

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Meade

Date(s) Visited: 8/20/2019 (a, b, c)

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. Google search – City of Meade popped up first, good information about utilities, community and services. Meade Economic Development website had excellent detail and link to an outstanding brochure. Having strategic plan on website shows progressive community and was a nice touch. I didn't need to look anywhere else except Economic Development website. It had links to anything you would want.
- b. I found it very easy to get information on Meade, Kansas. I simply typed Meade, Kansas into Google and found several very informative websites. I liked the City's website; it was simple, organized and easy to navigate. I specifically liked the details on the city page including the brief history about Meade and the fact that I could see 9 churches with their pictures in other clicks on the page. It was also nice to be able to click and see all the local school options which listed a link for USD226 if I wanted to learn more. I also enjoyed the business directory and the tourism link that highlighted the Dalton Gang Hideout, the Museum and Meade Lake. However, the travel services map failed to load it as directed. I did not experience any difficulties navigating the website otherwise. The Meade Chamber of Commerce website was very basic and appeared it needed to be updated. It was still inviting all to join their 4th of July celebration and some of the member sites listed such as Bart's Tavern have now closed according to the link I accessed. The Meade District Hospital/Artesian Valley Health System and Meade County Health Department websites were easy to navigate and informative.
- c. It was easy to get info on Meade and it was accurate for the most part (population was different on a few sites but did have the date). Cityofmeade.org- good website, some things outdated (population) and meadeco.org- not as good- calendar doesn't work, nor does current weather.

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. Nice small community. Downtown has nice selection of businesses. Love’s Convenience Store is new and a nice addition. Well maintained properties and streets overall. Pleasant atmosphere where anyone would feel comfortable stopping. Stores had inviting window displays. Mural on Buckingham Trading definitely catches your eye while driving through town. Quilt squares on building is a neat touch. Airport was well-marked Welcome to community sign was nice. Dalton Gang Hideout was well-marked and advertised. Hard to know where high school is when coming in from west. Park by school is nice. Convenient stores on Highway 54 easy to get to. Hospital looks nice. Have a recycling center - that’s awesome for a small town. Homes on north end of main are nicely maintained. North end not much signage. Museum sign was cute on north end. Courthouse no sign so had to just assume was the courthouse. Sign to golf course was easy to read. Stopped at Love’s to go to restroom and was greeted and restrooms well maintained.
- b. I found the five-minute impression to be that the town was very green, clean, overall well-maintained but could use some more signage, especially as you enter north to south, south to north. The West to East entrance to town offered a clean, overall well-maintained, and inviting impression when we were stopped at the stop light and saw the colorful décor on the side of the Meade County News building/Quilt shop and the fun Buckingham Trading Co. sign. Great signature additions that catch your eye immediately!!
- c. Town was clean and had amenities most travelers/town people would want or need, such as hotels, gas, restaurants and convenience stores. Most homes exhibited pride of ownership. East and West entrances were marked the best with signage for Dalton Hideout, Historical Marker, Church of Christ, Junctions and Speed Limits. Welcome sign was very nice. North and South not much signage. There was a nice museum sign and courthouse sign. Some of the other signs were faded or too busy to read.

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. Parallel parking signs on Main Street were a nice touch so people knew parking direction. The Library sign on south main was worn out and not readable. Downtown seemed to be well occupied; not many empty buildings. Studio 54/Empty Hanger Boutique: super cute items and very friendly. Visited about hot dogs and haircuts community event we saw online. Buckingham Trading was a very cute store. The employee was very friendly. Very nice merchandise for a small-town shop. Said Subway would help with people stopping in. Back Room Printing store was a nice option for offices supplies, but customer service wasn't great. Employee didn't speak while we were there. It was a pleasant surprise to find gift and other retail items at Bachman Drug Store. Nothing on the front of the store would indicate they have retail items. Honeycomb Quilts had a great inviting exterior that would for sure draw people passing through town on the highway. We found out they also operate the newspaper. Like many small towns, people wear multiple hats and it is hard to get community involvement in activities. Owner refers customers to other local businesses. Green Acres Quilt Shop had a large variety of inventory. She was very willing to answer any questions we had about community.
- b. I noticed a wide array of different buildings both new and old, some better maintained than others. I think that the Buckingham Trading Co. sign and location is a key asset to the downtown area!! The beautiful painted picture of the cowboy riding a pig does an amazing job of "grabbing the attention" of travelers! ...and ties in to the Western flare you could tie to the Dalton Gang Hideout attraction too. I think the Salon 54/Empty Hanger Boutique could use a bigger sign (or some sort of drive by appeal to pull people in) because you had to be walking by to read the small print which then invited us in otherwise I wouldn't enter unless I wanted a haircut and she had so much more to offer. The Bachman Drug/Pharmacy, salon 54/Empty Hanger Boutique, and Buckingham Trading Co. each had a wide array of quality, affordable merchandise available to appeal to various customers which were nice to see and all offered something I have not seen elsewhere so it made them a unique option as well. I was impressed that the Buckingham Trading Co. had such a wide array of merchandise from kites to clothes to dishes, jewelry and much more! I went in several different businesses; the pharmacy, community learning center, library, city hall, courthouse, bank, salon 54/Empty Hanger Boutique, Buckingham Trading Co. and the office supply place. The warm, friendly genuine greeting in both salon 54/Empty Hanger Boutique and the Buckingham Trading Co. were to be commended and certainly left a positive impression of what the town has to offer! I could tell they were happy to have new faces in their buildings and they each went out of their way to leave us with a warm, friendly feeling and encouraged us to come back to explore more because new merchandise would be coming in soon. We were never

- greeted or asked if we needed anything in the office supply place which it was hard to discern the name of because many of the letters were missing on their sign. She had a wide array of office supplies available including various colors of paper supplies which would be nice to have access to in a small town.
- c. Most buildings were maintained well and marked with easy to read signs. Salon 54 had clothing of good quality and does haircuts. The beautician there was involved in Haircuts and Hotdogs (I had seen this during a web search); a neat community service project. I enjoyed going into Buckingham Trading; an impressive shop. Lots of clothing items to choose from. Lots of items to purchase as gifts. There were 2 quilt shops. Honeycomb seemed newer and was adding merchandise. Green Acres had a lot of material. Both curators were very friendly. The pharmacy was well stocked and had gift items available. Love's was very clean and well stocked. The employees were very friendly. Salon 54 was very welcoming and informative. Quilt shop owners were friendly and willing to answer questions. At the Pharmacy, we were greeted when we entered, however I went up to the counter to ask a couple of questions after looking around and was ignored. Buckingham Trading employee was very friendly and told us the story of the business opening.

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. Public restrooms were available in the city office by the library. City Park had restrooms, water fountain and trash dumpsters. Nice downtown area. Parking was easy and well-marked with parallel parking signs.
- b. I saw a few trashcans downtown but not many. There was a public drinking fountain at the City Hall, and public restrooms but there were no hours listed. When asked, they said the bathrooms were open to the public when the building was open which she said was until 5:00pm on week days. I asked at the Community Learning center about open Wi-Fi and he said they blocked that so did not believe it was an option. Open access was available on the computers at the Library and I loved their little computer ethics sign they had posted on each computer. Great idea to list the expectations. There was a public drinking fountain and public restrooms at the City Park that were open for all 24/7. The landscaping around town was basic but well taken care of. The streetscaping was fairly well maintained and many of the light poles downtown had banners on them to catch your attention. We did not have any trouble parking and had plenty of access to multiple services from where we parked. It was a nice day so we simply walked business to business downtown.
- c. Park had water fountains, benches, trash receptacles and restrooms. Courthouse and Coop had nice, well-kept lawns. Love's landscape needed some care. Parking was easy to find and several shops were within walking distance.

4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. Lunch at Chuck Wagon Restaurant was great. Staff was very friendly. It was impressive to see advertisements for area attractions. The “Take Time To Visit....” Sign on the front door was a neat addition to get people to explore the community.
- b. I did not note any major retail shopping areas such as a shopping mall or strip mall but did note the local Dollar General which would provide many great options for both travelers and those who live in Meade. I did not go in the Dollar General. They also have a huge Love’s convenience store with nice restrooms and a Subway housed in Love’s as well. The staff in the Love’s was warm and friendly and you could tell they enjoyed their job and take pride in keeping the drink and coffee station clean and well stocked. There was a Rusty Junker sign on a boat that caught my attention on the outskirts of town but perhaps it could elaborate below it what it was, hours, etc. to pull me in further.
- c. Shops were easily viewed and accessible.

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. Did not really see defined industrial area.
- b. Yes, I think the area by the fairgrounds would be considered industrial/commercial areas. It did seem to me that there were plenty of expansion potential areas noted.
- c. These areas appear to be on the west end of town. There is land all around that could be developed to accommodate additional industries.

6. Health Care Services

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

- a. The hospital is on the highway and signs were well-marked throughout town. The emergency entrance was at the back of the building, but well-marked.
- b. Meade District Hospital sign on the building is visible from the highway and the grounds and area looked well maintained and easily accessible from the highway with adequate parking. However, the Emergency Room sign was low and small and could perhaps be made larger. There was a sign closer to the highway that said Artesian Valley something I think but it was hard to see and read in the drive-by glance.
- c. Hospital with Emergency Room and a clinic are all available. There is a wide variety of doctors with various specialties which keeps town people from driving long distances.

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

- a. The building for the health department looked very old from the outside.
- b. I did not readily see any dentist or optometrist options in our tour through town. It took a bit of a hunt to find the health department which appeared to be located in an old long term care building. They were closed over the lunch hour so we did not get to go in, but the sign for the health department and Southwest Guidance Center appeared to need some new paint and attention. On the other side of the building was K-State Meade County Extension office and they were closed for lunch as well so we did not get to go in there either. The pharmacy downtown had a nice array of various over-the-counter medications and even had some medical equipment that you do not often see in a rural pharmacy as well as merchandise and home town themed apparel and handmade crafts in the front area for purchase which was a nice addition.
- c. Most facilities appear to be in good condition and on the main highway through town. The public health department is more difficult to find and not very inviting.

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

- a. Long-term care center was on highway and easy to see.
- b. I did note a nice looking Care Center/Assisted living facility but did not go in or approach the building beyond seeing it from the highway.
- c. The only one I observed was Lone Tree Retirement Center. It appeared to be a nice facility from the outside.

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. The City Manager commented that they have an abundance of open housing and is as empty as he has ever seen it. Homes we observed that were occupied seemed to be well maintained.
- b. I noted a wide variety of housing throughout Meade with very well maintained and tailored landscaping. In fact, I saw several houses with flags proudly displayed and much attention to details such as quaint yard décor and detailed landscaping throughout town. It was refreshing to see such older homes being well cared for in the center of town as well as on the outskirts of town, the lawns and neighboring yards seemed to be well groomed and very green. It was a beautiful yet hot day when we went and still people were out working in their yards. I only saw a few houses for sale but it did appear they could appeal to all incomes.
- c. I was disappointed that the appraiser at the courthouse doesn't have a listing of houses for sale. She was helpful in getting the realtor numbers though. There seems to be a good mix of housing in town but not a lot of "for sale" signs. The housing available isn't obvious. Some houses in town are very run down.

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

- a. The list of rental property owners from the City was the only information we saw for rental properties.
- b. I did not physically see any rental properties but did note a list of properties that was available on the counter in the City Hall as well as she said the newspaper had listings as well. There were also links to rental property on the City Website.
- c. City Administrator stated that about a fourth of rentals are open currently. However, driving around, I didn't see a lot of signs verifying this.

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. High school easy to find and well-marked but only from east side of town. Very easily accessible for parking for sporting events. Very nice facilities. No sign on the highway to direct to Grade/Jr High School. Once we got there, electronic sign looks nice and buildings were older, but well maintained. Nice space for bike racks. There wasn't easy parking in front of school.
- b. Meade Elementary School and Middle school were located beside each other and appeared to be adequate in size. The playground had been updated but some older style basketball goals also remained which added a nostalgic feel. The area around the school was mowed and well taken care of and it was neat to see the old "stone/rock" bleachers in the neighboring field. I am not certain if these are still in use or not but they also added a 'what once was feel' to the area. The bike racks were full at the school which was nice to see and could also speak to the fact that people were comfortable with having their children ride their bikes to school, alluding to a safe town for children and outdoor activities. Meade High School appeared to have been expanded on and had very nice parking areas and a large fenced in football field with nice bleachers. It also was nice to see the school was designated as Tobacco Free by posted signs. The Community Learning Center was small with a dated building but was organized with several computer stations open and available for use. I learned there are many options for high school aged students and adults to take classes online and/or use the computers there as needed. However, there is no evening or Saturday computer access hours available since most students chose to do their learning on their own at home. He said they were getting more students from neighboring communities and partnered with the school if anyone was struggling or needed to make up a class that they did not do well in.
- c. They have a Learning Center, Grade/Middle school and a High school. We did not go into the schools to see if size was adequate but they are comparable to other surrounding, small town schools. Buildings and grounds are well maintained.

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

- a. District website was full of information.
- b. I was able to find information about the schools online and from what I saw the elementary school scored 6 out of 10 on their test scores with the high school scoring 5/10. The school websites were easy to navigate and professional with an enjoyable personal touch such as the photos from various events. We were highly impressed with the idea of Haircuts and Hotdogs! Great kickoff for back to school and way for the local hairstylists to give back to their community! Awesome idea, great job to all!
- c. This is one area I did not find information on.

9. Childcare

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

- a. Appeared to be a shortage of day care providers. No day care center, just in-home providers.
- b. I did not readily find information on the daycare situation in town. But we visited with a lady at the bank who said daycare, although fairly affordable, was hard to come by because everyone was always full. I am not certain if the elementary school does an after school program like our school does or not as I could not readily find an answer online when I searched. A quick search online at ChildcareCenter.us lists 3 In-home Daycares in Meade as follows: 1) Gollither Day Care Home is a Group Day Care Home in Meade KS, with a maximum capacity of 12 children. The provider does not participate in a subsidized child care program. 2) Bottles and Boots is a Licensed Day Care Home in Meade KS, with a maximum capacity of 10 children. The provider does not participate in a subsidized child care program. 3) Happy Hippos is a Licensed Day Care Home in Meade KS, with a maximum capacity of 10 children. The provider does not participate in a subsidized childcare program.
- c. Didn't see any daycares but was told there are several home daycares in town.

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. We noticed quite a few churches. On the east side of town there is a sign with all churches listed.
- b. Meade has a wide range of denominations, 9 on the city webpage and in the City of Meade flyer and 11 were listed in a Google search for Meade, Kansas churches. I saw several in our tour around town but did not go in any of them. Most of them were well maintained and cared for with adequate signage. I did note a few Lutheran signs on the north to south and south to north approach to town but they were small and far off the road so difficult to read but I did recognize the cross emblem that was in red/maroon when we drove past the church and saw it there too.
- c. One website listed 8 or 9 churches. I believe we saw most of them. Physical appearances were attractive and well kept. Did not observe community service in this area.

11. Civic

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

- a. The fairgrounds facilities were nice but would not know where they are. They had signage for 4H and FFA. Kiwanis is active and meets at the Chuck Wagon Restaurant. There was a box for Lions glasses drop off outside Economic Development office so assumed there is a Lions Club. Kiwanis meets at Chuck Wagon restaurant and had their sign posted by the door. Meade State Bank had Chamber, Boy Scouts and Booster clubs signs.
- b. I saw a wooden sign in the Chuck Wagon Restaurant noting that Kiwanis met there. I also saw the 4-H and FFA emblem and fair dates on a metal sign over by the fairgrounds. I think every community should capitalize on the strength 4H and FFA programs bring to their community so perhaps this could be expanded on throughout town further. I absolutely loved the idea of the Meade Library Foundation that I read about on a catchy flyer at the Library. On the front it says "Invest in Knowledge, Pleasure, and Future of the Meade Community". It opens up to give you the option to become a donor which I felt like was a take home idea for our library to perhaps attempt to begin as well. Meade is doing an excellent job not only maintaining your library, but working hard to maximize its reach in the community for years to come! There were a few flyers in the courthouse and a bookmark at the Library from the Meade County CATCH Coalition. The bookmark I picked up said "Most teens don't drink. In Kansas, 7 out of 10 chose not to drink alcohol" on the front and had more facts on the back. Also in the Courthouse by the Economic Development door, there were a few dated flyers from the Meade

- County CATCH Coalition. There was a street banner on a light pole that said, Meade A Good Life! Kiwanis
- c. Didn't see much in respect to variety of nonprofit organizations. Saw a sign at the Chuck Wagon Restaurant that the Kiwanis meet there. Did not observe any 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. NA
- b. The streets and landscaping was overall well maintained with adequate parking, sidewalks were present on some blocks and not others which is pretty typical of rural America. Lighting was present downtown and on most street corners but was not fully observed since I visited during daylight hours. I think it would be beneficial to promote Meade Lake on more signs since the lake is so far out of city limits it might go unknown to other travelers. The Courthouse looked like a courthouse but was not labeled so we had to guess our way into the doors. There was some kind of a stone/rock sign on the corner but it had fallen over and was in need of repair. The doors to the Courthouse could use a sign or vinyl depicting the hours, etc.
- c. Streets seemed to be well maintained. Some signage was good. There was some that was very faded and then signs in front of businesses that are no longer open. Parking was readily available. Chuck Wagon Restaurant parking lot/interior needs to be redone. Some businesses are very nice and well maintained. However, there are several that should mow and clean up around the buildings to display the same kind of pride as the homeowners.

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

- a. Visit to city office was great. Inside building signage wasn't posted so we weren't sure we had the right location, but employee immediately came out to help us. They had a great brochure to give new people to town. The welcome bag project in process is a great idea. They have a listing of rental property owners, but not a listing of houses for sale. The City Manager was very welcoming and visited with us about the community. Courthouse was a very nice building. Well maintained just not outdoor signage to let people know it is the courthouse. There was a nice big display of local brochures just inside the door, it was just a little messy. The Economic Development office on the third floor was closed. The City employee had told us the director had passed away earlier this year and they hadn't filled position. That is the only way we knew why the office was closed. There was nothing posted on the door about office being closed. There were a lot of community materials outside the door.

- b. We were well received in the City hall and she was more than happy to answer our questions and readily upfront with a few challenges they are experiencing such as the recent passing of the Economic Development person which has created a few gaps here and there since “he was such an involved person”. But admittedly we were not sure which door to go in once we walked in the main door. There were no signs or designations, although there were some nails above the entry way to what we learned was the main city office so perhaps the sign had been removed? But after a few minutes of looking through the lobby, the City clerk came out from the restroom and greeted us with a warm smile and then was more than willing to help answer questions and guide us further as needed. The doors to the City Hall could use a sign or vinyl depicting the hours, etc. I did not see any handouts about the town in the lobby area but did pick up a City of Meade Kansas brochure when we were in the main office that was very informative about the services they coordinated as well as other services in town.
- c. We were graciously welcomed to the city hall. We saw a “New to Town” brochure and they are in the process of preparing “Welcome Bags”.

Police/fire protection:

- a. NA
- b. Very visible Meade Police Department building and I did see a few officers driving around during our tour of Meade. I also noted the location of the Fire Department and EMS which seemed to be in a fairly new building.
- c. Police were out in the community. Buildings were nice, well-marked and well maintained.

Library:

- a. Other members from our group visited the library and were very impressed!
- b. The Library was impressive to say the least! I loved the inviting entrance with the comfy floral chairs encouraging you to sit down and read a bit! I also liked that they appealed to the teen readers with the youth section at the front of the library. The addition of the clear signs hanging to mark each section such as beginning readers, junior non-fiction, was a nice addition to help guide patrons to the right location. They also tailored there kids section with low level bulletin boards, tot size computers, table and chairs. You could definitely tell a lot of detail, love and care goes into the library and they were just as friendly with their greeting and asking if they could help with anything.
- c. This facility was well organized.

City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sports plex)

- a. The City Park on the east side of town was very nice. Frisbee golf is a fun attraction to have there. The rental is free for the stone building at the park. That is a great perk for community members. There were public restrooms located in the park. There were multiple dumpsters for trash. There was a water fountain by the basketball court which was a great idea. The sheltered area at the City Pool was a great idea.
- b. I did not observe a specific walking trail/track geared towards the public but the City Park would be a nice area to walk around since it had great big trees and lush green grass. Meade has a great little City Park with playground equipment, well-maintained lawn, gazebo, covered building, dumpster, fountain and numerous benches, picnic tables and Frisbee golf locations. I also noted the local pool although it is an older pool, it did have a nice covered area over the picnic tables to help patrons get out of the sun a little if needed. We were also made aware at the City Hall that you could use the stone building in the center for free. I also saw info about using the building on the City website also which listed the phone number to contact to make arrangements. We saw Public restrooms in the park (although we did not go into them) and we were advised at the City Hall that they were open 24/7 with cameras to monitor activity. I liked that there was a park donation spot which encouraged others to contribute to the upkeep of the Park as well as a camera surveillance sign posted near this area as well. I forgot to note the lighting in the park since we were there during the day hours and I was busy taking in all the amenities. We had to drive around on a bit of a hunt to find the baseball fields which we finally located over by the fairground area.
- c. All were easy to find and appeared accessible for all. They were very neat, without evidence of trash.

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. Dalton Gang Hideout is well advertised and had great signage. The only signs for Meade State Lake is at the intersection of Hwy 54 and Main.
- b. Meade is known for the Dalton Gang Hideout which we saw advertised in the local restaurant as a listed "Take Time to Visit" attraction and it also had a poster promoting it. There is also adequate signage promoting the Dalton Gang Hideout in various locations through Meade. I saw a few banners downtown that said "Meade make it your home" with different sponsors listed on the banner, the bank being one of them. The City of Meade Kansas flyer was nicely done with great pictures and said, "A friendly place to visit...a Great place to live." And then listed numbers for local utility services, zoning, city office, other services, school district, churches and Emergency services. The "Take Time to Visit" on the Chuck Wagon Restaurant was a simple yet creative touch to encourage visitors, travelers and locals to take time to visit the Dalton Gang Hideout, Meade Co. Historical Museum and Meade State Lake.

- c. They are well known for the Dalton Gang Hideout. There are signs advertising it however I didn't hear anything about a 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. It was a neat experience to see the historic preservation at the Dalton Gang Hideout.
- b. I found a "Experience Meade County Kansas" bookmark that promoted the Major Events and Points of Interest at the library-- might be nice to have these also placed throughout other high traffic areas in town such as the convenience store, restaurants, city hall, etc. Again the posters at the Chuck Wagon Restaurant advertised/promoted the Dalton Gang Hideout. The Dalton Gang Hideout showed signs that it was a new project in town "Historic Preservation in Process" and it was a good idea to post that the Kansas Heritage Trust Fund was being used to help fund the Historic preservation. This spoke highly of the town's commitment to this attraction.
- c. The restoration of the Dalton Gang Hideout would be of interest to both of these groups.

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. Museum was conveniently located. Meade State Park but was only advertised on signs at Main Street intersection and Chuck Wagon Restaurant.
- b. I think you could capitalize further on Meade State Park. Perhaps the artist that did the Buckingham Trading Co. sign could do some more signs to promote other attractions in Meade since art tends to grab people's attention which would maximize the town's reach for all.
- c. I feel that the lake could draw people to the area. It needs to be advertised. I have been through Meade many times and didn't know they had a lake. Once in town, it was mentioned but we had trouble figuring out where it was.

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. Not that we noticed or were referred to.
- b. I did not see a visitor's center or Chamber of Commerce office. We asked about the Chamber of Commerce but the two people remarked they really didn't have an office or weren't aware of one. But went on to say they thought maybe they were going to be working on that option as they were exploring options with the loss of the person in charge of the Economic Development office too. I think the City Hall could also fill that gap with a small table of information within their building perhaps with flyers, bookmarks, and signs promoting tourism within and around Meade perhaps. There were several great flyers, brochures, and bookmarks at the Library that you could expand out into the town as well.
- c. These offices are not obvious. They need to be marked well to invite visitors in. Signage, signage, signage. If this was promoted better, I feel there would be more visitor traffic.

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

- a. The Studio 54 and Buckingham Trading would definitely bring me back to town. They were cute locations and a bright spot to shop. I enjoyed lunch at the Chuck Wagon and would stop there again.
- b. The specialty shops Buckingham Trading Co. and Salon 54/Empty Hanger Boutique would bring me back. I also plan to go back to visit the Dalton Gang Hideout when my family comes for Labor Day and I think we might go out to Meade Lake and check it out as well since we have never been.
- c. Buckingham Trading will bring my daughters and I back to town. This was my first tie to go in and I was very impressed with the selection and employee who was there. The Crooked Creek Classis Spring Show brings my family to town yearly to participate.

14. Wrap-up

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

- a. Downtown area had a lot of options for shopping. It was well maintained and inviting. Most buildings in the downtown area were occupied. They do a great job of promoting and advertising the Dalton Gang Hideout. Parallel parking signs on Main Street were well posted. People willing to visit. City Park on east side of town is a great asset.
- b. The people we interacted with were very friendly and welcoming and clearly want their town to prosper! The town is invested in maintaining the historic significance of the Dalton Gang Hangout with the historic preservation we currently witnessed going on. The Library was warm, inviting and engaging!! You should feel very proud of what your library is doing and has to offer!
- c. The most positive thing I observed was the pride of ownership in the neighborhood of Meade. Most of the shop owners/employees were very friendly and welcoming. There is a good mix of businesses.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. Lack of restaurants is a common struggle for rural communities. There were only 4 options we found. Like most rural communities, it is an older town struggling to keep people there and involved. Not having an Economic Director seems to have an impact on community projects. Funding for updating older buildings. Maintaining population. Community engagement – hear multiple time that the same few people are involved and burned out. Needing economic growth.
- b. It is hard to put a label on the biggest obstacle/challenges facing this community since I was just there for a day but perhaps it is similar to our challenge and you just have to find a way to be relevant to not only your locals but to travelers too. From my quick view I would say, there is not a lot of eating options or retail businesses that grab the attention of people traveling through or give you a reason to stop! I think more signage could capitalize and drive people to top locations. For example, the Chuck Wagon Restaurant is a nice, family-style restaurant and perhaps the old western like appeal could be dialed up a little and tied in to the Dalton Gang Hideout attraction, etc. because admittedly I would not have stopped and ate there if someone else in my party didn't know it offered good eats. It just for whatever reason didn't grab my attention as a must eat location. Perhaps a sign promoting home cooked, family-style restaurant coming off the top of the building as various circle signs or something to announce the favorite meals or specials could be made to catch people's attention because after eating there (I had the chicken fried chicken, yum!), the service was great and the food was too! I also felt like it would be beneficial to promote Meade Lake on more signs because the lake is so far out of city limits it might go unknown to travelers and visitors.

- c. A big obstacle is updating various signage around town. Another is bringing people to town. The challenge here is capitalizing on events happening outside of town. (i.e. Dairy Expansion near Plains)

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

- a. Make the effort to stop in small communities. You can find some great treasures! The mural on Buckingham Trading is a great draw to a fun store. Very friendly people that greeted us and visited answering any questions we had. The sign on the door at the Chuck Wagon Restaurant advertising area attractions.
- b. The fun and engaging gentleman working in the Buckingham Trading Co. and woman at Salon 54/Empty Hanger Boutique. You definitely could tell they loved their job and loved the community they were working in! They also made it know they wanted you to come back!! The concept of Haircuts and Hotdogs as a kick off to celebrate school starting. It's fun ideas like this that can engage many and become an annual memorable event.
- c. I will remember the friendly people. Also, I enjoyed hearing about the Back to School Haircuts and Hotdogs- Neat concept! I liked that one of the empty buildings had classic cars displayed in the big windows. That is much more appealing than an empty building.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

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

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