

# The Big CITY

*The Manhattan of the West stands tall.*



Downtown.

MANHATTAN CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

By Richelle Tremaine

The Little Apple is the nickname for Manhattan, Kan., and like the East Coast counterpart, there seems to be a little something for every taste. From history, to shopping, to nature trails and rides, to galleries and museums and a thriving college population with Kansas State University located here, Manhattan is a worth a visit from any part of the state.

Established in 1855, Manhattan is the county seat of Riley County. The town remained a free-state stance during the Bleeding Kansas era when New England sent emigrants here to cement the abolitionist sympathies.

Drive around town and see the fondness for limestone that founding fathers of the community had. A host of buildings, churches, homes and much of the university is comprised of the cloudy white stone. In fact, the most compelling reason for the stone is the landscape – literally, there were very few trees around when the area was in its infancy. Trees dotting the landscape primarily grew around the rivers and streambeds while the native limestone was abundant and quarried from the ample hills.

Manhattan is nestled among the northern section of the Flint Hills and the nearby Konza Prairie. The rolling countryside is comprised of layers of limestone and flint, creating an unparalleled landscape. The very nature of the stony hills has protected the prairie from both the plow and the bulldozer, thus leaving the land unspoiled. It is the country's last large expanse of tallgrass prairie, unfolding wide and wondrous, looking much the same as it has through the ages.

## Konza Prairie

The Konza Prairie, a bountiful 8,616 acres of native tallgrass prairie, is just six miles south of Manhattan. It allows visitors a bit of time travel of sorts. The prairie remains pristine and wild, much as it would have looked a century ago. For those who want to get out and really experience the prairie on a more personal level, the Konza features a hiking trail, offering three hikes of different lengths: three, five or six miles. Access to the trail is free and visitors are welcome from sunrise to sunset.

For other short drives in the countryside, head out on Anderson Avenue which leads to the town of Keats. The road gives way to rolling, wide open vistas. Likewise, head out toward Randolph for another soul soothing drive.

## Kansas State University

Blumont College became part of the national land grant college system and eventually became Kansas State University, formerly Kansas State Agricultural College. Called "K-State" today, the college is an integral part of this thriving community. K-State's permanent art collection is housed on

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Aggieville.



Downtown.

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campus at the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art. The museum offers five separate galleries for viewing.

Explore culture of an altogether different nature at the Strecker-Nelson Gallery, the oldest commercial art gallery in the state. This gallery provides a welcome setting for revolving exhibits and features works from several top Kansas artists. The owners often are on hand to offer additional insight to the works and some information about the artists.

Local history can be discovered at the Riley County Historical Museum. The museum is filled with objects made in or around Riley County. One jewel is the elaborate sunflower clock.

The Goodnow House, right next to the county museum, gives visitors a peek into the lives of Ellen and Isaac Goodnow who left Rhode Island to lend their support to antislavery efforts in Kansas. Soon after, the Goodnows began to build Bluemont College (now K-State) completed in 1859. Many of the objects and collections in the Goodnow museum are from the family. Other sites hailing to the past include the Hartford House, the Wolf House Museum and a Pioneer Log Cabin.



Gallery.

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Creek State Park, home to the second-largest reservoir in the state. Tuttle Creek boasts 12,000 acres of water and more than 16,000 acres of public hunting land. In addition, the park offers full-service camping as well as primitive campsites, the Blue Valley Yacht Club, bike trails and a 310-acre off-road vehicle area. The Fancy Creek Shooting Range and the Tuttle Creek Trapshooting Park offer facilities for shooting enthusiasts.

The largest lake in the state, Milford Reservoir in Milford State Park, is situated about 30 miles west of Manhattan. Similar to Tuttle Creek, the park is surrounded by campsites, trails and parks.

Shopping venues in town range from boutiques in downtown to the Manhattan Town Center. Aggieville, the community's hot spot for students, draws visitors of all ages to shop and dine among the one-of-a-kind shops and restaurants.

Another strong presence in Manhattan comes from nearby Fort Riley, which initially was established as Camp Center in 1853 but was renamed that year in honor of Maj. Gen. Bennet Riley of the U.S. Army. The fort was established to help defend against raiding Indians. Today, civilians can visit the historic fort for walking and driving tours. Access to the fort is open to the public with a valid driver's license and vehicle registration. ■



Golf.

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### The Great Outdoors

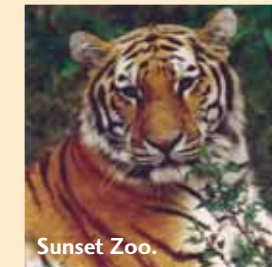
For those looking to get out and play awhile, the community offers plenty of opportunities for days spent in the outdoors. Those who want to get out on the greens have a few options including Colbert Hills Golf Course, rated number one in the state for daily fee courses by "Golf Digest." The course is home to the K-State men's and women's golf teams. Situated on the west side of Manhattan, Colbert Hills is surrounded by the prairie of the Flint Hills. Another course, the Stagg Hill Golf Club, offers 18 holes in a woodland setting in the Kansas River valley.

A brief drive of another kind brings visitors to the Tuttle

### A Day in the Sun

A little walk with the wild side, Sunset Zoological Park is home to 330 animals, representing 105 species. The theme for the year aligns with leap year – Leaping into Conservation. Accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the zoo provides a welcome setting for raising awareness about animals as well as its counterparts in the wild.

New this year is a Parma wallaby Joey in the Australian habitat as well as a baby giant anteater. A sampling of the mammals includes: a red panda, pygmy marmoset, Amur tiger, western tufted deer, maned wolves, chimpanzees and snow leopards. Feathered creatures include: black swans, Caribbean flamingoes, bald eagle and cinereous vulture. Peafowl walk freely among zoo visitors. For those attracted to the creepy crawlies, reptiles and amphibians are found here too. Colorful yellow and blue poison dart frogs and green and black poison dart frogs are easy to spot in their exhibits in addition to boa constrictor and ball python.



Sunset Zoo.

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