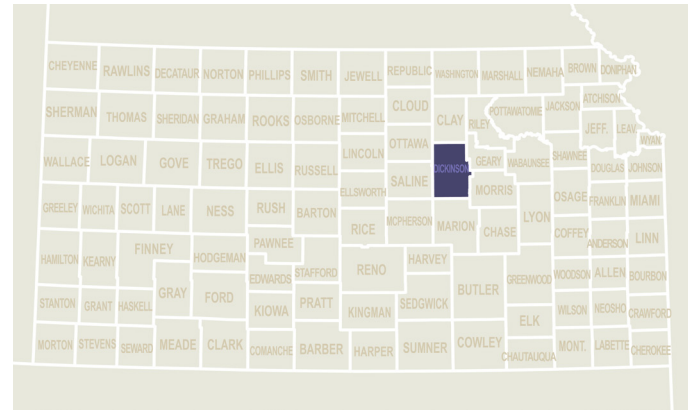




A historic bank building sits in downtown Chapman, Kansas on a sunny day in 2014. Source: The All Nite Images



About the Community

POPULATION*	1,410
DISTANCE TO NEAREST GROCERY STORE (prior to opening Chapman Food Mart)	12 miles
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME*	\$55,700
MEDIAN AGE*	38.8 years
CHILDREN LIVING BELOW POVERTY LEVEL**	11.7%
FAMILIES LIVING BELOW POVERTY LEVEL**	6.4%
LOW INCOME & LOW ACCESS TO GROCERY STORE**†	3.1%
PEOPLE WITH LOW ACCESS TO A GROCERY STORE**†	2.0%
CHILDREN WITH LOW ACCESS TO A GROCERY STORE**†	8.1%

Background

Chapman, Kansas is located in north-central Kansas along the I-70 corridor, between Junction City and Abilene, Kansas. The city is bordered by Chapman Creek, its namesake, on the east and the Smoky Hill River to its south.

The city earns the nickname of the Barn Quilt City of Kansas due to its more than 100 barn quilts on display throughout the city. Self-guided tours of the city's barn quilts are available. Chapman is also home to the Kansas Auto Racing Museum.

Many of the original pioneers that settled in the area descended from Ireland. This influence is still seen today in the high school mascot the "Fighting Irish."

Chapman is the hometown of astronaut Joe Engle. Engle was slated to run an Apollo mission to the moon, but the mission was canceled before he was scheduled to take-off. Eventually Engle made his way to space in the 1980s on the second run of the Columbia Space Shuttle.

The Issue

For many years, residents of Chapman, Kansas did not have a full-service grocery store. Residents were forced to travel 12 miles to the nearest grocery store in Junction City. Many Chapman residents work on the Fort Riley Army Base where they can purchase groceries at the sales tax-free Commissary.

In 2008, a devastating 1/2 mile-wide tornado swept through the city, decimating many homes and buildings. Chapman, with a population of 1,700 in 2008, dropped to 1,200 citizens almost overnight. It became clear that if the city didn't adapt, Chapman would continue to decline.

The city began to brainstorm economic development opportunities for the city to encourage residents to rebuild in Chapman. Three priorities rose to the top: (1) Astra Bank, (2) Dollar General, and (3) a new grocery store.



Community comes together after tornado hits home

After the devastating tornado that hit Chapman, Kansas in June 2008, the reality TV show, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* visited Chapman, Kansas to rebuild a local family's home. But, the show almost didn't come to Kansas. Story has it that the show's producer doubted the community's ability to recruit enough volunteers. Before Chapman, the most volunteers a community had recruited for the show was 1,700. The producer felt it would be impossible for Chapman, a town with a population of barely 1,700 at the time, to get close to that many volunteers. In the end, Chapman proved the producer wrong with a record turnout of 5,156 volunteers!



Above left, Chapman residents hug while examining the wreckage from the 2008 tornado. Above right, local volunteers work together during the filming of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

(Photos from Getty Images and Lawrence Journal-World)

The Process

PROJECT TIMELINE

1950s

Chapman's own Joe Engle, a NASA astronaut, grew up in the city of Chapman, Kansas. Local legend describes Joe working at the local grocery store as a teenager.

2008

On the evening of June 11, 2008, a half-mile wide tornado rammed through Chapman, Kansas, damaging many homes and businesses.

2009

Extreme Makeover: Home Edition visited Chapman, Kansas to rebuild the Tutwiler family home with help from more than 5,000 local volunteers.

2013

Construction of the new Chapman Food Mart grocery store began.

2014

Dollar General opens across the street from Chapman Food Mart.

2015

Chapman Food Mart opens for business - the first full service grocery store located in the city for many decades.

The Chapman City Council designated matching funds for economic development. Doug Thompson, local resident, business owner and lawyer, and his wife, put forward a proposal for a local grocery store.

The city pledged \$600,000 towards the project in the form of a grant. Construction on the Chapman Food Mart began in 2013. During the time it took to build the grocery store, Dollar General built and opened a store across the street from the soon-to-open store. Some would consider this a bad omen, but Doug Thompson viewed it as a "compliment rather than competition." In the end, the Dollar General directly across from Chapman Food Mart keeps Chapman residents from shopping outside of town.

From the start, Chapman Food Mart has prided itself on offering high quality products and customer service. On the first day that Chapman Food Mart was open for business, community members volunteered at the store handing out samples. This set the tone for a welcoming atmosphere at the Chapman Food Mart that still rings true today.



Lessons Learned

✓ Pick the right team.

When opening Chapman Food Mart, there were three experienced store managers that showed interest in running the Chapman store. For various reasons, these potential managers did not pan out. When Doug showed the store to a fourth candidate, the Bush's, a family that owns and manages a grocery store located in nearby Solomon, Kansas, Doug says they were almost in tears, and they said, "never in our lives did we ever think we'd be able to be in [manage] a store as nice as this one." That was all that the owner needed to make his decision and since, it has been a fruitful relationship.

Work with local partners. ✓

Chapman city government supported the building of the Chapman Food Mart through a matching grant. Doug says that when the city approved the funding he knew that at least, "the five people on the council, the staff working for the city, and the mayor would be shopping at that grocery store because they would be absolutely conspicuous by their absence." The Chapman Food Mart would be much smaller or maybe not even exist if Doug had not found partners in the local government and Chapman City Commissioners.

✓ Continue to make a good first impression.

On opening day of Chapman Food Mart, community volunteers offered samples to new customers, providing a pleasant, friendly, and welcoming experience. Additionally, the deli department operates a catering arm of Chapman Food Mart which serves as an additional mechanism for marketing the store and sharing the good service of the Chapman Food Mart with the broader community.

Project Successes

Picking the right team, working with local partners, and making good first impressions has led to success for Chapman Food Mart. In its nearly four years of operation, grocery store staff have established Chapman Food Mart as the neighborhood grocery store. Doug Thompson stands by his original prediction, that Chapman Food Mart may not be "the biggest store, but we can be the nicest store." The store's neighborly atmosphere has secured Chapman Food Mart as a Chapman institution.

