First Impressions 

Team Report Form

Community Visited: Lucas Date Visited: June 15, 2015

Team Members: Mother of 2 small children

Freshman at KSU wanting to move back to the area

Banker and Mayor

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?

Very easy to find information on the web

1. The “Five-Minute” Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted.

* Very clean entrances into the town with the exception of the Northwest entrance. Older part of town and more run down.
* We noticed the town seems more spread out than Almena.
* We were unsure of some of the open hours of the businesses which looked to be out of the owner’s residence.

The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)

* A wide variety of entrance or welcome to Lucas signs. Some are faded and need paint.
* Signs were adequate and streets for the most part were good.

2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.

* Some of the downtown needed cosmetic updating/repair. Some looked a bit aged and needed new siding/paint.
* Exterior of the bank was rough looking, but may have been from the hail storm 6 weeks earlier.
* Buildings for the most part were ok to good.

Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed.

* Brant’s meat market, great product, we all purchased some meat and cheese there. Very friendly and helpful, historical site.
* They have a movie theater which is awesome.
* Hardware store looked nice as did the grocery store.

Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?)

* Great customer service. We were greeted at most places with smiles. Never had to ask for assistance. We did ask where to eat lunch and apparently there is only the K-18 restaurant.

What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.)

* Most places had benches outside their stores.
* Would have been nice to have a drinking fountain at Bowl Plaza.

Comment on appealing landscaping and streetscaping.

* Benches make it appealing
* Fork art gives the empty lot a nice appearance. Sort of a garden type appeal.
* Main street is nice and open

Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

* No problems finding parking. Small town had ease of access to everything.

1. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

* Gas station and convenience store were in good shape and easy to access
* Home businesses, (Hobby Shop and Aunt Gerties) – weren’t open and didn’t see hours.
* Restaurant located next to the gas station/convenience store.

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

* The Land Pride business you could tell was fairly new and had an addition, still with room for further expansion if needed.
* Heartland Hay was on the north side of town with plenty of space.
* United Ag Services/Elevator had plenty of space. With the ball field right close wondered about traffic during harvest and possible safety issues.

5. Health Care Services

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

* They have a Medical Clinic!! We believe the reason they have one and Almena doesn’t is that they are not located close to a larger community. Almena is only 12 miles from Norton Hospital and clinic.

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

* Lucas Medical Clinic is in good condition. We did not notice any other medical services.

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

* The nursing home has been shut down and is for sale so the elderly have to move to nearby towns in order to have their care and needs met.

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.)

* We noticed several houses for sale and apartments for rent but the supply is still insufficient to meet the demand. We were told actually there is a need for rentals of all kings.

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

* We noticed there were to apartment complexes, yet the demand for housing/rentals is not met.

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?

* School looked good and sufficient in size relative to the size of Lucas. Grounds appeared well maintained.

Pre-school/kindergarten/Head Start facilities

* None present

Elementary/secondary schools

* K-6 are the only grades taught in Lucas along with the Sylvan students known as Lucas-Sylvan. 7-12 are housed in Sylvan Grove facility known as Sylvan-Lucas.

Were you able to find print information in the community that helped asses the quality of the educational system?

* Lucaskansas.com website was very helpful in everything we were doing and looking for as far as information went.

1. Childcare

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

* Unclear, we received and unclear answer from the city clerk. She said that the principal’s wife does it in the winter and she believed that she continued during the summer as well. She gave us a phone number to call which was out of service.

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?

* Baptist, Methodist, and Lutheran Churches were observed and we believe maybe one more but we missed the name. It seems there are plenty of places to attend church

Are there any facilities or statements that some would view as intrusive or that would make someone feel uncomfortable if they were not of a particular faith?

* None

1. Civic

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

* Lucas PRIDE program

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

* Library was having a reading program when we were there.

1. Public Infrastructure

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

* Moderate on landscaping and streets around the west end of town. It looked more like the neglected side of town.
* Signage was moderate to good, fairly well marked.

Did you observe land-use planning?

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

* It was unclear where the offices were located. Before we entered the Civic Center we were under the impression it was just an activity center. Some of us may have dropped the ball on investigating the city office to the full extent it desired. Information was easily available almost everywhere we went.

Police/fire protection:

* Fire department looked very nice and well kept.
* No evidence of police protection.

Library:

* Library felt welcoming and had a separate room for children which we felt was a good idea.

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

* We were all impressed with the size of the city park and that it also had restrooms to use. Shelters, tables, playground equipment, gazebo with centennial monument.
* Very nice and well maintained ball park.
* No pool in town.

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?

* Garden of Eden, Grass Roots Art Center, Brant’s Meat Market, Bowl Plaza. Expect the unexpected in Lucas.
* We took the tour of both the Grass Roots Art Center and the Garden of Eden.

Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents?

* Lid Off Film Festival

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

* None were noted

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.

* The Civic Center. Everywhere we went they had flyers and brochures.

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

* Brant’s Meat Market
* Aunt Gerties was closed, would like to see it
* World’s biggest collection of the smallest replicas

1. Wrap-up

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

* Many attractions, and tourists making the trip off the beaten path to see all the attractions this little town has to offer. Friendly people and clean main street.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

* Biggest obstacles are the nursing care, housing and rentals and daycare.

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

* What we will remember the most is the incredible amount of tourist attractions for such a small town. Main street appearance is nice but needs a few small things done to the aged and weathered buildings and it will look great. Lack of options to eat downtown, the café was closed. Some sort of Soda Shoppe would fit right in with the downtown.
* We all enjoyed our trip and hope we have provided some useful information and thoughts. We also plan to try to apply what we saw to our little town as well.

Notes:

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