) is a department of the county and acts in a variety of areas benefiting the communities and residents of Wabaunsee County. It is the goals of WCED to enable success in the communities of Wabaunsee County and all things associated with creating an economy that is viable for years to come.

Rural America is facing great challenges in keeping its economies alive and the values and identity that make Rural America such a special place!

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Abby Amick at the WCED Office!
We are open 8:00am -4:30pm, Monday-

Get this Newsletter at Your Home!

You are reading only the seventh newsletter for WCED so we are looking for feedback. What are things you like....or don't like? Are there subjects or articles you would like to see in the next addition of the *Wabaunsee County Economic Scoop*? Please tell us!

You can receive the *Wabaunsee County Economic Scoop* right in the comfort of your own home— via postal mail or email! We're also on the web— www.wabaunsee.com!

If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically or by mail please contact WCED at 785-765-4655 or wcedc@embarqmail.com

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