

Kansas Museum of History
New Exhibits – November 22, 2025
Thematic Gallery

Visitors entering the new gallery are asked to consider What is Kansas?, What was Kansas?, and Why Kansas? in preparation for exploring the remaining sections of the new gallery. Visitors bring their own perceptions of Kansas—perhaps positive, negative, or a mix of both. These questions help address those perceptions and consider their origin. Kansas has tornadoes and sunflowers, is the Free State and the Wheat State, and is known for *The Wizard of Oz*. But Kansas offers so much more. Kansas is home to stories of everyday people accomplishing incredible things. Kansas is the heartland, a crossroads, a place of innovation, and a celebration of numerous cultures and traditions.

The remaining gallery sections center stories of Kansans who fought for a cause, made their home and a living, created communities, pushed for change, battled adversity, and celebrated their successes.

- *Bleeding Kansas* tells the story of the turbulent territorial era, how Kansas became a state, and Kansans' role in the Civil War.
- *Making Kansas* is rooted in the land and resources from the earth.
- *Connecting Kansas* is centered on the 1880 Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe steam locomotive and the impact of the railroad.
- *Changing Kansas* shares stories of people pushing to make their society a better place.
- *Celebrating Kansas* highlights how communities come together for unique and ongoing festivals.

The exhibits offer interactive experiences throughout the gallery that explore stories in more depth, bring artifacts to life, and connect visitors to the past. The thematic structure allows for updates that can make for a more dynamic space.

Visitors contemplate a final question as they leave, What is the Future of Kansas? History holds lessons that can lead to understanding about who we are and how we can shape our future.