



Moving to the Country

Riley County Guide to Rural Living



*Riley County Planning & Development
110 Courthouse Plaza
Manhattan, KS 66502
(785) 537-6332*



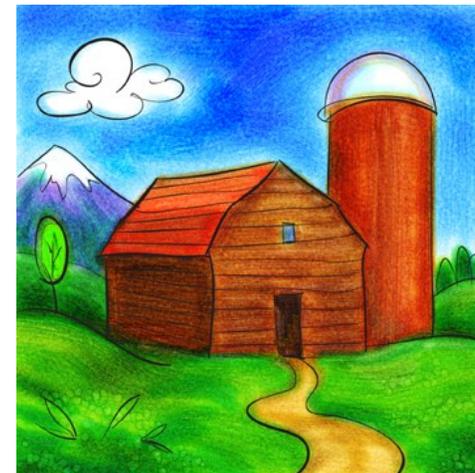
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THINKING ABOUT A PLACE IN THE COUNTRY? Riley County Guide for Rural Living

More and more Riley Countians are moving to the rural areas these days, looking for their "Place in the Country." While this is certainly a personal choice, often times this decision is made without a full understanding of the differences between rural and urban living and the public issues that may be involved. This brochure offers many practical tips and areas to research before buying your country home site. Hopefully, consideration of these items will help ensure your rural living experience is a pleasant and rewarding one.





PROPERTY USE CONSIDERATIONS

Zoning: The first thing you need to know is that the entire unincorporated area of Riley County is zoned. Zoning restricts the use of property into different categories. Most of the County is zoned for agriculture, which limits the land's use for residential purposes. One of the fundamental reasons for this restriction is to provide areas in the County where farming can occur without conflicts from residential neighbors.

Zoning classifications in Riley County:

SF Zones	Single Family Residential
B Zones	Two Family and Multiple Family Residential
C Zones	Commercial Districts
D zones	Industrial Districts
AG Zones	Agricultural District

Lot Size: There is no minimum lot size for land zoned (AG). The minimum lot size for residential zones (SF-1 through SF-5) varies, depending on whether you will need to provide your own well and wastewater system on site.

Permitted Uses: Each zone has different permitted uses. You must check with the Planning and Development Department to determine if your property is zoned for the desired uses and for the type of structure you wish to build.

Floodplain: Is your property located in a floodplain? To find out, you must contact, prior to any development, the Planning & Development Department for a determination.



Surrounding Properties: The surrounding properties will probably not remain in their present land use indefinitely. Sometimes large rural land uses like quarries, borrow pits, or wind energy facilities may effect neighboring properties. You can check with the Planning and Development Department to find out how these properties are zoned, and to see what future developments may be in the planning stages.

Property Lines: You may have a plat of your property, but unless the land has been surveyed and pins placed by a licensed surveyor, you cannot assume that the plat is accurate. The hilly terrain in Riley County caused some roads and subdivisions to be built in slightly different locations than shown on the original site plans. Fences that separate properties are often misaligned with the property lines. A survey of the land is the only way to precisely determine property lines. Section lines, property lines, and fence lines may or may not have the same location.



LAND RESTRICTIONS

Easements: Existing easements may require you to allow construction of roads, power lines, water lines, sewer lines, etc. across your land. These easements are a matter of record either in the Planning and Development Department or the Register of Deeds office. Check these issues carefully.

There can also be problems with the legal aspects of access, especially if you gain access across property belonging to others. Even if you have a verbal agreement with adjacent landowners, it is better to obtain legal advice and have a signed easement recorded in the Register of Deeds office.



Mineral Rights: Many property owners do not own the mineral rights under their property. Owners of mineral rights have the ability to change the surface characteristics in order to extract their minerals. It is very important to know what minerals may be located under the land and who owns the rights to them. Much of the rural land in Riley County can be used for mineral extraction.

Covenants: Many subdivisions and Planned Unit Developments have covenants that limit the use of the property. It is important to obtain a copy of the covenants (or confirm that there are none) and make sure that you can live with those rules. Recorded covenants are filed in the Register of Deeds Office. Riley County does not enforce covenants. Find out if there is an active homeowners' association to enforce the covenants.

A Homeowners Association (HOA) may take care of common areas and open spaces. A dysfunctional homeowners association or poor covenants can cause problems for you and even involve you in expensive litigation.

Dues are almost always a requirement for those areas with an HOA. The by-laws of the HOA will tell you how the organization operates and how the dues are set.

Insurance: Before moving to the country, you should check to find out if you can obtain insurance and at what cost. Generally the more miles between your property and the nearest fire station means higher premiums. There are remote locations in the county that some companies find uninsurable.

PERMITS

Environmental Health Permits, Requirements, and Services

Water Permits: A water well permit must be obtained from the Riley County Planning and Development prior to drilling a domestic well. If you discover an abandoned water well on your property, State statutes require that the well is properly plugged and logged with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (K.S.A. 82a-1213). All required permits are available @ <http://www.rileycountyks.gov> website. Look under Departments, Planning and Development, Environmental Health, and then Applications.

Well water Testing: The quality and quantity of well water can vary throughout the year depending on area rainfall and the water source. Planning and Development has a staffed laboratory to assist in monitoring water quality, which includes testing for Coliform Bacteria, E. coli, Nitrates, Sulfates, Chloride, Total Alkalinity, Fluoride, Hardness and Iron.

Wastewater Permits: An on-site wastewater permit must be obtained from Planning and Development for all new construction and qualified remodeling projects before a building permit can be issued for the property (Riley County Sanitary code, Article 1, Section 1-1.2).

Septic Tanks: Septic tanks in Riley County are required to be pumped and inspected a minimum of once every five years (Riley County Sanitary Code, Article 5, Section 2-5.5 and 6.1). Septic systems may have an effluent filter in the septic tank that will need to be cleaned periodically to prevent wastewater backups into your home. All wastewater discharges from your home will be directed to the treatment system on site (Article 1, Section 1-3.5.1g).

Property Resale (ESE) Existing System Evaluation: Upon request of the property owner or contract buyer, Environmental Health will provide an inspection with a written report of the existing water and wastewater system.



Building Permits: Before beginning construction, a permit is required for all new structures whether they are zoned for agriculture or residential. Check with the Planning and Development Department for building permit applications and additional information.



Burn Permits: In Riley County burning of any material is not allowed without a burn permit. Permits are free and can be obtained in the Riley County Emergency Management office.

Entryways and Culverts: New entrances and culverts must meet County and/or township guidelines. When considering where to locate entrances and driveways on your property, consider accessibility during wet or icy weather conditions. Road construction across or through ravines, watercourses, or waterways must be carefully planned. If the drainage above where you plan to put your crossing is 160 acres or more, you must obtain approval from the Kansas Board of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources. Entrances and other work in the road right-of-way may not be constructed without approval plans from the Riley County Public Works Department.

Installation and Maintenance of Entrances on County Right-of-Way: Entrances may be installed in County right-of-way for private individuals, businesses, and other agencies upon approval by the County. The County must review proposed installations for appropriate approach sight distances, to calculate drainage area to determine culvert size and design, and to approve types of materials used to construct the entrance. The standard minimum width for entrances installed in the County right-of-way is 20 feet of driving surface with 3 to 1 end slopes. A minimum culvert of 18" shall be installed with a 12" minimum cover, including surfacing.



The County does not install culverts in County right-of-way. Others may install culverts in County right-of-way upon approval by the County, in accordance with the procedure and standards set forth above. Anyone requesting a new entrance installation or extension to an existing entrance will be required to pay for all costs incurred in the installation.

Existing Culverts: The County will maintain and/or replace entrances once an entrance has been installed in county right-of-way.

Setbacks: Each zoning district has its accompanying setback requirements. For front, rear and side yard setbacks, check with the Planning and Development office. Make sure you have enough space to accommodate setbacks, possible separation distances and the topography. If your property is on a major or minor highway, your setback requirement will increase.



UTILITY SERVICE CONSIDERATIONS

Water, sewer, gas, electric, telephone and other services may be unavailable or may not operate at urban standards. Repairs can often take much longer than in town.

Electricity: Electrical service is not available to every area of Riley County. It is important to determine the proximity of electrical power and what power source provides service to your area. It can be very expensive to extend power lines to remote areas. Many times it is cost prohibitive to bury the lines due to rock near the ground surface. It may be necessary to cross property owned by others in order to extend electrical service to your property in the most cost efficient manner. It is important to make sure that the proper easements are in place to allow lines to be built to your property.



Electric power may not be available in two phase and three phase service configurations. If you have special power requirements, it is important to know what level of service can be provided to your property.

The cost of electric service is usually divided into a fee to connect to the system, and then a monthly charge for energy consumed. It is important to know both costs before making a decision to purchase a specific piece of property.

Power outages can occur in outlying areas with more frequency than in more developed areas. The duration of the loss of power is usually longer in a rural area than in town. A loss of electric power can interrupt your supply of water from a well. You may also lose food in freezers or refrigerators. It is important to be able to survive for up to a week in severe cold with no utilities if you live in the country.

Heating Sources: Most rural areas do not have access to natural gas. Be prepared to consider alternative fuels such as propane, electricity, wood pellets, wood or heat pumps. Electric furnaces may be expensive to operate in your area. You should plan on an auxiliary heating backup during power outages.

Telephone: Most telephone lines in the county are capable of supporting high speed computer modems. Cellular phones may have decreased reception in some areas.

Trash: Some providers do not offer service in the some rural areas. Open burning of paper and boxes is considered an option during certain conditions. A permit is required for any open burning, except cooking and ceremonial fires.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Even though you pay property taxes to the County and the township, the amount of tax collected does not cover the cost of the services provided to rural residents. Those living in the city subsidize the lifestyle of those who live in the country by making up the shortfall between the cost of services and the revenues received from the rural dwellers. This is why the level of service is less in rural areas.

Emergency Services: The fact that you can drive to your property does not necessarily guarantee that you, your guests, and/or emergency service vehicles can achieve that same level of access at all times.

Proper addressing is critical in reducing response times for police, fire and emergency medical services. The physical location of your residence and extreme weather conditions adversely effect response times for emergency services.

911 Service: Calls to report a crime, personal injury and property damage should be directed to the 911 center. **DIAL 911** - Most of Riley County has enhanced 911 service. Portions of KSU and 20-30 homes in the extreme northern part of the County are served by public service answering points (PSAP) other than the Riley County 911 center. Cellular 911 calls are accepted at the County 911 center but the County's unique shape allows some calls to reach cellular towers in other jurisdictions. Wireless callers should be familiar with their address and insure they are calling a local PSAP. For more information call the Riley County Emergency Management Department at 1-888-537-6333.



Fire Services: Fire services across rural and suburban Riley County are equipped and managed through a special benefit district with responses performed by volunteers. Except for the City of Manhattan, a County-wide network of volunteers helping citizens provide the initial response to fires, hazardous materials releases and other natural emergencies. The Riley County Fire District is the central point of contact for questions related to fire regulations, volunteer applications, community fire training, burning permits, wildfire interface zones, and insurance ratings. Remember "Rural fire protection depends on you and your neighbors helping each other." For more information, call the Riley County Fire District at 1-888-537-6333.

Emergency Medical Services: The Riley County Emergency Medical Services are located in Manhattan. The agency provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) units and technical rescue responses to the entire County. A network of volunteer first responders augment the ALS units to enhance the response times to rural portions of the County. At certain parts of the county, a fire truck may precede the arrival of an ambulance.

Law Enforcement: The Riley County Police Department is a County-wide consolidated police department with jurisdiction throughout the County, the City of Manhattan, and the smaller cities of Leonardville, Ogden, Randolph, and Riley.

Mail Delivery: Standard parcel and overnight package delivery can be a problem for those who live in the country. Confirm your status with service providers.

Addressing: New, legal addresses are assigned when you obtain a building permit.

Voter Registration and Voting:

To Register to Vote: Fill out a voter registration card at any one of the voter registration sites Riley County Clerks Office, city halls, the Manhattan Public Library and many private businesses. For location nearest you, call the Riley County Clerk's Office

No Excuse: Anyone may vote in advance --- you no longer need an excuse as you did for absentee. If you are registered in Riley County, you can vote up to 20 days prior to Election Day.

- Options:
- 1) Vote by mail
 - 2) Vote in person at the Riley County Clerk's Office

Permanent Advance Voting:

- Any person having a permanent physical disability or an illness that has been diagnosed as a permanent illness and who is a qualified elector may apply for permanent voting status.
- You may obtain the form for permanent advance voting in the Riley County Clerk's Office. This form only needs to be filled out once and is kept on file at the Riley County Clerk's Office.
- Once this form is complete and on file in the Riley County Clerk's Office, you will automatically receive



your ballot for all elections you are eligible to vote in. These ballots will be mailed out 20 days before the Election Day.

Road Maintenance: School buses travel only on maintained roads. You may end up driving your children to a bus route so they can get to school.

Dust: Traffic traveling on rock roads create dust especially during windy and dry weather. The amount of dust created will depend on the volume of traffic, the speed of the traffic, the moisture in the rock and the hardness of the rock. Dust on a rock road can result in reduced visibility and other inconveniences at your residence.

Snow and Ice Removal: County and Township Roads may become impassable during extreme weather events. The classification of a particular road will determine the level of service the road will receive during these events. Travel may be difficult during these times so appropriate precautions should be exercised.



CONSIDER MOTHER NATURE

Residents living in the country usually experience more problems when the elements and Mother Nature turn unfriendly. Here are some thoughts for you to consider.

Vegetation: The physical characteristics of your property can be positive and negative. Trees are a wonderful environmental amenity, but can also involve your home in a fire. Building at the top of a wooded draw or a tall grass prairie should be considered as dangerous as building in a flood plain area. Cedar trees close to a structure and shake roofs can be especially risky. "Defensible perimeters" are very helpful in protecting buildings from fire and inversely can protect wooded areas or prairie from igniting if your house catches on fire. For further information, contact the Riley County Fire District.

Slopes: Steep slopes can slide in unusually wet weather. In wet weather large rocks can also roll down steep slopes and present a great danger to people and property.

Soils: Soils that swell and shrink may damage concrete foundations. Building in areas with expansive soils requires an engineered foundation.

Storm Water Drainage: The topography of the land can tell you where the storm water runoff will go during heavy precipitation. When property owners fill in ravines, they have found that the water, which used to drain through that ravine during heavy rains, can now drain through their house. A flash flood can occur and turn a dry gully into a river. It is wise to take this possibility into consideration when building.

The Flint Hills feature numerous springs on hillsides. Check your property immediately after heavy rain to see if any springs are activated and plan accordingly. A line of shrubs on a hillside is a good indicator of seepage.



Wildlife: Nature can provide you with some wonderful neighbors. Most wildlife is a positive addition to the environment. However, even “harmless” animals, like deer, can cross the road unexpectedly and cause traffic accidents, or eat your garden in one night. Rural development encroaches on the traditional habitat of turkeys, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, deer, elk, snakes, and other wild animals that can be dangerous and you need to know how to deal with them. In general, it is best to enjoy wildlife from a distance and know that if you do not handle your pets and trash properly, it could cause problems for you and the wildlife. The Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks, Riley County, and K-State Research and Extension offices are good resources for information about living with wildlife.

Siting Your Home: Your acreage may allow several alternative building sites. Carefully examine seasonal wind exposure and sun orientation to position your home for optimal energy efficiency. Consideration of existing and future views both from the property and towards the building site provides more site satisfaction. Other areas needing careful study include: storm water drainage patterns, soil composition and depth and driveway access. It is important to visualize how your home may be viewed from adjoining roads and neighbors. Make your home as environmentally friendly and sustainable as possible.

CONSIDER AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is an important part of the Riley County environment. Owning rural land means knowing how to live with farmers. There are a few things you need to know:

Hours: Farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvest time. Hay is often swathed or baled at night. It is possible that adjoining agriculture uses can disturb your peace and quiet.

Dust: Land preparation and other agricultural operations can cause dust, especially during windy and dry weather. You can normally expect the odors to be stronger for a couple of weeks in both the spring and the fall.

Burning: Ranchers will burn their pastures in March/April. Farmers occasionally burn their ditches to keep them clean. Agricultural burning creates smoke that you may find objectionable. You also may need to back burn an area surrounding your home for protection if you do not live in a platted area. Call the Riley County Fire District for more information and to obtain a burn permit!

Chemicals: Chemicals (mainly fertilizers and herbicides) are used in growing crops. You may be sensitive to these substances, and many people actually have severe allergic reactions to them. Airplanes may be used early in the morning to apply some insecticides.

Odors: Animals and their manure may cause objectionable odors. You can normally expect the odors to be stronger for a couple of weeks in both the spring and fall.





Noxious Weeds: Before buying land, you should know if it has any noxious weeds. You can call the Riley County Noxious Weed Department at 785-539-3202 and find out the past history of any infestations that have been located on the property or to request an inspection. Kansas law requires you to treat noxious weeds on land you own. The Noxious Weed Department can assist you by providing chemical at a reduced price and providing rental sprayers for use in Riley County.

Livestock and Pets: Animals can be dangerous. Bulls, stallions, rams, boars, etc. can attack human beings. Watch your pets. Landowners should remember that their dogs could cause great harm to livestock, fences, etc. Dogs do have a tendency to pack occasionally and go on "hunts." There are laws that allow for the destruction of dogs that chase or worry livestock, although the problem is usually resolved before drastic measures are necessary. The leash laws for Riley County (Resolution #030388-06) provides for the control of dogs and cats within the county, outside the corporate limits of any city. Please remember that you are also financially responsible for harm done to livestock by your pets.

Right to Farm: Agriculture is an important business in Kansas and Riley County. If you desire to construct/acquire a non-agricultural residence among the farms and ranches of Riley County, you may be asked to provide an agricultural protection easement to surrounding agricultural operations. This easement will enable Riley County's farmers and ranchers to continue producing food and fiber.



CONCLUSION

The preceding information is by no means inclusive. You may encounter additional issues. Hopefully these comments will help you enjoy your decision to reside in the country. Remember that an informed decision, well considered, is a wise decision.





**WHERE TO CALL OR VISIT FOR
INFORMATION CONCERNING:**

Appraisals (Real Estate & Personal Property)

Riley County Appraiser's Office
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6310

Building Permits

Riley County Planning and Development
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6332

Covenants

Riley County Register of Deeds
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6340

Deeds

Riley County Register of Deeds
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6340

Driver's License (Renewals & ID Cards)

Riley County Treasurer's Office
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6320

Easements

Riley County Register of Deeds
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6340



Electricity

Westar Energy
225 Seth Childs, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
1-800-794-4780

Bluestem Rural Electric Co-op Associates
P. O. Box 513, Clay Center, Kansas 67432
785-632-3111

Emergency Services

Riley County Fire District
Riley County Office of Emergency Management
Courthouse Plaza East
115 North 4th Street, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6333 or 1-888-537-6333 (if long distance)

Entrances and Driveways

Riley County Public Works
Asst. Director of Public Works
6215 Tuttle Creek Blvd, Manhattan, Kansas 66503
785-539-2981

Also see Township Trustees on page 26

Fire Protection and Burning Permits

Riley County Fire District #1
Riley County Office of Emergency Management
Courthouse Plaza East
115 North 4th Street, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6333 or 1-888-537-6333 (if long distance)

Flood Zones

Riley County Planning and Development
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6332



Home sites, Landscaping and Soil Testing

Riley County, K-State Research and Extension
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6350

Motor Vehicle (Registration & Titles)

Riley County Treasurer’s Office
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6320

Roads and Bridges

Riley County Public Works
Director Public Works/County Engineer
6215 Tuttle Creek Blvd, Manhattan, Kansas 66503
785-537-6330

Soils and Ponds

Natural Resources Conservation Service
3705 Miller Parkway, Ste A, Manhattan, Kansas 66503
785-776-7582

Surrounding Land Use

Riley County Planning and Development
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6332

Tax Payment (Personal Property & Real Estate)

Riley County Treasurer’s Office
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6321



Telephone Service

Southwestern Bell
1-800-464-7928

Twin Valley Telephone
Miltonvale, KS
1-800-515-3311
tvvinc@twinvalley.net

Voting

Riley County Clerk’s Office – Elections
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6300

Wildlife

Kansas Wildlife and Parks
5020-B Tuttle Creek Boulevard, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-539-7941

Zoning

Riley County Planning and Development
Riley County Office Building
110 Courthouse Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66502
785-537-6332



Helpful hints for use before Property is Purchased and/or Developed!

- What uses are permitted?
- What is the surrounding property zoned?
- How can it be used?
- What is the flood zone?
- What are the setbacks?
- Do I need a wastewater permit?
- What is the zoning on the property?
- Does a township, or the county maintain the road?
- Is your property covered by a subdivision covenant?
- Are there any easements on the property?
- Who supplies utilities to the property?
- How and where does the storm water drain on the property?
- Do I have water and wastewater permits?



Township Trustees

Ashland—Tom VanSlyke	785-539-8527
Bala—Dean Larson	785-293-5810
Center—Steve Hanson	785-293-4433
Fancy Creek—Robert Roth	785-944-3498
Grant—Randy O’Boyle	785-539-3910
Jackson—Larry Larson	785-293-2263
Madison—Ralph Wahl	785-485-2615
Manhattan—James Gardner	785-776-3355
Mayday—Ronnie Richter	785-944-3597
Ogden—Tamara Killham	785-537-1162
Sherman—Stanley Glaum	785-293-5575
Swede Creek—Jim Steele	785-363-2027
Wildcat—Darrell Westervelt	785-485-2664
Zeandale—Kent Manuel	785-539-5180

For More Information Contact:



Planning & Development
110 Courthouse Plaza
Manhattan, KS 66502
Phone: 785-537-6332
Fax: 785-537-6331

Visit Our Website

<http://www.rileycountyks.gov>

INTERACTIVE MAPPING (GIS) WEBSITE

Using the GIS website, you can find information on County and City boundaries, ownership parcels, streets, zoning districts, parks and trails; water & sanitary sewer networks, political jurisdictions, and aerial photographic images. To use this website follow these instructions:

- go to <http://gis.rileycountyks.gov/>
- at the bottom of the page: select "*community Interactive Mapping Website*"
- read the disclaimer and select "*Accept*"