



NEWS RELEASE

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Kansas Attractions Extend Beyond Lewis and Clark History to Offer Unique Experiences for Modern-Day Travelers

The Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery expedition marked the beginning of rapid change not only in the United States, but in Kansas as well. Just 50 years after the Corps first visited the area; the Kansas Territory was opened for settlement in 1854.

No other state in the nation can claim a more varied past in American history than Kansas. Located in the geographic heart of the U.S., Kansas conjures up images of cowboys, Old West gun fighters, pioneer trails, cattle drives, wide-open prairies, frontier forts, and American Indian culture. And all of these images exist today in tourist attractions found across the state.

The larger-than-life cowboy legends of the Old West were born on the frontier plains and in the cattletowns of Kansas. Wichita grew from a cattletown to the largest city in the state today. Dodge City captures the spirit of the cowboy. Abilene was the end of the line for thousands of longhorn cattle driven from Texas on the Chisholm Trail. And, many of America's famous lawmen and gunfighters spent time in towns across Kansas.

The settling of the West brought pioneer traffic on the Santa Fe, Oregon-California, and Smoky Hill trails, and with it a frontier military history. Fort Leavenworth, Fort Riley, Fort Hays, Fort Larned, and Fort Scott all played a role as gatekeepers to the American West and have excellent museums and living history programs on 19th century military life.

The state is named after the Kanza Indians, meaning "People of the Southwind," who once inhabited the land long before Lewis and Clark visited the area. While many of the early tribes were forced to move to Oklahoma, four nations remain in Kansas. The state's American Indian culture is honored in many museums across the state.

Most of America's virgin tallgrass prairie is located in the Flint Hills region of central Kansas. Walk in the prairie in Kansas and you will experience one



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of the four untouched tallgrass prairies left in the world and the last one in North

America. The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas is the only unit of the National Park System devoted to the tallgrass prairie ecosystem.

Kansas is still home on the range for American bison. Two state wildlife refuges, the Finney Game Refuge in Garden City and the Maxwell Game Preserve in Canton, offer guided tours for a close-up view of these magnificent creatures that once populated the plains.

Pelicans in Kansas? Yes, Kansas has two top-rated bird watching wetlands near Great Bend. Cheyenne Bottoms, one of the top 15 birding destinations in the nation, is the largest marsh in the interior U.S. and is a Wetland of International Importance with close to 45 percent of the North American shorebird population stopping there during migration. Nearby Quivira National Wildlife Refuge is a Wetland of National Importance and counts hundreds of shorebird species in its population.

Step beyond these familiar images and you will discover more one-of-a-kind places in Kansas that will create memories for years to come. To aviation history buffs, Kansas is the "Air Capital of the World."

Museums dedicated to aviation and aerospace history dot the state, including the famed Kansas Cosmosphere in Hutchinson - the only Smithsonian-affiliated space museum in the country. You can see how Kansas is the breadbasket of the world at the many agricultural museums in Kansas. And, the boyhood home of Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th president of the U.S., at Abilene's Eisenhower Center features a museum, Presidential Library, and a place of meditation, where the President and First Lady are buried.

Your visit to Kansas wouldn't be complete without a stop in some of its largest cities. Wichita, Topeka, Overland Park, and Lawrence all offer an array of top-rated attractions and activities.

The four cities explored by Lewis and Clark offer a range of attractions that go beyond the 1804-1806 expedition to tell the story of Kansas and its peoples, both past and present.

Kansas City, Kansas, one of the larger cities in the state, boasts a mix of tourist amenities ranging from the historic Grinter Place and Huron Indian Cemetery to the National Agricultural Center and Hall of Fame and Verizon Wireless Amphitheater. From the charming Strawberry Hill neighborhood near downtown to the racing excitement at Kansas Speedway racetrack; “KCK,” as the locals call it, blends its history with the present and future.

Leavenworth, the “First City in Kansas,” was established in 1854. The city has numerous historic vintage homes, an historic riverfront downtown district, the

1888 Union Depot listed on the National Register, the future National Fred Harvey Museum, and is home to the “Big House,” the United States Federal Penitentiary. The community interprets its history and heritage through 13 interactive wayside markers with state-of-the-art digital technology that allows you to hear a recorded narrative with the mere push of a button.

Fort Leavenworth is the oldest military fort in continuous operation west of the Mississippi River and the only active military fort along the Lewis and Clark Historic Trail. The Fort's 16-stop wayside tour includes interactive displays that feature artwork with images of significant historical people, structures or events associated with that site. The Frontier Army Museum tells the story of Fort Leavenworth from 1827 to today, and the history of the U.S. Army on the Frontier from 1804 (Lewis & Clark) through 1917. The museum will become the permanent home of “Beyond Lewis and Clark,” a military exhibit under development that will travel across the country during the Lewis and Clark bicentennial. Other attractions at the Fort are the Berlin Wall Monument, Oregon and Santa Fe Trail swales, Buffalo Soldier Monument, and a U.S. National Cemetery. Please note that a picture ID is needed to enter the Fort.

Atchison, founded in 1854, is most noted as the birthplace of famed aviator Amelia Earhart. Her childhood home exhibits her history in aviation and is open to the public for tours. On the edge of town, the city pays tribute to aviation and aerospace with the International Forest of Friendship. Atchison also boasts a number of historic homes, the 1880s Santa Fe Depot complete with museum exhibits, trolley tours, art gallery, and several beautiful historic churches.

White Cloud is located on the Missouri River at the junction of three states - Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. The Four-State Lookout (some say, the state of Iowa is visible on a clear day) offers a panoramic view of the Missouri River valley below. In nearby Highland, the Native American Heritage Museum offers displays on the woodland tribes of northeast

Kansas. Doniphan County is the headquarters of two emigrant tribes that remain in Kansas today – the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas.

For more information on Lewis and Clark in Kansas, call 1-800-2-KANSAS to request a Kansas Getaway Guide and Lewis & Clark Travel Kit or visit us on the web at www.travelKS.com.