

## Fw: The transformation of a once-decaying Kansas town

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# Sincerely, The Star

Good morning subscribers!

I have a friend from college who grew up in the Pacific Northwest. When she first arrived in the Midwest, I remember one of the first things she asked me: Why would you live here all your life?

While we may not have views of the mountains and the ocean, I know this region has so much more beauty than what others dismiss as “flyover country.”

The open horizon that lets you see blue sky for miles. The colorful sunsets that scrape across the sky on a cool summer day. The forests that turn into rainbows along Highway 70 during the fall.

This region, and all of its beauty, is home to me. I know it is home to many of you, as well. After Kansas was named the least beautiful state in an article earlier this year, we saw [your photos that showcase how pretty](#) this region is. It’s the reason I’m so passionate about telling stories here and showcasing what so many people are missing. I’m happy to say my friend from college has finally come around, too.

This week’s featured story takes us to the rural, southeast Kansas town of Humboldt — a town that is in the midst of a bold economic revival, and one that’s attracting many young visitors from Kansas City and beyond.

As always, stick around after reading today’s featured story. I’ve got you covered with other great reads at the bottom of this newsletter.

## HERE’S TODAY’S FEATURED STORY:

Sometimes when Cole Herder has a free moment he likes to get up from behind his cluttered desk at Humboldt City Hall and go stand by the bank of floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the town square.

He remembers what the view once was: a city hanging by its nails, a downtown with half its teeth knocked out, a decaying hotel whose only guests were ghosts.

How things change. These days, [downtown Humboldt is tingling with so many projects](#) and new businesses that Herder, the city administrator, struggles to keep track of it all. A music venue. A brewery. A book shop. A cocktail bar. A honky-tonk bar. A golf-simulator bar. A five-room luxury hotel. A fitness center. A gift shop. A coffee shop. A confectionery. All have either opened in recent years or are coming soon to this southeast Kansas town of 2,000.

Most of these ambitious enterprises are organized under a civic group called A Bolder Humboldt, which formed about six years ago, said Paul Cloutier, one of the group’s founding members.

What is happening in Humboldt at the moment doesn’t fit cleanly into established patterns of social and economic development. Whatever it is, Humboldt has begun to draw interest from outside its sleepy corner of Kansas.

Earlier this year, The New York Times called Humboldt one of 52 places to visit in the world in 2022. Gov. Laura Kelly recently declared, “There’s no better example of the growth and success we’re seeing in Kansas than in places like Humboldt.” And it has begun to poach young, creative citizens from places like Kansas City, just two hours away.

[Dive deep into Humboldt’s economic transformation](#) in this story from The Star’s David Hudnall.

## THIS PAST WEEK IN THE STAR:

### **You won’t want to miss these new eats...**

Find out [which restaurants are opening and closing](#) in the metro area in August from the Star’s Joyce Smith.

### **... or these back-to-school deals**

Today is the last day of tax-free weekend in Missouri. Here's how [you can save on school supplies](#) today.

**So now he's vaccinated?**

Whit Merrifield refused to get vaccinated against COVID-19 when he played for the Royals, missing a team trip to Toronto in July. But after getting traded to the Blue Jays, the second baseman told reporters [he finally got the shot.](#)

**The battle for the bargain**

[A new store in Johnson County](#) is stocked full of brand-name inventory for big deals, and customers say you never know what you might find.

Thank you for supporting our journalism! See you next week!



Emily Hood  
Audience Growth Intern



TRAVEL

**Small Kansas town became a top travel destination after years of decline. Here's how**

"Whatever's going on here works unlike anything I've ever been around," says a recent transplant.



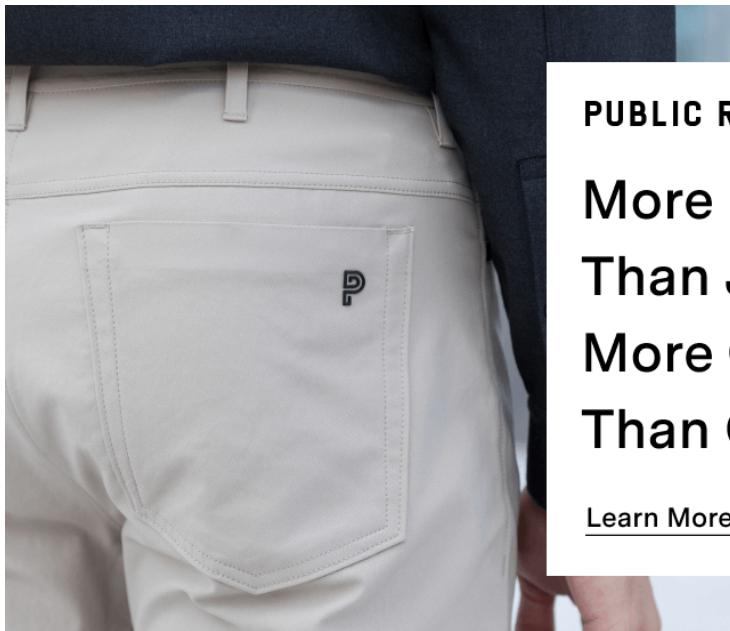


TRAVEL

## 36 hours in Humboldt, Kansas: Where to go, what to do for a weekend getaway

A visitor's guide to this suddenly booming southeast Kansas town.

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