



EARL V. SEIFERT VISITORS' CENTER

THE EARL V. SEIFERT VISITORS' CENTER IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FROM 1 - 4 P.M. ON FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MAY THROUGH OCTOBER.

VISITORS' CENTER RENTAL

The Earl V. Seifert Visitors Center is available free of charge for educational, civic, and nonprofit organizations by appointment only.

The center also offers event space for weddings and receptions on the south patio and at the Myer Freshman Memorial Arbor. These events require a reservation and rental fee.

For more information, a rental agreement, or to make reservations, contact City Hall at (620) 421-7030.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Parsons maintains the arboretum grounds, however, volunteers are always needed to keep it in full bloom. The Parsons Arboretum Foundation welcomes your help!

If you have ideas for new projects or educational programs, contact Pat McReynolds at (620) 778-6631 or Bev Browne, Secretary/ Treasurer, at (620) 423-9170.

SIGNATURE FEATURES

The Concrete Turtle – Standing watch over the Arboretum just south of the wetlands, this beloved landmark was once a familiar sight at the Silver Wheels Skating Rink in Parsons. It was generously donated by the Kurt Salyers family.



Windmill Aeration System – A windmill, located west of the wetlands, pumps air into the ponds to reduce algae growth, helping to maintain a healthy aquatic ecosystem.

Pioneer Spirit Tribute – Stone fence posts from Beloit, Kansas, along with iron wheels, mark two park entrances, honoring the pioneer heritage of Kansas.

Natural Stone Displays – Large petrified wood stones and creek rocks, donated by Howard Markley, are showcased at the main trail entrance, adding a striking natural element to the landscape.

Children's Storyboards – Provided by the Parsons Library Board, these story walk displays at the north end of the Arboretum offer a delightful literary experience for young visitors.

PARSONS ARBORETUM AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER



2004 BRIGGS AVE.
620-421-7030
WWW.PARSONSKS.COM



ENJOY OUR SCENIC TRAILS

The Parsons Arboretum offers hikers, cyclists, walkers, and joggers a scenic escape with beautiful trails and vibrant blooms year – round. This peaceful retreat is perfect for unwinding after a long day or adding fresh air to your daily routine.

All trails are made of durable concrete, ensuring accessibility in all weather and for individuals of all abilities. Thanks to dedicated volunteers from the Parsons Rotary Club and the community, the Arboretum's trail system has continued to grow, offering a seamless and enjoyable experience for visitors of all ages.

One highlight is the Rotary Trail, which extends from the northern edge of the Arboretum, and links to the city's Frisco Walking Trail at 17th Street, providing a smooth, scenic route for exercise and exploration. Whether you're looking for a relaxing stroll or an invigorating jog, the Arboretum's trails offer the perfect outdoor experience.

ENJOY YEAR-ROUND

HISTORY OF... ...THE PARK

The Parsons Arboretum is a true gem in the city's park system, offering a breathtaking natural retreat unlike any other in Southeast Kansas.

The vision for the Arboretum began in 1987 when the Parsons Tree Advisory Board set out to create a dedicated green space in the region. That dream became a reality in 1991 when the Union Pacific Railroad generously deeded nearly 19 acres of land to the City of Parsons. By 1993, the Parsons Arboretum Foundation was established to guide its growth and development. Today, the Arboretum spans 25 acres and showcases an impressive 825 trees, along with a diverse collection of flowers. As the only Arboretum in Southeast Kansas and one of just a few statewide, it stands as a testament to the city's commitment to nature and conservation.

The Arboretum's growth has been made possible through a combination of public and private support. Initial tree plantings were funded by the Small Business Administration, with matching contributions from the City of Parsons and the Tree Advisory Board. The Wetlands Project, featuring an observation deck and seating area, was funded by Western Resources, with additional support from the Southeast Kansas Audubon Society.

Visitors can enjoy a variety of features, including two charming gazebos, a memorial tree area, and numerous thoughtful gifts from the community, ranging from flower and water gardens to statues, signage, and dedicated trees.

With every season, the Arboretum continues to flourish, offering a stunning backdrop for relaxation, reflection, and outdoor exploration.

...THE VISITORS' CENTER

In May 2000, the Earl V. Seifert Visitors Center was officially dedicated in honor of Seifert's pivotal role in developing the Arboretum.

The building itself carries a rich history. Originally constructed as the bathhouse for the Glenwood Park Swimming Pool, it was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. The pool, once a bustling community attraction, was eventually filled in, and the bathhouse sat unused for nearly 50 years.

Thanks to Seifert's vision and dedication — alongside Parsons Recreation Director Arvon Phillips—the

once-forgotten structure found new purpose. Over 15 years, they worked tirelessly with the city, local civic organizations, Boy Scout troops, and dedicated volunteers to transform the space into a vibrant educational center that now serves as a gateway to the Arboretum's natural beauty and history.

BLOOMING BEAUTIES

Experience a true Kansas prairie with wildflower beds showcasing 10 vibrant species from May to October.

In 2013, the Arboretum was part of a Kansas State University study on viburnums. Among seven test sites statewide, Parsons thrived the most, losing only two of 18 planted varieties, many of which are near the entrance.

Lining Ken Ervin Drive, 23 colorful Crape Myrtle trees, donated by The Botany Shop, bloom from May until frost, ranging from 5 to over 40 feet in height.



The Harlow Family Garden was envisioned by Helen Harlow as a tribute to her late husband, Paul, and their family. After Helen's passing, an elegant arbor was added in her honor. The garden was later expanded, and a striking bronze sculpture was placed by their children in memory of their sister, Jeanine. Today, Roberta and Alan Whetzel continue to support and preserve this cherished space.

The Janssen Family Memorial Water Garden was established in 1999 by Cecil Janssen as a serene tribute. Following his passing in 2008, the family further enriched the space by adding a beautiful flower bed in his memory.

Several other thoughtfully designed floral displays pay tribute to loved ones. The flower beds in front of and along the east side of the Earl V. Seifert Visitors Center are dedicated to Thelma and Maurice Wyckoff, while the west side flower bed honors Earl V. Seifert himself. The flower beds near the building's accessible parking area serve as a memorial to Rose & Claude Ervin and Hazel & Montie Martin.

Additionally, thanks to the generosity of Audry Billman, the Arboretum now features a dedicated parking lot, ensuring accessibility for all visitors to enjoy this beautiful and meaningful space.