
INTRODUCTION**SECTION 4
PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Public facilities are vital components to County and communities, and add to the quality of the living environment. Many of these public facilities have been developed out of necessity, while others have developed in response to the demands of the citizenry. Each public facility requires substantial financial commitment, and therefore, necessitates the careful review and planning for future needs.

The major emphasis of this section is to determine the present capacity of the Kearney County public facility inventory and to determine the adequacy of these facilities to meet the future, estimated demands throughout the

planning period. Although the majority of public facilities in Kearney County are located in each of the communities, rural portions of the County do contain an extensive amount of public facilities. **Illustration 4.1** identifies the primary public facilities in rural Kearney County.

**GOALS AND
POLICIES**

Goal 1 - *Plan, program and implement the most effective, safe and cost efficient infrastructure and public facilities systems throughout the rural county areas.*

Policies:

- 1.1 Prepare and adopt an annual Capital Improvement Program or Plan, which is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 1.2 Recognize the need for and improve on intergovernmental and regional cooperation to reduce duplication of public facilities and services.
- 1.3 Maintain modern design standards and policies for public infrastructure improvements throughout the rural areas of Kearney County and the Villages of Heartwell and Norman.

Goal 2 - *Provide adequate, efficient and appropriate public utilities and services to both existing and future agricultural and residential areas.*

*goals and policies
continued.....*

Policies:

- 2.1 Maintain and improve existing public utilities and services on an as needed basis.
- 2.2 Provide facilities and services in rural

Kearney County and the Villages of Heartwell and Norman, necessary to prevent degradation of the environment, including modern sewage treatment, refuse collection and disposal and similar environmental control processes as necessary. This includes the proper disposal of animal waste.

- 2.3 Insure the rules and regulations governing safe drinking water and sewage treatment are adhered to.

Goal 3 - Provide for the equitable distribution of public facilities to meet the cultural, educational, social, recreational, safety and health needs of the County.

Policies:

***goals and policies
continued.....***

- 3.1 Provide adequate public health, safety and crime prevention systems throughout the County.
- 3.2 Promote a social and cultural environment that provides an opportunity for all residents to experience, develop and share their values, abilities, ambitions and heritage.
- 3.3 Foster a public educational system capable of raising the County's overall educational level.
- 3.4 Develop and promote programs to educate the residents of Kearney County and visitors on the rich heritage and history of the region. Utilize current and future public and cultural facilities such as community libraries, Fort Kearney State Historical Park and Recreation Area, and the wildlife management areas.
- 3.5 Insure the rules and regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act are met at all

public facilities.

- 3.6 Encourage the availability of all necessary services to youth and older adults in Kearney County.

Parks & Recreation

Fort Kearney State Historical Park is located two miles south of Interstate 80 on Highway 50A. The Park commemorates the first fort built to protect travelers on Oregon Trail. There is a park permit required for admittance and the Park includes a visitors center, picnic tables, shelters, grills and playground equipment.

Fort Kearney State Recreation Area is located 3/4 mile east and one mile north of Fort Kearney State Historical Park. The 152 acre area provides camping, showers, restrooms, dump station, fishing, swimming, hiking and winter sports. A basic fee is required for campers and the facilities are open from approximately May 1 through October 31.

Kearney County has 10 Wildlife Management and Waterfowl Protection areas throughout the southern region of the County. Prairie Dog, Frerichs, Killdeer, Clark, Lindan, Bluestem, Gleason, Youngson and Jensen are Waterfowl Production Areas and Northeast Sacraments is a Wildlife Management Area.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public Administration facilities are designed to serve citizen of the County and provide a location to conduct the business of the government.

The **Kearney County Courthouse** is located at 424 N. Colorado Street in Minden, Nebraska. Built in 1904, the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and does meet ADA standards. Offices at the Courthouse include:

- County Clerk
- County Assessor
- County Court
- District Court
- Registrar of Deeds
- County Treasurer
- Probation Office

- Election Commissioner
- School Superintendent
- Veteran Service Officer
- Drivers License Department
- Child Support Office
- Agriculture Extension Office

Law Enforcement

The **Kearney County Sheriff Department** is located at 246 N. Colorado Street in Minden, Nebraska. The County jail has 6 cells. The Sheriff Department includes a total of 15 staff, both full and part-time. Of the 15, there are 7 sworn officers, including the Sheriff. Additional staff includes 7 communications officers and one office manager. In addition to rural law enforcement duties, the Sheriff Department provides law enforcement services to all areas without police protection. PUBLIC FACILITIES MAP

ILLUSTRATION 4.1

Currently, the Sheriff Department has eight vehicles ranging from marked patrol cars and a sport utility vehicle. The equipment used by the Department includes radar, video cameras, cellular phones and other equipment standard to police departments.

Fire Protection

Kearney County fire protection services are provided to Axtell, Minden, Wilcox, Gibbon, Kenesaw, Kearney, Campbell and Hildreth fire districts. The communities of Axtell, Wilcox and Minden have fire stations in Kearney County. Buffalo County, Gibbon, Kenesaw, Campbell, and Hildreth fire districts also serve portions of rural Kearney County. See **Illustration 4.2**. The Minden Rural District has 37 volunteer fire fighters. The Fire Department has an insurance rating of 8, and a service area of 315 square miles. The Rural Fire Department is involved in a mutual aid agreement with the City of Minden in which equipment between the City and Rural Fire Departments share all volunteers and some equipment with expenses allocated accordingly between the two departments. The rural fire department has on pumper, one tanker, two grass rigs, one ambulance, one command vehicle and one equipment vehicle and receives approximately 100 call per year.

Civil Defense

The present **Civil Defense** services for Kearney County are provided through the County Emergency Management Agency. Civil Defense works with local fire departments in planning for public safety and consists of over 100 volunteers.

The planning and preparation for natural disaster and

man-made emergencies consists of:

- 1) Mitigation
- 2) Preparation
- 3) Response
- 4) Recovery

Examples of natural and man-made disasters include floods, tornadoes, winter storms, chemical spills, explosions, plane crashes, etc.

Postal Services

The **U.S. Post Office** in Minden is located at 410 N. Minden Avenue. The Post Office has 221 total postal boxes and two rural routes.

Located at 106 S. Main Street, the **U.S. Post Office** in Wilcox provides one rural route and 216 total postal boxes.

The U.S. Post Office in Axtell is located at 405 Main Street. The Post Office has two rural routes and was recently updated in 1995 to provide a total of 276 postal boxes.

Public Libraries

Public libraries can be found in Minden, Axtell and Wilcox. The Jensen Memorial Library is located at 443 N. Kearney Avenue in Minden. Built in 1907, the hours of operation are 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Thursday and Friday, and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. The Library is home to over 19,000 resources including books, video tapes, microfilm, newspapers, magazines and internet access.

The Village of Axtell and Wilcox also provide public library services and are open between 15 and 20 hours per week.

MEDICAL/ ELDERLY SERVICES

Kearney County Health Services is a full service hospital located at 727 E. 1st Street in Minden. The hospital employs approximately 122 staff and has a 15 bed capacity with an average occupancy rate of 5 beds. An assisted living facility is being planned for expansion.

Located at 244 N. Minden in Minden, the **Kearney County Health Services Medical Clinic** employs nine staff and is attached to the hospital.

Assisted Living..... **Bethany Home** is a assisted living and nursing located at 515 W. 1st Street in Minden. The facility employs approximately 100 staff and its 122 beds are at full occupancy. The Home has plans for expansion in the future.

FIRE DISTRICTS MAP

ILLUSTRATION 4.2

Axtell Medical Clinic is located at 408 E. 1st Street in Axtell. The clinic is open 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Tuesday and Friday and employs one nurse, one physicians assistant and one LPN. Expansion of staff and hours of operation are possible.

Hinterlong Living is located at 846 E. Hawthorne in Minden, Nebraska. This facility has 16 assisted living units and one adult day care unit. The facility was recently completed and has a current occupancy rate of 65 percent. The facility is attached to the east wing of the nursing home and employs five staff persons.

persons with disabilities **Bethphage Campus** in Axtell is a home for mentally disabled persons. The facility was built in the 1920's and houses approximately 100 persons. The campus employs 225 staff persons and is planning to add employees.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Students in Kearney County attend schools in communities in and near Kearney County. See **Illustration 4.3**, Kearney County School District Boundaries map.

East Elementary School is located at 123 N. Minden Avenue in Minden. The school offers grade levels kindergarten through third with an enrollment of 227 students. A total of 34 staff, including 20 certified, are employed at the school. The school was recently remodeled and updated and provides approximately 45 computers to its students.

C.L. Jones Junior High is located at 520 West 3rd Street

and was recently remodeled and updated. A total of 328 students are enrolled in grades four through eight. The Junior High employs 34 staff persons, 24 of which are certified, and contains 24 classrooms. Computers are very accessible to the students with a total of 134 computers being used in the school.

Minden High School is located at 325 N. Yates and offers grades nine through 12. The school has an enrollment of 307 students and 34 staff persons establishing an 11 to one student/teacher ratio. A total of 27 of the 34 staff persons are certified. A computer is located in all of the 25 classrooms, the media center has 15 computers and between 40 and 50 are located in the two computer labs. **Students from Minden, Norman and Heartwell attend elementary, middle and high school in Minden.**

Axtell Community School is located at 500 Main Street in Axtell. The School is in the process of adding a multipurpose room and remodeling certain classrooms. Approximately 334 students are enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelve, with a total staff of 41 persons, 30 of which are certified. The School offers 80 computers for use by students and enrollment is continuing to grow.

Wilcox Public School is located at 404 E. Sapp Street in Wilcox. Built in 1949, approximately 215 students are enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12. 24 of the 34 total staff are certified and each of the 16 classrooms has a computer. The School is discussing possible consolidation with the community of Hildreth which would bring approximately 80 students in grades 7-12 to Wilcox Public School.

**COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS**

The **Kearney County Fairgrounds** are located in the north part of Minden on Highway 10 and E. 21st Street. The County Fair is held each year in July. The fairgrounds include such facilities as a horse arena, livestock buildings, two community buildings and a baseball diamond. The Fairgrounds host an array of activities throughout the year including rodeos, weddings, dances and auctions.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAP

ILLUSTRATION 4.3

INFRASTRUCTURE

PUBLIC UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Section serves to identify existing water, sanitary sewer, telephone system, natural gas system electrical system and other utilities in the Villages of Norman and Heartwell. The existing condition and future needs and improvements of utilities are discussed in this section for the planning period of 2000 to 2010.

Water system.....

Neither the Village of Heartwell or the Village of Norman have a community water system. Homes and businesses in both Villages rely on individual wells for their water supply. While the use of individual wells seems to be adequate now, both Villages should be ready to develop community water supply systems in the future, as growth will eventually outgrow the use of private wells.

Sewer system

The Village of Heartwell operates a community sanitary wastewater lagoon. It appears to be operating well and should continue to function well for years to come.

The Village of Norman does not have a community wastewater treatment system. Homes and businesses rely on individual septic systems for sanitary sewer treatment. The Village of Norman should be ready to develop a community wastewater treatment system in the future as growth of the Village takes place.

Streets and drainage

Both Villages have relinquished 100 percent of their State Funds to Kearney County and Kearney County now is responsible for the Maintenance, Repair and Improvements to the streets and Drainage Systems in the Villages of Heartwell and Norman.

Electrical system.....

Both Villages have electricity provided by the Southern Public Power District. Service to Villages appears to be

adequate at this time.

Natural gas system

Heartwell is provided natural gas by the Kansas Nebraska Natural Gas Company and service is adequate at this time.

Norman is not supplied with natural gas at this time. The Village of Norman should investigate the availability and cost associated with providing gas service to the Village.

Telephone system.....

The Village of Norman is provided with telephone service by the Glennwood Telephone Company. The Village of Heartwell is provided telephone service by Citizens Communications Company.

SECTION 5