

# First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



**Community Visited: Garnett**      **Date(s) Visited: Feb. 22, 2019 (a, d)**  
**Feb 19, (b)**  
**Feb 20, (c, e, f)**

**1. 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. Information easily found on the web, at city hall, in the library and in many of the stores we stopped to visit. The publisher of the newspaper also was helpful in providing information.
- b. Prior to the visit, I researched the website to find out the following: Amenities, Economic Development, Job openings, Map, Tourism info, Utilities, Permitting. I found every single item I was looking for very easily. Their website is in a newer format with a tag line 'Simply Garnett' which I didn't forget. It was easy to navigate, and font was the right size. They have their twitter feed and Facebook page embedded on the front page of their website. I got the feel that the Chamber/City was somehow meshed together on the website. I loved the graphics and will be using this website as a resource to update our City website this year. Also, I can get any type of permit application on the website and the cost. I only recommend placing a search bar at the very top of the website.
- c. Information was easy to obtain on both the Simply Garnett website and Facebook page. The website is very thorough with information about all community events, job opportunities, and community resources. I appreciated that either a citizen or outsider can find all community information in one resource.
- d. It was very easy. It seemed like everyone we spoke with was cooperative in sharing information. The directions and suggestions they made were easily followed and appreciated.
- e. The city website was very informative on happenings within the city and made Garnett appear attractive to potential visitors. With a simple google search I was able to find all information needed for my upcoming trip to Garnett.
- f. Web site easily navigated. Home page is a little busy. Could not find a search capability & could not find direct links to the schools or museums in town. Love the calendar with all events and Garnett street map.

**2. 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. Large beautiful old houses on West 4th with a divided street. Several neighborhoods nicely laid out for middle income families. Coming into town from the South, the “Welcome” sign needs painting. The Veterans Park on the south end of Garnett is attractive and welcoming.
- b. The place charmed me instantly. Driving through the main drag, it had just snowed, and it looked so beautiful. The City public works department was busy clearing off streets which as much snow that had fallen in that area the night before, I was impressed the streets were so clear. I noticed the wide array of restaurant/businesses in what I felt like was a small town. The downtown area was neat in appearance. The entrance signs that read Garnett do not match the way finding signs. They are just had a more rustic feel than the signage around town. Schools were very beautiful buildings were kept up. They could use more landscaping. The way-finding signs were spot on. They were easy to read, a great color and continued with the Simply Garnett slogan. They assisted the team to get to our destination as we used google maps to assist but the signs allowed us to turn where we needed to. The blue oversized street signs were my favorite. Not only are they super easy to read, the unique color and the black lamp post style gives the city street signage soft charm.
- c. Storefronts on main streets appear clean, updated, and accessible. We toured the community on a snow day and almost all businesses had their sidewalks and parking lots clear when we arrived at 11:30. Street signs are large and easy to read. I prefer the blue color and size, in comparison to other communities. Again, we went on a snow day. Both ends of the community had Welcome to Garnett signs. The signs were worn slightly from exposure to the elements.
- d. There weren't very many for sale signs in the yards. Their consistent use of the Garnett logo was consistent in signage all throughout the town, we noticed this immediately. We noticed there are nice, well-kept homes alongside neglected properties. Our first stop, the library, was easy to find.
- e. Good amount and variety of businesses. Signs made it easy to navigate through town. For the most part businesses and houses seemed well maintained, with the exception of a few here and there.
- f. Blue and white street name signs are wonderful. Easy to read at distance & speed. Because of snow on ground could not see very many sidewalks out of downtown. At least no one had shoveled in front of their homes. Both schools Jr/Sr High (new) and Elementary (new) were on the outskirts of the city & hence walkability to schools could be an issue. Both schools looked very updated. Welcome to city signs on both ends of 59 Hwy & very noticeable. Modern "digital signing" absent. The Anderson County Historical Museum had 8 ft. fence surrounding the building which made it look more like a detention facility than a museum. Downtown lights with light poles are very nice.

### **3. 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. Downtown around the square is probably above average for the size of Garnett. There are old buildings and some empty properties. The east side of the square is empty and looks like it will soon be under construction. Some eateries around the square as well as antique stores and second hand shops, a law office. The customer service throughout Garnett was friendly, welcoming eager to assist. In a general statement it was exceptional and everyone spoke positively about their community and about their city.
  
- b. The downtown area was clean. It was well taken care of and again the wayfinding signs were a great addition. The business signage was sometimes difficult to see from a vehicle, so we parked the vehicle and walked. The one thing that stood out was the number of empty store fronts. The storefronts were kept up as well. A lot of pride in their downtown area. Loved the sitting area and mural near Malone's. This is a great gathering point to sit and enjoy the downtown area. We observed many craft/shops in the downtown area. The quality and variety was great. The prices were also very reasonable. We walked into several shops just to look. Some were closed (probably due to weather/school closings that day). Some of the shops we entered included Josephine's and Country Fabrics. Both stores had friendly owners and were very interested in assisting our group. We were greeted immediately by the owner of Josephine's, but the owner of Country Fabrics was not in front of store. We walked in and most of the group after 5-7 minutes left. One stayed behind and was able to meet the store owner eventually. We ate at Malone's. This was a great place that wasn't busy and had great food. We waited a bit for just sandwiches but there was no hurry. The downtown area seemed somewhat deserted but there were many vehicles. We also stopped by City Hall and received a friendly greeting by staff who was more than accommodating. City hall was clean and again, the front area seemed to have lots of tourism information on display; everything Garnett is about.
  
- c. Downtown was large, with some empty storefronts. Most of the stores had cleaned off the sidewalks in front of their businesses (snow day). The biggest take-away was the lack of customers at shops and restaurants. We went into a gift shop that had a variety of items ranging from cookbooks, Christmas ornaments, to seasonal décor. We went to a fabric store and met with the owner. He said that if it were not for out of town customers, some from as far away as Pittsburg, KS, he would not be able to keep his doors open. He did provide a service of fixing and cleaning sewing machines, which is a unique service that is hard to find. Employees in local businesses were very quick to help answer any questions that we had regarding the community. When in the gift shop and city hall, all local businesses and restaurants were recommended. No one provided negative recommendations or feedback regarding competition. It provided a sense of community, when business owners are building up the products and services offered by their neighbors. Downtown was large, with some empty storefronts. Most of the stores had cleaned off the sidewalks in front of their businesses (snow day). The biggest take-away was the lack of customers at shops and restaurants.

- d. Empty buildings on the square, several antique/flea market businesses. At least 2 non-franchise restaurants on the square. Some buildings nicely kept up, others in need of paint and repair. It was a very cold day in February, so the retail businesses were not busy but the restaurant where we had lunch was packed. A small, gift/furniture/workshop business. We all purchased several items there. It was lovely, and the employee working was very nice and let us walk all around the business. Two antique/flea market businesses were clean, well maintained. Employees were nice and inviting. The Yoder grocery store was very nice, it was the first business we visited, and one employee immediately said, "Welcome to Garnett!" as soon as we told her we were from out of town. Clean, well lit, obviously a popular spot in town. We were greeted, did not have to ask for help, welcomed.
- e. The appearance of buildings on the square were maintained, there were a few that looked as if they had been remodeled to match the era the buildings were built. Those that had been remodeled looked great, it would be nice to see more businesses do the same. I really think it would improve the overall appearance of the square. The courthouse was beautiful and a real focal point. We visited a few businesses on the north side of the square. One that stood out was Monroe 816. What a great little shop, not only did they have great products they also provide fun DIY opportunities. Another store that was impressive was Yoder's. There were a few reasons I want to come back to Garnett, this was one of them. Friendly and welcoming customer service in all businesses.
- f. Mostly service oriented businesses around square (no sales tax), several restaurants of various cuisine, specialty stores (fabric), and novelty (knick knack) shops. Street lighting was good and mounted on metal poles not just light on wooden poles. Several shops without displays and could not identify the type of business from a distance. Were some empty/unused buildings. Store traffic downtown was minimal although lots of vehicles parked at courthouse. Stores were kept very clean. One of the stores we were greeted right away as we entered and clerk very friendly.  
One store when entered, we could not find or see a clerk until we were getting ready to leave then he/she appeared. Customer traffic was minimal. Restaurant waitress greeted us as we sat down. All were friendly and courteous.

**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. Garnett had public restrooms, benches, waste receptacles and overall was clean; taking into account that their winter had more of a presence than we are used to viewing. Parking was not a problem, around the square there were plenty of cars, indicating a busy downtown.
- b. Because of the snow, we were unable to see many of the amenities in the downtown/park areas. We did notice the trash receptacles and some benches in the downtown area. Parking was a little difficult to find at about 11:00 a.m. There were many vehicles in the downtown area, but we didn't notice that many people. We were able to park in front of City Hall and walk around the downtown square and find a place to eat. Everything was within walking distance on nicely cared-for sidewalks.

- c. Numerous benches were available around the courthouse. Some trash receptacles available around the downtown square. Public restrooms were available at City Hall and some were available at the Legion Park (not utilized though). Most businesses were prompt in getting their sidewalks and parking lots cleaned from the snow. It made businesses more accessible and welcoming to visitors.
- d. I think public WIFI was available at the library. We noticed benches along the walking trail, and at various points. I don't know about restrooms and trash cans. Honestly, I was the driver and I couldn't take notes about details like that. We did not have trouble with parking. It was dull, cold dreary February so landscaping was not really a highlight. The library had a lovely little outside garden/reading spot, but it was locked, so it apparently isn't utilized.
- e. No Answer
- f. Public restrooms were available in city hall & restaurants. Restrooms were not easily identified in the retail stores. Trash receptacles and benches available around square. Did not see water fountains. No "Wi-Fi available" signing in stores. Parking was not difficult to find and could navigate around square easily from where we parked. The retail stores, restaurants and courthouse all available from parking areas. Snow piles made access more difficult for pedestrians.

#### **4. Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

- a. Noted: Large SUPER Market with large pharmacy attached. Two to three additional pharmacies. These were located on main thoroughfares with ample parking and areas were cleaned after snow storms. Amish had a store outside of town to the west that we visited, store was interesting, provided homemade items and multiple spices along with other items for purchase. The parking lot here was not paved and somewhat treacherous.
- b. We passed by a pharmacy and grocery store that had lots of parking and were large enough to accommodate lots of people. It was well lit and right off Maple, a main throughway in Garnett. The Flower shop in town is beautiful place and had traffic even on a snowy day.
- c. Local stores, grocery stores, and businesses appeared clean and well-kept. There weren't any places that I would feel unsafe in visiting.
- d. There were several cute shops we would have liked to visit but ran out of time. I have always been interested in the flower shop on the highway going through town, because it looks cheerful and welcoming. We also didn't get to go into the farm store, but we really enjoyed the Yoder store.
- e. Shopping areas were conveniently located with a variety of shops.
- f. Along Hwy 59 there were strip type malls with various vendor types. Laundromat, florist, banks (3), Subway, Pizza Hut, DQ, Dollar Store, hardware store, sportswear store, lumber yard, new & used car dealers. All were easily accessed from main road. All stores were well kept.

## **5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

- a. Did not visit a specific industrial park. Several citizens described the Ethanol Plant on the South end of town as a vital part of the city's economy, also noted the old train depot and its importance to the community.
- b. We did see an industrial area, but I don't believe it was clearly marked. We had done some research online and the City website has a great selection of industrial properties available but did not find an "Industrial park" per se. The online access is a great asset because there is a point of contact and all the properties are listed and include pictures.
- c. Did not see a designated industrial area, but did notice where I believe a new business could potentially be located.
- d. I don't think we found it.
- e. Didn't see any on our visit.
- f. Could not find a well identified Industrial park. Drove past ethanol plant, several city/county public service yards (yards could use straightening or fence to cover unsightly inventory). Water, Wastewater & Electrical areas looked secured (fenced).

## **6. Health Care Services**

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

- a. Excellent hospital, relatively new, physician's offices, optometry, chiropractic offices, dental offices drug stores and EMS observed. Community appears to have a healthy medical system supported and owned by St. Luke's of Kansas City. Physical Therapy available at the hospital and a local independent provider working in the community.
- b. Anderson County Hospital was one of the newer buildings in the area. Very well maintained, landscaping, and parking. Another great asset in the community.
- c. Community hospital and clinics looked new/recently updated and welcoming. Signage was helpful and easy to understand. We noticed one pharmacy in town. It was a great perk that it appeared to offer delivery of medications, which would be an asset for local citizens, especially homebound or elderly.
- d. Unfortunately, we couldn't visit the hospital or assisted living. The hospital seems like it is centrally located and fairly modern.
- e. There was a very nice healthcare center on the main road. By looking at the parking full parking lot it seemed as if it was well used and a vital part of the community.
- f. Hospital was in great condition with a medical clinic nearby. Looked like a newer facility. Pharmacy was available near on Hwy 59.

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

- a. No answer (NA)
- b. We were able to find a family care center and a mental health facility and an optometrist. We didn't see a dentist (we may have just missed it).
- c. No answer (NA)
- d. I believe I noticed an eye doctor office.
- e. No answer (NA)
- f. Clinic was near hospital physicians available there. Observed a dentist, optometrist, pharmacy, and audiologist.

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

- a. One nursing home with long term care and with swing bed availability observed. The facility looked well-maintained and busy, appeared to provide all therapy needed for this type of care.
- b. We did see a long-term care facility called Parkview, but it was small. Their website was also a great way to find out more about that facility and the type of programs available.
- c. As mentioned, the community appears very accommodating to the aging population. Most rural Kansas communities' often struggle adapting to the needs of the aging population. The senior center, assisted living, long-term care, community resources, delivery of prescriptions, medical (doctors, optometrists, hearing aids, dentists, etc.) are assets in rural communities. These opportunities could be an attraction for seniors that are seeking independence, but also local resources to meet their needs.
- d. I know we drove past one assisted living center
- e. On our visit we came across on facility that appeared to be a nursing home. From the outside it seemed to be well maintained.
- f. There are three. Anderson County Hospital Residential Living Center, Golden Heights Living Center and Guest Home Estates.

## **7. 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.)**

- a. Few for sale signs observed. Neighborhoods from affluent to moderate income to low income observed. Excellent low income housing (duplexes) and one apartment complex, Garnett Housing Authority. Not many empty houses. The local weekly newspaper however had several realtors listed with their advertisements for home sales.
- b. We didn't see much for sale (we were looking for realtor 'FOR- SALE' signs). We stopped at a realtor's office and they directed us to a new development that has some land available to build but only 3 homes had been built in that area. There was a variety of houses (styles) in Garnett from 2-3 story to ranch style. We didn't see many new homes or neighborhoods. The



- challenge I see is there aren't many options for new homes. Younger families may be looking for different style of home/low maintenance so that might be hurting Garnett in attracting younger families.
- c. We went into Gold Key Realty and received information on all local properties on the market. The availability of homes in various price ranges appeared available. If a family was particular in regards to the age of home, there weren't a lot of new homes available to purchase.
  - d. We spent quite a bit of time driving around neighborhoods, looking at the difference in housing options. There are brick apartment complexes that seem located close to conveniences. There are several mid to upscale neighborhoods with nice homes. There was a small group of what we thought were senior house duplexes, located in an attractive area where walking seemed safe. We saw older restored homes, old neglected homes, 70's ranch style houses, and small cottage/bungalow types. I believe we only saw one for rent sign in front of a nice small house. Only saw a very few for sale sign in yards. I think I saw at least two realty businesses.
  - e. Many nice neighborhoods with a variety of houses that seem to offer options to those house hunting. There were also many houses that were well maintained, but unfortunately there would be many that were surrounded by houses that were ran down. Did not notice many for sale signs in yards, but after searching on Zillow was able to get a little look at the availability. Didn't seem like there were many options but for a small town that seems to be normal. The houses available seemed to be good starter homes. I was impressed with the quality of the newer low income housing complex.
  - f. Housing stock aging, lots of two story houses. Was a new sub-division with one new house being built and two complete homes, these were mid to upper priced.

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

- a. Did not observe rental signs on properties.
- b. We stopped by City Hall and they could not provide us a list of landlords. City staff mentioned there were not very many rentals available in town and recommended going to Key Realty.
- c. We didn't see a lot of rental homes available. There were a few, but not a lot of variety in the choices if a new family moving to town was interested in renting prior to building/buying a home.
- d. NA
- e. Only noticed a few for rent signs while driving through.
- f. Realtor says all rentals full and there is a waiting list. Did not see for rent signs around town.



## 8. 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. Excellent looking schools – One new grade school located on Highway 59 as you leave town to the north. High school and Junior High on the same campus, 20 to 25 years old with a new football facility located on their campus. One Catholic Grade School located near the local Catholic Church, the building was not new but was well maintained.
- b. We passed by an elementary school and a combined middle/high school. Both seemed to be newer schools. The middle/high school seemed to be brand new. Grounds were very well maintained. When we arrived, the school was closed due to snow. No snow had been removed from the drive. This school seems to be a great asset to the community as the building was big in comparison to the size of the City and it shows the pride they have in their school because it was pristine.
- c. Local schools were closed on the day of the visit due to the weather. The Elementary and Middle/High School appeared new, clean, and safe for students. Everything was well maintained and clean. We also saw a Head Start and daycare facilities. When discussing with a local citizen, she stated there were several daycare facilities available in town if a family was needed daycare options.
- d. Very impressive, 2-3-year-old middle school just as you enter the north end of town, located on the highway. We did not go inside. Jr/Sr high school was approximately 25 years old, according to a man we visited with. It was red brick, located on the west side of town, we did not go inside. I don't know what is available for Head Start/ pre-K.
- e. Was very impressed with the new elementary school. It is a great first sight when you pull into town from the north. The high school building itself seems as if it is good shape, however it is in major need of character. Trees on the yard, some all season landscape, something that shows school spirit, etc.
- f. A new county wide JR/SR High School, a newer Elementary School, Graham School for Cattlemen and Women & St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Catholic School. Did not observe post-secondary, or Pre-School but there was a Neosho County Community College (Goppert Eastern Kansas Rural Technology Center) facility. High School & Elementary Schools looked very adequate & well maintained. Not sure about others.

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

- a. None other than community members stated that several families choose to live in Garnett and commute to work in surrounding cities such as Olathe/Ottawa. Says something for the quality of their education.
- b. USD 365 website was an awesome website with up to date information about the school's activities and pictures. Greatschool.org had some reviews about the school but other than that, questions about the educational system were not answered.
- c. NA
- d. I am sorry to admit I did not access online information.
- e. The webpage had a great video "USD 365 - A small community with a big passion for your child's education!" that I felt did a fantastic job at sharing the strengths of their school district. I think that it would not only attract potential families to the district, but also potential teachers. I would have liked to see on the school page a section that had a short bio and picture of teachers to give the website a more personal feel.
- f. Could not find any apparent direct links to educational system on the city web page. There was a business directory on the city web site that listed the schools.

**9. Childcare**

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

- a. Not observed
- b. I did not see any child care facilities when we toured Garnett. A website search after our tour on [www.childcarecenter.us/kansas](http://www.childcarecenter.us/kansas) showed us there are at least 10 child care facilities/in home day care available. This is incredible as our City struggles with this. I was unable to find pricing for childcare.
- c. When talking to a local business owner, she mentioned that the community has several daycare options available in the community.
- d. No Answer
- e. Answer was "N/A"
- f. Talked to a resident and we were told childcare is quite abundant in Garnett. Price was not mentioned.

## **10. 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. Several Church representing most mid-west denominations. In the local *Anderson County Community News*, 6 Catholic Churches, 5 Methodists Churches, 4 Baptist Churches as well as several from main stream Christianity.
- b. Like many cities in Kansas, there definitely was no shortage in denominations in Garnett. We found Christian, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Life and Lutheran just from our drive. All the churches were in great condition.
- c. Many churches were noticed throughout the community and most seemed in good condition. A couple looked as though they had recently expanded or remodeled.
- d. I believe that Garnett must have some religious attendance. Several older churches appeared neglected and run down. We visited the Catholic Church, went inside the building and observed the Catholic school next door. We noticed at least 2 flyers in business windows for religious activities in town.
- e. Visited the Catholic Church. It was beautiful and well maintained. Also saw a few flyers for fun church-sponsored events that seemed like they would attract a variety of people.
- f. Life Assembly of God Church, Nazarene Church, Christian Church, Baptist Church, Catholic Church, Methodist Church, Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, New Life Baptist Church. Catholic charities sponsors a Mobile Resource Bus, food bank and rent & utility assistance. Information was available at city hall.

## **11. Civic**

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

- a. Not observed.
- b. Volunteerism and civic organizations are overflowing in Garnett. We noticed posters/ signs in almost every store front. The City website 'Bulletin Board' is a great idea. There is also a links page on the City website. Everywhere we went in Garnett, there were flyers of lunches and support groups, and service opportunities. The City website had a community calendar that had all sort of information
- c. Big Brothers Big Sisters, Food Pantry on the Square? (closed due to the weather and based on signage, not certain exactly what services were offered)
- d. NA
- e. When entering businesses I noted many flyers for events that were hosted by a variety of organizations. The events seemed like they would be the type that would draw people.
- f. Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, VFW. Did not observe any civic organization activity.

## **12. Public Infrastructure**

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

- a. Street signs were excellent – unique signage – very attractive. Winter snow obstructed some of the view, streets around the square needed repair, probably the result of winter damage.
- b. Streets in main throughways were kept up. Side streets seemed better than most but could use some overlay. Signage throughout the entire City was great. Large blue streets signs help identify streets.
- c. Lighting was observed in most of the areas we visited. There appeared to be a shortage of sidewalks in certain areas of town, especially in residential areas. However, there was snow on the ground and they may have been hidden from view.
- d. Signage was HUGE. We were very impressed by the consistency in the use of their city logo throughout the signs in the city, even down to the patch on a city workers hat and work shirt. We felt that the signs all through town were easy to see and identify because of the use of the logo, and helped us find many things we wanted to see. We were very intrigued by the campground by North Lake, the walking trail, the recreational complex (ball fields, rec center, swim pool, golf course) the campground was awesome!
- e. I was impressed with the city logo used for signage, employee attire, and city vehicles. I felt that it did a good job of unifying the town. There were plenty of signs that made navigating through town simple.
- f. Signs coming into town very visible & bright. Lighting downtown was attractive with antique black poles & lights. Streets in residential areas do need some work. Restrooms in city hall are smaller & not easily found by visitors.

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

- a. City Hall layout is good; Chamber of Commerce, City Offices and Police Department are all together with modern buildings, well maintained with very friendly and helpful staff
- b. We were very well received in City Hall. It wasn't very big, but they noticed us come in and asked how they could help us. The bathrooms were off the hallway which led to the City offices so not very secure. We were given goody bags and a calendar of events which was very handy and recommendations of where to eat!
- c. The people at City Hall were amazing. It was neat to see information at the entrance when you walk in. The main part of the building was very nice and open. However, getting to the restrooms was not easy and kind of cramped.
- d. Very welcomed here. Visited with the chamber of commerce director and she was very nice and inviting. Walked through the city hall and as luck would have it, a man who was super informative and very nice told us a lot about Garnett and answered questions. He works for the city in some capacity. Lots and lots of great flyers and brochures, both regional and statewide were available in city hall.

- e. A gentlemen greeted us and was very happy to answer any questions that we had. He was also enthusiastic about Garnett, made me excited to be visiting the community. There were an abundance of flyers with community happenings.
- f. City Hall personnel were very helpful & courteous. Abundant information was available. Shopping, Dinning, Lodging information. Info on special events. Information about Garnett rec center, information about area outdoor camping and lake activities, Info about Trails & parks, bed & breakfasts, campgrounds, RV parks, special events for the years. Maps of the lake area, sports complex, and Garnett all available at city hall. ONE STOP SHOP FOR GARNETT INFORMATION. The city also produces a newsletter. City also used social media to promote the city (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).

**Police/fire protection:**

- a. City Police, Anderson County Sheriff Department, Garnett Fire Department
- b. We did not stop by the Police/fire station, but it is a beautiful facility and looked new as well.
- c. NA
- d. We saw the fire department but not the police.
- e. NA
- f. Police & Fire are located downtown on the backside of City Hall. Fire department vehicles seem to be newer and at least one ladder truck of the three larger fire trucks.

**Library:**

- a. Excellent Library, helpful friendly staff. Small Genealogy Library was helpful and found the information I was looking for.
- b. We did not stop by the Library.
- c. Did not go in but it was pointed out that there was art available to view at the library.
- d. Beautiful and very welcoming. Librarian could be just a little negative about certain aspects of the library as far as upkeep and art exhibit, but we assured her she was quite lucky to have the size and benefit of the library/art. Definitely a positive for the town and was pretty busy while we were there.
- e. The library is centrally located and seemed to be well maintained. The Walker Art addition was unbelievable for a town the size of Garnett. There were multiple spaces for meetings, the feel of the library seemed cozy and accepting, staff was helpful.
- f. Observed public library with Walker Art Gallery collections. Close to downtown area within walking distance.

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

- a. Several parks, sports complex, rodeo ring, tennis courts, Prairie Spirit walking/biking trail.
- b. Unfortunately, because of the snow, we were not able to check out the City park amenities. Walking tracks/trails were covered in snow. The City website was able to give me lots of information on the Park facilities and the incredible parks the City has. I also found the 51-mile hiking and biking trail on the city website. I loved the idea of a Garnett outdoor Recreation Guide.

- c. The park at the south end of town was very open. I loved the pond and ducks. There was some equipment and benches, however, some of it could be updated. The bathrooms were not eye appealing.
- d. Swimming pool is small and outdated. Ball parks looked nice, with a nice concession area and a playground. Golf course hole markers were awesome, clubhouse small and older but probably sufficient. Rec. center was amazing use of an old Armory, much to offer and very clean and well-maintained. Walking trail was very intriguing and we'd all like to go back and follow it. While we were at the rec center early in the day, we saw several senior citizens using equipment, and after school was dismissed, we saw children and families going inside.
- e. The recreation area around Lake Garnett was impressive and gets an A+. There is so much that this area offers to Garnett citizens, and I'm guessing it draws in out of towners. The sports complex, especially the baseball fields, were nice. And I can't forget about the Prairie Spirit Trail, wow!
- f. Large outdoor sport complex, walking trails, indoor sports recreation facility with pool, Veterans Park. Lots of outdoor activities.

### **13. 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. Library houses the Walker Art Collection, which is a stunning collection for a City the size of Garnett.
- b. Simply Garnett was a slogan that was easy to remember. The City seems to have everything tagged with the slogan. It's on the signs and marketing material. The City website address is also the slogan. Something I heard about by a resident and a City staff member was the Community champions which is a celebration of active volunteers. This idea and event are a great way to bring people and these groups together to celebrate what they do AND get others to join to learn about the opportunities there are in Garnett to volunteer. The Cedar Valley reservoir was somewhere we stopped. The reservoir has bathrooms and boat docks although we didn't see many places to sit (picnic tables).
- c. When we asked at City Hall they told us about 3 different events that they have throughout the year. The grand prix event at the reservoir interested me.
- d. Gran Prix event at the north lake
- e. I felt that Lake Garnett and the trail would bring people into Garnett.
- f. City uses "Simply...Garnett, Kansas" as slogan.

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

- a. Annual Lake Garnett Grand Prix Motor Cross, draws many people and coverage by the Kansas City Star newspaper. RECREATION CENTER, unused Army Armory was given back to the City and through a GRANT was turned into a 24/7 Membership Recreations center featuring a basketball court, weight rooms, cardio conditioning room and a room set up to teach yoga.

- b. The City has a Farmers Market every Thursday in the summer which sells lots of fresh produce, farm raised meat and eggs and other homemade items. This is a great opportunity for residents and visitors to stop and buy a variety of local items.
- c. NA
- d. Oh yes, there were several flyers for community events that appealed to us. It seemed that even in cold winter months, the community found reasons to get together.
- e. Plenty of flyers with events that stood out to me. I found myself wanting to take some of the ideas back to our town.
- f. Due to the snow, the "Community Champions & Everyday Heroes" event had been postponed but calendar was full of events for entire year.

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

- a. Prairie Spirit Trail goes from Ottawa to Iola, running through Garnett. Have an annual 10 K run from Garnett to Scipio along this trail.
- b. Cedar Valley Reservoir & Crystal Lake. Also, their up and coming disc golf is a growing sport and I believe that might bring tournaments to their town.
- c. NA
- d. The north lake, the campground, the grand prix event, the walking trail that runs to Iola
- e. Lake Garnett, Prairie Spirit Trail, Walker Art Museum.
- f. Garnett has a Lake nearby that during season would attract fishing & other outdoor activities. The Library does have the Walker Art Gallery Exhibition. Several campgrounds/RV parks in 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.**

- a. Chamber of Commerce
- b. I didn't see one, but when you entered City Hall, you clearly could tell the chamber had their material in the entry way to City Hall.
- c. We went into the City Hall. The ladies working were more than accommodating, friendly, and helpful. They provided information regarding community events, festivals, restaurants, and attractions. They would make any visitor feel welcome. The City Hall was open and welcoming and had a large variety of community resources handouts available for the public.
- d. Yes, all facilities were clean, easily identifiable, and people were welcoming and friendly
- e. Yes. Everyone seemed excited that we were there. The town logo made it easy to recognize city offices and employees.
- f. The city hall serves as a great visitor's center. The hall is ADA accessible, sells limited "Garnett" clothing, and provides information on all activities going on and in future. The staff was very courteous and knowledgeable on the city.



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

- a. Several restaurants, Mexican, Chinese, Bar and Grills, Cafes. One remodeled restaurant on Highway 59, The Dutch Country Café will be opening soon. Yoder Store also serves food. Sonic, Dairy Queen Subway and others.
- b. Garnett Famers Market. It was not open, but I would come back to check it out.
- c. The fabric store with the machine repair was unique. The reservoir looked like a neat place for camping and hiking.
- d. yes, all facilities were clean, easily identifiable, and people were welcoming and friendly
- e. Yes, great food and service at Trade Winds Bar and Grill. There were a couple other restaurants that we were told about that I plan to go back and try. Also, Yoder's would bring be back.
- f. The Yoder's Country Store is a unique store that I would revisit.

**14. Wrap-up**

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

- a. Overall economy appears to be healthy. Unemployment is low, there are 270 jobs available on the web for Garnett and the surrounding area. This may partially account for the warm positive attitude of the citizens.
- b. Being new to Southeast Kansas (smaller town), I found it refreshing to find a 'small town' that had so many amenities. I tried to envision myself visiting to go live there. From a visitor driving though, there was lots to do and offer. The amenities would attract young and old and everything in between. Housing could be tough to find but seeing everything that is happening in Garnett, the rest will follow.
- c. Personally, it appears that the community has a focus (intentional or not) to be an aging friendly community. In comparison to other rural communities, Garnett appears to have community resources, transportation (flyer indicated it was available), senior center (appeared active, although was closed due to weather), local senior medical (hearing, vision, doctors' offices) and walking trails. Since most rural communities lack in these opportunities, it could be a selling point for rural seniors who need more local opportunities but don't want to live in larger communities. The town I believe has the ability to grow and cater to those that want to work in the city but have a quieter place to raise their family.
- d. General upbeat attitude. Rec center, walking trail. Signage and consistent use of Garnett logo.
- e. Proud of their community. Great outdoor areas. New school facilities.
- f. The amount of information available basically at city hall informs visitors of everything going on and places to visit or stores to shop. Street Signs are bright and very noticeable. The Sports Complex (indoor & outdoor) Amenities like these tend to keep our residents and kids in our communities and keep them coming back. Zoning and Permitting - Keeps property values higher and limits undesirable housing. Also improves the moral of the community and attracts new business and industry.

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

- a. The economy is based on agriculture, the Ethanol Plant and businesses in surrounding cities. Should agriculture decline this could affect the overall community.
- b. We heard about a trail but didn't see signage for where it starts. Signs around town to indicate where that trail starts would be helpful. The Yoder store was a cultural point of interest. It was OK. Nothing too exciting. Have been to YODER Kansas was hoping for more home-made items for sale. Some homes were pretty run down. Not sure how housing code/building code. I do remember houses that stood out like the black Victorian and the mermaid house.
- c. Talking to a couple citizens/business owners, the community does have a few issues. Retaining population may be an issue with activities or engagement for youth. Families have to travel to other communities for bowling, roller skating, etc. This isn't only a Garnett issue; it is a rural Kansas issue. Another issue is sustaining rural businesses, buy engaging the "shop local" mindset and bringing residents/tourist downtown. We went on a snow day, so it may be different on a typical day, but all stores and restaurants were empty. One shop owner said "Welcome to our sleepy little town" which indicated that maybe there wasn't much excitement for people wanting to engage in activities.
- d. Empty buildings downtown. Neglected homes and business locations.
- e. NA
- f. Downtown Square - Traffic is slow at best for the outer perimeter stores. Retail signing & store fronts improvements would be great. Seemed to be limited lodging availability for visitors. Housing availability for low and mid-range buyers.

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

- a. Friendly, warm well-designed community; thought was given to design areas of the city for the future. Excellent recreation and fitness facilities.
- b. The Ad Astra Per Aspera mural in downtown Garnett. Nice seating area and beautiful Sun painted on the side of the building. There has also some thought behind getting people to come to their City. The feel that there is a tourism plan. A combination of their website/amenities offered/signs/variety of business/cleanliness/ and definite pride in living in Garnett captured me.
- c. The town appeared welcoming, accessible, and clean. While there were some empty storefronts downtown, the established businesses along the main streets appeared well-kept and clean. The fence around the museum was unsightly, but I understand why it was there because of the basketball courts. There were also some uniquely painted homes in the area. It was not a detriment from my point of view, just interesting how some will apply paint.
- d. The potential they seem to see in themselves and that they are working to move forward. That they have accomplished some big things that we hope to do as well, specifically the rec center, the walking trail, the signs, a new school.
- e. NA
- f. The Sport Complex that Garnett has invested in is a positive resource for the community.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

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



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