

Kansas Profile: Now that’s Rural

Ellie Bowman, Prickly Pear, Elkhart

By **RON WILSON**
Director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University

Transition can be one of the most challenging factors for rural businesses as generations and markets change.

Today we will meet a young rural-preneur who is helping another rural business to adapt, change and succeed.

Ellie Bowman is the manager of Prickly Pear Farm, Home and Lumber in Elkhart, Kansas. Bowman grew up in Lewis and earned a degree in agribusiness from Kansas State University. With support from her parents, she purchased the lumberyard in Kinsley and re-branded it as Prickly Pear Farm and Home.

With a fresh look, expanded offerings, and emphasis on customer service, she was able to double the Kinsley store’s business in the first year. Her work to build the business led to her being recognized by the Kansas Department of Commerce as the 2024 To The Stars award winner as the Under 30 Entrepreneur of the Year.

That award caught the attention of Morton County economic development director Alexis O’Hair, who mentioned it to the owners of the local lumberyard in the county seat of Elkhart. The lumberyard had been family-owned for nearly 40 years, but one of the key owners had died and the following generation had moved away.

The owner’s daughter, Sheena, reached out to Bowman. “I was asked to come look at the store and see what could be done,” Bowman said. She first came and visited the store in February, 2025.

“I walked into that store for the first time and said to myself, ‘I would build this place in my dreams,’” Bowman said. In August, she stepped into the role of manager with support to enhance the store.

Bowman found that several steps were needed. “We needed to find a new supplier,



FROM LEFT: PRICKLY PEAR EMPLOYEES JARED CORBIN, MAVERICK ELAM, XAVIER CORBIN, ELLIE BOWMAN, SHANA BITNER, TAYLOR MCFARLEN, AND SYDNEY BRILLHART.

we needed to reset the store, and we needed to serve the community more effectively,” she said.

She jumped in and went to work. By October they had a new computer system in place and by November they had reset the store with the new supplier.

In the spring, they reopened the greenhouse next door, which had closed four years previously.

In April 2026, the store had a grand reopening and was re-branded as Prickly Pear Farm, Home and Lumber, similar to Bowman’s store in Kinsley. The building next door became the Prickly Pear Potting Shed and Greenhouse. “We’ll have mums in the greenhouse this fall,” Bowman said.

“More than 400 people came to the grand reopening,” she added. “It was really exciting. We had food trucks and a big celebration.”

“The response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. I absolutely love it. This community has welcomed me with open arms.”

For Bowman, the priorities are customer, community and people: “It all comes back to customer service. There can be great results if you’re willing to give your all to help customers succeed.”

She greatly appreciates the community of Elkhart. “Elkhart does it really well,” Bowman said. “There’s an active chamber and economic development office. There are people in the community who care.”

Are there young people willing to find opportunities in small town Kansas? Bowman is an example.

“I guess this proves I’m rural by choice,” said Bowman, using the term coined by rural advocate Marci Penner to describe young people who are

opting for a rural lifestyle and positively impacting their communities. Bowman has chosen to live in the community of Elkhart, population 1,888 people. Now, that’s rural.

For more information, look for Prickly Pear Farm, Home & Lumber on Facebook.

Business transitions can be one of the most challenging stages in the life of a small business. We commend Ellie Bowman for making a difference with entrepreneurship in a retail business in a rural community. She is applying the good business principles from her first store to another and helping both to succeed. Those are positive transitions.

And there’s more. When Bowman arranged for a different hardware supplier, she signed on with an independent supply company that also happens to be based in Kansas. We’ll learn about that next week.

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The ERIE RECORD

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Legal Notices

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2027

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING

The governing body of
City of Erie
will meet on September 21, 2026 at 6:00 PM at Erie City Hall for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed use of all funds and the amount of ad valorem tax.
Detailed budget information is available at Erie City Hall and will be available at this hearing.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Proposed Budget 2027 Expenditures and Amount of 2026 Ad Valorem Tax establish the maximum limits of the 2027 budget.
Estimated Tax Rate is subject to change depending on the final assessed valuation.

FUND	Prior Year Actual for 2025		Current Year Estimate for 2026		Proposed Budget for 2027		
	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate*	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate*	Budget Authority for Expenditures	Amount of 2026 Ad Valorem Tax	Proposed Estimated Tax Rate*
General	758,500	35.286	665,541	36.366	956,109	188,459	34.218
G.O. Bond and Interest	104,715		107,825		121,688		
Library	36,170	5.957	35,957	5.988	37,563	32,980	5.988
Tort Liability	7,064	0.794	7,377	0.798	9,162	4,395	0.798
Employee Benefits	136,534	29.785	150,000	29.943	353,310	164,915	29.943
Industrial Development					1,876		
Recreation	16,017	2.592	15,812	2.637	16,710	14,524	2.637
Special Police and Fire	2,996	1.986	7,000	1.996	77,944	10,993	1.996
Special Highway	5,008		33,250		44,750		
Special Park & Recreation	1,244		3,000		15,386		
Police VIN Inspection	6,445		43,000		17,400		
City Street Sales Tax					285,675		
Grocery Store	76,368		56,177		57,098		
Sewer Utility	174,169		170,064		303,571		
Water Utility	344,947		355,852		501,931		
Electric Utility	1,368,598		1,452,329		2,127,217		
Electric Utility II	1,016,714		962,162		991,148		
Non-Budgeted Funds-A	46,133						
Non-Budgeted Funds-B	710,681						
Totals	4,812,304	76.400	4,065,346	77.728	5,918,538	416,266	75.580
Revenue Neutral Rate**							75.580
Less: Transfers	1,085,314		1,194,083		1,231,069		
Net Expenditure	3,726,990		2,871,263		4,687,469		
Total Tax Levied	416,266		416,266		xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx		
Assessed Valuation	5,448,520		5,355,207		5,507,636		
Outstanding Indebtedness, January 1,							
	2024		2025		2026		
G.O. Bonds	1,485,556		1,362,222		1,238,889		
Revenue Bonds	4,160,000		3,560,000		2,945,000		
Other	0		0		0		
Lease Purchase Principal	0		0		20,887		
Total	5,645,556		4,922,222		4,204,776		

*Tax rates are expressed in mills

** Revenue Neutral Rate as defined by KSA 79-2988

Tena Wright

Official Title: City Clerk

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RESOLUTION 09-08-2026-01

WHEREAS, a vacancy exists in the membership of the Board of Unified School District No. 101, Neosho County, Kansas; and

WHEREAS, K.S.A. 25-2022 authorized a Board of Education to fill such vacancies no sooner than fifteen (15) days following publication of notice in a newspaper having general circulation in the school district;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the clerk of the Board of Education of Unified School District No. 101, Neosho County, Kansas, shall cause such notice to be published in The Erie Record.

By:

/s/ Dawn Wilson, Member, Board of Education

/s/ Isaiah Kephart, Member, Board of Education

/s/ William Cook, Member, Board of Education

/s/ Brian Semrad, Member, Board of Education

/s/ Morgan Buntin, Member, Board of Education

Attest:

/s/ Connie Buskirk, Clerk, Board of Education

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