

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Chapman

Date(s) Visited: a) Mon 6-04-18

b) Mon 6-18-18

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?

- a. No Answer (NA)
- b. I use Facebook and TripAdvisor when traveling and visiting other towns and the “Kansas Guide Book” for communities in Kansas. In the guidebook there was a little over a page about the community. I also found the city’s website. It accurately reflected what I saw. More information could be provided. Chapman is in a wonderful locale between Old Highway 40 and Interstate 70. Couldn’t find much information on the historic places to visit or the quilt trail.

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.)

- a. Not many people out and about, (Monday afternoon, 100-degree weather.) Does Chapman have a water shortage, or water restrictions? 80% of lawns were brown, but people are keeping them mowed for the most part. City signage stood out. Noticed homes and businesses had a quilt block on their buildings. RV park at edge of town was full. Very nice welcome sign.
- b. Neat in appearance- historic town with great old buildings. The brick streets gave a nostalgic feel when driving through town. Liked the narrow main street with the tall buildings. Like the quilt squares around town. Need more/better signage for parks and such. Entering from North off I-70 there is a large sign, we were not sure when the town started. If just stopping by, not sure if we would have gone past the grocery store and Dollar General. South was just a small sign (covered by tree branches), building was being renovated. Some yard work was being done. From this direction it gave the appearance there wasn’t much to the town. West off of Hwy 40 there was a large sign that was also for Indian Hill Golf Course. Pretty drive with cliffs, river and hill with golf course and cemetery. School building themselves are nice, but landscaping really needs some work. (Found to be the case around all three school complexes.)

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?)

- a. I loved the old buildings downtown. Parking is limited directly on the business main street. Business signage was difficult to see from our vehicle. Too bad downtown business street is so narrow. Grocery store is nice, clean, well-stocked and friendly. Hardware store, post office, bank, couple of novelty stores, bar, liquor store, pizza place. Grocery store employee greeted us, Casey's did not. The business that stood out the most was the hardware store. Had eye-catching "palm" trees by their entrance. Old buildings, but they were neat, narrow Main Street. Not much open on Monday afternoon.
- b. Old historic buildings. Kept up with improvements being done to others. Businesses had decent signage. Library needs to update their community board, nothing posted in it and it was a little tough shape wise; Library hours were not easily found. There was a wide variety of businesses for a town of this size. Quality merchandise with a nice selection. The hardware store was fun to look through. Everyone was great to visit with. We were greeted at the businesses we entered. Hardware store, Dollar General, grocery store, lucky Charm Quilts, Senior Center, museum. Yes, they asked us if we needed anything and were happy to share about their business and town. City Hall workers didn't pay much attention to us,-the least friendly.

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?

- a. Benches, restrooms, easy to find.
- b. Benches, picnic tables with shade, trash receptacles, and public restrooms. Restrooms at Sheeran Park needs updated. We ate our lunch from the grocery store at the shelter there. No place to eat at the grocery store and the only other place to get food was at Casey's. Need better signage for park with pool and ballfields. Phone didn't pick up any Wi-Fi. No difficulty finding parking. Parked and walked to the business district. Miss the grocery store being on main street but understand the reason to move it on the edge of town to a larger building.

3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. Only saw one eatery. Grocery store was very nice.
- b. Other than downtown we visited the grocery store and museum area. Also drove over to Dollar General. All were easy to access.

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. Commercial Land with “For Sale” sign.
- b. We didn’t see where the Industrial Park was. When asked at the City Office they acted surprised we couldn’t tell where it was. We drove in the area where they said it was located and didn’t see any signage. Looked like they could expand out on the North/East side of town and in the area around the elevators.

5. Health Care Services

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

- a. Didn’t see any.
- b. Didn’t see any.

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

- a. None seen.
- b. Don’t believe there are any in town; if there is, we didn’t see any signage.

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

- a. Right on Main Street on the north side of town. Well-groomed.
- b. Looks like there is an independent, assisted living and small nursing home facility.

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 regard to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.)

- a. Lots for sale. Mix of older houses and new neighborhoods. Didn’t see many “for sale” signs around town.
- b. Seemed to be adequate housing available for all income wages. Trailer Park looking to be a nice facility, lots of trees and clean. Most areas and homes seemed to be kept up for the most part. Rental properties are comparable and home prices are as well.

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

- a. Only saw 2 or 3 rental signs in front of homes.
- b. Nice range to choose from. Lower priced rentals to higher end. Signage was out on those properties and seen some on Zillow.

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?

- a. All new. Saw Pre-K through High School Buildings. All appeared to be relatively new construction, grounds were well-maintained. Seemed big for the community.
- b. Surprised how far apart the schools located in the city of Chapman were. Preschool facility didn't look to be at the same level as the other school buildings. Buildings are nice but the grounds could be better maintained.

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

- a. NA
- b. Yes, didn't realize the district went into Abilene. The Rural Center Elementary School looks like a great opportunity for students. FFA has a Facebook page and it looked like they just celebrated an anniversary. Have heard great things about the FFA Chapter. Looks like it's a great education system that has emphasis on agriculture more than sports which more schools seem to be going to. School should be proud of what they've accomplished.

8. Childcare

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

- a. 2 were seen. One on Main Street.
- b. Saw there were some available. Not a good resource to know if it's affordable. None on our team had young kids.

9. 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?

- a. Saw 3 churches. One small Baptist Church, One Catholic Church and a fairly new Nazarene church. On our limited time in Chapman, I didn't see any evidence of church-sponsored services or activities.
- b. There's a variety, more so than a lot of towns of this size. Would have liked to go in the historical Catholic Church but it was locked. Beautiful building. Didn't see any church sponsored events. All the buildings were well maintained.

10. Civic

Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community. Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- a. None seen. We didn't observe any activity.
- b. Didn't see any indication of clubs such as 4-H, scouts, Kiwanis, or others. Only the American Legion and the FFA Chapter. We did not observe any evidence of civic organization activity.

11. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. See question 1. Didn't notice any sidewalks around the residential areas. Streets were taken care of.
- b. Looked like new sidewalks were being put in. Sidewalks missing on some side streets. Could use better signage for parks and ball fields off of Marshall Street. Looks like there might be a great opportunity to landscape more around the river on the South side.

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

- a. NA
- b. They pretty much left us alone. We wandered around looking at items in the office and brochures. If we hadn't asked them questions, I don't think they would have ever acknowledged us. There was a lot of information on the town in the office.

Police/fire protection:

- a. NA
- b. Located on Main Street

Library:

- a. Didn't see one.
- b. Didn't get to go in, closed.

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

- a. The City Park was difficult to find. Cute park when found. Employee at the grocery store gave us directions. We never did see any signage for the pool, ball diamonds or park. Several picnic tables, public restrooms next to shelter house.
- b. Nice city parks with modern equipment, nice ballparks, and swimming pool. Nice small-town park.

12. Recreation/Tourism

Is the community well-known for any particular attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset?

- a. NA
- b. The FFA and the Quilt Squares. Remember visiting years ago for a large Toy Show/ Swap Meet. They could capitalize a lot more on the quilt squares. Saw signs everywhere but they were just black and white simple ones on regular paper on business doors and windows. A welcome sign with "Barn Quilt of Kansas" on it would be good. When we asked who was in charge of the tour or where more information could be found on the tour of the Barn Quilts, they didn't know much. Maybe some type of map and the history behind it.

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

- a. No.
- b. Yes, we were given information at the floral shop on the Car Show coming up in September. And classes they had coming up.

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

- a. The signage on the grain elevator was eye-catching.
- b. The historic buildings, RV park, Barn Quilts, and golf course. Town has a lot of rich history it could capitalize on.

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.

- a. No.
- b. There was a community board outside the library they could put items in about the city and the barn quilt tour. City office could be friendlier and share more information. Signs around town indicating the Historic Trail Walk and the Walking/Driving tour of the Barn Quilts would be very helpful. Lacking signage.

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

- a. No.
- b. One of the team members would like to return to try the restaurant Southern Comfort and to attend mass at the historic Catholic Church. Also, a lot of great photo opportunities. Another team member is interested in coming back while driving on Hwy 40 with his motorcycle group. Said they are always looking for towns located on county/state black tops to visit.

13. Wrap-up

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

- a. Clean, lots of new houses, looks to be growing.
- b. Chapman has history, old great buildings, a wide variety of businesses, new businesses, a great school system, a museum, and a multiple of things to draw people to the town while being located in a great area in regard to the interstate and Hwy 40.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. NA
- b. Signage and promoting itself. Not really an obstacle but brochures need updated, was looking for the Mission Church. (Saw it in several brochures we picked up.) I would love to see a brochure on the church with history of the parish, hours for services, and how to schedule a tour because they didn't have one at the city office. Plaques on the historic buildings saying what they were previously/originally would be a great addition. (If they were there, we missed them.)

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

- a. Mural on the elevator (nice).
- b. The hardware store. Our team enjoyed walking through the old-time hardware store and hearing the story behind it and some of the buildings in town. And the Barn Quilt Squares. Also enjoyed the Racing Museum.

PowerPoint report is online at

<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/civic-engagement/first-impressions/index.html>

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