First Impressions 

**Team Report Form**

Community Visited: **Cimarron**  Date Visited: **(a,b) Monday, August 8**

 **(c) Friday, Sept. 9**

**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. The website is easy to find from a google search. The site is neatly organized and very easy to use. It has links that take you directly to useful sites (Facebook page, library, pool, and other resources). The website is a wonderful reflection of this community. You can also pay your bills online – how helpful! The Facebook page seems to be updated regularly to inform residents of upcoming community events and news. This is a well developed community Facebook page! Good job to whoever keeps it updated and current!
2. The first link I clicked on had very outdated information (like 10 years old). Then I went to their Facebook page & was totally impressed! The picture of their water park/pool area was very inviting. They used the FB page to inform residents that the recycling center was losing money & would close at the end of Aug.
3. No comments.
4. **The “Five-Minute” Impression:**

**After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted.**

1. After our initial “five-minute” drive through Cimarron, I thought, “looks like a nice community, I’d like to see more.” It seemed like everything was easy to access – especially with the two main highways intersecting the community. From first glance, the highways, homes, schools, and buildings had a very nice appearance.
2. Cimarron appears to be a very clean community- we went to all city limits- north, south, east & west. Saw the windfarm north of town and the new construction nursing home. We saw 2 ladies crossing the street by the library & decided to stop & ask them about the hotel. Next thing we knew we were inside the hotel visiting with the owner- Kathy!
3. My first impression of the town was the cleanliness and how neat the greatest majority of the residents and businesses kept their properties. Yards were mowed, trees trimmed, ditches on the side of the highways leading to the city from all directions were well kept and free of trash. Most of the private and business structures, though some of them were dated were generally in good repair.

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

1. Cimarron signs were seen at all major entrances into the city. The Cimarron signs were not very big – especially for a community that has so much to be proud of. The sign entering from the east seemed like it was not out far enough – as we were entering I wasn’t sure if it was Cimarron or not. The streetscape from all directions is very inviting.
2. Community signs seemed a bit outdated from each direction. Wonder if some signage at the junction of the 2 highways could point to library, medical clinic, city office, etc.
3. People were friendly, waived when I drove by, and at one stop for directions, one resident was most helpful in directing me to the city offices, park, and high school. I was somewhat confused in finding my way around the city, however. There were no directional signs showing the way to important landmarks the city has to offer. Such as the City Offices, the City Park, the Municipal Golf Course, Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Recycling Location, Senior Center, etc.
4. **Downtown Business Area**

**Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.**

1. The downtown business area is a major highlight of the community. The main street district is very inviting with well kept buildings and infrastructure. It seems as if the business owners and city employs make a great effort to keep the community looking nice, especially in this downtown business area.
Since the downtown area is the main intersection of the two highways it would be nice to have signs pointing to different parts of town (ie: school, park, library, etc.). Without signs directing people at this intersection it might be difficult for people to locate these places.
2. Downtown area looked clean & inviting. Several buildings appeared vacant—not a surprise, just a bit disappointing.
3. People were friendly, waved when I drove by, and at one stop for directions, one resident was most helpful in directing me to the city offices, park, and high school. I was somewhat confused in finding my way around the city, however. There were no directional signs showing the way to important landmarks the city has to offer. Such as the City Offices, the City Park, the Municipal Golf Course, Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Recycling Location, Senior Center, etc. The downtown business area was clean, sidewalks and streets in good repair, and had a very high occupancy rate.

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

1. While we were in Cimarron we took advantage of many different businesses that were available. We received a quick tour of the historic hotel (it wasn’t labeled so we didn’t know what it was – but some very friendly local women took us there). We then did some shopping at Clarks Drug and Blush Boutique – both wonderful assets to this community – it’s always nice to see young people invested in their community.
We saw that in Cimarron there are a lot of business that will fit the needs of community members or people just passing through; flower shop, restaurants, hotels, hair salon, carpet/flooring, vet, liquor store, auto supply, grocery, pharmacy, boutique, gift shop, soda fountain, and many other businesses.
2. When we talked to the 2 ladies by the library they told us not to miss seeing the old fashioned soda fountain at Clark’s Pharmacy. We definitely did some economic development at Blush, the boutique!
3. The City Hall was located Downtown, as was the County Courthouse which headquarters not only the County Government but the local police, fire and emergency services. There seemed to be plenty of street lights in the downtown area, although I did not personally observe them illuminated, since my visit was conducted during the daylight hours. There were a variety of business in Cimarron. A full service lumber yard, a combination upscale women's boutique, old fashioned soda and ice cream counter and full service pharmacy. An interior decorating store featuring carpet and home improvement coupled with the weekly newspaper all in the same building across the street. A clean and modern Motel, several restaurants including fast food, Mexican, and American Menus.

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

1. Customer service was fantastic at all locations! Everyone was very warm and friendly. They made us feel very welcomed to the community. The also offered tips on what all we could do in Cimarron, answered any questions we had, and informed us of fun changes coming to the community. Overall, everyone was very friendly and helpful. We had to ask for directions and help from multiple people, and everyone was overwhelmingly helpful and kind. For example, when we didn’t know what the historic hotel was, two women walked with us to ask for a tour.
2. Excellent customer service—we ate lunch at Richie’s even though everyone we talked to suggested Ingalls or Montezuma for really good food! Richies’ was ok—tables were set banquet style so people sat in groups.
3. I had occasion to stop in the Drug Store and enjoy an old fashioned soda, one of the best I'd had in a long time. The clerk greeted me promptly and was friendly and allowed me to engage her in conversation.  From here I was able to find out the history of the town.

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

1. It was difficult to find public amenities because they weren’t labeled well. We did find a public restroom at the park on the south end of town. There might have been a drinking fountain there, but I don’t recall. It would be beneficial if this community would add signage that would direct out-of-towners to these locations.
2. Didn’t see fountains or benches. Checked out the public restrooms at the park at the south end of town. Only problem—they were locked.
3. I did not observe any public restrooms, benches, drinking fountains etc. in the downtown area, however, there was a new park located next to the city offices that was very pleasant. It contained benches a picnic table trash receptacles, and a garden area that someone took great care in maintaining.

**Comment on landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?**

1. Landscaping and streetscaping throughout the town is great. Everything is well kept. Despite many vehicles on the main street, there was ample parking. When we were in the downtown business area you could access many services, including, library, soda fountain, pharmacy, health clinic, city office, and more.
2. No problem finding parking.
3. Downtown parking was of no problem, and all downtown businesses were within easy walking distance.

1. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

1. On the east side of town you will find the grocery store and future Sonic, as well as Subway. This is a nice area – it looks like it is a somewhat newer development. On the west side of town you will find some businesses – such as a hotel, restaurant, and auto supply store. All areas seem to be well kept.
2. Besides the downtown area there was an attractive grocery store w/Subway on East side of town. Some service businesses were located along the highway. A new Sonic is being built.
3. Other businesses were easy to find since they were all located along the two main highway leading to and from Cimarron. These businesses included a new Sonic Restaurant that featured car hop service and indoor dining.  A very well stocked grocery store, though it was the only one in town observed, was located on the eastern side of town along the highway. It had an extensive selection of groceries, fresh produce, meat and even a drive through pharmacy. A Farm Supply store was located a few blocks east of the grocery store. Above all, Cimarron is a farming community, therefore the local COOP was substantial, both in size and services offered.

**4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

1. On the far east side of town it seems to be an industrial area – I believe that most of these businesses were labeled.
2. Manufacturing type industries at east & west ends of town. Windfarm to the north.
3. I didn't observe any defined areas where industrial parks or other commercial industries could be located within the city. However, there were located to the North and West of the city a very large Wind Farm and to the South an Ethanol Plant.

**5. Health Care Services**

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

1. I was disappointed to see that there was no hospital in town, especially since it’s the county seat. However, we did learn that there is a clinic that offers basic services such as appointments, check-ups, physicals, etc. In addition, there is a chiropractor and pharmacy available in town. I did not see if there was a dentist or eye doctor.
2. We learned there is no hospital in Cimarron. They do have a medical clinic located on Main Street. There is a Physical therapy clinic, a chiropractic office, the pharmacy and the Health Dept.
3. There is no Hospital in Cimarron. There is however, a well-staffed Emergency Care Center located in the downtown area. EMS services are supplied locally, with Hospitals located a short distance away in Dodge City to the East and Garden City to the West.

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

1. The clinic, pharmacy, and chiropractor each seemed to have nice facilities available for the community.
2. Someone we talked to said most people were used to going to Dodge or Garden for Dr. Visits (especially specialists). I didn’t notice an optometrist office.
3. No comments

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

1. On the north side of town there is a beautiful, new nursing facility in progress. This will be a wonderful asset to the community. I could see this drawing in older individuals from other communities. Great job to the community and nursing home for pursuing a new facility.
2. New nursing home facility being built at the north end of town.
3. There were two long term care facilities observed. One of which was just completing construction.

**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. It appears that there is a wide variety of housing that will work for many individuals and income wages. It was our understanding that homes do not stay on the market long in this community – which is a good sign. We were told that many people want to move from Dodge City or Garden City to Cimarron. If moving here, it might be difficult to find a home that would fit all requirements (size, neighborhood, pricing, etc.) due to the pattern of quick sales of propriety.
2. Very few properties for sale. We talked to one resident who said houses sell quickly. Stated that people from Dodge City move to Cimarron because of schools.
3. The local housing was a mix of older homes closer to the central area of the city. The variety was substantial. I found single family homes, apartment and rental residences, and a section of new homes to the north of the down town area. Adjacent to this new development were lots that were offered and will provide expansion opportunities for the city. Checking with one of the local Real Estate agents, it seemed evident that a wide price range of homes were currently being offered. There are primarily four Real Estate agencies serving the community.

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

1. It seemed as if there were many rental properties in town – not sure if they were available. We received a list from the city office that shared landlord name and numbers. This is a very helpful guide for individuals moving to town seeking a rental property. It also seemed that on the north end of town there was some new home development and available property.
2. Looked like houses were well kept for the most part. We picked up a list at the city office with names & Phone #s to locate rentals. Also noticed a HUD facility with a for rent sign.
3. No comments

**7. Schools**

**What schools are present? (Head Start, Preschool, K-8, High School, Post-Secondary, etc.) Do the schools appear to be adequate in size? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained?**

1. Cimarron is a 3A school with elementary and high school buildings both in the same campus area. It appeared that the preschool is a part of the elementary school system. I was very impressed with the school campus. The buildings were well kept, the playground at the elementary school was spacious and clean, the high school stadiums looked ready for events. I was very impressed with the appearance of the school district – good work!
2. Pre-School available at the Elementary building—K-6 & 7-12. Facilities looked great.
3. The local schools are in top notch condition. The building and grounds were very well maintained, provided large areas for expansion, and facilities were modern. A newer city pool was located close to the schools. The schools are reputed to be award winning, which is impressive.

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

1. In all of the places that we visited, I did not see any print information about the school district. I did hear from a community individual that it is a great school system.
2. No—the secretaries at the school were brand new so we didn’t get a lot of info. A lady we talked to at the library commented on the good schools.
3. No comments
4. **Childcare**

**What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?**

1. Roughly 5 or more childcare services are available for community members – it seemed as if these might be private at-home childcare services. I am not sure if they offer any other type of community child-care.
2. Mostly day care homes. The lady we talked to at the library indicated there is a need for more child care.
3. I was not able to observe childcare facilities, not to say there were none, I was not able to observe any.
4. **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 are multiple churches and denominations in this community – possible five or more. The appearances of the churches are very nice and well kept. I did not see any evidence of church/community services.
2. There were no signs at the edge of town indicating the different denominations. I saw 5 or 6 churches in our driving around Cimarron. I didn’t notice any church-sponsored community services.
3. There were six churches within the city. All major denominations were represented, except for the Catholic Faith. Which, at first I thought was odd, but when I spoke to the clerk at the soda fountain as mentioned earlier, the town of Ingalls, a few miles to the West, was the Parrish serving Cimarron. All church buildings were in very good shape, well maintained, ranging in design from Tudor style to Modern design.
4. **Civic**

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

1. Rotary and Lions Club are both a part of the Cimarron community. We only knew this by asking around. It was even difficult to locate the signage for these two when entering city limits.
2. Rotary & Lions had signs on the west edge of town.
3. There were no signs advertising any civic clubs, their meeting dates or locations.

**Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?**

1. No, I did not.
2. Signs
3. I did not observe any activity of civic organizations.
4. **Public Infrastructure**

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

1. Overall, very good. The main highway/street on the east side of town is very nice (maybe new) and gives an inviting, clean appearance to individuals entering town. The sidewalks, parking, lighting, landscaping, and streetscaping are all great too. I would suggest more signage pointing to public amenities (restrooms, etc.) and community interests (library, parks, etc.)
2. Streets in good condition. Sidewalks, parking & lighting are good. Restrooms hard to find.
3. Cimarron, as I mentioned before, is a very neat, clean and well maintained city. The condition of the streets, lighting, sidewalks, gutters, yards, residences, and businesses of the people who live there show that they take a great amount of pride in their city. I am sure, as it is in many smaller western Kansas communities, that the people of Cimarron also take great pride in helping out one another in both times of good and bad.

**Did you observe land-use planning?**

1. No?
2. New home under construction. Nursing home being built at north end of town.
3. No comments

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

1. It was very difficult to locate the city office – we had to ask many people. We assume it was difficult because they were getting new windows and their signage was temporarily gone. The city clerk was fantastic! She was positive and very helpful. When asked about living in Cimarron she said, “I couldn’t imagine living anywhere else.” Unfortunately, there wasn’t much print information that could tell us about Cimarron. It would be helpful to have a pamphlet or brochure.
2. Needs better signage & perhaps brochure would be nice. At City Hall—Amber was awesome! She said she had lived in Cimarron all of her life and couldn’t imagine living anywhere else!
3. The city hall was conveniently located on Main Street in downtown Cimarron. I was able to have a pleasant conversation with the soon to be City Clerk, and found out a great amount of useful information about the city.

**Police/fire protection:**

1. Volunteer fire for the community. Sheriff service the county and communities and is located in Gray County Courthouse in Cimarron.
2. Combined police/sheriff dept. housed in Co. Courthouse. Volunteer fire department.
3. Police protection is provided by contract with the Gray County Sheriff's Office located in the County Courthouse in Cimarron. Fire protection is provided by a volunteer Fire Department.

**Library:**

1. Fantastic, beautiful, and well-kept library. When we went in there were many adults and children using the services. It seemed as if they were making a great effort to involve the community by hosting events for children and adults.
2. Great—lots of people using this wonderful facility. Librarian was very positive.
3. The Public Library is located at 120 N Main Street. It is a modern facility, with an abundance of reference materials and periodicals.

**City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sports complex)**

1. We did see one city park with attached ball park – these seemed to be kept okay.
2. Several great park areas, ball fields, playgrounds & the rec center connected to the Extension office—wonderful facility!
3. The city park, Cimarron Crossing Park, is located at the southernmost end of Main Street. Here is found the local ball diamonds for little league and softball. This park is very well maintained, with and abundance of picnic areas, children's play areas, restrooms, even a covered wagon is on display to celebrate the town's heritage.
4. **Recreation/Tourism**

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

1. When we asked community members they couldn’t really identify anything that would draw individuals. They did mention that during season, hunting draws some people.
2. Not really. Lots of hunters during hunting season.
3. "A Proud Past and a Promising Future" This is the slogan of the community of Cimarron, Kansas. An apt slogan, and from what I was able to observe, this western Kansas community is a find.  From the home of the Gray County Fair, to various Chamber and City activities throughout the year it seems that there is plenty to do here. Summer time Ball games, City swimming pool, a recreation center with basketball and racquetball courts, a bowling alley, High School Sports events to attend, a Senior Center, a Municipal Golf course, weekly Farmers Market during the summer, Trick or Treat Downtown in the Fall, Christmas Downtown in the Winter, to the Easter Egg Hunt in the spring would keep any one very busy. In addition the city has a Triathlon in reverse in August, multiple cross country biking events throughout the year and the Hunting opportunities around Gray County for Upland Game Birds are fantastic.

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

1. No I did not.
2. Gray County Fair had ended before our visit.
3. (see comments above) Visitor did not indicate how he learned of all these events.

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

1. None
2. The water park will draw people to Cimarron.
3. No comments

**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. We only found the city office that would be able to answer any questions to visitors. We did not see a chamber office or visitors center. Very friendly staff and the city office.
2. No obvious chamber office or visitor center.
3. No comments

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

1. We learned about the two restaurants in town – one was closed on Monday (while we were there). When we asked about where to eat, everyone recommended driving over to Ingalls or Montezuma. People told us about the options in Cimarron but they highly recommended that we go to another town.
2. The old fashioned soda fountain and Blush Boutique. The young couple who owns those 2 businesses are opening a restaurant & Home décor store across the street.
3. No comments
4. **Wrap-up**

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

1. There are many positive aspects that this community should be proud of. Mostly, the individuals that we spoke with were very positive and welcoming – they are all great stewards of this community. In addition, it’s wonderful to see young individuals investing in their community to make it better.
2. Friendly—hard-working people -- Proud of their community—
3. Clean Community

Great Schools

Large number of diversified activities for residents to participate in

Friendly townsfolk

Nice selection of businesses

Very well maintained public facilities, parks, ball fields, swimming pool, golf course, streets and down town area

Room to grow

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

1. It is difficult to pinpoint a challenge just after visiting a community for a few hours. However, I believe that Cimarron could improve on their signage throughout the community to really show their pride for their community.
2. Declining/aging population—Economy dependent on farming/oil/gas
3. I found it difficult to find the public facilities in Cimarron. SIGNS need to be placed at strategic locations along the main two highways directing visitors to the advantages of the community. Such as the High School, Swimming Pool, City Park, City Offices, County Courthouse, Public Golf Course, County Fair Grounds. Chamber of Commerce, ETC. A central location with information about the city would help visitors to quickly learn about all that Cimarron has to offer. This location would have to be advertised by signs to direct the visitor to the information.

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

1. Well, I will definitely remember it as the town that our van had some troubles – and I will also remember the great deal I found at Blush Boutique. Mostly, I will remember the inviting people and wonderful business district.
2. The two ladies we met across the street from the library who introduced us to Kathy, owner of the old hotel—Margaret & Carol I think. Also—everyone we asked for recommendation for where to eat suggested Ingalls or Montezuma—not Richie’s in Cimarron.
3. How clean and well maintained the entire city was

How friendly the people were

How good the soda was at the corner drug store.



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