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## **Galena USD #499**

Unified School District # 499 covers 13.5 square miles and is one of the smallest districts in Kansas. The USD valuation tax base as of July, 2002 was \$10,996,259 making Galena the second poorest school district in the state. The school facilities include the following:

**Liberty Elementary School:** Principal, Susan New  
Grades 3 through 5 serving 166 students.



### **Mission Statement**

**Liberty Elementary School** is a place of quality teaching and learning in a safe, caring environment. Students will develop academic, technological, and problem solving skills as well as responsible behaviors and attitudes required for life-long learning and productive participation in society.

## **Historical Galena**

Galena has a rich and colorful history. The fact that the town exists at all is due to the perseverance and determination of its residents. During the late 1800's, settlers came to Southeast Kansas primarily for agricultural and hunting opportunities. However, the discovery of lead prompted many people to the area to seek their fortunes in the lead and zinc mines. Galena was settled and incorporated as a city on June 19, 1877, immediately following the discovery of lead. The name of the town, Galena, is derived from the lead ore of the same name.

From the discovery of ore in 1877 to 1899, the total production of lead and zinc mines was worth over 100 million dollars. The mining district, about four miles square, included one of the largest lead smelters in the world. Just before the turn of the century, Galena was reported as the wealthiest city per capita in the world.

During the mining boom, Galena's population peaked near 25,000. In 1907, Galena annexed with Empire City, a mining community of 10,000 bordered to the north. The mining boom lasted into the early part of the century, however, the smelter continued to operate until 1978.

The mining companies that operated in Galena never intended for the town to continue after the mines were no longer profitable. Therefore no ecological efforts were made toward land preservation or reclamation. When the lead and zinc was depleted, the mining companies moved on but many of the residents remained. Galena has survived despite the ecological devastation, decreases in business infrastructure and waning population.

In the mid 1980's, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency was contacted about concerns of old mining properties. The danger of lead contamination was believed to be in the mine wastes around the Galena area. In 1986, lead contamination was found evident in the soil. Heavily contaminated chat was deposited back into the dry voids and covered with lead free chat. Individual yards within a one-mile radius of the Smelting Plant were found to have high levels of contamination and were cleaned by replacing old soil with new soil and sod. The cost of the project thus far has been 12.3 million dollars (10% state money, 90% federal money from the Federal Superfund Program.)

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In 1991, the United Reclamation Service (U.R.S.) consultants began an area wide study of wells to check if lead contamination was infiltrating the deep aquifer. Some shallow wells were found contaminated and other abandoned deep wells were plugged. The cleanup of surface water began in 1993 continuing on a 2-year design. Lead contamination has also been addressed by the Cherokee County Health Department through education and services for testing the blood levels of children residing in Galena and surrounding area.

As responsible as mining was for Galena's prosperity and growth, the long lasting effects have taken their toll on the health and well being of the residents in the ensuing years. The Superfund Program and EPA cleanup has been critical to the survival and improvement of Galena as a community of pride and endurance despite the difficulties inherited from the mining industry.

### **Present Day Galena**

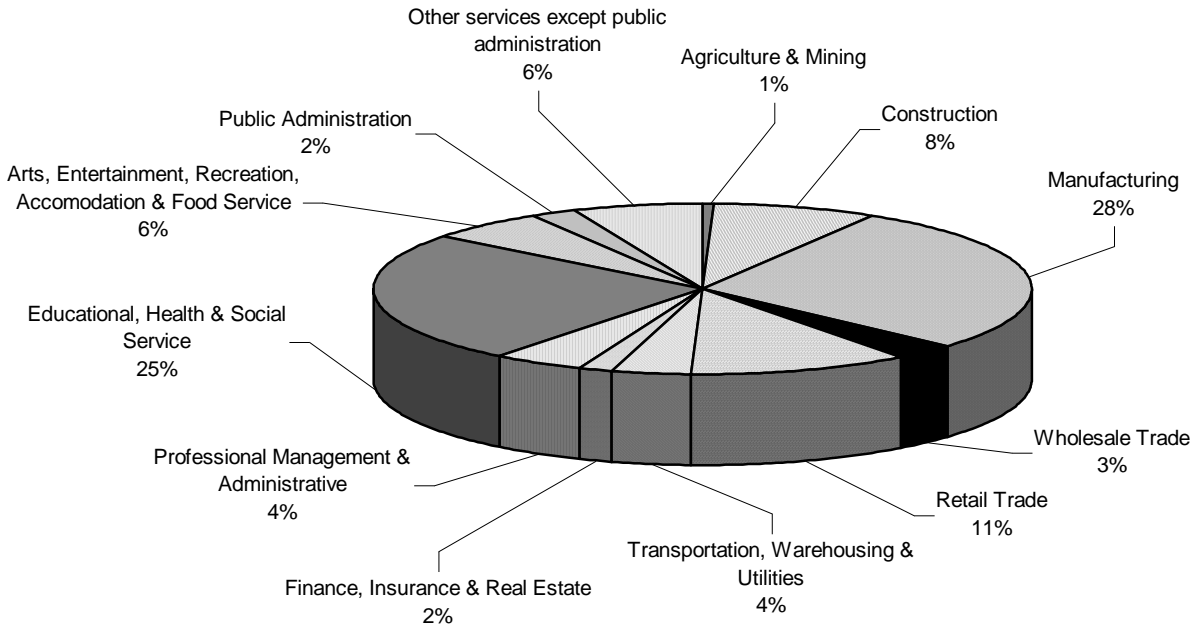
Galena, KS is a community of 3,287 located in Cherokee County in the extreme southeast corner of Kansas. The town is 7 miles west of Joplin, MO along Historic Route 66 at the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, bordered by Missouri on the East and Oklahoma on the South.

Galena has a city manager/commission form of government. There are five elected commissioners with one of the five serving as mayor. The city manager is the chief administrative employee and along with the city clerk oversees the payroll, water, sewage and other city services. A public works director supervises the street and water departments. The city currently employs 48 full and part-time employees.

Galena as a rural community has a small number of local industries that provide employment. Manufacturing industries make up the largest sector of industries in Galena. The single largest employer in Galena is the school district with approximately 120 employees. The educational, health and social service sector is second with 25%. Much of the local employment base is service provision or employment by small firms.

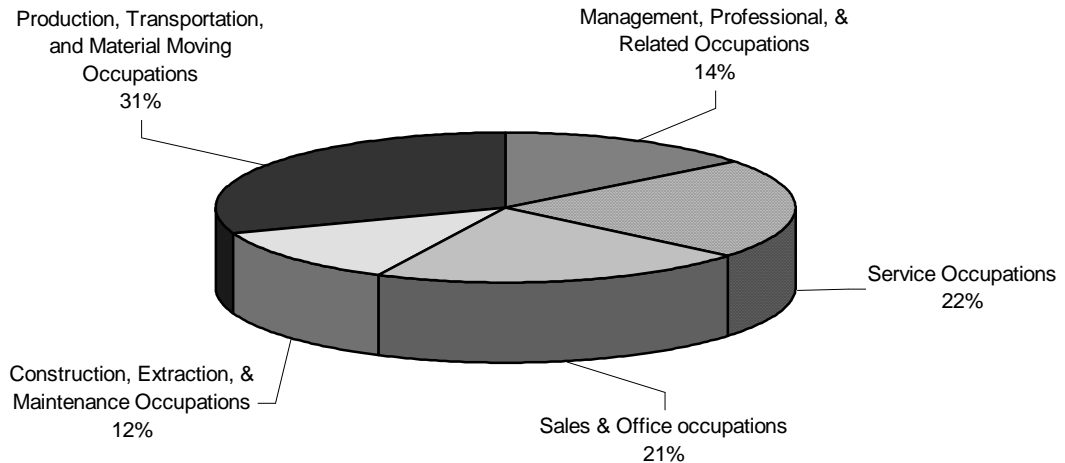
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**INDUSTRY OF GALENA**



Employment opportunities in nearby cities offer Galena residents jobs in the production, transportation, service, retail and utility based sectors.

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GALENA RESIDENTS**



## **Community Services**

Since its beginning, Galena and the surrounding area rely upon volunteer help to provide fire protection. There are 30 volunteers, three paid employees and fifteen pieces of motorized equipment. Medical services are provided locally by one physician, one dentist, an optometrist and mental health services through the Family Life Center. In addition, emergency medical services are provided through the Cherokee County ambulance service. There are two nursing homes and two public housing authorities.

Community members receive other services from hospitals and doctors located in Joplin, MO or Pittsburg, KS. The close proximity of these two larger cities provides a variety of employment, cultural, social, recreational and commercial opportunities. The area also offers several post secondary educational choices within a 30-mile radius for district graduates.

Galena has fifteen churches, a public library, an archival library and a museum of local history. The local newspaper, the Galena Sentinel, is published weekly and has been in continuous operation since October 1880.

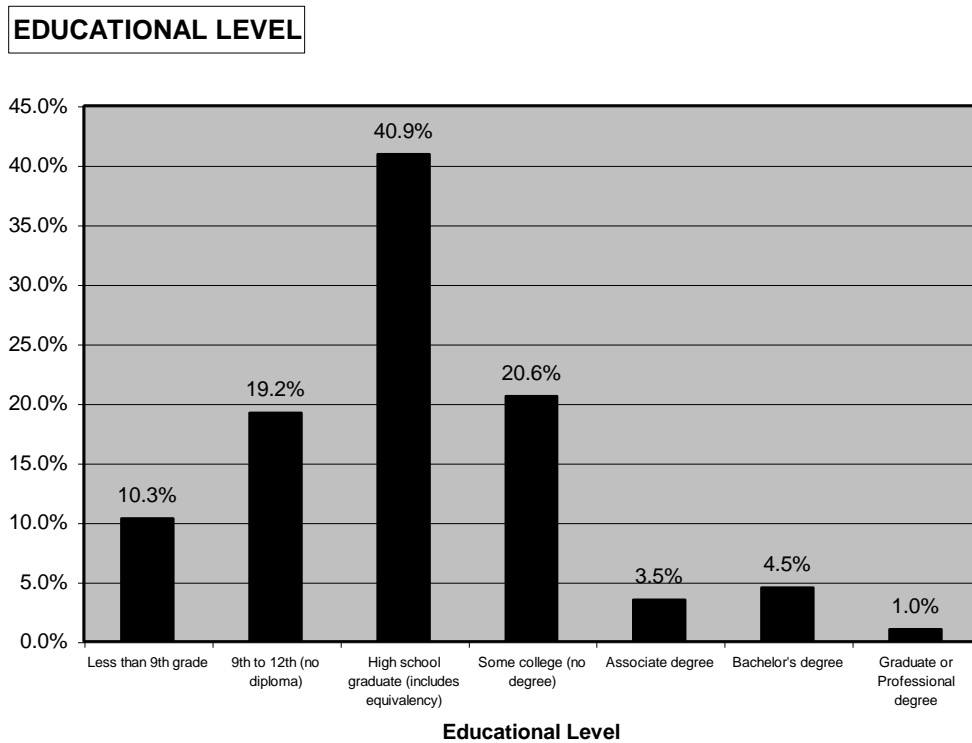
Recreational and community facilities maintained by the city include three parks. Galena City Park has a swimming pool, walking track, volleyball, basketball, and tennis courts. Schermerhorn Park is located on the banks of Shoal Creek and a local volunteer group is currently working on a nature center and walking trail in this area as well. Pappy Litch Park is under construction and will serve as a meeting area downtown. Football, soccer, basketball, baseball, a boxing club and scout troops are available for the youth through volunteer efforts of parents and community members.

## Galena Demographics

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Galena's population of 3,287 reflects an older than average population when compared to state and U.S. statistics. Only 36 % of the population is under the age of 25 and 15 % of the population are over the age of 65.

Galena is predominantly Caucasian and has few minority or ethnic populations. The ethnic make-up of the community does not seem to have an impact upon the educational opportunities available to our students.

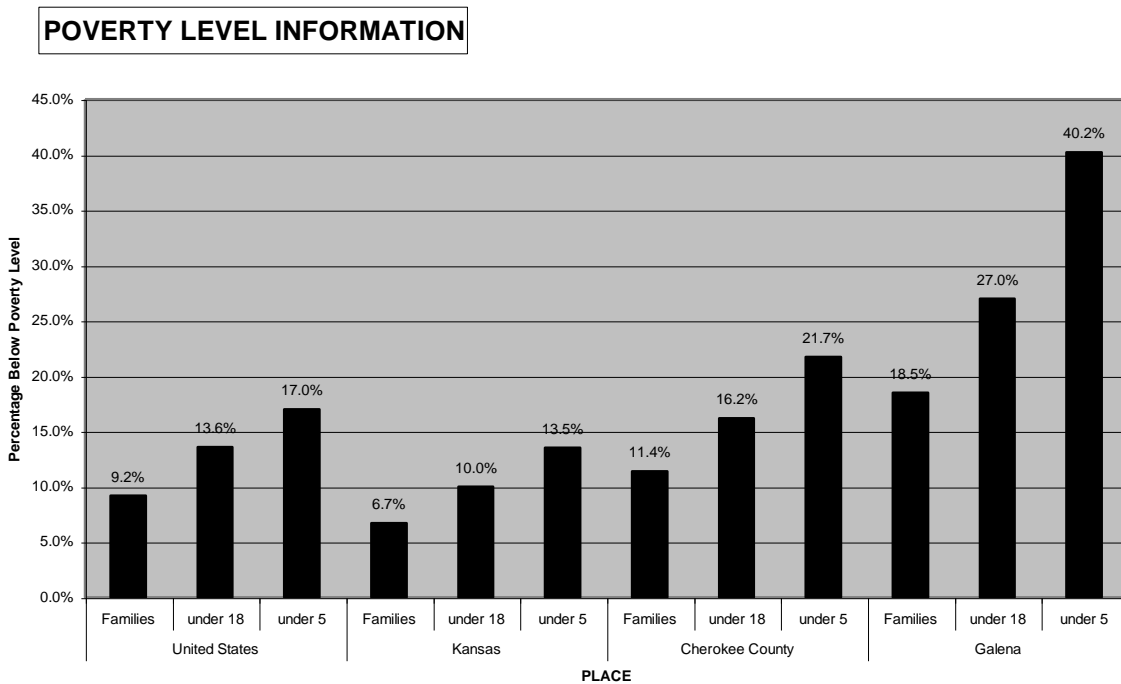
### Education



The educational level of community residents is a significant factor for our students. Of the 3,287 residents, 30% report less than a high school education. Of that 30%, 10% have less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education. Forty-one percent report a high school education with 21% having some college experience. Of those attending college, only 8% have completed an associate or bachelor's degree.

## Socioeconomic Concerns

Socioeconomic concerns are a major factor affecting Galena families. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the median household income is \$25,401.



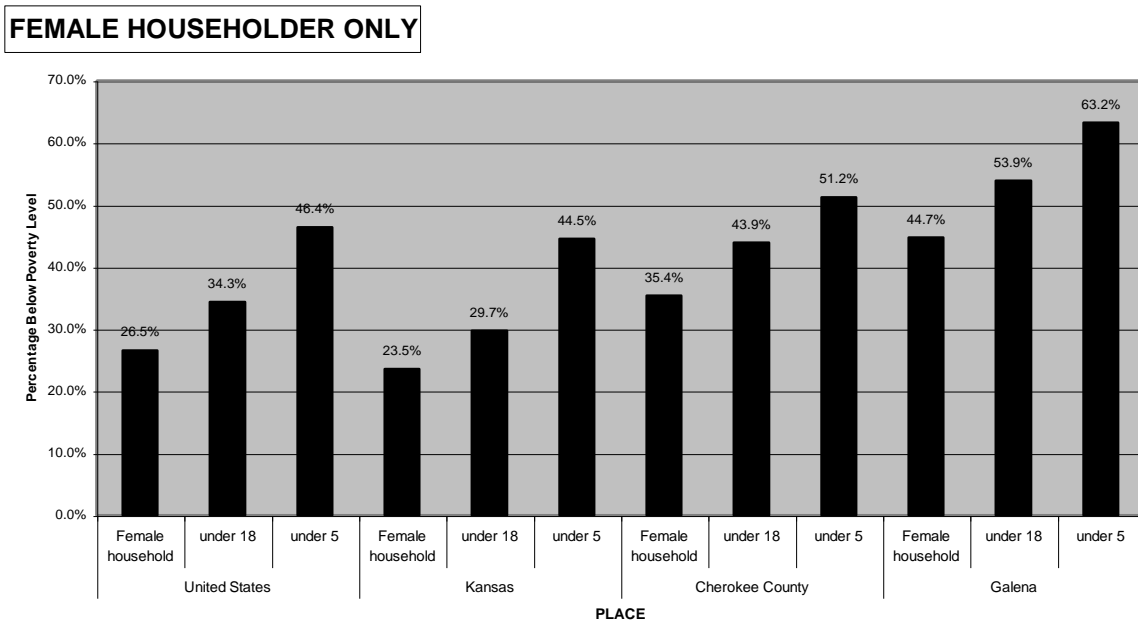
For *families with children under 18*, 27% live below the poverty level.

Forty-percent of the *families with children under age 5*, live below the poverty level, which is almost triple the state average.

Galena also holds one of the highest unemployment rates in Cherokee County with an average of 5.2% of the population unemployed.

## Family Dynamics

Additional socioeconomic concerns that affect the standard of living and limited resources of Galena students are the large percentage who reside in single female households or with grandparents.



For *families with children under 18*, 54% reside in a single female parent household.

Sixty-three percent of *families with children under the age of 5* live in single female parent households.

Overall, Galena is double the state average in children living in single female parent households.

Additionally, the 2000 U.S. Census data reflects 119 children live in households with their grandparents. Eighty-three of the 119 children have their grandparents as the primary caretaker.

## **Community-School Partnerships**

Community support for educational progress and growth of the community due to the school's involvement are a prime example of a reciprocal partnership central to the survival of Galena and the improvement of life for Galena families.

Despite financial hardships, bond issues were passed in 1994 that made possible the remodeling and expansion of Spring Grove Primary Center, the addition of a Performing Arts Center to the high school and the development of a facilities maintenance and technological plan for the district.

The police and fire departments and local businesses provide opportunities for community service learning and actively participate in special school projects such as career fairs, safety programs, mentoring and holiday celebrations. The school board, PTA, and school site councils provide guidance and direction along with financial support.

In turn, the district supports the community by providing facilities and programs for sporting events, organizational meetings, community fine arts presentations and community dinners. The playground and gym equipment are open evenings and weekends for community residents. The reputation of Galena as a quality place of learning has been an ongoing process resting upon the shoulders of many who came before us with a vision that speaks to the community's commitment to education.

## **History of Galena Schools**

Galena schools began as Galena City Schools, District 46 and in 1963, the Kansas State Legislature set up a procedure for unification of various school districts throughout the state. In 1966, Galena USD#499 was established.

Early history reflects that education has always been valued in the community and progress has often been gauged by the physical growth.

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Records indicate that in 1873, the first school built in the district was a log cabin located on Shoal Creek. A new frame building was constructed in 1879 on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Short Street. Galena's first graduating class was from this building in 1885.

As the population increased, additional buildings were erected with Columbia school in 1895, Central School in 1889 and the first Spring Grove building in 1900. In 1898, during the height of the mining years, figures show 2,334 people of school age resided in the district.

The first Galena High School was built in 1904 with the addition of a gym and auditorium in 1934. The Liberty School building, which is still in use, was completed in 1941 along with a new Spring Grove elementary building and Roosevelt school; all buildings constructed through the WPA program. The present high school was built in 1964.

In 1984, the Board of Education and Media Center were built. In 1992, the addition of an Interactive Distance Learning classroom, a new cafeteria, commons area and enlarged library were added to the high school. In 1994, Spring Grove Primary Center added five new classrooms, a library, computer lab, cafeteria and gym. New additions to the high school included a performing arts center in 1995.

1873	First school in the district (log cabin)
1879	New frame building 5 <sup>th</sup> and Short
1885	Galena's first graduating class
1889	Central School
1895	Columbia School
1900	First Spring Grove Building
1904	First Galena High School
1934	Addition of gym and auditorium to the High School
1941	Liberty School completed New Spring Grove building Roosevelt School
1964	Present High School built
1984	Board of Education and Media Center built
1992	Addition of Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) classroom, cafeteria, commons area, and enlarged to the High School
1993	Addition of 5 new classrooms, library, computer lab, cafeteria, and gym to Spring Grove School
1995	Performing Arts Center completed