First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

Community Visited: Oakley Date(s) Visited: January 23 & 28, 2016

**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 nice website – www.Discover Oakley.com*

*Easy to maneuver for information and lots of information available. Keep this website up and current as your #1 investment in reaching visitors and new residents/businesses.*

*Some web information – Site was easy to navigate. Good photos. Governing body agenda and minutes posted. Some were outdated.*

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.)

*Very positive – lots of businesses, well-kept homes, nice streets and well maintained (A complete self-sustaining community)*

*Coming from Buffalo Bill Center was the “best” entrance for 1st Impressions. All signage was great. There are a fair number of buildings that need some repair/clean-up and sidewalks in front of those buildings were very dirty. Not much in streetscapes.*

*I-70 signage was excellent; the directional signs were throughout the central business district of the community.*

*The drive throughout the community was very clean with commercial and perhaps industrial along the way; the area had much green space between the businesses and it was clean – without debris.*

*Observed an activity center with bowling and games and several hotels along the route into the community.*

*Signs were large and easy to read. Businesses kept up. Buildings, dollar store in convenient location with good parking. True Value store, grocery store….gas station and convenience store.*

1. **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?)

*Current business buildings very nice. However empty buildings in need of repair. Signage downtown also very good. Library was the only thing we didn’t locate. Streets all over town in great shape. Downtown sidewalks, street lights, and handicap accessibility all questionable.*

*Many farm related businesses and they seemed very busy. Shopped the clothing store. It was very nice but is going out of business. Grocery store was also very nice – great line of products and the chicken smelled divine!*

*Would have loved to have seen the theater and thrift store but both closed. Donut shop – great menu and nice building.*

*Every business was very friendly. Both the city office and the Buffalo Bill Visitor Center we were asked if we needed any assistance. We were not asked at other retail businesses we stopped at.*

*Buildings and streets were well kept and clean. The city seemed to active and parking available.*

*The city has a variety of businesses – donut shop, grocery store, quilt shop, hardware store, insurance agencies, gift shop, dollar store, liquor store, gas stations/convenience stores, motels, activity center, True Value Store.*

*One great attribute – a community theatre and the electronic sign displayed the time.*

*Customer service was very good – they asked if they could help, they told of a shopping activity taking place, they were somewhat helpful with regard to requesting a good place to eat for lunch…they offered available places…none in particular*

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?

*Parks and tourist sites had great benches and picnic areas. We would suggest some benches downtown. We did not see any drinking fountains and only businesses and visitor center had public restrooms that we found. As for landscaping and streetscaping, not much to see in January. There were some planters, but all were empty and not commercial planters so rusty and decaying. Easy parking everywhere (grocery store a little tricky). Most stops would require long hikes or driving to multiple areas.*

*Some green space between businesses. This was refreshing to see, foliage, no trash. A welcome sight among the businesses. Few empty storefronts. Business district was relatively busy at 9:30 -10:00 on Saturday.*

*No trouble with parking, streets were clear and clean.*

1. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

*By I-70 – Truck Stops; and HWY 83 – Caseys. Did not see other retail areas except farm implements/Industrial Park. Not attractive, but all easy access.*

*Yes – good signage with window signs. Business hours were posted.*

4. **Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

*Yes, definitely have some great businesses there with room for growth or more. With the amount of business/tax income – we felt some “beautification” projects could be done.*

*At the east entrance off I-70 & possibly west entrance on the hi-way corridor.*

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?

*Nice Hospital/ER/Ambulance/Dr’s. Offices/Eye/Dentist/Chiropractic/Drug Store. Very progressive for size of town. All very nice buildings with parking. Information was also available online. They also have a Senior Center, Nursing Home, and Assisted Living. The NW Education Center has services for special needs of all ages – Huge Plus!!*

*Hospital-emergency; Cancer Center; Assisted Living; Nursing Home; Dental; Clinic; Professional Building was posted. One long term care on east side of city, hospital, cancer center on west side. City transportation services are available (parked at ambulance building).*

*Did not see a senior center or meal site.*

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.)

*Housing seemed to have a nice mix of smaller and larger homes. We saw NO houses for sale and many newer homes so we assumed that if you moved to Oakley you probably had to build or rent. Found three listed in the paper.*

*Middle Income; Low Income; Affordable Housing*

*Varied housing: single family incomes, low/limited income and affordable housing; well-kept yards; trash receptacles were interspersed along the streets, they were clean and covered…*

*Residential: clean yards, few sale signs, although in the donut shop discussion was overheard that there are 25-30 properties for sale.*

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

*Only saw one home for rent. List of landlords on website and available from city office. Nice compilation of this information.*

*A few “for sale” signs but did not see “for rent” signs. One building lent itself to be refurbished as a multifamily rental but it looked abandoned.*

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?

*Catholic – Pre to 5th grade; Head Start; Public – Pre to High School*

*Large school grounds, well maintained, buildings seemed adequate.*

*Head Start clearly defined. Grade, middle and high schools all centered in one area of town with the athletic fields nearby. Available parking.*

1. **Childcare**

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

*Forgot to ask at the city office. We did not see anything marked “Day Care”. Nothing in newspaper or website that we could find.*

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?

*At least 10 churches – Range of denominations; Churches seemed in good repair; “The Cave” Youth Center – appeared to be sponsored by the Christian Church.*

*Several churches throughout community.*

1. **Civic**

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

*City Office did not have a list but was able to find on the website. Large number to choose from. Masonic Lodge and VFW noted.*

*Did not see advertising with organizations as sponsors.*

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 all over town very good. Signage very good. Not many sidewalks in residential area. Parking all good. Landscaping and streetscaping we felt could be improved or added. Did not observe land-use planning but didn’t know what this meant.*

*Street excellent – no blacktop*

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

*No brochures were available or given. Very nice ladies, but knew little about what was on the website or who would be maintaining the website. We expected them to be more helpful. The city administrator had just left.*

Police/fire protection:

*Saw the building – well maintained.*

Library:

*Saw on website, but we did not see in our visit or drove by and didn’t know it was the library.*

*Library – excellent – for adults and youth; (recently provided a bequest from a community member in which $ were provided for expansion of library and museum.) Library and museum in one building – artwork of school children were displayed in the lobby; sitting area for individuals in lobby…clean.*

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

*Very nice!! And fairgrounds looked very nice too! Great job with this!*

*Swimming pool – excellent; pool house and zero entry pool with slides, etc. Pool near a walking trail/park area with exercise equipment on the grounds (to measure heartrate?)…nice touch.*

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?

*Buffalo Bill – “Stop for the Legend, Stay for the Day!” We loved it, but were very disappointed that the “western” legend atmosphere is really no-where to be seen downtown or in the community.*

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

*Newspaper – Kansas Day event at the Buffalo Bill Center. Ladies at Buffalo Bill Center were very informative on all to see and events in area. Website has nice calendar.*

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

*Fick Museum (fossils)*

*Monument Rock (although 20 miles away)*

*Buffalo Bill Statue at Center – Huge plus for 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.

*Yes, Buffalo Bill Center had great staff, facilities and wonderful kiosk along with web availability for visitors.*

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

*I would eat at the Steak House on I-70 (not part of town) and try the Buffalo Bill Grill. Love thrifts shops so would definitely stop there if I found it open. Buffalo Bill Center Water/Corn Shucking Events would make me travel there.*

1. **Wrap-up**

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

*Thriving business community; Well-maintained streets and homes; Buffalo Bill Visitor Center was the “most” positive thing during our visit.*

*Cleanliness; busy downtown district with variety of businesses; donut shop and gift shop; excellent streets; great pool with park and walking trail; several motels; excellent library.*

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

*Closed business/buildings and maintenance/appearance of them. Beautification of downtown area and entrances into town. Most entrances were very industrial – very beneficial for the economy but not very eye appealing.*

*Not sure if there was a variety of clothing/shoes stores.*

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

*Positive visit at the Buffalo Bill Visitor Center. She convinced us that we both should visit the museum, Monument Rocks and the Gallery in Scott City and come to the corn shucking event. Best advertisement for Oakley that we found. More informative than the city office.*

*Streets; Downtown business district; Pool; Excellent directional signage throughout town*

*We visited on a Saturday therefore cannot comment on city services. Very impressed with cleanliness of town and streets. Housing in good condition. Did not see extremely high dollar housing. One could differentiate the older part of town vs new development.*

First Impressions was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and adapted for use by K-State Research and Extension.

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