



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 St. Francis City Park  
Other name/site number Howard T. Sawhill City Park (preferred)

2. Location

Street & number 300 Block of East Washington Street  not for publication  
City or town St. Francis  vicinity  
State Kansas Code KS County Cheyenne Code 023 Zip code 67756

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.)

*Patrick Zollner*

5/23/08

Patrick Zollner, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

**Kansas State Historical Society**

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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:)

*Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

7-10-08

Howard T. Sawhill Park  
Name of Property

Cheyenne County, Kansas  
County and State

**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.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
1		structures
2		objects
5		total

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

New Deal-era Resources of Kansas

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter Categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE / Park

RECREATION & CULTURE / Theater & Music Facility

SOCIAL / Civic

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE / Park

RECREATION & CULTURE / Theater & Music Facility

SOCIAL / Civic

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT / Art Deco

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: BRICK

Roof: ASPHALT

Other:

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Howard T. Sawhill Park

Name of Property

Cheyenne County, Kansas

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION

PERFORMING ARTS

Period of Significance

1934-1958

Significant Dates

July 26, 1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Sawhill, Howard T.

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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by survey, recorded by engineering.

Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Cheyenne County Historical Museum

Howard T. Sawhill Park  
Name of Property

Cheyenne County, Kansas  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 2.5 acres

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

1

1	4	2	6	0	3	3	0	4	4	0	6	3	4	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

2

1	4	2	6	0	4	2	5	4	4	0	6	3	4	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

3

1	4	2	6	0	4	2	5	4	4	0	6	3	3	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

4

1	4	2	6	0	4	2	0	4	4	0	6	2	5	0
Zone	Easting	Northing												

See continuation sheet

**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 J. Greg Kite, President  
Organization HISTORC PRESERVATION ALLIANCE Date February 22, 2008  
Street & number 230 North Market, Suite 201 Telephone (316) 269-9432  
City or town Wichita State KS Zip code 67202-2006

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

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

Name Cheyenne County (Terry Miller, County Clerk) - see continuation sheet  
Street & number 212 East Washington Street Telephone (785) 332-8800  
City or town St. Francis State KS Zip code 67756

**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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section Number 7 Page 1

Howard T. Sawhill Park  
St. Francis, Cheyenne County, KS  
New Deal-era Resources of KS MPS

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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

Dedicated on July 26, 1934, the Howard T. Sawhill Park, originally known as the St. Francis City Park, is centrally located in the 300 Block of East Washington Street in St. Francis, Cheyenne County, Kansas. It is situated on the main street downtown immediately to the east of the city's most prominent building, the Cheyenne County Courthouse. Completed at a cost of approximately \$7,000.00, the city park was designed by Howard T. Sawhill (1887-1960), who also supervised its construction. The most important features of the park are the band shell, amphitheatre, center fountain and memorial American flag. The park is significant because the band shell, in particular, along with the amphitheatre, is representative of the very few remaining structures built at the time, such as the Wolf Park Band Shell (1930) in Ellinwood, Kansas and the Central Park Band Shell (1910) in Conway Springs, Kansas.

**Park**

The entire park is laid out around a central fountain. There are four entrances to the park – the main entrance on the southwest corner and three smaller entrances on the north, south and west sides. The main entrance is bordered by two large brick pillars, inlaid with rough granite, each surmounted by concrete urns, supporting 5-globe torches. The entrances on the north, south and west are bordered by smaller pillars, constructed of native sandstone from Cherry Creek, again surmounted by concrete urns, but without torches. The entrances on the south and west are original, while the entrance on the north was added later. Sidewalks from all four entrances join at an outer circle of sidewalk, which surrounds the fountain.

The band shell and amphitheatre are situated on the east side. At the southeast corner is an American flag painted on a concrete slab. The north, west and most of the south side are composed of grass plots. An edging of rock terraces the level grass plot on the northwest. Six stone benches with wooden seats are placed to the west and south of the amphitheatre. Originally, there were also artistic stone drinking fountains throughout the park, including one inside the center entrance to the amphitheatre and one in front of the painted concrete flag. In addition, there were bird baths and a little sundial on the fountain, upon which was inscribed the motto: "I count none but the sunny hours."

**Band Shell**

Built of cement bricks from the interior walls of the old jail and finished in cream colored stucco, the band shell reflects the Art Deco architectural style that was so popular in the 1930's. The band shell presents a quarter sphere interior, filled with rows of lights, facing to the west toward the amphitheatre. It is well known for its unique and wonderful acoustics. There are two accesses to the front of the band shell – one on either side, which mount steps to the stage. The band shell's façade is ornamented with a raised triangular application on each side and a raised harp application at the top of the structure. Originally, the outer edge above the stage was framed by a decorative rainbow, the harp was painted gold and below the stage, in regular bars and notes, was written the music of "America," lighted to be visible to the audience.

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St. Francis, Cheyenne County, KS  
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The building measures approximately 36 feet 2 inches in width and 33 feet 4 inches in depth with a stage that extends forward 3 feet 7 inches. It contains two rooms and three bathrooms. A door in the back of the stage leads into a large rehearsal room, which also has a rear access door on the east near the southeast corner. This upper room measures approximately 34 feet 8 inches in length and 14 feet 8 inches in width with lath and plaster walls and a wooden floor. It has four windows, two on the east side and one on the north and south sides, each measuring approximately 4 feet 3 inches in length and 3 feet 2 inches in height. It also contains two small bathrooms in the triangular space formed by the back of the round stage and the rectangular room behind. These bathrooms have one tall, narrow window, each measuring approximately 3 feet 3 inches in height and 1 foot in width. The bathroom for "Ladies" is in the corner on the north and the bathroom for "Men" is in the corner on the south. Each of these bathrooms has the original, pull-chain toilet with an elevated, wall-mount, cylindrical, galvanized metal tank, as well as a small oval porcelain sink. There are two rows of coat hangers in the bathroom for "Ladies" and one row of coat hangers in the bathroom for "Men." An inside staircase, measuring approximately 3 feet 4 inches wide, leads to a full basement, which has been used for meetings. This lower room measures approximately 30 feet 6 inches in length and 14 feet 3 inches in width with lath and plaster walls and a concrete floor. It has four windows, two on the north and south sides, each measuring approximately 2 feet 10 inches in length and 1 foot 11 inches in height. It also contains one very small bathroom in the southeast corner. It has the original, pull-chain toilet with an elevated, wall-mount, rectangular, wooden tank. However, unlike the two upstairs bathrooms, there is no sink. The band shell also features four beautifully hand-painted murals depicting the growth and development of Cheyenne County. They are "The Westward Trail," "The Price of the West," "The Spirit of Cheyenne," and "The Hope of Tomorrow."

**Amphitheater**

Constructed in a horseshoe design that faces the band shell, the oval-shaped amphitheatre is built of cement with four rows of seats and measures approximately 97 feet 4 inches in length and 62 feet 2 inches in width. Originally, it had an upper row of seats constructed of hedge poles to harmonize with seats in other parts of the park. It will still seat comfortably 700, but has held as many as 2,500. It is crowned by a railing made of painted metal pipe. Originally, the railing was rustic in appearance and made of native wood. There are three entrances to the amphitheatre – one through the center of the back, which passes under the steps of an archway, and two side entrances, which approach by sidewalks from the street and mount steps to the top row of seats. Originally, rustic wood arched over the three entrances and supported copper lamps for lighting. The center of the amphitheatre is carpeted with grass. Today, a flag pole stands on the north edge of the sidewalk just outside of the center entrance.

The amphitheatre has also been known as the "Rose Bowl" because the intention was to have roses growing in profusion around it. The sloped outsides of the back of the amphitheatre are surrounded by a rock garden composed of native boulders from Cherry Creek. Originally, it was planted with a variety of flowers. In addition, a special niche was built on the southwest side, near a shaded bench. A verse calligraphically lettered by the designer, Mr. Sawhill, was set behind plate glass, surrounded by ivy growing among the stones. His wife, Vivian, selected lines from Tennyson's poem, "Flower in the Crannied Wall" for the sanctuary.

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Howard T. Sawhill Park  
St. Francis, Cheyenne County, KS  
New Deal-era Resources of KS MPS

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**Fountain**

Located at the center, the entire park is laid out around the fountain. Made of cement, the fountain was poured on location in a mold of earth patted in by hand. The fountain has stone supports on four sides and measures approximately 14 feet 6 inches in diameter. It is edged by an inner circle of sidewalk, which has in it formed the date of completion of "1934," as well as the name "ST FRANCIS CHEYENNE CO." Originally, there was a rock column in the center of the fountain from which rose an illuminated spray of water. In addition, the bowl of the fountain served as a pool for goldfish brought from a farm and cattails grew from its center. Originally, benches of rustic design were placed at intervals around the outer circle of sidewalk facing the fountain and a large bed of cannas and zinnias was planted around a flag pole erected by the Boy Scouts west of the fountain. Also, three hundred pansy plants were set out around the fountain circle. Originally, stepping-stones instead of sidewalks approached the fountain.

**Flag**

Painted on a concrete slab facing main street, the memorial American flag is situated on a grassy mound at the southeast corner of the park. The flag measures approximately 10 feet 8 inches in length, 6 feet 9 inches in height and ranges from 3 feet 7 inches at the base to 6 inches at the top in thickness. The concrete floor of the old jail was left to form its base. A floodlight illuminates it at night. Originally, there was a fringe of red poppies along the sides and a rock garden with evergreens behind. It had been hoped that the flag would be guarded by two large canons.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Howard T. Sawhill Park

Name of Property

Cheyenne County, Kansas

County and State

New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 1

### NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Howard T. Sawhill Park is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historical significance because of its association with the growth and development of the City of St. Francis. The park was created shortly after the Great Depression and was the result of the City Council arranging for the Civil Works Administration (CWA) to employ workmen and provide federal funds to help finance the project. It was an oasis in the downtown during the Dust Bowl era and it has been a centerpiece in the community for nearly seventy-five (75) years. This nomination is part of the "New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas" MPS.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT

The decade of the 1930's opened in the wake of the stock market crash in October, 1929. During the Great Depression that followed, the nation's financial markets collapsed and industrial production was paralyzed. Millions were thrown into unemployment lines at a time of little governmental interest in economic planning or comprehensive relief programs. Catastrophes of nature added to this bleak picture and parts of the country became known as the Dust Bowl.

In an effort to ease massive unemployment, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" programs marked the U.S. government's first big, direct investment in cultural development. Under the National Recovery Act, the Civil Works Administration (CWA) was managed by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and provided jobs for more than twenty million men and women during 1933 and 1934. The CWA (Civil Works Administration) should not be confused with the WPA (Works Progress Administration, later Work Projects Administration), which was not launched until the spring of 1935, the beginning of FDR's "Second New Deal," as his second term came to be known. The Civil Works plans were put into operation to bridge the interval of time necessary to get the Public Works program into effect. The Civil Works plans were a sort of "first aid treatment" intended to provide only temporary relief, while the Public Works program was the "medicine" intended to heal the sickness and enable people to take care of their own needs.

Cheyenne County received a total allotment of \$38,200.00 from the federal government for work on nine (9) CWA projects. Of these, two (2) were sponsored by the City of St. Francis. One of these was to create a park on a block of land just east of the courthouse and the other one was to rebuild the light and power line from the plant to the business district. These projects fulfilled the administration's goal that "a certain number of people should be put to work doing something worthwhile on full time pay for thirty hours per week." In Cheyenne County, the payroll for one particular week amounted to \$2,853.96 for 209 workers, which for a 30-hour week, averaged 46¢ per hour per worker.

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Howard T. Sawhill Park

Name of Property

Cheyenne County, Kansas

County and State

New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 2

### DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

With the idea of a city park in mind, work commenced on a plot of ground comprising an entire block just east of the new Courthouse, a Classical Revival style, 4-story, masonry structure, built in 1924. Trees were already there and furnished wonderful shade, so the groundwork was established for the park. They had been planted years earlier when the block still held the old Courthouse, an Italianate style, 2-story, wood frame structure, built in 1889.

Originally, it had been intended for the park to be located on the ground where the Courthouse now stands. That was the purpose for which the block had been purchased. However, before anything more than the planting of trees could be done, it was decided to build the present Courthouse there. Thoughts of a park were then dropped for nearly ten (10) years. Thereafter, in the summer of 1933, city officials decided to build "a comfortable little park," using a five year program. However, by the winter of 1933, the City of St. Francis began drawing CWA funds from the federal government to pay men who needed work. As a potential project, a much grander park was proposed.

A member of the City Council said, "But we need someone to make the plans. There's no use in spending [money] until we know what we're going to do." "I know just the man," another replied," i.e. Howard T. Sawhill. "From then on . . . it seemed that the park . . . under the guidance of the planner they chose . . . was just like so many parts to a jig-saw puzzle, each piece to be put in place until the whole thing was completed . . ."

In the southeast corner of the block was a square red brick building, once the county jail, then a Boy Scout hut. West of it were the remains of a foundation where the first Courthouse stood in St. Francis. First, the old jail was torn down. Men blew warm breath on their fingers and cleaned every brick for further use. Next, fertilizer was brought in and spaded under. Thereafter, water pipes were laid and spray that ran all day turned to ice. Finally, the newly poured sidewalks were covered with straw and dirt.

As it grew warmer, the real construction began. The cement bricks of the interior walls of the old jail were used for the band shell. The concrete floor of the old jail was left to form a base for the concrete slab upon which the flag would be painted. An oval-shaped amphitheatre of cement was built in front of the band shell, forms were made for the fountain in the center and pillars of brick and stone were erected at each of the three entrances.

Rich black dirt was spread around to transform the barren ground into fertile topsoil. Grass was planted initially on the mound below the flag, around the fountain and in the center of the amphitheatre. Then the rock garden was begun. 150 tons of native boulders from Cherry Creek were hauled in. Most of these were used on the sloped outsides of the Rose Bowl, but some edged the inner circle around the fountain.





















































