First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

Community Visited: Date(s) Visited: 9/12 & 27/2017

Pre-visit web search: How easy was it to get information on the community you were visiting? Did it accurately reflect what you saw? Did you have difficulties obtaining information on the community through a web search?

*There was very little information about Formoso on the web. The Jewell County site listed Formoso and the page had a little information with a picture of the post office. I did find out the park was established in 2013 by local volunteers. The Formoso Thrift Shop has a Facebook page.*

1. The “Five-Minute” Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted. The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)

*There is a nice welcome sign as you turn off of HWY 36 and head to Formoso. Also noted a sign for a non-denominational church. The cement/stone bridge was neat with the date. The gravel road is well maintained. Also saw the PRIDE sign. The houses along the gravel road are mixed. Some are well kept, others not so much. There are many old/junk cars on the west side of the road as you go south. When you turn to head into the community, housing and yard maintenance needs a great deal of TLC. It really detracts from the community. Main Street was quaint. It’s incredible you are able to keep a restaurant open in this size of community.*

2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc. Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed. Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?) What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.) Comment on appealing landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

*The downtown area is about 2 blocks long. Saw the post office, city hall and library, thrift shop, Jewell Fire Department, limestone building with the owl on the front, and a block off of main, the Barn restaurant. The restaurant and thrift store were open. Staff very friendly in both places and shared information about the community. There is a nice little park south of the thrift store. There also appeared to be a phone utility building next to another small park. There were several empty buildings which need repairs or demolition. The planters and several benches are a nice touch.*

1. Other Retail Shopping Areas

Describe other retail shopping areas. Were the areas attractive and easy to access?

*N/A*

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate/expand? If so, describe.

*Noted that the old scale house once must have been used for recycling. The sign saying “PRIDE Recycling” was still there. It’s unclear what the steel bins are used for. Saw several trucks with Smith Harvesting decals. Are they using the bins for storage? There was a collapsed bin which needed to be hauled off. Mowing or weed control would be beneficial.*

5. Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services. Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers. What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?

 *N/A*

6. Housing

Give a brief description of the existing mix of housing stock. Does the local market have housing that would appeal to all income wages? What challenges do you see in regards to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.)

What kind of rental properties did you observe for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing?

*There is a mix of housing. Most homes are small and census data reports 80% of the home were constructed prior to 1940. There are a lot of run down and overgrown properties. Perhaps a code or code enforcement could improve the situation?*

7. Schools

Do the following schools appear to be adequate in size or do you see the use of temporary classrooms? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained? Were you able to find print information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?

*There is no school, but noticed the sign where the former Formoso school was located. A nice history piece.*

1. Childcare

Were you able to determine if childcare was affordable and available?

*Did not note any. In conversations at the restaurant, grandparents are helping when kids come home from school.*

1. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the churches represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of church-sponsored community services?

*Formoso Community Church. Nice sign as you turn off of HWY 36.*

1. Civic

Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community.

*Benches around town were purchased through business or civic sponsorships.*

*Saw the bench saying Formoso Garden Club. In visiting at the thrift shop, I learned the garden club is still active and responsible for the planters and vegetable stand and proceeds from the vegetable stand go back into the community. Same is true for the thrift shop. It was reported the PRIDE group is still active but not seen on the Kansas PRIDE website.*

1. Public Infrastructure

Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas other than downtown. Did you observe land-use planning?

*Streets were either paved or gravel, not unusual for a community of this size. Restrooms could be found at the park. Some of the public areas needed mowed. It was nice to see lots where houses had been torn down turned into garden plots.*

*It was noted with both a flag and sign that Formoso is part of the Tree City USA program.*

Comment on city/town hall (How were you received? Was there information about the town available?)

*City Hall was not open. Hours were posted.*

Police/fire protection:

 *Very nice rural fire station!*

Library:

*Library was in the same building as the city office. It wasn’t open but hours were posted. Good to see regular hours.*

City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sportsplex)

*Very nice city park. Includes restrooms, shelters, play equipment, basketball/tennis court and the memorial tree sign.*

*The little mini park beside the thrift shop was nice. Liked the old time spring animals.*

*The rose garden and bench was nice. The lot north of the rose garden needed mowed.*

1. Recreation/Tourism

Is the community well-known for any particular attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset? Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents? Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community. Is there an obvious visitor’s center, chamber of commerce office, main street office, or other facility that serves the needs of visitors? Comment on the staff, facilities, signage, visibility, etc. Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future?

*The skating rink and the restaurant could be attractions. It would be really nice if there was a sign on 36 HWY promoting the skating rink, restaurant and thrift shop.*

13. Wrap-up

What are the most positive things you observed about the community?

 *Wonderful City Park*

 *The Barn Restaurant*

 *Liked the veggie stand and thrift shop*

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

*As a visitor, it appears there is a lot of apathy in the community and that a number of folks don’t care about maintaining their yards and the appearance of their property. There are so many vacant properties which are not cared for and the large number of old junk vehicles.*

*Being a mile off of HWY 36 is a detriment to the community as it doesn’t allow for a flow of traffic through the community.*

*Also the age of residents. Maybe they don’t have the means or are not physically able to take care of their property.*

What will you remember most about this community six month from now (positive or negative)?

*The Barn Restaurant, the number of garden plots and the vegetable stand. Also that there is a skating rink.*

*I’ll also remember the number of rundown and overgrown properties and the accumulation of abandoned vehicles.*

First Impressions was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and adapted for use by K-State Research and Extension. Funds for this program have been made possible by a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, Logan, KS.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service

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