

Sunflower State Summary

Kansas, known as the Sunflower State, was the 34th state to enter the Union on January 29, 1861. Kansas is 417 miles long by 211 miles wide, encompassing 82,277 square miles. The geographical center of the contiguous United States is located near Lebanon, Kansas. “Ad Astra per Aspera” – “To the Stars through Difficulties” is the state motto. Famous Kansans include George Washington Carver, Walter P. Chrysler, John Steuart Curry, Robert Dole, Amelia Earhart, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Jean Harlow, Steven Hawley, James Langston Hughes, William Inge, Buster Keaton, Karl Menninger, Gordon Parks, Kathleen Sebelius, William Allen White, and Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Agriculture, Aircraft, & Energy

Kansas is also sometimes called “The Wheat State,” ranking first in wheat flour milling capacity with 58.6% of the U.S. total capacity and second in wheat produced (369.6 million bushels in 2009) and wheat flour milled. The major Kansas exports in 2010 were: civilian aircraft, engines, and parts; meat of bovines, boneless, fresh, or chilled; and dog and cat food, put up for retail sale. In 2009, Kansas ranked 30th in the U.S. for energy consumption and 16th for per capita consumption. In 2010, oil production in Kansas was at a 13-year high of 40,465,095 barrels; this is a 52.4 percent decrease from 1970.

Education

Kansas has 293 school districts which served 453,360 FTE students during the 2009-10 school year. The largest school district is Wichita, which has 46,225 students. Kansas has 57 institutions of higher education – 31 universities and colleges, 19 community colleges, and 7 technical schools. The largest university in Kansas is the University of Kansas, with a Fall Semester 2010 enrollment of 26,266 for Lawrence and 3,196 for the KU Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas.

Employment & Income

An estimated 1,396,558 people were employed in Kansas in 2010, making up 1.0 percent of the U.S. workforce. The unemployment rate in Kansas was 7.0 for 2010, which was below the U.S. unemployment rate of 9.6 and the 9th lowest out of the 50 states. In 2010, Kansas ranked 22nd in the nation for per capita personal income at \$39,737. The average annual wage for Kansas was \$38,147 in 2009, below the U.S. average of \$45,551. In 2009, poverty rate estimates for Kansas had 13.7 percent of the population living in poverty compared to an average of 14.3 percent for the nation.

Government

Kansas has 105 counties, with four U.S. House Districts, 40 Kansas Senate Districts, and 125 Kansas House Districts. Kansas State General Fund expenditures in FY2010 were \$5.268 billion; a 13.1% decrease from FY2009. The majority of the state’s expenditures go to education at \$3.479 billion, or 66 percent of the state’s expenditures in FY2010. Despite the change in the state sales tax rate to 6.3% (effective July 1, 2010), per capita sales tax collections declined in all but 24 Kansas counties; 18 counties do not impose tax rates above the state rate.

Population

With a population of 2,853,118 in 2010, Kansas ranked 33rd out of the 50 states. In 2010, Kansas had a population density of 34.9 people per square mile, which ranked 41st of the 50 states. With a growth rate of 6.1 percent from 2000-2010, Kansas is below the U.S. growth rate of 9.7percent. Kansas has 666 cities, 37 with populations over 10,000 and 114 with fewer than 100 residents. In 2010, around 69 percent of the Kansas population lived in the six Metropolitan Areas of Kansas City (Kans.), Lawrence, Manhattan, St. Joseph, Topeka, and Wichita. The largest city is Wichita with a population of 382,368 in 2010.