

I-70 across Kansas

This is a foldout pamphlet and map of Interstate 70 across Kansas. A history of the Kansas interstate system, brief town descriptions, and photographs are included.

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I-70—the 424 mile golden link across Kansas is complete, stretching from the Lewis and Clark viaduct which bridges the Missouri line on the east to the Colorado border on the west. This multi-lane, controlled access roadway reduces driving time to less than seven hours and increases safety three fold.

The final section is the 19 miles from Goodland west to the Kansas-Colorado line completed June 17, 1970. Going back to 1960 when the Congress first breathed life into the interstate system by providing the financing, Kansas was the first state in the nation to complete a contract using 90 percent federal and 10 percent state matching funds. This was a concrete paving project west of Topeka that was half way between the eastern and western terminals of I-70 at Washington, D. C. and Gore Fort, Utah, 1,548 from either end.

In the 14 years from the beginning of the first project to the opening of the final section, engineers and road builders achieved goals now accepted as standard. Basic design is the same on all sections but refinements and added safety features make the newer segments much better than those built in the earlier years.

Kansas has been building roadside parks for 36 years where travelers can safely pull off the highway, stretch their legs and relax. The Highway Commission cautioned that the need for interstate rest stops would be even greater. Twelve pairs of safety rest areas were designed for the I-70 route between Topeka and the Colorado line. Hundreds of motorists stop at these rest areas every day. The newer areas are considered to be among the finest in the nation. Those built in the earlier years of the program are to be upgraded.

To complete I-70 to the highest standard possible, from the beginning the Commission planned for an asphaltic concrete overlay to bring the road to the full design thickness in the last years of the program. Work on the overlay is expected to begin in 1971 or 1972 depending on the financing.

When the first sections of I-70 were completed, most of the ground around the interchanges even near the towns and

cities were either farm or pasture land. But in the intervening years there has been a buildup of traffic-oriented business, not only near the towns but at many of the rural interchanges also. Each community along the line has easy access to I-70 not only for the local citizens but for tourists as well. Welcome flags are out to those who need services or who want to savor the peace of their trip and there is much to see and do.

Goodland is the largest city on I-70 west of Hays. Its Pioneer Museum contains items from the frontier days and Indian artifacts. West of the city is a new sugar beet processing plant and refinery. The city has 25 acres of parks and a grass-enclosed swimming pool.

Colby is the location of Sod Town, a group of authentic sod buildings containing many pioneer items. The "town" is located two miles east of Colby. A new Community Junior College is located south of the city.

Osborne is about 20 miles north of the creek grounds that rise 65 feet above the floor of the Smoky Hill river valley. These unique formations have been designated as a national landmark by the U. S. Department of Interior.

Quinter is the beginning point of wagon train trips during the summer months for modern day pioneers who would like to retrace travel on the Old Smoky Hill trail. South of Quinter (22 miles) is Cedar Rock, a chalk spire 75 feet high.

Wamego is the half way point in the 500 mile trip from Denver to Kansas City. South of the town is Cedar Bluff reservoir and state park. Public use areas are on the north and south shores.

Ellis—There is a free campground for overnight stays. The boyhood home of Walter Chrysler, one of the giants of the automotive industry, is open as a museum.

Hays is the home of Fort Hays State College which started at the old fort that once helped to protect the western frontier. The Kansas Historical Society has a museum at the fort and two of the original buildings are open to the

public. The 4,000 acre agricultural experiment station at the college has made great contributions to agriculture.

Victoria—The imposing St. Fidelis Church is called "The Cathedral of the Plains." Built by German-Russian immigrant settlers, it was completed in 1911. Its twin towers are 141 feet high.

Russell was once a center of Kansas oil exploration and many wells in the area are pumping. A plaque northwest of town marks a famous well, the Corne Oswald No. 1.

Wilson is south of Wilson Reservoir and state park. The town is "the Czech Capital of Kansas" and there is an old opera house built by the Czech pioneers.

Elsworth is a few miles south of I-70. Rogers art museum at Elsworth features western landscape paintings, and east of the town is Kancopole reservoir and state park.

Salina is the junction of I-70 and I-559, the route south to Wichita. West of Salina and south of I-70 is the country's largest municipal airport. Smoky Hill Museum at Oakdale Park features prehistoric man, the American Indian and pioneer life. East of Salina on old US-40 is an Indian burial pit containing more than 140 prehistoric skeletons.

Abbott—The Eisenhower Center makes Abbott the "Tourist Capital of Kansas." The three building complex built near the Eisenhower family home houses the museum, the library for presidential papers and the Place of Meditation where the late Dwight David Eisenhower, thirty-fourth president, rests. Near the Center is Old Abbott Town, a replica of the town as it was in the days of the Chisholm cattle trail.

Junction City—Northwest of the city is Milford Reservoir and state park. Twelve miles south of Junction City is Rock Spring-Kill Camp. East of the city is Fort Riley, present home of the First Infantry Division. On the reservation is the First Territorial Capital of Kansas now maintained as a museum. There is a marked trail of the Junction City area.

Manhattan is the home of Kansas State University with its beautiful campus of white native stone buildings. It was

the first land-grant college in the nation. Five miles north of Manhattan is Tuttle Creek Reservoir and state park.

Council Grove is south of I-70 on the old Santa Fe Trail. Its rich history dates to the Indian treaty signed in 1825. Kaw Mission, a former Indian school, now is operated as a state museum. North of the town is Council Grove Reservoir.

Alma is 3.5 miles south of I-70. It is one of the old first hills communities serving a wide territory of cattle ranches. A museum there contains many pioneer items, and seven miles west of town is another museum.

Topeka—The state capitol grounds are five blocks west of I-70 at the Eighth Street interchange. Work on the native limestone capitol building was completed in 1903. The famous John Steuart Curry murals are on the second floor and the David H. Overmyer murals on the first floor of the capitol. Southeast of the capitol is the Kansas State Historical Society containing many period rooms. North of I-70 at the Fairview interchange west of the city is Center Creek, the executive mansion for Kansas governors. The Wadsworth Foundation, Gage Park and its famous zoo, Washburn University, Lake Shawnee and Burnett's Mound are other attractions at Topeka.

Lawrence is the location of the University of Kansas. Its campus once was contained on Mount Oread but its growth in recent years has lined the hillside with college buildings. The memorial campanile towers 120 feet above the hillside. There are several museums on the campus. Also at Lawrence is Haskell Indian Institute.

Bonner Springs—The Agricultural Hall of Fame and National Center is north of the town. Three buildings feature farming—past, present and future.

Kansas City is the second largest city in Kansas. Located at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers, it was here that Lewis and Clark camped when they explored the Louisiana Purchase in 1804. Barton Cemetery, burial place for Wyandott Indians, is in the city.



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