National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Rocky Ford Bridge

Other names/site number Locally known as Bird Bridge; KHRI 111-0000-00082; Local Public Authority (LPA) #951.0-524.7 / Nat'l. Br. Inventory (NBI) #000560951005247

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Metal Truss Bridges of Kansas 1861-1939

2. Location

Street & number SW Corner Section 29, T19S, R12E & 2.75m S & 3.5m E of Commercial St. & 6th, Emporia, KS

City or town Emporia, KS

State Kansas Code KS County Lyon Code 111 Zip code 66801

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this __x__ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property __x__ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide __X__ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: __X__ A __B __C __D

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date _______________

Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property __x__ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date _______________

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

__x__ entered in the National Register

__x__ determined eligible for the National Register

__x__ determined not eligible for the National Register

__x__ removed from the National Register

__x__ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action _______________
### 5. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
<th>Number of Resources within Property</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Check as many boxes as apply.)</td>
<td>(Check only one box.)</td>
<td>(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ private</td>
<td>□ building(s)</td>
<td>□ contributing buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X public - Local</td>
<td>□ district</td>
<td>□ noncontributing buildings</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ public - State</td>
<td>□ site</td>
<td>□ sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ public - Federal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Total</td>
</tr>
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**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

### 6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>(Enter categories from instructions.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION: Road-Related (vehicular)</td>
<td>TRANSPORTATION: Road-Related (vehicular)</td>
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### 7. Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Classification</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Enter categories from instructions.)</td>
<td>(Enter categories from instructions.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER: Pratt Truss</td>
<td>foundation: CONCRETE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walls:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>roof:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>other: METAL: Iron, Steel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources, if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary

The Rocky Ford bridge was originally built in the Kansas City stockyards and moved to its current location in 1907. The Pratt truss design was patented in 1844 with many being built into the 1930’s and 1940’s nationwide. It is located between the cities of Emporia and Neosho Rapids in Lyon County, in the Eastern central portion of the state of Kansas. This area features a mixture of cultivated land on both dry/irrigated acreage and uncultivated pastureland consisting of both native/tame grasses. The Rocky Ford bridge spans the Cottonwood River which bisects Lyon County North to South and feeds into the Neosho River. The bridge is a one-lane (15.5’ wide), single span, Pratt truss (trapezoidal) design, 214’ in length with a timber deck and runners supported by steel channel floor beams. Key characteristics of the design and engineering include trapezoidal shape, primary pinned connections with nuts, secondary pinned connections with keys, forged eyebars in the lower chords, forged eyebars as diagonal tension members, and built-up members of channel iron and lacing. The bottom chords are made up of steel forged eye bars with pinned connections. The top chords, diagonal and vertical members are built-up members consisting of iron channels with riveted lacing, which are also pinned connections. The Rocky Ford bridge was designed using steel, iron, and concrete construction. It is in fair/poor condition with minor sectional loss to its steel members and general deterioration to its timber deck planks/runners. The South end of the bridge rests on a cast in place concrete abutment and the North end rests on a masonry block/mortar abutment. No approach spans are present. The Rocky Ford bridge retains its historic integrity and character-defining features of a Pratt truss bridge.

Elaboration

Setting and Site:

The Rocky Ford bridge is located between the cities of Emporia and Neosho Rapids, South of I-35/US-50, in the SW corner of Section 29, Township 19 South, and Range 12 East at Longitude 96°06’53.60”W and Latitude 38°21’56.90” N. Its exact location is 2.75 miles South and 3.5 miles East of the intersection of Commercial and 6th Streets in Emporia, KS. The Rocky Ford bridge carries local passenger traffic across a meandering Cottonwood River thru scenic and sparsely populated rural landscapes consisting of cultivated fields, and pasture lands. The Cottonwood River bisects Lyon County North to South and empties into the Neosho river in the Eastern part of Lyon County. The Rocky Ford Bridge has a 20’(+) drop from the deck to the water surface below. The Rocky Ford Bridge with its 214’ single span, was at one time the largest single-span bridge in the state of Kansas and was a primary crossing for rural residents over the Cottonwood River.

Structure:

The Rocky Ford bridge is a one-lane, single span, Pratt truss structure, as defined by the Kansas multiple property document Metal Truss Bridges in Kansas 1861-1939. The Pratt brothers, Thomas and Caleb, patented the design in 1844; however, the design evolved over the years and eventually included features like inclined end posts, which the original design did not have.1 Characteristics of the design and engineering includes “design diagonals were placed in tension and vertical members in compression, with the exception of the hip verticals.”2 It eventually evolved to include included end posts, a “top chord built up with two channels, a solid plat on top and lattice bars connecting the lower flanges of the channels.”3

The Rocky Ford bridge features a concrete and masonry foundation, and rests on two abutments, a North abutment comprised of masonry blocks, and a South abutment of cast-in-place concrete. It measures 214’ in length from end to end and crosses the Cottonwood River. The deck is 15.5’ wide and is made of timber planks for runners, some perpendicular to the span, and two rows running parallel, which are spaced evenly across the bridge where the vehicle tires track. This lies on longitudinal timber stringers resting on steel I-beam floor beams connected to the base of each vertical post using

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a pinned and u-bar attachment. Both sides of the deck have ornate, steel, lattice rail. The bottom chords of the bridge are made up of steel forged eye bars with pinned connections. The top chords, diagonal and vertical members are built-up members consisting of iron channels with riveted lacing, which are also pinned connections. The inclined end posts rise from the bottom chords and meet the horizontal top chords to form a trapezoidal shape. The top chords and end posts consist of two channels, a top plate, and lacing bars; the bottom chords consist of forged flat eye bars.

The web members consist of vertical posts that form nine equivalent panels and diagonal ties that intersect within the center panel. “Tension-only” diagonal members are square steel rods forged into eye-bars supported with pins on one end and forged into round shaped threaded ends in turnbuckles at the center of the truss panel. A riveted system of intersecting angle stock and lacing bars forms the portal and sway bracing; channel stock forms the sway struts that connect the top chords and each vertical post, leaving a vehicular vertical clearance of 15.0’.
Condition:
The Rocky Ford bridge is in fair/poor condition overall. Bridge ratings are assigned on a “0-9” scale where “0” is the worst case where that component has failed, and “9” is the best case and newly built, with no defects. These ratings are then broken up into Good, Fair, Poor ranges. Good consists of the “9, 8, 7” rating range, Fair consists of “6 and 5” ratings, and Poor consists of “4, 3, 2, 1, and 0” ratings. The most recent bridge inspection ratings gave a Deck a Fair rating, the Superstructure a Poor rating, and the Substructure a Fair rating.

A February 2018 bridge inspection report yielded the following scores.4

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Rating Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deck condition rating</td>
<td>Fair (5 on a 0-9 scale) due to wear in timber stringers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superstructure condition rating</td>
<td>Poor (4 on a 0-9 scale) loss of steel section/load rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substructure condition rating</td>
<td>Fair (6 on a 0-9 scale) degradation of stone/masonry unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal rating</td>
<td>Structurally Deficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficiency rating</td>
<td>26.2 (0-100 scale with 0 worst and 100 best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average daily traffic (as of 2007)</td>
<td>30 vehicles per day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Load posting</td>
<td>Posted for load (3-5-10 tons)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall condition</td>
<td>Poor (Overall condition = worse rating of above Deck, Superstructure &amp; Substructure)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Appraisal Rating of Structurally Deficient denotes the bridge is no longer able to carry legal loads (20 tons) due to original design of vehicles being carried being so much smaller than today’s loads. Also, contributing to reduced load rating is the bridge’s age, minor loss of section on all steel members and pack rust building up in all built-up members.

Integrity
The Rocky Ford Bridge is an excellent example of a Pratt truss bridge. Historically, the design was the most popular in Kansas around the turn-of-the-century.5 It retains a high degree of integrity, with no apparent alterations to the original design or materials. The original workmanship, materials, design, and character-defining features of the structure remain fully intact. The Rocky Ford bridge sits in its original location, with relatively unaltered setting. The feeling or expression of a historic sense of time and association with the engineering design of the Pratt truss is evident through the intact original and unaltered structure. The *Metal Truss Bridges in Kansas 1861-1939* document discusses the potential for preservation and/or relocation of eligible bridges. The Rocky Ford bridge is located on a lightly traveled dirt road, and it is unlikely that traffic requirements will necessitate alteration or replacement provided that ever increasing agricultural loads can continue to use alternate routes around this location.

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5 Larry Jochims, *Metal Truss Bridges in Kansas 1891-1939, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1989), E-1. Jochims stated there were approximately 262 extant Pratt trusses in Kansas at that time.
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark “x” in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)
Property is:

A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ENGINEERING

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1907

Significant Dates

1907-Construction

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

A.M. Blodgett Bridge Company
**Period of Significance (justification)**

According to a 1907 newspaper article the bridge came from the Kansas City stock yards and was installed by the Kansas City based A.M. Blodgett Bridge Company. In May 1907 when the county commissioners accepted the bridge, it was noted the bridge was the largest single span bridge in the state with a span of 214 feet and constructed for a fee of $6,000. The period of significance is limited to the construction and installation of the Rocky Ford Bridge in the year 1907. This was done by the A. M. Blodgett Bridge Company out of Kansas City.

**Criteria Considerations (justification) N/A**

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

**Summary**

As a Pratt through-truss design bridge, the Rocky Ford Bridge embodies one of the most popular style of bridge design at the time it was constructed. It meets the registration requirements for a Pratt truss, under the multiple property document *Metal Truss Bridges of Kansas 1861-1939*. The bridge is a single span 214' length made it the largest in Kansas in 1907. The eleven panels held together by forged steel eye-bars and forty-four pinned connections show an attention to detail, intricacies, and sophistication from a by-gone era of construction. At the time of construction, this bridge offered one of the primary means to cross the Cottonwood River for local residents and principal access to a stone quarry in nearby Hartford, KS. The Rocky Ford bridge is locally eligible under Criterion C for its engineering design and under Criterion A for its connection with transporting passengers and goods across the Cottonwood River near Emporia.

Additionally, in July of 1983, the Rocky Ford Bridge was witness to tragedy when Sandra Bird’s car drove off route at the site and into the Cottonwood River. Upon further investigation, it was proven that Sandra was a victim of murder. This story and the Rocky Ford Bridge were featured in a CBS mini-series titled “Murder Ordained” in May 1987. Due to this history, and the fervent imaginations of residents and visitors alike, the bridge is also known locally as the “Bird Bridge” and has been listed with HauntedPlaces.org, an international database of suspected, haunted locations.

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**Elaboration**

**Context**

Lyon County, with a current population of 36,000, is nestled in the Flint Hills region of eastern Kansas about 100 miles southwest of Kansas City. The county was initially created as Breckenridge County by the first Kansas Territorial Legislature in 1855, it was named for John C. Breckenridge, who was elected Vice-President of the United States the next year. When first created, it was attached to Madison County for all civil and judicial purposes, and Columbia was designated as the county seat, but no county business was transacted. By an act of February 17, 1857, the county was fully organized and detached from Madison County, with the temporary county seat located at Waterloo. In the fall of 1858, Americus was voted by the people to become the county seat.

One of the first settlers in the area Charles H. Withington, who located in the extreme northern part of the county on the Santa Fe Trail, a short distance south of present-day Allen, Kansas in 1846. In 1854, he opened a store, which was the first in the county and the only one in the region outside of Indian posts. His store also served as a hotel and supply station. Withington was influential in the settlement of the county and prominent in all public affairs. In April, 1855 Oliver Phillips located on 142 Mile Creek. In 1859, he was elected to the legislature, was a delegate to the Osawatomie Convention, and held a number of county offices. Others who came around the same time were Chris Ward, J. S. Pigman, Charles Johnson, James Pheanis, David Vangundy, John Rosenquist, Joseph Moon, Reverend Thomas J. Addis (at that time, the only free-state man), and many more, who, with very few exceptions, settled along the creeks in the northern half of the county.

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6 The author wishes to credit the Lyon County Historical Society with the supplied historical text.
One of the first settlements in the county was established in 1856, first called Florence, before changing to Neosho City, then Italia and finally to Neosho Rapids. The next year Emporia and Americus were laid out and 1858, the settlements of Hartford, Waterloo, Fremont, and Forest Hill.

In February 1860, the residents voted to move the county seat to Emporia, where it remains today. At that time, there were about 3,500 residents in the county, but that year, the area suffered a severe drought, and many moved eastward. Some relief was provided to those who stayed, but the county would continue to suffer an economic downturn the next year with the breaking out of the Civil War.

In March 1863, the Kansas Legislature passed and act that established the Kansas State Normal School in Emporia. The school's first graduating class consisted of two women in 1867, the year the first permanent building was completed.

The first efforts to secure a railroad were in 1864, but it was not until 1870 that the first railroad was built -- the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad which ran south from Topeka. The Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad was built in the same year and more lines and branches would be added in subsequent years.

A stone courthouse was built on the northwest corner of Third Avenue and Commercial Street in Emporia in 1866 at a cost of almost $20,000.

As more settlers continued to locate in the county, more settlements were born, including Reading in 1867. A decade later, Butlertown was founded in 1877, but two years later, it was moved to just across the tracks of from the Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, and renamed Olpe. The town of Hortonburg, which later was renamed Lang, was laid out in 1882, and four years later, in 1886, Allen, Bushong, and Admire were established along the Missouri Pacific Railroad in northern Lyon County.

By the turn of the century, Lyon County supported about 25,000 people, who primarily supported themselves through the farming of corn, oats, wheat, and other crops. The county also sported numerous fruit trees, primarily apples, and hundreds of people raised livestock.

The Lyon County Courthouse continued to be used until about 1903 when a new courthouse was erected on the northeast corner of Fourth Avenue and Commercial Street at a cost of about $55,000.

Over the next century the county diversified into manufacturing, services, health care, and academic ventures, especially in Emporia, the county's largest city.8

**Bridges in Kansas**

The need for all-weather crossing of rivers and streams corresponded to the growth of the market economy across Kansas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Bridges provided farmers easy access to markets and could make the difference between growth and stagnation for the many small, young communities across the state.7 Proximity to a bridge often secured a town’s economic stability, and it contributed to a local sense of modernity.

Prior to the 1930’s, the railroad was the primary means of long-distance travel and there was little need for roads to extend more than a few dozen miles. With little stimulus for improving roads that would cross multiple jurisdictions, road construction and maintenance remained local concerns. County commissioners often carried the burden of selecting bridge location, over which much contention was common.

The range of choices for bridge designs and companies was vast. Many of the larger bridge companies sold metal truss bridges through mail order catalogues. County commissioners could simply specify the span, clearance needs, and truss type (if there was a preference), then choose the lowest bidder from the numerous competing companies that had salesmen in the field.

By the late nineteenth century, fabrication of iron and steel was widespread. The speed of construction and relatively low cost of metal truss bridge parts ensured their popularity over labor-intensive masonry bridges and short-lived timber

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7 Jochims, E.
8 “Legends of Kansas”, “Lyon County” [article on-line]; available from [https://legendsofkansas.com/lyoncounty.html](https://legendsofkansas.com/lyoncounty.html)
bridges. Toward the end of nineteenth century the quality, quantity, and cost of steel improved to a degree that it virtually replaced wrought iron for bridge construction by 1910.9

Most metal trusses were constructed of built-up members composed of mass-produced, standard-shaped channel, plate, and angle stock purchased from one or more of the numerous steel companies nationwide. The bridge companies preassembled trusses in their factories then simply shipped them to the bridge site for installation. Installation involved grading approaches, constructing abutments and piers, erecting preassembled floor and truss members, and placing decking material.

Before 1900, generally all panel point connections - the locations at which structural bridge elements intersect - were made with the use of a pin. This technique was so widespread that it became one of the distinctive features of the American bridge construction in the nineteenth century.10 The pin-connected construction of the Rocky Ford Bridge illustrates the standardization of this technique. However, subsequent advancements in pneumatic riveting techniques greatly improved rivet installation quality, enabling more reliable panel point connections. With the increased portability of this construction technology, the more reliable riveting techniques rapidly surpassed pin-connected bridge construction during the first years of the twentieth century.

In addition, the contemporary development of economic cement production promoted the widespread combination of steel and concrete in bridge construction. It was not uncommon for older metal truss bridges to receive new reinforced concrete decks or poured concrete reinforcements for older stone abutments. By the 1920s reinforced concrete was the standard material for abutments, piers, and decks of steel truss bridges. The newer reinforced concrete south abutment on the Rocky Ford bridge is an example of this.

Pratt Truss Bridges
The Rocky Ford Bridge is a classic example of the Pratt truss design. Patented in 1844, the Pratt truss incorporates vertical members in compression and diagonal members in tension, a design that reduces the required length of compression members, helping to prevent bending or buckling.11 The Pratt truss became the most common bridge type of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and spawned numerous variations including the Parker, Camelback, Baltimore, Truss Leg Bedstead, Lenticular, and Pennsylvania trusses.12

Since its introduction in 1844, this bridge design became part of hundreds of bridges created up to Second World War. It was designed by the Thomas Willis Pratt (1812 – 1875) and his father Caleb Pratt, a pair of American engineers, just several years after William Howe patented his famous Howe truss design. This bridge design immediately became widely used during the period when many bridges moved from wood components toward all-steel construction designs. Its most compelling feature was the ability to span great distances using simple construction methods. It was regularly used to span anchor points that are up to 250 feet (76 meters) apart. It was most commonly used in railroad bridge construction, although it was also a preferred choice for creating other types of bridges all around the world until early 20th century.

Thomas Willis Pratt was born in 1812 in from Boston, Massachusetts. He was schooled at college in Troy, NY at the Rensselaer Institute and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, but he never graduated. He instead returned home and worked at Boston and Worcester RR and the Providence & Worcester RR engineering companies when the majority of bridges were built using wood and with truss designs made by S. H. Long, Elias Towne, and William Howe.

Seeing how Howe’s designs that were enhanced with vertical metal members started replacing long-used Long and Towne Trusses, Pratt decided to enhance 1840 Howe truss and Long Truss design by making diagonal structures made from steel, verticals from wood switching diagonals to flow into other direction than Howe’s. With proper camber and pre-stress, newly created Pratt Truss became structurally stable, enabling it being used over long spans and fixing several disadvantages present in all then commonly used truss designs. Pratt truss patent was accepted on April 4, 1844, under a category of “TRUSS FRAME OF BRIDGES (Truss Bridge)”. Although his name was listed first, many speculate that Thomas’s father Caleb was listed on the patent application as a form of a tribute to his long career in engineering.

9 Jochims, F.
10 Jochims, F.
12 Ibid, 8.
The basic form of Pratt truss includes triangular truss design whose diagonal members slope toward the center of the bridge. When under load, this design makes diagonal members feel tension (the force that expands the object apart), while vertical members feel suspension (the force that pushes objects into oneself). If the diagonal members are made from the solid material (such as metal bars), the heavy load of the bridge may cause the need for implementing reinforcements to the center area of the Pratt truss bridge, since that part of the bridge will experience the strongest force loads. Those center areas can be reinforced with stronger materials or be subdivided into K or Y-shaped patterns. Pratt truss bridges are statically determinate (all of its support reactions and member forces can be calculated using only the equations of static equilibrium), which made them capable for use in scenarios where bridge designers needed to span great distances.

In Kansas, Pratt truss bridges were constructed well into the twentieth century, suggesting the appeal of the design’s strength and economical construction costs. In 1998, approximately 800 Pratt truss bridges existing throughout the state of Kansas.

**Rocky Ford Bridge**

In August 1906, the Lyon County Commission voted to build a bridge over the Cottonwood River near the Rocky Ford and Fowler neighborhoods. The location was chosen based on the need for a highroad to Hartford, KS, and access to a nearby stone quarry. According to a 1907 newspaper article the bridge came from the Kansas City stock yards and was installed by the Kansas City based A.M. Blodgett Bridge Company at a cost of $6,000. A.M. Blodgett had previously served as vice-president of the Kansas City Bridge and Iron company founded between 1880 and 1882 before founding his own company. In May 1907 when the county commissioners accepted the bridge, it was noted the bridge was the largest single span bridge in the state with a span of 214 feet. The bridge was built at a time when the automobile was changing the way people traveled and the mechanization of farm equipment was in the near future.

The Rocky Ford bridge is an excellent example of the Pratt truss design and is locally significant as a piece of Lyon County history. Listing in the National Register will document the importance of this bridge for future generations and may also aid in acquiring funding for its preservation. It meets the registration requirements of the context *Metal Truss Bridges of Kansas 1861-1939*. The period of significance is limited to the construction and installation of the Rocky Ford bridge. As more and more steel Pratt trusses are disappearing from the Kansas landscape, registering the Rocky Ford bridge will ensure this vital piece of history is preserved, and its significance acknowledged.

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15 Jochims, E-3.
9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Baughn, James, ed. *U.S. Historic Bridges* [information on-line]; available from


10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates. (Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**
Datum if other than WGS84: __________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 38.365836 -96.114935 3
   Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 __________________ __________ 4
   Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

OR

**UTM References**
______ NAD 1927 or _______ NAD 1983

1 14 52059 4250355 3
   Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 __________________ __________ 4
   Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)
The Rocky Ford bridge is located between the cities of Emporia and Neosho Rapids, south of I-35/US-50, in the SW corner of Section 29, Township 19 South, and Range 12 East at longitude 96°06'53.60"W and latitude 38°21'56.90" N.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)
The boundary includes the footprint of the bridge, the abutments, and the approaches that are all historically associated with the original structure.

### 11. Form Prepared By

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name/title</th>
<th>Brian P. Engelke / Design Technician</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>organization</td>
<td>Professional Engineering Consultants (P.E.C.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>street &amp; number</td>
<td>500 South Prairie Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>city or town</td>
<td>Lawrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brian.engelke@pec1.com">brian.engelke@pec1.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone</td>
<td>785-250-2616</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Lyon County, Kansas c/o Warren Chip Woods, PE &amp; PS - Lyon County Engineer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>street &amp; number</td>
<td>500 South Prairie Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>city or town</td>
<td>Emporia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone</td>
<td>620-340-8220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement**: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement**: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

### Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Photographs**
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered, and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.
Photograph Log

Name of Property: Rocky Ford Bridge
City or Vicinity: SE of Emporia
County: Lyon
State: Kansas
Photographer: Brian P. Engelke
Date Photographed: 04/27/2020

Location of Original Digital Files: 623 Massachusetts St., Suite 200, Lawrence, KS 66044

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include a description of view indicating the direction of camera:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photo Number</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#0001</td>
<td>S to NE</td>
<td>2020 Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0002</td>
<td>S to NW</td>
<td>2020 Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0003</td>
<td>S-N</td>
<td>2020 South to North view of timber stringer deck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0004</td>
<td>N-SE</td>
<td>2020 Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0005</td>
<td>N-S</td>
<td>2020 View of built up member verticals, tension rods, built up horizontal portals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0006</td>
<td>E-W</td>
<td>2020 Looking West at ornate steel lattice rail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0007</td>
<td>W-E</td>
<td>2020 Looking East downstream Cottonwood River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0008</td>
<td>SE-NW</td>
<td>2020 Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0009</td>
<td>W-E</td>
<td>2020 Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0010</td>
<td>S-N</td>
<td>2020 Bottom deck showing floorbeams &amp; wind bracing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0011</td>
<td>NE-S</td>
<td>2020 Showing Forged eyebars-pinned connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0012</td>
<td>SW</td>
<td>2020 Showing Southwest view of forged eye bars, pinned connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0013</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>2020 Showing truss pin to floorbeam connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0014</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>2020 Showing Southeast top corner, pinned connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>#0015</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>2020 Showing Southeast bottom corner, pinned connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0016</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>2020 Showing Northeast bottom corner, pinned connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0017</td>
<td>SW to NE</td>
<td>2020 Side and bottom overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0018</td>
<td>SE to NW</td>
<td>2020 Overview</td>
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Figure Log

Name of Property: Rocky Ford Bridge
City or Vicinity: SE of Emporia
County: Lyon
State: Kansas

Location of Original Digital Files: 623 Massachusetts St., Suite 200, Lawrence, KS 66044

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#0001</td>
<td>S to N</td>
<td>South to North Inspection pic from 1977 bridge inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0002</td>
<td>W to E</td>
<td>West to East Inspection pic from 1977 bridge inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0003</td>
<td>N to S</td>
<td>North to South view of top portal members from 2019 bridge inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0004</td>
<td>Top</td>
<td>Typical eye bar and pinned connection in top members from 2019 bridge inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0005</td>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>Typical built-up lower chord member, multiple eyebars &amp; pin from 2019 bridge inspection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0006</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>14 March 1907_Emporia_Weekly_Gazette – Rocky Ford Bridge Construction Begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0007</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>09 May 1907_Page 4_Emporia Gazette – Rocky Ford Bridge Opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0008</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>10 May 1907_Page 4_Emporia Gazette – Rocky Ford Bridge Opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#0009</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>23 July 1985_Page 1_The Iola Register – Sandra Bird Murder-Jury Finds Husband Guilty</td>
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Rocky Ford Bridge
Lyon County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

SW Corner Section 29, T19S, R12E
2.75m S & 3.5m E of Commercial St. & 6th, Emporia, KS
Longitude 96°06'53.60"W / Latitude 38°21'56.90" N
Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

Lyon County, Kansas
County and State

SW Corner Section 29, T19S, R12E
2.75m S & 3.5m E of Commercial St. & 6th, Emporia, KS
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Rocky Ford Bridge

Lyon County, Kansas / SW Corner Section 29, T19S, R12E
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Longitude 96°06'53.60"W / Latitude 38°21'56.90" N
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
OMB No. 1024-0018

Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

Lyon County, Kansas
County and State

SW Corner Section 29, T19S, R12E
2.75m S & 3.5m E of Commercial St. & 6th, Emporia, KS
Longitude 96°06'53.60"W / Latitude 38°21'56.90" N

KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge_0002_2020 S-NW Overview.TIFF
Rocky Ford Bridge

Lyon County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

SW Corner Section 29, T19S, R12E
2.75m S & 3.5m E of Commercial St. & 6th, Emporia, KS
Longitude 96°06'53.60"W / Latitude 38°21'56.90" N

KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge_0003_2020 S-N View of timber stringer deck.TIFF
Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

Lyon County, Kansas
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KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge_0006_2020 West ornate steel lattice rail.TIFF
Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

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Rocky Ford Bridge
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KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge_0017_2020 SW-NE Overview.TIFF
SW Corner Section 29, T19S, R12E
2.75m S & 3.5m E of Commercial St. & 6th St., Emporia, KS
Longitude 96°06'53.60"W / Latitude 38°21'56.90"N
Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

Lyon County, Kansas
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KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge_FIG_0003_2019 N-S Top portals diagonal bracing.TIFF
Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

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County and State

SW Corner Section 29, T19S, R12E
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KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge_FIG_0004_2019 Typical eye bar and pinned connection.TIFF
Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

Lyon County, Kansas
County and State

KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge FIG_0005_2019 Typical built up lower chord member.TIFF
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
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Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

Lyon County, Kansas
County and State

County’s Biggest Bridge.

J. Oliver, foreman for the A. M. Blodgett Bridge Company, of Kansas City, took his tools to Rocky Ford Monday, and will immediately begin the work of putting in the Rocky Ford bridge. The bridge to be put up at Rocky Ford is the bridge which is standing across the Union Pacific railway’s tracks at the Kansas City stockyards. The bridge has a 214 foot span and is 30 feet high. It will cost the county $5,200 and will be the largest bridge in the county.

KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge FIG_0006_14 March 1907_Emporia_Weekly_Gazette – Rocky Ford Bridge Construction Begins.TIFF
Rocky Ford Bridge
Name of Property

Lyon County, Kansas
County and State

This morning the new Rocky Ford bridge was crossed for the first time, as the commissioners were inspecting it. The work on the bridge has not been completed, but it is thought that it can be finished by the last of the week. The painters will finish tomorrow after which Charles Grimmett will do some filling in at both ends of the bridge. The Rocky Ford Bridge cost the county about $6,000.

KS_Lyon County_Rocky Ford Bridge FIG_0007_09 May 1907_Page 4_Emporia Gazette – Rocky Ford Bridge Opens.TIFF
Rocky Ford Bridge

Lyon County, Kansas

Name of Property

County and State

Four More New Bridges

To be built in Lyon County this summer.

Rocky Ford Bridge accepted by the
County Commissioners, and will
be open to public tomorrow.
Commissioners’ may work done.

After checking up the county treas-
urer’s accounts tomorrow morning, as
it customary every month, the county
commissioners will adjourn until June
3, when they will meet as a board of
equalization.

The May session has not been as
busy as the one next month promises
to be, but besides the usual routine
business of paying the county’s bills,
the commissioners have had consider-
able other business to look after. Yes-
terday they declared their intention of
building four new bridges, to cost a
total of $3,800. One of them, costing
$100, will be built across Cool Creek,
one mile south of the one and a half
miles east of the new Rocky Ford
bridge; another at a cost of $100 will
be erected on Salt Creek, in Water-
township. A $100 bridge will be con-
structed, one-half mile southwest of
Reading across Mud Creek; the other,
creek to be bridged is Osage, two
miles east and one mile west of Lang,
which is a cost of $100.

The Rocky Ford bridge, which is
said to be the largest single span
bridge in the state, was accepted by
the commissioners today at a cost of
$100. It will be in use tomorrow.

Yesterday and today was black day.
Several new petitions for roads were
filed, and the petition to vacate the
Abilene Richards road was rejected.
Jury finds Bird guilty of murder

EMPORIA, Kan. (AP) — A former Emporia minister was found guilty today in Lyon County District Court on a charge of first-degree murder in the July 1983 death of his wife.

The jury convicted Thomas Bird after about six hours of deliberation and 12 days of testimony from about 75 witnesses.

After attorneys presented closing arguments, the jury deliberated for about three hours before recessing Monday evening. Deliberations resumed at 8:30 a.m. today. The verdict was returned at 11:30 a.m.

Bird was accused of murdering his wife, Sandra, two years ago and then trying to mask the murder as an automobile accident.

In closing arguments, Bird’s attorney said that the state is asking jurors to convict Bird on nothing but circumstantial evidence.

But County Prosecutor Rodney Symonds argued that evidence presented during the trial bolstered the state’s contention that Bird threw his wife off the Rocky Ford Bridge near Emporia and made it look as if she died in a traffic accident.

Sandra Bird’s body was found near the wreckage of her car in the Cottonwood River July 17, 1983, and the death was originally ruled an accident. The investigation was reopened last year after Bird was convicted of criminal solicitation to commit first-degree murder in another case.

“Not one single witness testified that Thomas Bird was even near the Rocky Ford Bridge on July 16 or 17,” defense attorney Robert Hecht said during his two-hour recap. “Not one single witness has confirmed what the state said in his opening statement.”

Hecht said the state’s entire case was based on circumstantial evidence full of inconsistencies. He also noted the improbability of many of the state’s allegations.

“The state has suggested the defendant climbed down the embankment in the middle of the night and relocated the body,” he said. “Think how crazy that would be.”

“I told you ... this case was a tragedy being compounded,” Hecht told the jury. “There are families here being totally destroyed. For God’s sake, follow the court’s instructions. Don’t convict this man because the state scandalizes him.”

He said the state must prove that Mrs. Bird was beaten and thrown from the bridge.

“Without that proof you’ve got to have reasonable doubt. You can’t convict this man of murder. Send him back to his kids,” Hecht said.

However, Symonds argued that even though the evidence was circumstantial, there was...