First Impressions

Compiled Team Report Form

Community Visited: Natoma Date Visited: October 9, 2015

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?

*Wikipedia – location, population 335, statistics*

*City of Natoma.com – general info, city council members, organizations, community calendar*

*Good school website – has calendar and lots of activities*

*Facebook page – found links and businesses*

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

*Lots of trees, unique town layout. Roads twist and turn = very charming! Older homes can be an asset if they are fixed up. Noticed new construction.*

*Basketball history, no notice of town from highway, cute little houses, new construction, old houses need loves, gas station, community center, Studio, bank, nice library, café, Post office, coop, daycare kids out, pretty along the river, found school after much searching, need signage, one way streets, couple of churches*

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

*One sign indicating town name, street signs, some buildings were a little run down. We had a hard time finding the high school – could use a sign for that.*

*No signs from west, nice monument to basketball coaches, not really any well defined entrance, how to get to high school??? East side turn by cemetery – no sign, just drive off main highway*

2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.

*Some older buildings have been repurposed – good. Sidewalks in need of repair (very expensive!) Some empty old buildings, community center, library was very nice.*

*Run down, needs paint and signage. Not real welcoming or something to make you stop.*

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

*Accounting office, Nex-Tech, Bank, gas station, 2nd hand shop (nice to have clothes in a pinch), martial arts, yarn store, restaurant-very nice and homey! Small grocery store and hardware items were located in the gas station.*

*Great gas station – grocery, hardware, pizza, service bay*

*Loved the Alpaca store with public restroom coming*

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

*Very friendly! We stopped at all the businesses on main. Everyone was very helpful.*

*Great – well received – very friendly – all visited*

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

*Some benches, public restroom in the park, yea!! The lady at the yarn store is trying to put in a public restroom and told us where a visitor could use a restroom. Very helpful!*

*Benches, community center but it was closed, nice park with bathrooms available.*

Comment on appealing landscaping and streetscaping.

*No flower pots, but again, lots of nice trees!*

*Need some benches or flowers, not much otherwise*

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

*Ample parking and easy access to businesses*

1. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

*No other shopping areas*

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

*No defined area*

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?

*Didn’t find any*

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.)

*Low income apartments per city hall – didn’t see them. Got names of real estate agent and couple of rentals from city hall. Saw new construction and several remodel projects in the works.*

*The lady at the city office gave us names of people to contact about housing. We noticed lots of houses being repaired and some apparent new construction. Noticed small homes and larger homes. Would appeal to most incomes, perhaps mostly lower/mid income. Did not notice “for sale” signs. Low rent housing available.*

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

*No signs of what might be available. Didn’t find anything at bank or post office posted either.*

*Campers! Got a nice list and phone numbers from city hall.*

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 facilities appear to be adequate in size. A little rundown. Nice playground equipment. Hard to find ball fields and school access. Well mowed and trimmed.*

*Nice schools, nice playground in the elementary school. It is great you still have your high school. We saw notices for a pre-school program in the school.*

1. Childcare

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

*The city office told us of one lady that has a daycare but did not know if she had any openings.*

*Yes, saw the lady walking with kids. City gave us names.*

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? 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?

*Methodist, Lutheran, Historic Presbyterian Church. Did not notice any activities.*

*3 very nice churches but did not see evidence of services.*

1. Civic

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

 Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

 *4-H collecting coats and having a clothing drive at the bank.*

*The Lions club built the picnic shelter in the park, also a small community sign on Main Street. Government organizations available at city hall. Air Force info at bank*

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 go everywhere – pretty well maintained. Sidewalks downtown need help. Did not observe land use planning.*

*The streets are narrow but maintained; the sidewalks need work; plenty of parking; public restrooms in the park; did not see any signage other than street signs.*

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

*City hall was hard to find as sign was difficult to read. Very friendly and helpful. Gave names and phone numbers. Didn’t find numbers for services.*

*Very helpful. No brochures. Gave us names to help with rental properties and a real estate agent card.*

Police/fire protection:

*Fire Station next to city hall*

Library:

*Closed but looks very nice*

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

*Nice ballpark. Tennis courts!!! Nice elementary playground*

*Doing work on the park – new tennis court. Public bathrooms! Playground very nice.*

*Nice big shelter built by Lions Club*

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?

*No community slogan. I know they have a river event.*

*Brochures at city hall. Didn’t see anything specific to town except comment about historic church.*

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

*Halloween party at the café! School calendar several places.*

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

*River! Beautiful area!*

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.

*School calendar and activities info was found at the post office, bank and café.*

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

*Nice hometown restaurant – fried chicken!! Alpaca yarns*

1. Wrap-up

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

*Very quaint community, lots of old building that could be fixed up. Some older homes could be cleaned up (junk around the houses). Very pretty area. Seemed to be an “older” town.*

*Location on river, lot of activity fixing up properties, all we talked with were friendly and positive, keeping schools, young families – not retirement community.*

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

*Fixing up old buildings, homes (is there a city ordinance?), fixing sidewalks, updating store fronts.*

*Too close to Hays – everyone shops out of community. Lots of infrastructure to maintain. No ongoing business for employment or to bring people to town.*

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

*Friendly people, location on river, however it is not a thriving or welcoming downtown. If we didn’t have a purpose, there is nothing that would have gotten us to stop or turn off K-18.*

*The beautiful area, fun café, nice people, old buildings, older homes needing to be fixed up.*

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

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Works, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914 as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and the United State Department of Agriculture Cooperating, John D. Floros, Director.