

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Goessel

Date(s) Visited: a.) 11/5/19
b.) 11/4/19
c.) 11/6/19
d.) 10/28/19

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. The city's website, Facebook page, and other online searches provided a very detailed depiction of Goessel and captured the small town charm. The city website provided information from past and upcoming events. The school's website was also attractive and easy to navigate.
- b. Very easy! It did reflect what I saw. No difficulty at all. The city's official website was loaded with much relevant information and easy to navigate. The website gave me a complete picture of Goessel. Very impressive.
- c. The website was easy to find and very informative. The information appeared to be accurate.
- d. Finding information on Goessel was simple. The City of Goessel has a website which contains a newsletter. The newsletter covers past events, the weather, and a calendar of upcoming local events. Wikipedia is a great resource for learning about the history, geography and demographics. The best website is the Mennonite Heritage Museum as it is easy to find information on the hours the museum is open, prices, and contact information. Their site also has many nice photos which accurately depict the museum.

- 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. When I came into town I first drove the entire city, going down street by street and tried to map out where local businesses were located. I have to say I was impressed with the housing and their neat appearance. I kept telling myself “this is a quaint little town.” There were very few houses that needed some up keep or torn down. It also appeared that there was a good variety of housing options to suit everybody’s budget. I came into Goessel on Highway 15 and turned onto their Main Street. When coming into town I noticed a large rock with the city name and the landscaping neatly manicured around it making it very visible. Additionally, I saw a newer looking LED sign with “Goessel” on it and a scroll with city information for their citizens. The street signs were in new condition and very easy to read. The streets were in good shape and vary from pavement to gravel in a lot of areas throughout town. I did notice some rather unpleasant property with wild grass grown up around it and “Private Property” signs all around. It also appeared that, while never really identified, the city’s “industrial park” was what you first saw coming into town with several businesses present (i.e., Kevin’s Auto Body & Paint, Mt. T’s Car Wash, Funk Electric, etc.)
 - b. Generally, properties throughout Goessel have a neat, well-maintained, attractive appearance. No downtown area, most businesses were located along the highway which serves as their main street. A full range of housing options were noticed. Very few blighted properties exist. Attractive town! I entered from the south on Highway 15 and turned west onto Highway 215 (Main Street), circled the outskirts of town on surrounding gravel roads, then traveled each of the streets through town in each direction. Goessel is located in the midst of well-maintained farmland. City streets are in good condition and well-marked with easy to read street signs. Businesses and houses are somewhat interspersed in places. There are attractive welcome signs as you enter town from the highway and on Main Street. Adequate signage directs you to the places of interest. See image 20191104_140325. All signage looked like new or was in good condition. A city welcome sign also acknowledged high school students who recently placed well at the state cross country meet, as well as upcoming local school and civic events. One detraction from the overall attractive appearance entering town was the vacant lot on the highway at the entrance to town. The vacant lot was not mowed and had a sign posted on it that impressed me as being relatively unfriendly.
 - c. The town had a clean and neat appearance. Noticed the schools, bank, and grocery store. The side streets were dirt, but homes had been kept up nicely. The signs off the highway were very nice and attractive. I didn’t see signage from other entrances.
 - d. This is a well-kept community with very few yards that have excessive junk. Part of the town still has gravel roads which were dusty and had a wash board effect (only a small inconvenience). My first impression is that Goessel reflects a quaint bedroom community. Most of the older, historic type homes, are well maintained. There was only 1 abandoned house on the corner of State Street that may need to be torn down. Several homes had nice landscaping. About ½ mile before arriving in Goessel, there is an attractive sign for The Mennonite Heritage Museum. The Alexanderwohl Church is a beautiful landmark on the outskirts of town. A nice rock sign that says “Established in 1895.”

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. Goessel did not really have a “downtown area” per say. However, they did have several old, historic buildings on Main Street that appeared to be in decent shape. Some of those buildings were being utilized at the present time as well. My very first stop was into Keith’s Foods, a small grocery store because I couldn’t find anywhere to use the restroom upon coming into town. While inside, I looked around and absolutely loved the “old grocery store” vibe Keith’s gave off. I spoke with James, store employee, and Keith. James was very knowledgeable about Goessel. (Further details below on customer service). It had very competitive prices for a small town and had everything from basic nonperishable food items, fresh produce, and fresh cuts of meat. It also housed a Hunt Brother’s Pizza and you could buy freshly made sandwiches there. Lincoln Perk is a small coffee shop inside the Bethesda Home nursing home. It is not well visible and if you are not a local you would not know it exists as it is in a place not common to most. I didn’t tour this business while on my adventure. I was greeted by James at Keith’s Foods and he was very knowledgeable and helpful when I asked questions. I asked a lot! He told me of the ways Keith has diversified his income to sustain a grocery store in a small town (i.e., catering jobs, butcher, pizza business, and a multitude of events he hosts for the local churches and schools). James also told me about the things to do in town or lack thereof of things to do for youth. Despite some of the challenges he described, you could tell he was proud of the history and took pride in his community. At one point, I spoke with Keith, while brief, he told me of some of the things he does in the community and that he had already cooked 7 turkeys this morning and still had 6 more to cook for a community Thanksgiving dinner.
- b. No downtown area. Lincoln Perk is a small eating area just inside the entrance to Bethesda Home that sells gourmet coffee, fresh pastries, and fresh fruit smoothies to the public. Very tasty food and good service. Keith’s Foods is a small grocery store, but had a full range of what any household would need, plus a fresh-cut meat counter, deli, eating area, small public restroom. At Lincoln Perk, I had an enjoyable conversation about the town with the receptionist for Bethesda Home who promptly greeted me and also served me. An employee at Keith’s Foods greeted me and was ready for me at check-out. I asked if Keith was available and was told that Keith was out finding some milk for a customer. I had already stopped at Lincoln Perk in Bethesda Home for a fruit smoothie and overheard someone there say that Keith went to look for some almond milk for them. It is obvious that Keith, the owner of the grocery store in town, will do anything to assist a customer!
- c. I didn’t see a specific downtown area other than entrance from highway. I did see a grocery store that had a good variety for the size of town. A single gas pump attached to a tire store. Two banks, Post Office, Library, City Office, and Electric

- business. The grocery store was the only place to get lunch. Nursing Home had a coffee shop. The grocery store customer service was nice but real outgoing. Just answered questions and continued back to their visiting. The lady at the City Office was a fill-in so did not know about the community.
- d. Goessel has a very small downtown, but offers all of the basic needs. It has a gas station, small grocery store, library, restaurant and city hall with several other small businesses. All businesses appeared clean on the outside. The CrossRoads Credit Union could use a fresh coat of paint. I spent quite a bit of time in Keith's Grocery Store. I thought it was the perfect small town grocery store. It had hunter green walls which is very inviting and old tins displayed in the shelves. The owners said they make most of their income on catering. There was all of the basic groceries. They did not inflate their prices like most small town stores. There was a crockpot full of taco meat and all of the toppings set up on a small card table and an area to meet with friends and have coffee. A small deli is in the back of the store and they grind fresh beef daily. I purchased freshly sliced ham, cheese, peanuts, and crackers. There is a clean restroom in the back of the store with easy access. We stopped in Keith's Grocery Store and the clerks were friendly, but not very talkative even though it was not busy. The staff at the museum visited with my husband and I for several minutes. One of the women showed us around the museum and was very passionate about the Mennonite history. The worker at Lincoln Perk was pleasant and the HR officer employee was very talkative.

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. I noticed only a couple benches near the Bethesda Home and in front of City Hall but other than that I did not see any others. There were public restrooms inside the City Civic Center and a couple of drinking fountains there. The only Wi-Fi capabilities were in the Public Library and I'm only guessing as I did not see any signage about it but they had several computers within the Library. I didn't see any landscaping that was real "noteworthy" and parking didn't appear to be an issue anywhere.
- b. I noticed public benches in a nicely landscaped park area on the west side of the Bethesda Home campus and in another nicely landscaped park area in front of the city building where City Hall and the City Library are located. Drinking fountains and public restrooms were located inside the city building. Public restrooms are also in the shelter at the city park on the south end of town. A trash receptacle was located in front of Keith's Foods. Wi-Fi may have been available in the city building, but I didn't check. There were two small, attractively landscaped park areas along Main Street, one on the north side of Main Street just west of Bethesda Home, and another on the south side of Main Street in front of the city building. Ample parking was available at each business building.
- c. Public restrooms at park area attached to school grounds. The town was neat and clean.

- d. The public library has a Wi-Fi password posted in the entryway. Parking was limited, but sufficient the day I visited Goessel. In the museum, I noticed there was information about flooding during previous years outside of Keith's Grocery Store. This may cause a problem during the rainy season.

4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. The only retail shopping area I went to was Keith's. I had lunch while inside there and enjoyed it quite well. The sandwich prices were comparable and good to eat. The other businesses I observed but didn't go into were: Roadmaster Tire, Miller Funeral Home, Crossroads Credit Union, Post Office, and others at the east end of the city limits.
- b. The only retail businesses I noticed and patronized were Keith's Foods and Lincoln Perk.
- c. I only saw the grocery store and tire store.
- d. I did not notice any retail shopping stores other than the gift shop at the Mennonite Heritage Museum. I did buy a fabulous cookbook, pepper nuts, and a handmade kitchen tool to make pepper nuts. The gift shop was very attractive and had tasteful merchandise with reasonable prices.

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. As previously mentioned, it was not well labeled as to it being the "industrial park" on the east side of town but it did offer many different businesses and all buildings appeared to be in good condition. There was a trailer park behind these businesses that I would consider an "eye sore" as it is one of the first things you see coming into town. There was one commercial building up for sale that I noted.
- b. A variety of commercial buildings are located throughout town, however most are located on the east end of Main Street as you enter town. Almost all buildings were noted to be well-maintained with an attractive appearance. A printing company from Illinois plans to move into the vacant former Bethesda Hospital building on the south side of Main Street. Utility contractors were present and working on utilities for the building when I visited. City officials estimate the printing company will employ 5-10 persons. Business space is available for rent in Ratzlaff building on Main Street.
- c. I saw one area but could not tell if business was still open or not.
- d. I did not see a defined area; however, the abandoned hospital used to be used for a print shop and the locals said it had a new owner. The new owner replaced the roof and they were under the impression that it may be utilized again for some type of industry.

6. Health Care Services

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

- a. Goessel did not have any emergency medical services that I observed but upon looking up information online about Goessel and this very topic I noted Newton is a neighboring city with numerous medical & health service options.
- b. Newton is just 14 miles south of Goessel and has numerous medical offices, plus Newton Medical Center, a full-service hospital with emergency medical services, 18 miles from Goessel. Mercy Hospital is located in Moundridge, just 12 miles from Goessel. I didn't notice any medical offices in Goessel, however, many medical offices are located in Newton, just 14 miles away.
- c. I only saw a small Fire Department.
- d. I saw the nursing home and fire department.

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

- a. I didn't notice any medical, dental, or optometrists offices in Goessel.
- b. I didn't notice any medical offices in Goessel, however, many medical offices are located in Newton, just 14 miles away.
- c. I didn't see any medical facilities other than nursing home. There was an old hospital building
- d. I did not observe any of these facilities.

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

- a. Bethesda Home is a nursing home with occupancy for 43 residents. From speaking to patrons in the community they advised me it employees approximately 100 people.
- b. Mennonite Bethesda Society owns approximately 20 acres of property along two blocks of Main Street and surrounding areas. They own Bethesda Home and Retirement Center, a 43-room long-term nursing facility with an additional 10 assisted living rooms. They also own numerous independent living facilities in the surrounding area. Mennonite Bethesda Society is a nonprofit organization. Their most recent Form 990 on guidestar.org reports they employed 136 individuals in calendar year 2017 with total payroll and benefits of \$2,815,000. A newspaper clipping on the bulletin board in the Lincoln Perk coffee shop states they are a top-rated facility in Kansas. A drawback though is they are a nonprofit organization exempt from local property taxation. A parcel search on Marion County's website shows they own property in Goessel with an appraised value over \$4 million, all tax-exempt.
- c. One long term nursing home which housed the community's coffee shop.

- d. Bethesda Home which has long term care, several assisted living units in the community and a coffee shop inside the long term care facility. It is one of the nicest nursing homes that I have visited. The staff was super friendly and answered several questions. They offer meals to the community in their dining room for around \$5.00. I bought a gourmet coffee and it was as good as Starbucks. I was very impressed with Bethesda's cleanliness, inviting entry with a fall/pumpkin display. Outside was a bifold chalkboard sign for Lincoln Perk.

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. This section is where I felt Goessel thrived. They have a great selection of good quality, well-maintained homes in their city. Goessel offered housing that would suit incomes of lower, mid, and upper class incomes. There were a couple of different housing areas that were obviously well manicured lawns and neatly up kept homes. I only noted a few homes that were in need of some TLC. This is all in addition to the trailer park previously mentioned. I also noted a couple of housing being constructed near the Bethesda Home which shows me growth in a small town!
- b. Good quality, attractive houses of different sizes all throughout town! Very few houses for sale and very few blighted houses. Noticed maybe two or three blighted houses on Main Street and a few blighted houses on the southwest corner of town. See images 20191104_154245, 154252 and 154307. A small trailer park. See image 20191101_125635. If a person can't find acceptable housing available in town, they can quickly build in a new-looking housing development on the south side of the east end of Main Street across the street from Bethesda Home. It has 5-10 housing lots with utilities in place and ready for construction! Two new houses have already been built there. See images 20191104_130433 and 130133.
- c. There appeared to be a good mix of housing, but I only saw one home for rent. The Mennonite housing area was very nice. It looks like it might be a challenge to find available housing which is good for the community.
- d. I only saw 4 For Sale Signs. This appears to be a middle class community with housing prices around \$100,000 for an average sized (1200 sq ft) home. There is a new housing development going in.

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

- a. I noticed a few low income rental houses and a couple houses for sale in the "upper income" subdivisions. Upon doing a web search, these houses are listed for \$100k+
- b. I noticed low income rental housing and Bethesda Home rental housing for elderly. I noticed numerous duplexes in town but I didn't notice any "For Rent" signs though.

- c. I only saw one rental home and one business building for rent.
- d. I did not see any rental properties advertised.

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. Private preschool, Elementary, Junior, and Senior High Schools are in Goessel. The schools structurally appeared to be in good shape based on their age. The only thing I noted was there wasn't very sufficient signage to indicate what building was what exactly. There did not appear to be much in the way of "school pride" such as colors or artwork that was aesthetically pleasing while driving by. The preschool playground area was a small fenced area that did not appear to have a lot of playground equipment for the students. I did note and thought it was phenomenal that the Elementary school had a large solar panel for their energy source. This is huge and shows tourists how progressive a small town can be despite their size! Their school website even has a "Solar Panel Data" page that shows you how much energy has been saved from the panels on a day-to-day basis. I did also note there were several maintenance workers for the school district out working on landscaping and other projects throughout the school grounds when I drove by.
- b. Private preschool, Elementary, Junior, and Senior high schools are in Goessel.
- c. Grade School and High School were both nice sizes and kept up with updated outdoor facilities.
- d. Goessel Elementary School and Goessel JR/SR high school. The buildings are nice, clean and as a parent, I would feel safe sending my child to school in their community. The elementary school had signs posted advertising a book fair.

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

- a. At Keith's Foods I was able to pick up a "Bluebird Backers" membership form that citizens could fill out and pay a membership fee for many different supported programs such as athletics, music, arts, FFA, and so on. The accomplishments of the students and schools were not really visible online. I feel they should highlight such things! Goessel has excellent schools.
- b. No, but adequate information is available on the Kansas Department of Education website in Data Central. Goessel has good schools!
- c. NA
- d. USD 411 Goessel School has a website and FB page. The Goessel Unified School District site rates the school as 4.5 out of 5. They received a B+ rating in academics, A for teachers, A- for clubs and activities, C+ diversity, C college prep, and an A for health and safety. There is a student-teacher ratio of 12-1.

9. Childcare

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

- a. I spoke with a woman at length while I was in the Civic Center during General Election voting, she mentioned there was a need for childcare and was not aware of any childcare centers or privately owned childcare homes. She did mention she was formally a preschool teacher with the Mennonites but several years ago the school district took over the preschool operations.
- b. City employees mentioned one childcare facility in town in an individual's home. I didn't gather any further information.
- c. NA
- d. I didn't see any childcare advertised or daycare signs. City Hall was closed during my visit.

10. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the faith communities represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of faith-based community services?

- a. There are three Mennonite churches in and near Goessel. No other faith-based organizations were noticed in Goessel. I saw sign for a Community Thanksgiving meal coming up in the near future.
- b. There are three Mennonite churches in and near Goessel. No other faith-based organizations were noticed in Goessel.
- c. One denomination and it was Mennonite.
- d. There are 2 Mennonite Churches and both are well attended. The Goessel Mennonite Church is very plain, but well maintained. It could use a fresh new sign in front of the building. The Alexanderwohl is a landmark with immaculate grounds and a large parking lot.

11. Civic

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

- a. I saw a sign for the local 4-H Club. I also saw a large sign for Goessel Community Foundation. A local citizen advised me this particular foundation raises money to fill various grants around the community for a multitude of different organizations. She specifically stated that the Senior Center was purchased and the funds were added to their overall goal and the money was allotted for various grants for seniors in the community. There is also a new sewer line project going through town that she said has been many years coming. Only noted community organization was the local 4-H club. There used to be a Lions Club, but not now. There was an attractive sign on Main Street that publicized the Goessel Community Foundation and fundraising goal. Additionally, other resources, such as brochures, of events and organizations to get involved with were found in Keith's Foods and the Civic Center.
- b. Only noted community organization was the local 4-H club. A garden club was mentioned, but I didn't obtain any information on it. A Lions Club existed in the past, but is no more. There was an attractive sign on Main Street that publicized the Goessel Community Foundation and fundraising goal. Brochures for the Goessel Community Foundation were available in the city building.
- c. Did not see any.
- d. Tabor College advertises events in Goessel.

12. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. City signage, streets, and parking were in good condition throughout Goessel. I noted there were a few spots in town where there were major potholes and the sidewalks in various areas were in need of repair to avoid injury and liability issues.
- b. There is a current CDBG project for wastewater system improvements. Signage represents the total cost of the improvements is to be more than \$2,700,000 in funds provided by the Federal government with no local funding stated for the project.
- c. There were some sidewalks. The street signage was good.
- d. NA

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

- a. The City Clerk was not working on the day of my tour as she had a family issue to tend to but I was met by numerous citizens in the community both working and attending the General Election voting. Two ladies there were very welcoming and hospitable; they were a major source of information to me. They showed me the wall of brochures about the many things that go on in Goessel as well and told me some of the things they see wrong with the city, to include a lack of things to do locally for the youth. The youth just tend to hang out at each other's houses and play video games.
- b. The City Clerk promptly and enthusiastically greeted me when I entered City Hall. I then spent about an hour and a half talking with the City Clerk. The Public Works Director stopped by later and joined our conversation.
- c. The lady was a fill in and was not familiar with the community.
- d. It was closed.

Police/fire protection:

- a. I noticed two fire department buildings, one that was quite old and a newer looking facility. I had a difficult time finding the Police Department but was told the town had two or three part-time officers and very low crime rates.
- b. There are two buildings in town that house fire equipment. The City Police Chief reportedly only works a few hours a week. The Public Works Director stated there is little crime in Goessel.
- c. Small fire department.
- d. There was a 3-garage fire station.

Library:

- a. The Public Library is in the Civic Center along with the other city hall offices. It was not open at the time I was there but from what I could see looking through the door it appeared to be in great condition. There were a few computers I could see as well that I was told are accessible to the citizens of Goessel.
- b. There is a small, but professional-looking library located in City Hall that is open a variety of hours to meet different schedules. The library was not open while I visited, however, I noticed on the city website numerous activities and services at the library
- c. Looked like a nice library but was not open.
- d. The entry way to the library was open and I went inside and read the bulletin board. The sign said the hours were M-TH 8-5 and FRI 8-Noon. I went to the building on Mon at 11:00 and it was closed. There was a sign that said “closed, will return at 2:00.” When I looked in the window, it looked like a very nice facility and much larger than what I would expect to see in a community of 500.

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

- a. The city park was “off the beaten path,” meaning, if you were not from Goessel you would not know where to find it. More adequate signage would improve activity at the park. But overall, the park offered many good things such as a volleyball court, basketball court, disc golf, and playground equipment. Along with that, a pavilion was present for activities. Most all of their recreation sponsored sports and activities are done in either Newton or Wichita.
- b. There is a small park in the southern part of town that has a public shelter, picnic area, basketball court, and volleyball court and playground equipment. A disc golf area is also located across the street from the park. The school grounds’ offer ballparks, playgrounds, and sports areas. There is a local recreation commission to sponsor events. Post Office: In recent years, small towns in Kansas have fought efforts by the U.S. Postal Service to reduce the business hours post offices are open and even to close some post offices. The sign on the inside door of the post office in Goessel shows the post office window is open for business 36 hours a week. The same is also reported on the city’s website. That is essentially full-time and enviable. Some post offices in Kansas small towns the size of Goessel are open less than half-time hours.
- c. I did not see a walking track, but the others were very nice.
- d. There is a small city park that could use some improvement. It’s clean and maintained, but somehow lacks appeal. The playground has been updated. The picnic tables and pavilion could use a fresh coat of paint and instead of Frisbee golf (unless it is a popular attraction) add a community garden or an exercise trail.

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. Goessel is well-known for its Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum and its annual Country Threshing Days that takes place in August. In speaking with several people, they have fully embraced their city's heritage and take great pride in it.
- b. Goessel is well-known for its Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum and its annual Country Threshing Days.
- c. NA
- d. Small Town- Big Heart

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

- a. Other than the Community Thanksgiving meal coming up there was no other indication of events going on. It could be of benefit to advertise their Threshing Days and other major events year round to encourage tourists to come back.
- b. Nothing was happening the few hours of my visit, however, numerous flyers were posted on the windows of Keith's Foods and the bulletin board at Lincoln Perk.
- c. I did not see any.
- d. Most events are related to the Mennonite culture.

Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community. (Public art, museums, lakes, campgrounds, regional heritage locations).

- a. There was a large mural on the east wall of Keith's Foods that showed a possible town slogan "Small Town, Big Hearts" that was pretty neat to see. And as previously mentioned, the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum is located at 200 N. Poplar.
- b. NA
- c. I did see one heritage museum but was not open.
- d. The Mennonite Heritage Museum

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. NA
- b. NA
- c. I only saw City Offices with good signage on the building.
- d. NA

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

- a. I did not participate in the Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum during my tour so I may revisit Goessel and do so.
- b. Yes. I visited Goessel on a Monday and the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum was closed. I will be back to visit it! Goessel does not have a full-service restaurant. Lincoln Perk is a delightful coffee shop with a limited menu. Keith's Foods serves pizza and sandwiches. The Branding Iron café serves a full meal, but is only open on Friday evenings.
- c. The only place to eat lunch was the grocery store pizza. I would go back to the grocery store for its Cheese Curds from Alma Creamery in Alma, KS.
- d. The local restaurant looked appealing. I was disappointed to find out it is only open 1 day a week. Those hours are probably just fine for the local residents though.

14. Wrap-up

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

- a. I think Goessel has a lot of good things going for them! They are progressive, willing to see the things that need improvement, and offer solutions to meet the town's needs. The housing is probably one of the most positive things observed. The fact that they have a fully operational grocery store is impressive! Embracing of their Mennonite heritage with their tourist attraction of a museum is top-notch. Having a nursing home that aids in the quality of life for the city's seniors and offers a lot of job opportunities for a town of less than 600 is truly remarkable! The option to have 24/7 gas pumps is also an added bonus.
- b. Bethesda Home—a major employer (more than 100 employees and almost \$3 million in total payroll and benefits)! Housing—a variety of well-maintained housing units for every need (single-family owned and rented, low income rentals, elderly independent living, etc.), a new housing development with building sites ready for construction! A grocery store! A new business moving into town soon occupying a previously vacant building and employing 5-10 persons! A post office with full-time window hours! Overall attractive houses and buildings! A reputable museum that is a tourist attraction! Apparently, a community with pride!
- c. The wonderful signage from the highway.
- d. I loved the community. The people are friendly and take pride in their homes and businesses. There are no junk yards and it is wonderful to have a small grocery store and quality coffee shop in town. Although the businesses are few and small, they meet all needs.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. Lack of restaurants/food option. Very few retail businesses, could be utilizing more of the vacant buildings on Main Street to accomplish this. Majority of the youth tend to go to Newton and Wichita to participate in recreational activities, drawing them away from Goessel. Suggested maybe a public swimming pool. Lack of sources of income. The largest business in town is tax-exempt and generates no income for the city.
- b. No full-service restaurant. The senior center in town closed about a year ago due to lack of interest and has now been converted into an individual's residence. A very large employer in town is also a nonprofit entity and generates no tax revenue for the town. Reliance on one well for the entire town's water supply creates challenges in times of drought. Few retail businesses.
- c. Not a place to go in and eat a meal.
- d. Possible issues with flooding during the rainy season.

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

- a. The small town charm and the hospitality of the people I came across.
- b. Goessel is a small, rural town in Kansas that has a lot of positive features! Yet, the community of Goessel still strives to do even more!
- c. Easy to get to and very clean.
- d. The Museum is worth a trip back and I would love to have a grocery store similar to Keith's Grocery Store in our community.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

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

First Impressions was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and adapted for use by K-State Research and Extension. Restructuring made possible through a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service
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