First Impressions 

**Team Report Form**

1. 9/19/16
2. 9/21/16
3. 9/6/16
4. 9/21/16

**Community Visited: Little River Date Visited:**

**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. No Comments.
2. I liked the website.  I thought it was a neat idea to include local job opportunities!  I loved having the business listed as well as community calendar.
3. It was very easy to get information on the community. They have a great website. All information accurately reflected the town.
4. No comments
5. **The “Five-Minute” Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted.**
6. When pulling into Little River, it was so nice to see life downtown; many cars parked on the main street and buildings being used for businesses. on the south side of town as you come into Little River, there’s a building that looks as though they tried to do some upkeep by painting and would look like less of an eyesore if finished. It was so exciting to see a grocery store in town!!! If I could say one thing that you should keep in mind it don’t forget how much it means to support your grocery store. We recently lost ours in St. John and now it’s too late!
7. I thought the town had a lot of nice homes and a good downtown area.  It was nice to see several cars downtown.
8. Community Little River Sign – Landscape at city limit is very welcoming. Downtown Main Street was lively, clean and well kept.
9. Found Little River to be a nice, clean little town that had nice paved streets, unique street signs, beautiful homes with nice landscaping. Didn’t notice too many unkempt properties.

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

1. We loved the sign pointing to ball field as you come into town. It would help to have signs for park and school. Very nice!
2. Little River had a very nice sign at the entrance of the town.  There was one building that looked like it was in the process of getting painted from grey to white.
3. Community Businesses, school, street signs and everything were very well labeled.
4. Like their welcome to Little River sign when you come in from the south. Had a nice Main Street that made you feel that the community had some pride! Had a few eye sores when you first came in, but overall very inviting.

**2. Downtown Business Area**

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

1. It was motivating to see downtown buildings well kept. It made me want to come back and paint ours. I wish we would’ve done our research on business hours. coming on a Monday we missed out on some things including what looked like a very unique antique store and we heard the food would have been great at the bar and grill. However, we were greeted by a neat crew at the grocery store and had an amazing pork sandwich!
2. I loved how different businesses sponsored the blue flags hanging up.  I thought most the businesses had a sign with hours open and looked updated.
3. Nice, freshly manicured business fronts. Signs were bright, nice colors, and easy to read.
4. Really enjoyed your downtown! Had a wonderful time in your grocery store! Very cute business with friendly people running it. I was there on a Monday and a few businesses were closed. But, the buildings looked nice and inviting. It was nice to see that the community is still working to make improvements. Liked signs when entering town showing where to find the ball field.

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

1. One of our first stops was the childcare. having once owned a childcare and always having a dream of owning a center, it was exciting to hear their story and the director was gracious enough to stop what she was doing and give a tour and very useful information!
2. Blue Sky Salon was closed the day I was in town but looked very clean and I loved the sign. Garden of Eden had a nice variety of groceries.  I loved the deli selection and it's nice they serve food in case you visit on a Monday and Oliver's is closed :) I loved the history of the building!  The owner was very friendly.  Two-Twelve Main was closed the day we came but I peeked in the window and loved all the merchandise!
3. Telephone, insurance, grocery store, bank, antique, restaurant. Library (with city police officers), and salon.
4. No comments

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

1. The librarian was so sweet and helpful and so proud to share the library with us. At the city office we learned a lot of helpful information to finish off our day.
2. No Comments
3. We were greeted and treated respectfully.
4. Yes! I do think that some may have known what we were doing in Little River, but everyone was very friendly, took time out of their day to visit with us, helped answer questions and did a wonderful job of making you feel welcome.

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

1. We found benches and able to use a public restroom at the store.
2. I didn't notice any drinking fountains available although you could purchase drinks at the grocery store.  The grocery store was kind enough to allow us to use the restroom.  I saw restrooms at the Library and the park.
3. Benches and Restrooms
4. Yes, benches and trash cans on main street. The grocery store let me use their restroom and it looked like there was a bathroom in the park.

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

1. There was plenty of parking available and we were able to walk to most of our destinations from that one spot. So convenient!
2. Parking was easy to find and we were able to walk to a number of places without driving everywhere. The roads looked maintained.  I think there was only one dirt street that was a little bumpy.
3. Landscape was great
4. Lots of nice landscaping. Looks like the community overall takes pride in their yards and property. Loved the paved streets, just makes a small town look cleaner. Parking was not an issue.
5. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

1. Other retail shopping: everything seemed to be located right downtown and mentioned above.
2. I think most of this was on Main Street.
3. N/A All shopping areas were conveniently located downtown.
4. Had several businesses which is nice to see in a small town. Some were closed, but had an attractive and inviting feel. I like it when it feels like the heart of a town is downtown.

4. **Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

1. It seemed as though expansion would be possible if manufacturing industries would locate or expand but we did not ask to see who owns land and if that is even a possibility.
2. I think there would be enough space to expand if needed.  I think a gas pump might be beneficial to the community.
3. Not a lot of room to expand (construction currently takes up a block span)
4. It looked like maybe there was when you first entered town.

**5. Health Care Services**

**Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services. Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers. What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?**

1. Though we didn’t look while we were in Little River, I found that they did have a volunteer fire department and the closest hospital was in Lyons which is about the same as what we have and works as long as the community stays involved and continues to volunteer. I’m not sure if there is volunteer EMT but we find in Macksville it helps to have an ambulance available.
2. I didn't find any hospital, Dr. or dentist office but surrounding communities are close enough to provide those services.  I did observe a nursing home.
3. Adult care building was accessible near school. Did not see any other healthcare providers around town.
4. Looked like you would have to drive to a hospital, but with the nursing home there it seems like you would be able to get help if needed. Didn’t notice any health care providers except the nursing home. Nursing homes seem to help small towns not only by providing jobs, but also by helping those who need assistance stay in their hometown.

**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 seems as if there were a couple houses available or land to purchase if someone were to relocate. The city office had a good sized list of landlords for rentals which is very helpful when so many struggle to get loans.
2. I noticed newer looking homes and a couple of homes being built.  There was a variety of income level homes.  I only noticed one or two homes for sale.  We stopped by the realtor’s office but couldn't find anyone but the door was unlocked.
3. Appeals to a wide range of income. Challenges would/could just be finding open houses.
4. It looks like you had a nice variety. New housing development area, a new house being built. The city clerk said she had a list of rentals. Properties looked to be a nice size, not squished together.

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

1. So many of the yards in town had beautiful landscaping. One of the ladies doing the visit with us mentioned that she remembered having ‘yard of the week’ years ago in her hometown and coupons for local businesses were given as prizes. (Maybe something fun to do for Little River?)
2. I think if you were looking to rent the city clerk had a list of people to contact to find housing.
3. We saw a few places that we guessed were rentals, but they were not marked.
4. Didn’t actually see anything for rent, but was told that there were some available. Looks like there are all kinds of possibilities to build.

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. As mentioned above, we found a great child care center. The closest elementary school was within 10 miles and seems very involved with Little River and their library. We did not get to visit elementary however the Jr high-high school looked well maintained and we heard from the child care center that they keep doors locked for safety.
2. From my understanding the middle school and high school are in Little River and the elementary school is in another town.  Although the daycare offers a preschool class through the school.  The school seemed maintained and I didn't find any print material about the school.
3. Junior high-High School in Little River. Grade School in Windon. Buildings were well maintained.
4. High school looked very nice and clean from outside. Looked like you would have to transport younger kids, which might make it a little harder for some.

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

1. No Comments
2. I thought it was neat that the library keeps a yearbook from every year.
3. Did not see any print information.
4. Not that I saw, but I also did not go into the school.
5. **Childcare**

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

1. Mentioned Above
2. The director was VERY nice and helpful!  She gave us a tour of the facility and answered all of our questions on how to get a daycare going.  Only negative would be that if there was a tornado all of those little kids would have to run across the street to the school.
3. The learning center near school. Looked very well maintained and welcoming.
4. The daycare was awesome! Toured your center, very nice. It’s been a few years since my kids went to day care, but it sounded very reasonable.
5. **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. We noticed 3 churches in town all looked nice and well maintained. We noticed two side by side and curious if parking was ever an issue but discovered that services were at different times and didn’t seem to have issues.
2. I only remember two churches that shared a parking lot.  They both looked well maintained.
3. 3 denominations found; Physical appearances were excellent! Did not see any church sponsored services listed on fliers around town.
4. It looked like you had a couple of options. Grounds looked nice, but I don’t recall seeing any community services.
5. **Civic**

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

1. I was impressed that the masonic club had a building in town providing AA meetings and I’m sure other services. We noticed the baseball field sign was donated by Lyons club.
2. I noticed Mason, Lyon's Club, and AAA.  I saw fliers for a fall festival that looked fun.  The fliers were eye catching and most of the businesses I Passed had a flier advertising the event.
3. Masons Club. We didn’t notice any civic organization activity.
4. Looked like you had several options. It was nice to see a Legion, not many small communities have one and the same with the Masons. Noticed a nice sign by the Lion’s Club, but didn’t notice any signs or advertisements for 4-H or Scouts.
5. **Public Infrastructure**

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

1. I love the old brick streets! Though maybe hard on vehicles it sure is neat. Sidewalks were in good shape. There were a couple benches that were pretty worn but for the most part the downtown was very inviting. I like the unique street signs. The only thing we had trouble finding was the school the city building with library and police office is smart use of building and the donation bricks are a great addition!
2. Outside of Main Street the street signs were unique and there was adequate signs telling us how to find the school and park.  It seems like most of the businesses and residents take pride in the landscaping and overall was very nice.
3. A lot of the above were good and adequate; well-marked.
4. Liked your unique street signs. Loved the paved streets, it just makes a small town seem cleaner. Most yards had appealing landscaping, I was impressed.

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

1. The city park had nice new equipment! And we also noticed money is being raised for Water Park!
2. No Comments
3. Yes, the businesses are in good locations and the school, library, port and downtown are all in working distance of each other.
4. Yes, future home building sites.

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

1. No Comments
2. The city hall was nice and she was very helpful with any questions we had.  Outside of her office were a number of brochures for different activities. We also noticed a town newspaper.
3. We were welcomed; asked if she could help us. The information was available/ she answered questions about the community.
4. Very welcoming. Clerk was knowledgeable about her community, willing to answer questions or find answers.

**Police/fire protection:**

1. No Comments
2. I don’t remember about a fire station but we did see the police office.
3. Police are located in the City Hall and the fire department is downtown.
4. Yes, but didn’t visit.

**Library:**

1. No Comments
2. The Librarian was very kind and the library was very organized and easy to find things.
3. Library located nicely with city hall. The staff was kind.
4. Nice small library. Had a nice variety of books and magazines and several computers for public use.

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

1. No Comments
2. The city park was nice.  I love how they are raising money to purchase a splash pad!  That will be a big bonus to the community.  I didn't notice any walking paths but the sports complex looked very nice.
3. Welcoming, very manicured. Had lots to do; locations for gatherings. Very nice!
4. Nice city park. Looks like you are trying to make even more improvements.
5. **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. We didn’t notice a slogan for city but there may be one
2. I didn't notice a community slogan but The Fall Festival seemed to be a big weekend.
3. Not well known for a specific attraction or event to our knowledge. Community slogan: Little River, Big Heart.
4. Not that I’m aware of, but there were several posters advertising the up-coming Fall Fest.

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

1. We noticed signs for fall festival all over which even gave us great ideas for presenting our events- thank you.
2. Fall Festival
3. No
4. (Above) Saw posters for Fall Fest

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

1. No Comments
2. The Chamber of Commerce seemed to be involved in community things but we got a phone number at the city office to speak with them.
3. School, small local businesses.
4. 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. Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future?**

1. We noticed that there was a chamber of commerce and impressed by the signs in most windows showing the group is dedicated and active. We look forward to hearing ideas from there members hoping to get a chamber of commerce in Macksville.
2. I would love to go back to Little River to look in the Two-Twelve store!!
3. City Hall covers helping serve the visitors! The staff if very welcoming and accommodating.
4. I would say the City office. Nice newer facility. Like the flag pole out front with donation/memorial bricks. The restaurant was closed, but looked appealing. I really enjoyed the grocery store and that they offered quick meals.
5. **Wrap-up**

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

1. Your town motivated us to get into action! You should feel blessed to have such a unique place to live that seems safe and involved.
2. I loved that the local people support the hardware store and the grocery store.  The daycare and nursing home is a big blessing providing a service and jobs!  It seems people care about their community and are doing things to improve it.
3. There is a well-kept-downtown and attractive store fronts.
4. Very friendly community. Clean and safe feeling. Had several housing options. Look like there was a variety of options for all ages.

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

1. No Comments
2. The biggest obstacle I would think would be driving to another community for fuel.
3. All ranges of Income (May be harder for some to keep their property kept up and well maintained due to budget)
4. I would guess having the community shop local.

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

1. No Comments
2. I will remember the friendly people and the nice downtown area.
3. The Learning Center Daycare (Very Positive!)
4. I loved little towns! Little River is a fun, friendly community that has several options for small town living! Really enjoyed my visit.



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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service

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