

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2002 - 2022

Rice County, Kansas



February, 2002

**RICE COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
2002-2022**

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INTRODUCTION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Rice County Comprehensive Plan, including the participating cities represented on the Rice County Joint Planning Commission, has been a collaborative effort involving many people within Rice County. The following are acknowledged for significant contributions to the work of preparing the Comprehensive Plan.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Beverly Ooley, County Commissioner

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Joan Davison, County Clerk

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Darrell Hoelscher, Bushton Mayor

Ron Wilcox, Chase Mayor

Donald Pruitt, Geneseo Mayor

Daniel Stephenson, Little River Mayor

Chris Hamilton, Frederick Mayor

Charles Nichols, Lyons Mayor

Paul Reed, Raymond Mayor

Clay Thomas, Sterling Mayor

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RICE COUNTY JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION:

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J. L. Herold, Vice-Chair

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Delbert Hoelscher, Planning Commissioner

Ed Fair, Planning Commissioner

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The preparation of the Comprehensive Plan for Rice County, Kansas, was prepared in significant part with funding provided by the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing - Community Capacity Building Grant.

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PLAN OVERVIEW

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide to the future development of Rice County and each of the participating cities within the county. It recommends policies and strategies for economic development, housing, land use, major streets and community facilities and services. Because it is a guide, the Comprehensive Plan must be viewed as a flexible document and should be reviewed annually to ensure relevance to the changing conditions present with the community. Major updates should be considered on no more than a ten year cycle.

How does the Comprehensive Plan differ from the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations?

While the Comprehensive Plan is a legal document authorized by state statutes, it establishes no regulatory requirements by the County or any of the participating cities. As such, none of the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan are enforceable as law. However, the Comprehensive Plan does carry legal weight in decisions made on zoning and platting matters, which are the subjects of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. Zoning decisions, when based on and consistent with an adopted Comprehensive Plan, are presumed reasonable and make challenges to those decisions much harder to prove to have

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been arbitrary or capricious. This is why the content of the Comprehensive Plan is important to the County, the participating cities and the citizens of the County.

What is the relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Regulations?

As stated above, the Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document. It establishes the "vision" of the community for itself into the future, but there is no way the Plan itself can provide a legal requirement for that "vision" to become reality. It is only through the regulatory actions of the County or any of the participating cities that the Plan can be implemented. The most common of these "regulatory actions" is the adoption of Zoning Regulations. To be effective in carrying out the Plan, the Zoning Regulations must promote new development consistent with the "vision" of the Comprehensive Plan. It is common practice to revise the Zoning Regulations after an update to the Comprehensive Plan since there are often new policies and new ideas in the Plan the community wishes to see occur.

Who prepared the Comprehensive Plan?

The Rice County Joint Planning Commission, with the assistance of a Planning Consultant, prepared the Comprehensive Plan. The Rice County Joint Planning Commission was created by agreement between Rice County and the cities of Alden,

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Bushton, Chase, Geneseo, Little River and Raymond. The Joint Planning Commission functions as the “official planning agency” for the County and these cities, rather than each creating its own Planning Commission. Under state law, it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to prepare the Plan; however the Comprehensive Plan is not considered “adopted” until approved by each of the Governing Bodies.

Who is responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Plan?

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be the joint responsibility of the Rice County Joint Planning Commission and the Governing Bodies of all the participating local governments. Implementation of a Comprehensive Plan generally comes through the subsequent adoption of regulatory documents such as Zoning Regulation, Subdivision Regulations, Building Codes, and other similar documents. Thereafter, as individual decisions are made on rezonings, plats, building permits and the like, those decisions can be measured against the stated policies and goals and objectives of the adopted Comprehensive Plan. Such evaluation prior to making those decisions is significant in that a decision made in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan is considered reasonable and less likely to be overturned in the event of a legal challenge.

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What does the Comprehensive Plan say about development issues that should be addressed in the Subdivision Regulations?

The Subdivision Regulations establish the procedures and improvement requirements for persons wishing to divide land into new building sites, regardless of the zoning classification and ultimate use of those properties. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the pace of development in Rice County and its participating cities is relatively slow. However, as new development does occur, it is important that the Subdivision Regulations provide clarity on the policies of the County and each city toward new development and the standards and requirements of infrastructure improvements to support that development. In particular, clear policies and procedures for improvements to streets, utilities and drainage structures should be incorporated within the Subdivision Regulations.

What does the Comprehensive Plan say about extraterritorial regulations for the cities in the 3-mile areas in Rice County?

The City of Lyons and the City of Sterling presently have Zoning and Subdivision Regulations in effect for a portion of its extraterritorial jurisdiction in Rice County. Since none of the other cities have regulations, no extraterritorial jurisdiction exists for these cities. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that all of the unincorporated area of Rice

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County become subject to the jurisdiction of Rice County's regulations, but that an "area of influence" be established around all the incorporated cities and provisions be made to solicit comments from those cities prior to new development in that area.

What does the Comprehensive Plan identify as the most significant development issue facing Rice County?

The most significant issue facing Rice County is to develop better methods to manage the non-farm development within the unincorporated portion of the county. Ideally, this would be achieved by seeing more of the development locating within the incorporated cities of the county. However, realistically, it is incumbent upon the county to find ways to address the development demands in the rural areas without discouraging that development entirely.

What does the Comprehensive Plan say about housing affordability?

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the affordability of housing within the county is critical to the ability to attract and retain young families to live in Rice County. The policies outlined in the Plan are aimed at maintaining competitiveness with the surrounding communities with respect to housing while leaving much of the individual decisions to the open market.

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If the land use and zoning recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented, what will change in Rice County?

The challenge to Rice County in implementing the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan will be in maintaining the balance of meeting the needs and demands of existing residents and businesses, while addressing the impacts of proposals to develop new land. The pressures to have new development within the county under rules and regulations designed to protect the taxpayers interests in extending services in a fair and cost-effective manner is the greatest challenge to all involved.

Also, the implementation of land use regulations in the unincorporated areas and smaller cities will present unique challenges and opportunities to the county and all cities involved. A concerted "education" effort must be made to inform the residents and landowners of the value and benefit of these actions. The magic in this effort is to find value in these measures that result in a "win-win" situation for all concerned.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PLANNING PROCESS

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan for a community is intended to be the most visible part of the planning process. The role of the Comprehensive Plan is to set the direction for the future growth and development of the community. This direction is developed through the official planning bodies of the community (the Planning Commission and governing body) and should be supported by a commitment to engage the local citizenry in the planning process. This is a noble endeavor, but is one that can be difficult to effectively accomplish. However, the rewards of a successful participatory planning process can be felt within the community for years.

A lack of knowledge of the historical, sociological, economic, environmental, and psychological roots of a community can result in uninformed decisions based on perceptions that can have negative effects on the community. Human nature tends to focus on the present situation rather than take a structured look to the future. Citizen input and involvement is often shrouded in an atmosphere of perceived crisis. As a result, communities have a tendency to be "reactionary" rather than "proactionary" in their decision-making process. The Comprehensive Planning process should provide the foundation for developing a "proactionary" plan and vision for the community.

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To allow planning to work for the community, it is important to understand what is involved in the planning process. The planning process can be summarized as:

- * an analysis of existing conditions and characteristics of the community;
- * the application of accepted planning principles;
- * development of goals and objectives for future development, and;
- * creation of policies to guide future decisions and actions.

Because the Comprehensive Plan gives a long-range perspective for directing the future course of a community, it is beneficial to comprehend the Plan's interrelationships. A clear understanding of existing conditions within Rice County and the participating cities, coupled with a carefully structured set of goals and objectives, serve as the framework for the Comprehensive Plan. From this planning framework, policies for directing future land use and development decisions can be developed. Implementation of the plan might include such things as adopting Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, establishing a code enforcement program, enhancing existing assistance programs and services, or establishing entirely new programs and services. All of these implementation actions would be intended to carry out the goals and objectives and implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

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PLANNING JURISDICTION

The Comprehensive Plan for Rice County and the participating cities is intended to provide the all participants with a set of development policies, recommendations for future actions, and a Future Land Use Plan that will help guide the future growth and development. The Plan covers all of the unincorporated portion of Rice County and the cities of Alden, Bushton, Chase, Geneseo, Little River and Raymond. The planning period is from 2002 to 2022.

REASONS FOR ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This plan is to be used by both public and private officials in guiding decisions dealing with land use, public programs and services, and investments in public facilities. In particular, decisions such as where to locate new housing projects, determining the best location for new commercial and industrial developments, deciding which road improvement might best foster additional private investment in the community, and identifying where annexations might be in the best interests of the annexing city can all be guided by the Plan. By following the policies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan it is possible to more efficiently control the cost of providing public services to the citizenry of Rice County and the participating cities of Alden, Bushton, Chase, Geneseo, Little River and Raymond.

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While the final Comprehensive Plan will contain specific goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations for future action, it must be understood that the Comprehensive Plan is just a guide document based on existing conditions and current understandings of the trends and directions of public and private investments. These conditions, along with local concerns, priorities and attitudes will change over the course of time and must be reviewed and incorporated into the Plan on a periodic basis. Statutorily, the Plan must be reviewed annually by the Planning Commission. A comprehensive update will not be necessary annually, but the County and the participating cities should not wait more than 10 years to perform a comprehensive update.

Change may not occur as fast in Rice County as it does in other parts of the state, but the pace at which change does occur, coupled with the impacts of regional and/or national trends, can be felt in Rice County and its cities much faster than once was the case. A commitment by the County and the participating cities to make a strong planning program a major part of the local government process is vitally important in allowing the County and cities to be responsive to change when it occurs. Such an effort, coupled with an active and informed Joint Planning Commission, will allow this Plan to remain a dynamic document that will consistently reflect local attitudes and concerns, and serve the County and participating cities well for years to come.

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REASONS FOR ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This Plan is divided into four sections: 1) Planning Goals, 2) Plan Elements, 3) Future Development Plan, and 4) Plan Implementation.

Planning Goals – The first section presents the planning goals and objectives for Rice County and the participating cities on the plan elements addressed within the Comprehensive Plan. These were developed by the Joint Planning Commission following an evaluation of the “issues and concerns” expressed by the community stakeholders in a planning exercise conducted at the beginning of the planning process.

Plan Elements – The second section provides an analysis of each of the elements of the plan. These include: 1) Population and Growth, 2) Housing, 3) Transportation, 4) Utilities, 5) Drainage and Flooding, 6) Community Services and Facilities, 7) Educational System, 8) Economic Development, and 9) Land Use. Each element is analyzed from a planning perspective and concludes with the planning implications and proposed policies or recommendations.

Future Development Plan – The third section presents the Future Development Plan for Rice County and the participating cities of Alden, Bushton, Chase, Geneseo, Little River and Raymond. It presents the recommendations for future land uses, a major street plan, a community facilities plan, and economic development initiatives.

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Plan Implementation – The fourth and final section outlines the steps to be taken in order to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The steps address implementation initiatives for the future land use recommendations, future major street recommendations, future community facilities recommendations, and future economic development recommendations. It also provides an implementation schedule and other implementation considerations for Rice County and the participating cities.

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Section 1 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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SECTION 1 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chapter 1 – Public Participation

Introduction

Introduction

The planning process must include an effort to engage the public in the deliberations for the future of the community. In order to achieve this participation, the Sabetha Planning Commission hosted two open meetings in June, 2000, for the purpose of inviting the general public to assist in identifying and Issues and Concerns for the future of Sabetha. These meetings were held on consecutive nights in order to afford a greater number of persons to participate in the process. This was in recognition of the busy schedules at that time of year for so many people within the community.

With the assistance of City staff, a mailing list was generated that identified specific “stakeholders” within the community that were invited directly. In addition, a notice was published in the local newspaper to extend an open invitation to anyone wishing to participate. In total, approximately 50 people provided their thoughts, ideas, issues and concerns to the Planning Commission to be used in the planning process.

At the meetings, the residents present were provided a packet of papers with a brief cover narrative and a series of sheets with headings of the planning elements contained

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within this plan. The residents were asked to make whatever observations, comments or statements they felt appropriate.

The Planning Commission has reviewed these comments and noted their significance throughout the development of this plan. The verbatim responses from those meetings are available for review at the City Offices.

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Section 2 - PLANNING GOALS

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SECTION 2 - PLANNING GOALS

MISSION STATEMENT

The focus of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish the foundation for effective management of development within Rice County. To that end, the mission of the Plan is to encourage as much development as possible to the incorporated cities within Rice County. This includes the cities of Alden, Bushton, Chase, Geneseo, Little River and Raymond, all of whom are participating in the Joint Planning Commission preparing this Plan; as well as the cities of Lyons, Sterling and Frederick, which either have existing Planning Commissions or which chose not to participate. In addition, the mission is to provide assurances to the greatest extent possible that development in the rural areas is well planned, does not place undue demands for new services on tax-supported entities, and will contribute to the maintenance of the agricultural and rural residential nature of the unincorporated part of Rice County.

Goals and objectives for any community are intended to identify the aspirations and intentions of the citizens of that community with respect to various topics or "elements" of the planning process. While some may consider such statements to be "lofty" and of little real value to the present condition; the direction in which a community wishes to grow, both in terms of physical direction as well as social direction, is dependent upon a communities understanding and acceptance of the "vision" such goals and objectives are intended to define.

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The Rice County Joint Planning Commission engaged members of the public in an "Issues and Concerns" exercise intended to elicit the opinion of "stakeholders" within the community on the various "elements" of the Plan. Thereafter, the Joint Planning Commission reviewed those comments and spent considerable time developing the goals and objectives stated herein. Each of the stated goals and supporting objectives received considerable thought and were developed with the interests of the citizens of Rice County and the participating cities in mind. It is the intent of the Joint Planning Commission that the goals and objectives stated herein be viewed as a statement of "vision" for future of Rice County.

GOALS FOR POPULATION AND GROWTH

PG-1 GOAL: **ENCOURAGE AND EXPAND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COUNTY AND THE PARTICIPATING CITIES TO PROMOTE ACTUAL GROWTH WITHIN THE COUNTY.**

PG-A OBJECTIVE: Promote the development of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses to create job opportunities to attract new residents to the county and retain the youth within the communities.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

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RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, all Chambers of Commerce, Rice County Economic Development, etc.

PG-B OBJECTIVE: Work with real estate businesses and financial institutions to encourage a competitive real estate market and to enhance the opportunities for a wide variety of development projects for Rice County and the participating communities.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

GOALS FOR HOUSING

HG-1 GOAL: WORK TO ASSURE DECENT, SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL RICE COUNTY RESIDENTS.

HO-A OBJECTIVE: Promote improvement of the quality of housing in the rural areas of Rice County and the participating cities' neighborhoods where substandard quality exists.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

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RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

HO-B OBJECTIVE: Promote a wide range of housing choices at appropriate locations throughout the county and each city. This includes a mix of rental and multi-family housing properly sited within existing neighborhoods in the cities.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

HO-C OBJECTIVE: Promote housing types sensitive to the demographic profile of the community. In particular, attention should be paid to the housing needs of a growing elderly population.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

HO-D OBJECTIVE: Encourage the renovation and rehabilitation of housing units where practical, and the removal of housing units deemed uninhabitable, unsafe, or beyond repair. Utilization of the

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Neighborhood Revitalization program is encouraged.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

HO-E OBJECTIVE: Encourage residential development inside the cities on existing vacant lots or as new residential developments.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

HO-F OBJECTIVE: Discourage scattered rural housing within the Rice County. Encourage the formation of properly designed rural subdivisions that are supported by adequate infrastructure.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

HO-G OBJECTIVE Recognize the use of manufactured homes as an affordable housing solution for many people and seek to locate these units in appropriate locations within the county. By law, Zoning Regulations will accommodate the location of residential-designed manufactured homes throughout the

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county. The placement of manufactured homes not meeting the residential-designed standards should be sited within established parks or on suitable sites in the rural areas and not scattered among existing neighborhoods.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

GOALS FOR TRANSPORTATION

TR-1 GOAL: PROVIDE AN EFFICIENT AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DESIGNED TO MOVE PEOPLE AND GOODS WITHIN AND AROUND THE COUNTY AND EACH OF THE PARTICIPATING CITIES.

TRO-A OBJECTIVE: Promote improvement to traffic flows within and through the county by proper use and development of all the street classifications.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, etc.

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TRO-B OBJECTIVE: Promote the development and use of alternative modes of transportation and the infrastructure necessary to support the same within the county.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, state and federal highway officials, etc.

TRO-C OBJECTIVE: Ensure that new development does not negatively impact the existing transportation system nor place demands for major upgrades to the transportation system in an untimely manner.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

TRO-D OBJECTIVE: Discourage unplanned residential development along major arterial routes in the unincorporated areas.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

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TRO-E OBJECTIVE: Promote the enhancement of regional transportation improvements that will benefit the county. Strongly support those major road improvements included in the Kansas Highway Improvement Plan. Further, promote improvements to Highway 96 and Highway 56 to enhance the county's future development.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, state and federal highway officials, etc.

TRO-F OBJECTIVE: Establish construction standards within the Subdivision Regulations outlining appropriate requirements for improvements to roads and streets in new subdivisions.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

TRO-G OBJECTIVE: Establish guidelines within the Subdivision Regulations for improvements to existing roads and streets impacted by proposed developments, including an impact fee where appropriate.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

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RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

TRO-H OBJECTIVE: Support the provision of special transportation needs through programs at the county level or by private means.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, state and federal highway officials, etc.

GOALS FOR UTILITIES

US-1 GOAL: PROMOTE THE EXTENSION OF UTILITY SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE SAFE AND AFFORDABLE UTILITY SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTY AND ALL THE CITIES WITHIN THE COUNTY.

USO-A OBJECTIVE: Encourage the delivery of public water services to as much of the county as practical. Continued development utilizing on-site water supplies is not in the long-term best interest of the county nor its citizens.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, rural water districts, etc.

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USO-B OBJECTIVE: Assure the adequate provision of water and sewer facilities and services in coordination with growth areas identified in the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan. Areas beyond the city limits receiving infrastructure improvements from those cities should be considered for annexation in the near future.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

USO-C OBJECTIVE: Update and enhance the Environmental Codes of Rice County to assure the standards and requirements for on-site water and wastewater systems promote the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

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GOALS FOR DRAINAGE AND FLOODING

DF-1 GOAL: **PROMOTE THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF THE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS WITHIN RICE COUNTY, ESPECIALLY IN RECOGNIZED FLOODPLAINS. RECOGNIZE THAT CERTAIN AREAS OF THE COUNTY ARE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH DEVELOPMENT AND THEREFORE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT BE ENCOURAGED WITHIN THOSE AREAS.**

DFO-A OBJECTIVE: Identify areas subject to drainage problems and in the floodplain within the county and the participating cities which should be protected from encroachment of new developments consistent with the floodplain regulations.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

DFO-B OBJECTIVE: Work with the Watershed Districts to identify and protect breach impact areas below watershed structures within Rice County.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

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RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, watershed district officials, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

DFO-C OBJECTIVE: Promote "best management practices" in new developments to protect from erosion and sedimentation pollution in surface waters within the county.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

GOALS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

CSFG-1 GOAL: PLAN AND PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN RICE COUNTY IN ORDER THAT PROPER DEVELOPMENT IS NOT RESTRICTED AND TO HELP MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE THE LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE AND STANDARD OF LIVING.

CSFO-A OBJECTIVE: Locate all public and semi-public land uses in accordance with their individual service area requirements, transportation access needs and utility demands in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

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TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

CSFO-B OBJECTIVE: Promote design guidelines and controls for public and semi-public land uses which insure compatibility with surrounding areas, enhance the values of the natural landscape and serve as examples of the quality of development desired within the community.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

CSFO-C OBJECTIVE: Provide parks and permanent green spaces where appropriate in order to meet growing recreational needs, protect floodplains and wildlife habitats, buffer adjacent land uses, and enhance property values.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

CSFO-D OBJECTIVE: Encourage improvements to the surface drainage system in the cities through improved design standards in the Subdivision Regulations and by committing to an expansion of the existing storm sewer system.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

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RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

GOALS FOR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

ESG-1 GOAL: RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE WITHIN RICE COUNTY AND SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF THE SCHOOLS WITHIN THE COUNTY.

ESO-A OBJECTIVE: Support the continuation of existing school systems within Rice County.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, school district officials, etc.

ESO-B OBJECTIVE: Support expansion of programs and services from colleges to provide greater opportunities for continued education and job training for the residents of Rice County.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, college officials, etc.

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GOALS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EDG-1 GOAL: **ENCOURAGE THE EXPANSION OF BUSINESS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN RICE COUNTY THROUGH A STRONG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.**

EDO-A OBJECTIVE: Promote continuing education and skills training through established outreach programs and other local services and facilities to encourage residents of all ages to continue to live and work in Rice County.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, school officials, Rice County Economic Development, etc.

EDO-B OBJECTIVE: Continue to use and support local Economic Development resources to enhance Rice County's competitive position in retaining existing and attracting new jobs to Rice County.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, Rice County Economic Development, lenders, etc.

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EDO-C OBJECTIVE: Promote business and industrial development consistent with the overall quality of life within Rice County, that would benefit the county's economy and not adversely affect the environment. Efforts should focus on supplementing business types already in existence within the county and promoting development of new businesses compatible with the established business and skill base within the county.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, Rice County Economic Development, etc.

EDO-D OBJECTIVE: Assist in the identification of appropriate sites for business and industrial growth and assist in extending public facilities and services to these sites as appropriate or necessary.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, Rice County Economic Development, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

EDO-E OBJECTIVE: Develop Land Use Regulations and development guidelines to assure that business and industrial development receives protection from conflicting land uses when possible. Such

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regulations and guidelines would serve as a tool to attract new business and industrial development to Rice County.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

EDO-F OBJECTIVE: Develop and annually update a Capital Improvement Plan to outline the priorities for improvements within the county supportive of new business and industrial development, economic growth, and enhancement of the county's overall quality of life.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

EDO-G OBJECTIVE: Commit to expansion and/or enhancement of industrial park space within the county, developed with all utilities for immediate use.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, Rice County Economic Development, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

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EDO-H OBJECTIVE: Continually evaluate the use of the Enterprise Zone as a tool to encourage economic development. Where appropriate, adjust the Enterprise Zone boundaries to maximize its successful implementation.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, Rice County Economic Development, etc.

EDO-I OBJECTIVE: Develop regulations that do not unduly restrict mixed-use activities within the county, especially "home-based industries."

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

GOALS FOR LAND USE

LU-1 GOAL: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ORDERLY AND EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF LAND WHICH WILL ACHIEVE A FISCALLY SOUND AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE COUNTY, WHILE MAXIMIZING COMPATIBILITY AMONG LAND USES.

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LUO-A OBJECTIVE: Ensure that future development occurs in a timely fashion and is adequately served by roads, sewers, water and other public facilities and services.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

LUO-B OBJECTIVE: Protect the fiscal position of Rice County and the participating cities by ensuring that future development occurs in a cost-effective manner.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, townships, etc.

LUO-C OBJECTIVE: Minimize land use incompatibilities and ensure that adjacent developments are comparable in density and quality, thereby providing for a smooth transition between land uses.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

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LUO-D OBJECTIVE: Coordinate future development with the physical environment, placing a premium upon developing in harmony with existing natural features.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

LUO-E OBJECTIVE: Provide regulatory programs that encourage and reward innovative site planning which reduces costs to the public.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

LUO-F OBJECTIVE: Plan for the timely annexation of developed areas adjacent to the existing cities and work toward annexing properties prior to actual development. This will help assure development that is consistent with city standards and will enhance overall property values.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, etc.

LUO-G OBJECTIVE: Discourage new strip commercial development that is not promoted in a unified, consistent manner. Individual lot developments for single purposes that fail to coordinate

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with adjoining property development should be discouraged.

TIMEFRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Rice County, all cities, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers, etc.

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Section 3 – PLAN ELEMENTS

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

Chapter 3 - History

Introduction History Overview

Introduction

An important part of the planning process is an understanding of the history of the community, at least in terms of an historical perspective of the past actions that have resulted in the community of today. In other words, an understanding of the major events occurring in the past that contributed to the physical and social character of the community. This knowledge is important for planning purposes only to the extent of knowing the broad issues.

This is not an attempt to create an analysis of the many historical events within Rice County's past. Many of those events are only given topical acknowledgement. For a more in depth understanding of the historical issues within Rice County's past, one must research other sources.

History Overview

The following is a summary excerpt from William G. Cutler's *History of the State of Kansas*, first published in 1883 by A. T. Andreas, Chicago, Illinois.

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- Location

Rice County, the central county of Kansas, was created by the Legislature of 1867, and was organized August 18, 1871. Its special County Clerk was Edward H. Dunham, its special County Commissioners were Daniel M. Bell, Theodore A. Davis and Evan C. Jones; temporary county seat Atlanta, which was located on the north one-half of Section 9, Township 20, Range 8, west of the sixth principal meridian.

It was named in honor of Samuel A. Rice, Brigadier General of United States Volunteers, who was killed at Jenkins Ferry, Ark., April 30, 1864.

Rice County embraces Ranges 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Townships 18, 19, 20 and 21. Its northern boundary is 102 miles from Nebraska; its eastern, 179 miles from Missouri; its southern, 81 miles from Indian Territory; its western, 194 miles from Colorado. It is bounded north by Ellsworth, east by McPherson, south by Reno, west by Stafford and Barton counties.

Four counties lie between it and Nebraska; seven, between it and Missouri; three, between it and the Indian Territory; seven, between it and Colorado. It is twenty-four miles across it from north to south, thirty miles from east to west, having an area of 720 square miles. Its original area was 900 square miles. It embraced Township 22 in Ranges 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, now Reno.

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- EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTY.

February 28, 1870, John A. Carlson homesteaded the northeast quarter of Section 3, Township 20, Range 6; Andrew John Johnson the northwest quarter of said section; C. S. Lindell the southeast quarter, April 4, 1870; August Johnson located a claim on the southeast quarter of Section 25 in the same town and range; John Enrick Johnson on the northeast quarter of said section; John P. Johnson on the east half of the northwest quarter of Section 24, said town and range. April 18, 1870; O. W. Peterson on the northeast quarter of Section 14 of the same town and range, August 20, 1870; R. M. Hutchinson, A. J. Howard and J. E. Perdue (firm of Hutchison & Co.) stopped upon the Little Arkansas River with 4,000 head of cattle. Messrs. Howard and Perdue located their claims in January, 1871.

March 1, 1872, a Sunday school was organized, and preaching had in Mr. H. P. Ninde's house, Rev. J. B. Schlichter. superintendent.

In April, 1871, Isaac Schoonover built his house on Plum Creek, hauling the lumber for it from Salina, sixty miles.

In November, 1872 O. Y. Smith built his house, bringing from Peoria, Ill., the brick for his chimney, having the first farmhouse in the county with a brick chimney.

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Buffaloes were very plentiful in the spring and summer of 1871 in Rice County, and their meat was of great value to the early settlers. Leonard Loomis, on the day he was seventy five years old, killed five buffaloes at seven shots.

April 19, 1872, at 8 o'clock P. M., on the Santa Fe trail, near Little Cow Creek, in Atlanta Township, Probate Judges (sic) Levi Jay, by the silver light of the moon, united in marriage Daniel M. Bell and Miss Mary M. Houks.

April 3. 1871, Rev. F. J. Griffith turned the first furrow on his claim. In the same month P. G. Carter commenced breaking on the southwest quarter of Section 15, Township 20, Range 8.

June 23, 1872, a Sunday school was organized at Williston and Magoffin's Hall, at Atlanta; Dr. Henry Fones was elected superintendent; Mrs. William Lowrey and Mrs. F. Chitty, assistant superintendents; Mrs. M. Williston, secretary; W. T. Nicholas, assistant secretary.

August 10, 1882, Mr. Nicholas was a somewhat prominent candidate for Auditor in the Republican State Convention. August 31. 1882, William L. Brown, of Sterling was made the Democratic candidate far State Auditor, and at the polls, Rice County. gave him twenty majority, while Republican majorities in the county reached as high as 179.

H. L. Millard, of Sterling, on January 9, 1883, was elected Chief Clerk of the Kansas House of Representatives.

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June 28, 1873, The Rice County Agricultural Society was formed. John M. Muscott was elected president; William C. Summer, vice-president; G. W. Voyls, secretary; T. C. Magoffin, treasurer; Moses Birch, Alexander Clark, M. J. Morse, J. H. Ricksecker, S. B. Terry and T. H. Watt, directors. During the year its membership reached 100. The society held a fair at Atlanta September 24 and 25, 1873. In 1877, at the Arkansas Valley Agricultural Society, Wilson Keys was chosen president; William R. Lee, vice-president; J. H. Stubbs, secretary; Samuel Jacobs, treasurer.

The Rice County Horticultural Society was organized November 8, 1871: Rev. J. B. Schlichter, president; Dr. George Bohrer, vice-president; C. Taber, secretary; S. B. Hampton, treasurer.

The Kansas Cane Growers and Manufacturers Association was organized at Sterling, December 29, 1881. Its officers were as follows: President, Reginald M. Sandys, of Sterling; Vice-President, John Bennyworth, Larned; Treasurer, J. V. Brinkman, Great Bend; Secretary, R. M. Rugg, Marion; Assistant-Secretary, W. E. Fostnot, Little River.

January 1, 1872, James A. Moore and Ada Cartwright were married by Judge Levi Jay. An early marriage in the county was that of Amelia, daughter of Rev. F. J. Griffith, to W. T. Nicholas.

John Quincy Adams, of Massachusetts, located at the mouth of Little Cow Creek in 1870.

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Nelson Reed, who settled on Section 15, Township 20, Range 8, in 1870, claims to have been the first settler that found the first corner stone in the count erected by Government surveyors, which was located on Section 18 of said township and range. He made the first trip among the settlers to Ellsworth for provisions.

Leonard Russell came to the county in November, 1870. There were then four white men in the county.

Union City, the headquarters of the Ohio Colony, located about three miles southeast of Atlanta, was the locality where Edward Swanson murdered P. B. Shannon by shooting him, August 27, 1871. Swanson fled, and was never arrested or punished for his crime, though James J. Spencer, the Sheriff, started to make the arrest, but never returned to Rice County. Spencer, the northwestern township of the county, named after Spencer, was afterward changed to Farmer. It is said that Shannon, a short time before this occurrence, remarked, "You must kill a man, before you can have a graveyard."

John Chitty, aged eighteen years, son of Ferguson Chitty, died August 28, 1871, the first death among the settlers.

In September, 1871, in Atlanta Township, George and Angie, twin children of Robert and Elizabeth McKinnis, were born; in Union Township, a son of T. Cowger.

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The first train of cars that passed through Rice County was on July 22, 1872, the line having been opened from Hutchinson to Larned.

The Salina, Atlanta & Raymond Railway Company was organized in 1872, and Rice County voted to its aid \$175,000, but it became defunct.

It is reported that, in 1863, a train of emigrants was broken up near the Plum Buttes, in Farmer Township, and William Magee reported to Historian Muscott. Two miles from there, on the trail, in April, 1874, he found in the vicinity broken and partly burned wagons, plows, barrels, tubs, boxes and earthenware, and that for miles there lay scattered around unworn boots and shoes, crisped by prairie fires and the scorching sun, with other articles, indicating the place to have been the scene of a general massacre, as a row of graves was visible, for some years after, near this spot. Directly east of the Buttes, in a basin surrounded by sand hills, a small party of Mexicans were surprised, and all butchered, at about the same time of the first event. Tradition has it, that in 1846, a man by the name of Jarvis was murdered near the creek that bears his name, by three doctors, who were his companions, from the mountains. He was said to have much money.

Blackman E. Lawrence, County Treasurer of Rice County, in October, 1876, proclaimed that the safe of the County Treasurer was robbed of \$9,000. Treasurer Lawrence resigned November 25, 1876, and was succeeded by Patton Himrod, who had been appointed by the County Commissioners. William T. Drew, of Burlingame, who had been County Clerk of Osage County six years, was employed as an expert, and a report was made in December that there was a deficit of \$18,126. Mr.

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Lawrence was arrested and held for trial. A change of venue having been taken to Reno County, the trial commenced a (sic) Hutchinson in January, 1878, and in February, on a jury verdict of guilty, Judge Peters sentenced the prisoner three years to the State penitentiary.

Of the railroad lands in Rice County the A., T. & S. F. Railroad Company had 169,459 acres of which 66,415 acres remained unsold January 1, 1883. The Kansas Division of the U. P. Railroad had 24,456 acres.

The statistics of the county for 1874, show 180,299 taxable acres in Rice County; 12,387 under cultivation; 18,040 bushels of spring wheat; 1,092 of winter wheat; 2,880 of rye; 1,488 of barley; 30,220 of oats; 18 of buckwheat; 450 of sweet potatoes; 3,975 of Irish potatoes; 1,840 gallons of sorghum; 2,463 cattle; 10 sheep; 1,688 swine; 975 horses and mules. Relief bonds were voted by the county to the amount of \$4,000, the vote being 136 to 117. S. T. Kelsey thought 500 persons in the county would need assistance; another correspondent to the State Board of Agriculture reported 450. W. T. Nicholas, County Clerk, reported: There will be unusual suffering in our county the coming winter, but how many families I am not prepared to state correctly. There was not anything raised but some wheat, oats, rye and barley, and very little of the above-mentioned articles, on account of the grasshoppers. Another correspondent reported that three-fourths of the people needed assistance, and added: Having traveled over the largest part of our county, I find that about three-fourths of our people are almost entirely destitute of food, fuel and clothing. Some are now living on boiled wheat, and not half enough of that. The amount of bonds issued will not be half the amount required to support the people until the new crops come in.

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- *The Grasshopper Incursion of 1874.*

The centennial historian of Rice County, John M. Muscott, gives the following sketch of the grasshopper scourge:

"This pest, about the time of the first settlement of the county, had visited us on one or two occasions, and departed without any serious injury. But when they came in 1874, the details of the sufferings of our people at that period, in consequence of this terrible visitation, have been so freely and vividly portrayed through the press of the United States, as to render any extended repetition of them unnecessary at this time. Suffice it to say, that for five days preceding the appearance of the grasshoppers in that year, unusually hot winds from the southwest prevailed, until July 25, when the mercury stood at 106 degrees in the shade, 116 degrees in the sun, at 2 o'clock P. M. On the following day the wind suddenly shifted into the northeast, and about 2 o'clock P. M. the grasshopper storm burst upon us; and they increased in numbers until the 28th, when the climax was reached. The wind shifted on the following day to the south, and remained there until August 1, when it returned into the northeast, and on August 2, a fresh installment came from that quarter, and remained until August 7, when most of them took their departure, the wind still blowing from the northeast.

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"For the first three days after their appearance, the whole heavens were darkened with their presence and the earth with their bodies. They covered every tree and plant, and every green thing -- the prairie and water courses. They flew like hail in the faces of men, dashed themselves against every object, animate and inanimate, and as they rushed through the air or near the earth, and struck an opposing object, the rattle of their contact resembled the sound of a hailstorm on the roof, or the clashing of sabres in the scabbards of a squadron of cavalry at full gallop. Like the frogs and the locusts in Pharaohs time, they were every where.

"When this scourge had fairly settled down upon us, the stoutest hearts quailed before it, and gloom was depicted on every countenance. The plow was left standing midway in the furrow, and for a while all farm labor was virtually suspended. The most gifted pen and the most eloquent tongue are inadequate for the task, for language is too poor to paint the scene of desolation wrought by the grasshoppers of 1874.

"But the silver lining soon rose above the dark cloud. Early in September, copious rains refreshed the parched earth, and thus prepared the way for the most bountiful crops the ensuing year that Kansas ever produced. Relief to the stricken people poured in from abroad, and never was aid more timely and necessary, or even more gratefully received by any people, than it was by the citizens of this county, that

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fall and the ensuing winter. For our people knew and felt that their destitution was not the result of slothfulness or extravagance on their part, and that no human foresight could have averted this calamity. Joyfully and without any humiliation on their part, they received the bounty of others. The scourge of 1874 was not wholly unmixed with blessings, nor without some useful lessons. Mens hearts grew larger and beat with quicker sympathy for each other, in the presence of this wide desolation."

- ELECTIONS AND COUNTY OFFICERS.

The first election held in Rice County was on September 26, 1871. W. T. Nicholas for County Clerk, received all the votes that were cast. Moses Burch, William Lowrey and S. H. Thompson were elected County Commissioners; T. C. Magoffin, County Treasurer; James J. Spencer, Sheriff; J. W. Holmes. Coroner; G. W. Poole, Register of Deeds; T. S. Jackson, County Surveyor; Levi Jay, Probate Judge; H. Decker, County Attorney; William H. Van Omum, Clerk of the District Court. Neither Evan C. Jones or S. H. Thompson acted as County Commissioners, directly following their elections. Atlanta received sixty-four votes for county seat; Union City, about three miles southeast of Atlanta, had forty-eight votes.

At the general election held November 7. 1871, the foregoing named officers were mostly re-elected. J. M. Leidigh was elected a Commissioner in place of S. H. Thompson; Henry Fones was elected Coroner; W. P. Brown, County Attorney; Evan C. Jones, County Surveyor and

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Superintendent of Public Instruction; Rev. F. J. Griffith, Representative to the Legislature, receiving eighty-five votes and seventy-seven majority.

In March, 1872, S. H. Thompson was appointed to succeed J. M. Leidigh as Commissioner. In June T. J. Fulton succeeded W. P. Brown as County Attorney.

November 5, 1872, on the vote for Representative, F. J. Griffith received fifty-nine; H. P. Ninde, eighty-six; William Lowrey ninety-four. Since then its Representatives have been elected as follows: In 1873, Rev. M. J. Morse; 1874, Dr. S. M. Wirt; 1875, Ansel R. Clark; 1876 and 1882, Dr. G. Bohrer; 1878 and 1880, Rev. John G. Eckles.

Rice County at first was in the Twentieth Senatorial District, and J. H. Prescott of Saline was its Senator. Under the next apportionment it was in the Twenty-ninth District, and John H. Edwards of Ellis, and Solomon Stephens of McPherson represented it in the Senate. By the Apportionment Act of 1876 it was located in the Thirty-seventh District, and Thomas T. Taylor of Reno, J. C. Strong of Pawnee and Simon Motz of Ellis have been its Senators. By the Apportionment Act of 1881, with Barton and Rush, it constitutes the Thirty-sixth Senatorial District, and elects a Senator in November, 1884. It is the One Hundredth and First Representative District; it was the One Hundred and Fourteenth by the apportionment of 1876.

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At first Rice County was in the Eighth Judicial District and was attached to Ellsworth County for judicial purposes. W. H. Canfield was then Judge of the Judicial District. In 1872 and since then it has been in the Ninth District, and its Judges have been W. R. Brown, S. R. Peters and L. Houk.

The division of the townships of the county into Commissioner Districts is as follows: First District Farmer, Eureka, Lincoln, Pioneer, Raymond, Center and Valley. Its population in 1880 was 3,109. Second District -- Sterling, Atlanta and Victoria. Its population in 1880 was 3,937. Third District -- Union and Washington. Its population was 2,246 in 1880.

County Commissioners -- Daniel M. Bell, Theodore A. Davis, Evan C. Jones, Moses Burch, J. M. Leidigh, William Lowrey, S. P. Thornpson and Alexander Clark successful contestants against W. L. Smith, Peter Goech, O. Y. Smith, Thomas H. Wible, George D. M. Goff, W. C. Willard, J. K. Miller, J. S. Chapin. James E. Perdue, J. M. L. Gore, George F. Miller, Samuel Cameron and J. C. Seaward. The Commissioner longest in service was William Lowrey.

County Clerks -- Edward H. Dunham, William T. Nicholas and C. M. Rawlings have been the Clerks; Mr. Nicholas having held the office from September, 1871 to January, 1882.

County Treasurers -- T. C. Magoffin, B. E. Lawrence, Patten Himrod and James E. Perdue have been the treasurers.

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Register of Deeds -- G. W. Poole, J. Q. Manning, E. J. Arnold, John W. White, Moses Burch and J. F. Crocker have filled this office.

County Surveyors -- T. S. Jackson, Evan C. Jones, Kirk Himrod, H. P. Colegrove, Warren McClure, Frederic E. Pratt, and Jesse Brown have been the surveyors elected and appointed. Taylor J. K D. Howard, Henry Sherman. W. L

Sheriffs -- James J. Spencer, Joseph Taylor, J. M. D. Howard, Henry Sherman, W. L. Smith and T. A. Butler have been the sheriffs.

Coroners -- J. W. Holmes, Henry Fones, C. W. Hodge, Carlos A. Clobridge and W. M. Lamb have been the coroners elected and appointed.

Clerk of the District Court -- William H. Van Ornum, T. H. Watt, J. H. Stubbs, William R. Lee and S. J. Smith have been the district clerks.

County Attorneys -- W. P. Brown, T. J. Fulton, I. H. Ricksecker, Ansel R. Clark, John M. Muscott, John W. White, A. J. Abbott and J. H. Bailey have been the public prosecutors.

Probate Judges -- Levi Jay, W. B. Connor, G. W. Voyls, C. T. Daniels, S. H. Jones and George W. Clark have been the judges.

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Superintendent of Public Instruction -- Evan C. Jones, R. D. Stephenson, Mrs. N. E. Harley and J. K. Farrar have superintended the public school work.

COUNTY LINES AND COUNTY SEAT.

In the Kansas House of Representatives of 1872 Rev. F. J. Griffith represented Rice County; Rev. C. C. Hutchinson represented Reno County, which had been organized January 1, 1872, and on the 6th day of January had elected Mr. Hutchinson by a vote returned of 112, its Representative to the State Legislature. It was a patent fact that C. C. Hutchinson, et al., of Reno County desired the south tier of the Congressional townships of Rice County so as to make the town of Hutchinson an eligible county seat for Reno, and the interests of Atlanta and the northern portion of Rice County seemed not to be averse to parting with the said Township 22 in Ranges 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, one-fifth of the territory of Rice, so as to prevent Peace, now Sterling, from having good chances of being the county seat of Rice. March 7, 1872, an act took effect placing the territory above named in Reno County, Mr. Hutchinson's bill providing for the same having passed the House February 14 by a vote of 59 to 27, as appears from the journal. Mr. Griffith voted for it, Mr. Hutchison against it.

April 12, 1876, an election was held for the relocation of the county seat with the following result: For Peace (now Sterling), 336; for the Center, 457; majority for the Center 121. The location of the Center was on Section 4, Township 20, Range 8, and four acres of said section was conveyed to Rice County by Truman J. Lyon and wife May 26, 1876, and recorded June 2, 1876. On June 17, an election was held for the purpose of voting on loan and the public buildings, and the proposition was

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carried by a majority of sixty-six. In August, 1876, E. C. Sooy of Great Bend had the contract for erecting the court house at Lyons, (taking its name from Mr. Lyon) for \$10,400. The Commissioners appointed G. W. Fulton superintendent of construction of the court house. The Commissioners accepted the court house from Mr. Sooy, the contractor about June 20, 1877. County Clerk Nicholas took possession of his office in the court house December 20, 1876. The building is of brick and a neat structure. The court house yard is very well adorned with thirty trees. The county has a poor farm valued at about \$3,000. It has free bridges aggregating about \$2,500 in value.

- A Statutory Anomaly.

In chapter 24 of Dasser's Compiled Laws of Kansas, Section 61 defines the boundaries of Reno County and its northern tier of townships, embraces Town 22, of Ranges 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10; while Section 63 of said act in bounding Rice County, locates Town 22, of Ranges 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, as its southern tier of townships, making this same territory of 180 square miles in Section 61, in Reno, and in Section 63, in Rice County. By the last Section, Nickerson, an important railroad station, would be in Rice County, and the southeast corner of Rice County, two miles from Hutchinson, the county seat of Reno.

A future reviser of the statutes of Kansas will undoubtedly take cognizance of this in-harmony of the two co-related Sections of Chapter 24, defining the boundaries of the counties of Reno and Rice.

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SCHOOL MATTERS.

In 1871, there was (sic) 130 persons of school age in the county; in 1872, there was (sic) 293; in 1873, 476; in 1874, 785; in 1875, 913; in 1876, 1,438; in 1877, 1,794; in 1878, 2,577; in 1879, 3,175; in 1881, 3,258; in 1882, 3,488.

The number of organized School Districts in the county in 1872, was 9; in 1873, 14; in 1874, 37; in 1875, 41; in 1876, 50; in 1877, 58; in 1878, 60; in 1879, 62; in 1881, 71; in 1882, 72, with 87 school buildings and 95 school rooms.

The total expenditures for school purposes in 1872, was \$118; for 1873, \$1,629; for 1874, \$8,685; for 1879, \$22,895.33; for 1882, \$49,782.

The total valuation of school property for 1872, was \$486; for 1873, \$11,500; for 1874, \$13,600; for 1875, \$18,546; for 1877, \$21,701; for 1879, \$38,016; for 1882, \$49,782.

The average pay of male teachers per month. In 1882, was \$33.33; of female teachers, \$27.54.

Before the establishment of County Normal Institutes, in 1877, a great deal of interest had been manifested by the teachers of the county in their work, and many teacher's meetings had been held. During the six years of Normal Institutes, the teachers of Rice County have been in attendance upon their Institute in numbers ranging from 50 to 69. The conductors have been H. P. Colegrove, J. R. Campbell, L. T. Gage, H. K. McConnell and W. G. Hamrick. The school at Sterling employs six

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teachers, W. G. Hamrick, principal. Rice County has a Teachers' Association; its President for 1883 is Prof. W. G. Hamrick; its Secretary, Mrs. Annie W. Sollett. It was organized May 25, 1878.

- Rice County School Bonds

The total bonded debt of the School Districts of Rice County, as reported for 1882, was \$34,732. This aggregate does not include the following lot which are a part of the Permanent School Fund Investment, as officially reported, and which bring a historic name for the town of Raymond, the station west of Sterling, on the A., T. & S. Fe Railroad:

(Editor: Table showing 20 bonds of \$500.00 each issued in Rice County, School District 8, all on August 26, 1872, to Andrew Terry, for a total of \$10,000.)

The foregoing described bonds were purchased on October 16, 1872, of B. Haywood, of Topeka, for the sum of \$9,237, by the School Fund Commissioners. A Committee of the senate of 1876, consisting of Messrs. Peifer, of Montgomery; Johnson of Leavenworth, Barnum, of Bourbon; Judd, of Wyandotte, and McMillan, of Linn, submitted a report February 11, 1876, concerning this matter, which is found In the Senate journal, of 1876, pages 254, 255, 256, and 257.

In the House Journal of 1875, pages 541 to 820 inclusive, is a completer (sic) history of the matter, submitted to Speaker Haskell by the Committee on State Affairs, consisting of Messrs. Taylor, of Reno; Brumbaugh, of Marshall; Kellogg, of Clay; Huff, of Wyandotte; and Page, of McPherson.

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In his report for 1875, Atty. Gen. Randolph stated:

"I have brought suit against said District for the sum of \$2,762.80, with interest on \$762.80 of said sum from June 1, 1873, and with interest on \$1,000 of said sum from June 1, 1874, and with interest on \$1,000 of said sum from June 1, 1875; which suit is now pending in the District Court of Rice County."

In his report for 1876, the Attorney-General, in a semi-humorous manner, explains his action in the premises in the following manifesto:

"District No. 8, Rice County, was organized July 18, 1872, and was then bounded as follows: Commencing where the south line of Township 19 intersects the east line of Range 10, west; thence south with said range line to the south line of Township 21; thence west with said township line to the east line of Range 11, west; thence north with said range line to the north line of Township 19; thence east with said township line to the place of beginning said boundaries including a territory twelve miles long and six miles wide, and having almost as many square miles as several of the minor Germanic principalities -- Schwartzburg - Sondershausen, for example."

"At the time said suit was begun, three other school districts (Nos. 38, 39 and 40) had been in part organized out of the territory originally included in District No. 8, so that said district then consisted merely of a sandy, uninhabited and treeless tract of

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land six miles in length and three miles in width, lying wholly south of the Arkansas River. Thus had the district been designedly (sic) dissected quite out of existence. When the above action was begun against School District No. 8, its corporate life had been so nearly gerrymandered out of it that it has never since been able to be brought into court and to have and enjoy its day therein. It had then almost breathed its last. Having no director, no treasurer, no clerk, no schoolhouse having thereon "a belfry and a good bell that can be heard two miles" (see Exhibit 6, attached to the above report, page 548 of the House Journal, 1876), that school district has become so nearly a nonentity as to be but the shadow of a shade and to exist only in name. Stat magni nominis umbra. It may to-day be looked upon as in fact defunct. Since its birth was illegitimate, it came to an untimely end by foul means, as was to be expected.

"Perhaps by some process akin to Huxley's theory of evolution, the remains of School District No. 8, Rice County, may someday be resurrected, a new corporate life be breathed into it, and the forlorn hic facet of to-day be blotted from its tombstone.

"At the late December term of the District Court of Rice County, for obvious reasons herein before appearing, I dismissed the suit begun against said school district as aforesaid.

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"Who concocted the worthless bonds under consideration, and into whose pockets the net proceeds arising from the sale thereof finally found their way, fully appears in the testimony appended to the above report of the House Committee of State Affairs. The committee, at the close of their report, recommended that 'the Attorney-General of the State, under Section 2, Article 12 of the Constitution, commence suit against the stockholders of the Shawnee County Bank, the said bank having gone into liquidation; against the stockholders of the Marion County Bank, which bank has gone into liquidation; and against S. N. Wood, for the recovery of the amount (\$9,237) paid on said bonds, and the interest thereon.'"

"After the above report was submitted, it was moved that the same lie upon the table, and that 300 copies thereof be printed, which motion prevailed. It seems that thereafter the House took no further action in the foregoing matter." Three-fourths of the members of the House were registered as straight Republicans, and the House of 1877 more decidedly Republican, made S. N. Wood a presiding officer. Mr. Wood, as a candidate for Congress in 1882, received sixty-one per cent of the vote of Raymond Township.

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- PRESS HISTORY.

The Rice County Herald was started at Atlanta April 19, 1872, by a Mr. Frazier, and soon alter it was sold to the Shinn brothers. They sold it to Smith & Wallace, who soon after moved it to Peace, now Sterling. In 1875 It was moved to Hutchinson, Reno County.

The Rice County Gazette. -- Edward Bronson Cowgill commenced at Peace, January 20, 1876, the publication of the Gazette, a Republican paper. In 1879 It became an exponent of the principles of the Nationalists, but In September, 1880, it returned to the support of the successful Republican party.

In 1876, two monthly real estate papers were started at Peace -- the Homesteader by Smith, Stubbs and Ricksecker; the Valley Echo, by Clark and Page. These papers were enthusiastically devoted to the interests they represented.

The Weekly Bulletin. -- This paper, published by Charles D. Ulmer, was started May 17, 1877, at Lyons. He removed it to Sterling November 1, 1877, and it remains as one of the able Republican papers of the county.

The New Home. -- J. H. Ricksecker started this paper in 1879 at Sterling as a monthly. It was Republican in politics.

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The Recorder. -- In September, 1879, Rev. W. J. Williams started this paper as a monthly, devoted to the upbuilding of the Congregational denomination of Christians.

The Lyons' Republican. -- Clark Conkling commenced the publication of the Republican at Lyons in September, 1879. Its location insures for it a good permanent support.

The Central Kansas Democrat. -- This paper was started at Lyons in 1879, by Edward W. Wood and W. J. Fuller. It is aggressively Democratic in its politics. Mr. Wood is the present editor and proprietor.

The Rural West. -- W. E. Fosnot and brother commenced the publication of this paper at Little River in 1881. It is devoted to agricultural interests, quite specially to the cultivation of sorghum.

- CHURCHES AND SOCIETIES.

Rev. F. J. Griffith, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in May, 1871, preached the first sermon in the county in a sod house on Section 9, Township 19, Range 9; the second sermon at the residence of Jeremiah C. McNames in the same township, 19; the third in the Atlanta Hotel, May 14, 1871. The first Methodist Episcopal Church was formed June 1, 1872, by Rev. M. J. Morse, where 'Buffalo Bill' had his ranch, at a point where the Santa Fe trail crosses the Big Cow Creek. The denomination (sic) in 1882 have sixteen organizations, with a membership of 663; five church edifices, church property valued at \$11,000.

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Wesleyan Methodist. -- April 21, 1872, Rev. H. T. Besse organized the first church in the county at Peace, now Sterling, with the following named persons as members: Rev. Henry T. Besse, Harriet Besse, J. W. McPherson, Matilda McPherson, G. W. McPherson, Norman Walt and Orange S. Young. Rev. Thomas H. Watt, of this church, was the first settler in the southern part of the county.

Congregationalists. -- Rev. J. B. Schlicter in August, 1872, organized the first Congregational Church in the county at Peace. This society erected the first church edifice in the county at a cost of some \$2,000. There are four organizations of this kind in the county; a membership of about 200; church property \$8,500 in value.

Presbyterians. -- Rev. R. M. Overstreet organized at Atlanta in July, 1873, the first Presbyterian Church in the county with a membership of eight. There are now four churches with a church property valued at \$7,500; members nearly 100.

United Presbyterians. -- This denomination has an organization at Sterling, a neat, small church edifice, and some forty members. There are two organizations in the county.

Reformed Presbyterians. -- One small organization of this school exists at Sterling.

The "Friends". -- This society erected the second house of worship in the county, having organized their society at Peace in February, 1875. Their number is 360 in the county. There are three organizations. Church property is valued at \$2,500.

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The 'Christian'. -- The Church of the Disciples have four organizations in the county. Their membership is 200; church property is \$1,000.

Baptists. -- This body was organized in 1875, and in 1882 had eight organizations, with some 200 members in the county.

Lutherans. -- There is one church of this denomination in the county, with some twenty members.

German Methodist. -- One church; forty members; edifice \$500.

Roman Catholics. -- There are four churches of this faith in the county; a membership of 630; a church property valued at \$800.

Lutherans, United Brethern and Universalists are scattered over the county; the U. B.'s have an organization at Lyons.

Chapter. No. 50. R. A. M. -- Patten Himrod M. E. H. P.; W. F. Steven, Secretary.

Sterling Lodge, No. 171. A. F. & A. M. -- H. S. Millard, W. M., George W. Clark, Sec'y.

Sterling Lodge, No. 131. I. O. O. F. -- J. C. Steward, N. G.; J. M. McGee, Sec'y.

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American Legion of Honor. -- Eureka Council, No. 358. G. H. Lynds, commander; C. H. Brown, secretary.

Knights of Honor. -- Sterling Lodge, No. 1058. J. K. Skiles, dictator; W. M. Lamb, reporter.

Enterprise Lodge, No. 548, Knights and Ladies of Honor. -- J. Allen Porter, secretary; John Weddle, protector.

Meads Post, No. 14, G. A. R. -- J. E. Davies, post commander; James D. English, adjutant.

Kit Carson Post, No. 20, G. A. R. -- Lyons. A. E. Magoffin, senior commander; S. J. Smith, Adjutant.

Lyons Lodge, No. 192, A. F. & A. M. -- Solon Gray, master; W. T. Nicholas, secretary.

Lyons Lodge, I. O. O. F. -- S. J. Smith, N. G.; J. F. Crocker, recording secretary.

AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER STATISTICS.

The surface of the county is gently undulating. The lands in the county north of the Arkansas gradually descend toward the river, and they are nearly all tillable. The estimate of prairie is 98 per cent; of timber, 2 per cent; of upland, 85 per cent; of bottom land, 15 per cent. The average width of

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the bottoms on the large streams is about two miles; the width of the timber belts nearly one-fourth of a mile. Good springs are abundant, and well-water is found at an average depth of twenty-five feet. The varieties of timber are ash, box elder, coffee bean, cottonwood, elm, hackberry and mulberry. Artificial forests Are becoming quite abundant.

In 1873, Rice County had 29 acres in winter wheat; in 1880, 44,535. Spring wheat in 1872, 32 acres; in 1879, 8,873. Rye in 1872, 32 acres; in 1878, 2,285. Corn in 1872, 2,889 acres; in 1882, 64,303. Barley in 1872, 3 acres; in 1877, 2,244. Oats in 1872, 119 acres; in 1879, 9,544. Buckwheat in 1873, 4 acres; in 1881, 80. Irish potatoes in 1872, 49 acres; in 1880, 936. Sorghum in 1872, 29 acres; in 1882, 2,452. Broomcorn in 1874, 36 acres; in 1881, 2,425. Flax in 1874, 12 acres; in 1881, 221. In 1869, it had one acre in hemp; in 1881, 63. In 1881, it had 373 acres in rice corn; it had 6,223 sheep; in 1882, 9890 sheep; in 1882, a wool clip of 14,830 pounds. The value of its slaughtered animals for 1882 was \$87,631; of poultry and eggs marketed, \$19,254; of horticultural products, \$347; produce of market gardens, \$1,692. It has returned 3,355 horses; 413 mules; 2,947 milch cows; 5,628 other cattle; 7,694 swine. Poland-China and Berkshire breeds are preferred.

Red May and Turkey varieties of wheat have the preference. Lamberton Bros., Lyons, Report 112 acres of wheat, yielding 35 bushels per acre; Richard Early, 3 1/2 acres, 60 bushels per acre.

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In 1872 the taxable property of Rice County, as determined by the State Board of Equalization, was as follows:

Personal property \$ 47,900

1,905 Town Lots 13,308

54,680 acres of land 273,400

Total \$334,608

The abstract of the County Clerk returned the land assessment at \$307,180.

In 1875, the assessed value of the property in Rice County was established at \$702,379.33; in 1876, at \$842,515.62; in 1877, at \$886,459.06; in 1878, at \$936,815.29; in 1879, at \$1,109,841.26; in 1880, at \$1,117,429.23; in 1881, at \$1,253,897.92; in 1882, at \$1,540,673.44.

In 1870, there was a census return of five persons in Rice County; in 1875 there were 2,453; in 1880, 9,292, of whom 9,235 were white, of males 21 years of age and over, of colored there was 12; of foreign birth, 404; natives, 2,041. The returns of the assessors of population for 1881 was 8,114; for 1882, it was 8,546.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

Chapter 4 - Population and Growth

Introduction

General Population Trends

Planning Implications

Goals and Objectives

Introduction

Understanding population trends and generating population projections are an integral part of the comprehensive planning process. Existing and future population levels determine, to a large extent, housing and business needs, infrastructure and public facility usage, and land composition in a community. Viable population projections can be vital information to be evaluated as decisions are made regarding infrastructure, community service, public facility, and community programming needs for the future. Understanding current population trends and the factors that influence changes in population within a community are important elements of developing a Plan for that community.

The challenge for Rice County and its communities in the development of this Comprehensive Plan is to address not only the changes in the population figures, but to also develop an understanding of the population shifts that are occurring within the County. Population losses within one part of the county are offset by new development in other parts. Shifting populations are generating shifting demands for services. These trends are important in planning for the future of the County.

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General Population Trends

Population data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. The data was reviewed for Rice County, each of the cities within the county, surrounding counties and the State of Kansas for patterns and trends. A summary of the findings can be found in Tables 4-1 through 4-3 below.

**Table 4-1
Township Population Change**

Community	1970	1980	1990	2000
Rice County	12,320	11,900	10,610	10,761
Atlanta Twp.	258	258	181	233
Bell Twp.	39	43	27	18
Center Twp.	175	148	126	136
East Washington Twp.	79	107	139	179
Eureka Twp.	108	64	63	54
Farmer Twp.	189	156	139	127
Galt Twp.	113	74	73	51
Harrison Twp.	232	232	230	192
Lincoln Twp.	156	128	92	87
Mitchell Twp.	163	170	127	131
Odessa Twp.	89	76	64	55
Pioneer Twp.	137	107	103	101
Raymond Twp.	126	105	102	90
Rockville Twp.	154	144	141	134
Sterling Twp.	284	351	370	223
Union Twp.	181	245	208	205
Valley Twp.	125	97	96	108
Victoria Twp.	134	118	106	92
West Washington Twp.	188	153	142	138
Wilson Twp.	170	137	157	147

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Table 4-2
City Population Change Table

Community	1970	1980	1990	2000
Rice County	12,320	11,900	10,610	10,761
Alden	238	214	182	168
Bushton	397	388	341	314
Chase	800	753	577	490
Frederick	39	29	18	11
Geneseo	453	496	382	272
Little River	493	529	496	536
Lyons	4,355	4,134	3,688	3,732
Raymond	133	132	125	95
Sterling	2,312	2,312	2,115	2,642

Table 4-3
State and Regional Population Change Table

Community	1970	1980	1990	2000
Rice County	12,320	11,900	10,610	10,761
Barton County	30,663	31,343	29,382	28,205
Ellsworth County	6,146	6,640	6,586	6,525
McPherson County	24,778	26,855	27,268	29,554
Reno County	60,765	64,983	62,389	64,790
Kansas	2,249,071	2,364,236	2,477,574	2,688,418

As can be seen from the population data above, very interesting things are occurring in Rice County. While the overall county population has stabilized, the internal shifts of

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population are having an impact on the delivery of public services, as evidenced by the comments from the stakeholders reported elsewhere in this Plan.

Planning Implications

As shown in Table 4-1, Table 4-2 and Table 4-3, the population trends for Rice County's is stagnant at best, and generally trending downward. Several factors have contributed to this trend; some consistent with national trends and others more localized to the Rice County area.

First and foremost in the downward trend have been the impacts associated with the major reduction in the workforce in the oil and gas industry. Rice County benefited for decades from the oil and gas industry, primarily in the production and distribution of the crude oil and natural gas resources within the county. Many people resided within the county because of the jobs related to this industry. However, beginning in the early 1980's, the industry began to close many of the operations within the region and the interest in drilling for new production resources disappeared, resulting in significant loss of jobs in the industry. Many regions of Kansas were affected, including Rice County. Those that had broad employment bases in other fields were better able to absorb the loss of the jobs. Rice County was not so fortunate at that time and suffered population losses as a result.

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Second, a general trend of decline of population in the agricultural sector has manifested itself in Rice County. The total number of farms has slowly declined through the years with a resulting decline in the number of "family farm" residents. All this while the average farm size has increased, which supports the loss of number of farms and the resulting loss of population in this segment of the county's socioeconomic base.

The position of the County in this Comprehensive Plan is that, barring significant changes in the job's creation area, this trend will generally continue, but at a much slower pace. This position is based on the following assumptions:

1. The steady trend of decreasing population within Rice County will flatten out and new interest in rural development opportunities in several areas of the county will offset some of the general losses.
2. The economic conditions that have influenced Rice County's population over the past several decades, particularly in the agricultural and oil and gas industries, will be basically unchanged.
3. The political and economic climate, locally and nationally, will remain fairly stable.
4. The County has made planning for additional growth a major priority.

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Population figures may continue to fluctuate as regional economic boom and bust cycles occur. But Rice County is comprised of people who have learned to persevere through any economic hardship. This is reflected in the following factors which are indicative of the reasons the future is not as bleak as some might suggest:

1. **The Perception of Rice County.** Rice County is seen as a "good place to live." People like the small town and rural atmosphere within the county, the ability to work in close proximity to their family, and the overall high quality of life within the County.

2. **The Ability to Attract New Job Opportunities.** Rice County is fortunate to have many active organizations promoting the development of new jobs in the region. Because of the locational benefits, and an available work force, job creation will help stabilize the population figures for most of the County.

Stabilizing factors, especially those discussed further in the chapter on Economic Development, give a positive outlook for Rice County's future. There is every indication that the trend of a declining population in Rice County has ceased and, over time, actual growth will occur. Rice County is expected to continue to be viewed as a good area in which to live, work, and raise a family.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2000 - 2020

Goals and Objectives

Rice County's goals and objectives for the Population and Growth concerns are articulated in the following Goals and Objectives:

**PG-1 GOAL: ENCOURAGE AND EXPAND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR
NEW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COUNTY AND THE
PARTICIPATING CITIES TO PROMOTE ACTUAL GROWTH
WITHIN THE COUNTY.**

PG-A OBJECTIVE: Promote the development of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses to create job opportunities to attract new residents to the county and retain the youth within the communities.

PG-B OBJECTIVE: Work with real estate businesses and financial institutions to encourage a competitive real estate market and to enhance the opportunities for a wide variety of development projects for Rice County and the participating communities.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

5 - Housing

Introduction

Housing Characteristics

Housing Trends

Manufactured Housing and Mobile Homes

Future Housing Needs

Planning Implications

Goals and Objectives

Recommendations

Introduction

While it is true that neither the County nor any of the cities within the County are in the "housing construction" business per se, the manner in which the public addresses the provision of housing by the private sector, and the plans and policies adopted to support housing development throughout the County, will determine the success of the County and its cities in managing the public resources. The willingness to adopt policies regarding land use and development, especially in the rural areas, and the attitude toward investment in public properties collectively conveys the community's desires for its future development.

For Rice County and the participating cities, the population trends noted in the previous section, the general decline of people in the small cities and most of the rural area, the general increase of people into the rural areas, and the accompanying construction of new housing units, all are of paramount importance in the development of this Plan.

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2001 - 2021

Housing Characteristics

While no formal inventory was taken, general observations were made regarding the character of the housing units within the rural areas of Rice County and within the participating cities. While the appearance of the properties was not necessarily influential in analyzing the housing stock throughout the County, the presence of outside storage of materials or vehicles, or general lack of maintenance of the property did affect the impression one obtains with respect to the condition of the housing stock.

The most significant area of concern to the County with respect to housing is the proliferation of non-farm housing units throughout the unincorporated portion of the County. Overall, the population and housing stock numbers are fairly stable, but there are increasing numbers in some parts of the rural areas. The impact of these new residents in the certain parts of the rural areas on County and township services is significant and can have a long-term affect on the tax structure supporting the County and township operations. Combined, these affect all citizens of the County, including those inside the incorporated cities.

The challenge to Rice County and the participating cities will be to develop plans and policies that encourage more new development to go into the incorporated cities and better manage the new development in the County, while not discouraging the interest of the public in living in Rice County.

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Another area of concern is the affordability of new housing and the concomitant placement of manufactured housing throughout the County. While it is general knowledge that for those who do not presently own their homes acquiring a single-family house is the most desirable change in housing status, affordability is felt to be the most common reason why people would not buy at this time. Therefore, affordable housing options should be pursued wherever possible.

The most common means of providing affordable housing is through the acquisition of manufactured homes. While this type of housing addresses the affordability issue, manufactured homes are not always the most desirable housing type to an established neighborhood. Careful design of rules and regulations can alleviate some of the concerns and the County and the participating cities should pursue those modifications to their regulatory programs. However, caution should be given to assure that these types of uses remain available within the County and the participating cities in appropriate locations. More will be discussed about this issue elsewhere in this Chapter.

Housing Trends

Some new housing construction has continued in certain areas of the County over the past several years. However, most areas of the County have seen little or no change in overall housing units, or in some cases an actual decrease in numbers of housing units. The changes for the rural areas are shown in Table 5-1 herein.

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TABLE 5-1
RICE COUNTY HOUSING UNIT HISTORY 1970 - 2000
COUNTY AND TOWNSHIP HOUSING UNIT TOTALS

Community	1970	1980	1990	2000
Rice County	4,745	4,974	4,868	4,609
Atlanta Twp.	83	101	88	72
Bell Twp.	15	15	10	10
Center Twp.	62	56	56	48
East Washington Twp.	32	43	55	67
Eureka Twp.	36	27	26	24
Farmer Twp.	65	62	56	51
Galt Twp.	45	35	31	20
Harrison Twp.	86	89	94	81
Lincoln Twp.	53	52	44	42
Mitchell Twp.	62	63	65	54
Odessa Twp.	32	30	29	21
Pioneer Twp.	48	47	41	39
Raymond Twp.	46	41	38	35
Rockville Twp.	62	61	52	51
Sterling Twp.	106	126	113	92
Union Twp.	69	76	76	73
Valley Twp.	48	40	47	47
Victoria Twp.	59	45	46	41
West Washington Twp.	55	58	56	57
Wilson Twp.	56	53	61	55

As shown above, the housing units in most of the rural areas have shrunk over the past several years. There are some isolated areas of new development. While this is not surprising, the records of the County indicate most of these homes in the rural areas are not within platted subdivisions, which is a major concern of the County.

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Table 5-2 below gives a reporting of permitting activities within the rural areas, by township, based on records from the Rice County Sanitarian.

**TABLE 5-2
TOWNSHIP ALL PERMIT TABLE**

Township	1998	1999	2000	2001
Atlanta Township	5	5	0	1
Bell Township	2	0	0	0
Center Township	1	1	4	0
East Washington Township	7	3	0	5
Eureka Township	0	1	0	1
Farmer Township	4	1	1	1
Galt Township	2	1	0	1
Harrison Township	1	0	0	2
Lincoln Township	0	1	1	2
Mitchell Township	2	1	2	1
Odessa Township	1	0	0	1
Pioneer Township	0	0	1	0
Raymond Township	0	0	0	0
Rockville Township	1	0	1	3
Sterling Township	2	2	4	4
Union Township	1	1	3	2
Valley Township	3	3	3	4
Victoria Township	0	2	1	0
West Washington Township	0	2	2	2
Wilson Township	0	3	3	2
Total All Townships	32	27	26	32

As noted in the heading, this information is for all sanitation permits issued, new water wells, new septic systems and lagoons, and all repairs. The following tables show the information for each category.

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TABLE 5-3
TOWNSHIP NEW WATER WELL PERMITS

Township	1998	1999	2000	2001
Atlanta Township	0	0	0	0
Bell Township	0	1	0	0
Center Township	0	1	1	0
East Washington Township	2	1	0	0
Eureka Township	0	0	1	0
Farmer Township	0	2	1	1
Galt Township	0	1	0	0
Harrison Township	0	0	0	0
Lincoln Township	0	0	1	0
Mitchell Township	0	0	0	0
Odessa Township	0	0	0	0
Pioneer Township	0	0	0	0
Raymond Township	0	0	0	0
Rockville Township	0	0	0	0
Sterling Township	0	0	0	0
Union Township	0	0	0	0
Valley Township	0	2	0	1
Victoria Township	0	0	0	0
West Washington Township	0	0	0	0
Wilson Township	0	0	0	0
Total All Townships	2	8	4	2

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TABLE 5-4
TOWNSHIP NEW ON-SITE WASTEWATER SYSTEM PERMITS

Township	1998	1999	2000	2001
Atlanta Township	2	5	0	0
Bell Township	0	0	0	0
Center Township	0	0	1	0
East Washington Township	4	3	0	3
Eureka Township	0	0	0	0
Farmer Township	0	0	0	0
Galt Township	1	0	0	0
Harrison Township	0	0	0	0
Lincoln Township	0	0	0	0
Mitchell Township	0	1	2	0
Odessa Township	0	0	0	0
Pioneer Township	0	0	1	0
Raymond Township	0	0	0	0
Rockville Township	0	0	0	1
Sterling Township	0	0	0	0
Union Township	0	0	1	0
Valley Township	0	0	0	0
Victoria Township	0	0	0	0
West Washington Township	0	1	0	0
Wilson Township	0	0	0	0
Total All Townships	7	10	5	4

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**TABLE 5-5
TOWNSHIP REBUILT ON-SITE WASTEWATER SYSTEM PERMITS**

Township	1998	1999	2000	2001
Atlanta Township	3	0	0	1
Bell Township	1	0	0	0
Center Township	0	0	3	0
East Washington Township	2	0	0	0
Eureka Township	0	0	0	1
Farmer Township	2	0	0	1
Galt Township	0	1	0	1
Harrison Township	1	0	0	2
Lincoln Township	0	0	1	2
Mitchell Township	2	0	0	1
Odessa Township	1	0	0	1
Pioneer Township	0	0	0	0
Raymond Township	0	0	0	0
Rockville Township	1	0	1	2
Sterling Township	2	2	4	4
Union Township	1	1	3	2
Valley Township	1	3	1	4
Victoria Township	0	2	1	0
West Washington Township	0	1	2	2
Wilson Township	0	3	3	2
Total All Townships	17	13	19	26

As can be seen from the permitting tables, the new construction activity has been generally scattered and no discernable pattern is easily identifiable. However, as is expected, most activity is happening in the southeast part of the County, most significantly in East Washington Township.

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For a comparison of the changes in the rural areas to those within the cities, the housing unit changes within the incorporated cities are shown in Table 5-6 below.

**TABLE 5-6
RICE COUNTY HOUSING UNIT HISTORY 1970 - 2000
COUNTY AND CITY HOUSING UNIT TOTALS**

Community	1970	1980	1990	2000
Rice County	4,745	4,974	4,868	4,609
Alden	94	103	102	85
Bushton	167	173	185	158
Chase	307	295	285	222
Frederick	16	13	11	7
Geneseo	223	234	206	171
Little River	239	256	247	234
Lyons	1,713	1,826	1,808	1,738
Raymond	48	55	62	51
Sterling	818	899	878	963

As shown above, all of the cities have experienced a decrease in housing units except the City of Sterling. However, that may be offset by recent annexations where most of the new construction originally occurred outside the city limits and was subsequently annexed. This appears to be the case based on the data for Sterling Township and the City of Sterling. The overall changes happening in the cities parallel those happening in the rural areas. And these changes greatly impact all jurisdictions, either from an overall loss of the tax base to support public services or, in the case of some of the townships, a shifting of population and housing to the rural areas demanding more services with little addition to the tax base.

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Manufactured Housing and Mobile Homes

As mentioned earlier, manufactured homes are a major solution to the issue of affordable housing. Recent data is not generally available on the percentage of manufactured homes existing within the rural areas of the County or the participating cities, but the perception expressed to and through the Planning Commission indicates that the topic is a matter of general concern. The desire is to provide assurance that the placement of manufactured homes is a positive contribution to the overall quality of life within the County and the participating cities.

State law requires the County and cities to provide for manufactured homes within its regulatory policies and regulations. Rice County's Zoning Regulations will provide for the placement of manufactured homes concurrent with the requirements of state law. The placement of double-wide manufactured homes, as well as modular homes, on individual lots with permanent foundations must continue to remain permitted in compliance with state laws. However, the placement of double-wide manufactured homes not on permanent foundations and single-wide manufactured homes on individual lots must be managed in order to assure compatibility with the surrounding land uses. The Zoning Regulations must fully address the appropriate placement of these building types, both in the rural areas and within the incorporated cities.

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Future Housing Needs

The demands for housing within the rural areas are being met by the private sector and, as such, little demands will be placed on Rice County to take specific steps to assist that effort. Within the cities, demands for rental and multi-family housing will grow and the County should encourage the cities to meet those demands whenever possible. It is not in the best interests of Rice County or any of its cities to see multi-family housing created in the unincorporated portion of the County.

As noted previously, manufactured housing will also be in great demand because of the affordability and ease of financing. The placement of these types of housing units must be managed as outlined in the previous section. Also, an increase in the overall age of the population will increase the demand for specialized housing for the elderly, both in the form of assisted-living units and in full-care facilities. These needs must be met, but should be located within the incorporated cities and not in the unincorporated areas.

Planning Implications

The greatest planning implication for Rice County and its cities for housing will be to develop appropriate policies and regulations to manage the housing development demands within the rural areas. The ability to accomplish this task and not discourage continued investment within the County is the greatest challenge facing the County and participating cities in this Plan.

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Goals and Objectives

**HG-1 GOAL: WORK TO ASSURE DECENT, SAFE AND AFFORDABLE
HOUSING FOR ALL RICE COUNTY RESIDENTS.**

HO-A OBJECTIVE: Promote improvement of the quality of housing in the rural areas of Rice County and the participating cities' neighborhoods where substandard quality exists.

HO-B OBJECTIVE: Promote a wide range of housing choices at appropriate locations throughout the county and each city. This includes a mix of rental and multi-family housing properly sited within existing neighborhoods in the cities.

HO-C OBJECTIVE: Promote housing types sensitive to the demographic profile of the community. In particular, attention should be paid to the housing needs of a growing elderly population.

HO-D OBJECTIVE: Encourage the renovation and rehabilitation of housing units where practical, and the removal of housing units deemed uninhabitable, unsafe, or beyond repair. Utilization of the Neighborhood Revitalization program is encouraged.

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HO-E OBJECTIVE: Encourage residential development inside the cities on existing vacant lots or as new residential developments.

HO-F OBJECTIVE: Discourage scattered rural housing within the Rice County. Encourage the formation of properly designed rural subdivisions that are supported by adequate infrastructure.

HO-G OBJECTIVE Recognize the use of manufactured homes as an affordable housing solution for many people and seek to locate these units in appropriate locations within the county. By law, Zoning Regulations will accommodate the location of residential-designed manufactured homes throughout the county. The placement of manufactured homes not meeting the residential-designed standards should be sited within established parks or on suitable sites in the rural areas and not scattered among existing neighborhoods.

Recommendations

These comments clearly identify some of the programs or services that should be established by the County or participating cities. Therefore, it is recommended that the following actions be taken in response to the housing needs.

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1. The County and cities should jointly establish a housing rehabilitation program to encourage reuse of existing housing stock where appropriate. Funding should come from the Federal and State sources available for such programs.
2. The County and cities should establish a housing code program for improvements in areas of structural soundness and exterior appearance. Coupled with this review, the County and cities should consider establishment of a minimum property standards code designed to assure minimal maintenance of both the housing unit and the property on which it is located.
3. The County and cities should develop clear standards on placement of manufactured homes within the County and each of the participating cities. These should apply to placement of such units both within Manufactured Home Parks as well as on individual properties.
4. The County and cities should explore the viability of adopting building codes to provide assurances that new construction meets minimum standards for materials and workmanship. These codes, properly designed to address the needs of Rice County and the participating cities, should greatly increase the ability to finance and insure new construction in the long term.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

6 - Transportation System

Introduction
Existing Transportation System
Major Road Network
Road Standards
Proposed Road Improvements
Planning Implications
Goals and Objectives
Recommendations

Introduction

The present and future characteristics of the transportation system supporting a community in large measure influence that community's long-range patterns of growth and development. Adequate transportation is vital to the movement of raw materials and to the distribution of the commodities and products of agriculture and local industry. Adequate transportation is equally vital to the day-to-day activities of the residents of the community as they are heavily dependent upon direct, efficient and safe access to all portions of the community via the transportation system.

The purpose of the transportation element is to review the current transportation systems serving the County and explore the ways and means by which these systems can continue to serve an enlarging population and expanding economy in the future.

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Rice County is presently served by two primary transportation systems: these being rail and surface vehicular systems. To a lesser extent, air transportation is available, but not to a commercial level of service. Of these three, the most important to the continued development of the County is the surface vehicular mode consisting of local streets, roads and state and federal highways. Accordingly, the central objective of this section of the Comprehensive Plan is to develop a long-range system of streets, roads and highways that will continue to move traffic safely and efficiently in and around the County.

Existing Transportation System

As noted above, the three basic elements of the transportation system consist of air, rail and surface vehicle systems. The following summaries are intended to give an overview of the present status of each transportation system.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

The only identified "public" airport within Rice County is located on the western edge of Lyons. This is a public airport jointly owned by Rice County and the City of Lyons, but does not provide "commercial" air service. The facility primarily supports local operations, which are more oriented to small business and private "pleasure" interests. There are also a number of private grass landing strips throughout the County but are not identified on any maps. These should be monitored by the County and subject to local approval in order to avoid future incompatibilities to new development.

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The closest commercial air service is Mid-Continent Airport in Wichita. However like most people within central Kansas, many will travel by land to Kansas City International Airport in Kansas City, Missouri, in order to obtain less expensive air fares for commercial travel.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Rail service within Rice County has drastically decreased over the past several years. Presently, the Central Kansas Railway provides service on the former main line of the Santa Fe Railway Company through Sterling connecting Hutchinson to Great Bend and beyond. Central Kansas Railway also provides service from the west through Chase to Lyons, and on another line from the west through Bushton, Frederick to Geneseo. These lines are very important to the economic health of the County, especially as transportation linkages for the movement of agricultural products from the County.

However not all of the County is served. There has been considerable abandonment of railroad lines within the County through the years. The line from Lyons east through Little River, the line from Lyons southeast to Hutchinson and the line from Geneseo east through Crawford into Ellsworth County have all been abandoned. It is considered to be in the best interests of Rice County to oppose any further reduction in rail lines within the County in order to minimize additional undue impact on the rural road network from the transportation of grain and agricultural commodities on the surface transportation system.

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SURFACE VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

The most significant aspect of the transportation system in Rice County is the surface vehicular transportation system. This is the system that has been the driving force in most of the new development within the County over the past several years. It is the quality of road accessibility to the employment centers in the region that have supported the private decisions to develop new residential dwelling units within the County. But the challenge to the County will be to manage the growth so as to protect the quality of that surface transportation system.

The State and Federal Highways within Rice County consist primarily of U.S. 56, which traverses the county from east to west and travels through Lyons, and U.S. 96 Highway, which comes into the county from the south through Sterling to Lyons, then combines with U.S. 56 to the west. Also, K-14 goes north from Lyons into Ellsworth County and K-4 travels along the northern border of the county from Barton County east through or near Bushton, Frederick and Geneseo until it turns north into Ellsworth County on its way to Lindsborg. Short sections of State Highways exist in K-171, which provides access to Bushton from K-4 and K-46, which provides access to Little River from U.S. 56.

Rice County is not a County Unit Road county and, as such, the townships within the County still are responsible for maintenance of the bulk of rural roads. This is a very important fact since any new roads within the rural areas developed within any new

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subdivision developments are subject to County design and approval, but maintenance responsibility goes to the township in which the subdivision is located, thereby adding to the overall road mileage of that township.

Also, the development that occurs within many townships that are not part of an approved subdivision simply open new drives onto the section-line road network, many times causing significant impacts to the drainage and functionality of those roads. The manner in which this happens in the future must be well managed in the Subdivision Regulations and development approval process.

In light of the forgoing statement, Rice County has allowed rural development to occur with internal "private" roads. This process has kept these roads from becoming a part of the township road system, but the new residents are often very unhappy with the quality of the road and the fact the homeowners within that subdivision are responsible for all maintenance needs, including grading, rocking and snow removal. This brings significant pressure on both the County and the township to take over maintenance, which rarely occurs. As a result, many of the residents of these subdivisions feel "cheated" and are less likely to be supportive of future efforts to improve the area. Rice County and the townships should evaluate its policies regarding this matter and assure themselves what is allowed is in the best, long term interest of all its residents with respect to private roads.

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Major Road Network

For all practical purposes, all the section line roads within unincorporated Rice County that are not a part of the State or Federal Highway system are considered a part of the major road network. This applies also to the section line roads that are part of the township road network. The intent of this designation is to assure proper setback of all new construction in order to protect right-of-ways for future road development, regardless of the present need or status of the road. It is assumed that future development will utilize the section line road network as the primary "base" from which all transportation systems will be developed. As such, this Plan formally declares all section line roads as "major roads."

Road Standards

Road standards within Rice County fall into four categories, those for which Rice County is directly responsible, those that are the responsibility of the cities, those that are the responsibility of the townships, and those that are the responsibility of the State of Kansas. This Plan will address road standards issues for all except those that are the responsibility of the State of Kansas.

The city streets and roads within the participating cities were originally constructed to support "urban-level" traffic. Within many of the cities, curbs and gutters exist in much of the built area of the city, but these improvements are in varying degrees of disrepair. In addition the paved surfaces are in various stages of disrepair. Each city needs to decide for

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itself to what standard any new streets or roads should be built and also pursue a timely program to evaluate the viability of each existing street for maintenance or repair. In some cases this may mean converting some previously paved roads to gravel in order to provide adequate maintenance. A more detailed analysis of each community should be done by each city's governing body.

The County roads generally have been given various "classification names" over time and for varying purposes. Essentially, the road network that is the County's responsibility are the primary farm-to-market and market-to-market roads throughout the County that are not a part of the state and federal highway system. As such, these roads are generally maintained to a higher standard than the roads within the township road network and are expected to carry higher volumes of traffic at higher rates of speed. Many are paved to some degree, although in recent years the County has maintained some of these roads as gravel. Regardless, it is a part of the County services to maintain these roads and to manage access to these roads as new development occurs. Specific standards should be developed to address these issues.

In addition, all of the bridge structures in the unincorporated portion of Rice County that are not on the state and federal highway system are the responsibility of the County. By law, these are structures that are the equivalent of a 4-foot by 6-foot opening or larger. This includes bridge structures on the township road system as well as the county road

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system. Maintaining records on all these bridges and the role they play in the overall transportation needs of the rural areas is a daunting task. And changes in land usage in an area with undersized bridges could have a significant impact on budget and funding needs of the County. This is another reason to improve the management process of rural development.

The townships are responsible for all additional public roads in the rural areas that are not a part of the state and federal highway system or the County road system. The statutes prescribe the responsibilities of the townships for these roads, but the important issue within this Plan is to assure coordination with the County on new development to minimize the impacts to the township budgets.

Proposed Road Improvements

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has made improvements to U.S. 56, U.S. 96 and K-14 through Rice County over the past several years. Other highway projects will be made over time by KDOT to the other highways within the County and Rice County should do all it can to promote and encourage those improvements.

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No specific major improvement projects are identified in this Plan. The County Road and Bridge officials are responsible to administer the improvement plans to the county road network. It is encouraged that those plans be shared with the Rice County Joint Planning Commission on a regular basis in order to assure decisions are coordinated with respect to road needs and development proposals.

Planning Implications

In light of the foregoing, Rice County must develop policies with respect to private roads within subdivisions, access of new lots to section line roads, road development and maintenance standards and responsibilities for developers of new subdivisions, and the process of evaluating and assigning financial responsibilities for impacts of new development on existing roads and bridges. All of these items are important to the continued development of quality roads within the rural areas of Rice County that will support the transportation demands today and into the future. The Subdivision Regulations will be the "tool" to implement these policies and the updating of those regulations should clearly include language addressing each of these topics.

Likewise, the participating cities should begin a systematic process to evaluate the street system within each city and develop appropriate standards for each of those streets.

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Goals and Objectives

TR-1 GOAL: PROVIDE AN EFFICIENT AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DESIGNED TO MOVE PEOPLE AND GOODS WITHIN AND AROUND THE COUNTY AND EACH OF THE PARTICIPATING CITIES.

TRO-A OBJECTIVE: Promote improvement to traffic flows within and through the county by proper use and development of all the street classifications.

TRO-B OBJECTIVE: Promote the development and use of alternative modes of transportation and the infrastructure necessary to support the same within the county.

TRO-C OBJECTIVE: Ensure that new development does not negatively impact the existing transportation system nor place demands for major upgrades to the transportation system in an untimely manner.

TRO-D OBJECTIVE: Discourage unplanned residential development along major arterial routes in the unincorporated areas.

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TRO-E OBJECTIVE: Promote the enhancement of regional transportation improvements that will benefit the county. Strongly support those major road improvements included in the Kansas Highway Improvement Plan. Further, promote improvements to Highway 96 and Highway 56 to enhance the county's future development.

TRO-F OBJECTIVE: Establish construction standards within the Subdivision Regulations outlining appropriate requirements for improvements to roads and streets in new subdivisions.

TRO-G OBJECTIVE: Establish guidelines within the Subdivision Regulations for improvements to existing roads and streets impacted by proposed developments, including an impact fee where appropriate.

TRO-H OBJECTIVE: Support the provision of special transportation needs through programs at the county level or by private means.

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Recommendations

In order to enhance the transportation system within Rice County, the following recommendations are given.

1. The County should adopt Subdivision Regulations to address policies and requirements for private roads within subdivisions, access of new lots to section line roads, road development and maintenance standards and responsibilities for developers of new subdivisions, and the process of evaluating and assigning financial responsibilities for impacts of new development on existing roads and bridges.
2. The County should continue to support the Highway Plan by KDOT for planned improvements to highways within Rice County.
3. The County should work closely with the townships to assure existing and new roads within the rural areas are maintained at appropriate levels for the traffic demands created by surrounding land uses.
4. The County should direct the Road and Bridge officials submit all future road improvement plans to the Planning Commission for review in order to assure coordination in decision making.

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5. The participating cities should evaluate the streets within each community in order to identify standards for future improvements.
6. The participating cities should evaluate the existing streets for appropriate serviceability and consider a schedule for repair or reconstruction.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

7 - Utilities

Introduction
Water Systems
Wastewater Systems
City Utility Services
Telecommunication Services
Other Utility Services
Planning Implications
Goals and Objectives
Recommendations

Introduction

The utilities serving a community are an extremely important component of the services that define the "quality of life" within that community. Most counties in Kansas do not provide utility services per se, although many have recently become active in constructing and managing wastewater systems in portions of their county. Virtually all of the incorporated cities within Rice County provide some level of utility service within their community, and in some cases have extended those services beyond their borders. In addition, there are "special" districts that provide utility-type services, most notably the rural water district within the county.

Other private companies provide the remainder of utility services in the community, primarily through Western Resources and Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. Other services are addressed herein also.

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Water Systems

There is one Rural Water District operating within Rice County. The district is managed by an independent Board of Directors and is responsible to the "members" connected to the water system. The Rural Water District has a "franchised" area of the County, established in response to petitions to the Board of County Commissioners of Rice County, and that area is protected from intrusion by other water providers. This district covers an area east of Lyons stretching to the McPherson County line either side of 56 Highway. According to the 1994 Rural Water Districts in Kansas report published by the Kansas Rural Water Association, Kansas Water Office and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the district covers 150.5 square miles in Rice County and has a total of 210.5 square miles within its boundaries in Rice and McPherson counties. It also has a total of 230 miles of water line service a total of 386 users. The district purchases its treated water from the City of Lyons.

However, Rural Water Districts are not obligated to provide water service to all residences within its "franchise" area. It is only responsible to provide water in sufficient quantity to those already connected to the system and no additional users are added unless additional capacity is provided. This situation often causes hard feelings among neighbors in the rural areas when new demand occurs and there is no capacity to meet that demand. Unless changes are made in state laws and the manner in which Rural Water Districts operate, this condition will not change.

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All of the incorporated cities in the county operate their own water utility system, with the exception of Frederick. Most have some water service beyond their borders, but on a limited basis. Each city must establish its own policies regarding water service extensions and requirements for annexation in the future.

Wastewater Systems

Presently, Rice County has no wastewater or sewer districts within the county. Most of the incorporated cities within the county provide sanitary sewer services. The balance of the county relies upon on-site wastewater systems. The public systems are regulated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), while the on-site systems are generally subject to regulation by the Rice County Sanitation Code.

The Rice County Sanitation Code presently addresses standards for siting and construction of on-site wastewater systems for residential structures within the unincorporated portion of the County. Presently, the County requires a minimum lot of 3 acres for any new residential structure with a septic tank/lateral field system and a minimum lot of 5 acres for a lagoon. The system used depends upon soil conditions on the property. Alternative systems may be considered, but the Code does not “encourage” these systems unless unusual circumstances are present.

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Many counties within Kansas have begun to significantly alter the manner in which on-site wastewater systems are permitted. As a general rule, the lagoons and the septic tank/lateral field systems provide little "treatment" of the wastewater before discharge to the environment. In fact, most documentation indicates these systems were originally considered "temporary" until public sewers were made available.

In recent years, KDHE has been studying more alternative systems with the intent of enhancing the quality of treatment of the effluent prior to discharge into the environment. This "policy" change is further substantiated by the demands coming from the Environmental Protection Agency in administering the provisions of the Clean Water Act. In particular, the current efforts to adopt Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) standards within each major water basin within the State of Kansas will increase the pressure for counties to adopt higher standards for on-site wastewater treatment systems. As such, Rice County should seriously consider alterations to its Sanitation Code to discourage on-site wastewater systems that fail to meet water quality standards and strongly encourage those alternative systems that will maintain the County as an attractive area for development.

City Utility Services

As noted earlier, all of the cities except the City of Frederick provide water and sewer services to their residents. Some also provide service beyond their borders, but this is not wide spread. All cities indicate adequate capacity to meet the expected growth in demand

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for the city utility services during the planning period of this Plan. As such, no further discussion is included herein.

Telecommunication Services

Local telephone service is provided by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Sprint, Mutual Telephone Company, and H & B Communications. As is consistent with service in the balance of the state, the companies are near completion of conversion to digital switching equipment throughout the County, which improves the quality of service and assure accessibility to other public safety services, such as 9-1-1 service countywide. Also, the digital conversions will allow expansion of improved connections to internet and other digital data transfer services.

Rice County has cellular phone services from virtually all the licensed carriers in the state of Kansas. The quality of coverage, however, remains dependent upon sufficient placement of communication towers for the carriers. It is the tower placement issues that generate the greatest challenge to the local officials as this industry continues to expand. Rice County should establish clear policies regarding the placement of communication towers in order to protect the public interests.

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Other Utility Services

Electric utility services are well established throughout the County and are handled mostly by private concerns. The City of Sterling is the only municipality to provide municipal electric service and has a limited service area beyond its borders. The ability of all providers to serve Rice County with electricity is well established and sufficient for the demands anticipated during the planning period.

Gas service is much more erratic throughout the county. Most cities are provided gas service by private companies, however the City of Lyons operates a municipal gas utility and has some limited services beyond its borders. In the unincorporated portion of the county very few areas have gas utility services and must rely on electricity or propane for heating. This will not realistically change during the planning period; however any growth or expansion of the cities will most assuredly result in an expansion of the gas utilities to accommodate that growth.

The demand for cable television services is not as great as it once was now that satellite services have improved. However, some cable services exist in the cities and provide limited service in the surrounding rural areas. Presently there are no areas of the County have sufficient numbers of residents in a more "urban" setting to make cable services feasible. Regardless, the County should establish policies regarding the franchising actions needed to accommodate these services if they are presented.

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The only other utility service that might become of interest to the County will be growth in other "wireless" services, especially internet services. These rely heavily on communication towers sited in strategic locations to provide quality service. Again, a clear policy on placement of communication towers is important to the County's future.

Planning Implications

The most significant planning implications for Rice County within the utility concerns will be regarding water service, wastewater treatment systems and expansion of "wireless" services for telephone and internet access. The County should establish clear policies on these items in order to protect the public interests and promote growth and development.

Goals and Objectives

**US-1 GOAL: PROMOTE THE EXTENSION OF UTILITY SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE
SAFE AND AFFORDABLE UTILITY SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS
OF THE COUNTY AND ALL THE CITIES WITHIN THE COUNTY.**

USO-A OBJECTIVE: Encourage the delivery of public water services to as much
of the county as practical. Continued development utilizing
on-site water supplies is not in the long-term best interest of
the county or its citizens.

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USO-B OBJECTIVE: Assure the adequate provision of water and sewer facilities and services in coordination with growth areas identified in the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan. Areas beyond the city limits receiving infrastructure improvements from those cities should be considered for annexation in the near future.

USO-C OBJECTIVE: Update and enhance the Environmental Codes of Rice County to assure the standards and requirements for on-site water and wastewater systems promote the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendations

In order to enhance the utility services within Rice County, the following recommendations are given.

1. The County should revise its Sanitation Codes to address on-site water wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems that enhance quality of service and improve the prevention of pollution.

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2. The County should develop guidelines within the Zoning Regulations addressing placement of communication towers.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

8 - Drainage and Flooding

Introduction
Drainage System
Watershed Districts
Floodplain Patterns
Flood Hazard Issues
Present Regulatory Actions
Planning Implications
Goals and Objectives
Recommendations

Introduction

The potential for flooding and other drainage problems are a significant factor that must be addressed within any developing area. Failure to properly assess the impacts of development on the natural environment can lead to significant losses due to building failures or property damage from stormwaters. The purpose of this element is to review the issues to be addressed by Rice County, and identify the means to improve the standards for new development to mitigate the potential of impacts from flooding in order to maintain property values and enhance the quality of life within the County.

Obviously, dealing with drainage issues on a countywide basis is much more difficult than addressing drainage issues within a city. In the case of Rice County, this is compounded by the unusual drainage basin in the southern

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portion of the county along the Arkansas River. Much of the general watershed of the Arkansas River within Rice County is ill-defined due to the "sand hills" that are part of that drainage basin. This lack of definitive drainage patterns are a significant challenge in managing new construction and development because it is extremely difficult to identify specific flood plains. Hence, it is very difficult to assure compliance with flood plain management requirements.

Drainage System

The drainage systems within Rice County fall basically into three primary watershed systems; the far southwestern portion of the county in the Arkansas River basin, the central half of the county stretching from the northwest to the southeast in the Cow Creek basin, and the northeastern portion of the county in the Little Arkansas River basin. The very far northeastern corner of the county is in the Wolf Creek basin, but comprises a very small portion of the county.

The Cow Creek basin is "sub-categorized", for this Plan only, into the Little Cow Creek basin, essentially embracing all of the City of Lyons and areas to the north, and the balance of the Cow Creek basin covering roughly one-half of the county from the northwest to the southeast.

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Within each of these drainage subsystems are areas of flooding that should be managed so that new development does not encroach in the flood zones. The current flood maps available to Rice County are very general in nature and do not provide detailed information on flood elevations. While it would be ideal if detailed flood elevation maps were available for every stream within Rice County, that is not realistic. However, Rice County should submit requests to FEMA for detailed flood elevation studies along those streams within the County that are seeing the greatest threats to development. Primarily these are in the central and southeastern portion of the County.

Watershed Districts

There is one established Watershed District within Rice County, formed to establish watershed lakes as part of the land and water conservation programs of the state and federal governments. Many watershed lakes have been built through the years within those parts of Rice County covered by the Watershed District. These watershed lakes provide flood control, recreational opportunities and other agricultural benefits within the county.

Since most watershed lakes were constructed with some federal monies, these structures are also subject to the present "rules and regulations" of the federal agencies providing those funds. Currently, the Watershed District is

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required to “manage” the breach areas below the watershed dams from development in order to reduce the potential of liability and damage in the event of a “breach” of the dam structure. Each district is supposed to maintain maps of the “breach impact zones” below each watershed structure to identify these areas. And the demand is to prevent new construction in these areas or face significant additional costs locally to either upgrade the dam, acquire the new buildings, or cut the dam and refund all federal monies previously received.

Rice County should consider a provision within its Zoning Regulations to establish an “overlay” zoning district that would function much like flood plain zoning does in order to assist in this effort. Other counties have included these provisions in their regulations and the benefits to the taxpayers of each Watershed District have already been realized, since there is experience of avoiding new construction in breach zones.

Floodplain Patterns

As noted previously, the floodplains within Rice County are as varied as the watersheds within which they lay. The recognized floodplains need to be protected from unwanted development where possible as noted throughout this chapter.

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Present Regulatory Actions

Rice County is participating in the National Flood Insurance Program. However, the mapping information supporting Rice County's efforts to manage the floodplains in accordance with the National Flood Insurance Program are very vague and lack detailed information in the bulk of the county. More detailed mapping information would benefit the county and its citizens and should be pursued.

Presently, each landowner is responsible for preparing detailed studies to document the extent of flood hazards on individual properties if questions arise about the extent of flood hazard exposure during the permitting process. The cost to provide detailed information on all floodplains within the county is very high and well beyond the means of Rice County to fund. The county should constantly request FEMA to prepare updated maps with more detailed flood elevation data for use in the administration and management of the Flood Insurance Program in Rice County.

Rice County also manages a Sanitation Code within the unincorporated portion of the county. This code sets standards for the placement of on-site wastewater treatment systems for individual residences. Among the siting standards is a restriction on placement within flood plains. Improved flood plain

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maps would also assist in the administration of this code. Further, the advent of enhanced concerns with the quality of effluent being discharged into the ground from on-site wastewater systems will ultimately require the appropriate regulatory agencies to require more advanced on-site systems to reduce the potential of groundwater pollution. Rice County should pursue taking a leading role in identifying the most effective means to implement such a program, especially in the highly sensitive Arkansas River basin where a high degree of new development is occurring.

Planning Implications

The most significant planning implication is the lack of detailed flood elevation information throughout the county. As noted herein, obtaining the necessary detailed information to properly manage the Flood Insurance Program is expensive and beyond the means of Rice County. Presently, each landowner must pay to document the flood data, when needed, on individual properties. Obtaining better maps and supporting information to improve the administration and management of this program is very important to the county.

Also of concern is the need to manage the breach zones below the watershed lakes within the county. As noted, the most effective means of achieving this is through the Zoning Regulations of the county.

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And, finally, the need to begin addressing the effluent quality being discharged into the groundwater from on-site wastewater systems presents an opportunity to create an effective means to manage this issue.

Goals and Objectives

DF-1 GOAL: **PROMOTE THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF THE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS WITHIN RICE COUNTY, ESPECIALLY IN RECOGNIZED FLOODPLAINS. RECOGNIZE THAT CERTAIN AREAS OF THE COUNTY ARE NOT COMPATIBLE WITH DEVELOPMENT AND THEREFORE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT BE ENCOURAGED WITHIN THOSE AREAS.**

DFO-A OBJECTIVE: Identify areas subject to drainage problems and in the floodplain within the county and the participating cities which should be protected from encroachment of new developments consistent with the floodplain regulations.

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DFO-B OBJECTIVE: Work with the Watershed Districts to identify and protect breach impact areas below watershed structures within Rice County.

DFO-C OBJECTIVE: Promote "best management practices" in new developments to protect from erosion and sedimentation pollution in surface waters within the county.

Recommendations

In order to properly manage drainage and flooding potential within Rice County, the following recommendations are given.

1. The County should amend its Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to clarify design requirements for new development sensitive to the topography of the land and cognizant of the impact of development in or near recognized floodplains.

2. The County should include provisions in its Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to protect the "breach zones" below watershed ponds and lakes.

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3. The County should maintain its participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, and enhance its "educational" efforts to inform the citizenry of the benefits of the insurance coverage opportunities to the community to protect from potential losses from flood damage.
4. The County should pursue assistance from state agencies to develop a management program to encourage more advanced on-site wastewater treatment systems, especially in the Arkansas River basin.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

9 - Community Facilities and Services

Introduction
Fire Protection
Public Safety Services
Parks, Recreation and Open Space
Rice County Landfill
Public Buildings
Planning Implications
Goals and Objectives
Recommendations

Introduction

Much as is the case with transportation and utilities, the provision of community services and facilities is a significant measuring stick in the evaluation of "quality of life" within a community. Community services and facilities are generally those that are beyond the means of individuals or families to provide for themselves. Rice County is blessed with a plethora of services and facilities that parallel those of counties much larger. Not all of these are provided directly by Rice County, but the benefits accrue to the citizenry none the less.

This element will provide an overview of those services and facilities not otherwise addressed elsewhere in this plan. As noted above, some of these are provided by entities other than Rice County. The intent is to acknowledge the extent of services and facilities within the county, regardless of who provides them.

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Fire Protection

The rural areas of Rice County are provided fire protection services through a Fire District established through the Rice County Board of Commissioners in accordance with state statutes. In addition, many of the incorporated cities have Fire Departments, some of which provide fire protection services beyond their borders in a limited service area.

The Fire District relies on volunteer firefighters to provide fire protection services. These individuals offer their time for training in order to maintain the Fire District's accreditation and must constantly upgrade equipment in order to remain current. Originally, the interest was in providing quick response to "rural-type" fire needs, such as grass and field fires, structural fires, and the occasional vehicle fire. The desire was to minimize the amount of damage that occurred from these fires and improve the "quality of life" to the rural residents.

The demand on the Fire District has changed significantly over the past several years, however. With the increase in non-farm homes and businesses, and a growing expectation that the fire protection will be more like that of city fire departments, the Fire District is often pressured to enhance and improve the level of services. While this is admirable, and may even result in an improved rating for insurance purposes for improved services, the additional costs associated with larger, better or more equipment and training may outweigh the added costs.

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There is value to the County for quality fire protection services and Rice County should continually work with the Fire Districts to assure that those services are provided.

Law Enforcement Services

Rice County provides law enforcement services to all of the rural areas of the county through the Rice County Sheriff's Office. In addition, many of the smaller incorporated cities rely on patrol services from the Sheriff's Office for law enforcement within their city limits.

Rice County is also responsible for the County Jail, operated through the Sheriff's Office. As is typical, with changes to the sentencing requirements under Kansas law and the mandates on housing of those incarcerated, the operation of the jail is a growing concern for the county.

In addition to the county's operations, the Kansas Highway Patrol has troopers assigned for patrol duties within the county, and there are law enforcement agents on duty at the two federal reservoirs associated with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

The county's growth in rural population has increased the demands on the Sheriff's Office in many ways. The increase in property crimes is common with an increase in non-farm rural residential development because the homes are more likely to be unoccupied

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during the daytime. Farm homes, where the residents are relying on farming enterprises for their livelihood, are more likely to have people and activity around the homestead on a continual basis, thus reducing the interest by those of criminal intent. The result is growing demands for more patrols and more visibility, which is very expensive to the County. This will be a continual problem that must be addressed by the County regardless of subsequent policies managing future growth and development.

Emergency Medical Services

Ambulance service in the county is provided by the Rice County Emergency Medical Services, including services inside the incorporated cities. The Fire Districts and city Fire Departments provide "first responder" services on calls within the County until the ambulance arrives. The Rice County should remain informed on the changing demands on emergency medical services to assure that quality service remains available throughout the county.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

The county itself does not provide designated park, recreation or open space facilities. Public park lands exist in many of the incorporated cities and many people have access to "private" recreation areas, particularly along the Arkansas River.

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Cemeteries

The county is not responsible for any cemeteries within the county, although a number of small cemeteries exist. Under state law, the operation and maintenance of the cemeteries in the unincorporated portion of the county are the responsibility of the Township Boards in the various townships of the county, unless there are other specific ownership arrangements in place. Some of the cemeteries are owned and operated by a nearby city. But the bulk of the cemeteries are operated and managed by the Townships.

In many cases, the available space within these facilities is getting limited. It is important for the county to work with the Townships and other interested parties to manage the needs of citizenry with respect to cemetery space in the future. It is advised that new space devoted to these uses be subject to zoning approval to assure compatibility with surrounding land uses and minimize development impacts for these facilities.

Public Buildings

The county has several buildings within its ownership from which it provides its services and operations. The main facility is the Courthouse in Lyons. Other buildings include office buildings, maintenance facilities, and road and bridge shops. The county should annually evaluate the sufficiency of these buildings to meet the present and future needs of the county.

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Other Community Services and Facilities

The other main area of "public services and facilities" is the public educational services within the county. There are five Unified School Districts that are wholly or partially located within Rice County. While Rice County has no direct responsibilities towards the operation of the school systems, the public perceptions of the quality of the schools is very important to the future of the county. The educational system is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 10.

Planning Implications

The main planning implication to Rice County is to remain aware of the changing demand for public services as the population continues to change. The rate of change will have a direct bearing on the level of change in demands for services. The potential impacts on existing or future tax-supported services should be evaluated in all future development proposals.

Goals and Objectives

CSFG-1 GOAL: PLAN AND PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN RICE COUNTY IN ORDER THAT PROPER DEVELOPMENT IS NOT RESTRICTED AND TO HELP MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE THE LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE AND STANDARD OF LIVING.

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CSFO-A OBJECTIVE: Locate all public and semi-public land uses in accordance with their individual service area requirements, transportation access needs and utility demands in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

CSFO-B OBJECTIVE: Promote design guidelines and controls for public and semi-public land uses which insure compatibility with surrounding areas, enhance the values of the natural landscape and serve as examples of the quality of development desired within the community.

CSFO-C OBJECTIVE: Provide parks and permanent green spaces where appropriate in order to meet growing recreational needs, protect floodplains and wildlife habitats, buffer adjacent land uses, and enhance property values.

CSFO-D OBJECTIVE: Encourage improvements to the surface drainage system in the cities through improved design standards in the Subdivision Regulations and by committing to an expansion of the existing storm sewer system.

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Recommendations

In order to enhance the community services and facilities within the Rice County, the following recommendations are given.

1. The County should continue to support the Fire District to enhance and improve services to all of the citizens of the County. The County should also work with the Fire District in order to improve the ISO ratings for the rural areas where possible.
2. The County should adjust its regulatory documents to have a say in locating and siting additional cemetery space within the County.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

Chapter 10 - Educational System

Introduction

Public Schools

School Facilities

Institutions of Higher Learning

Planning Implications

Goals and Objectives

Recommendations

Introduction

The public school system of any community is the most important entity outside the control of the city government that will impact the perception of the community and the overall quality of life. This section of the plan will provide an overview of the educational opportunities within Rice County.

Public Schools

There are five Unified School Districts that are wholly or partially located within Rice County. While Rice County has no direct responsibilities towards the operation of the school systems, the public perceptions of the quality of the schools is very important to the future of the county.

Rice County's school systems are under duress as a result of dwindling enrollments and slow growth in the funding to support the schools at the state level. Recently, discussions have been held regarding the consolidation of some school districts, although

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this is not a popular idea and, as noted by several news articles on the issue, may result in other costly transportation problems due to the size of the resulting consolidated district. Regardless, the problems associated with maintaining operating schools within the communities of the county is a concern to everyone.

There are no indications that problems exist with respect to the quality of the education being offered with any of the school districts. All the existing districts have taken advantage of technology to interconnect with sources of additional teaching services in order to remain current. The ability to continue to do this will be driven to a great extent by the telecommunication infrastructure to support more "high speed" internet and computer technology.

However, the most dominating issue facing the citizens of Rice County in the near future is the scope and structure of the public school systems within the county. Balancing the needs of maintaining community schools with the financial reality of the costs to do so will have long-term impacts on all aspects of life within the county.

School Facilities

The range of schools facilities within the county is as diverse as the communities themselves. Four High Schools exist within the county, supported by a number of lower level schools within various communities.

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However, as noted previously, the pressures to consolidate or otherwise alter the manner in which school services are provided will impact the facilities over time. The county has no role in these discussions, but the outcomes will impact the demands on the county in the future in subtle, and sometimes not so subtle ways. It is important for the county to remain knowledgeable about any changes that might occur in order to be in a position to adjust services if needed.

Institutions of Higher Learning

Sterling College, a private college affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, is located in Sterling. It is well recognized as a high quality institution of higher learning and adds considerably to the "quality of life" within the county, and particularly the City of Sterling.

No other colleges or universities are located within Rice County. However, McPherson College is located in the City of McPherson to the east. And Barton County Community College is in Great Bend to the west and Hutchinson Community College is in Hutchinson to the south. The community colleges offer evening classes at numerous locations within the county, thereby providing access to educational services for the citizens of Rice County.

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Planning Implications

There are no direct planning implications to Rice County; however, the changes to the educational picture within the county should be monitored in the future in order to remain abreast of the impacts of any changes that might occur.

Goals and Objectives

**ESG-1 GOAL: RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO THE
OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE WITHIN RICE COUNTY AND
SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF THE SCHOOLS WITHIN THE
COUNTY.**

ESO-A OBJECTIVE: Support the continuation of existing school systems within
Rice County.

ESO-B OBJECTIVE: Support expansion of programs and services from colleges
to provide greater opportunities for continued education
and job training for the residents of Rice County.

Recommendations

In order to maintain the high quality educational system within Rice County, the following actions are recommended:

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1. Work closely with all school districts to assure adequate access via the public streets to support the school system.
2. Assure that impacts on the school system are included in evaluations of all new developments, particularly any residential developments that might result in sudden increases in student loads.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

Chapter 11 - Economic Development

Introduction

Planning Implications

Goals and Objectives

Recommendations

Introduction

The economy of any local community has changed dramatically over the past few decades. What once were economically self-reliant settlements, usually located along the major transportation routes of the day (i.e. the original trails and later the railroads), have become the cities of today. Some have grown significantly and others have settled into a pattern of existence that has seen little change over time. Still others have dwindled into virtual "ghost towns" with few economic opportunities remaining and only remnants of the commerce that once allowed the community to thrive.

This section of the plan will not duplicate or contradict the efforts of the existing Economic Development groups within Rice County, which have been very active and have an adopted Strategic Plan, which promoted the development of this Plan by Rice County. As such, all discussions about the specifics of Economic Development activities are referred to Rice County Economic Development.

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Planning Implications

Other than a desire to see a higher retention of youth, Rice County has an excellent economic development program in place. Sufficient land has been developed for business and industrial growth.

Goals and Objectives

EDG-1 GOAL: ENCOURAGE THE EXPANSION OF BUSINESS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN RICE COUNTY THROUGH A STRONG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

EDO-A OBJECTIVE: Promote continuing education and skills training through established outreach programs and other local services and facilities to encourage residents of all ages to continue to live and work in Rice County.

EDO-B OBJECTIVE: Continue to use and support local Economic Development resources to enhance Rice County's competitive position in retaining existing and attracting new jobs to Rice County.

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EDO-C OBJECTIVE: Promote business and industrial development consistent with the overall quality of life within Rice County, that would benefit the county's economy and not adversely affect the environment. Efforts should focus on supplementing business types already in existence within the county and promoting development of new businesses compatible with the established business and skill base within the county.

EDO-D OBJECTIVE: Assist in the identification of appropriate sites for business and industrial growth and assist in extending public facilities and services to these sites as appropriate or necessary.

EDO-E OBJECTIVE: Develop Land Use Regulations and development guidelines to assure that business and industrial development receives protection from conflicting land uses when possible. Such regulations and guidelines would serve as a tool to attract new business and industrial development to Rice County.

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EDO-F OBJECTIVE: Develop and annually update a Capital Improvement Plan to outline the priorities for improvements within the county supportive of new business and industrial development, economic growth, and enhancement of the county's overall quality of life.

EDO-G OBJECTIVE: Commit to expansion and/or enhancement of industrial park space within the county, developed with all utilities for immediate use.

EDO-H OBJECTIVE: Continually evaluate the use of the Enterprise Zone as a tool to encourage economic development. Where appropriate, adjust the Enterprise Zone boundaries to maximize its successful implementation.

EDO-I OBJECTIVE: Develop regulations that do not unduly restrict mixed-use activities within the county, especially "home-based industries."

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Recommendations

As noted herein, Rice County has a strong commitment to its economic development through many means. As such, no specific recommendations are made beyond those outlined in the Goals and Objectives listed above.

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SECTION 3 - PLAN ELEMENTS

12 - Land Use

Introduction
Existing Land Use
Zoning Regulations
Subdivision Standards
Planning Implications
Goals and Objectives
Recommendations

Introduction

The willingness of a community to address the provision of new development through its policies regarding land use to a great degree establishes the atmosphere within which the private sector makes its decisions on investment within the community. Further, the extent to which the locally adopted rules, regulations and policies work to achieve the establishment of a positive investment climate greatly influences private investment decisions. And positive private investments in the community benefit the community as a whole on several levels.

The intent of this chapter is to give an overview of the existing land use patterns within the county and address the connection between the regulatory provisions of the county and those development patterns. As noted throughout this Plan, Rice County has a strong connection to its agricultural past and has shown a great desire to maintain an environment conducive for the continuation of agricultural activities, but not to the exclusion of other development interests.

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Existing Land Use

The Existing Land Use patterns within Rice County obviously reflect the uses discussed in the chapters on population trends and housing. In general, increases in rural residential land uses are occurring in the central, southern and eastern portions of the County and are having an impact on the agricultural operations in those areas. These changes have not all been bad, but the belief of the Planning Commission is that a better job can be done to manage the development interests within the rural areas.

Irrespective of these changes, the land use patterns in the rural areas are still dominated by agricultural uses. There are also a few scattered commercial uses on small lots or as a part of a rural residential property. The need for more definitive regulations that enhance the County's involvement prior to development would greatly benefit the tax-supported agencies by giving a "voice" to the development decision process prior to significant private investments.

Another land use issue that is of concern is the general lack of new development within the incorporated cities of the County. Not all are losing population, but the majority of new growth and development within Rice County is happening in the rural areas, as noted in the chapters on population and housing. Assisting the cities in providing an environment that supports new development within the cities is within the County's best interests.

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Zoning Regulations

Rice County presently has no Zoning Regulations in effect for the County. Certain portions of the unincorporated portion of Rice County are subject to Zoning Regulations in the extraterritorial area around the cities of Lyons and Sterling. The development proposals in these areas have been reviewed by those cities and the rules and regulations adopted by those cities. The involvement of the county officials has been very limited.

While this provides a base from which to evaluate Zoning Regulations by the county, the city approach generally does not provide sufficient control over rural developments to assure the developments meet the objectives outlined within this Plan. Neither does this approach provide the type of rural development variety or "flexibility" in dealing with more contemporary development issues. Depending upon the final decisions made within this Plan regarding development standards for the rural areas, the Zoning Regulations should be developed to the greatest flexibility to manage the rural development occurring with Rice County.

Subdivision Standards

Much like the condition with Zoning Regulations, Rice County has no adopted Subdivision Regulations in effect. Subdivision Regulations address the procedures for submitting and approving plats, the standards for the development of the infrastructure

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supporting those subdivisions, and the methods for financing the requirement improvements.

As is the case with the Zoning Regulations, a limited area surrounding the cities of Lyons and Sterling have Subdivision Regulations in effect by those cities. However, the standards for improvements are generally reflective of city standards, which are unrealistic in the rural areas. As such, little development has occurred subject to these regulations, and the areas where rural development has occurred is beyond the reach of the city rules. The effect of this is to push non-farm development further into the rural areas and away from the cities where urban support services exist. This is exactly the opposite result of the intent of the adoption of the regulations by the cities in the first place. This is very common throughout the state of Kansas and is a process that should be seriously reevaluated in all cases.

Planning Implications

The challenges for Rice County in addressing the land use issue in the future will rest primarily in the actions needed for the development regulations. The Zoning Regulations need to provide greater variety and flexibility to deal with development proposals within the county. The regulations need to provide a wide variety of rural residential districts and be very limited in the use of commercial or industrial zoning independent of conditional uses.

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Also, the Subdivision Regulations should be closely reviewed to assure the standards for improvements in new subdivisions are consistent with the position of the county today, and that greater flexibility is provided to encourage development.

Goals and Objectives

LU-1 GOAL: **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ORDERLY AND EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF LAND WHICH WILL ACHIEVE A FISCALLY SOUND AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE COUNTY, WHILE MAXIMIZING COMPATIBILITY AMONG LAND USES.**

LUO-A OBJECTIVE: Ensure that future development occurs in a timely fashion and is adequately served by roads, sewers, water and other public facilities and services.

LUO-B OBJECTIVE: Protect the fiscal position of Rice County and the participating cities by ensuring that future development occurs in a cost-effective manner.

LUO-C OBJECTIVE: Minimize land use incompatibilities and ensure that adjacent developments are comparable in density and quality, thereby providing for a smooth transition between land uses.

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LUO-D OBJECTIVE: Coordinate future development with the physical environment, placing a premium upon developing in harmony with existing natural features.

LUO-E OBJECTIVE: Provide regulatory programs that encourage and reward innovative site planning which reduces costs to the public.

LUO-F OBJECTIVE: Plan for the timely annexation of developed areas adjacent to the existing cities and work toward annexing properties prior to actual development. This will help assure development that is consistent with city standards and will enhance overall property values.

LUO-G OBJECTIVE: Discourage new strip commercial development that is not promoted in a unified, consistent manner. Individual lot developments for single purposes that fail to coordinate with adjoining property development should be discouraged.

Recommendations

In order to properly manage land use development in Rice County, the following recommendations are given.

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1. The County should adopt Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to improve its ability to manage rural development and create more flexibility in design requirements for new development.
2. The County should oppose all efforts of cities to establish extraterritorial areas for Zoning Regulations and/or Subdivision Regulations. The County should establish a procedure in its Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for all cities to review and comment on proposed developments within their "areas of influence." Elected officials subject to election by the people affected should make Land use decisions in these areas.

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Section 4 – FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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SECTION 4 - FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

13 – Future Development Plan

Introduction
Future Land Use Plan
Major Street Plan
Conclusion

Introduction

This section of the Plan presents the Future Development Plan Map for Rice County. It includes both a graphic representation in a map, as well as a series of policy statements and directives for future decision-making by the public and private sectors.

The Future Development Plan Map is a general, graphic description of the Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives, recommendations and policies. However, it is NOT a zoning map or a static, unchanging blueprint for the future development of Rice County. The Future Development Plan Map is a general guide that should be evaluated during deliberations on all new development proposals and updated periodically based on the decisions that are made with respect to future development. It is not a given that the Future Development Plan Map will reflect the actual development patterns of the County in the future. Further, the policies within this Plan should be viewed the same way, as general statements of action to be used as a general guide for future decisions within the planning area.

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Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is graphically depicted on the Future Land Use Map herein. It is intended to provide a generalized pattern of agricultural, residential, and open space uses within the County. Further, the text herein supports the Map with principles and policies for each land use category.

- *Agricultural Land Use*

The Agricultural Land Use designation is the dominant land use within Rice County. Within this area, agricultural uses and very low-density residential uses are considered appropriate. Where land is proposed for development to other uses, the evaluation and determination of the viability of those uses are recommended to be considered under the Zoning Regulations, where the appropriateness can be viewed on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, a rezoning will be necessary, specifically with residential developments. In other cases, a Conditional Use Permit is considered the best method of determining the appropriateness of the proposed development. This approach also provides the greatest degree of "flexibility" in dealing with the development impacts.

Within the Zoning Regulations, the Zoning Districts for these uses would be the "AG" Agricultural District, and the "RR" Rural Residential District.

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The underlying planning principles in the Agricultural Land Use designation is to promote continuance of agricultural lands in agricultural uses. The conversion of these lands to non-agricultural uses, especially to residential uses, has a deleterious effect on the remaining agricultural lands and should be discouraged where possible. Additionally, commercial and industrial uses should be carefully permitted in the rural areas where very limited support services exist and the extension of services can be very costly. Some non-agricultural uses are appropriate for the rural areas, such as feed lots, bulk storage of agricultural and petroleum products, quarries and salvage yards, but must be judiciously located to minimize the impacts associated with those businesses.

- *Residential Land Uses*

The Residential Land Use designation is shown very little on the Future Land Use Map. To the greatest extent possible, the most dense residential developments within the rural portions of Rice County should be targeted toward the major road networks and close to the existing incorporated cities within the County. Other locations may be appropriate for more dense residential development in the rural areas where similar development already exists or the lands proposed for development are not considered good for agricultural uses. Within the Zoning Regulations, the Zoning Districts for these uses would be the "RR" Rural Residential District, the "SR" Suburban Residential District, the "R-1" Single-Family Residential District, and the "V-1" Village District.

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The underlying planning principles provide for the provision of rural housing opportunities at locations within the County capable of supporting the impacts of the non-farm development. Rice County is not opposed to additional rural developments of this nature, but desires to be more judicious in the locations within the County where such development occurs. Also, the intent is for higher levels of infrastructure support to be present for such development.

- *Commercial and Industrial Land Uses*

Commercial and Industrial Land Uses are not reflected on the Future Land Use Map. The reasoning for this action is to acknowledge that the bulk of the County is not capable of supporting commercial and industrial developments due to the lack appropriate utilities and other public support services. However, it is recognized that some commercial and industrial uses are appropriate for the rural areas and, as such, the expectation is that the Zoning Regulations will be amended to provide for the placement of these uses on a case-by-case basis with Conditional Uses.

In particular, numerous such uses are more appropriate for the rural areas, such as confined animal feeding operations, junk and salvage yards, rock quarries, landfills, airports, bulk storage of agricultural and petroleum products, and the like. These uses can be considered, as other more common commercial and industrial uses, through a Conditional Use Permit process.

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Major Street Plan

The major streets within Rice County will primarily remain the state and federal highways, and the section-line roads. The classification of these streets are already established within the various governmental units responsible for the operation and maintenance of those respective streets. As noted in the chapter on Transportation, the intent is for these streets and roads to be the basic framework from which all future development occurs, and as such it is imperative to protect the right-of-way needs for this transportation system in the future. Hence, all such roads are declared to be "Major Streets" within this Plan.

City Future Land Uses

The Future Land Use Plans for each of the participating cities are included herein. Each of the cities development plans are geared more to the continued use of the existing properties within each city. Given the expectation of little new development in the immediate future, most of the needs surrounding the participating cities are more general reflected in the plans and policies of the County.

As for specific land uses within the cities, it is anticipated that most of the non-residential development will occur adjacent to existing similar uses. If any of the cities consider future actions to create business development centers, this Plan should be amended to reflect those changes.

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Conclusion

The Future Land Use Plan and the Future Land Use Map are a reflection of Rice County and each of the participating cities into the foreseeable future. The pace and priority of when and where new development will occur will be dictated more by the open marketplace and the risks taken by private developers in the coming years. The role of Rice County and the participating cities will remain one of "partnership" opportunities to assure that new developments occur to the benefit of all affected.

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Section 5 – PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

SECTION 5 - PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

14 - Implementation

Introduction

Implementation of Land Use Recommendations

Implementation of Major Street Recommendations

Implementation Schedule

Other Implementation Considerations

Procedures for Review and Update of Programs

Introduction

As a policy guide, the Comprehensive Plan has no regulatory authority and, thus, relies on a variety of implementation tools to carry out its intent. The two most recognized tools are Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations. These are often supplemented by other "land development related" codes and regulations, such as locally adopted Sanitation or Environmental Codes, Building Codes, Property Standards Codes, and other similar local standards.

The Comprehensive Plan will also be implemented on an incremental basis over time as landowners and developers approach Rice County with development proposals and rezoning applications. These proposals and applications should be considered in relation to the goals, objectives and policies articulated within this Plan. If consistent with the plan, the decisions of the County and the participating cities are presumed to be reasonable, but this does not preclude a decision different from the findings of the Plan on a specific development proposal or application.

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Implementation of Land Use Recommendations

The most effective method of implementing the Future Land Use recommendations within this Plan is to adopt Zoning and Subdivision Regulations designed to provide the flexibility to respond to new developments. At the time of preparation of this update to the Comprehensive Plan for Rice County and the participating cities, new Zoning and Subdivision Regulations and modifications to the Sanitation Code are being considered.

In addition, the County has modified its organizational structure to place all development-related administration and enforcement in one department. This will improve the quality of services to the public through a "one-stop shop" approach to the permitting process, and it will provide improved coordination of the administration of the various codes and regulations because one department is responsible for all of these. Experience in other counties has shown this approach is a major improvement to public services and benefits are realized both short and long term.

Implementation of Major Street Recommendations

This Plan makes no specific changes to the Transportation system within the County that would entail any significant changes by the County. The primary need is to recognize the "major streets" during the development process.

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Implementation Schedule

The expectation is that the Comprehensive Plan will be adopted by Rice County and the participating cities in the first quarter of 2002, followed soon by adoption of new Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. The completion of these actions by Rice County and the participating cities, following the required public hearings by the Rice County Joint Planning Commission, will provide Rice County and the participating cities with current plans and regulatory tools to carry out the intent of this Plan.

Other Implementation Considerations

Another action Rice County and the participating cities should consider in the future is consideration of the adoption of building codes applicable within Rice County and the cities. While not many counties within Kansas have adopted building codes, the value of the codes for all aspects of tax-supported public services is great. In addition, the consumer protection aspect of a reasonable building code program benefits the private sector as well by reducing the risks associated with new construction by people not knowledgeable about all the aspects of construction. The decision to adopt such codes must be made by the Governing Body having jurisdiction, and there may be interest in coordinating such services with some or all of the incorporated cities. This should be considered by the County and the participating cities in the near future.

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Rice County and the participating cities should also considered definitive policies and codes for minimum property standards and minimum housing standards. This Plan identifies these issues as concerns and such policies and codes are the best method to address the problems.

Procedures for Review and Update of Programs

State statutes establish that the Comprehensive Plan is to be reviewed annually. Most counties include such a review in the budgeting process normally conducted during the month of June. An annual review does not mean that major modifications must be made to the Plan; only that the Plan is reviewed for consistency with existing programs and policies, as well as conformance with new programs and policies adopted in the previous year.

The Rice County Joint Planning Commission should annually review the Comprehensive Plan for its consistency and conformance with the programs and policies of the County and the participating cities. In addition, changes in zoning should be reviewed for consistency with the Future Land Use Plan. It is possible that a change in zoning may be made during the year that is felt important and needed within the community, but which may not be consistent with the Plan. The annual review of the Plan is the time to adjust the Plan to accommodate this change.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Given the rate of change within the County, a comprehensive update to the Plan should be considered no later than ten years from the adoption of this Plan. A comprehensive update may be needed earlier if changes occur more rapidly, or if other activities warrant. However, since the Plan is considered one of the relevant documents to be reviewed when considering a zoning change, it is important that the Plan be kept current.

Finally, the Rice County Joint Planning Commission should also include a review of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations during the annual review of the Comprehensive Plan. Such a review should be to address areas within the Regulations that may need modification, or to consider subjects the Regulations do not currently address. Given the rate of change in our technological abilities and the societal expectations regarding these changes, it is anticipated that issues will develop that are unknown at this time. Therefore, an annual review of the Regulations is recommended.

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APPENDICES

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Public Participation

*POPULATION AND GROWTH
HOUSING
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
UTILITIES
DRAINAGE AND FLOODING
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
LAND USE
OTHER*

STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

The following are the comments received by the participants at the October 26th, 2000, meeting of the Rice County Joint Planning Commission. These comments are from the invited stakeholders and other citizens that were present at that meeting and took the time to provide their individual "input", comments and ideas on the following planning topics. The purpose of this exercise is to collect the thoughts of the community and use that information in developing Goals and Objectives for the various planning topics identified.

This same group of people will also be asked to affirm the issues and concerns identified herein and to participate with the Joint Planning Commission in giving a priority ranking to these issues. The end results will be used by the Joint Planning Commission in developing the Comprehensive Plan for Rice County and, subsequently, in assuring that the implementation tools (land use regulations) are sensitive to the needs and concerns of the community.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2002 - 2022

POPULATION AND GROWTH

Road improvements and expansions.

-0-

Expand the tax base.

-0-

Abandoned buildings.

-0-

More growth in SE corner.

More rural homes.

Will need more water sources.

-0-

Help our county keep up with plans of surrounding area.

-0-

Continued loss of county population.

Brain drain from county.

1960 Rice County had 1,200 farm operators. 1999 Rice County had 563 farm operators.
Effect on cities?

-0-

Job opportunities for young people.

Land for building homes established.

-0-

Any zoning rules should "invite" growth and not be a deterrent.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Rice County is growing and should not be deterred. However, there should be some common sense guidelines to avoid undesirable types of growth.

-0-

More people would live in Rice County if there was adequate housing available.

More support for industry is already here - constant contact to offer assistance.

-0-

Maintain present population which, involves replacing our large elderly segment as they pass on.

-0-

Try to bring in businesses that pay more than minimum wages.

-0-

More rural housing and economic growth for the rural areas to grow with for job development to attract new people to the community.

-0-

Rice County is not a growing county. Cities are losing population. At the same time, it is an aging county. We need to be prepared to address the concerns and needs of our elderly.

-0-

Rural populations directly involved in agricultural production will continue to decrease in numbers in the future. Rural issues and services will be more affected and demanded by those not as directly affected by the agricultural production group. This may lead to increased conflict of interests between diverse groups of people.

Those persons farming and owning the land will decrease in number while those populating the rural areas may not own a very significant portion of the land but be larger in number.

-0-

Definite need for population growth.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Favor rural housing development with controls.

Townships may need help to provide roads until valuations catch up.

-0-

Need more affordable housing and clean up areas that are run down.

More recreational areas, especially for young people.

Would be great to have a store or two like we used to have.

Help Senior Center to continue to grow. It has been good for many senior citizens.

Quit pushing small farmers out of the land.

-0-

For Mitchell Township and most of Rice County – encourage development in an orderly and constructive way. We have lost a lot of our population in the last twenty years.

-0-

Overall plan needs to be structured to encourage economic growth in county – which in turn could increase population.

-0-

Population declining in small towns.

-0-

Encourage increase in population.

More housing and more jobs.

-0-

Rice County will likely grow in population during the next 20 years. I believe that the rural population will decline as farm size increases.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

The towns of Sterling and Little River will probably have the highest percentage growth with Lyons having the highest total population increase (likely a 6-10% increase over the 20 years).

Rural population will decline, possible 10-15%.

-0-

I do not see much change in population for 20 years. Average age of citizens will continue to increase.

-0-

HOUSING

Water and Sewer.

Rural water districts, etc.

Acreage for developments.

Multi-family dwellings.

Manufactured homes.

-0-

Regulate the placement and care of manufactured housing.

Develop quality mobile home parks - regulate.

Investigate the Neighborhood Revitalization Act to encourage building and renovation of housing.

Affordable, adequate housing - HUD programs are not necessarily the answer.

Development a program for demolition of homes out in the county.

-0-

Mobile homes - age and size.

Foundation requirements.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Need affordable – costs \$100,000.00 and can only afford rent on \$30,000.00.

-0-

Make sure our plan will be consistent with lending agency requirements.

-0-

Need for entry level housing.

-0-

Apartment complexes for elderly.

More good rental homes and apartments.

Plan to help remodel and fix up existing housing – such as grants and low interest loans.

-0-

Certainly a need for some housing but growth is slow.

Would be extremely cautious regarding manufactured homes. However, should be able to do so under guidelines.

Manufactured homes seem to be more of a subject with political emphasis than a “real” need or vehicle (no pun intended) for increased housing. Folks like to talk about manufactured homes as an alternative, but I personally feel there is no demand for this type of housing in Rice County.

Seems like the development in the SE part of the county should be encouraged.

-0-

Acreage restrictions in rural areas should not be too stringent. Rural homes need to be encouraged, subject to sanitary and life quality concerns.

Manufactured housing regulation is controlled by state laws.

-0-

Rehab housing in all communities.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

New housing programs for all communities – utilizing grants and tax credits.

Address blight areas – neighborhood revitalization programs.

-0-

The need to control what kind (of housing) and how close to each other.

-0-

Address issue of ad valorem taxation as it affects existing housing, i.e. do not penalize those making improvement to their homes by adjusting taxes upward each year.

-0-

Develop housing tracts in or close to cities for new homes. Lyons has very few new lots.

-0-

Equal housing and zoning for new housing to be regulated.

-0-

New housing stock is needed. Particularly affordable housing for younger families. This will help bring new, younger people to our county.

Also, a lot of existing housing units need to be rehabilitated, and where needed, condemned and demolished.

-0-

There may be an increase in vacant and dilapidated homes in the more remote and isolated areas.

-0-

All communities need housing.

Mobile homes are okay. Need planned areas.

Cooperation with water districts and cities to provide water for housing development.

-0-

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Maybe more low income housing for older population.

-0-

Set housing standards.

Set standards for builders, plumbing, mechanical, etc.

Require properties to be kept up.

-0-

Good housing is difficult to find in many of our communities. Need to encourage development of housing.

-0-

Abandoned public buildings and housing in small towns.

-0-

Abandoned public buildings need to be cleaned up or torn down.

-0-

Appears to be a growing need for new housing both in Lyons and in smaller communities such as Sterling and Little River. In Lyons, the number of sites available for new construction is very limited and some available lots would require considerable expense to develop sewer lift stations which tends to restrict development rather than promote it.

-0-

Financing to update and improve existing aging housing as well as build or move in new affordable dwellings.

-0-

Bridges will be upgraded during the next 20 years as the two-lane highways 96 and 56 will likely expand to a four-lane paved highway.

County roads will be prioritized with more rocked roads with a few asphalted. Other roads will be moved to minimum maintenance as farm size and field sizes are increased. Some roads may be entirely closed to public traffic.

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Small cities need to rid themselves of run-down houses. "Cheap rent" invites undesirable people into a community. Too often, crime and drugs result.

Small cities need moderately priced housing, in order to attract new families. Without affordable housing it is doubtful that a community will grow. But, it is not practical for a developer to speculate in these areas.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Additional costs for roads.

(See comments on Growth.)

-0-

Because of our aging population, we need to be sure there is transportation services for them.

Work toward an interstate through the county. Business tends to want to locate close to a major roadway.

-0-

Transportation in rural areas for elderly.

Larger equipment, wider roads and right-of-way.

-0-

Need roads to handle large loads, semis.

Fix or remove RR.

-0-

State and county roads are well maintained.

-0-

Bypass heavy traffic around Lyons?

-0-

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Improve existing roads and do not use farmland for more right-of-way.

Continue bridge program.

-0-

Other than personal vehicle, no idea here. There does seem to be a need for elderly to do their business.

-0-

Seek additional funding from the legislature for county road systems – which are facing a much greater use – weight and frequency – due to the demise of the railroad system.

-0-

Roads and bridges with size to work with large equipment.

-0-

Equal funding of townships. Many townships have money year-to-year they don't spend, others can't maintain what they have.

-0-

We need to make sure Sterling and Lyons have state highways nearby. Also, the option of a 4-lane state highway system needs to remain a goal.

The abandonment of short-line rail lines is a concern, especially for agricultural interests.

-0-

Decreased funding or budget dollars will lead to closing or decreasing maintenance or roads in remote and isolated areas. Roads determined to have a certain usage rating will be the ones improved and maintained. Laws may have to be put in effect to restrict new construction in areas not serviced with a maintained road.

-0-

Only a few rail lines still exist. Work with business and industry using these to help continue service.

Township and county roads are suffering because of heavier truck traffic as RR's decline.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Could use more transportation for elderly.

-0-

Highways and secondary roads will be used even more for trucking or grain and products in and out of the county as the railroads either abandon lines or just do not supply cars to ship products.

-0-

Upkeep on road and highways with heavy trucks. Need them if no railroads.

-0-

Railroad.

Bus.

Transportation for elderly available in rural areas.

-0-

As rail use diminishes, more use is put on our road system to move grain, etc., therefore more cost to maintain and improve existing roads.

-0-

Need railroad service for shipping grain.

-0-

We are fortunate to have a nice airport. We need to prevent further encroachment on it.

We have lost several miles of asphalt roads. Unfortunately this asphalt was removed and discarded instead of being rehabilitated.

Small cities cannot afford to maintain their "main" streets, which in most cases are a connecting link with county roads.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2002 - 2022

UTILITIES

Where lines are placed in rights-of-way.

Who has priority in rights-of-way.

Development of rural water and sewer systems.

-0-

Keep up with technology or be on the cutting edge.

Plan for safe, adequate water into the next generation. Education may be one part.

-0-

Underground maintenance.

-0-

Big need for good water.

Easements for separation of lines – underground.

-0-

High cost for natural gas in Lyons.

What effect will deregulation of electric power have on the county and its citizens.

-0-

Look for better ways to improve utilities, such as burying lines and eliminate most poles. This would help power outages and improve housing areas.

-0-

Have as many options as possible. The “only game in town” mode is unhealthy.

Keep as competitive as possible.

Keep as attractive as possible – they should have some parameters on where they put some of those unsightly poles, etc.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Crucial element to growth and development.

County codes seem adequate in water and sewer area.

-0-

Ways to control where and how (utility) lines are put as to roads.

-0-

Take hard look at Lyon's utility distribution system – either provide adequate capital fund for replacement or inquire about transferring our system to supplier.

-0-

Enforcing cleanup and plugging of abandoned oil wells and equipment.

-0-

The water district to be included for rural housing in more of Rice County.

More availability of other cooperative utilities in the county.

-0-

We need to work to maintain high quality telephone service. The cities water and wastewater systems must be maintained and improved. All cities should eliminate septic systems, to prevent nitrate pollution of our groundwater. Agricultural fertilizer use needs to be closely monitored because this is a major contributor to groundwater pollution. (Nitrates).

We must make sure that we have access to broadband, internet technology. For rural communities, access to broadband technology is as important for survival today as the railroads were to towns in the last century.

-0-

Costs of these services will probably determine the growth or development of new housing, etc. in rural areas.

-0-

Better pipeline mapping for everyone to use. Possible GPS mapping.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

We have good electrical service from several different companies.

-0-

More affordable in country.

Why is REA always so much higher than KPL?

-0-

Expand the Rice County RWD # 1 to areas that do not have water. Upgrade present system to allow for expansion.

-0-

Underground phone cables – what happens if cable is broken.

-0-

Cell phones.

-0-

Availability of potable water is becoming a larger problem in Rice County. Nitrates are becoming more of a problem, particularly in the southern half of the county. Sterling, Alden and Raymond have concerns, and Little River also has water quality problems.

-0-

Question of how good electric service will be in less populated areas when deregulation is put into effect.

-0-

Water has been high in nitrates.

-0-

County will need to work with KDHE.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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DRAINAGE AND FLOODING

Who is expected to handle additional watershed from developments.

Changing water flows.

-0-

Develop conservation practices and plan to reduce flooding.

-0-

Several areas flood main roads in wet seasons.

-0-

Development of housing and industry in a flood plain should be on hold until a protection plan can be developed.

-0-

Add more watershed lakes.

Clean, widen and maintain creek areas.

-0-

Certainly have to be an issue to be considered before any development could occur.

Must take into consideration how this specific development affects adjacent properties.

Serious issue.

-0-

Cow Creek and its tributaries. Flooding problems.

-0-

People need to respect the federal flood plain management plan. Residential, commercial and industrial developments should be required to submit adequate drainage plans before their developments are allowed!

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Stormwater management is a big issue.

-0-

Attention and awareness of current federal and state rules will guide plans in this area.

-0-

Need zoning below watershed lakes for housing construction.

Need better defined flood zoning for development purposes.

-0-

If this applies to township roads, many areas need ditches cleaned out and culverts put in rather than washing out roads. No township money for this.

Will use this area to discuss township roads. How do we maintain them on what budget money we have? And how can we tax people more? Heavy equipment, semi transportation, etc., is more than they can handle.

School systems complain about bus routes. We are aware of what needs to be done, but how to do it?

This would be a concern about new development also.

-0-

Continue the promotion, development and expansion of the flood control through the Little River Watershed District.

-0-

The organization I represent, Upper Little Ark River Watershed District, was voted by the district to lessen flooding. We have a 4 mil tax levy and get cost-share assistance from the state for dam construction. I recognize the downside of zoning, but in our case it might be of great help.

Issues that could arise might involve dwellings built downstream from one of our dams. We are regulated by the Division of Water Resources and their specifications for watershed dams are much more stringent, and expensive, if a dwelling should be built in that area of the floodplain where a failed dam might endanger human life.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

We have the utmost confidence in the specs we now use, but the regulations cannot be ignored. We probably could not afford upgrading existing dams to a higher category nor adding cost to the proposed dams, (we have about 15 to build) so zoning in certain areas downstream from dams and proposed dams might be of great benefit to our district.

-0-

No-till farming helps stop drainage. What about drainage of cities?

-0-

The watershed dams in Rice County have done much good, but there is a need for more dams. Restriction on housing is needed below these dams.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

What additional requirements are townships going to be required to supply?

Trash.

-0-

County-planned beautification for rural areas – tree planting, colorful plantings at strategic locations, etc. Could involve contests, service and civic organizations. Maintenance would be a key.

All services available for elderly. Encourage retirees to stay and invest locally.

Increase the availability and quality of child care. After school programs, etc.

Utilize the community building built in 2001.

Existing rural water wells and sanitation systems – monies and help to bring up to code.

Encourage cultural activities and promote.

Closed circuit TV for all areas – promote and develop to be educational and helpful.

Recreation activities expanded and enhanced – organized and personal (golf, tennis, etc.)

-0-

Services for elderly.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Fire.

Police.

-0-

Several projects underway - jail, emt center.

Community Foundation Center.

-0-

Rural area should blend policies to urban policies.

-0-

The ability of industry to hire required labor.

-0-

Upgrade city parks and add more county areas such as County Lake open to the public for camping and fishing.

-0-

I think the county has done pretty well here.

-0-

Swimming pool in Lyons.

Walking trails.

Park areas updated.

-0-

Communities must be progressive and have a vision. "Main street" businesses are the lifeblood of our communities. We need to work to ensure their survival.

-0-

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

These facilities should be distributed among the greatest (largest) population areas proportionately.

-0-

Consider countywide law enforcement.

-0-

Social services.

Fire.

Police.

-0-

Need more manufacturing for small communities.

-0-

Small cities cannot justify keeping a competent fulltime law enforcement officer.

Fire service is feasible with joint cooperation between city and county. However, many times, local departments have different needs from others in the county.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Utilize Sterling College for adult education.

Encourage schools to include Rice County history – some key figures, etc.

Encourage schools to help train HS graduates for jobs in county.

Encourage schools to try to stress importance of responsibility, resumes, job interviews, etc.

-0-

Small schools.

-0-

We have a lot of school districts in the county.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

-0-

Training of our future generation should include a small course in our high schools to include discussion of zoning regulations. This would be appropriate at the junior or senior level of secondary education or at the junior college level.

-0-

Have as good a school system as possible – consolidation is the wave of the future – provides better teachers and less cost for administration and buildings.

-0-

We have excellent systems in Sterling, Little River and Lyons that could handle lots of growth with current facilities.

-0-

Support of Sterling College.

Involvement of school system Superintendents.

-0-

Work closely with USD's as they are major employers in all parts of county. Educators' input is essential.

-0-

Obviously, our educational system is critical to our survival. This is an important piece of the economic development puzzle.

We need to invest in our schools. They need to be adequately equipped and sized.

Let's have the goal of committing all of the resources needed to provide a top-notch educational system in our county.

-0-

These facilities should be maintained and planned to be located as centrally as possible to those they serve in proportion to population.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

More consolidation may be demanded in the future as rural populations continue to decline.

-0-

Update technology as needed.

Better pay for teachers. Surely local parents and board know when they are doing a good job.

Smaller classes.

Develop better bus routes. Roads need to be better.

-0-

Make countywide districts.

-0-

More need for preschools in the public system to help students get a jump start on their education.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Would be good to develop strategy or incentives for agri-business, value-added products, etc.

Use programs from the state, SCKEDD, and Ricedco to improve communities, encourage and aid local businesses and recruit other businesses.

Encourage home-based businesses.

Continue leadership programs and expand.

Fill the Industrial Park and all available buildings with job producing businesses.

-0-

Need schools, housing and services.

-0-

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

What is the plan for the foundry in Lyons?

-0-

Promote county better to outside people - such as good place to raise children, good retirement community.

Have better financing available to new business and industry.

Excellent hunting and fishing.

Center of Kansas and US for easy travel.

-0-

Will come from within incrementally. We will not be "saved" from outside by some large industry.

Will need growth to begin and then this will occur.

-0-

Requires careful application. Must be encouraged but not to detriment of existing development and quality of life issues.

-0-

More work to be done drawing new industry and new jobs to the county and rural area.

-0-

Rice County needs to do a better job at economic development efforts. We have got to attract some small to mid-sized manufacturing businesses.

Cities need to get involved!

-0-

Tax assessment may have to change from being so heavily land and property based when farming and agricultural returns cannot support the burden of increased urban population.

-0-

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Need available economic and industrial development areas to attract business if nothing more than interested sellers of sites.

-0-

No more corporate livestock farms. We already have more than enough diverse effects, flies, odor, water level, dead livestock lying around. People are leaving their homes because of this. When everything is contaminated 10 years from now and they move to a new area, what do we do with the mess?

Surely there must be other industries we could support for growth.

Need to protect what water we have – (not pasture ponds for livestock) who swims in them but cattle?

-0-

For our county to survive, promote economic development to provide jobs that will encourage people to move here, stay here and replace population losses.

As farms get bigger, our communities will not survive with the consolidation of more farm ground under fewer operators.

-0-

Regulation of taverns in rural areas.

-0-

More job development with the county.

-0-

Theoretically a good idea, but seldom pays its way.

LAND USE

Livestock.

Salvage yards.

Golf course.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Corporate farming.

-0-

What can be done to separate large livestock facilities from houses to deal with odor, flies, runoff.

Junk yards - old cars.

-0-

Agricultural land should remain agricultural until industrialization, commercial, residential or other development takes place. Then zoning may be needed.

-0-

Do more rotation of crops.

Keep tree rows and plant corners and ditches for wildlife.

-0-

Very general - not restrictive.

-0-

Fringe areas of cities are an issue. For example, do housing acreage restrictions apply in fringe areas. Commercial and industrial zoning should be carefully considered. Entry usage should be controlled by zoning. Signage is controlled by zoning. Zoning should control commercial development without impeding development.

-0-

Revised Sanitation Code.

Orderly development - re: lot size.

Mobile home restrictions.

Communication tower locations.

Salvage yard locations.

Water quality and quantity.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

What can be done to protect what is out there now (feed lots, farms, etc.).

-0-

For cities that do not have zoning, they need it. Cities need to be properly "planned". Trailer houses should not be allowed everywhere in a city. Designate a specific "trailer park" where they must go. Cities need to enforce their property codes. Nuisance abatement needs to be carried through.

-0-

Will the size of farm operations be restricted through legislation even though an ever increasing size will be needed to support utilizing the technological advances in equipment, etc.

-0-

Need rural housing development plans.

Need rural industry plans.

-0-

Being careful who and what it (land) is sold for and used for.

Common sense management.

-0-

Make sure that we develop standards for livestock facilities of all kinds that are environmentally sound and that are conducive to expanding present facilities and the construction of new facilities.

Do not allow housing on less than 40 acres.

-0-

Corporate farming.

-0-

Converting ag to non-ag uses.

RICE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2002 - 2022

Restrictions on salvage operations and junk accumulation.

Discourage wholesale removal of trees.

OTHER

Residents of county need to feel good about living here instead of always critical.

We need to be visitor-friendly to encourage tourism and visitors and shoppers to the county.

Develop recycling strategies to reduce solid waste amount.

Unify the county.

Promote volunteerism to make clean up of areas possible, roadside pickup in county, etc.

Build on strengths – central location, etc.

Consider ways to utilize retirees to help with education, etc.

Marketing.