

The Kansas GP



“If you build it, they will come!” That’s what organizers of the Kansas Grand Prix Racing Association promised Bank of Topeka officials in 1940 when they requested a \$3 million loan to build a Formula 1 race track. Initially skeptical, the bank’s loan arranger was eventually won over by the KGPRAs enthusiasm, supplemented by an exhilarating ride in an Alfa Romeo race car. And so, the money changed hands. Expectations for success were high until the promoters learned of the only location in the whole state zoned for Formula 1 racing: a vast, boggy field south of town. Still, preparations progressed on schedule, as did the inaugural race. Unfortunately, it followed on the heels of a heavy thunderstorm, turning the bog into a quagmire. Spectators had to help extract the cars from the racing circuit, and since Formula 1 racing forbids audience participation, KGPRAs lost its permit to conduct future automotive contests. The moral: “Don’t drive your car where it is moist, lest it with its own petard be hoist[ed].”