First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

**Community Visited: Hillsboro Date(s) Visited:**

a) 9-1-17 (Friday)

b) 8-31-17 (2 people) (Thursday)

**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?**

1. One of the first things checked was the City’s website, [www.cityofhillsboro.net](http://www.cityofhillsboro.net) - Immediately, I could tell there were ties to big Ag and I noticed they are large honey producer / manufacturer. Website was informative, however after digging into it quite a bit further, it appears some of the info was several years out of date. For example, there was a coffee shop, Little Pleasures Coffee that seemed to be closed and was still on the website. Additionally on the website, Walmart Pharmacy said coming soon and it was apparent it had already come and gone, and another Pharmacy moved had moved in, which is great, we are not fans of anything Walmart has to offer small communities. Additionally prior to the visit, we searched for hotels and a place to stay on Air BNB. Immediately, we only one hotel option found in Hillsboro, and the reviews seemed to be slightly unfavorable from a web perspective. It is our opinion Hillsboro should pursue a variety of options and types of places to stay (Bed and Breakfast, Guest Houses, or even rooms to rent etc) may be beneficial and easily searchable is key, sites like VRBO or AirBnb make accommodation’s like this very easy. But if the site hasn’t been updated in several years, it is probably time. \*Additionally, prior to the visit, we found a video under the “Doing Business” tab that encompassed the idea that relocating to Hillsboro was a good move... We think the video about the community is a fantastic idea and showcasing a young couple was smart. However, it might be nice to incorporate more people from the community: various ages, ethnicities, students, single or married, etc. It’s our opinion the video may have been a little long at just over 6 minutes and was also a bit forced in places, almost like a corporate training video. The musical soundtrack for the video is extremely important and can make or break a production. To us, the choice of soundtrack was primarily what made it feel corporate and dated, while a lot of the content was very good. All in all, it is a great idea and a great start. But could be revised and updated to really benefit Hillsboro. Never underestimate working alongside some hired Creative’s to help achieve your vision. As an added note, the ending seemed odd when it focused on the closed Alco store, from what we saw, Hillsboro has a lot to offer, and sticking with that is probably the best bet.
2. Keying in [www.hillsborokansas.com](http://www.hillsborokansas.com) brought us first to the generic Wikipedia listing and then to the City of Hillsboro’s page. It began with attractive photos and a positive statement about the community. Opening that page allowed easy access to the city departments, officials, contact and question information, business and employment opportunities, relocation information and upcoming events. It gave us the feeling that the numerous offices, organizations and facets of the City were cohesive and working together. While somewhat generic, it was positive and offered good information. While my daughter thought it could use some modernization, I, being older, liked the simplicity of use.
3. **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.)**
   1. To be completely honest, we felt confused where to turn in to get to the center of Hillsboro to find Main Street. There seemed to be several turns off the highway and none of them seemed to be prominent enough to build our confidence which would take us there. We drove around and through town several times trying to notice signs etc. Then we saw a small sign for “Java Joes”, a place to get coffee at Tabor, we slammed on our brakes. Once we stopped at Tabor for coffee, we walked briefly around the campus and didn’t want to leave. It was challenging to want to go to other places since it was so beautiful on campus. The landscaping at Tabor was incredible! Having that College is a HUGE asset to Hillsboro.  
      **Driving West on Hwy 77 –** If you don’t make an effort to slow down, you could drive right past Hillsboro. To the left was a bunch of Industry and chains type businesses. There was no clear way to turn in to get to down town.   
      **Driving East on Hwy 77 –** There was a nice, big billboard saying: Welcome to Hillsboro. It was about the same impression coming in, not clear where to turn to get to the downtown area.   
      Driving South past the closed Alco store on Ash Street, we noticed a sign directing us 1 block over on the side of the building. The sign wasn’t too big and eye catching, so it could be missed if someone wasn’t looking.  
      Driving North on Ash Street / Indigo Road we passed some beautiful neighborhoods with nice houses and beautiful landscaping including neighborhood ponds and fountains. Then, we passed the Windmill and park / golf course areas which were so attractive and inviting. This was one of the more attractive ways to enter town in our opinion. However, once you drove towards the center of Hillsboro, many of the houses on the main roads look unkempt.  
      Driving West on D street (by Wendy’s) an older / tired looking sign was posted coming into town. The trees / bushes camouflaged the old sign for the most part, but we were specifically looking for signs at this point. Although the sign wasn’t much, it certainly caught our eye for content. We quickly turned around to get coffee at Java Jay’s. It was great, although I get the feeling it is more for people on campus as parking and walking in to get a coffee on a daily or even weekly basis probably won’t happen for a local person, there was a pretty good sized line and it wasn’t extremely quick. We did see there was a coffee shop listed on the City’s website. Though it must have closed since then.
   2. We visited Hillsboro on a pretty Thursday morning and arrived around 9:15. Wanting to do a drive through of the town first, we were unsure of which would be the best exit off of the highway to go into town and decided to take the second one we came to. This took us by the Hillsboro Business Park and a nice new hospital facility. We drove on through town and came to the Mennonite Settlement Museum corner where we turned left on D Street and passed by several nice, modern business buildings and through Tabor College. (The Java Joe was closed. Really ready for a latte, we were sad but enjoyed a quick drive through the beautiful Tabor campus.) We proceeded on D Street to Prairie Point and Prairie Point Circle and by the Hillsboro Elementary School, then took back streets to the Middle and High Schools, coming out close to Main Street and the retail business district. This was purely by accident, although we had been looking for downtown.  
      We did not see a lot of updated streetscapes but the yards and businesses were mostly well groomed and trimmed.   
      It was somewhat unclear where to turn to find the main retail business district, so could maybe, use better signage for downtown. The signage that we saw was a little bit redundant, almost too many for just certain destinations like the sports complex. We did not see a lot of updated streetscapes but the yards and businesses were mostly well groomed and trimmed and for the most part, the town and residential areas look well-kept with pretty modern housing that would be desirable to someone looking to relocate. Some of the streets were in need of repair but not more than most towns.

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?)**

1. First impression of downtown was that streets looked good and clean and the buildings in general looked well kept. We did notice some obvious vacancies, but also noticed there were signs with listing agents, advertising signage, or for rent signs, which from our standpoint is very important. If a prospective entrepreneur happens to roll through town, it is important for them to know what is available and who to call. To us, it was different to see so many buildings that didn’t have second stories downtown, not better or worse, just something that we noticed. In many cases I think the reason this was noticeable, is many towns with second stories, their windows are boarded up. So a positive is, that not having those same second story “board ups” probably helped make for a cleaner appearance to Main St.  
   We noticed several flooring businesses (3-4 buildings). Additionally, we noticed a few artisan / boutique shops. We felt a strong hardware store / lumberyard presence around the downtown/ main street area. As well as several service type businesses. One of the first places we went was a store called Odds and Ends on Main Street, and while we really enjoyed the inventory and displays found in the store, we felt that a store of that quality should occupy a store front building in the downtown block, and not a nearby house. While inside the current location we felt a little like we were in someone’s home and it felt awkward. We went in several other stores, a few we really enjoyed. And the stores we enjoyed most, seemed to be new to Hillsboro. And seemed to be still setting up merchandise they were making.  
   While walking around we noticed some vacant storefronts, we noticed they had signage advertising other service businesses that didn’t occupy them. Examples: Home-based businesses, photographer, catering company, massage therapy, and other home services. This is a great idea, but instead of just a sign. We would suggest pursuing window displays for those companies in those empty buildings. Try to make them attractive as if those stores are really open. We really liked the old building that had the photographer and cater ads in it, but couldn’t tell if the building was empty and not being used, or an event space, or something else etc. After more research online, we found a Facebook page for a restaurant called Classics at Olde Towne, which apparently occupied the building at one point. Their last Facebook post was 2012, so we sensed it was no longer open ☹ . It appeared to be one of the older buildings in Hillsboro, so we think it is important it is utilized, maintained, and loved.  
   Overall great customer service, we were greeted in every occasion except the Hardware store when they were towards the back helping at the back-garage door. (We completely understood, and we got the feeling they were genuinely sorry they didn’t greet us at the door with a smile). In fact, everyone was so friendly, it was like they knew we were from out of town and doing the First Impressions program and were extra friendly. One great experience for us was at the Norel Bakery when the owner asked if it was our first visit and she said let me give you an education and explained all the treats in the freezer. The donuts were amazing – best we have ever had! Additionally, we took home some bread and cookies which were also wonderful.
2. While the Main Street buildings all seemed as if they have been well maintained, the downtown looked a bit like it was struggling to us. It seemed that there were quite a few vacancies and that the traffic was light, even over lunch time. Although there were a couple of nice shops, there wasn’t too much of a variety as far as shopping goes.   
     
   Our first stop was the Chamber of Commerce where a nice lady answered our questions about the upcoming Arts and Crafts event and gave us a map and information on where to eat and stay. We asked about a phone book, but she could not tell us where to go to get one. Her Office was neat & clean but very small and it felt like there was something more behind a wall behind her desk, like they had just found a little nook to squeeze into. This was kind of odd to us due to the importance of Chamber’s functions in most towns this size.   
     
   The shops that are there have nice, friendly, helpful employees. We felt welcomed at the several small “gifty” shops & boutiques that we visited. People were very friendly. It does seem as though there are a lot of home improvement type businesses for this size of community which is great and convenient for the citizens but as visitors, it felt like downtown was missing something. (Maybe a spot to stop for refreshments and congregate.) While Norel Bakery and the Mexican food place were nice and within walking distance, they didn’t quite seem like part of the downtown experience. We felt that just one or two more shops and a small café or soda fountain would make a big difference.

**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?**

1. We did notice a bench that said: “The Chamber” which helped us find the Chamber. There were several other places with benches as well, which was nice though we didn’t really use them. However, it is important for older folks. We didn’t notice any water foundations at first glance, nor did we see any specific “public restrooms” in the downtown area, instead we asked businesses along the way to use their restrooms since there didn’t appear to be any public ones. Tabor College seemed to have all the amenities needed on campus, it was a very nice place.

Tabor had impeccable landscaping. The City of Hillsboro itself, also had manicured lawns and looked like one person was mowing many of them, which is a good, clean look. That’s not to say that there weren’t some “trouble areas” around that needed landscaping, mowing, and maintenance. Parking was ample for everywhere we went, especially on Main St, which allowed us to walk around and have quick, easy access to most everywhere on Main Street. I don’t believe Tabor College was in session yet, which is why parking wasn’t a problem there either, though the lot was fairly full while we were there.

1. There were several benches downtown, but we did not see drinking fountains or public restrooms and, in fact, eventually left downtown for that reason.   
   Tabor was beautiful and the rest of the community looked good, too. A few spots could have used some “sprucing up” but for the most part, very nice. It might have been the day we were there, but parking was almost completely empty everywhere we went, especially on Main Street, so yes, very ample.
2. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

1. Describe other retail shopping areas. Were the areas attractive and easy to access?  
   We were disappointed when the Antique / salvage place across from the Recreation area was closed. That looked like a place we would really like to stop. We did drive around a fair amount and it seemed most of the other shopping was located on the north side of town, near the highway.   
   We really struggled to find a place that sounded good to eat lunch. We typically wouldn’t go for chain restaurants or fast -food and would prefer something local and unique. We searched online and couldn’t find anything on Yelp. We saw the Tabor Caf online, but opted not to go back to Tabor since we were already downtown. Ultimately we settled on Mexican food, which was comparable to many Mexican Restaurants.

Additionally, on the north side of town we noticed a good variety of stores like Dollar General, Auto Zone, a Tire Shop, among others that were all nestled together over by the highway. This area seems to be next too and/ or part of the industrial park area. There were a few vacant buildings in this area as well, along with large vacant lots. Those vacancies could be a great asset for the right tenant, or a huge eyesore for a long time. Actively pursuing the right tenants would be advantageous. In addition to the closed Alco, there was another large building that appeared to be a large grocery store at one point. Not sure why that didn’t work out, but it seemed to be a great location and nice place for groceries with ample parking and even gas pumps. We felt like the grocery store building downtown was a little cramped and might be better suited in a larger building to keep people shopping locally. However, we are conflicted on the idea… We felt there is a history with Dale’s Supermarket that we really appreciate, but sometimes for a town to grow, certain things need to be looked at, given new breath, and allowed to grow.

1. We were disappointed that there weren’t many places to have lunch and we actually ended up eating at Wendy’s and getting a cookie at Casey’s.  
   We also visited Dollar General and, of course, TCT Solutions Center. We saw Auto Zone and the Hotel, a Tire Shop on the north side of town closer to the highway. We did not visit Dale’s Supermarket, close to downtown, but several girls we visited with told us that the best place for groceries was Dollar General with a great variety of groceries.

4. **Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

1. Yes, HDC (Hillsboro Development Corp) 160-acre Industrial park which is a host to 12 businesses, which was something I found online prior to the visit. We saw a small sign while driving over to Dollar General, however we weren’t sure if that was considered the Industrial park area, or if it was the area over by the new hospital was, but possibly all of it. It appears Hillsboro has room to grow, which is good.  
   The location of the Industrial Park on the East Side of town seemed good with several industries, however one thing that jumped out was newer looking hospital in the Industrial area, which seemed an odd placement for a hospital to us.
2. We did not research a lot about availability for new industry, but from driving around the industrial and business park areas, it seems that not only is there plenty of room for growth but that the infrastructure has already been put into place for new businesses. This is a big asset because so many times, the timeline is short for new industries inquiring about assets that are ready & available.

5. **Health Care Services**

**Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services.**

1. It appears the new Hospital and old Hospital are both operating. Both hospitals seemed nice, however the new one seemed out of place with the location in the Industrial Park. It has become ever present in our minds appropriate city planning is so important, especially with “new” buildings. Maybe the hope is for this area to become a Medical Park, if this is the case, some attractive signage and a way to make it feel separate from the rest of the industrial park might be a good addition, and appeal to those with a small practice that would like to join the community.
2. As far as we could tell, there are two hospitals operating at the present. The newer facility is in a strange place, but maybe, there are future plans for the area.

**Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers.**

1. While thankfully we didn’t need to use any of these services during our visit to Hillsboro, it appeared to us that all facilities seemed nice for healthcare and seemed like plenty of options for everyone.
2. We saw a dental office but did not really see other health care facilities other that the retirement home and the hospitals. Online it appears that healthcare should be adequate. As it is shared between Hillsboro, Marion and McPherson.

**What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?**

1. Parkside offered nice, well-built maintenance free duplexes. The area was serene, safe and inviting, and is certainly a homerun for the community. The Salem home was close by the assisted living, so everything was well thought out and in the same area. Some areas appeared fenced off, while others were walkable.
2. We felt that the long care and assisted living-nursing facilities were really nice. Everything was conveniently close and well kept. A great asset for this size community.

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.)**

1. South side of town had beautiful ponds, foundations and houses. These neighborhoods caught our attention from the road and would probably meet our want list to live in that neighborhood. Although houses in the area to the neighborhood to the North of Tabor were nice and well cared for as well, and I could certainly see myself living there. Since I live in the country currently, and was raised that way, we did drive around a few country road and mile roads. The ones we drove we found to be well cared for with nice gravel, making that an attractive possibility for housing as well, if land is available for building.  
   North side (by Alco) – overall houses seemed very close together, mainly needing some maintenance and TLC. Appeared to be similar to the division we see in so many towns with lower rent areas in decline.
2. We were impressed with the housing available in Hillsboro. We saw several clusters of government assisted housing units and all were very well kept. The general neighborhoods seemed to have reasonably modern homes with nice yards and the Northwest housing development past the golf course was not only extremely nice but there was additional new construction going on, showing growth! We loved the duplexes out by the Mennonite Complex. They were by far one of the most impressive things we saw on our visit.

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

1. Hillsboroproperties.com - One rental listing found online that was in Hillsboro for $800 per month… out of the 30 sale listings, only about 11 sale listings were in Hillsboro and the rest in Marion or surrounding area. Much like our own communities housing, it seemed you need to be “in the know” for when things become available. When we looked on Zillow, there was only about 1 property listed on there for $1050, which is double what we are used to for rentals. While driving around, it appeared most of the rental properties had “for rent” signs in the yards and weren’t found online, I suppose this may be due to the College.
2. Not many rentals available according to our quick research. Maybe due to Tabor with students.

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?**

1. The elementary school was a more basic building, but the Middle School, High School and Tabor College buildings were all very attractive buildings and well kept. It appeared Hillsboro had quality educational system in place with ample facilities.
2. The Hillsboro schools all looked to be modern, adequate in size and in good condition. The grounds at the Elementary School were kind of lacking on the street where we went by but when we drove to the back by the play area, everything was new and even had the rubber ground beneath.

**Were you able to find online information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?**

1. April 7th 2016, **Governor’s Award recognizes** **top-performing schools: Hillsboro Jr / High school was recognized**
2. (No answer)
3. **Childcare**

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

1. Kids Connection – Child-care center – seemed to be nice and a good community option that one of the churches had. During a quick search online, we didn’t really see an abundance of other options. Maybe a space on the city website could be devoted to keeping a current list of Daycare Providers?
2. Kids Connection Child-Care Center: We talked to several young moms who were happy with the day care.
3. **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?**

1. There seems to be a dominant Mennonite presence in the Hillsboro area with many nice churches. Additionally, we saw a Methodist church among others that were all nice. Being raised Catholic however, we searched online ahead for a Catholic Church and didn’t see one. This is the type thing that would have hindered us from moving to Hillsboro. Perhaps it would be a smart idea to put the surrounding town’s Church links on the Hillsboro website that aren’t present in Hillsboro. For example: it can be noted that Marion or McPherson both have those amenities or denominations. We realize while in certain circumstances, we are “competing” with surrounding areas or towns, those same towns can also greatly benefit what a community as to offer. And if a nice family came moved to town, but goes to church in Marion. That is a win for Hillsboro!
2. While the Mennonites seems to be the dominant religion in the Hillsboro area and have many nice churches we saw several others that were very nice, too. The Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren organizations seem to have embraced the community and appear to be very generous, offering many services and actively investing in the town.
3. **Civic**

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

1. We saw an old sign that said Kiwanis and Lyons Club on them. I don’t remember seeing anything on Main Street, other than some signs of religious based business’s or organizations.  
   We did see a “city of Hillsboro” vehicle driving around. But didn’t notice any city workers mowing, weed eating, etc.
2. We saw a big wooden sign by the golf course naming the towns clubs and organizations. A very old City of Hillsboro truck passed us several times while we were on the Northeast side of town.
3. **Public Infrastructure**

**Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas other than downtown.**

1. We did notice the gravel roads just outside of town where the best we had driven, and we grew up in the country. They gravel was small, smooth gravel, and well grated. Tabor College and the recreation areas seemed really nice and well landscaped. Over by the RV Park there were a couple shelter houses that could use a new coat of paint to keep up with the nice playground equipment surrounding them. The storm shelter building seemed really nice with the tall, stone fireplace and surrounding deck wrapping around, it seemed like a nice newer addition to the community.
2. We noticed that some of the streets needed repair (potholes, etc). Sidewalks seemed fine. No restrooms or neighborhood parks that we found.

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

1. We did not go to town hall, but we did stop into the Chamber office and asked to use the restroom. She acted embarrassed to take us to the back where the rest room was, but was very nice and accommodating. The Chamber desk was close to the front door and seemed awkward looking through the brochures, just a bit too tight. The lady working the desk, apologized, that she was “just filling in”. There weren’t a ton of brochures, but we took a few with us to look through. Having a chamber office that is inviting, easy to find, and comfortable. Is something that has really become apparent, possibly even couches or coffee, can make for a good addition.
2. No answer.

**Police/fire protection:**

1. We noticed a building that said Police, but it kind of looked abandoned, so we weren’t sure if it was in use or had moved, there seemed to be a VoTech welding school in back. We noticed the Fire station and it was small, but nice.
2. The Police/Law Enforcement building was somewhat dilapidated. A good coat of paint and some weed-eating would help. Maybe there was a new one we didn’t see.

**Library:**

1. We saw a library around the downtown area and one at the Tabor College. We didn’t go in, however both seemed nice in exterior appearance.
2. The library was great in that it was shared with the arts council. Wonderful idea!

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

1. Both sports complex areas were great! Everything nestled together made it easy to find and a fun area that included the pool, park, RV, and also attached to a golf course. The Tabor/High school fields and tennis courts were very nice. We didn’t really notice a specific bike/ walk trail on our visit.
2. Very nice sports complexes. Convenient with the pool, park, and golf course. There didn’t seem to be any walking trails.
3. **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?**

1. The 48th Annual Craft Fair is coming up in September and is well known to Hillsboro. There were plenty of banners, posters and advertising for the Arts and Craft Fair. Some ads claimed to host as many as 40,000 shoppers. Though when we asked a local in a store about it… they talked like it was less than 10,000 shoppers. Either way, it is still a very large and unique event! A struggle for towns, is to offer consistent information about things within its own community. The best advocates for the town, are the people who live there. Figuring out a way to unite their perception and the way to talk about Hillsboro, would be an incredible achievement.
2. The famous Hillsboro Annual Craft Fair is in September. Lots of advertising with banners and posters. A large event that is fun for citizens and draws many visitors.

**Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community.**

1. The Marion Reservoir: being from a lake community ourselves we realize what a great feature this is, though we have heard it may have been shut down recently for Blue/ Green Algae, which I am sure Hillsboro would see the impact of that. When we drove across the dam, we did notice some homes located near the reservoir, a few miles outside of Hillsboro, but another possibility for housing.
2. Marion Lakes probably draw some folks to the community. We also observed that they were renovating the Mennonite Settlement Museum which will be a nice feature for visitors.

**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.**

1. When we stopped in the chamber office, we visited briefly, looked at a few papers. The woman working apologized for being a “stand in” for the person that normally occupies the desk.
2. The Chamber of Commerce seems to be the “Welcoming Center”. They were very nice and helpful.

**Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future?**

1. The Norel Bakery was a nice treat, however driving 1 hour for a doughnut seems unreasonable so it probably won’t bring us back for just that. A couple of the shops were enjoyable and if we were passing by on the Highway with time to spare, we might pop in for a peek. But nothing that would take me out of my way just to visit Hillsboro.
2. It might be nice to go back and observe the Mennonite Settlement Museum when it is finished. The Annual Craft Fair might also be a draw for us. At this point, the retail and food options available would probably not be a draw.
3. **Wrap-up**

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

1. In many ways Hillsboro felt similar to our home town. Everyone offered a warm smile and friendly hello. There seemed to be some very passionate people in the downtown businesses that have great talents. The strong religious presence was felt and the pride taken in most properties was obvious. We certainly understand the challenges a small community faces, and think Hillsboro appears to be doing ok for a community of its size.
2. A nice, clean and safe community with friendly people with lots of Pride. The cooperation between city and other entities is an asset as is the Mennonite investment in the community. Great housing developments. Tabor College is a great asset! Strong industrial park.

**What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?**

1. The Layout: how to direct visitors off the highways and to the city center and downtown area is certainly a struggle for Hillsboro. However, that is a busy highway, and if you can capture some of those passing by, it benefits all in the community.
2. The downtown seems removed from the other business areas and appears to be in decline. Also, people like to eat! Need more options for dining.

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

1. Tabor College was incredibly impressive. The Norel Bakery was delicious and our favorite store was a new store, Diamond in the Rough. Seemed like a nice couple taking on a new venture and we wish them the best of luck with their endeavor. These are 3 things that will stick in our minds 6 months from now.
2. The thing most remembered will be the opportunities with the industrial and business parks and the housing choices, especially the new duplex area and the Northwest Housing Development.



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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service

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