Kimball Welcomes You!

As seen in the March/April 2008 issue of Nebraska Life Magazine.
Hope that the following feature story, pictures and ads will be helpful in familiarizing yourself with Kimball and our citizens. Since 1889, the town of Kimball has welcomed both travelers and settlers into the warm embrace of its friendly and welcoming community nestled in the far southwestern corner of Nebraska. Safely secured under the brightest stars and the most spectacular sunsets, Kimball has emerged as one of the most desirable destinations to live, work, raise a family, retire and even start a business in the Great Plains.

There’s so much to like about Kimball. Its natural, rural beauty. Close proximity to the Colorado Front Range, Interstate 80 and the future Heartland Expressway make our location a huge attribute.

- Healthy living.
- Top notch health care facilities.
- Assisted living and nursing home that are second to none.
- Excellent schools.
- Welcoming churches.
- Unique shopping.
- Rich rail history and presence.
- Many dining options.
- Historic architecture.
- Stately homes.
- Full city and county services.
- Tree lined streets and parks.
- Affordable land.
- World class landing strip and support services.
- The state’s highest golf course.
- Unique shopping.
- Rich rail history and presence.
- Outstanding cultural and sporting events.
- The best drinking water straight from the tap, and so much more.

Kimball is a place where there’s always something happening, always someone to visit with, always somewhere to go, always something to do if one so chooses; or one can bask in relative privacy for a little recharging of the soul!

Welcome to our amazing hometown – we invite you to consider Kimball your hometown!

Kim Ballman, Executive Director
The Kimball-Banner Chamber of Commerce

If there is anything you would need to know about the area, or if you have comments regarding the same, please visit or contact us.

Kimball Banner County Chamber of Commerce
122 South Chestnut Street, Kimball, NE 69145
308-235-3782 voice • 308-235-3825 fax
kbccc@megavision.com • www.ci.kimball.ne.us

This publication supported in part by these sponsors:

GOLD SPONSORS
Will & Lillian Brown
Kimball VFW Post #2243 & Ladies Auxiliary
First National Bank of Kimball
Kimball Health Services
Clean Harbors
First Tier Bank of Kimball
Kimball Co-op Food Store
Kimball County Visitors Committee
Kimball Public Schools
Castronics & Evertson Oil Companies
Kimball Area Foundation

SILVER SPONSORS
City of Kimball
Kimball-Banner County Chamber of Commerce

While in Kimball

School
Superintendent of Schools
Troy J. Unzicker
901 S. Nadine St.
Kimball, NE 69145
(308) 235-2188
Fax: (308) 235-3269
tunzick@panesu.org
http://kimball.k12.ne.us

City
City of Kimball Administrator
Harold Farrar
223 S. Chestnut St.
Kimball, NE 69145
(308) 235-3639 or 235-2971
ckimball@megavision.com
www.ci.kimball.ne.us

Economic Development
City of Kimball
Economic Development
Kent Worker
223 S. Chestnut St.
Kimball, NE 69145
(308) 235-3639
(888) 274-6004
econdev@megavision.com
Kimball Area Foundation
Dr. Doug McConnell
PO Box 483
Kimball, NE 69145
(308) 235-3829 or 235-3601
chiro@megavision.com
Forward Kimball Industries
122 S. Chestnut St.
Kimball, NE 69145
(308) 235-3782 or 235-5818

Hospital
Kimball Health Services
Julie Schnell - Chief Executive Officer
505 S. Burg St.
Kimball, NE 69145
(308) 235-1951 Hospital
(308) 235-1966 Clinic
www.kimballhealth.org
info@kimballhealth.org

Nursing Home
Kimball County Manor
Bev Schnell - Administrator
810 E. 7th St.
Kimball, NE 69145
(308) 235-4693
bev@megavision.com

County Offices
Kimball County Courthouse
114 E. 3rd St.
Kimball, NE 69145
(308) 235-2241
clerk@kimball.nacone.org
www.co.kimball.ne.ue

WNC Community College
Southern Panhandle
Sidney Center
Deanna G. Volkmer - Associate Dean
(308) 254-7404
volkmerd@wncc.net
www.wncc.net

University of Nebraska Extension
Kimball-Banner Co. Extension Office
209 E. 3rd St.
Kimball, NE 69141-1401
(308) 235-3122
(888) 235-3077
evogel@unlnotes.unl.edu
www.cib.unl.edu

Airport
Robert E. Arraj Field
Dennis Bastian - DR Aircraft LLC
(308) 235-4008
(307) 631-3679
dennis@draircraft.com
www.draircraft.com

Cover photo by Alex Blanché
Kimball
Ready for the Next Big Break
Story and photography by CHRISTOPHER AMUNDSON

Kimball was practically deserted one Saturday night back in 1954 when most able-bodied residents made their way southwest of town to Seth Torgeson’s farm. Rumors had spread that the drilling crew was close and “touchdown” could happen any time.

The secret was already out. Seismograph crews had been surveying Kimball County for months. Others had already had luck in Cheyenne County to the east. “Black gold” was underfoot.

The evening turned to dark at Torgie’s farm and eventually the onlookers headed home none the wiser. But the news came with morning light. Touchdown! The oil boom had come to Kimball County!

This would be the beginning of big changes in Kimball and everyone knew it. Samples of the oil were brought into town and dripped onto the Western Nebraska Observer as it rolled off the press that week. Within two years pumping units pulling light sweet crude became a fixture of the landscape – both in and out of Kimball. The city was divided into 40-acre sections and drilling rigs moved into backyards, vacant lots and alleys to get at the oil 6,000 feet below the city. Landowners shared in the revenue and the city financed new building and improvement projects. Workers poured new wide streets that gave the city a look of readiness for success.

Kimball became known as Nebraska’s oil capital but more importantly it became a hub for servicing a huge area of oil fields in eastern Wyoming, northeastern Colorado and western Nebraska. New buildings for drilling and service companies, parts stores and oil companies like Standard filled High.

Boomtown Left, when community leaders began to feel the oil industry slump in the 1960s, they recruited Ken Risk’s dad, George Risk, to Kimball with a $150,000 investment and a promise that George would employ five people at his electronics manufacturing plant. Today, George Risk Industries employs nearly 300, including 38-year veteran Marcella Baack, 87, who works as the order “expediter.” “If the orders aren’t getting out on time she gets out there and cracks the whip,” Ken said, with a smile. Above, Kimball’s main drag, Chestnut Street, is full of hometown businesses.

 stories/
Oil and Big Mamou
Tim Wistrom tends to maintenance on ‘Flying Eagle Number 1’ at the Kleinholz oil field west of Kimball. Below, Morgan Williams’ dad named their steakhouse on the west edge of Kimball ‘Big Mamou’ after a Hank Williams song. He named a drink ‘Morgan Nicole’ after Morgan. And as for her brother Lance, well, he gets to work as the bartender ‘so he feels important’.

after local residents completed the Oliver Reservoir irrigation project in 1911. Today long trains of Union Pacific grain cars haul wheat from the Kimball Co-Op elevator toward foreign ports. Every fall, sugar beets wait in giant mounds off Highway 71 for processing into sugar at the sugar beet co-operative in Scottsbluff. But as a teenager, Everson saw the downside and uncertainty of production agriculture.

‘Hail devastated my dad seven years in a row. I said enough of that and I went to work in the oil fields,’ Everson recalled.

He learned the oil business from the ground up as a basic laborer – a roughneck – digging trenches, laying pipe and whatever else he could do to get oil on his hands. He worked in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and of course Nebraska. He loved the oil business and worked nights, weekends and whenever he could get away from school.

There was a saying an old crew supervisor – a “tool-pusher” – used when Everson and his crew of roughnecks would strike oil. “You know what this is boys?” he would say. “This is Cadillacs, diamond rings and good looking women.”

Today, Everson owns Nebraska’s largest oil company, Everson Oil. He has another company in South America drilling wells for the big multi-national oil companies. Everson also owns Castronics, a Kimball company on the east edge of town that keeps 50 employees working two shifts threading pipe – called casing – for oil wells around the country. A long-time pilot, he flies his Cessna Citation jet to business meetings. The day we visited, he was leaving the next morning for Venezuela to check on progress of drilling operations there.

‘There’s still money to be made in the oil industry but it’s a glimmer of the progress of drilling operations there. Oil and Big Mamou.

way 30 and Chestnut Street downtown. As many as 30 drilling rigs operated from Kimball with thousands employed on roundabout crews, maintenance crews and as engineers and geologists.

This little town on the Lincoln Highway became an oil boomtown. The population climbed from 1,700 to 4,300 by the late 1950s. Good fortunes had come to Kimball.

Morgan Abramson and her husband John were at Torgie’s pasture that night in mid-America saw towns exploding with progress and wealth – fueled by the railroads, cattle, crops and commerce (Kimball had all of these and more). But like Cain vs. Abel or the “other shoe dropping,” the economic boom and bust to make a living on these arid high plains
A lot of our competitors aren’t here anymore because they had debt and when you couldn’t hardly buy a job because oil was six, eight barrels a barrel, we were fortunate to be able to go out and buy existing wells from producers who were in financial trouble or from major oil companies like Exxon Mobil who didn’t like the area any more,” Everettson said. “So we bought what they had and expanded on that.”

His company now pumps half a million barrels of oil annually from about 70 wells.

WANTING TO GET OIL on our hands like Everettson, we headed out to the Kleinholz oil field where we found Tim Wistrom and his trusty black dog, of course. Wistrom is a “pumper” like his father before him. He accompanied his dad on weekends as a child then as an adult returned to Nebraska after college in California to help in the oil fields. As a pumper, Wistrom tends to the wells and accounts for every barrel of oil they produce. He’s like a dairyman – of oil wells.

Fuelled by natural gas from the well itself, the pumps run 24 hours a day pulling a steady flow of crude oil, raw natural gas and water from the earth. Tall narrow tank units with a smoke stack and inter nal heater separate natural gas and water from the oil. A collection of larger tanks – called tank batteries – store the oil until semi-tankers truck it to refineries in Denver. Other than the semi-tankers and the pumps like Wistrom, the oil fields practically operate on their own.

You can see the Kleinholz field just west of town on the north and south sides of Interstate 80. The wells extend 8,200 feet into the ground through layers of soil, gravel and rock to the Wykert formation where there’s oil in a layer of rock. The rock is sandstone and only six feet thick. Wistrom explained all this while we were standing under the first oil well of the day. The oil is trapped in “tiny voids” in the rock, he said. He kicked a piece of concrete with his boot to demonstrate the porosity of the rock a mile and half under us.

“It’s amazing to think that you could have a hundred and some barrels of oil a day come flowing out of something like that,” he said. (One barrel equals 42 gallons.) And as he talked, he marveled at dinosaurs and decomposing matter pressed under the heat of 8,000 feet of earth grinding over time to make oil and natural gas. The “putt-putt-putt” of the mufflered single-cylinder engine kept tempo next to us, and we marveled at man’s ability to coax oil up to the surface.

“How much oil is still down there?” I asked.

He said 16 million barrels were in the field before pumping began. The first wave of production from the ‘50s to the ‘60s pulled 20 percent. Secondary recovery through water pumping should get an-
Titan 1 missile stands in Gotte Park, absent Missile Center-U.S.A. Today a 98-foot tall the center of the field of nuclear weapons: western Nebraska. Kimball would be at eastern Wyoming, northeast Colorado and intercontinental ballistic missiles in ing a vast network of underground boom literally from under its feet.

The arms race was on and once again gripped America in the late 1950s. Cold War hysteria and harvest it.

Nobody knows the answer to: “How of western Nebraska?”

covered – is trapped under the soils much wealth – discovered and undis- covered in Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming.”

Other generators are being built south across the Colorado border. Can Kimball harness the ever-present wind and become the Saudi Arabia of wind energy? Most locals said “not in my backyard” when a new-grocery store was built. George and Edith's business, an auto parts store and machine shop, grew to 12 employees as they serviced both the oil industry and the missile construction industry. “We practically had a new city of trailer houses and homes,” Edith said.

In the early 1970s another small boom descended on Kimball when the military redesigned the silos to accommo- date the newer, quicker and longer-range Minuteman III missiles. Workers and their families came to Kimball again. That lasted for a few years and the boom ended. With the Cold War behind us, there are now 150 active Minuteman III silos in F.E. Warren's network, with 38 in close vicinity to Kim- ball.

Today the population of Kimball is back down to 2,500 – yet the town has the infra- structure and wide streets for 5,000.

Since the end of the last missile boom, residents have been waiting, working and wondering – ready for the next big boom. What will it be, they ask? Seven wind generators north of town supply electricity for municipal communi- ties in Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. Other generators are being built south

The key to open the door

When a business opportunity knocks at your door, FirsTier can help open that door with financial tools to make it a success. Checking accounts, insurance, operating capital and the new wealthbuilder loan program are some of the services we can provide to your business. Call or visit our website to find out more.

Some see road signs, others see goldmines. Kimball sits on two major thoroughfares, and with that the potential for great rewards. I-80 is the nation's busiest east-west transcontinen- tal highway. If Washington loosens its purse strings to fund a long overdue project, the “Ports to Plains” transcontinental highway will funnel traffic from Mexico, Texas and Canada over Kimball's Highway 71.

neither 20 percent, leaving 60 percent inaccessible – until someone invents a different method of getting to it. All of this begs the question that nobody knows the answer to: “How much wealth – discovered and undis- covered in Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming?”

Like an October corn crop on the flats of the Platte River Valley, this oil is just waiting for someone to come and harvest it.

KIMBALL was still riding its oil boom when Cold War hysteria gripped America in the late 1950s. The arms race was on and once again Kimball would be grasped by another boom literally from under its feet. The government's plans to defend us against the Soviet's included build- ing a vast network of underground intercontinental ballistic missiles in eastern Wyoming, northeast Colorado and western Nebraska. Kimball would be at the center of the field of nuclear weapons. Missile Center-U.S.A. Today a 98-foot tall Titan 1 missile stands in Gotte Park, absent the nuclear warhead. Edith Haines remembers the first public meeting with officers from F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyo.

“We had many, many meetings out here where the young men would explain what they were going to do so the landowners would be comfortable with the idea that they were going to have missile in their backyard,” she said.

“The general consensus was it was going to ruin the country,” George added. “But then it didn’t.”

On the contrary, it was another boom.

The first nuclear missile was an At- las E located two miles south and one mile west of Kimball off Highway 71. That missile silo is now a private res- idence owned by Don and Charlene Zwitnitzer. Within a few years 150 Minuteman I and 30 Peacekeeper nuclear missiles were in the ground and ready to launch at the president’s command. Getting to that number was an incredible feat of logistics, manpower and construction. Thousands of engineers and con- struction workers and their families moved into Kimball. The schools taught classes in the basement of the Methodist church be- fore building a new high school with fed- eral funds and two new grade schools. A new grocery store was built. George and Edith’s business, an auto parts store and machine shop, grew to 12 employees as they serviced both the oil industry and the missile construction industry. “We practically had a new city of trailer houses and homes,” Edith said.

Then in the early 1970s another small boom descended on Kimball when the military redesigned the silos to accommo- date the newer, quicker and longer-range Minuteman III missiles. Workers and their families came to Kimball again. That lasted for a few years and the boom ended. With the Cold War behind us, there are now 150 active Minuteman III silos in F.E. Warren’s network, with 38 in close vicinity to Kim- ball.

Today the population of Kimball is back down to 2,500 – yet the town has the infra- structure and wide streets for 5,000.

Since the end of the last missile boom, residents have been waiting, working and wondering – ready for the next big boom. What will it be, they ask?

Seven wind generators north of town supply electricity for municipal communi- ties in Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. Other generators are being built south across the Colorado border. Can Kimball harness the ever-present wind and become the Saudi Arabia of wind energy? Most locals said “not in my backyard” when an out-of-town company called Waste Tech said it wanted to bring the nation’s industrial waste to Kimball for incineration. After years of community discussions – which led to the writing of a book about building community consen- sus – Waste Tech (now called Clean Har- bors) was finally built. It employs 100 in well-paying jobs and is the largest property tax generator in the county (Kleinholz oil field is second). Most residents now agree industrial waste was one of the best things
We love feet!

Specializing in the treatment and care of your family's foot health. Clinics in Kimball, Gering and Chappell. Call for hours or an appointment.

Anderson Family
Foot Care
Dr. Tiffani Anderson, DPM
118 S Webster
Kimball, NE 69145
866-535-0017

It’s easy to find what you’re shopping for with front door parking and front porch-friendly merchants to assist you. Come shop in Kimball where merchants are glad to help you find whatever you need.

Kimball
Easy to find, hard to leave

Kimball’s newest floral, gift and nursery shop.

Cottage Gardens

‘Plant a new look this spring’

Make your cottage bloom with a visit to ours. Cottage Gardens is overflowing with plants, gifts and home decor. Hardy varieties planted for this region available in our on-site nursery this spring. Advice for your landscaping project, or a floral delivery for any reason. Come see Kimball’s newest floral, gift and nursery shop.

Cottage Gardens • 905 E. Third • Kimball, NE • 308-235-3074

Will Kimball become the Saudi Arabia of wind energy? That’s one idea on the table as locals look for Kimball’s next big boom. These wind turbines north of town provide electricity for communities in Nebraska, Colorado and Wyoming. Colorado’s booming Front Range is less than two hours away — and getting closer every year.

to happen to Kimball in the last 15 years. Can Kimball now position itself as center for industrial waste disposal? (Don’t laugh, it’s big business.)

Then there is growth in manufacturing like Bruce Everett’s Castronics and George Risk Industries, an electronics company that forward-thinking businessmen brought to town in the 1960s with a $150,000 investment and a promise that the company would employ five people (today it employs 225).

And then there’s always tourism. With its first-rate airport, its 18-hole golf course, hotel/brewery renovation project, a new destination garden and greenhouse can Kimball become a recreational retreat for vacationers from the Front Range, the East Coast and beyond?

Kimball residents talk about all these developments at morning coffee downtown and at the Kimball Co-Op food store: “Kimball County has gone through a series of booms and busts through the years and we’re about to take off again,” said Marion Abramson’s son, Bob Abramson, who moved back to town to live where we do.”

“We need to tell everyone just who we are and that we are not going to back down to urban sprawl, Mother Nature’s drought or everyday doom and gloom,” she wrote in a recent newsletter. “Kimball and Banner Counties are the best places in the world to live, work, play and raise a family. Frankly I do not understand why everyone in the world would not choose to live here.”

Kimballites do seem resilient – they re-member the boom times, forget the busts and are ever optimistic of the next big break. These are lessons for us all.

-----

Monograms & More
Silk screening, heat application and embroidery for businesses and individuals. Custom design and digitizing with free quotes provided.

Mention this ad for 10% off your order.

1017 E. Third • Kimball, NE 69145
308-235-4606
Email: motelkimball@zemianmail.com

Stop & Stock Up On Provisions Here!

Beer, liquor, soda and snacks available every day. Variety of ammunition, hunting, fishing and camping necessities in one convenient location.

Mon-Thurs • 6:30 am-10 pm
Fri-Sat • 6:30 am-11 pm
Sun • 8 am-8 pm

Motel Kimball
American owned with vintage hospitality

Service and classic furnishings never go out of style. Find both at a reasonable rate at the Motel Kimball.

1017 E. Third • Kimball, NE
308-235-4606

Motel Kimball

Monograms & More

Kimball CO-OP Food Store
Owned By Those We Serve
815 East Third Street
Kimball, NE 69145
Ensuring our community continues to grow and prosper

The Kimball Area Foundation was created to provide a way for people to give back to their area communities. This vision plays a vital role in the future of the area for generations to come.

The fund is managed by the Nebraska Community Foundation and provides a not-for-profit funding classification to receive tax deductible donations. Contributions made today are invested and the interest is used for community improvements.

What contributors are saying about the fund:

“I am inspired by our citizens who are being proactive and contributing to the future of our community. These contributions today provide a powerful promise for the vitality of tomorrow.” ~ Larissa Thomas

“Kimball is my home, and my wife, Marcie, and I have benefited greatly from the Kimball area people. We have raised our four daughters here and wish to do our part in ensuring future generations have the same opportunities they did.” ~ Dr. McConnell

“My wife Lillian and I are new transplants from Colorado to Kimball. We love the town, but most of all we moved here because of the people.” ~ Will Brown

“My retirement, after teaching music and art for 40 years in the Kimball School system, now gives me time to do-nate to the community. My husband, Harley, and I feel this is an excellent progressive foundation for our town and future generations.” ~ Merceda Dietz

For more information about the Kimball Area Foundation contact:
Dr. Douglas McConnell, Chairman – 308-235-3601, dmcconnell@embarqmail.com
Larissa Thomas, Secretary – 308-235-8100, thomas.studios@hotmail.com

Whether you’ve only visited once or grew up here and moved away, we invite you to consider moving home to Kimball, Nebraska. Our clean, friendly downtown features businesses that still care about their customers. Have your purchase gift wrapped or get your groceries carried to your car (without asking). Take your kids to the park. Or better yet, let them ride their bikes themselves. Kids still do that in Kimball. Kimball has jobs waiting for qualified applicants. Business incentives are in place to help you get started in your own business if that’s what you are looking for. A welcoming business environment waits for you to discover what they already know: Kimball is a great place to live and work.

Kimball Business Boosters
Kimball-Banner County Chamber of Commerce
122 South Chestnut Street • Kimball, NE 69145
308-235-3782 • 308-235-3825 fax • kbccc@megavision.com

Kimball, NE. - A Good Place to Call Home
A High Point on the High Plains
Kimball, Nebraska

Living and working in Kimball County Nebraska has its high points. Available land, access to transportation options, clean air and water all add up to profitable business opportunities. Outdoor recreational opportunities such as golf, hiking, fishing, nature watching and camping complete the quality of life you seek. All this within a few short hours of the metro areas on the Front Range of Colorado. Here are a few other high points about Kimball County you won’t want to miss:

- Panorama Point, the highest spot in Nebraska
  - Kimball Health Services, Nebraska’s first basic-level trauma center
- Quaint downtown shopping and dining
  - Beautiful, safe and clean parks
  - Oliver Reservoir State Recreation Area
- Kimball Recreation Area and Four Winds Golf Course
  - Excellent school system
  - Museums and historical buildings
  - Business and professional opportunities abound
  - 3-state corner marker
  - Relax in nature at her best

To learn more about opportunities in Kimball, NE, log on to www.ci.kimball.ne.us or call City of Kimball Economic Development 888-274-6004 or Kimball Banner County Chamber of Commerce 308-235-3782

This ad sponsored by Kimball County Visitors Committee and Kimball Economic Development