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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking “x” in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Franklin Sidewalk
Other name/site number: Franklin Historic Sidewalk (preferred); 037-1852-0001

2. Location

Street & number: Parallel to Bus. U. S. HWY 69 btw Franklin and Arma
City or town: Franklin
State: Kansas
Code: KS
County: Crawford
Code: 037
Zip code: 66375

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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
[ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
[ ] nationally [ ] statewide [ ] locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Name: [Signature]
Title: [Signature]
Date: [Signature]

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is
[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register.
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain:)

[Signature of the Keeper]
Date of Action:
5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)
- □ private
- □ public-local
- □ public-State
- □ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)
- □ building(s)
- □ district
- □ site
- □ structure
- □ object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)
- TRANSPORTATION: Walkway

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
- TRANSPORTATION: Walkway

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof:

Other: CONCRETE

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- ☑ 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.
- ☐ 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 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance
1936-1956

Significant Dates
1936

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
FREETO, F. (contractor)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
  #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
  Record # ___

Primary location of additional data:
- ☑ State Historic Preservation Office
  ☐ Other State agency
  ☐ Federal agency
  ☐ Local government
  ☐ University
  ☐ Other

Name of repository:
Kansas State Historical Society
Franklin Sidewalk

Name of Property

Crawford County, KS

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .6 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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</table>

Zone Easting Northing

3 4 9 3 2 5 4 1 5 3 6 3 0

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Phyllis Bitner, Chairman, Heritage Committee; with KSHS staff edits

Organization Franklin Community Council, Inc.

Date 07/24/2006

Street & number PO Box 43

Telephone (620) 249-9333

City or town Franklin

State KS

Zip code 66735

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

Photographs

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name State of Kansas: Kansas Department of Transportation

Street & number 700 SW Harrison Street

Telephone

City or town Topeka

State KS

Zip code 66603-3754

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Franklin Sidewalk
Franklin, Crawford County, KS

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The historic Franklin Sidewalk (c. 1936) spans a distance of 9361.5 feet (1.773 miles) in length and measures three feet in width. It runs parallel along the east side of Business Highway 69 in Crawford County, Kansas, between Arma to the north and Franklin to the south. The sidewalk extends from the southern edge of Arma at the junction of E. Hector Avenue and Business Highway 69 to the southern edge of Franklin between 10th Place and 10th Street.

The majority of the length of sidewalk sits roughly 15 to 20 feet off the roadway. A sloped ditch and wooden electrical poles run parallel between the sidewalk and roadway. The terrain between Arma and Franklin is generally flat and used for agricultural purposes with clusters of houses at the south edge of Arma and the north edge of Franklin.

Although portions of the concrete sidewalk have overgrown with vegetation and cracked due to shifting, it is generally intact and retains its physical and historic integrity. It maintains nearly all of its original length except for a small portion of about 1 block at the southern end that was recently re-laid when the highway was rerouted. Area volunteers recently removed soil and vegetation that covered sections of the sidewalk returning it to its original appearance. Plans dated 1936 specified a 3-foot wide sidewalk that was 4 to 5 inches thick. In addition to the construction of the sidewalk, the project involved improvements to ditches and drainage, bridges and extended culverts, grubbing hedges, grading, surfacing, seeding with Bermuda grass, and signage. Although vestiges of some of these elements remain, there are not enough intact elements to list other than the sidewalk.
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Franklin Sidewalk
Franklin, Crawford County, KS

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Franklin Sidewalk (c. 1936) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its associations with local transportation history. Constructed in 1936, this sidewalk connects two rural mining communities in Crawford County, Kansas, and was erected, in part, due to increased foot traffic along US Highway 69 as a result of school consolidation in the late 1920s. State Highway Commission records indicate that the sidewalk was built as part of a 1.7 mile project (69-8 FA-40-A) with plans dated 1936. In addition to the construction of the sidewalk, the project involved improvements to ditches and drainage, bridges and extended culverts, grubbing hedges, grading, surfacing, seeding with Bermuda grass, and signage. The plans specified a 3-foot wide sidewalk that was 4 to 5 inches thick.¹

Crawford County History

Crawford County is located in the southeast corner of Kansas along the Missouri border. Prior to its organization by the Kansas Legislature in 1867, the area that is now Crawford County was part of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee Nation ceded this land to the United States by a treaty in 1866. The area was officially opened for Euro-American settlement and organization in 1867, and a vote of county residents on December 15, 1868 gave Girard the county seat over Crawfordsville.²

Southeast Kansas has long been associated with its coalmining history. The first commercial mining shaft was dug in Crawford County in the 1870s creating job opportunities for the influx of European immigrants. The number of employees in underground mines of the Kansas portion of the coal field reached almost 10,000 during the early years of World War I. The area boomed along with the coal mining industry. Schools and businesses prospered.

In 1910, the population of Crawford County was 51,178, a gain of 12,369 during the preceding 10 years, making it the fourth in the state in population. The incorporated towns of Franklin and Arma accounted for 150 and 327 citizens, respectively, in 1910. There were nine other incorporated towns in Crawford County at that time.³

The strong economy and growing population spawned the organization of an extensive interurban railway system in Crawford County. In 1907, Girard residents formed the Girard Coal Belt Electric

¹ Information compiled in an informal report by Marsha King, Kansas Department of Transportation. Email correspondence dated 18 September 2003. Records retained at KSHS Cultural Resources site inventory files.


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National Park Service

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Railway Company. The main track extended east of Girard to Ringo, then northeast to Edson, Franklin, Arma, and Croweburg, just three miles from the Kansas-Missouri border. The Joplin & Pittsburg Railway Company (J & P) purchased the system in 1909, and that same year a trolley line was erected at 20th and Broadway in North Pittsburg and built eight miles north to Franklin where it hooked up with the newly purchased Girard line. By 1929, the J & P had limited its passenger operations and had become primarily a freight hauler. The four-mile Franklin-to-Ringo line was one of the first to be abandoned shortly after reorganization in 1929. As late as 1950, the J & P was still operating some 37 miles of track for freight only. The line was sold and dismantling began in April 1954.4

This part of Kansas became known as the Little Balkans because of the many Eastern European nationalities represented in the immigrant groups that settled there. Historian William E. Powell has written extensively on the mining communities of southeast Kansas:

The most numerous European nationalities laboring in the underground mines were Italians, Austrians, Germans, Yugoslavs (largely Slovenians), British (English, Welsh, Scots), French, and Belgians. Although there were several coal camps inhabited by one or two ethnic groups (Capaldo, No. 7 Mayor's Camp, Little Italy, Mackie, etc.), most were 'melting pots' of native- and European-born persons. The mining communities ranged in size from fewer than 50 individuals to over 1,000 (such as Arma, Pittsburg, Frontenac, Mulberry, Scammon, Radley). However, most communities remained small and individually had, during their peaks, a maximum of a few hundred inhabitants.

The camps were commonly moved, wholesale or in part, after the dissolution of the underground mines around which the camps originally clustered. The houses, shacks, and other buildings, after being disassembled, were commonly moved to new camps on railroad flatcars or on huge, flat wagons pulled by mules and horses. Those buildings which were not moved were sold or left to fall into a state of disrepair.

During the late 1920s and 1930s, a series of debilitating factors, acting in combination, caused the steady decline of underground mining in the coal field. The main causative factors were the economic impact of the Great Depression, the rise of mechanized surface mining, competition from oil and gas, labor problems in the coal field (strikes), and competition from Eastern coals.

With the decline of underground mining, the cultural landscape of both Crawford and Cherokee Counties changed. The camps were moved or were vacated as the mines ceased operation. Many miners and their families went to other operating mines in the area, migrated to other coal mining regions, or entered different trades. Railroad spurs, ties, and some tracks were removed; the surface scars visible today include the chattered grades and some abandoned railroad equipment. Many of the shale-ballasted or dirt roads leading to the mines and camps were grown over by vegetation or plowed for use as cropland. Houses were moved away from many camps; the ground on which they stood was plowed or grown over by vegetation. At some sites, the remnants of foundations, sidewalks, cellars, and water wells attest to the erstwhile, busy mining communities. At other sites, no surface expressions, save the tailing pile or dump of the former mine, remain. These sites that were once camps are now crop fields, pastures, or scrubland.

Several of the mining communities survived the decline of underground mining...Several important factors accounted for the survival and eventual change of a sizeable number of mining communities. The longevity of mines and number of mines near the communities were influential; several nearby mines operating for long stretches of time helped to maintain the coal-oriented communities. When one of the mines ceased operation, the employees stayed in the camp and found employment in another nearby mine. With time, more efficient and faster transportation (such as motor-driven vehicles and the Joplin & Pittsburg electric railroad) enabled miners to remain in their places of habitation and to travel several miles to the mines. Several communities, such as Pittsburg, Arma, Frontenac, Mulberry, and Scammon, were located on one or more railroad lines, and this locational advantage lent stability to the communities. Larger mining-oriented communities (Pittsburg, Arma) possessed a diversified economic base that helped to sustain them during the decline of underground mining. With the demise of underground mining, some miners remained in former camps and worked, if they were able, in other economic pursuits, usually in or near the coalfield. Other miners, in retirement or on welfare, remained in the camps. The aforementioned factors, frequently acting in combination, were influential in the survival and metamorphosis of a number of coal mining settlements.

In summary, commercial underground mining, principally shaft mining, stimulated the beginning and growth of numerous agglomerated mining communities in the Cherokee-Crawford coalfield. A sizeable number of the present-day rural and urban communities can trace their origins back to a camp near an underground mine. As a result of adverse economic conditions during the 1920s and 1930s and technological
improvements in mechanized surface mining, shaft mining steadily declined in output and importance. The decline had a debilitating effect upon the many mining communities and their inhabitants. Miners and dependents departed, and most camps were moved or fell into physical decay. Where crops now grow or cattle now graze on many sites, there were once busy mines and mining communities. With the cessation of the last shaft mine in the coalfield in April 1960, a colorful and important era of mining ended which had a profound impact upon the history of this portion of southeastern Kansas.\(^5\)

**Sidewalk History**

At the time of the sidewalk’s construction, Arma was a small town with typical businesses and services. Franklin was smaller than Arma and was hit hard by the declining mining industry in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Franklin residents relied heavily on businesses in Arma for goods and services. Safe pedestrian travel between Arma and Franklin appears to have been the key reason for the sidewalk’s construction. General improvements to allow better drainage also occurred as part of this project. It is believed that the sidewalk primarily served Franklin residents and students who frequently walked to Arma for business and school.

Due to the decline in the mining industry businesses were forced to close and schools consolidated. The Arma *Record* announced the consolidation of the Franklin and Arma high schools in August 1929. Arma donated the use of their high school building for the consolidated school, which reopened as a branch of the Crawford County Community High School. Of the 270 students enrolled at the school that first year, 114 lived outside of the former Arma district boundaries with 54 residing in the former Franklin district. Franklin students had to travel (often by foot) the nearly two miles north to school in Arma.\(^6\)

As evidenced by numerous news articles in the *Record* throughout the 1920s and 1930s, safety had long been a concern of residents whose children walked along the streets of both Arma and Franklin. Several accidents and deaths were reported as students and others walked along the edge of busy thoroughfares. For instance, the *Record* noted the death of a small child in March 1928, “...as the younger children were going home from school in Franklin, Enid Gardner a six year old girl was

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\(^{5}\) William E. Powell, “Former Mining Communities of the Cherokee-Crawford Coal Field of Southeastern Kansas” *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Summer 1972 (Vol. 38, No. 2) 187-199.

\(^{6}\) Arma *Record*, 1 August 1929; 12 September 1929.
almost instantly killed by a motor car... Two teachers and several of the children were walking along when the little girl darted out in front of the motor car which caused her death.”

Because the citizens of Franklin and Arma were closely linked through business and education, the need for a sidewalk connecting the two communities is not surprising. The Record provides brief accounts of the progress of the planning and construction of the sidewalk between Arma and Franklin. The first mention of the proposed sidewalk in the Record comes on May 14, 1936, “Work will begin sometime this summer. This road has always been dangerous because of the many pedestrians who are forced to walk on the pavement when coming to Arma...” However, the sidewalk project still had not started by August 20. The Record reported in early November that the sidewalk was “nearing completion” and that there was some “finishing up to be done in front of several of the business houses in Franklin.” The same article again noted that the new sidewalk would “help greatly in the safety of pedestrians who transact business in Arma.”

Articles in the Pittsburg Headlight reference the project contractor as F.N or F.H. Freeto. The sidewalk was constructed on the east side of the US Highway 69 (now Business US Highway 69) several years after the initial paving of the highway. Two historic signs at the side of the highway suggest that this section of highway was constructed as part of two federally assisted projects in 1922 and 1923. Although at least one newspaper article suggested the sidewalk project was part of the Works Progress Administration work program of the New Deal, there is no official evidence to corroborate this. However, it is known that the sidewalk was federally funded through the Kansas Highway Department and was given the project number 69-8FA-40-A.

Many years later in 1970, a bus route was established between the two communities when the Franklin Elementary School closed, and the students’ use of the sidewalk for daily transportation declined. By this time, most residents had alternative forms of transportation and were not as dependent upon the sidewalk.

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7 Arma Record, 8 March 1928.

8 Arma Record, 14 May 1936; 20 August 1936; 5 November 1936.

9 Pittsburg Headlight, 18 August 1936; 21 August 1936. The 18 August article lists the contractor as F. H. Freeto. The 21 August 1936 article lists the contractor as F.N. Freeto. A second source has not confirmed which is correct.

10 Photos of these signs are accessible online at www.franklinkansas.com. One sign reads “Kansas Federal Aid Project No. 40 Section A 1922.” This project was for paving a 16’ wide concrete highway from the south end of Franklin to the south city limits of Arma. The other sign reads “Kansas Federal Aid Project No. 120 Section [?] 1923.” This project was for paving a 16’ wide concrete highway from the south end of Arma to the north end of Arma.

11 Information compiled in an informal report by Marsha King, Kansas Department of Transportation. Email correspondence dated 18 September 2003. Records retained at KSHS Cultural Resources site inventory files.
sidewalk for transportation purposes. The sidewalk has since been used primarily for recreational purposes as a walking path.

The sidewalk uniquely reflects the trends of the area due to changes in jobs, education, and transportation. Although it is not confirmed as fact, it has become well known as the longest sidewalk connecting two towns. The sidewalk is also referenced in Marci Penner’s recent publication The Kansas Guidebook for Explorers. The sidewalk retains its integrity of setting, location, and materials, and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its associations with local transportation history.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Franklin Sidewalk
Franklin, Crawford County, KS

Bibliography

Books


Scholarly Articles


Newspaper Articles

Arma *Record*. 8 March 1928; 1 August 1929; 12 September 1929; 14 May 1936; 20 August 1936; 5 November 1936.

Kansas City *Star*. 1 August 1936. “Eighty years ago Franklin, Kansas, Now Vanished, Was in the Limelight.”


Websites


Elaboration
The first reference point is the north end of the sidewalk. It is at on the east side of the intersection of Business Highway 69 and E. Hector Avenue at the southern edge of Arma. The second reference point is on the east side of the intersection of Business Highway 69 and E. Second Street at the north edge of Franklin. The third reference point is the south end of the sidewalk. It is between 10th Place and W. 10th Street on the east side of Business Highway 69 on the southern edge of Franklin.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
The sidewalk runs along the east side of Business Highway 69 beginning at the intersection of E. Hector Avenue at the southern edge of Arma, Kansas, and extends approximately 1.7 miles to a point between 10th Place and W. 10th Street at the southern edge of Franklin. The nominated property includes the sidewalk and three feet on either side of the walkway.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION
This was the original site for the sidewalk.
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 10

Franklin Sidewalk
Franklin, Crawford County, KS

PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is consistent with each photograph:

Property: Franklin Sidewalk  
Location: Franklin/Arma vicinity, Crawford County, KS  
Photographer: Sarah Martin  
Date: 2 October 2006

*Please note:* The photos begin at the north edge of the nominated sidewalk in Arma and progress in sequence to the south edge of Franklin. See photocopied USGS map for photo reference points.

1. North end of sidewalk at the corner of Business HWY 69 and Hector Ave. in Arma, facing south
2. Beyond north end of sidewalk looking toward school five blocks away, facing north
3. North end of sidewalk at the corner of Business HWY 69 and Hector Ave. in Arma, facing north
4. Several blocks south of Arma, entering a rural segment of Business HWY 69, facing north
5. Entering neighborhood north of Franklin, facing south
6. Continuing through Franklin, facing south
7. Continuing through Franklin, facing north
8. Continuing through Franklin, facing south
9. South end of sidewalk just south of 10th Place and just north of W. 10th Street at the southern edge of Franklin, facing north
10. Road marker along Business HWY 69 commemorating an earlier road project, just north of the intersection of Business HWY 69 and Hector Ave. in Arma, facing north